

LEEDS CITY COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

Held on

Wednesday, 22nd April, 2009

At

THE COUNCIL CHAMBER,
CIVIC HALL, LEEDS

In the Chair:

THE LORD MAYOR
(Councillor F Robinson)

Transcribed from the notes of
J L Harpham Ltd.,
Official Court Reporters and Tape Transcribers,
Queen's Buildings, 55, Queen Street,
Sheffield, S1 2DX

VERBATIM REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS OF LEEDS CITY COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 22nd APRIL 2009

THE LORD MAYOR: Good afternoon and welcome to this Council meeting on a lovely, serene and calm afternoon – so far. My usual first instructions, please turn off all mobile phones and then we can have a calm and serene, as I said, afternoon.

I have some announcements of a sad nature, I am afraid. Maggie Clay, CBE, who was a Liberal Councillor in the 1980s, sadly has died and today a small gathering of family is being held for her funeral and Councillor Brett is attending on behalf of the City Council. Also, our sympathies go to Councillor Rafique whose grandmother died, I believe, today.

I would also draw your attention to a more pleasant display outside in the ante Chamber. We have got some lovely displays there but I would like to draw your attention particularly to the Chelsea Flower Show's garden which has lots and lots of environmental issues connected with it. I do hope you get a chance of having a good look at them, pick up some information and certainly ask any questions of Martin who, I believe, I have seen there.

I have got a further pleasant announcement.

COUNCILLOR EWENS: If I can say, Lord Mayor, in addition to the Chelsea Flower Show display, which is excellent, I would also like to draw your attention to one of the excellent features which has been produced by City of Leeds School O-level pupils. Thank you.

THE LORD MAYOR: Yes, that is appreciated. Finally, a pleasant announcement. Councillor Mulherin has given birth to a baby this morning. *(Applause)* A baby boy, I am told. Do not ask me his weight! I do not think many Lord Mayors can make that announcement, really.

We will get on with our business, then, for the afternoon.

Item 1, I call on Councillor Bentley.

ITEM 1 - MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 25th FEBRUARY 2009

COUNCILLOR BENTLEY: To move that the Minutes be received, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: I second, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: *(A vote was taken)* Those in favour? Thank you. Against? CARRIED.

ITEM 2 - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

THE LORD MAYOR: Item 2, the Lord Mayor will make an announcement to you about interest on show, on deposit and again that have been circulated and invite any other applications or declarations from you to be considered on the list. Are there any? Councillor Cleasby.

COUNCILLOR CLEASBY: Lord Mayor, could I apologise for not adding mine to the list already. In relation to Item 15, I am a veteran. *(Laughter)* In relation to Question 2, I am a governor of Horsforth School.

THE ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE (Corporate Governance): Can I just say, members do not need to make declarations in relation to questions.

THE LORD MAYOR: Yes, another one.

COUNCILLOR EWENS: I would just like to declare that I, too, am a veteran and am a governor of City of Leeds.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. No more?

COUNCILLOR SMITH: Thank you, Lord Mayor. In relation to Item 7, Climate Change Strategy, I am a member of the Leeds and District Climate Change Group. I am also a member of Greenpeace.

THE LORD MAYOR: Any more? *(A vote was taken)* Those in favour please show. Against? **CARRIED.**

It has been remiss of me not to welcome in the announcements to Councillor David Schofield. *(Applause)* A return visit, of course. Thank you.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Very brief.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Like yours, Peter.

ITEM 3 - COMMUNICATIONS

THE LORD MAYOR: With that, then, I go to item 3, the Chief Executive.

THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE: No communications, thank you.

ITEM 4 - DEPUTATIONS

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Deputations, I call upon the Chief Exec again.

THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE: There are four Deputations this afternoon; the first regarding the toilet accessibility; the second the permissible age for private hire vehicles; the third supporting the campaign against vacant housing in Leeds; and the fourth with respect to the condition of properties on the Woodbridge estate.

Councillor Bentley.

COUNCILLOR BENTLEY: I move that all the deputations be received, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: I second, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: *(A vote was taken)* Those in favour please show. Against? **CARRIED.** We welcome our Deputations.

DEPUTATION ONE ALL MEANS ALL GROUP

THE LORD MAYOR: Good afternoon and welcome to Leeds City Council. If you could make your speech that should be no longer than five minutes we will appreciate it.

