

**LEEDS CITY COUNCIL**

**MEETING OF THE COUNCIL**

Held on

Wednesday, 10<sup>th</sup> September 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 10<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 2008

THE LORD MAYOR: Good afternoon again and welcome to the full Council Meeting. After quite a long break it is good to see a few tans about the place - they must have been well and truly abroad. The others have not been quite as fortunate but looking around we can spot who they are. However, certainly, welcome.

I repeat the announcement about the mobile phones - taken for granted, I am certain.

Three announcements, really. The first one on a sadder note that as Lord Mayor I attended the funeral of Wayne Bland, who you may well remember was killed in Afghanistan. I attended the service at the Leeds Parish Church and obviously gave the Council's condolences to the family.

On a brighter note, a first time announcement of the engagement of Councillor Alec Shelbrooke, to Victoria Wilson. (*Applause*)

No doubt another announcement made with popular acclaim, to the 80<sup>th</sup> birthday of Councillor Atha, Bernard Atha, on the 27<sup>th</sup>. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR ATHA: I think I would prefer to get engaged! (*laughter*) Shall we swap?

THE LORD MAYOR: I am pleased to make those announcements. We will continue.

ITEM 1 - MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 2<sup>ND</sup> JULY 2008

THE LORD MAYOR: Minutes of the meeting held on 2<sup>nd</sup> July. Councillor Procter.

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

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: I second, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Those in favour? Those against? No abstentions. CARRIED then.

ITEM 2 - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

THE LORD MAYOR: Declarations of interest. There have been many written declarations and they are on display. They have been circulated as well. If there are any individual ones would you please show?

COUNCILLOR A BLACKBURN: West North West Homes ALMO, a Director of West North West Homes ALMO, if you can put that down against my name.

THE LORD MAYOR: What item in relation to?

COUNCILLOR A BLACKBURN: It is to do with the item of homes. I thought I should just declare it. If it is not necessary - I am just trying to declare.

THE LORD MAYOR: Right, you have an interest. Councillor Lobley?

COUNCILLOR LOBLEY: Item 11, Increased charges for Community Care Services White Paper. I am chairman of Community Action for Roundhay and I think it would be personal rather than prejudicial. Thank you.

COUNCILLOR BEVERLEY: Lord Mayor, I would like to declare a personal interest for Item 8(a), the reference back. I have a close family member who works at Leeds Sports Centres.

COUNCILLOR PRYKE: Lord Mayor, I am sorry I am not sitting in my place. Minute 53 on page 49, the annual update of Water Asset Management. I am a member of the Regional Flood Defence Committee.

THE LORD MAYOR: Is that it? Yes.

### ITEM 3 - COMMUNICATIONS

THE LORD MAYOR: We move on to Item 3, Communications. Chief Executive?

THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE: There are no announcements, Lord Mayor.

### ITEM 4 - DEPUTATIONS

THE LORD MAYOR: We move to item 4, Deputations. You will see there are five deputations this afternoon. I call on Councillor Procter.

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

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: I second that, Lord Mayor.

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

### DEPUTATION 1 LOCAL HYDE PARK RESIDENTS

THE LORD MAYOR: Good afternoon and welcome to today's Council meeting. If you could now make your speech to the Council, which should take no longer than five minutes, and if you would please begin by introducing the people in your deputation.

MS S BUCKLE: Thank you Lord Mayor, Members of the Council. I am Sue Buckle and this is Roxanna Hussain, Christine McQuillan and Rachel Harkess. Apologies from Yasmin Ajeeb who has had to collect a sick child from school. We are all parents of children who would go or have gone to local schools in the Hyde Park area.

There is increasing concern about obesity and lack of exercise, especially among children and young people with ominous implications for their future health. Before the Olympics the Secretary of State for Sport wrote to Local Authorities about "a new vision" for sport, to "increase opportunities for all people to participate."

Leeds City Council has announced that it will spend millions of pounds refurbishing sports centres, yet in our inner city area there is a woeful shortage of

sports fields where future Olympic medallists could be developing their talents and all children could be keeping healthy and happy both in and out of school hours.

Some figures show just how serious the situation is. Within 1.5 miles of Hyde Park Corner are five primary schools and one High School, with many pupils from houses without gardens, from families who for reasons such as economic hardship or lack of transport, find it difficult to take their children to sports activities.

The Education (School Premises) Regulations of 1999 lay down minimum requirements for school playing pitch provision, but you will be shocked to hear how far short of these requirements our local schools fall.

City of Leeds High should have 35,000 square metres. It has just over 13,000 square metres. Spring Bank and Shire Oak Primary Schools should have 5000 square metres each. Spring Bank has just over 1,500; Shire Oak has just under 2000. That is a total shortfall of more than 6,500 square metres. I should point out that the space which these schools do have is grassy play areas, not actual sports pitches.

The most shocking figures are for the three primary schools where the majority of pupils qualify for free school meals, generally an indicator of social and economic deprivation.

Brudenell, Rosebank and Quarry Mount Primary Schools have no playing field space - that is nought square metres, although Brudenell and Rosebank should each have 5000 and Quarry Mount should have 2,500. Instead, all sports activities have to take place on hard surface playgrounds, adjacent to roads and traffic. To summarise, these schools need almost 50,000 - in fact 40,846 square metres more playing field space, and that is according to the legal requirements, the minimum.

Primary school headteachers wrote some time ago to the Executive Board explaining the problems they face in trying to provide adequate sports activities for their pupils.

At Shire Oak and Spring Bank, rugby and cricket coaching have to share space with PE classes. Track and field athletics activities cannot be developed.

At Quarry Mount, all sports activities have to take place in the School Hall or on a sloping concrete playground – not conditions likely to produce marathon runners or high jump champions. Similarly at Brudenell and Rosebank, where the range of sports activities is severely limited, rugby tackling cannot be taught and running is not feasible, to give two examples. In fact at Rosebank, the only grass area close to the school is generally unsafe for children to even venture on to, due to dog faeces and used syringes, and yet teachers of these schools desperately want their pupils to have the best chances for health and sporting success.

Our area is the second worst in Leeds for open space provision. We are very lucky to have Woodhouse Moor, which we value as a natural green space for all to use, but it is the most intensively used park in Leeds, especially when the universities, with their combined numbers of more than 50 000 students, are in session, so it can in no way be regarded as part of the school sports.

Because of Headingley and Hyde Park's Lack of playing fields, the UDP gave N6 protected status to the remaining playing fields, although since then development has actually happened at the former Leeds Grammar Schools site and at the former Spring Bank Teachers' Centre, yet any evening around the terraced streets of our area you can see children kicking footballs because they have nowhere else to play.

We ask, therefore, that you, the Council, do all in your power to bring the playing pitch provision for local schools up to the standards laid down by the Education (School Premises) Regulations for the sake of our children's health and their future. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Procter?

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

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: I second, Lord Mayor.

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

Thank you for attending this afternoon. You will be kept informed of the consideration that will be given to your presentation. Thank you.

## DEPUTATION 2 CATS PROTECTION

THE LORD MAYOR: Good afternoon and welcome to today's Council meeting. Would you please now make your speech which should really take no longer than five minutes, and if you could first of all please introduce the people in your deputation.

MR G HOLT: Thank you, my Lord Mayor, elected members, Council officials and public in the gallery, hello. My name is Graham Holt. I am a voluntary co-ordinator of the Cats Protection Branch in the Wharfe Valley, part of which is in Aireborough. I am surrounded by colleagues from a neighbouring branch in Adle and another member from my branch.

We came to talk to you two years ago about responsible pet ownership in the city of Leeds and what your role could be as landlords or supervisors of housing stock and we came to tell you what we could do in partnership with you to make sure that cats in our case but pets in general had a better deal living in Leeds.

I thought it was appropriate that we should come back and update you on how the last two years has gone, what has been a success and what has not been a success.

I am pleased to say that some of your Council officials in Housing have been very receptive at policy level and at operational level, particularly in West Leeds and, to some extent, in South Leeds. We have been given access to training staff, we have been given access to forums where tenants meet to talk about pet ownership, we have been involved in giving advice in property that you own, in centres that give one-stop advice, we have had stands and stalls and in the last two years we have managed to neuter about 2,000 cats in Leeds in property managed by Leeds City Council. That has cost our branch and my friends in Adle about £70,000 on neutering fees alone.

In the process, we tend to find problems greater than one cat that needs neutering. The reason we have come back for a second time is to partly congratulate you on revising your tenancy agreement but partly to urge you to monitor its delivery. A policy that has no substantial and robust monitoring is not a policy that is effective.

We bring to you today but I will not recite them in the Council Chamber, because in a sense they expose individuals and they are confidential, but appended to what I have said today which will be left with your officers, about ten examples we have found in various locations in Leeds where people we have helped before two years ago have again fallen by the wayside and collected cats ranging from half a dozen in some cases to 30 or 40 since we cleared them out last time.

We do appreciate, because we are taxpayers, that the community charge and the help you get from national Government will not meet every tenant's need and every taxpayer's need, but we do feel that more could be done to monitor the performance of tenants in terms of their relationship with pets, the number of pets they have and the status in terms of their ability to reproduce - that is the pets, not the tenants!

I would like to just give you one example and as the Lord Mayor, Councillor Robinson, comes from the Pudsey Farsley area, two years ago we emptied at your request a house in that part of Leeds that had 16 cats, only one of which was neutered. We took them away, we accommodated them overnight, we neutered them all. Two were returned so that the tenant could have two pets; the rest we found new homes for and that took time and money. This year the tenant has been rehoused and we have had a request from a neighbour to come and help her again where she is now in some form of supported housing with eleven un-neutered cats, two un-neutered dogs, several cages of fish and several aviaries within the house.

That may not be causing you problems but it is causing me one and one wonders whether it is a sensible housing policy if it is not monitored and so on. I can give you attached to my speech today ten examples from different postal districts in Leeds. We can take you to any street almost in some of the big parts of our estates where every other house will have a cat and where every third house will have a cat that is not neutered. This is antisocial, it gives cats a bad name, it gives tenants a bad name, it is not fair to the environment and it works against your policy - which is a good one - of empowering communities for a better existence.

We are urging you to do the same as you did last year - give us access to more One-Stop shops, access to more notice boards, access to more staff, but to enforce that policy that you wisely chose to review a year or two ago.

We are also seeking your support and we have already got it from officers for a workshop in Leeds on responsible pet ownership across a whole discipline of organisations.

Thank you, Lord Mayor - five minutes! (*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? That is CARRIED then.

Thank you for attending and for what you have said. You will be kept informed of the consideration which your comments will receive. Thank you again and good afternoon.

DEPUTATION 3  
NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND

THE LORD MAYOR: Good afternoon and welcome to today's Council meeting. If you would now please make your speech and make it approximately five minutes, depending on how things are, and if you could introduce the other members of your delegation.

MR A OLDROYD: Thank you Lord Mayor and Elected Members of Council. My name is Alan Oldroyd and I am current Chair of the National Federation of the Blind Leeds Branch. Members who are in support of my deputation are Joy Fisher, Martin Bingley, Tim McSharry and Mary Hockey.

The title of my deputation is "Say No to Shared Spaces"

I am here today with a deputation to represent disabled organisations from across the whole of Leeds to give you a heartfelt plea to all City Councillors to support the cause of social inclusion for all disabled people by saying no to all highways and planning policies that are designed on the grounds of Shared Spaces.

The local and national evidence clearly demonstrates that the policy of Shared Spaces has very serious implications for the health, choices, independence and mobility of disabled people within this great City of Leeds and reinforces social segregation and isolation of already vulnerable people.

Blind, deaf blind and partially sighted people already experience enormous barriers to their basic freedom and mobility within society and the introduction of the flawed and discriminating concept of shared spaces reinforces these barriers in a way that is unacceptable for any city that truly values the diversion, inclusion and equality of all citizens.

All Local Authorities in the UK now have clear public duties to promote disability equality and to meet their obligations under Part 3 of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 2005 in relation to their policies, practices and services, and the function of the Highways and Planning Departments are fundamental to achieving this.

The whole idea of planning areas within this City that exclude disabled people and where their public safety is being seriously compromised should not be supported by elected members of our great Council.

When considered from the viewpoint of a non-disabled person, it may first appear on paper that there is nothing wrong with the concept of "Shared Spaces", but in reality the loss of public footpaths and pedestrian rights of way within housing and other public developments can have a devastating impact on the lives, mobility and independence of not only blind, deaf blind and other disabled people, but also young children, families and older people who all face potential increased risks and dangers through being forced to mix with cars, vans, lorries, buses and cyclists.

From my own experience as a totally blind person the difficulties and stress that I face in negotiating my way through Leeds is a price I accept to maintain my independence and dignity but, when it comes to negotiating my way through a shared space complex the barriers that are inherent to the design deny my rights to independence and completely disable me by demonstrating a total lack of consideration for my mobility and safety needs as a blind person.

Shared space excludes disabled people by default; it makes many blind, deaf blind and partially sighted people prisoners in their own homes, unable to independently make their own way out and makes many people wholly reliant on the good will of other people to go out in the community.

Leeds City Council should not be party to increasing the number of victims of the flawed policy of shared space. Leeds must continue to develop its work with disabled people's representatives to ensure that inclusion, mobility and diversity are truly celebrated through a total commitment to supporting the independence, choices and equality of disabled people across the whole of this great City.

I call on this Council to place a moratorium on any development that involves shared spaces and to ensure footpaths and pedestrian rights of way are at the heart of highways planning in the name of equality, inclusion and independence.

Thank you, sir. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Indeed, 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: Lord Mayor, my congratulations to the speaker and I am happy to second.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Those in favour? Those against? That is fully CARRIED. Thank you for attending and for what you have said. You will be kept informed of the consideration which your comments will receive. Thank you and good afternoon. *(Applause)*

#### DEPUTATION 4 LEEDS MENCAP

THE LORD MAYOR: Good afternoon and welcome to today's Council meeting. If you could make your speech to the Council, make it around five minutes, and if you could also introduce the rest of your deputation. Thank you.

MS S GRUNDY: Thank you. My Lord Mayor and Members of the Council, my name is Samantha Grundy and I am currently Acting Chair on the Trustees for Leeds Mencap. With me is Frank Pumbridge, our CEO, and Kate Grimshaw, our fundraiser.

I hope you will forgive me but I am just going to tell you a bit about my story because I think it informs some of the work we do and what we are here to talk to you about.

I moved to Leeds in 1991 to work for you guys and I met my husband at the Council. Our son, Daniel, was born in 2001. Much to our surprised he weighed only 4lbs. He was rushed immediately into intensive care. We took one look at him and were completely bowled over with love and feelings for this little mite. The doctor told us that he probably would not make it through the night and that he had a genetic disorder which meant that he was disabled.

He did make it through the night and the next they discovered that he had a hole in his heart. Later still brought more bad news when they discovered that he had suffered major brain damage and would have additional learning and physical disabilities to cope with.



The days passed and Daniel did grow stronger. At six months he underwent a ten hour heart operation after which we finally arrived home. The hospital had taught us how to nurse Daniel but we were now left at home with a tiny baby who was too weak to support his head or lift his arms. We faced a future of having a child who could not walk, talk, eat, drink or use the toilet. We loved Daniel so much but the future at this point did look a bit bleak.

We also discovered that some of the public and some of our friends had a major problem with accepting people with a disability. Luckily it was at this point we discovered the Hawthorn Family Support Centre.

Hawthorns is a centre for families with young children who are disabled. We found families going through experiences just like ours. We were able to make a network of new friends, other parents and carers who I can still call on at anytime. They gave us the relevant benefits and rights advice but, most importantly, the staff taught us how to play with Daniel, how to encourage him, learn with him and recognise when he had made progress. They gave us back our little boy, for to them he was not a patient but he was just simply a kid. The staff were amazing. They had the skills and understanding to guide us through this really difficult time.

Hawthorns is only one of the projects which run out of Leeds Mencap's building but as the biggest day time user the finances of the whole centre are currently underpinned by the grant. I must stress, however, that our overheads are incredibly low - that is in our opinion, of course.

On a weekly basis over 170 families city-wide use the centre and over 140 children visited this summer alone.

I actually want to thank Leeds City Council for their support of Hawthorns and Leeds Mencap. You have supported us for over 40 years and I think we should be proud of this support.

However

- The council has not commissioned a Hawthorn-style project and our existing grant will end in November.
- We were not consulted on the details of the specification in the commissioned projects.
- We were surprised that a Hawthorn-style of family support was not included in the package.
- We did consider bidding for the services that you asked for, but we felt that the proposed services did not meet the needs of our parents, carers or children.
- The requested services were not backed with adequate financial resources.

Leeds needs an early support project. We know from our families the importance of this support. We know how much stress is placed on families when they have a child with a disability. Support at this key stage in life gives the families a solid foundation on which to build, giving long-term stability. This early support cannot be provided for in the children's centres simply due to numbers involved to form cohesive parent groups and the need for highly specialist experienced staff. Please do not get me wrong, I am not knocking the children's centres; I think they do a fabulous job.

Eight out of ten families with a child with a disability admit to being at breaking point. Each child with a disability who ends in care will cost social services between

£100,000 and £200,000 per year. We wonder how many families we have managed to keep together through the support of Hawthorns for the past 40 years.

The loss of the grant for Hawthorns has forced us to look long and hard at the services we provide. It has been an opportunity for us to forge new partnerships and take a fresh look at what we do. We have already undergone a transformation, we have a chief exec with a business background and a successful fundraising team, and for every pound we receive in the form of a grant we raise a pound from donations, so now we have to raise double that.

So what are we asking for? We understand the need for change and fully support the development of services in Leeds and the move to commissioning of services; however, the needs of our families we work with has not changed. We are driving forward to find a long-term funder but it has been made difficult by only being given five months to achieve this, but - but, but, but - the most important thing that I am asking you today is that you commission a Hawthorn-style of project offering parent support. If we do not run it, no problem. The most important thing is that the work continues and family support is available.

I was very lucky; I have a partner who can support me both financially and emotionally, but this experience very, very nearly broke me and very nearly broke my family. How difficult is it, then, for single parents, who are without, maybe, a secure income, families with more than one child and even more than one disabled child? How much more difficult it will be for them without a Hawthorn Family Support to help them?

Thank you for your time. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Councillor Procter.

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

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: I second that, Lord Mayor.

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

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

#### DEPUTATION 5 SPENHILL RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

THE LORD MAYOR: Good afternoon and welcome to today's Council meeting. You can address the Council and your little speech will be about five minutes, and if you could also introduce your deputation.

MR P OWEN: My Lord Mayor and Members of Council, we have come here today from Spenhill Residents' Association and we have linked up with three other residents' groups over this matter. My colleague is Toby Fursdon, I am Peter Owen.

We have a piece of greenbelt land in our area that has been used by local people and local schools for 48 years plus. It consists of meadowland, woodland and playing fields. One third of the playing field area is owned by Ripon Diocese for the use of a Church school. However, the school wishes to pass the use of this land over to a commercial five-a-side football company to build a complex of twelve

pitches and run them all virtually round the clock from 9.00 a.m. to possibly 11.30 p.m. every day of the year except Christmas Day.

If you can try and imagine what this will be like for the people who live around this. For example, people living near Elland Road may seem to have a bad time of it with football noise and crowds, but at least it is only occasionally, whereas for us this would be continuous.

The people that live around this land can hear noise on the fields quite easily with their windows closed. The housing consists of mainly families with a large number of young children and old people's flats and housing. These young children will have to go to sleep every night listening to shouting and swearing drifting into their bedrooms from the 2,500 men brought in from outside the area to play football there per week.

To inflict this on families giving them no means of escape in their own homes should be unacceptable.

Also, the land is used by people for all sorts of recreational activities which, as well as football, include cricket, rugby, running, bird watching, organised picnics, model clubs, sunbathing and many more, as this is a very pleasant and safe-feeling piece of land. It is very well looked after and looks and feels like a park. It has also got a wildlife species list that would rival Golden Acre Park. Many of the local users will be driven off this land due to the loud and hostile activity around such a complex. Other sites of this intensity are approximately half a mile from housing.

We ask the Council to stop this development in any way they can and bring this to a close as, for the people living in the area, it has brought a year of extreme stress and depression.

We would also like to ask the Council to help us to protect the land for the future as, despite being N1, N6 and N8 greenbelt land, the commercial company in question has already had plans drawn up for almost the entire site. We ask that you put the land into trust with Wade's Charity that will ensure that it will stay as our open, free green space for the school and the community.

We would also like it to also be given village green status and we feel that if the Council will do this, we can convince the Church to follow and do the same. 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 further consideration.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: I second, Lord Mayor.

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

Thank you for attending this afternoon and for what you have said. You will be kept informed of the consideration which your comments will receive. Thank you and good afternoon.

MR P OWEN: That is lovely. Thank you for your time.

#### ITEM 5 - REPORTS

Report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Corporate Governance)  
on Appointments

THE LORD MAYOR: Item 5, Reports. Councillor Brett.

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

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: I second, my Lord Mayor.

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

Report of the Chief Democratic Services Officer on Members Allowances

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Brett.

COUNCILLOR BRETT: My Lord Mayor, I move this report in terms of the Notice.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: I second, my Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: I call for a vote. All those in favour? Those against? One. Any abstentions? Was that one abstention? That was CARRIED.

ITEM 6 - QUESTIONS

THE LORD MAYOR: Item 6, Questions and I will call on Councillor Taggart.

COUNCILLOR TAGGART: Thank you, my Lord Mayor. I wonder, would the Leader of the Council please tell us how much he raised for Looked after Children by completing the Jane Tomlinson Run for All?

COUNCILLOR BRETT: My Lord Mayor, the final figure was in the region of £1,300. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR TAGGART: Lord Mayor, can I preface my supplementary by complimenting Councillor Brett for his efforts and all the moneys raised - I do not think anyone would denigrate that - but I am just wondering if he would agree that despite his best efforts and best intentions, this is not really the way that holes in the Council's budget should be filled because at this rate, Councillor Brett, you would have to walk all the way round the earth in order to pay for the deficits on Supporting People - you may yet want to do that, by the way - or you would have to walk to the moon and back in order to pay for your incinerator.

COUNCILLOR BRETT: I think, Councillor Taggart, we would have a long and animated discussion about this because it is quite clear that on this side we disagree about whether or not for a matter of this nature we should try to do our best to raise extra funds - and it is extra funds, we are not talking here about the money needed to look after our 1,300 looked-after children. This fund stands today in the region of £18,000. It includes contributions of about £1,600 from elected members MICE funds, over £8,000 from Leeds City Council's commercial services at their Casino Royale dinner event in April this year, and I could go on.