MS L KEENAN: My Lord Mayor and fellow Councillors, my name is Lisa Keenan and I am here with Christine Barker, Anthony Benson, Julia Bowness, John Bairley, Audrey Gallaher and Freddy Idle. We are here as representatives of the All Means All Group, who are a group of people with high support needs, who came together to look at issues that affect their lives.

The group identified that not having changing places toilets stopped them from doing a lot of the things they wanted to. Without these facilities people with high support needs are unable to go to the toilet or be changed safely. At the moment there are no changing places facilities in Leeds city centre. This means that people with high support needs, and their carers, are excluded from many economic and social benefits and activities enjoyed by the majority of citizens of Leeds.

We want changing places toilets in Leeds city centre. A changing places toilet is a toilet that is big enough to accommodate one of two carers, it has a height adjustable changing bench where a carer can safely change continence pads. There is also a hoisting system so that people can be safely transferred from their wheelchair to the toilet or changing bench. Standard accessible toilets do not have changing benches or hoists and most are not big enough for more than one person.

We are asking that all new large scale developments include a changing places toilet. We would like to see the provision of changing places toilets in the Local Development Framework or the planning system so that there is an expectation that large scale developments provide these facilities. It is important that these facilities are provided in public spaces so that people with high support needs can enjoy the same opportunities as other citizens of Leeds. In the short term we are asking that there is a confirmed site in the city centre and a commitment for these facilities to be ready in a year.

We want this because there are 292 adults with high support needs receiving support in Leeds, there are also 425 school children with high support needs and other groups of people would also benefit from these facilities, including people with limiting long term illnesses and people with physical impairments.

The need for these facilities is not specific to Leeds. Mencap's national campaign for changing places toilets and estimates that 40,000 people across the country need these facilities. Our neighbours in Bradford now have nine of the changing places toilets and have more in planning.

This is a user-led campaign that was started by a group of people who wanted to make their own lives better. Leeds Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, Leeds Voluntary Sector Learning Disabilities Forum and Leeds Advocacy are supporting the All Means All Group with this work. The campaign has many strong supporters including: the Learning Disabilities Partnership Board; the Learning Disabilities Partnership Board Service User Reference Group; Leeds Partnership NHS Foundation Trust Board of Governors; Leeds Voluntary Sector Learning Disabilities Forum's Trustees and their member organisations; and over 1,600 people who have signed out petition. In support of the campaign the Council have set up a working group, led by Adult Social Care, with representatives from across the Council and also from the All Means All group.

To make it happen, the adaptations for a changing places toilet to an existing space will cost £10,000. Several potential sites for these facilities have been identified through the Council's working group. The All Means All group is very pleased and encouraged by this work and thinks the locations being explored are good. However, as yet we do not have a confirmed site and there seem to be

obstacles stopping this from happening, including the issue of who will pay for the maintenance and upkeep of these facilities. This provision of these facilities is not just an issue for Adult Social Care; we need a whole Council approach to show a full commitment to including people with high support needs.

The Valuing People Now strategy talks about the importance of social inclusion for people with learning disabilities and specifically mentions the importance of changing places toilets in achieving this. This issue is so important that the National Learning Disabilities Week, in June of this year, is dedicated to campaigning for more changing places toilets. Leeds City Council's papers 'Transforming Day Opportunities' and 'the Leeds Learning Disabilities Strategy' both stress the importance of moving away from segregated services to more socially inclusive support. Both papers also recognise the importance of changing places toilets in achieving this.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR BENTLEY: 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: *(A vote was taken)* Those in favour? Against?
CARRIED. Right, thank you for attending and due consideration will be given to what you have said. Thank you very much. *(Applause)*

DEPUTATION TWO GMB TRADE UNION

THE LORD MAYOR: Good afternoon and welcome to today's City Council meeting. You may now introduce your colleagues and if you would keep your speech to five minutes it will be appreciated.

MR B CHARD: Lord Mayor, fellow Councillors, my name is Bill Chard, Regional Organiser GMB trade union and I am accompanied today by Javaid Akhtar who is chairperson of the Leeds Private Hire Association which is a branch of the GMB; we also have Aurangzeb Qabal, Secretary, and Committee members Akhtar Mohammed and Fahiq Malik.