It has a number of uses and one young man recently who is a looked-after child has been helped to attend trials at David Beckham's LA Galaxy Football Academy, we are sponsoring another young man who excels in football to take up a scholarship with Bradford City Youth Team and the latest application to this fund is to

help a young person overcome difficulties in her relationships by her excelling at netball and she is therefore going to represent her school in Spain.

I would maintain that none of these extras would be possible without the efforts that we have made. I am certainly not pretending that we do as much as we would like. We would all like to have more resources and to be able to do more to help the very real needs of our looked-after children. I think the difference between us is that you somehow believe that public funds should do it all. On our side we simply say that is socialist 70s baggage. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Hollingsworth.

COUNCILLOR HOLLINGSWORTH: Would the Executive Board Member with responsibility for Environmental Services care to comment on Leeds City Council's recent record on recycling?

COUNCILLOR MATTHEWS: Thank you. I think you will go easy on me today, since Councillor Smith is not here. I would just like to say, great news - the percentage of waste being recycled has been dramatically increased from 26.5% in April this year to 33.75%, and this is an all-time high. It is the second consecutive month that over 30% of Leeds's municipal waste has been recycled and it is above target.

It is well over twice the level of recycling carried out at any time under the previous administration and a marked year-on-year increase in the levels of waste being recycled under this administration.

Compared to last year overall recycling has increased by 4,500 tons and the total amount of waste generated is down by over 1,800 tons. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Hyde.

COUNCILLOR W HYDE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Would the Executive Board Member with responsibility for Youth Services please explain the details and the reasoning behind the increase in ward allocations for youth services across the city?

COUNCILLOR LAMB: Thank you, Lord Mayor. The Authority will spend over £4.2m on ward based youth services this year, which represents an increase of over 10% on last year's figure. This has been achieved by making significant savings from other areas of expenditure which enables the Youth Service to spend extra money on more staff and front line services at no extra cost to the taxpayer. Every ward in the city will benefit from the changes as the service aims to reach more people by maximising the number of staff working on a local level. It places a continuing focus on engaging directly with young people themselves to have a lasting, positive impact on improving their lives. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Councillor David Blackburn.

COUNCILLOR D BLACKBURN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Can the Executive Member for Environmental Services explain the repeated failure of the black bin collection on certain roads within the Greenhill, Highfield, Kellett, Kirkdale, Leysholme and Silver Royd areas of Farnley and Wortley?

COUNCILLOR MATTHEWS: Thank you again, Lord Mayor. We are aware of these problems in the areas that were mentioned and there have been catch-up

collections and they have taken place, as Councillor Blackburn is aware of, as he has already talked to officers about this matter - not that he is electioneering or anything like that.

As agreed with Councillor Blackburn, we are undertaking a detailed investigation and will discuss these with him in due course. Thank you.

COUNCILLOR D BLACKBURN: By way of a supplemental, the Exec Member, who is obviously not here, often refers to the service as a Rolls Royce Service. Can you assure me or can you indicate to me that the situation will be redressed and I am happy with a Mercedes service, actually, not a Rolls Royce service. Basically the service that residents are currently receiving is more like that of a 40-year old Trabant that the wheels have fallen off. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR MATTHEWS: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I have actually really been looking forward to this, I have got to be honest. It may not look like it, but I have.

Obviously Councillor Blackburn, you will agree with me here that investment is absolutely crucial in this service and that often it is a very stretched service. For example, for £30,000, for instance, we could get 80 brand new litter bins, 2,000 new wheelie bins, brand new ones, have three de-litterers for six months, an additional refuse crew for eight weeks, provide an extra bulk crew and vehicles for 15 weeks. We can provide an additional 2,500 man hours in refuse collection, or 3,200 man hours for de-littering. Great, OK, but thanks to the ever-efficient Green Party, for £30,000 the taxpayers of Leeds could get a Farnley and Wortley by-election. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. We will ask Councillor Beverley.

COUNCILLOR BEVERLEY: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Would the Leader of Council please tell us his views on the decision of the Leeds Primary Care Trust to deny TB vaccinations to children of English ethnic origin in Leeds high schools?

COUNCILLOR BRETT: Thank you, Lord Mayor. This is obviously a matter of concern but I have taken the trouble to seek views from certain experts in the PCT. What I am about to express is not my view but an expert view from Dr Simon Balmer, who is the consultant in public health medicine for Leeds Primary Care Trust. What he tells me is that what has been happening recently follows national policy regarding TB vaccination and the BCG programme.

The current vaccination programme is based on evidence of effectiveness from the UK and other countries and has been endorsed not just by Dr Balmer but many national experts. The national policy changed in 2005, moving from what was then a universal programme to a more targeted approach which was recommended nationally by the Chief Medical Officer.

Leeds Primary Care Trust adheres closely to this targeted approach. Essentially, vaccinations are offered to those who are thought to be at a greater risk of acquiring tuberculosis. These include infants living in areas where the incidence of TB is greater than 400 per 100,000 head of population per year, or infants whose parents or grandparents were born in a country with a tuberculosis incidence rate of greater than 400 per 100,000 per year and previously unvaccinated new immigrants from high prevalence countries.

In essence what they are doing is giving the vaccination to those who they think are in particular need of it.

The rationale for not offering the vaccine more widely is that this is a balance of benefits and risks, because any vaccination does have some risks. It is on balance felt it is no longer a useful form of prevention for those at low risk of developing TB, so if individuals are not at a high risk they are not offered the vaccination.

My personal view is that on this matter, I am happy to agree with the medical experts. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Gruen.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Lord Mayor, could the Executive Board Member for City Development please tell us whether he is “sick of paying tax to support imported spongers”?

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: My Lord Mayor, I am delighted to answer the question. I think most of us are sick of paying too much tax for Governments to waste our money, particularly those who find themselves in the current economic situation in very difficult financial circumstances.

Councillor Gruen is obviously, however, referring to comments made by a friend of mine, Glenn Broadbent, who is our candidate in the Farnley and Wortley by-election. Having known Glenn for many years I was somewhat surprised when I saw his comments on the blog, as they are, I can tell you, most untypical of him. I was therefore very pleased that he sought very quickly to apologise for what he had said and the rather colourful language that he used.

The Labour Party would do well though, I think, to take on board the very serious issue there about people’s feelings about constantly having to pay more and getting less.

There is another issue, of course, Councillor Gruen, and that is the issue of blogs and Facebook. Being somebody who is fairly illiterate in that sense, I am delighted to say, these Facebooks and these blogs seem to carry all sorts of information. For example, Councillor Gruen, a member of this Council was referred to in the following terms on Facebook:

“I blame Councillor James Lewis and I intend to kick his sorry little arse when I see him.”

*(laughter)*

Same Facebook, same blog:

“Councillor J Lewis was as much use as a chocolate teapot.”

*(laughter)*

He could not tell me where you were - I am surprised at that! I wonder when Councillor Gruen asks his supplementary if he would like to clarify what he would propose to do with anybody who makes such derogatory remarks about a member of this Council? Would you like me to tell you who it was, by the way, or are you aware?

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: No doubt that will be supplementary to the supplementary. Lord Mayor, I admire the way Councillor Carter tries to make light of what are in many people's views racist comments. Whether he is a friend or not a friend, why has he not been sacked as the candidate by now?

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: My Lord Mayor, just to finish off the answer I was giving previously, the person whose Facebook blog that was on is your front bench colleague Councillor Mark Dobson, who seems to have a very low opinion of Councillor Parker and Councillor Wakefield or colleagues. What do you propose to do about that?

I say again, Councillor Gruen, Mr Broadbent has apologised for very ill-chosen words. That ends the matter. I would recommend apologies to any member of the Labour Party over there or in the Government, because you have a lot to apologise for.

Let me just add one further point. There is actually one group of people for whom I profoundly dislike paying increased income tax and that is to pay income tax to the inflation-proof pension pots of overweight, arrogant civil servants who you love as champagne socialists. *(Applause)*

Game, set and match!

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you for that. Councillor Gruen.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: You defended him. He is a racist and you defended him.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Ewens, please.

COUNCILLOR EWENS: Would the Executive Board Member with responsibility for Learning agree with me that this year's GCSE and A-level results...

COUNCILLOR COULSON: The mic is not on, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR EWENS: ...are due to the hard work of the candidates and the staff who taught them?

COUNCILLOR HARKER: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Yes, Councillor Ewens, first of all I would like to congratulate the staff, students....

COUNCILLOR COULSON: Lord Mayor, I did say that the mic was not on and I did not hear what was said.

THE LORD MAYOR: You did not hear the question at all? In that case could I ask the Councillor to repeat the question and repeat to the microphone, if it is on?

COUNCILLOR EWENS: I had probably got the paper in the way. I know I have got a very quiet voice.

Would the Executive Board Member with responsibility for Learning agree with me that this year's GCSE and A-level results are due to the hard work of the candidates and the staff who taught them? *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR COULSON: Much better, thank you.



COUNCILLOR HARKER: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Yes, Councillor Ewens, I would agree. I would also extend the congratulations to the parents and carers who supported these young people and to the governing bodies who work with the staff in the schools.

Leeds is celebrating record results both at A-level and GCSE this year. We have had some tremendous results in schools spread right across the city. I am particularly pleased to report to Council that, following the GCSE results, I think we only have four schools left below the 30% floor target set by Government. Prior to the GCSE results the number was greater.

We should be justly proud of our people in the grades that they have achieved this year. They really are paying us back for the investment we are putting in to education. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Wadsworth.

COUNCILLOR WADSWORTH: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Would the Executive Board Member for Leisure comment on the recently announced appointment of an operator for Roundhay Mansion?

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Yes thank you, Lord Mayor. I am delighted that a quality operator has been selected in Dine to run the mansion at Roundhay.

COUNCILLOR WADSWORTH: Would the Executive Board Member for Leisure agree with me that it is better that the Roundhay Mansion is kept open for the people of Leeds rather than being an office block? *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Yes indeed, Councillor Wadsworth, I agree wholeheartedly with you that the people of Leeds indeed will be able to access the Mansion as they have a right, in my view, to do.

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: When?

Lord Mayor, we hear shouts of "When, when?" As ever it really sticks in their throat, does it not...

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Four years.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: ...that we have actually found a quality operator to go into the Mansion and refurbish it and look after it. Those who have not seen it recently will know that under the Labour administration it got into a real, sorry, decrepit, dilapidate state - a bit like their last administration, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Right, let us move on, then. Councillor Mulherin.

COUNCILLOR MULHERIN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Would the Executive Board Member for Children's Services agree with me that the Every Child Matters Agenda is possibly the biggest challenge this Council has ever faced?

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: Thank you, Councillor Mulherin. Actually, looking at the question itself, the biggest challenge this Council has ever faced, I have to think that us two being the wrong side of 40 in terms of historical perspective might not be the best people to make a judgment of that. For instance, you might find Councillor Atha might remember the Luftwaffe and he might think that that had been a bigger challenge for the City Fathers. You might find that Les Carter might remember the winter of discontent with the thousands of Council workers that were

out on strike, people not getting buried in the city - that might have also seemed perhaps a bigger challenge to the City Council. Perhaps Keith Parker might remember Margaret Thatcher's Government scything through hundreds of thousands of jobs across the country and creating a challenge in our coalfields.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: You had a picture of her on your wall!

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: All I have got to go on, Lord Mayor, in terms of challenges facing this Council is perhaps the shame of having your education services taken out of your control because the Government thought that the administration at that time did not have the nous to look after them and, of course, build confidence again to create the results that Councillor Harker and Penny Ewens have been celebrating this afternoon.

On a more contemporary level, of course, one of the biggest challenges facing this Council at the moment is the fact that the Government has robbed us of millions and millions of pounds which are challenging every single Council budget and meaning that our council workers are going to have to squeeze every last ounce of effort to make sure that our services are delivered.

Yes, I do agree that the Every Child Matters Agenda is one of the biggest opportunities that this Council faces and I hope that we are all going to grasp it wholeheartedly. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR J MCKENNA: Much better than "Yes"!

THE LORD MAYOR: Supplementary?

COUNCILLOR MULHERIN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Would the Executive Board Member therefore acknowledge that, despite the hard work of the Children's Services staff, the outcome of the Joint Area Review is not, as he claims, very good but really only adequate because of the lack of leadership shown by his administration on the subject? Would he also admit that the JAR report could have been so much better if only your administration had listened to the concerns raised by this Group on issues such as looked-after children, exam performance, truancy and exclusions and the number of young people who are leaving our schools without qualifications? *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: It is not in your brief, is it?

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: I have been guided to just say "No" but what I would actually do, because I am very helpful, is I would actually direct Councillor Mulherin to perhaps attend a few more Executive Board meetings where the very comprehensive reports that we get from such interventions as JAR are gone through in minutiae by Councillor Wakefield to make sure that we have got all our bases covered.

She might also have noticed that, if she had actually listened to what was said by the Inspectors when our JAR report came through, they did actually say it was good - not just that it was adequate, that it was good. It also came at the back end of the inspection process and at each stage of that inspection process the process got harder and that is why I mentioned that to get good at that stage means that you were very good to get good.

In terms of looked-after children, can I just refer you again to the JAR report, Councillor Mulherin, because you are trying to imply that it was inferring that our performance was not very good. Here is what the Inspector said:

“The contributions of local services to improve outcomes for looked-after children are adequate.”

I give you that.

“Multi-agency work to support families is good. A major strength is the good short- and long-term placement and stability. This is enabling many looked-after children to succeed at school, particularly at the primary base. However, the slow pace of change in the past”

- that is when you were in charge -

“is still impacting on educational achievement for those aged 14 and over.”

That is something that we are going to have to handle and the problem that you have left. It is your legacy. We got a very good JAR report. If you want make out that our people who work in Children’s Services are just adequate, that is fine, you are entitled to your opinion, but our opinion and that of our Inspectors who gave us our JAR report, is that overall Children’s Services is good, officially, and very good in terms of personal. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Lancaster.

COUNCILLOR LANCASTER: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Will the Exec Board member for Children’s Services make a statement about the Innovation Fund?

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: I forgot I was on this as well! Thank you for reminding me, Councillor Lancaster.

The Leeds Innovation Fund. This is something which Children’s Services are particularly proud of. I will just give you the general overview of it because what I have arranged is for the detail of it to be sent to you over the email system so that you can peruse it at your leisure.

The reason why I want to celebrate it is the fact that it is a good example of partnership working across the broad spectrum of all those involved in Children’s Services, whether it is the voluntary sector, our own services, the PCT. It involves pooling budgets that have never been pooled before, it involves decision-making by all those people coming together and deciding what their priorities are. More importantly, it is about preventative work. It is trying to make sure that we do not get so many children being taken in and looked after. We want to make sure that they are staying with their families as much as possible.

There is some really good stuff to do with looked-after children, Councillor Mulherin will be glad to understand, especially in terms of their attainment and their attendance. That was passed out to our Corporate Carers Group only yesterday, so your colleagues, such as Councillor Driver, will be able to update you on that.

As I said, the most important thing is that we celebrate this concept which rewards innovation not just in terms of our own staff, that they are freed up to be creative, they are freed up to try ideas, to make sure that every taxpayer’s pound that we have in Children’s Services is used to its N<sup>th</sup> degree, but also in terms of encouraging our partners to take on projects which they have wanted to do for such a

long time and that have been held behind and this is the kind of money which means that we can release that creativity.

You will also note when you get the report that there are specific projects in your own particular areas. There is North-East, South, West, whatever. I am hoping that the elected members within those areas will be able to home in on those, they will be able to monitor the progress of those activities to make sure that this works. I am hoping for their feedback too. They will be looking at things like teenage pregnancy, as I have said attendance and also looked-after children and their attendance.

Please do get involved and check out your emails for the fuller picture.  
(*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: No supplementary. Councillor Wilson.

COUNCILLOR WILSON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Could the Executive Board Member with responsibility for Learning assure us that this year's Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3 results are now an accurate reflection of how our young people performed? Thank you.

COUNCILLOR HARKER: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I wish with all my heart I could give that assurance but the shambles that we went through this year in terms of the Key Stage 2 and the Key Stage 3 marking under the guidance of Government is appalling - what our schools went through, what our individual children went through in this process.

I think we have now got the best we can expect. I think some of the scripts have been remarked and I think we all saw some of those examples on television where the marking was just appalling this year. I am pleased that the Government has taken action against the firm responsible but I cannot give the guarantee that I wish I could.

THE LORD MAYOR: Supplementary Councillor Wilson? No. Councillor Lyons. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR LYONS: You can clap after I have spoken. First of all, Lord Mayor, I am sorry that Councillor Steve Smith is ill and we would like to send him our best from here and wish him all the best, because I know he is interested in this and one of these days he will tell me! (*laughter*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you indeed.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: Can the Executive Member for City Services please tell me where his administration plan to site their proposed incinerator?

COUNCILLOR MATTHEWS: I am happy to stand in. There are no current plans for an incinerator in Leeds. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR LYONS: He wants to look at what people are telling him to see if it is true before he answers these questions! (*laughter*)

Could you then tell me how many sites you are still looking at for your incinerator and whether the knocking down or demolishing of the houses on Osmanthorpe Lane, Halton Moor Road, to put a rail head to move rubbish across from Manchester etc to burn in this incinerator is integral to which site you will choose? So that is how many sites are they looking at and whether this is integral,

are we knocking people's houses down so we can build a rail head so that the rubbish can be burned from Manchester?

COUNCILLOR MATTHEWS: I am not sure that he heard me the first time. There are no current plans for an incinerator in Leeds. I will advise Councillor Lyons, perhaps he should go on a site visit with some of his colleagues over to Labour-run Manchester where there are two incinerators. Perhaps you can go and have a look.

The administration is looking at all sorts of neutral waste solutions. What I will say is we all know that what this is masking is that Labour have no policies or ideas on waste management at all. We are still waiting to hear your policy. Thank God that they are not running the Council any more. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: I like this man.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Chastney.

COUNCILLOR CHASTNEY: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Can the Executive Board Member for the Central and Corporate portfolio please advise Council of developments within Human Resources about tackling sickness absence management?

COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: How did you do in your GCSEs? *(laughter)*

COUNCILLOR CHASTNEY: Very well, thanks!

COUNCILLOR BRETT: I hope a number of Members on the other side will listen to this answer, because it is not unimportant.

In a very tight budget one of the few areas where we might actually be able to help ourselves is if we can reduce sickness absence. The latest sickness absence figures would indicate a year end outturn of just under 11½ days per employee - 11.42. That is a decrease on last year of 0.76 days per full-time employee which does not sound very much but if I tell you that represents a saving of £1.6m, you will perhaps understand the significance of this.

I am told that in one particular service area, in Children's Services, they are predicting an outturn at the end of this financial year of over ten days less per full-time equivalent than in the previous year, and that is obviously hugely significant.

This has been achieved by a much more rigorous challenge in each directorate, by an increased focus on wellbeing at work and some extra pilots that some of you might have heard of are being introduced to see whether we can do even more to encourage healthier lifestyles.

We have an increased focus on being more effective and more proactive over occupational health services and a better use of the new ill health retirement processes which do not rely on permanent incapacity. What it boils down to is earlier intervention when employees are off ill. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: We have run out of time so there will be no supplementary and that concludes, then, the item on Questions.

#### ITEM 7 - RECOMMENDATIONS OF EXECUTIVE BOARD

(a)

THE LORD MAYOR: Item 7, Recommendations of the Executive Board. I call on Councillor Brett.

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

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: I second, my Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Leadley.

COUNCILLOR LEADLEY: My Lord Mayor, at the meeting of Council on 20<sup>th</sup> June 2007 we heard fears for the future of Terry Yorath House, which had really arisen out of a bureaucratic muddle over the renewal of contracts causing a gap when no formal contract was in place and the service continued. In the end that problem was resolved but we would have been better off without it.

We now seem to have had something similar which is referred to in Mr Walton's report on pages 29 to 33, which describes an oversight leading to a contract extension having to be carried out under Special Urgency Provisions. By this contract UBU provide Supporting People with independent living services for mentally handicapped people.

Also the Delegated Decisions report for the period 9<sup>th</sup> June to 15<sup>th</sup> August lists a number of cases in which contract procedure rules were waived to ensure provision of Supporting People services by various organisations.

When we are dealing with services for especially vulnerable people we must observe contract procedures which will avoid causing anxiety to those people or, more likely, members of their families who look after their interests. Thank you, my Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Councillor Brett to sum up.

COUNCILLOR BRETT: I thank Councillor Leadley for his comments. You will understand that I am not in a position to give a detailed answer but I will write to Councillor Leadley when we have looked into the matters he raises.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Those in favour please show. Thank you. Those against? Abstentions? That is CARRIED.

(b)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Brett again.

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

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: I second, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: I call for the vote. Those in favour? Against? Thank you. Abstentions? No. That is CARRIED, then.

#### ITEM 8 - MINUTES

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Brett

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

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Second, Lord Mayor.

(a) Executive Board

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Wakefield.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Before I move the Reference Back, can I echo the words of Councillor Harington's White Paper later on by congratulating all those athletes who performed so well in the Olympics and, indeed, in the current Paralympics. I think that they have actually given us some inspiration through some very grim days of weather and I am sure that what they have done has enthused a whole new range of people into new sports that hardly featured on TV.

You can understand somewhat the anger and the cynicism when I read the headlines of the Evening Post saying this administration had got a bold vision for the future building on the success of the Olympics. When you actually look below that headline, what you actually saw was something different. It was not about a vision for alternative sports. If you remember the Olympics we did well at gymnastics, we did well at boxing, we did well at sailing, we did well at rowing and, above all, we did well at cycling. There is not a word in that sports strategy that came to the Executive Board that mentions that. Indeed, what we actually saw in that headline and in the Executive Board was not a vision for the future to build on success at the Olympics. It was actually a closure programme of all the sports centres in the most vulnerable poor areas of this city.

This Council has signed up in its vision document to Narrowing the Gap and in these areas, these communities, be they Burmantofts, be they Beeston or City and Holbeck and other areas, I tell you, the percentage of children living in families on benefits are 40% to 50%.

We have also another statement. We have a statement saying we are going to tackle childhood obesity. How does the closing of these centres tackle that? Indeed, we are in partnership with the Health Service which tells us that what we should be doing is tackling the gap between life expectancy in the inner city and life expectancy in the outer city, which is eight years. We even have a statement in the document that actually talks about making sure that we get full participation and increase the opportunities right across the city. Even in June we had a paper from Adult Social Services saying what we need to do is make sure that our old people get more access into sports centres.