Private hire drivers in Leeds have joined the GMB in droves since my first meeting with over 200 of them in February. This year over 500 have now joined the GMB. These drivers have sought to join the GMB because they genuinely feel that they have been battered by raft after raft of local legislation dragging them down with swathes of bureaucratic and damaging over regulation.

NVQ training, VRQ training, English comprehension testing, medical tests and now the late renewal policy which means that if a driver if a driver is a day late in renewing his licence the decision has been made to force the drivers to undertake a DSA driving test, undertake the English comprehension test, even though they might have been born in the UK from generations of ancestors born in this country and been driving private hire cars in Leeds for the last 20 years they still have to take the English comprehension test. This is plainly ridiculous. They must also undertake another CRB check, pay for a Group 2 medical report, even though they might have undergone these both recently - all of this at a cost of around £200 for the driver just because they are a day late renewing their licence. Drivers already have to pay for car plates and the renewal of badges every year, combined cost another £180.

Often they have to replace tinted windows when these cars are bought to the manufacturer's spec, at a cost of between £500 or £600.

Of course, the single and most contentious issue troubling drivers and the one that has caused the most concern is the current proposal to restrict the age limit on cars, because this piece of local legislation will force smaller companies out of business and force drivers on to the dole and out of work.

There are just under 5,000 private hire drivers in Leeds working for themselves or in small or medium sized businesses, plus there are also the very large multi-million pound firms. We all know that the small to medium sized enterprises are the life blood of any economy, the driving force of competitiveness and innovation. The large companies are happy with the proposed new byelaws because they know what its imposition will force many of the smaller companies out of existence, creating monopolies.

The proposal means that the age of cars that can be used drops from eight years to six years unless they pass through the Exceptional Conditions Policy. I will come to this policy, but firstly I should tell you that most Councils do not have age restrictions. In Newport a few weeks ago drivers were so incensed that their Council introduces a change of ten to eight year that they blocked the city twice - and that is ten to eight, not eight to six as Leeds proposes.

The Department of Transport publish best practise guidelines and I quote: "It is perfectly possible for an older vehicle to be in good condition, so the setting of an age limit behind which a local authority will not license vehicles may be arbitrary and inappropriate." It also says that, "Licensing requirements which are unduly stringent will restrict the supply of private hire vehicles and services by putting up the cost of operations or otherwise restricting entry to the trade."

The Exceptional Conditions Policy states that if a car is six years old and the driver wishes to continue operating it, then that car must be subjected to a two hour test at a cost of £60 to the driver. This is in addition to the MOT. To pass, the car must be in exceptional condition. The dictionary says that exceptional means "very unusual" or "outstandingly good". That effectively means that no cars will pass the test, and we believe it has been designed for that reason.

I ask you on behalf of the 5,000 private hire drivers in Leeds to squash this proposed flawed and unnecessary legislation. Keep these people working and off the dole. In this harsh economic climate many people have cut back on taxis and drivers are burdened enough with the other directives that I described. They simply cannot afford any more. They do not trust the Exceptional Conditions Policy.

The principles of an Act may be all right when the Act is passed, but principles are liable to be undermined by the rules frames under the Act; and the rules undermined by directives; and the directives by the whims and fancies of the persons executing them.

Thank you for you listening to us. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR BENTLEY: 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: *(A vote was taken)* Those in favour? Against? That is CARRIED, thank you. Thank you for your speech and due consideration will be

given to all that you have said and you will be informed. Thank you and good afternoon. (*Applause*)

DEPUTATION THREE HANDS OFF OUR HOMES GROUP

THE LORD MAYOR: Good afternoon and welcome to today's Leeds City Council meeting. If you would like to introduce your colleagues and if you could restrict your statement to five minutes it would be appreciated, thank you.

MR J DAVIS: My Lord Mayor, fellow Councillors, my name is John Davis, I am Chair of a group in Leeds called Hands off our Homes. With me here is Maureen Ailwood, one of the members of the group from East End Park.

The draft Leeds Housing Strategy 2009 – 2012 notes that the Council has not built new Council housing since the 1980s.

We would ask all Council members to realistically face up to the consequences of that policy over the last 25 years or so because the period covers times when all the major parties have been at some time in control of Leeds City Council and both Labour and Conservative parties have had long periods in Government nationally.