I put it to Council, I genuinely put it, how is the closure of these centres actually going to achieve any of those objectives set out in those statements?

I think that when you look at it, it has been a very cynical attempt to actually blind us with so-called commitment to sport when it is actually a commitment to close sports centres in our most needy areas.

I think it is important to say that we welcome the investment. We welcome the investment from a Labour Government but the Labour Government is committing itself to health and wellbeing - understandably so given the demographic pressures in the city. That is a good idea but it should never, ever be at the expense of these communities which are desperately in need of getting access to sport and health facilities.

If you use the criteria in the paper which is about arterial roads and district centres, you actually shut the door to the heart of the communities that need it most. Of course they will be successful - they are successful, we have got evidence of that - but actually it shows a profound ignorance of the needs of this city.

I will give you one example where I think it really reflects the ignorance. If you use arterial roads and district centres between Kippax and Garforth, there is only one conclusion. There is only one conclusion and that is that the Kippax Sports Centre closes and Garforth gets the new one - wherever I do not know because there is no space on the existing one. Instead of putting in that criteria social need, you actually say to people in Kippax, jump on a bus - when there are no bus routes, by the way, to talk of - or go up there. That is profoundly missing the culture and the participation in sport by local people in Kippax.

I think if this is a sports strategy, if it is about raising aspirations, you should actually look at this paper, you should go back to the drawing board, you should have a look how you can increase different sports, you should have an element which includes social need and you should come back here and say, "We got it wrong first time, we will go and consult and put out another one" and actually start looking at the communities that you yourselves in your document claim to be committed to in narrowing the gap and start putting sport back and health back to those communities because that is where it is most needed.

I hope that in the Reference Back, colleagues, that we actually start to think much more creatively about both sport and indeed how we get people from communities where there is less than 50% with car ownership - 50% do not have a car - involved in sport, participating in sport and increasing their health chances as well as their life chances by doing so.

I move, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

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

COUNCILLOR HARINGTON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. This is on the same Minute. It is quite clear when you look at sports centres that action needs to be taken. For example, in the Fearnville Sports Centre last year there was a 50,000 decrease in the number of people coming to the sports centre and the year before that there was also a 50,000 decrease. With the corresponding lack of income that that means, it is a £3.4m needed to repair that centre alone in order to make it fit for purpose.

There are declines in attendance in other centres round the city and altogether it is £19m that is necessary in order to make the necessary repairs and make all the sports centres fit for purpose, so it is absolutely clear that something needs to be done.

It is also clear what we need to do in principle because of the documents that have come out both nationally and locally. The Government's paper, New Era for Sport, the Sport Leeds Strategy, is echoed in this document we have before us saying that obviously we want to increase participation, we want to have centres which are affordable, sustainable and of good quality.

What we need to be confident of, though, is that any draft that goes out is going to lead to the right questions and so that the right consultation takes place and there is enough time in which it can happen.



Just looking at Fearnville, for example, on its own, we need to be clear why there is this decrease. As many people will know, a lot of people who use Fearnville are not local people, they will be people coming in from outside. Is this a decrease of people who are coming from outside or is it people who live locally? What are the reasons for the decrease? Is it that people have found somewhere else to go? Is it the same number of people taking exercise but they are just going elsewhere to do it? What is it?

Is there a complaint we do not yet know about, about the lack of facilities at Fearnville, or is it that people are not satisfied with the quality? Above all, if such a centre was closed, how can we be sure that the people who at present use it would go anywhere else? We need to be absolutely clear if there are any closures that the closure does not serve as a deterrent when it is difficult enough to encourage local people to attend anyway.

We need to be clear what each centre actually includes so, for example, if Fearnville was closed would it just be a question of closing the pool or would there be some facilities left for the many pitches that there are there and there is also a new BMX track which we hope will continue to be successful and well used, so we need to be clear obviously that there will be facilities there to service the people who use that.

In other words, it is not a question of just aware of what is in each centre. We can appreciate that arterial roads, dual purpose, city centre, town centre facilities are likely to be attractive, but what is going to be there and are we going to ask the right questions so we know we have got the right spread of sport around the city so that there is the necessary variety.

The papers tell us that we actually have more pool space than we need. OK, maybe we do not need a pool in every space, not everybody likes swimming and after all the view does not change a lot when you are swimming. What other sports are we looking at? Are we really making sure, picking up Keith's point, that there will be space for whatever it may be - fencing, boxing, whatever - so we have the widest possible range of sporting and active recreation possibilities in the city.

So lots of questions to answer and I hope that also we look very carefully if and when there is the consultation at how it happens. In Gipton and Harehills at the moment for various reasons people have a low expectation of what consultation will actually mean. They do not, when it starts off, have an expectation it is going to mean residents are going to be listened to. They think it will mean that their views will be ignored.

There are some very serious questions about how the consultation takes place and that the right questions are asked so that we are absolutely clear we are moving to a quality service which is sustainable, affordable and, above all, accessible. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: I will invite Councillor Taylor to make her maiden speech and I am certain you will give her every support.

COUNCILLOR E TAYLOR: Lord Mayor, I would like to support the Reference Back regarding the Draft Vision for investment in sports centres and proposals for future provision for public consultation.

Like, I am sure, many other members of the Chamber, I have regularly used our Leeds leisure centre facilities over the years, not just at the sports centre which

is in my ward of Chapel Allerton, also Fearnville Leisure Centre which I use a lot, which is on my home and which would be closed under the proposals.

The role that these leisure centres and, indeed, all these across the city continue to play in the daily lives of many local residents cannot be underestimated, so therefore when any decisions of this magnitude are being made it is absolutely vital that on their behalf we make sure as a Council the choices we make are the right ones.

Unfortunately as the proposals stand at the moment I remain unconvinced that this is the right choice for the Council to proceed. If the Council is to shut Fearnville and East Leeds Leisure Centre, for example, what support are we going to offer those people who may have to spend more of their hard earned money to travel to new facilities? If the leisure provision is centred on one new centre, will they offer the same activities currently offered by the two individual centres? Is there a possibility that there will be too much demand for the more popular activities leaving people without facilities?

The worst case scenario in all of this is that people will stop using the facilities. Yes, there are a lot of private gyms in the city these days but the bottom line is the majority of people cannot afford the membership.

The knock-on effect of not using our leisure centres will be on a range of social health and wellbeing issues from tackling childhood obesity and encouraging healthy living to give our youngsters gathering on the street somewhere else. Let us remember, we give the nation the choice and option of healthy eating and healthy activities more, we are taking all that away from them if the centres are closed to local residents.

It is with this issue, with this in mind, that I urge you to look again at your proposals to close the sports centres. Thank you. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR CONGREVE: I speak on the same Minutes. The importance of exercise in reducing obesity and promoting life expectancy is recognised in targets set in the Children and Young People's Plan, Every Child Matters, and also in Primary Care Trust policies and the Council's strategy for young people.

The inner area of south Leeds is one of the most deprived in the city. Residents have a much lower life expectancy – ten to 15 years in fact – than in those living in outer areas. The action plan for the area, the Holbeck Action Plan, states:

“With the exception of the South Leeds Sports Centre there is a lack of quality sport and recreation facilities in the area, in an area with some of the worse health statistics in the country improving the quality and accessibility of facilities is considered a priority of the action plan.”

Once the new Morley Leisure Centre opens, South Leeds Sports Centre will be closed and provision focused on the new facility at Morley and on those at the John Charles Centre for Sport.

The distance to Morley from Holbeck is 4.8 miles – almost ten miles for a round trip. The distance to the John Charles Centre is 1.6 miles. Residents of inner South Leeds have the lowest car ownership and some of the lowest family incomes in the city. Many families will not be able to afford the travel expenses. Access by public transport is poor to both Morley and the John Charles Centre.

There will also be a negative impact on the disabled. A recent letter in the Yorkshire Evening Post from a lady who uses the South Leeds Sports Centre and has been to the John Charles Centre complains about having to fall out of the pool at the John Charles Centre. How one falls out of a swimming pools seems a bit strange but the lady explains in her letter. She finds the facilities at South Leeds excellent for her condition and for other disabled people.

The Morley Centre at 4.8 miles is far too far for people to travel and the cost of the bus fare will be beyond many, many families in the area, not to mention the conflict with any green travel policies or plans that the Council may have.

Considering the John Charles Centre, local people who are not proficient swimmers or belong to swimming clubs will feel intimidated and will therefore feel excluded because the facility is a city and regional one designed for competition and for clubs. Local people will be second class because preference will not be given to them. It will be given to those who the city is trying to push through the swimming clubs and, of course, we have got to bear in mind the Olympics coming up. I am sure this city will be wanting to attract Olympic swimmers into Leeds to use the facility. Where will this leave local people? As it is at present local people have difficulty accessing facilities at the centre.

In 2006 a 3,000-strong petition was submitted to the Council from residents against the proposed closure of the South Leeds Sports Centre - yes, there were proposals to close it then – in which a campaign group from the local community was formed. A public meeting on the issue attracted over 100 people and when the Council did a U-turn and re-opened the South Leeds Centre, bearing in mind that they had closed it under a pretext of renovating it, they finally did the U-turn, had to renovate the pool. Councillor Procter said on 13 September 2006, “We as an administration have listened to local people and taken a value judgment in relation to that particular leisure centre.”

That is what is said here.

COUNCILLOR PROCTER: What else did I say?

COUNCILLOR CONGREVE: On the verbatim you said that, Councillor Procter.

COUNCILLOR PROCTER: Use it or lose it I also said.

COUNCILLOR CONGREVE: You have said that, Councillor Procter? Where is the listening going now? Let us hope you listen this time – I do hope so, for the benefit of everyone in South Leeds.

The community fought hard to retain this centre and so did the wonderful and helpful staff that are there. They are fighting to keep the centre going, make it viable. It is tragic that this administration proposes to close it again and for them to promote widening of the gap between the most deprived and the privileged in this city.

Children will be prevented from learning to swim, the health of the community will be put at greater risk. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you.

COUNCILLOR DOBSON: Thank you, my Lord Mayor. Again, speaking on the same Minute and the proposal to close down the Squash and Leisure Centre

along with four others and replace them with two wellbeing centres in some unspecified location.

The phrase that springs to mind is this dreadful one that we hear all the time about post code lotteries. I am not just ward councillor for the area but also a long-suffering resident. I know the feeling when it comes to how this administration chooses to deliver services to outer East Leeds except, of course, it is not really a lottery, is it, because with a lottery you have a slim chance of winning. People who live in the Outer East under this administration seem to me to be singled out in an orchestrated assault on both services and amenities. Of course, Lord Mayor, we are fit to take the city's dead, eroding precious green space and sports facilities in the process – just not fit to be providing decent services to replace them.

For example, in my ward I have two burgeoning football teams for youth, Garforth Villa and Garforth Rangers. Both have in excess of 300 children, both sexes, right through to open age, and I have nowhere to put them.

When we are talking about delivering sports provision in outer east Leeds, I think the first thing we should be thinking about rather than what sort of facility will we be getting and where will it be put, which I think is divisive and it is obviously an attempt to drive a wedge between certain wards, which has failed, John.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Has it?

COUNCILLOR DOBSON: Yes, John. Your first starting point should really be consulting the people about what they actually want.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: That is what this is.

COUNCILLOR DOBSON: It is a nonsense. It is a complete nonsense because I did a bit of research and I asked what the consultation process is actually good for. We are going to be visiting ward forums. With all due respect, at probably the tender age of pushing 45 I am one of the younger people who attended the ward forums. Quite frankly you should be getting into schools and finding out by 2014, young adults, what they will be wanting to see in a ward and the neighbouring wards.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: What is this debate?

COUNCILLOR DOBSON: As far as I can see really there has been a lot of sleight of hand here. We have got a wonderful piece of glossy literature that was produced back in April of 2008, and it is the Conservatives' election address for Garforth and Swillington, and amongst the more outrageous claims that my illustrious predecessor was to take for anything constructive that happened in the ward, when I stopped laughing at that – and we did have a quick look through it – I could not find anywhere any mention of the potential closure of Garforth Squash and Leisure Club.

Really, I think by 2010 I will make it my business to know that everybody in Garforth is actually aware of this issue. It will be well publicised and well documented.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: 2010 is that an election year?

COUNCILLOR DOBSON: To look at the leisure centre itself – John, you can laugh all you want – we had 152,000 visitors through the door of the centre last year. That centre has a gym, it accommodates football, squash, badminton, aerobics, all sorts of exercise classes. It is a meeting place for community groups and it also has a highly successful pre-school playgroup. Is there any guarantee that any Wellbeing

Centre on any location you wish to put it will have those public amenities for the public to use at a price that is affordable?

I think that is one of the issues really that seems to be skated over in all of this. I am all for better facilities and I am sure I echo what Councillor Wakefield said, we want better facilities in outer East and I think the slightly divisive issue of where they are going to be located is a bit of a red herring. What I want to know and what I would like guarantees on is whatever facilities are provided they are going to be actually within the remit of ordinary working people.

I do actually think, Lord Mayor, that in outer east we do seem to be on the end of every spiteful, vexatious piece of nonsense that comes out of this administration. It is only a couple of years ago that the Tory controlled Fire Authority were trying to close the fire station. What has this administration got against Garforth? I am sorry to sound like Councillor Finnigan, but what has this administration got against Garforth? *(laughter)* I paraphrase.

Really, these ideas are ill-conceived. The starting point is clearly wrong. The starting point should be let us have a look at the demographics, what are the young adults and sports people of tomorrow, what sports services do they need, are they going to be functionable, are they going to be in locations that can be reached from all sections of the community and are they going to be affordable, and I think until we start looking at these sort of issues really the whole issue needs a serious re-think. Thank you, my Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR LYONS: Thank you very much, Lord Mayor. I did not want to get up today to speak because I did not want our sports centre shutting down. I will tell you why we built the sports centre. It is built on Halton Moor. Why it was built is we were spending more money on police, everybody from the Council who had a job was over at Halton Moor to see how we were going. In fact, the papers said and used to refer to us as The Zoo. Can you imagine people living where the headlines say "The Zoo"?

What we have done over the years has worked and one of the first things we did was to build a sports centre there so that everybody could partake. It was not just the people that came in at first that were going swimming and weight-lifting and all that kind of business. It was people like SKIN – that is Special Kids in Need. It was people like the youth workers who were battling against the overwhelming odds that were happening on Halton Moor. Every day in the paper you saw something that happened. Over the last 20 years since the sports centre opened, it is the focus of the community and it is all sections of the community that go there and use this, so you can understand why I am a little bit upset today at the tactics used by this administration.

It was saving more money. We are not talking just about sport now, we are talking about a community wellbeing and all the rest of it, but all that money together what it used to cost us to overlook the people to make sure they were not breaking into one another's houses or breaking into somebody else's houses, it was what happened at the end of the day.

If you look at the ALMOs and who wants houses, look at Halton Moor and you will get 100, 200, 300 people applying now to go on to Halton Moor. Remember also *(interruption)* Yes, thank you very much, keep it open. As far as we are concerned, you saw places like, "Do you want to buy a house for £1,000?" Where was this? It was Halton Moor. You can shout and decry all you like but they are not shutting sports centres near where you are.

COUNCILLOR HARKER: We have not got any. There are not any, Mick.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: Lord Mayor, without getting interrupted with these villains on the other side, as far as you can see, if we shut down the sports centre there, the East Leeds Sports Centre, it is said that they are going to build another. It does not say whether it is going to be PFI money or whether it is going to be private or whatever, and it is going to be somewhere on the A64. How in heaven's name do you get from Halton Moor to somewhere on the A64, if you are sending young kids to learn to swim, etc? You do not and there is no bus service across there.

COUNCILLOR PRYKE: 37.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: It does not go that way. It goes nowhere near there. If you should know that it does not go there at all and if you know where the Sports Centre is going to be built you should be telling people, Ralph. People in your area use this sports centre as well. If they think that by shouting at me they can shut this centre down without a fight they are sadly mistaken. I will get on before my time runs out, before the barracking starts to say that if this is open discussion and it should be open discussion, we went round to the people in the area and we said, "What do you want up here?" and they said, "We want this to remain open, we want it to remain viable." Nobody has consulted all these organisations, nobody whatsoever, about closing down the East Leeds Sports Centre and the pool.

I know just what is in their minds, what it is, but why did they say last year, you are all right, it is going to stop open? Because there is not an election this year, so they can get this through this year, or they think they can. What we will do, we will put the facts to the people of Leeds to say that it is not on. Do not bring it under the guise of there being Olympian swimmers. What you are trying to do is save cash because you have wasted bloody cash on all kinds of things – consultants and God knows what. It is all right Andrew Carter telling us about the government wasting money – look at the money they are wasting, because I am going to tell them all in my patch just where they are wasting money. Stop everybody else as soon as the red light goes on, Lord Mayor. Thank you. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR IQBAL: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I would like to speak on the same Minute, this so-called consultation, and especially I would like to focus on the proposal in the report to close South Leeds Sports Centre. I would like to tell the members of Council the disastrous consequences if this decision is allowed to go ahead.

It is with great sadness that yet again we are in this Chamber trying to save our centre from closure by your administration. As many of you will know, it was only two years ago that we, the community of South Leeds, led actively by the then newly formed local campaign group, SPLASH, fought off a devious proposal for your administration to close South Leeds Sports Centre.

You may also remember that thousands of signatures were collected from local residents who were quite rightly understandably angry and appalled at your plans to close our leisure facility.

What South Leeds Sports Centre has to offer is perfect for wide-ranging groups in our community. It is very simple – they do not want to go to Morley or the John Charles Sports Centre for sport. They have everything they need at their own leisure centre. Many people have been using the facilities of the South Leeds Sports Centre for many years and I know many of our older people feel very comfortable in their surrounding. There are swimming classes for both young and old, a wide range of fitness classes and a gym described on the Council's website as "state of the art".

It was only last week that an elderly disabled person in the YEP was singing the praises of the facilities at the centre and highlighted a number of access problems for disabled people at the John Charles Centre for sport. That will stop her from using the facilities. I say again, why is your administration closing it?

Fellow Councillors, you may have noted in the YEP last month after being given a year to prove its worth, South Leeds Sports Centre has hit its targets. The residents of South Leeds have responded to councillor Procter's rallying call in this very chamber two years ago – use the centre and keep it open. What is their reward? The closure of their much-needed sports centre.

No wonder many people in our community have little trust in this Council. If only 20 people stop exercising due to the closing of South Leeds Sports Centre, then we as a Council are not delivering on our promise in the Leeds Sports Strategy 2006-2012 to ensure that the health benefits of sport and active recreation are recognised and developed and ensuring equality of opportunity and narrowing the participation gap in sport and active recreation between different sectors and groups within the community.

It is the duty of the Council to put the people of our city first. I fail to see how closing a much-valued community facility is achieving this aim and I ask you to re-think this decision. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I have to say, listening to some of the stuff from the Labour Group over there you would think that the sports centre provision in this city had somehow been some local Shangri-La under the old Labour Group. What I will point out is that I actually, for the first part of childhood, grew up on Halton Moor and then I progressed to Richmond Hill, which is in LS9. While I was living in Halton Moor and going to school at Richmond Hill Primary School we had swimming lessons. Do you know where those swimming lessons took place? They took place at South Leeds Sports Centre and Bramley, precisely because there was no local provision whatsoever in LS9 and do you know what? It is still the case. It is still the case, so do not try and make out that every local community was looked after by the old Labour administration and you provided fantastic sports facilities for them.

What you did was actually a very cynical policy in terms of providing sports facilities so that certain communities who had influential ward members were able to secure facilities for their area...

COUNCILLOR: Just like nurseries.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: ...and other areas had to suffer, so I am not going to be taken in by that particular argument. What I will try and point out to you is try and bring a children's services perspective to this. What I am interested in, of course, is the same things that most of you are interested in and Councillor Wakefield has alluded to it, and that is the problem that we have with childhood obesity. If we are going to tackle childhood obesity we want to make sure, like Councillor Harington has said, that any sporting facilities are sustainable, affordable and accessible.

When I talk about sustainable, affordable and accessible, they are not just physical entities. They are not just talking about how physically near a sports centre is or whatever. It also talks about the mental attitude. One thing that I will tell you is that our children have been brought up to have certain expectations and one thing that they will not put up with is below par facilities.

In terms of consultation – and Councillor Dobson talks about ‘I do not go to my ward forum because I can only attract the with pensioners in my ward’, fair enough, but local children speak with their feet and out of those sports centres that we have in our city Councillor Taylor will be pleased to know that in terms of childhood usage, Scott Hall Sports Centre is far out and above in terms of attracting the number of children to their facilities. They had in 2007/08 153,000 visits from children. Compare that with East Leeds – 36,784. I will talk about Fearnville as well, Fearnville had 58,440.

I would suggest that the population density in terms of Fearnville and East Leeds is somewhat comparable to that of Scott Hall...

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Rubbish. Absolutely rubbish. Arrogant.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: ...so what is the difference between Scott Hall being so attractive and those two centres not being so attractive? It is because children feel and they see Scott Hall as being accessible, they like the facilities that are there because they are well maintained in comparison with the ones which might be that little bit closer.

If we can provide that kind of mental accessibility to children to encourage them to actually go to a facility, I think the only way we are able to do that is to invest in those areas where the investment will get the outcome we require and that involves investing in places like Scott Hall that are in the right place, they are on bus routes, they are on main roads, they are accessible by communities, not just accessible within communities.

You can have several different communities coming to one different sports centre. Rothwell Sports Centre does not just cover Rothwell. I can assure you there are plenty of people come down from Garforth, there are plenty of people come over from Wakefield to go to Rothwell because it has got good parking facilities, it is on main routes, it has got bus routes.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Exactly.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: We can do the same thing for our children and also our pensioners.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: As long as you have got a car.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: I do not think our pensioners just want to be in the area where they actually live at the moment.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: As long as you have got a car.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: Our pensioners are adventurous. They have got free bus passes. They can go wherever they like these days. Talk to Coastliner. They do not have to go to Bridlington to have a good day out; they can go to some fantastic sporting facilities that we are providing for them...

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Absolute rubbish.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: ...and I will point out the government, by bringing in free swimming for our pensioners...



COUNCILLOR COUPAR: Shame on you, Councillor Golton, if you are thinking about pensioners like that.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON ...will mean that we have higher usage in our sports facilities.

COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: Closing the gap are you, Stewart?

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: We should ensure that those sports facilities are the highest and best maintained possible, if not just for health and safety, so for the future of our children and the health of our older people, this vision is needed.  
(Applause)

COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: Get on the bus, not on the bike.

COUNCILLOR SHELBRooke: Thank you, my Lord Mayor. I am actually very worried about this debate because it seems to have opened up quite a nasty attitude from the party opposite of terrifying the public to try and win their own political ends.

No suggestion is here that people will lose out overall. It is very interesting that Councillor Dobson said that you are trying to drive a wedge between Kippax and Garforth. Nothing could be further from the truth, could it? I notice on the infamous blog that Councillor Dobson said that he was Labour – not new Labour - and becoming more left-wing by the day. To be fair to Councillor Dobson, he has really affirmed that today by saying that, as all Labour Governments do, we should carry on pouring millions of taxpayers' money into failing services and denying them the quality services that they deserve.

This consultation is about trying to bring forward 21<sup>st</sup> Century sports facilities and leisure facilities to the people of this city. To listen to the arguments you have been making this afternoon would be suggesting, if reported like that, that this Council is shutting every leisure centre in this city and that there will be no provision in this city for anyone to go to. That is the level you have sunk to trying to scare the public and trying to boost your opinions.

Councillor Dobson, I really do not know where to start. I was simply just going to stand up and say doesn't everybody in the city have the right to deserve first class leisure facilities, and then you go off at some tangent talking about how when the skate park which was brought in by your predecessor and put there was actually your idea, and that it was a lie that he put in the newsletter that the Conservatives had helped to bring the skate park to Garforth. No, clearly, I am sure, Mark, that was you, you did it and you were not elected at the time. Also, of course, the fire station and how my Labour colleagues saved the fire station. Nothing to do with the fact that the Conservative-run Fire Authority prevented Garforth Fire Station from being shut when the Labour Government cut it's budget. (*interruption*) You believe in your own spin and that is dangerous for any politician when they start to believe their own spin.

The people of this city deserve good leisure facilities. My ward does not have any leisure facilities in it at all. There is nothing in my ward for leisure facilities. People have to move on. Why should the people of my ward have to carry on going to, for example, the Kippax Leisure Centre, which needs millions – millions – of pounds poured into it for renovation because it was neglected under your administration for 25 years? That is why we are now in the situation where we have got to invest in proper leisure facilities which every taxpayer in this city and non-taxpayer deserves to live a healthy and fulfilling life. Thank you, Lord Mayor.  
(Applause)

COUNCILLOR HARKER: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I would like to echo the comments of Councillor Golton. We do seem to be living in some idealised world over on the Opposition benches. There are so many areas of this city and not necessarily affluent areas of this city, particularly in the north of the city, who do not have the facilities they need. They do not have sports centres, swimming pools, community centres. I represent one such ward which for over three decades has been neglected by subsequent administrations and this is a chance now for me to lobby for the Moortown ward for facilities.

Not everybody in Moortown ward can afford the John Lloyd centre. We have areas of high deprivation. You are the people who are saying you cannot travel four miles to Morley – some of my people from my housing would have to travel far greater distances and would need public transport that does not exist, so before you lecture us, let us be aware there are large areas of this city, blue collar areas of this city who do not have any facilities. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR LYONS: We won't by the time you have done.

THE LORD MAYOR: I noticed a few of you want the chance to speak in a moment or two. You will get your chance.

COUNCILLOR GRAHAME: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I would like to speak on the reference back. I would just like to remind Councillor Procter in 2006 when we worked together in a manner when I was Chair of Scrutiny, and I will quote you from the verbatim, 1 November:

"Lord Mayor, I have news for Councillor Lyons. He will see, he talks about things in the press tomorrow. I am hoping the press will carry something tomorrow. The press should carry the news tomorrow that the East Leeds Leisure Centre will not be closing as part of our proposals thanks to the good work of Councillor Schofield"

- who, thank God, is no longer here –

"and Councillor Hyde."

You forget to mention the main one, Councillor Mick Lyons and other people and there you misled the Council because the officer, Mark Holman, the papers were sent to me at eleven o'clock and he had put, "Regarding any decisions they were not in favour of the individual sites being kept because they cannot afford the upkeep of them" so officers knew that no individual sites would be kept open, so let us hope that today we might get some truth from you, Councillor Procter. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR ATHA: I want to make two or three points, Lord Mayor. First of all I would just like to reduce the temperature. We are discussing something that is really terribly important to some of us, if not all. What we are doing is playing silly beggars again, batting arguments across - I might call it scoring, I might not. I could quote the fact that the person who fought for Scott Hall was Peter Sparling of the Conservatives who fought hard to get that there because it was part of his ward. We could score all these points but it is not necessary.

What we ought to do is to have a proper consultation. What happens when we are in this position? We know that no proper consultation is going to be done because lines are drawn and they are not going to give way, either side, and that is

the stupidity. If you go ahead with this then what happens is the people who are going to be consulted will know in advance the decision has been made.

I say to Councillor Procter, you would do us all a service if you said, "All right, I will withdraw this Minute now, I will accept the reference back and we will have a proper consultation *ab initio* with all possibilities put on the table and let people come out and express their views clearly."

At the moment it is going to be a battle. If you continue to fight to close these centres then some of us will be starting a battle to prevent it and what a stupid waste of time. If we had a sensible consultation with totally open minds and a total understanding of the demographics, the economics and everything else.

Referring to economics, Councillor Harington referred to the cost of doing up one centre. Quite frankly, when you want to close a centre you would say just how much it is going to cost to maintain, but if you want to keep it you say it only costs – and this is a quite different figure. We ought to say, if Councillor Harington's figures are right let us see the basis on which those figures were made and we will see whether or not they are genuine.

I would say one or two more things very briefly too. We must remember that we are here to provide a service and not run a business. We should provide a service on as business-like a way as we can. That we are all agreed on. That should be the basis on which we are talking. If we close some of these centres then, in fact, you are reducing the service to many, many people. You cannot deny that.

Let us have a discussion, an open discussion without preconceptions and see what emerges at the end.

I just refer to one specific matter about (*inaudible*) and South Leeds Sports. I was on the Sports Council Lottery Panel when these millions of pounds were being given away all over the country. I took no part in the discussion relating to Leeds because that would have been a conflict of interest but, of course, I was party to all the documentation that came through.

One part of the documentation was that Leeds would get a £5m grant for the pool provided – and one of the conditions was – that that sports centre in South Leeds would not close. If you look in the earlier pages you will find the application for the grant done by our side did include that possibility, but in fact – and that was in my case a sense of disgrace – but in reality that was the condition of the grant of the Lottery Panel. I do not think we are going to go to the Lottery Panel and say look, take the £5m back, we are going to break it. What I am saying is we want a proper consultation to ensure that the decisions we made are finally correct.

One final question. Someone referred earlier to Olympics and Paralympics. I say this about the Paralympics. When you watch it, be fascinated and amazed by the quality and the skill and the ability and the courage of those people but remember this one fact which I think is an absolute steaming disgrace – and I say this as actually a founder member of the British Paralympic Association – I was on the International Paralympic Committee for God knows how many years - for three Paralympics now one group has been excluded on the grounds of pure discrimination and that is the people with mental handicap. Not merely has that happened in this country but all the mentally handicapped athletes who are achieving any higher level of success had all public money withdrawn by Sports England or the Sports Council UK and they have been denied it. It is an absolute scandal and I would have thought that hopefully some of you may well feel the need to write or get in touch with your MP, or it may be your own friend or relative in the business, to say we must make

sure in 2012 that the people with mental handicap can compete properly and in that event because their exclusion means I felt it impossible to go to Beijing to watch the Paralympics because it would have been almost a denial of the fundamental belief of total inclusion of all disability in those games. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: Thank you, my Lord Mayor. I had not intended to speak in this debate until Michael got involved.

Michael, can I just tell you something? I do not know which land you live in but certainly I am surprised you do not know your own ward. You tell us that 24 years ago you built the centre and cured all the ailments and the ills of Halton. Let me just tell you, it is only two years ago, 18 months ago that we had massive racist problems in that area, we had all sorts of police in the area and they have now been cured by a lot of work, nothing to do with that sports centre, I will tell you that now. It was to do with work and policing, etc, that has gone into the area, so let us not talk nonsense about what that particular centre is doing at this stage.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: You do not know what you are talking about.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: I do know what I am talking about because I will give you the facts

COUNCILLOR LYONS: I will invite you up. I will invite you up there.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: You do not need to invite me up. You have no need to invite me up. Councillor Hyde and Councillor Schofield have taken me up on many occasions and showed me what it is like. I know what it is like, don't you kid yourself. I doubt if you know what it is like, that is our problem because you do not know what it is like. That sports centre is not doing anything fantastic for the area. A lot needs to be done in that area; a lot will be done in that area but having said that, no sports centre – nothing is closing, remember this, at this stage. You are all screaming and blowing off. It is consultation, it is going out to consultation.

I am interested in Councillor Atha's point of view – "John, take it back and let us have real consultation." I am not certain what he is talking about. Does he want Councillor Procter to get a blank sheet of paper and say, "Let us go consult on a blank sheet of paper" because what else are you doing? Somebody has got to put something forward. If you are going to consult on something you have got to put something forward. It makes sense to consult on things in that way. At least people have got something to look at and come from.

Finally, my Lord Mayor, can I just say today I feel very sad because I realise I was deprived as a child. I did not realise that. I always thought I was very privileged as a child. I lived in an area, big Victorian house, nice cobbled streets, wonderful play areas to play in, but I found out today I did not. That was a back-to-back in Hyde Park and I had various parks to play in – Woodhouse Moor, fantastic park. We played football, we played rugby, we played everything at Woodhouse Moor. Beckett's Park, another park that we had to play in and that was used. Burley Park – none of these have gone, none of them have gone, they are all there. We used to go swimming at Armley, we used to go swimming at Kirkstall. Kirkstall has gone but Armley Baths are still there, so do not give me this rubbish about the inner city. I will tell you what, I was a damn sight fitter then. I could out run and out jump anybody in this Council then – now I cannot even out walk them! Now I am deemed to be privileged and living in a privileged area where I am going to live ten years longer. I think I will still live ten years longer if I still lived in the same place, ate the same food that I ate then, which was rationed...

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: And you smoked.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: ...and I would be a lot better and probably live 20 years longer.

You are talking rubbish, we know you are. You are opposing for the sake of opposing. For God's sake, Bernard Atha started off trying to say let us all be happy and calm and sweet and all the rest of it and then went on to knock everything under the sun. Let us try to be constructive. I remember 25, 26 years ago when Peter Sparling, and we started off with Lord Bellwin, Irwin Bellow said it is time we had sports centres but what happened was you neglected them year after year after year after year and we have arrived at the situation where we now have to do something because of 24 years of Labour neglect. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR TAGGART: Yes, Lord Mayor. I will try and be brief. I think two Liberal members unwittingly misled Council and I think it is because of the lack of membership on this Authority that they have said what they have.

I will first of all start with Councillor Richard Harker, who peddles his lie that Moortown has had 30 years of neglect. What a load of rubbish. When Scott Hall was built it was in the old Chapel Hills and Scott Hall ward, which included half of Councillor Harker's ward – it included, for example, three sides of Moortown Corner, a lot of Street Lane, almost up to the ring road. Peter Sparling, a local Conservative member, was determined to get that centre built and that is one of the reasons why it was built there.

Even today, even though the ward boundaries did change in 1918 and again the Moortown ward boundaries changed a little bit in 2004, even today the distance from Scott Hall Sports Centre to the Moortown ward boundary is just a few yards which even an ex-smoker like Councillor Harker could probably walk on the average day. It is so close that it does not make any difference. As far as local people in Leeds 7, 8 and 17 are concerned, Scott Hall is their local sports centre, but it was not built thanks to the Labour Party, it was Peter Sparling, who is no longer with us. By the way, he was an honourable Conservative.

The other one is Councillor Golton who gives this impression that somehow there were some powerful Labour barons over the years who decided where all the sports centres went. Then he talks about South Leeds. The curious thing about South Leeds – and some of us have got long memories – this used to be a Liberal ward and it was Ivan Lester, one of the few surviving Liberal Councillors in South Leeds, who was panicking, he was dead keen to get a sports centre in what we now call South Leeds Sports Centre but in those days, in the early days was called Hunslet Hall because it was a Liberal ward and they were really worried about the Labour Party winning, and so the Liberal Group took a decision, yes, it is going to be Hunslet and that is why that sports centre went there. It was no objective analysis – it was to do with the political bread and butter of the surviving liberals. It made no difference because Lester lost his seat and all the other Liberals and, of course, it went on to become the safest Labour ward in the city.

I think we should pay tribute to all the people in the past who played their part. Ronnie is nodding because he has been around long enough to know that what I am saying is true. We should also pay tribute to the urban districts who often did not want to spend any money at all. They always let big Leeds spend the money. Once it became obvious that the Heath Government was not going to bring them to it, oh my gosh, didn't they panic, so Morley built Scatchard, not to a very good standard, I can tell you. I say that as a former Chair of Rec Services. I have still got the Objective Building Report on something.

Rothwell Urban District built Rothwell...

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: The jewel in your crown now.

COUNCILLOR TAGGART: ...and suddenly in the early 1970s if they were building them now one or two of them might be in different locations, but do not blame the Labour Party. We did more of the sport and leisure services than any party has ever done in this city. You should even remember that in Armley yes, there was already a swimming bath but it was expanded to become an all purpose sports centre. That was done by the Labour Council despite the fact that at the time it had three Liberal Councillors – of course it is three Labour now – but we cared about that.

The ironic thing about it was all the late 1970s call centres by the time they actually opened, every one of them was represented by a Labour Councillor.

Where you are wrong on your consultation – they are all wrong in lots of ways – is you are providing all sorts of problems for yourself. I will give you Garforth Kippax, I know the area well. There is all kinds of history about why the facilities are where they are but you talk about facilities that are suitable for both and I am a local resident, I think it must be green belt development, I cannot think of any other development site in Garforth unless you are going to destroy the existing leisure centre and try and put a brand new new build on top of it, I do not know, but you ought to be specific. What does A64 corridor mean? Too vague. The people will not trust you. It will be better if you actually came forward with firm proposals.

Do not knock the Labour Party, do not knock courageous politicians in the past who cared about this. Leeds showed the way. We need to spend some money now, we might need some changes but do not knock the Labour Party and all those heroic people in the past who provided us with what we have today. Thank you very much, my Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR MARJORAM: Thank you, my Lord Mayor. I speak on the stated Minute. Members will know this is a second maiden speech of this evening.

THE LORD MAYOR: I apologise, I have been trying to find out whether it was your maiden speech or not and I have just heard that it is. If it is, I am certain everyone will appreciate and give their support.

COUNCILLOR MARJORAM: My Lord Mayor, I understand the last person that probably had two maidens in one night was St George and it would be ageist, my Lord Mayor, if I suggested some people may remember that!

I hope that my colleague Councillor Procter will confirm for me and, indeed, the whole Chamber, that the criteria for new sports centres, and in particular Wellbeing Centres, with access to PFI credits have in fact been set down by a Labour administration at a national level and I would ask that the Labour members opposite do what many of your party are doing perhaps and take issue with your leadership over this issue, as appears to be the case over so many others.

One thing that has been ignored for me in this evening's debate is the role of the private sector and it would be easy if it just did not exist, which I think is what some people wish were the case, but actually over the years particularly in Leeds in every area of the city we have seen an increasing number of private centre facilities and I would be the first to say that these do have often a membership fee or higher costs, but it is clear from the number and, indeed, the range of people that use them,

that those are not considered to be prohibitive or a barrier to entry to people from many different walks of life using those facilities.

What we need to remember as a service provider – and we do in so many ways provide a service – is that in this particular instance the Council's facilities are not in isolation. We are providing a range of sports facilities just as are the private sector and we need to make sure the facilities we provide match people's expectations in terms of their accessibility and the quality of the facility that they find when they get there.

The parlous state of the economy at the moment is a factor in many private gyms are now reducing their membership fees or, indeed, allowing turn up and use access, with no ongoing membership charged, and the result of that is that, pound for pound, if you are an even moderately frequent visitor to a Council facility you will be paying as much per month as someone who goes to a distinctly better quality private members or low entry gym.

It is clear that we have to compete with that and I know that on some sides competition will be considered a dirty word but if we do not then the situation, particularly with regard to the Council's budget, will get worse year after year.

I hope that in summing up Councillor Procter, my colleague, will confirm that it is not only unfair but unsustainable that some of these leisure centres not only do not earn money for the Council but some of them cost the Council per visit over £2. That is clearly unsustainable and in any other aspect of the Council's affairs it would be considered negligent for the administration to allow that to continue.

Finally, I would like to agree with Councillor Lyons that this is going through in a year when there is no election, but I think on this side of the house we would very much hope that there was one. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR BLAKE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. In seconding the reference back I would like to bring Council back to the purpose of the reference back. What we are asking is for you to go back and reconsider the decision that you have taken to go out to consultation, particularly on the proposals that you have put in the paper that went to Executive Board. We want you to withdraw that paper and start again.

I think all of us on this side have heard the comments from the other side and all we have heard reinforces what we are asking. I think Councillor Golton's comments were some of the most disgraceful that we have heard on this subject.

We have to think about the consequences of what you are proposing to do. All of us, I believe, want the best facilities for people in this city and serving all of our communities we say yes, we do want investment but, you know, this consultation flies in the face of all our communities and policies to close the gap. Inequalities between the communities are well documented, whether it is in health, educational attainment or access to employment. This consultation is proposing a drastic reduction in sports provision at the heart of our communities and I believe this gives a shocking message. It undermines any commitment we have to reducing inequalities and has not even given any consideration to the work that is going on with partners in the city which is focused on the communities that have been most affected by the proposed changes.

Do you know what the give away is? It is a self-fulfilling prophesy here. There are no options in this paper. There is nothing to go out to genuinely consult on.

I have to say this was always sadly predictable and I think Councillor Marjoram actually hit on the reason why. This exercise is based on a crude cost saving exercise. It is not based on the needs of people in our city. If it was, there would be an analysis of health needs, for example; an analysis of what the health cost of closing these centres is actually going to be for our city; an analysis of obesity levels, coronary heart disease and health inequalities at all.

There is no evidence in here about access. You talk about use it or lose it. In Middleton where we are risking losing our swimming pool swimming sessions have been reduced to half an hour duration. What incentive is that for people to go along and use it? What about affordability or ability to travel, as we have heard from so many contributors? What about social need?

In Middleton you talk disparagingly about an under-sized pool. In fact this is ideal for older people - is a warm pool – and for young learners and from schools.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: How disgraceful.

COUNCILLOR BLAKE: Lord Mayor, this Council has a duty to promote the wellbeing of its citizens. Between 40% and 50% of people living in my area do not have access to a car. The cost of adult bus fare for two trips a week for an adult to Morley would be over £400 a year and for a child it would be £260. It would be at least a one hour round trip and this is if - a big if – the bus timetables actually fit the times of the activities in the other places.

Physical activity in children has the advantage of reducing disease, risk factors and also increases self-esteem and wellbeing. Surely it is the duty of this Council to do everything to encourage participation and to target the areas of low take-up, not to say the areas have not got many people using the facilities – let us take the facilities away.

On behalf of the residents of Leeds we are demanding that you rethink your approach, go back to the drawing board. At least have the courtesy of involving ward members in the planning of provision and of partners in the city.

You talk about handing facilities over to the voluntary sector. We have got no problem with the voluntary sector, but are you seriously suggesting that the capacity is there and that we are expected for multi-million pound investment at Middleton to be handed over to people? I do not know who you are talking about. You have not mentioned anything.

Your policies are all full of fine words but we know that all you are interested in is cost cutting, cutting services at the expense of the health and wellbeing of people in our most disadvantaged communities. Shame on you. You have a chance to stop this now. Support our reference back. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR HARRAND: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I will be brief. I mean brief, not the Taggart version of brief, which was four minutes 57 seconds!

COUNCILLOR TAGGART: Under five minutes, Peter.

COUNCILLOR HARRAND: At danger of being tolerant and non-controversial and reasonable, I would like to accept publicly Bernard's point about people with learning disabilities participating in sport. We will pick that up this week and we will do something about that. Thank you very much for that. *(Applause)*



COUNCILLOR R FELDMAN: Lord Mayor, I also was not going to speak today until Neil decided that I was nodding. One of my colleagues said I was not nodding, I was nodding off! (*laughter*) It would be very difficult with the noise. I must be one of the few Councillors who was here when Fearnville was decided upon to be built. I can remember it very clearly and I remember Irwin Bellow, who was Leader afterwards, deciding that we needed more and he was one of the driving forces to ensure that we got more sports centres, not just the Labour Party.

Why I wanted to stand up though was, whoever built them – and they have been built over 24 years ago – why on earth did you not look after them? (*hear, hear*) If you had looked after them – and remember the nearest one to my ward is on Scott Hall Road and how many times have I been told by people, “I would not go there, it is filthy.” Nowadays it is a lot better. The standards dropped because you never were interested in them, you had no real desire to do what you were talking about today, because all that you are saying today is a political argument. It is not a sensible one when you hear what John Procter has to say.

You were not even interested in providing one solitary facility in my ward in Alwoodley. It may surprise some of you but for over 20 years I have tried to get a bowling green in Alwoodley – not a vast one, just a simple bowling green - and the Labour party for several years put this in the budget and I was told by Bernard, who is sitting there, “See, you are getting your bowling green, all is well.” Two thirds of the way through the year, where is the bowling green? “Well, we were short of money so we have taken it out.”

To do it once may be acceptable; to do it twice is becoming a bit much; but to do it three and four times is just obscene.

When I was Lord Mayor I think Bernard said to me, “Don’t worry, when you are Lord Mayor I am Chairman of Leisure, we will have the first game on the green.” Is that right, Bernard?

COUNCILLOR ATHA: I cannot remember.

COUNCILLOR R FELDMAN: A few months later Bernard became Lord Mayor, I was still in Alwoodley ward. Where was the game? We are still waiting to have it. I call it a game, I do not know what the exact definition is. In Alwoodley ward we have not got a bowling green.