For Leeds the policy to neglect Council house building has been disastrous. The figures will vary a little but it appears to be accepted that there are something in the region of 25,000 households on the Council house waiting list and sometimes over 500 people bid each week for one or two desirable homes that come up. Without a ranking of priority extra there seems little point in making the effort to bid for a home, yet people do so in their hundreds out of desperation.

The full effects of the economic downturn are probably yet to be fully appreciated, but already homelessness through mortgage repossessions is running at levels that are 300% higher than a few years ago and landlord evictions are at their highest rate for five years.

There has been a belief that the market could be relied upon to provide the housing required by the people of Leeds. However, with 25,000 waiting for a home and 17,500 empty homes in Leeds, there appears to be a slight imbalance in need of speedy correction. We believe that it is wrong to blame the current problems on the financial crisis alone.

We note that the Housing Strategy document suggest that "Home ownership remains the preferred tenure for the majority of people in Leeds" but what people might want and what they can obtain may be two different things. Gone are they days of the irresponsible lending by banks and building societies and therefore the deposits required to be saved by potential home owners, the income required to maintain mortgage repayments, the credit rating deemed acceptable to a mortgage lender and the security of employment that is necessary for the option to purchase a home is no longer a realistic option. It is not available to the vast majority of non-home-owners in Leeds. In such circumstances the security of a well built and maintained Council property once again becomes attractive, particularly to those who have recently dipped their toes into the house buying market and found the water less than agreeable.

The EASEL project and other private developments in Gipton have not created homes that are available to those former occupants of Council properties who have seen their homes demolished to make way for a new private development that has

now magically disappeared. The fact that half of the houses being built by Bellway Homes in Gipton and Seacroft as part of the EASEL project have been bought by the Council and a report to the Executive board disclosed that the regeneration programme had created one new job for a joiner's apprentice, suggest that an alternative strategy is required.

Let us pretend that affordable housing is affordable for the moment. The Draft Housing Strategy document informs us that without a major Council housing programme the delivery of affordable housing is largely dependent on delivery through the planning system as a result of wider private housing development.

This policy has been a disaster in Leeds and across the country and we are now paying the price. In 2003, Leeds had an annual predicted shortfall of 480 affordable homes per annum until 2008 – over that period, Leeds averaged 3,288 new homes a year yet only 10% of these were 'affordable'. This contravened the UDP's affordability requirement of 15-25% of all new houses. The main reason – the Council's decision to enforce a lower rate of affordable housing from city centre apartment developments, and its subsequent failure to even enforce its own rules.

Now, according to the Council's own Housing Market Assessment, that shortfall is 1,889 affordable homes per annum to 2021. We have no chance of getting anywhere near this number and the Council has not even tried. Its target was just 1,800 affordable units over three years, less than a third of what is required, and that was before the credit crunch and the collapse of private house building.

The Council has now had to revise their plans for house building down from 10,200 new homes to 8,400 over a three year period to 2011, which the Council feels is a target they are confident of achieving despite the fact that there were only 100 recorded housing starts per month as of February 2009.

There has been a total failure of housing policy based on reliance on the private market. What we are calling for is that the lessons be learned and for there to be investment in first class public housing. Builders facing bankruptcy should be offered the chance to build that Council housing designed to the highest environmental standards. It is the most effective way to tackle housing need, climate change and unemployment all at the same time.

On 29th of January this year Gordon Brown addressed a Local Government Network conference saying, "In the past we have placed restrictions on local authorities... Today let me make it clear, if local authorities can convince us that they can deliver quickly – and cost effectively – more of the housing that Britain needs, and if local authorities can build social housing..."

THE LORD MAYOR: I must stop you there. Thank you. Councillor Bentley.

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

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: I second that, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: *(A vote was taken)* Those in favour please show. Against? That is CARRIED.

Thank you for what you have told us. You will receive information and due consideration later. Thank you indeed. *(Applause)*

DEPUTATION FOUR
WOODBIDGE TENANTS AND RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

THE LORD MAYOR: Good afternoon and welcome to today's Council meeting. If you would give your speech for about five minutes and introduce your fellow delegates.

MS L McNEIL: Thank you. My Lord Mayor and fellow Councillors, good afternoon. My name is Linda McNeil and with me are Charlotte McNeil and Patricia Billbrough and we represent the Woodbridge Tenants and Residents Association of Beckett Park.