I listened to you all talking about your own sports centre. We have not got one. You speak about your community centres – we did not have one until the last few years. You do not know how well off you have been. Because you have been so well off, you have not attended to what you should have done. You should have maintained them, you should have looked after them, you should have been proud of them and I am deeply sorry because I also used to be on the Sports Councils and I always used to say to them when the Labour members were singing their praises, it is marvellous, you talk about the East, you talk about the South, you talk about the West – when I was in Scouts I was told that there was a North as well but unfortunately for the majority of you, you do not seem to accept that in North Leeds in my ward we have got lots and lots of people who have no money, who are in total problems just as much as in any other area. I often wonder why they should be treated differently to all the other poor people in the city because to my mind anybody who is poor is poor wherever they live, and they should not have to pay any price because in parts of Alwoodley wealthy people live.

I hope that when we get round to looking at all sports centres, the north again in Leeds, North Leeds, is taken into account and that we get something. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR NASH: My Lord Mayor, we have heard from the opposite side that this is a political argument. You are darn right it is a political argument. There is the party who wants to shut everything down if it does not pay its way. We are the party that wants to provide a service for the people.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: What rubbish.

COUNCILLOR NASH: I accept what Councillor Feldman said. Yes, there are poor people who live in Alwoodley. You have been in power now four years; have you got any blueprints for a sports centre in your area?

COUNCILLOR HARRAND: You have got your bowling green.

COUNCILLOR NASH: I will be glad to see it. The reason that Irwin Bellow did say we need more sports centres was for the lathering he got from the Labour side. When the Tories took over in 1975 they stopped the building of Fearnville Sports Centre – yes, this is true – and we had a really good sports centre about to be built but he stopped the signing of the contract.

COUNCILLOR FELDMAN: The contract was signed.

COUNCILLOR NASH: (*interruption*) Excuse me, let me finish. You can speak afterwards. We made such a stink about it that Irwin Bellow came forward with three sports centres, Scott Hall, Fearnville and South Leeds, and you boasted, “We have built three sports centres for the price of two.” I have to say that of all the sports centres that have been built in Leeds, they were not built to the standards that we do expect today.

However, two wrongs do not make a right and the reason why some sports centres are not so successful, the reason is obvious. There is a low family income. It costs to go swimming, it costs to go and play sports. When you heard from my colleague - which sounds like last year I must say - Councillor Harington, that 50% of children in certain areas are on free school meals, you can see what sort of a problem this is.

The original swimming baths in Leeds which were built in Edwardian times before the First World War were built as a health measure to keep people clean. I would say today sports centres are just as essential as a health measure as well as for people's enjoyment.

It is true they have not been maintained as well as they should be but we had 18 years of a Tory Government who starved local authorities.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: What rubbish.

COUNCILLOR NASH: It is true. We were not allowed to raise money to spend on sports centres. When Labour did take charge in 1980 these are some of the things we did. 3.00.24

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: That is an absolute lie.

COUNCILLOR NASH: When Labour did take charge in 1980 these are some of the things we did. We converted Armley swimming pool into a fully fledged sports

centre. We built East Leeds, which was an area of great deprivation in Halton Moor. We built Kirkstall, which was the last to be built. We built Pudsey. We converted Aireborough swimming pool into a fully fledged sports centre. We built a climbing wall there, one of the first in the country. We converted the John Smeaton School swimming pool into a fully fledged sports centre. Middleton Park, the school burned down there and it was to be rebuilt and I insisted it be rebuilt in such a way that the swimming pool became a sports centre open to the people. Prince Henry swimming pool we got opened to the general public - there was great resistance from people in Otley. Do not tell me that we have not looked after areas which were not solely our own.

My Lord Mayor, I think it is an absolute humbug for you lot to say that you are building on the success of our Olympian team and building these super sports centres all over the city.

I will support you building super sports centres but certainly we do not support you closing down local sports centres which are used by many, many people.  
(Applause)

COUNCILLOR CAMPBELL: Thank you, Lord Mayor. When Councillor Wakefield and Councillor Harington started today I thought actually we might have some sensible contributions, and then, unfortunately, Keith, your group got away from you again.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: I think they have been very good contributions.

COUNCILLOR CAMPBELL: We have had this afternoon's little fiasco. Councillor Blake says can we reconsider consultation. Actually what that means is we do not want to do any consultation. We do not want to go down this consultation path we talked about. Actually, it would have been useful if you had actually read what had been said at the Executive Board meeting. It really would have been useful because you would actually see there is consultation involved in this and it is about all the people of Leeds expressing a view about what sort of services they want, where they want them and actually guaranteeing that we will get usage out of these sports facilities.

One thing that nobody has touched on - well, nobody on that side touched on but actually there are new sports centres being built. I just happened to mention at the Plans Panel before last when we had a presentation and we agreed a new sports centre in Armley - a fantastic building. I have to say to you, it is an absolutely beautiful building and when it is built I shall make every effort to go along there and have a swim. Have we got any support? Nobody mentioned that, did they, even though I know that certainly the ward members have been heavily involved in the discussions and were heavily involved in the design and were very supportive of it.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Nobody mentioned Armley.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: One of them chaired the Steering Committee.

COUNCILLOR CAMPBELL: I did not know that. We got the comment here about distance, "If you close the one down the people in my ward are going to have to walk 1.6 miles to the sports centre." It is terrible, isn't it, they are going to have to walk - I think walking is healthy, is it not, but never mind - 1.6 miles to the health centre, the Bodyline Gym and then they are going to be too tired to spend half an hour on the walking machine! (laughter) Come on, Councillor Nash.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: A very good contribution, Colin.

COUNCILLOR ATHA: It really is pathetic.

COUNCILLOR CAMPBELL: Shut it down because it does not pay. Who is the person with the best track record in the Leeds Council of shutting down places that do not pay? Councillor Nash - Otley Civic Centre, Greenacre Hall in Aireborough, Guiseley Library, again in Aireborough, closed down. Why? They did not pay. There was a cash shortage. What do we do? We close down community centres. Where do they happen to be? They just happen to be outside Labour areas, but there we are.

Bernard, my goodness me, how Bernard can stand up and say it is a wonder. Happy birthday, by the way. Nice to see you being 80 again.

COUNCILLOR ATHA: You will have to speak up, I am a bit deaf. *(laughter)*

COUNCILLOR CAMPBELL: I will give you a for instance because Councillor Nash touched on Prince Henry's Grammar School. Prince Henry's Grammar School has a swimming pool, a large swimming pool. Thirty years ago the Parish Council said to the City Council, "We want to improve the facilities, we want to expand the facilities and include within it a new sports hall, a general purpose sports hall which the school could use and the community could use" and the Parish Council said, "We know you are short of money in Leeds because you are always short of money" - let's face it, 18 years of Tory Government - *(laughter)* - and another ten years of Labour doing exactly the same *(laughter)*.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: Don't start!

COUNCILLOR CAMPBELL: So the Parish Council said look, "We have the ability to borrow money. We will borrow the money to pay for a sports hall and improvements to the changing room and improvements to the pool which would allow a full sized seating area so that people who have brought their kids to learn to swim could actually watch them do it. OK? That was agreed. The Town Council agreed it, the Leisure Services Department drew up the plans. Who was the Chairman of Leisure Services who said it could not happen? Bernard Atha.

When you have shed all of those crocodile tears, actually what I would suggest to you, if you do what the rest of us are going to do and actually engage with the consultation because at that point actually people who are interested will be able to put out their input and we will actually provide a sports facility for what the people need and the people want. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR CLEASBY: Thank you, Lord Mayor. It is interesting, Councillor Campbell, that you suggest engagement. Would it not have been wonderful all those years ago when we were denied the nurseries - do you remember? - Horsforth, Cookridge, no nurseries, the ten year plan. Do you remember all that? If we are suspicious of you then do not be surprised because we know where you are coming from on this. Let us have some sense to this.

1.6 miles at three miles an hour is 33 minutes. What a nice time to warm up for the exercise and 33 minutes to warm down afterwards.

When I was a youngster - and I am going to top you all on this, I come from a much poorer part of the world than you, I am from Stockton-on-Tees and the only swimming baths in Stockton-on-Tees were on the opposite side of town from my school and we had to walk and it was three-and-a-half miles. Council, I never learned to swim but I did become a successful long distance walker.

Lord Mayor, I find it interesting that later we will be nodding through what could be a very important White Paper. Can I quote:

“Furthermore we hope this Council will use the achievements of the Great Britain Olympic Team as a positive tool with which to inspire more young people to become active at all levels of sport.”

COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: You will not be able to if there are no sports centres.

COUNCILLOR CLEASBY: What a marvellous opportunity to engage in a consultation and I am going to make a bid for Horsforth, because if I did not Horsforth would dislike me for it. Horsforth wants its own swimming pool. They do. If you look at the figures you will see that Holme Park, Aireborough and Kirkstall that ring Horsforth have pretty high footfalls. In fact, Aireborough next to Rothwell has the lowest subsidy, 34p per person. That is pretty low compared to the pounds in other parts of the city.

We know, the Horsforth Councillors, that Horsforth would like its own swimming pool but we also know and we have to accept the experts in sport who say it is not viable, which is why Trinity and All Saints College, when it built its new sports centre, did not put in a pool, to the disappointment of Horsforth. I would like a pool in Horsforth, Horsforth would like a pool in Horsforth, but I would also like a damn good Council owned and run sports centre in Horsforth. We have nothing. We have one community centre in Horsforth and in the first months I was a Councillor I had to help colleagues fight off you who wanted to close it. It was a community centre that was built during the war. We saved it because, Councillor Taggart, Mary Addison and Chris Townsley put £100,000 of RAT money into it to improve it. That was 14 years ago. It is falling apart now. We need a new community centre.

Yes it is all right, Jim, when you are getting a new swimming pool, it has been enlarged, now you get a new one, it is great, it is wonderful. I would like that for Horsforth, I would like it for the rest of the city but Councillor Campbell is absolutely right, engagement. Let us get our community engaged. There is a wonderful sports climate at the moment for sports awareness. Let us use it, let us not be political, which you are being. Jim, your party is being totally political.

COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: That is exactly what you are saying, Brian.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: That is what we are here for.

COUNCILLOR CLEASBY: Your Leader is being totally negative on this. He has seen the figures, he has seen the papers, he is being totally and utterly negative. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: We now call upon Councillor Procter. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: At last, Lord Mayor. I cannot remember a debate in this Council where we had over 20 speakers who have taken part and I am supposed to sum all this up in five minutes, am I? Well, here we go.

The situation is, Lord Mayor, that this administration has a vision for sport. Labour does not and did not.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: That is not a good start.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Yes, I make no apology for saying that this vision was inspired by the success of our Olympians in Beijing because it was, but, Lord Mayor, this is not a new issue and I can understand where a number of colleagues opposite are coming from. It is from a position of ignorance. Again, I do not blame them for that.

This is not a new issue, Lord Mayor, because actually Labour recognised this was a problem. Labour knew something needed to be done. Labour went so far as to commission a very, very, very expensive report from KPMG in 1999.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: Really? Consultants.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Consultants, indeed. They reported on 11<sup>th</sup> July 2000 and here is the report.

COUNCILLOR ATHA: Waste of time, though, wasn't it?

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Lord Mayor, that comment sums up this entire debate - "It was a waste of time, though, wasn't it?" The truth is that that report went to a handful of members at the time - I will not embarrass them by naming the ones who are still in the Chamber (*interruption*). No, I will not, but some of the most senior members of the Labour Group who are still here actually saw that report.

What did they do with it? Did they take action on it? Did they debate it? Did they send it anywhere? No, they hid it.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: Did they?

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: They hid it, they put it in the bottom drawer of the filing cabinet, they closed it, they locked it and they said to officers, "We will forget all about that" and that is the case. I am proud to say...

COUNCILLOR ATHA: It was actually discussed in Council.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: ... that it is something that would never, never happen under this administration. (*hear, hear*)

What are the issues? The issues that we are grappling with now are very much the same issues that were identified in the report, to be quite honest with you. Councillor Wakefield jibed, I understand, to one of the officers at the time when being told about the Kippax Garforth issue, "Well, fancy your chances at closing Kippax, do you? I would like to see you do that."

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Hear, hear.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: This is information I appreciate that many people do not know but the fact is that we are at a crisis point within our sports service and this administration wants to do something about it. It is all about money, the members opposite say. It is not all about money, but what you have to recognise and realise is that when centres get in a certain state and people who are coming through the door do not pay, are not able to pay, you have to be able to attract those who can pay. The fact is that one in four people who cross the threshold of a sports centre in Leeds pay nothing or virtually nothing, therefore you have to have - you have to have - the three-quarters of people who come through those doors paying a sum of money, a decent sum of money to subsidise that quarter and that is reasonable and that is appropriate.

Those people will only come through those doors if those facilities are of a decent quality. Councillor Marjoram absolutely hit the nail on the head when he talked about the issues involving the private sector. They are reducing their prices. I know many members over there are members of private facilities. Why shouldn't they be, as well?

Lord Mayor, in the last five years the centres have had an increase, an operational deficit, of 66%. These sports centres are subsidised to the tune of £7m each and every year and yet still we are facing another £900,000 shortfall in terms of our targets for this year alone.

Lord Mayor, I see time passing me by. I could speak for another ten minutes at least. Lord Mayor, I hear calls of "You have not touched on it." I am perfectly willing, if Councillor Gruen is prepared to suspend Standing Orders, to speak for longer but I leave it to him.

Lord Mayor, if Members look at the Executive Board Report and what we are suggesting, it is consultation. It is true consultation and that is all the recommendation is seeking; so much so that a third party will be carrying out that consultation and I urge all Members of Council to express their view. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Lord Mayor, a recorded vote, please. Would you note that Councillor Atkinson can vote from where she is sitting?

COUNCILLOR TAGGART: Seconded.

THE LORD MAYOR: It is seconded by Councillor Taggart.

*(A recorded vote was taken)*

THE LORD MAYOR: The result stands like this. Present, 93, "Yes" 41 plus Councillor Atkinson - that makes it 42 then, Abstain 2, "No" 49. The amendment is LOST.

(i) Central & Corporate

THE LORD MAYOR: We continue then with Central and Corporate. Councillor Grayshon.

COUNCILLOR GRAYSHON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Good afternoon to you and everyone here. The earlier debate which has taken quite some time this afternoon...

THE LORD MAYOR: Just a moment, if we could have some silence and give a fair chance to the speaker. There is a lot of movement.

COUNCILLOR GRAYSHON: Thank you, Lord Mayor, I am obliged. The earlier debate this afternoon involved Council funds and, of course, you will be aware that in Morley we actually received a new sports centre and we are very grateful and I think it would be remiss of me not to point out that if the original Scatchard sports centre had been maintained correctly, perhaps, the story would have been maintained somewhat different. It was built in an acceptable standard and I refute any such suggestion otherwise.

Turning to the item on the Council agenda today, page 46 Item 48, Transfer of Dormant Funds to Launch a New City of Leeds Fund. I think we should applaud officers who have worked on this particular idea as well as members of staff from that august organisation the Leeds Community Foundation.

THE LORD MAYOR: Just a moment, Councillor. I wonder if we could take our conversations outside, on both sides. I would like to hear what the Councillor has to say.

COUNCILLOR GRAYSHON: Thank you, Lord Mayor, once again I am obliged. I did raise my somewhat delicate voice to try and blot out the members to my right, obviously, and everyone to my left, but you understand the point I make. If I may be allowed to continue without further interruption, yes, I think this is a jolly good idea and there are a number of dormant charitable accounts throughout the city's trusts and such like which no longer meet the criteria which they were designed to meet when they were set up several years ago, if not decades ago. I think it is to be welcomed that someone has identified those trusts and that the money is now to be placed in to a new City of Leeds Fund which will obviously be a huge help to fund the work of a number of organisations throughout the city.

I look forward to some of that money being spent in Morley and I commend the idea to the Council. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR LOWE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I would like comment on page 9, Minute 76, Financial Health Monitoring 2008/09, the first part of the report. I want to ask whether the way in which the Council chooses to spend its money is delivering best value for residents. I am circulating photographs in this part of my comments. I will pass them this way so that the point is made. *(Councillor Lowe produced photographs)*

I would like to focus on what I think is the woeful incompetence of the grass cutting contractors in Leeds since the coalition privatised the service in 2005. It is now three years since Glendale took control and once again, as we have seen this summer, another grass cutting crisis. Residents are frustrated and fed up with missing cuts or where they did have cuts, as is attested by these photographs, we have poor workmanship and there is always a lack of accountability from the contractors.

Only this week one of my colleagues has received yet more complaints about the contempt and couldn't care less attitude of Glendale's workforce from elderly residents in Allerton Bywater. I could give you a list of such complaints from my own constituents in Armley, the Poplars, Snowdens, Lay Lane - I could go on but I will not because the whole city could be included in that list, no doubt.

We all know that it is well within the Council's powers to penalise this under-performing contractor. I have just been at part of the ALMO review and one of the things that we have been queried about from the Inspectors is why we do not use penalties to improve the contractor's performance and, indeed, the ALMOs are being told off for not using the penalties for improving the Council's contract performance, then the Council should also be held accountable for its failure to penalise contractors when performance is poor.

What has the Council done to show Glendale that this disgraceful incompetence will not be tolerated? Nothing. As far as I am concerned and my constituents are concerned, this is not acceptable. During the June 2005 Council meeting, Councillor Les Carter said, "I will tell you this" - I cannot get the accent right, I am sorry, I will not attempt that, but he said - "I will tell you this. This grass is going



to be sorted and I will tell you what, people will forget it when it is back down to its proper level. It will be sorted and people will say yes, that administration got it right.”

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: And they did. You keep raising it.

COUNCILLOR LOWE: Three years down the line and people can still not say your administration got it right because you got it wrong and continue to get it wrong.

How can residents trust this Council to run the city if they cannot even manage the grass cutting contract?

Councillor Andrew Carter also said in the same Council meeting that the grass cutting had, quite frankly, been a shambles. Quite frankly, it is still a shambles and it has never got to the standard required for me as a taxpayer, for my constituents or for the citizens of Leeds.

What I want to know is what you are going to do about it. Following the Scrutiny Board 2005 - I think you have slept since then - investigation in to the crisis back in 2005, the Board, which I was a member of, made a number of recommendations to improve the future operations of the grounds maintenance contract. These recommendations included closely monitoring the contractor - that was recommendation 16 - and showing data bases were set up so that the grass is cut when it needs to be and not when it does not - that was recommendation 30. There were lots of other recommendations but they have all largely been ignored.

Despite the anger and frustration of our constituents, there has been no action to tackle Glendale's incompetence and there is definitely no action to reduce their profligate profits.

As your softly softly approach towards Glendales has not produced any improvements to service, imposing financial penalties appears to be the only option left. Financial penalties will fall to Glendales to take account for its poor and derisory service delivery.

I am sure the residents of Leeds want to know why penalties have not been recorded and why your administration has been incapable of resolving this very straightforward issue over the last three years. I would also personally like to know what the cost has been of supplementing this contract and you will also account to the people of Leeds for this.

As Councillor Procter said, you have now got a quality operator at the Mansion. It took four years to find that quality operator. If you had been as thoughtful and as thorough in finding this contractor, maybe we would also have a quality operator to deliver our grass cutting service. We do not at the moment and we need to do something about it. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR BRETT: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am not, I suspect, going to use my full time on this so that we can perhaps go on a little further. Councillor Grayshon, I welcome your comments about the new Morley Sports Centre and thank you for your words in support of both officers and others over the new fund and I am sure we will be happy to tell you more detail as we get to it on how this fund develops and how it is spent.

I hear what Councillor Lowe says, your comments are noted, but the way in which I am expected to respond means that without the details before me about when these photographs were taken, about whether it was ALMO land, clearly you have found a case where it was very wet and the grass was very long. I am not

going to try to give you chapter and verse but the promise we will make is that when he is well, which will be very soon, Councillor Smith will look at these and will get back to you in writing about the issues that you raise. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

(ii) Development & Regeneration

THE LORD MAYOR: Right on Development & Regeneration, Councillor Leadley.

COUNCILLOR LEADLEY: My Lord Mayor, I wish to speak on Minute 50, the meeting of the Executive Board held on 16<sup>th</sup> July which mentions sums of money being spent on the assessment of new generation transport, which essentially is, of course, the trolley bus system. It is right that the feasibility of a trolley bus system should be investigated and I supported that when serving on Metro last year. However, I do hope that we will have quick, form and economical "Yes" or "No", preferably not more than a year from now. It would be unacceptable if not introducing trolley buses developed into a multi-million pound industry following the £40m spent on not building Supertram, which must have been extremely profitable for some. Thank you, my Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I will keep my comments brief. It is just to welcome on page 50 Minute 54, which concerns the decision of the Executive Board to raise affordable housing targets and change the guidelines for housing mix. These are, of course, informal planning policies which I do not think anybody could argue with. I have concerns and I would welcome Councillor Carter's comments.

We have often been seen, not just by our members but as an Authority, as a bit of a soft touch for developers. I am concerned in that what will be a harder economic environment for developers coming to us with planning applications, that the tendency will be for us to be even more relaxed than we should be in dealing with applications and take at face value what planning applicants and their consultants are saying in support of their plans and saying that they cannot include X amount of affordable housing because it stops the scheme from stacking up.

It is very much to say this is going to be a difficult economic environment for developers. We as an Authority should not allow them to get away with things that I think perhaps they have got away with in the past and there will be general agreement, and I certainly have a lot of officers in the Council say the same to me, that we have been too soft in the past and we need to be harder with developers to make sure that we get our affordable development and we get the kind of housing mix that we want included in this informal planning policy. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR PRYKE: Lord Mayor, this is on Minute 53, page 49. It is the Annual Update of the Water Asset Management Working Group.

I would like to commend to Council the work of the Group that produced, amongst other things, this document on the progress towards avoiding flooding and give our thanks from this side of the Chamber at any rate to the staff in Emergency Planning and Land Drainage who have worked to this end. Without their staff we would be up the creek without the proverbial.

There was a letter in the paper fairly recently saying why do we bother with emergency planning in Leeds? This is one of the reasons why we bother with emergency planning in Leeds and we have no intention of dropping the section. Thank you very much to the staff there.

I come back to Council today from a meeting of the Finance Committee of the Regional Flood Defence Committee, which is putting forward to the Environment Agency with some confidence that over the next ten years the Environment Agency should use Government money to invest £85.7m in flood defences in Leeds. This would provide £959,000 for the Upper Aire bit, £885,000 for Wyke Beck - Mick has gone, never mind - £806,000 for the Lower Aire part, £100,000 for Fairburn, £250,000 for Micklefield and Methley, £975,000 for Farnley Wood Beck and £4.3m for Wortley Beck. The Greens have gone as well, but never mind.

Best of all it is £89m - that is £89m - for the Leeds City Scheme, which sounds like a city centre one but it is not just the city centre, it is Kirkstall all the way down to Rothwell. That is £89m that we are proposing as a regional committee that the Government spend on this area and we are confident that over the next ten years that money is available to be spent.

Thank you very much to my colleagues for helping me on that and I commend the report to Council. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR ILLINGWORTH: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I have just crept under the bar! I rise to speak on Executive Board 2<sup>nd</sup> September Minutes 60 and 81 and in doing so I declare a personal interest as a Director of Kirkstall Valley Park.

I have asked the Council to disclose written details of all the contacts between the Council and potential developers for St Ann's Mills between January 2003 and the present day and to provide details of what was discussed. I have appealed against the refusal to release this information.

I still have no date for my appeal hearing. Parts of this enquiry have been outstanding for almost two years, although our constitution requires a hearing within 20 days.

I seek this as information, Lord Mayor, because people are concerned about the risk of insider dealing. We know that there have been detailed discussions with some potential developers as a result of which the Council is to relax the conditions under which this property is sold. We have no details of any relaxation, nor of any conditions that remain.

Previous reports to the Executive Board have been riddled with arithmetical and transcription errors to the point where vital information is misleading or wrong. We now know that the site has been valued since 2004 on the basis of intensive office development, although in 2005 this intention was explicitly denied to the Development Scrutiny Board.

Members may not be aware that this land was originally acquired for a public open space and is located in a high risk flood plain where development would contravene our adopted planning policies.

More than half the site, Councillor Pryke, lies outside the proposed flood defences for the Leeds Flood Alleviation Scheme and the remainder of the so-called development land is actually required for those flood defences themselves. There is no spare building land at St Ann's Mills.

The site provides a habitat for protected species and in particular there is an otter resting place in the immediate vicinity. I am not legally able to reveal the exact location of the otter holt because otters are protected species under the European Directive, Lord Mayor, and it is a criminal offence to damage their environment or

even to reveal their precise location, but it is difficult to see how anybody could develop this site without causing such criminal damage.

There is a major unresolved issue about responsibility for the 18<sup>th</sup> Century weir and who will pay for it. In short, Lord Mayor, this site requires a public planning brief. It is needed for three reasons: firstly, to protect the good name of this Council; secondly, to protect the interests of those who might bid for the site; and thirdly, Lord Mayor, to allow a voice to the good people of Kirkstall who so far have been completely excluded from this affair. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Thank you, Lord Mayor. First of all, I thank Councillor Leadley for his comments on NGT. We were very fortunate after much lobbying, I have to say, to get the support of the Regional Transport Board for the first £150m. Don't anyone run away with the idea that that means that we are going to get £150m because, of course, this Government's idea of devolving power means that it devolved discussion but they keep the power, so they have, of course, to confirm that we actually get that money. I entirely agree with Councillor Leadley, this city cannot afford, any part of it cannot afford another 12, 13, 14 year debacle like Supertram. We have to see progress and we have to see it quickly. I would hope all members of this Council would put whatever pressure they can on the DFT, that notoriously dilatory department, to move with speed in the discussions with us and not lead us down the garden path yet again.

Water Asset Management. Again, thank you to Councillor Pryke for his comments about the emergency planning team and, indeed, all the people who work in the department in connect with flood alleviation. They do a splendid job. As part of the Government's latest report Leeds' officers were consulted for a considerable time and lots of the work that they have done we have done or they have done in Leeds was used as an evidence base for the report.

Again, I do not like it when I see pictures of Government Ministers in the paper and announcements about Flood Alleviation Schemes that give the impression we have actually got the money. We have not. All we have got is, finally, officers in NECRA along with our officers working up a scheme. It is essential for the future of this city that this Flood Alleviation work is carried out.

Now on to housing. I am pleased Councillor Lewis supports what we are doing, but let me flag up a word of warning. The housing market in this country and in this city is extremely fragile. The planning officers and, indeed, Plans Panel members will have to do a balancing act and have to be extremely clever at it to get the maximum number of affordable units we can without stopping house building altogether. If you think I am scaremongering, I am not. There will be a debate later on today. If you have not had the statistics about what is going on in the building industry I suggest you study them. The building industry, the house building industry, is on its knees and we do not want to see house building stop in this city. Our policy has been made very clear. You know what our policy is. We want to build more affordable homes, we want to build indeed more homes on brown field sites and we are trying to get the Government to be reasonable and talk sensibly to us on that, but that is another very difficult task with the current crop of Ministers.

As usual there was no notice until a few moments ago of Councillor Illingworth's intervention. I find his comments thoroughly offensive. He mirrored some comments he has made which actually reflect on all members of the Executive Board in an e-mail to somebody, a copy of which I have here. Comments about insider dealing are thoroughly offensive to officers and members alike. They are unsubstantiated. I understand there is another rare species often sighted around Kirkstall Mills - it is called the greater spotted plonker. *(laughter)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. I am afraid the time has now come that I must call on Councillor Brett to sum up.

COUNCILLOR BRETT: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am going to do this in reverse order because I want to make a promise to Councillor Illingworth. I hope, John, you will listen very carefully to this. You will get your hearing on freedom of information but before officers can sort it, you have got to finalise what you want. If you keep changing the goalposts about what you want, what detail you want, we are never going to get to the hearing, so if you will finalise precisely what this hearing is about, we will get it under way.

I am not going to say any more about development or any more about my own portfolio because those are areas that we have already covered.

It leaves the long debate about sports facilities. I was struck by the historic note, backward looking note and tone of much of what we have heard, and I thought do I raise this piece of paper and again start by looking backward, but I am going to because it does make and reinforce the key point that Councillor Procter has already made.

The KPMG study, as we have heard, was commissioned by the then ruling Labour Group in 1999 and completed in 2000, four years before we took over. The study concluded - and I am reading very carefully here so I do not get this wrong - that there was an over supply of swimming pools of that time of 3.7 pools.

You could argue all sorts of things about what that means but what it means to me is that the vision that the then Labour Group had - and I pay tribute to the early 1980s when this started, a lot of good work was done opening the pools - but the vision seemed to be a bog standard 25 metre pool in every area.

The study in the year 2000 went on to say that the main conclusion was that the current operation of pools owned by Leeds City Council and run by Leeds City Council, the current operation was at that time thought to be not sustainable over the short to medium term which, in view of what was said eight years ago, makes it actually quite amazing that we are where we are.

The one thing that makes absolutely crystal is that senior members of the Labour administration did have a report that made it clear eight years ago something must be done. I do not think anything was done of any real significance with swimming pools before we took over in 2004.

I want to hit on the head one of the things that several Labour members said which is that we are closing pools, it is alleged, in the poorest areas of Leeds. I do not believe there is any doubt the poorest area includes Harehills, a large area of back-to-backs, one of the poorest areas I believe, certainly the second on the general indices of deprivation and until very recently with certainly the largest number of unemployed, was my ward, Burmantofts, Richmond Hill, Lincoln Green, going across the border into adjoining Hyde Park and Woodhouse, Little London. All of that area has never had a Council swimming pool. Leeds 9 has never been served, so this idea that somehow you close pools in the poorest areas - well, in some of the poorest they never had them.

I want to go on and I am not absolutely sure, Mick I apologise in advance if it was not you that alluded to this but one of the many Labour speakers alluded to private pools and private ownership. This was a myth that was very heavily peddled two years ago in 2006 to muddy the waters when we were consulting at that stage

about three new pools using Labour Government money your Government's money. It was one of the things that upset people in Inner East Leeds that local Labour politicians said, "It will not be run by the Council, it will be a privately run pool. You will not be able to afford it" and it led, quite clearly, to such dissention in the area that there was no new pool. Essentially Inner East Leeds lost the Government money that some at the time thought it should have had.

I therefore welcome - and I am not sure I have done this before, Bernard, but I after your 80<sup>th</sup> birthday I very much welcome - Bernard's remarks saying let us have a proper consultation, let us not be entrenched, let us all have open minds. I am very much trying to go into this consultation with an open mind, so I welcome your remarks. I do not know how they fit with your saying to me that people were entrenched because this paper gave too much detail and then it seemed like five minutes later Councillor Taggart was saying completely the opposite, that there was not enough specifics in this report.

That tends to show me that we probably got it right, that we were giving a general outline of the thinking but not giving specifics like exactly where do we want a new Inner East Leeds pool to be? I have talked about somewhere on York Road, but I want to consult with you, if you will talk to us sensibly, with the people of Inner East Leeds, exactly where that site should be.

I welcome also Councillor Nash's honesty in saying to us in this Chamber that some of the pools were not as well maintained as they should be and that certainly is, I think, an accepted position that all of us would say if we could find agreement around all this Chamber about the Council owned pools, we would agree they need money spending on them. That is something we can easily, I hope, come to an agreement on.

I am quite happy to look forward on this issue. Nobody has so far this afternoon mentioned the increased cost of fuel. That is a crucial element to what is sustainable with swimming pools run by the council or, frankly, run by anyone else. I hope we can go forward to have a discussion that takes account of these new variables.

We do need a new vision. Civil servants, in my view, will give us resources if we can produce a shared vision. The last round of talking to the Government with the civil servants laid some constraints on what initially was three new pools, that they had to be just that - three new pools - and yet this was at the time that this represented as, "Well, we need the money to refurbish this place and that place."

We need this new vision. We are inviting you to help us to form what hopefully will be an agreed vision on this very difficult area.

I am not sure that we are going to get an agreed position. I hope we will. I am laying that challenge down to you that you work with us to get this new vision. In my mind, one of the things that distinguishes principled opposition from opposition for opposition's sake, is the way in which certain opportunities are grasped. At national level whatever else you say about the opposition parties, they are not, in my view, responding to every minor thing that goes wrong, whereas my view, sadly, of what a lot of the time we hear from the opposition is, it does not matter how minor the changes, their view is, no change is all we are prepared to have.

I have to say that is the hallmark of a party that is not fit to govern and I hope it means if you continue in that attitude that you will not be in power in Leeds for a long time to come. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. After that now I call for the vote on the motion to receive the Minutes. Those in favour please show. Those against? Abstentions? Therefore the motion is CARRIED.

Five o'clock, the delights await you in the Banqueting Hall and we shall return here in 20 minutes.

*(Council adjourned for a short time)*

ITEM 9 - WHITE PAPER MOTION - PROPOSED INCREASES IN CHARGES FOR COMMUNITY CARE SERVICES

THE LORD MAYOR: We will restart at Item 9, White Paper Motion. Councillor Coupar.

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Members of Council will remember at our July meeting the comment I made about the consultation process regarding the increase in income for community care services. In fact all members of Council supported the extension of the process by one month. We were calling for a more inclusive, open and transparent consultation and I am sure that colleagues on all benches expected that to happen.

I can tell this Chamber that has not happened. The consultation has been extended for a month but nothing happened for the first month. It seems that everything was just pushed back by a month. I am staggered that if we all agree to do something in this Chamber that it should happen and not be ignored. So much for local democracy, eh?

I have been informed that the consultation so far as been with the Service Users and Carers Reference Group. I am sure it will surprise other members of the Council, as it did me, to know that the number of people sitting on that group is six. Yes, just six people. Other groups have not been consulted yet as they do not meet in August, although we did point out back in July that the timing of this consultation was all wrong, not only because of the groups not meeting in August but family members' and carers' holiday periods. The very people that these increases will affect, the service users, have not been consulted yet and the consultation is due to finish in mid-October. It gives little time for them to discuss or voice their views. This administration has already pre-determined the consultation as the question is not should we increase charges but how should we increase charges.

I will turn to the proposed increases now. These relate to service such as Homecare, day centre attendance, meals and transport as well as other services. The options are, number 1, to increase the charges for each service and increase the maximum charge per week - currently this is £88. A questionnaire that is proposed to be sent to service users suggests this is brought in line with residential care, which is currently £420. This would be an increase of £340 a week.

Option 2, to increase the amount of disposable income taken into consideration. Currently only 50% is considered and the proposal is to increase to 75% or 100%.

Option 3 is to take account of a person's capital. Currently this is not taken into account and you should remember that a person's capital would be considered if they have £13,500 in savings.

It is not a case of just one option being chosen but maybe all three or a combination of them all. It feels a bit like the pick and mix counter, only not very

sweet. This is very confusing for carers and service users as it is not clear what they are agreeing or disagreeing with. Some of the reasons put forward to justify the increases are that Leeds is a low-charging Authority, something I am sure we on these benches are all very proud of. Adult Social Care are aiming for top performance status from CSCAN. How exactly increasing charges will change the opinion of the Inspectors is unclear and, by the way, we note the recent inspection went well and the areas identified for concern have made significant improvements, and we look forward to the outcome and an improvement in the ratings.

It is also stated that increasing charges will improve fairness and equity in the system. It is proposed to develop a policy framework. Embedded in this framework is the power to make delegated decisions which would allow the Chief Officer to set and approve charges for new services. We believe this is not the way forward and that decisions on charges or increasing charges should be made at Executive Board or full Council level.

We need to address how all these charges will impact on the people who use the services. In the Executive Board report it looks at some users paying £5 more a week, or at worst £30 more a week. However, having received some examples it seems that the possibility of seeing an increase of £170 a week is not being excluded. It is still not clear what the maximum increase is any one service user may have to pay.

It is time the administration came clean with the people of Leeds and told them what you want from them. Is it fairness and equity or is it money, and if it is money, how much money?

We know that this administration has already raised the line of eligibility, which means that only those people with substantial or critical needs now receive services from Adult Social Care in Leeds. These are people with very complex care needs, who may be young or old, who cannot deal with these needs alone. An example I have been given is an elderly lady who has worked most of her life and has a modest pension and modest savings, but she has physical disabilities requiring assistance from Homecare each day. She may, under your proposals, have to pay the increase of £170 a week.

Please remember this is not just about the elderly but anybody over 18 who has substantial care needs and requires services from Adult Social Care. Cost increases of this magnitude could have the effect of the service users cutting down on the care they need or stopping it altogether.

The administration have brought these proposals forward without a word to anyone on these benches. The first we heard about them was when the Executive Board papers were published in June. I do hope it was not because we had an election in May.

Lord Mayor, I would like to know what alternative sources of funding have been explored. Is increasing charges the only option or have other ways of saving money been looked at such as cutting back on some of the fees paid to consultants or using some of the profit made from car parking charges.

Councillor Harrand, I did consider your amendment but, as usual, all you have to say is to slate the Government and not take responsibility for your own proposals. Your amendment makes no mention of consultation or increased charges and it is almost as if these decisions you make happen by magic and not of your own hand. Of course, I and my colleagues would like to see the Government give Leeds more



money for Adult Social Care, but it is not just about that. It is about how you choose to allocate what you have got and how you prioritise that spending.

I know that many members of Council across this Chamber are unhappy about the proposed increases and I ask all of you to consider seriously the impact these increased charges will have on people in all your wards.

We all know that the current administration oppose the introduction of fairer charging, which was justified by strongly held principles. What happened to them? Did they dissolve as soon as you tasted the power and money, or did it take a while longer than that?

Lord Mayor, in conclusion I am moving this White Paper in the hope that the controlling benches will stop this sham of a consultation and go back to the beginning with these proposals, explore other avenues of funding and, yes, demand more money from the Government. You should also remember that we demand that you treat the people of this city with fairness and respect which you are not doing in this process. Thank you. *(Applause)*

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

THE LORD MAYOR: I call on Councillor Harrand to move the amendment.

COUNCILLOR HARRAND: Thank you, Lord Mayor. It is nice to have a discussion about financing the social services and congratulations, Debra, being the first social services spokesman for four years to persuade your front bench to introduce such a White Paper. Well done.

I am going to talk about the financial parts of the White Paper and then Brenda is going to say something about the first bit that talks about the performance of social services. We know why there has not been a debate on social service financing introduced by the Labour Party in the last four years because some of us have the scars of June 2004 still on us. Debra, I do not think you were part of the Labour front bench group when they passed the last budget you passed for social services. I forget who was on that front bench for now but I can be encouraged to remember if necessary.

For others who were not around at the time, I just mention that within a week of being given this job I was summoned to a meeting of senior finance people to be told that a quarter of the way through the year unless we did something really serious we were going to overspend social services budget by £15m. That was the Labour budget on social services at a time when £15m was equal to the whole reserves of the city.

Since then I concede that senior officers of Adult and Children's Social Services have spent too much time on budgeting and the position is still not perfect. I shall be very disappointed if our overspend, if there is one this year, is anything like 10% of the one that you left us last time we were invited to take over.

This review of charging is one of the illustrations of the eternal battles to keep spending to what we have available and the pressures are simply nothing new. There are more older people - good. Everybody I know is old or intends to be. Expectations are higher - good. What has been available, what has been acceptable in the past is no longer acceptable now and there are people in this Chamber who will remember we thought Meanwood Park Hospital was acceptable. Twenty-five years ago that was an acceptable provision of social care in Leeds.

It is the pressure of the double whammy of the unfair settlement and the capping of Council tax increases - bad news. There is a serious problem we cannot avoid, the tradition of funding social services here which has put Leeds completely out of kilter in comparison with other cities, well intentioned no doubt but certainly not sustainable now. As responsible elected members we cannot let our electorate think we can go on like this - manifestly we cannot.

Where can we look to pay for the staff salaries, the cushion payments we have to pay? Till about 20 years ago the logical thing would have been we go to the Leeds City ratepayers and ask them, make the case. We cannot do that any more, that has been finished under various Governments. The city already pays out more on Adult Health and Social Care than the Government expects us to. Priorities, Debra. They say this is what you should spend. We spend more. We already prioritise, divert from funds which are implicitly meant for other parts of this organisation to social care, we do that already.

So what do we spend already? Where could we cut? Less staff? Less well paid staff? Discontinue some services? Should we charge users for services? All these are things that are under review of alternative sources of funding, the White Paper. We do not like it but we have provision to charge people for our services and the Labour Government have charged as often as we have. It is a tradition that is long established and at a time of real financial difficulty like now, we have a duty to look at it. Those inspectors and auditors who make a living out of inspecting social services would expect us to do that.

We are on this subject 15 years behind some other Councils. This sort of review took place in Sheffield and Barnsley ten years ago and more. We have many years to catch up. I must tell Council that even if Leeds was to go from being bottom of the league to top of the league for charging - which is not going to happen - you would still have enormous financial pressures, pressures we cannot solve on our own.

Debra, we look for, when you wind up, what your suggestions are to where we would save these moneys, because it is millions and if there are proposals we will take them away and seriously look at them.

Where is the best place to look? Who has the power to solve the problems of older people in society? There is only one answer. Who has got enough money to fight wars and invade other countries? This amendment recognises the only realistic place we would look for a long term solution - and God knows, we have had enough of the short term solutions this last ten years - is the Treasury. The Treasury can find money for Olympic swimming pools and aircraft carriers which slices our social services expenditure every year. If we had just had the settlement that the Health Service got this last ten years we would not be having this debate, we would have none of these problems.

The consultation there is is not half way through - it is not the middle of October, it is the end of October - and we look forward to the written comments of all parties, particularly the Labour Party, about what their proposal would be.

I would ask you to be realistic. We have all to face the consequences here now in 2008, of a misplaced central Government economy that has been going on for ten years. I do not like this any more than you do. Nobody enjoys having to conduct this sort of review and I instinctively share your distaste at having to do it but until these overpaid suits in London can be made to look at social services fairly, this is unavoidable.

Reviewing all alternative sources of funding, like it says in the White Paper, will always come back in the end to the same place - there is only one source of this money and it is not in Leeds. This amendment recognises the primary responsibility for our present position and I have pleasure moving it. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, I call on Councillor Lancaster to second.

COUNCILLOR LANCASTER: Thank you, Lord Mayor. In seconding the amendment I will pick up on some of the points mentioned by Councillor Harrand regarding improvements in the performance of the Adult Social Care Department and here are some facts hot off the press.

At the end of 2006/07 there were 40 people per 100,000 population in receipt of direct payments. By the end of 2007/08 that had risen to 97 per 100,000. A big improvement since 2004. Between 2006/07 and 2007/08, the rate of admission of elderly people into permanent residential nursing placements had decreased by 20% from 86 per 10,000 population to 69 per 10,000 - another big improvement since 2004.

Between 2006/07 and 2007/08, the number of carers being provided with services to help them care for people they are looking after, short term breaks, etc, has more than doubled from six per 100 people looked after to 14 per 100 - another big improvement since 2004.

In 2004/05 the number of adults and elderly service users who received a review of their care plan was 18.6%. In 2007/08 the figure was 63% and first quarter figures for 2008/09 suggest that for the current year it will be 80% - another big improvement since 2004.

In 2004/05 less than half of new elderly service users, 43% in fact, were being assessed within the Government target timescales. During 2007/08, however, the figure has risen to 88%, another big improvement since 2004.

We are going in the right direction. We recognise there is still more to do and room for improvement in some areas - for example, safeguarding, assessment, care management, carer support and helping older people continue to live at home and, as I have already said, at least we recognise that.

The Government - your Government - has announced a shake-up of care services. The Government - your Government - are directing us to review the way care is both provided and funded as forecast costs outstrip projected funding allocations both locally and nationally.

One Local Authority found that of 100 care packages purchased by individualised budgets, 70% of those people had bought other provision that the Local Authority had not provided for and that means they were making their own choice and it might not be the old-fashioned system of what was available. They were exercising their right to choose how they wanted to spend that budget and they were doing that to suit themselves.

The challenge for all of us is to move from fitting people into services, into services which are self-directed, fair, accessible, responsive and safe. The challenge is how we champion that change and how we have the courage to bring about that change.

I will just say, you really need to get involved and make suggestions rather than just keep going on about these. I would hate to think that anybody would have to pay that amount more but we really need the facts, we need the proof of what you are saying. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR BRETT: Thank you, Lord Mayor. It is fascinating when we do get what we appear to be positive contributions - hit the consultants. It is all too easy, is it not? We will cut the consultants. I suspect that in many cases some of you do not really realise what these consultancy things are about. I know that we spend £25,000 a year on asking outside experts to advise us about interest rates that allow us to move our money around. If we did not spend that money we simply would not save the money that we have in recent years. If we had not had consultants over selling Leeds-Bradford Airport we would not have had the huge sum that you all wanted to spend for us. I have to say that I cannot treat very seriously the suggestions that have been made about alternative funding.

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: What about car parking charges then?

COUNCILLOR BRETT: I am extremely concerned about the culture that says low charging is always good, Labour is proud of being low charging. I understand where you are coming from but we on our side would prefer to say, as Brenda tried to explain, the residents' choice comes first. We are about providing services to the residents of Leeds. In some cases that means difficult choices; that is what this is about. Nobody pretends this consultation is easy and it may well be that there could be alternative sources of funding. We would be very interested to look seriously at things that we really thought would allow us to save some of the increases that we might otherwise have to consider. This is not something we are refusing to do. This is a consultation and I will be disappointed, Debra, if by the end of October you have not had your chance to seriously put to Peter and others your thoughts as to how we can move forward on this.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: She has not got any.

COUNCILLOR BRETT: I want to point out that if at the end of the consultation - and perhaps I should stress nothing has been divided - the middle moderate proposals are what are finally agreed and implemented, 31% of the people using the services will see no charges, no change. 51% would pay an extra of less than £5 a week. We are talking about the vast majority of users either having no change to the amount that they pay or a relatively small sum.

I say "relatively small" because I know full well that if that is the case some people will not find the increase easy to find. I have to say that my view at the end of the day is I would rather have and explore an expansive model where we did seriously consider asking people to pay a bit more so that we can help more people in Leeds, because it is not the same world as the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. People are living longer, as Peter has said. My father worked for 40 years and 18 months after he retired his body could not cope any more and he had a heart attack, and that was common in that age. Now, thankfully, we are finding people living 20 or 30 years after the time when they stop work. That is a huge improvement but it means we have all got to change our thinking. The numbers that applied 20 years ago simply do not work now, so unless we get, as we are saying in this motion, more money from the Treasury, we have to do something. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I have to congratulate Brenda on sounding like Gordon Brown. She actually commented on a report that is not in the public domain, but actually was very impressive with your statistics, except

you did not really do what we were asking to do in the White Paper and talk about these charges, Brenda.

I will say this to Richard about consultancy. We accept that where there are areas of specialism you need consultancy, but do you really need consultancy to recruit staff to this Council like we have been doing over the last few years? Do you need to spend millions of pounds on things that public officers are being paid to do and I have to say on consultancy, we had a debate earlier on about sports centres - do we need yet another consultant paid thousands of pounds doing something that we have excellent officers who are capable of doing it? That is what I think about consultancy - there are millions wasted.

Really the point is this, Richard, as you are going off the point. When we met at last Council we all came to what I thought was a very sensible and constructive position that we were unhappy about the consultation period and we needed to go out again and look at this. First of all we needed to look at the options available because this is the biggest change in social services charges I have ever seen and I am sure many people in this Chamber have ever seen in decades. The second thing we said to do is that we would try to consult as many people as possible and it is important to do so.

I cannot help but feel we have missed a trick. We have missed a trick. We still, even when we are stood here, have not consulted with the people who are most directly affected, the elderly and disabled. They are still there and I know we have extended the consultation period but believe you me, six weeks soon goes. It goes very quickly when you are trying to do a massive consultation exercise.

It does remind me when Brenda said you never come out with options, it does remind me of 2003 because I remember the options you were calling about, Brenda, and your group, that group telling us that we had to scrap them and reverse them. That was the only answer you gave us to fairer charges - scrap them and reverse them and we will when we came in. That was the only option we heard throughout 2003.

I think in terms of being constructive we have got you, you have got a record of it, we have got a history of you and we have you on the verbatim.

To go back to the consultation, in 2003 when we were being accused of being evil and wicked by Councillor Carter and being told that we ought to reverse it, I remember after us consulting 2,000 people, Councillor Carter said this:

"We consulted 2,000 of the service users, less than 10% of the service users were consulted and we said we have consulted. My goodness me, the amount of money this Authority spends on PR, publicity, consultants and consultancy, my goodness me, you probably if you added all the money up would have had enough money to waive these charges altogether."

I remember that and that was based on 2000 and as yet we have only consulted six people in the city on a massive change to social services charges.

As Councillor Coupar said, we are hurtling towards a position in the January budget to increase charges, and there is some argument in the paper, I am not totally negative, you can listen to the argument and say yes, we are behind other comparative Authorities - we can hear that one. What I think is a real big challenge is whether we historically move disposable income up from 50% to 100%. Whether we

start tackling people who have only got £13,500 - and I agree with Councillor Harris when he was here when he said Leeds does not have to do this, Leeds does not have to copy Government guidance or any other Authority. I say to this, because we have had a debate earlier on about the role of the state, isn't the role of the local Councillors to say to the most vulnerable, to say to the elderly, to say to the infirm, "You should not be taking the total burden of this. We shall be looking at other options so the most needy and the most vulnerable do not pay for the increases to this" and that is what this White Paper is about. It is saying let us have a look at these options, let us extend the consultation and let us have a proper fair deal for the elderly in this city because they deserve it. I move, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Councillor Selby.

COUNCILLOR SELBY: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I rise to support the White Paper in the name of Councillor Coupar. In order to get Homecare a person's needs have to be substantial. The reality is that they need to fit the criteria for attendance allowance or disability living allowance. It means they need frequent attention from other people throughout the day or constant supervision to prevent danger to themselves or to others. They are vulnerable and the last thing they need is additional financial worry.

In 2003 when we were in control and proposed fairer charging, the scheme which we proposed charged far less than comparable Conservative Councils in the area. We decided only 50% of disposable income would be considered. We did not take into account savings. When we discussed this matter Councillor Harris commented that we are not talking about optional care, we are talking about people needing services to live and to have some quality of life and that we should not be asking any of them to put their hands in their pockets any more than we should ask the people who set up the LGI to put their hands in their pockets. He was supported by every member of the Liberal Group. If that was appropriate in 2003 it is appropriate now.

Councillor Carter in the same debate commented that elderly and disabled people will be hurt by what was being proposed. If that was the case in 2003 it certainly is the case in 2008. This Authority is now proposing to take savings into account and also looking into increasing the amount of disposable income. What does that mean in practice? When party groups had their briefing we asked that question of officers and we got the information. It means that a person getting £200 a week retirement pension together with Attendance Allowance and savings of £13,500 receiving 20 hours of Homecare will face an increase in the amount payable of £170. It is not going to be very long before those savings are totally wiped out.

A person owning their own home with income of £280 a week, £50,000 savings, getting 15 hours of Homecare, going to a Day Centre for two days a week, faces an increase of £95 a week. Again, it is not going to be long before those savings are totally wiped out.

When I showed these figures to the co-ordinator of one of the Good Neighbours Schemes in my ward, the comment that came back was this, "The increases are shocking, they will cause lots of older people to cancel vital care that they will not be willing or able to pay at these very high prices. Then Adult Social Care will say this proves there is no need for this service as they have done with Day Care and if they make the services so difficult to obtain, or too expensive, the take up will drop allowing them to cut services and claw back costs, hence the Authority will be able to balance budgets. A massive increase in the cost of social care will put more vulnerable people at risk."

That is the view of co-ordinators dealing with elderly people and disabled people in my ward.

Lord Mayor, that is what David Cameron's Conservatives in Leeds are proposing, that is what Nick Clegg's Liberals up in Leeds are proposing; service cuts for the elderly and for the disabled, tax cuts for the wealthy. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: Thank you, Lord Mayor, and the welcome appreciation from the other side of the Council Chamber.

I think Richard Brett made the mistake that lots of newly elected members to this Council make, which is that he let the cat out of the bag when he made the statement that low charges do not come first. I think he has let the cat out of the bag about what this administration wants because let us bear in mind this administration's track record. I always think it is useful to look backwards to see what is going to happen in the future.

What has this administration done with childcare vouchers for these young children in society? They have increased charges, they have massively increased charges for childcare vouchers. Do we think they will do the same out of this so-called consultation? Probably the same.

What have they done to other charges across the city? Car parking charges are up. People shopping in Leeds on Saturday pay far more in car parking charges under this administration. People going to leisure centres. An adult swim at a leisure centre increased by over 6% this year. Maybe it is no wonder people are not going to leisure centres when they are having to pay this massive increase. Once again, it was another charge that this administration saw and every time it sees a charge it just cannot help putting it up.

How about older people? Do we believe they will not put charges up for older people? Who knows. How about people in the city, even the dead in this city face increased charges with attempts at increases cremations, attempts at increases for burials, so this administration is an administration that loves its charges and that is why the Labour Group is quite right to bring a White Paper to this Council meeting to say that every other option before charges should be looked at, because we are trying to bring an alternative to this rather than charging on with increased charges which is this administration's stock in charge.

Quite frankly I would not be surprised if this administration did not listen to a word we said, but I think it is quite useful to listen to what their own bosses in London say. I think I have here - and I say I think because you cannot be too careful with what you find on blogs (*laughter*) but I think I have here a Conservative Council somewhere in the country very kindly posted on to the internet Eric Pickles' instructions to Conservative Councillors. It is always useful to look at what instructions the Conservative bosses in London are giving to them because as you know, those members here who have lived through the Thatcher years will remember that when it comes to Leeds it is London bosses first, Leeds second for the Tory Group in this Council Chamber.

What does Eric Pickles say about the Conservative Group? He says - this is Eric Pickles speaking:

"Nationally we will not hesitate to criticise any supposedly Conservative Council which props up a discredited stealth tax regime."

I will put this to the Council Chamber, sneaking in charges for childcare, sneaking in charges for car parking, sneaking in charges for leisure centres and now sneaking in charges for older people's services is nothing more than a discredited stealth tax regime. If you will not listen to us listen to your own bosses in London. Support our White Paper, look at all the other options and let us try and keep, unlike Richard Brett, Leeds's charges to a minimum. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR CLEASBY: Thank you, Lord Mayor. So, Councillor Harrand, you have heard you and the administration have missed a trick. You heard it from Councillor Wakefield. Well, I heard it from Councillor Wakefield. Let me tell you about the big trick that they missed. Do you remember when your route into Exec Board and I stayed in Scrutiny and moved down two floors? I took Sherry Bradley's office. She, for new members of the Council, had been the Exec Board member for Social Services. Being the willing lad that I am I physically carried my computer down the two floors, from where you are now to my chosen office, set it all up as best I could leaving the plug to go in the wall, got our officer - "Will you plug it in the wall?" "You cannot just do that; got to go off somewhere." He came running back some minutes later. "Councillor Cleasby, it is going to take me a little bit longer." "Why?" He said, "No, Councillor Cleasby, you do not understand. There has never been a computer in this office."

Yes, Sherry Bradley did not have a computer on her desk.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Put it in the broom cupboard.

COUNCILLOR CLEASBY: Her computer was on her secretary's desk so every time you e-mailed Sherry Bradley her secretary printed it out so it was on her desk for her to see. Even worse, I will give you one guess then who had Sherry Bradley's car park pass? Her secretary because she drove Sherry Bradley round and got the mileage for driving her round.

Another trick they missed - gobsmacked by this information - I was talking to a colleague in Horsforth who worked in our social services department (*interruption*)

COUNCILLOR: Brian, be careful.

COUNCILLOR ATHA: On a point of order, Lord Mayor, again, Standing Orders say they must confine themselves to the business. Quite frankly what the parking pass is for someone else who is now dead and gone I cannot imagine.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Lord Mayor, he has made his point.

COUNCILLOR CLEASBY: I am responding, Lord Mayor, to the words of the other speaker.

COUNCILLOR ATHA: He really ought to be forced to speak to the business in hand.

THE LORD MAYOR: Maybe, Councillor Cleasby, if you could moderate it.

COUNCILLOR CLEASBY: I will continue, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: I do not want this side upsetting.

COUNCILLOR CLEASBY: Lord Mayor, the trick they also missed on that side is Keith Merry did not have one on his desk either and used to boast that he would never have one on his desk. How on earth...



COUNCILLOR ATHA: Lord Mayor, this is flouting the Lord Mayor's office now by ignoring the instructions.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Cleasby, please refrain from that style of reference, will you?

COUNCILLOR CLEASBY: In that case, Lord Mayor, can I ask another question? Can I, then, ask of you and Council who the Leader of Council was at this time? Am I allowed to ask that question, Lord Mayor, because the answer, Lord Mayor, is Keith Wakefield. Here he is criticising this administration, Lord Mayor.

Remember, Lord Mayor, when you were on the benches with us you were as appalled as we were at the £15m deficit that had to be found.

COUNCILLOR TAGGART: I think Lord Mayor was too much for you, Brian. You are cracking up.

COUNCILLOR CLEASBY: I think you will agree with me, Lord Mayor, I have not strayed too far from the truth but in fact I have passed on the truth. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR FELDMAN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I get sick of listening to platitudes that go on and on and on.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Stop attacking Brian!

COUNCILLOR FELDMAN: I like to convince myself that I am practical. Peter Harrand has said there is only one way in which he can keep the prices of this as they should be, low. On this side they want to keep the prices low.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: We did not say that.

COUNCILLOR FELDMAN: Who are the people who can help? There is only one, Peter spelled it out - the Treasury. Why then do you *(interruption)*. You have got all the Labour MPs in this city, you boasted to us that they are all Labour MPs. Why on earth don't you speak to them? Why on earth don't they do something? What are they doing there sat on their you-know-whats? What we want is some extra money from them. The Treasury is there, you have got the Members of Parliament. What I have got is a challenge. Put your hand up any of you who are prepared to speak to your Member of Parliament to ask for more money? They are none of them, Lord Mayor, so it shows what we need. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR ARMITAGE: Lord Mayor, fellow Councillors. I must say I am shocked and disgusted by the hypocrisy that has been demonstrated by members opposite. I cannot believe that the same members bleated on about unfair charges and extolling their virtues on their plans which will leave elderly and disable people having to pay for services that they already receive. These proposals are wrong and the way you have gone about imposing them is equally wrong.

You have embarked on a rushed, ill-thought out consultation procedure which appears to be a sham. I believe that you have already decided how to proceed with your plans. Consultation exercises should be amenable and transparent but this unfortunately appears to be neither. I doubt whether members opposite could spell consultation, let alone do it properly.

We as elected members are lucky enough to have been informed about the effects of charges and the amount of disposable income and personal savings which would be taken into account will have. Unfortunately this information has not been made available to the very people you are needing to consult with. It simply is not acceptable that the very people who use this service are not being fully informed in the process and will decide how much they will pay for these services in the future.

The people who received community services are already substantially or critically in need, therefore they should be led through the process gently, ensuring at all points that they understand the effect that changes are going to have on individuals.

On top of this you decided to run two further consultation exercises at the same time - one for the 38 networks and the other for older people's services. The services are now buckling under the pressure you have placed upon them and are struggling to cope with the replies to the documents when they should be doing the things that they should be doing in their department.

I think it is highly unlikely that you will get the true response from the consultation exercises from the Neighbourhood Network Schemes. You assume that the networks would have time and resources to assist the 60 clients from each scheme to complete their questionnaire forms. Despite that you have sent these questionnaires out in August, the main holiday month, and asked them to return these forms completed by September. The networks had already provided you with information on supporting people at very, very short notice, not to mention the 115 page review document that had also to be filled in by the networks, also at very short notice.

On top of this all the different meetings that the organisations have to attend, such as Social Enterprises, procurement, commissioning etc, etc. No wonder that some of the schemes are registering their protest and concerns about the number of consultation exercises they are having to do and the time they are having to do it in.

Many of the schemes feel they are no nearer finding out what the future holds for them and the services that they provide and what moneys will be available in the future to run these very, very important services in our community.

Elderly people are vulnerable and need stability. They need to know that they are going to receive services and care and how much they are expected to pay for these. Any changes could have serious consequences. Our fear is that as money gets tighter, our elderly and disabled people will have to go to choose forego paying for pay and services so that they can afford life's other essentials, such as food and heating - something I am sure no-one in this Chamber wants to see happen.

That is why I am supporting Councillor Coupar's motion and I would encourage all fair-minded members of Council who want to protect the elderly and vulnerable people in this city to do the same. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR A BLACKBURN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I know that the Labour Party in the past have many a timer reminded us about my comments when we said that we should call fair charging unfair charging. I have not forgotten about that. My feelings are just the same.

With this, I feel that the consultation should go on longer, it should be wider, meaning all the people that use the services, not just some ad hoc group and things like that, and that people should know what is going on. It should be explained so that the service users themselves are well aware of what this consultation is about, if

necessary that they have somebody with them - son, daughter or whatever - so that they know, not that they go into Councillors or whatever and say, "I do not understand why this is. Why do I have to pay more now? I do not understand why", which I am sure a lot of us have come across elderly people saying they do not understand the reviews that have been done sometimes.

We also accept that the Government is not funding enough, we have to give that. They should fund more. We know there are more elderly people and, of course, that is going to increase, so there is a problem there, but with this consultation we feel it has got to be done longer and wider and that all the service users have got to be consulted and know what is going on. I would not want to think that anybody was saying, "I have got a choice, I cannot afford it so, as Councillor Armitage says, I have just got to do without the services." I do not think anybody of us really want that.

I say yes, all right, do your consultation but make sure that everybody knows what you are doing and what you are proposing. Thank you. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Thank you, my Lord Mayor. The first comment I want to make is just to go back to where we were four years ago. Councillor Harrand mentioned the £15m we inherited in the social services budget that nobody over there seemed to know anything about. What he did not mention was the fact that they had also undertaken a massive privatisation of care beds and signed up to a contract - I remember Bernard Atha ranting and raving outside to me about it, how he could not possibly support this privatisation and then, as usual, he came in here and voted for it.

In fact what happened with that was that they took such a large block booking of beds that £900,000-worth of money was lost in a year because the beds were empty, because there was no-one sleeping in them. That is how competent they were.

You would have a little bit more sympathy with this mock conscience that they have consistently displayed today if they were not members of the Labour Party supporting this Labour Government. This Labour Government - child poverty has gone up, that went up last year for the first time in a decade under a Labour Government.

In Adult Social Care the number of pensioners regarded to be in poverty has gone up again last year on the year before and is now 2.8 million, and if the fuel bills rise by the projected amount, a further 1.4 million pensioners will go into fuel poverty.

My Lord Mayor, the party opposite have got no business lecturing anybody about care for the elderly, care for the vulnerable or, indeed, care for anybody at all. *(hear, hear)*

Under their Government we are seeing how house repossession rises to a record level. Even when they announce a rescue package, what happens? We then get a letter from the RDA telling us this £300m of this rescue package has been top-sliced from the Regional Development Agencies and over the next few years it is going to cost Yorkshire and the Humber £40m. Where is it going to come from? I will tell you where it will come from - it will come from the regeneration schemes which vulnerable people are depending on in this city. Your Government cannot make a straight decision. They cannot stand up and say what they mean, they cannot implement something, they cannot implement anything that has not got a double meaning, a double effect. Look at the 10p tax abolition. Your Members of Parliament cheered it - cheered it - when Gordon Brown announced it, absolutely

cheered it. They did not realise what it meant. Those are the sort of people who are representing the people of Leeds in Westminster.

My Lord Mayor, if you lot really believe what you have been saying today, you would have some respect around the rest of the Chamber if you resigned from this misbegotten party that is running the country, this clapped out Government that is dying on its feet and taking the country with it. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR GRAYSHON: Thank you, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR: Lord Mayor!

COUNCILLOR GRAYSHON: I thought there was an echo! Yes, I think one of the most entertaining and interesting things that has happened since most certainly I have been on the Council is when we gave the writer Alan Bennett the freedom of the city of Leeds. I am sure many of you will be aware of the wonderful works that Alan Bennett has done both for stage, screen and television. One of his works is called A Cracker Under the Settee, and it stars the delightful Thora Hird, who is an elderly woman who receives care from the social services of her Local Authority. However, she is not happy with those services and she points her disapproval out to the care worker who was sent. The care workers says, "If you are not happy you can complain but you know what they will do, don't you? They will put you in a home." What subsequently happens is Thora's character is doing some cleaning herself and falls off a chair and breaks her hip. She is that terrified of going into a home that when a knock comes at the door from the local constabulary to see if she is OK because the curtains have not been drawn, she refuses to answer the door because she is that terrified that she will be put in a home if she complains about the services provided by the Local Authority.

I think what members in this Chamber should be aware of is to cite examples where someone has £31,500 in savings and receives care from the social services, they may receive an increase of - if I am incorrect, Brian, do tell me - £170 a week in their care. I think someone who has got £31,500 stuck in a bank account really should be contributing to the cost of their care. I do not think there will be many people in my ward who have got £31,500 in savings and I do not think that is a representative figure. It is going down the road of scaremongering.

COUNCILLOR TAGGART: You have got your digits the wrong way round.

COUNCILLOR GRAYSHON: those were the figures we were told, thank you, Neil. As always you are more than helpful.

The point I am making really is to cite these figures really is just scaremongering. It is not representative, is it, and as somebody who cared for both their parents until they died, if I was reading this with my mother who was in a terrible state she would be absolutely terrified. Some of you people who are coming up with these figures really need to think that whilst you are playing politics in this room, of the reaction that you are going to have to Mrs Brady Old Lady reading this.

COUNCILLOR ATHA: You mean do not tell the truth.

COUNCILLOR GRAYSHON: If she has not got £31,500 in the bank then

COUNCILLOR TAGGART: It is £13,500. *(interruption)*

COUNCILLOR GRAYSHON: The rule is when I am stood up I speak and you are sat down. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR ATHA: My Lord Mayor, I apologise to the Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR GRAYSHON: Bernard, if you would be kind enough to sit down. I think you are probably one of the old-aged pensioners in Leeds who may have more than £31,500 (*laughter*) in a bank account, so it is all right for you, but you come to Morley and walk round and have a chat to some of those people and come out with this figure and they would be alarmed.

Yet again, I am tired of this scaremongering. It is scaremongering, I am not arguing with you, Suzie, it is scaremongering, it is an extreme example and you need to really, if you are going to cite figures and things, cite something that is representative, not an extreme case. It is appalling and anybody who reads this in the newspaper that that is what they may be charged. It is quite outrageous.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: It is a fact.

COUNCILLOR GRAYSHON: I am sorry, Lord Mayor, I think it is offensive.  
(*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. At the tea interval, Lord Mayor, I was speaking to two of my constituents who are here today and I commend them for their endurance effort at still being here. I said to them, "What did you think of this meeting so far?" and one of the things that they accuse us of is this constant political argey-bargy, we say one thing, you say something else, etc.

When Andrew spoke about the Government in the widest sense and started quoting things nothing to do with this resolution, we knew that that was just cheap politics. The fact is when you cannot respond in 2008 to a position you were taking as an administration and you have to keep going back to 1999 and 2004, then we know your cupboard is empty, you are bereft of ideas. You must now stand on your own two feet. You have been in power for four years. History, Les, is history. We are now discussing your proposals, your cuts, your charges to elderly people and, of course, you have done two things.

COUNCILLOR BALE: Your Government, eleven years.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: One, you have appointed Peter Harrand, who is the acceptable face of Carterism (*laughter*) to put forward the unacceptable face of privatisation and dirty cuts. The second thing you have done, you tell us you take no lessons because we support the public sector. We are proud to support the public sector. We take no lessons from you who support your buddies who drove Northern Rock into the morass. Who is it who has to rescue Northern Rock? It is the public purse, it is the people because some greedy bankers with their snouts in the trough could not make it work better. (*interruption*)

The public sector has to sort them out. They are your buddies. We take no lessons from you and your private sector failings.

COUNCILLOR PROCTER: No they are not, they are members of your party.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: This is about cuts to elderly people and your lack of consultation and your lack of honesty. That is what this is about and you ought to accept the resolution. You promised a longer consultation period - you are not giving it. You are being economical with the truth and therefore that should not be allowed. You do not have to feed me any more - when this goes out to consultation we will see what the reaction of people is and I will tell you this, you will not win this

day. You will not win this day because you are being unfair on the vulnerable and on the elderly people in this city and it is a disgrace. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: I will just call on Councillor Selby who I believe wants to make a point of explanation.

COUNCILLOR SELBY: Yes, Lord Mayor. It relates to the remarks made by Councillor Grayshon and the issue about scaremongering. Can I assist him with the information (*interruption*) that was given to me by an officer of this Council? I will forward that information to Councillor Grayshon.

THE LORD MAYOR: Right, I am sorry about that but not acceptable.

COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: Very fair, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Right, Councillor J L Carter.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: My Lord Mayor, I find it absolutely fascinating to listen to Peter Gruen. I really and honestly do and I do not know where the heck he comes from. We have got this Chancellor who, remember they were telling us was the best one since the last 200 years - the only thing he has done is put us in a worse mess than we have ever been in 200 years. You are ignoring totally what is happening centrally. I do not blame you for ignoring it because you know you are on your way out as a party and that is no ifs or buts. He is telling these people in the gallery he does not like knock-about politics and he then goes and knocks about all the time. He does not make any sensible suggestions.

Peter Harrand is putting forward proposals to go out for consultation. I repeat that, consultation, consultation. No decision has been made till they come back. Why don't you wait? Why don't you wait till they actually come back?

It is interesting, the other day I had some of Brown's men come and see me, your party sent them up. They wanted to know how to run the country. One of the questions they asked me, they said, "If you were Gordon Brown what would you do?" and I said, "Resign, resign, resign", because that is the only way.

Let us go back to the comments of 2003 and 2004 and a change. I know the city were rejoicing, they had found a new administration and after 24 years that tired administration went out, but something else happened. We were not aware, we were not privy to a massive black hole in the social services budget. We were talking assuming that you were setting budgets in a proper and rightful manner and we know now you were not. That £15m meant a lot of things that we would have loved to have done to help people, scuppered the lot. Now we are getting grief for it but it is true. That happened.

In addition to that, everywhere we looked for money - you will remember recently - at least about six or seven months ago - all the people over there had a go at me about social services retraction plans and they were calling me all the names under the sun because we only got one star. What I have been doing is fighting to protect money for social services. Yes, I thought that everybody understands, because I was trying to protect them.

Let me also tell you what their Government do. We get Supporting People money. We used to get £35.9m. It is now £33m and the one thing that they do, they ban us how we can use it. They tell us what they can use it on. Can I just tell you, that £33m we are not allowed to use for social care. Your Government is saying there is a big chunk of money, you cannot use it for the poor, the weak, the

dispossessed of this city, you have got to do it the way that we say. That would make a heck of a difference to Peter. If I had not taken £6m back off him he would have been in clover, but your Government made me take £6m back otherwise we would have been in trouble for not administering the Supporting People Fund right.

Please, just calm down. The point that has been made about frightening people is really wrong.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: You are not frightening me.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: I am not interested in you, Michael. I am interested in the elderly people, where you are going to put out leaflets and say you are going to pay some ridiculous sum of money which they are not going to pay. That is you not daring a damn about the elderly, the weak, the poor. All you are caring about is your political future. Thank you, my Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: I believe we can now get round to the summing up and I call on Councillor Coupar.

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: Thank you, Lord Mayor. What an unrefreshing debate from the administration, something I expected, really. They seem yet again to fail to have seen the issue at hand. They blame the Government for underfunding services. Did I not already say when I moved the White Paper that we would also demand more money from the Government? This paper was not about that.

Can we rely on this administration spending any extra money it gets from the Government on the priorities that I have identified? I do not think so because Leeds already spends significantly less than other Authorities per head on the elderly and those with physical and learning disabilities. *(interruption)*

COUNCILLOR: Rubbish.

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: Facts, actually. Councillor Harrand mentioned yet again this mythical £15m black hole that Labour left. I would like to see proof at some stage that you bring it to this Council and show us exactly what the deficit was when you took over power.

COUNCILLOR PROCTER: Willingly.

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: It is not true. A review of alternative sources, I mentioned. Councillor Harrand, his only answer to that was to give somebody the sack. I am not asking for you to sack staff, Peter. All I am asking is for you to look at alternative sources of funding and I did already mention such as the profit you make on car parks and other things I mentioned earlier. It will be in the verbatim, if you care to look at it.

The Government are currently holding a review on the very future funding of social care. You do not need to pre-empt that outcome, you could wait for that outcome and then take the lead from the Government that you keep saying do not do enough for you. They are already doing this consultation.

COUNCILLOR: He is already ten years behind.

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: Councillor Carter - well - Councillor Andrew Carter, that is. We know that when you get on your feet that all we are going to hear is a rant about the Government and nothing constructive, nothing actually to say that you are in the administration, happy to take the allowances and salaries for being in the

administration but not the responsibility of any decision that you might make.  
(*interruption*)

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: You have not done so badly, love!

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: Councillor Lancaster, you talked about all the improvements. You quoted figures and statistics and I was glad to hear them, but we have not been privy to those statistics so far, so how can we answer you on your debate? I do not think so.

To suggest that we are not involved in social services and taking an active role, I am sad to hear you say that actually, Brenda. We would be even more involved if this administration allowed us to be.

Councillor Brett - what can one say, really? This White Paper is not about modernisation of services where choice is the key issue, but about you increasing charges to the very vulnerable people of our city.

I do thank Councillor Blackburn for her positive comments, however, and I do hope that she supports the White Paper.

Councillor Wakefield is absolutely right about the effect on people of these charges and the hypocrisy of this administration.

Councillor Grayshon - goodness me, he needs to speak to his colleagues about scaremongering and remember exactly what you put on leaflets in 2004 about fairer charging or unfairer charging, because I remember.

Councillor Les Carter says wait till the outcome. By then, Les, it will be too late because service users will be paying the increase in January.

Other contributions from my colleagues have demonstrated the inability of this administration to take responsibility for their deeds and I urge members of Council to support this White Paper, because it is not, seriously, just about the Government funding but it is about how we treat the most vulnerable in our city.

We should remember that this is what this debate is about, the people we provide care services to. You need to take this responsibility seriously. Treat them lightly at your peril. Do not say you have not been warned. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: We now come to the vote. I will ask Council to vote on the amendment.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Another recorded vote.

COUNCILLOR TAGGART: Seconded.

THE LORD MAYOR: Seconded for a recorded vote, and we have got the two names.

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

THE LORD MAYOR: Present 93, "Yes" vote 49, abstain one, "No", 43, so I take it the amendment is CARRIED and that now becomes the substantive motion.

Are we recording again? Right.



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

THE LORD MAYOR: The score is present 93, "Yes" 52, abstain none, "No" 41, so that is CARRIED.

#### ITEM 10 - WHITE PAPER MOTION - MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES

THE LORD MAYOR: We go on to item 10, White Paper motion on Members' Allowances and I call on Councillor Finnigan.

COUNCILLOR FINNIGAN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. You always know you are in bother when people suggest that when you put in a White Paper motion it is courageous. *(laughter)* At the point anybody suggests that it is a courageous thing, you need to go back and perhaps reflect as to whether it is a sensible thing to approach.

A lot of people have come up in a very friendly way and suggested perhaps that we withdraw this particular resolution for, I think, the best of reasons. I think they have a great concern for my personal welfare! *(laughter)*

I can perhaps understand where they are coming from on this particular resolution and that I am setting myself up for a good kicking. I can understand why they may believe that that is the case, but I think this is an important issue and even if I do get a good kicking - and I think that is a fairly safe bet - then we are in a situation where I think this particular issue ought to be discussed and ought to be debated.

I heard what Peter was saying earlier about knock-about and certainly when it comes to grandstanding I am as guilty as other members of getting stuck into that sort of thing and putting on a bit of a pantomime performance, but certainly when I was preparing for this particular debate yesterday afternoon, what you try and do is think they are going to slag me off about this, therefore I need to slag them off about something else, instead of having an honest and open discussion about the issue that is in front of them.

Certainly I had a look and there is Peter, there is Neil lined up to push the amendment so I spent a bit of time, putting up a card for Peter about some issues to fling back at him if he flings them at me and an even longer card for Neil to fling some muck back if he was going to fling it at me.

I thought, let us have an honest discussion. I will tell you what, we will rip that up and get a load of other phrases that I am supposed to include at this particular point, we will skip that and we will try something different and something radical - we will just pitch the argument in a non-political way and fair enough, see where it actually goes.

Why do I think that this is a good idea? Trying not to make it party political, trying to look at the financial challenges our communities face and to see whether now is a good time for us to set a positive example.

As we all know - and this is purely factual, it is not looking to blame anybody in particular - housing repossession is up by 48%. That is fact. It does not matter why - you can blame the Americans, you can blame who you want but the fact of the matter is that it is up by 48%. That means 18,900 homes were repossessed in the first half of this year. Behind those statistics are very difficult times for a lot of people, for a lot of families. It is straight fact. There is no point in putting any party political spin on it, they are having a difficult time facing repossessions because money is

exceptionally tight. No arguments, no discussions about that. It is liable to get worse before it gets better.

Fuel poverty. There are ten year records which according to the Office of Statistics means 4.4 million people in the UK are going to be officially in fuel poverty and we all know what has happened in terms of gas and electricity prices. This means everybody struggling more with their bills; it means particular sections of our community substantially struggling and having to make some tough and difficult choices.

We know British Gas have put their bills up by 15% and NPower have put their bills up by 27% and there are going to be discussions taking place across all of our communities that people are going to have to take tough choices about eating, about heating, all those other sorts of issues. It is purely factual, not putting any spin on it one way or the other.

Warm Front organisations getting £800m, it appears that it is underfunded by £1.3 billion. We are in a situation where these, the people most vulnerable to the cold who need that particular organisation to work to keep them warm, to keep their fuel bills down, to give them a sustainable living. We know about the profits from the fuel companies, where they have gone. Petrol prices are up 60% in ten years. We know that that has a significant impact on food prices; food inflation is up 10% so far this particular year. We are in a situation where people are having to take very tough choices. No point blaming one side or the other, we can have a bit of knock-about - he lives there, he does not live there, whatever - but we need to reflect on these people who are in our communities and the difficulties that they have.

We can set them an example. We can show a bit of solidarity with every pensioner, with everybody who is on a fixed income, with every parent, with everybody who is unemployed, with anybody who has got a long term disability and say we understand the problems and the difficulties and the challenges that you face and we will not take a pay rise for two years until the economic upturn which most people predict will occur over the next two years.

There is some suggestion that we leave it to the Independent Remunerations Committee and I can understand why people would want that independent approach to try and remove from the fact that we pay or we are ultimately voting ourselves for our own pay rises. That seems inappropriate. Out there in these communities that are challenged in these difficult financial times, are not really accepting that that is genuinely independent. As far as they see at the point where they are having to turn down the gas, the point where they are struggling to feed themselves, they are not going to be interested that there is an independent route that suggest what we should get as pay rises as Councillors. I think that is ultimately where the debate needs to concentrate. It is now a good time to reflect specifically on whether we should show restraint, whether we should show solidarity with those communities that are struggling substantially.

We have heard today about the fact that a lot of budgets on the City Council are struggling. We heard about the looked-after children's budget. According to my calculations, if none of us take a pay rise for at least two years, then somewhere it is in the region of about £50,000. Why not hypothecate that to support that particular budget?

There was a suggestion or a proposal that was made at an earlier Council meeting about Relate. Fair enough, why don't we give up our pay rises for the next couple of years and hypothecate that money to support Relate and the good work that they actually do?

I think it is important for us to set an example and regardless of what happens in the vote - and I suspect I am not going to win it - I personally will not be taking a pay rise for the next two years, because I can hardly say one thing and do another.

What I would suggest is that people seriously look at the challenges that our communities face, seriously look at the challenges some of our budgets face and think seriously about saying we are going to show some solidarity, we are going to make sure that we do not appear to be voting for ourselves to get a pay rise when other people are substantially struggling to make ends meet. That is what it is about. We can have a bit of knock-about, we can have a bit of theatre, but this is a serious matter.

I would ask you seriously to look at supporting this particular resolution and I formally move it. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: I understand I have to rise now if I want to move the motion that White Paper number 11 in my name is withdrawn, so I so move.

COUNCILLOR CAMPBELL: Second, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: I will need Council, before we vote on it - we need a vote from Council to approve Councillor Carter. All those in favour? Any against? Abstentions? Right, we will delete that.

COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: Lord Mayor, could I now rise and seek permission of Council to withdraw White Paper 12, which is in my name?

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Seconded.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. What do Council think of that, then? Voting? Yes? Against? Abstentions, no. So we delete that.

We return to the White Paper now and call on Councillor Blackburn.

COUNCILLOR D BLACKBURN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I have got great pleasure in seconding this amendment. I have got to say we have got a time where we have had problems with job evaluation for our staff, staff are suffering, pay increases in general are low and below the cost of living with massive increases in energy bills and food prices are going through the roof.

There are lots of people out there that in the coming few years are going to be really hard up and to me it is up to us to show the way forward. Let us all pull our belts in a little bit and give up a little bit and not take our increases for the next two years. I think that is the right thing. I do not believe we can turn round to staff that we employ and offer them the kind of pay increases we are doing and then go ahead and do what we are doing ourselves.

As Councillor Finnigan said, my group is committed, including the next Councillor for Farnley and Wortley who is going to be elected next week, not to taking a pay increase and, as most of you know, my group have a cap on what allowances they take already. Thank you. I support the motion. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Gruen for the amendment.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: I move the amendment and I am not going to speak for long. This is a debate I think we would rather not have. I take up the challenge,

this is not a political knock-about. We know from the House of Commons when MPs debate publicly their own pay rises and pension arrangements and John Lewis or whatever, etc, the stock of politics plunges deeper and deeper into the mire. We should not be debating this for the reason that we have set up an Independent Remuneration Panel who we trust, for better or worse, and whatever they recommend and come back with for better or worse we actually accept.

I meant this when I spoke in our Group meeting, I said we each agreed *mea culpa* ourselves. The very first Remuneration Panel that sat when Councillor Walker was the Leader of the Council, he decided that he would not accept the increases for Leader and Deputy Leader around at the time and I will tell you what, ten years later the current Leader and Deputy Leader still have that distorted lack of proper remuneration that crept into the system then, so whenever you say let us not take the tuppence ha'penny today or tomorrow, all that happens is you build up more and more pressure in the system and for some people you devalue actually, I think, the work people do here because although it is called an allowance it is actually their remuneration for people who, for many, this is a full-time job, they do it day in and day out, seven days a week, assiduously across all parties, work very hard for their constituents and then we are suddenly saying to ourselves, hey, we are different, we cannot accept a pay rise. I think that is entirely wrong. It sends the wrong messages and it is wrong.

Your individual responsibility - and some of you do it, very few, some of you do it - you abate your own increases and take less than you are actually entitled to and I respect you for that and I think that is a very worthwhile thing, but many people do not do that and equally I do not criticise them for not doing it.

My amendment simply says we do recognise all the many things that Robert has talked about and in terms of the basis allowance - because, Robert, your resolution is very wide, what do I take it to mean? Is it basic allowance, is it all allowances for this year and next year, whatever?

Our view is that for basic allowances it is right to nod in the direction of our own staff and say we will not take more than the pay increases they get and show solidarity with that, so that is what our concession is.

I need to say that I have scored another first. You will be pleased to know that after all the criticisms we have levied at our colleagues for never ruling in anything illegal, I have managed to do it and apparently the wording at the end of my second paragraph has - and it will be held up for historic purposes but our legal officers actually sometimes do say "No" to an amendment - in fact they said to me I do need to say that hopefully with your agreement I can say the last paragraph is:

"Finally Council resolves to instruct officers to investigate whether increases to allowances can only be paid to Councillors who can prove they live or work within the city's boundaries."

Of course that is not aimed at anybody in particular (*laughter*), it is simply a generic expression of what many people might possibly feel. With that I move the amendment.

COUNCILLOR TAGGART: Councillor Finnigan has talked about £50,000 that could go to the children by foregoing allowances for two years, but the logical extension of that is for him to give up all his allowances because the children would gain even more. In fact, while he is at it he may as well donate all his clothes to charity shops, give away his car and where he lives. If he wants to do the hair shirt

existence and live as a hermit somewhere in southern Morley or Liversidge or wherever it might be, that is a matter for him, as far as I am concerned.

It is accepted by all of us that Councillors, politicians, MPs in particular, are not all that popular but those of us who are Councillors know that irrespective of party the work is very interesting and challenging but the commitment is huge and the hours are long. There are many Councillors for whom the hourly rate actually is just above the minimum wage and yet we are taking substantial decisions on all sorts of areas, so we should not be apologetic.

I feel sorry for those Councillors who depend upon the allowances to survive and there are some. I am not one, I am lucky, I have other money but we should remember that there are some people for whom it is their only income.

I personally think it was unfortunate that a previous Leader did not agree with the leadership. I do not always agree with the two Leaders that we have, although I respect them and the work they do and I have seen both how hard they work. They actually are worth more, frankly, and it is a shame, as Peter said, a decision taken some years ago has hobbled what we have now. We should not make a big song and dance about this, we should tell the public we do not take a great deal of money home but no-one is going to thank us.

By the way, when those cuts were made in Leeds, nobody thanked us. It did not make the Council or any Councillors more popular. We can actually be more effective, it seems to me, by coming up with the right policies, fighting for the people of this city and being people's champions and stop having this Anglo Saxon Protestant guilt about getting allowances for what we do. I have been a trade unionist all my life and some people would say being a councillor is not a job although, of course, some people who stand for office as a councillor apparently claim it is a job and therefore qualifies them. That is a matter for them and the tax man, it seems to me. We should be proud of what we do, we should not hang our head in shame and let us have no more of his nonsense about allowances and let us get on with the job we were elected to do. Thank you. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR BEVERLEY: Thank you, Lord Mayor. These are hard economic times, there is no doubt about it. Our country is on the brink of a recession and people are angry and justifiably so. They are angry about the situation they find themselves in due to a whole host of problems. We have heard some examples already. One example, utility bills. People feel that the situation is unjust they are getting no help whatsoever from the Government. Only yesterday Alistair Darling made it clear that there would be no windfall tax on the big utility companies. People are angry, people feel like they are getting no help whatsoever. Then we have things in the press like the article here from 2<sup>nd</sup> June in the Yorkshire Evening Post about Leeds Councillors' expenses exceeding £2m. Things like this also make people extremely angry across our city, and rightly so.

More than £2m is far too much to have to pay, in my opinion, for 99 Councillors and I believe that by freezing allowances across the board, if we all agree to that today, I believe that that will send that positive message to people in our city that we understand the hardships that they are suffering, we understand their situation and we are acting accordingly.

It must be said, however, that it is quite a joke that this particular motion was put forward by Councillor Finnigan. In this same article you have got a list of all the different Councillors' expenses and what the different Councillors claimed last year, and Councillor Finnigan claimed £32,420.84. *(interruption)* For a Councillor to get up and lecture us on lowering the bill of our Councillors' salaries is an absolutely

disgrace and if he cares so much about that then he should give us his special responsibility allowance.

Nevertheless, I have made it clear in this Council Chamber the whole time I have been here that I will always vote on a motion on its merits. There are very few Councillors in this Chamber who are in the situation that I am in and can do that - there are few others but not many - so I am going to support this motion. I believe that it is worth doing across the board and I do that regardless of the individual that proposed it. Thank you.

THE LORD MAYOR: We are running out of time so I now must as Councillor Finnigan to sum up.

COUNCILLOR FINNIGAN: Thank you. That has been a fair and reasonable and honest debate about where we are in things. I am still convinced that it is appropriate. I know what you are saying and I understand the issues about it being looked at independently and all those other matters but the bottom line is this question of showing a bit of solidarity. I think that that is important. Ultimately this will mean that if it does go into Councillor's allowances there are other demands, Relate do a great job, the children who we provide help and support and care for need a better deal. It is an opportunity to give them that. I suggest that we put it to the vote, Lord Mayor, and we will be asking for a recorded vote to see if I get more than six!

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. I shall now call for the vote first of all on the amendment and it is a recorded vote.

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

THE LORD MAYOR: I will read the result. Present, 91, "Yes" 39, Abstain 2, "No" 50, so the amendment is LOST. We come to the substantive motion. Recorded vote.

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

THE LORD MAYOR: The result, present 890, "Yes" 7, abstain zero, "no" 83. That means the motion is LOST.

#### ITEM 13 - WHITE PAPER MOTION - GREAT BRITAIN'S OLYMPIC TEAM

THE LORD MAYOR: We have one more item. Item 13, Great Britain's Olympic Team. I call on Councillor Harington to formally...

COUNCILLOR HARINGTON: Thank you, Lord Mayor, I formally move the motion in my name.

THE LORD MAYOR: Secunder, Councillor Parker.

COUNCILLOR PARKER: Formally second, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: We will now vote on that. Those in favour? Those against? Any abstentions? Thank you, that is universally CARRIED.

Before you all jump on your feet, I think that is all the business we have. Thank you for your attendance and we will no doubt see you around. Thank you.

*(The meeting closed at 7.20 p.m.)*