When then above estate was built some 40 years ago, it was one of the most sought after Council estates to live on. It consists of 249, homes of which 63 are privately owned. They are known as the 5M houses and are system built.

For years repairs to these houses were deferred because there was no clear policy on what should be done with them. In 2004 after years of uncertainty, it was decided that something should be done as the estate was beginnings to resemble a slum and still does in certain areas.

Following much prodding by local councillors and our association, three alternatives were proposed: demolition and rebuilding; full repair; or major renovation. After approximately a year of consultation, it was decided to go for refurbishment with owner/occupiers given the option of buying into scheme which a few have done already.

Another consultation took place in which a pilot block of six houses was begun with pitched roofs and insulation. After this another consultation took place, where residents were given the opportunity of looking at materials and colour schemes and concerns of owner occupiers were raised again. The ALMO then took the decision to begin another group of houses with every included except for the pitched roofs which were deemed to costly. Flat roofs were decided on and so were done. Thirty houses were finished and what a difference they have made to this part of the estate.

At the very beginning of the 5M project we were told that the money was available from the government and this money was ring fenced - in other words protected - not to be used anywhere else. Concern was expressed but everyone believed and trusted the ALMO - now we wish we hadn't.

As recently as May 2008 we received a splendid newsletter about the progress on the scheme and a meeting was called in July 2008 to describe the progress.

Now in 2009, more than four years since the original discussions took place, we have been handed the news that the money is not available and therefore the refurbishment will stop.

We are now told by the ALMO that Decency work only will be done which, in our view, is neither practical nor economical. In other words some people will get bathrooms/kitchens done, some won't; in some cases the tenant will be forced to choose which one of these they want done. This is not good enough.

At a meeting organised by Woodbridge Tenants and Residents Association on 9th March 1009, it was agreed to start a campaign to state our case and to try to have this decision changed, our aim being to restart the refurbishment work on the 5M houses as promised years ago. A strategy was agreed:

- A petition for all concerned residents to sign, which is now in the progress of being done;
- A deputation to the Council;
- A press release with photographs;
- A letter to our MP, John Battle;
- Letters to various Councillors and individual letter to Board members;
- A letter the West North West homes to leave the building site in situ in the hope the work will continue when the funding returns, as some tenants feel that once the site goes, that is it. Some residents also feel that they are being let down thoroughly.

We ask the Council, as the strategic landlord, to use its powers to make West North West honour its commitment made more than four years ago, and demand an explanation of why the ring-fenced money was spirited away and that we need not worry that, once planning permission came through, there would be no further delay.

Of course, we all believed the ALMO again.

We ask the Council to deliver us from this decision and the incompetence of West North West Homes. Some tenants have said that they will hold back their rents in protest. We have told them not to do this. We hope to avoid the situation where tenants who have had their houses completely finished - I am one that has had my house done - feel unnecessarily privileged and therefore stop any ill-feeling amongst tenants which it is causing.

We will carry on the fight until we have a satisfactory conclusion and all tenants on the estate are satisfied. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Councillor Bentley.

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

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Lord Mayor, I am afraid there will be the first of many like this. I second.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. *(A vote was taken)* Those in favour, please. Against? That is CARRIED then. Thank you for attending this afternoon and due consideration will be taken of all you have said. Thank you and good afternoon. *(Applause)*

ITEM 5 - REPORT

THE LORD MAYOR: Item 5, I call upon Councillor Bentley.

COUNCILLOR BENTLEY: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I move in terms of the Order Paper.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: I second, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: *(A vote was taken)* Those in favour? Thank you. Against? That is CARRIED.

ITEM 6 - QUESTIONS

THE LORD MAYOR: Item 6, we now go on to Questions. I call the first one, Councillor Grahame.

COUNCILLOR GRAHAME: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Would the Chair of the Central and Corporate Scrutiny Board care to comment on the call-in meeting held on April 9th concerning the Budget Action Plan and Staffing Issues?

COUNCILLOR DOBSON: Thank you, Councillor Grahame. Good afternoon, Lord Mayor. For members' information the call-in related to a number of decisions taken by the Director of Resources concerning staffing matters. Those who called in the decision were concerned about the levels of consultation undertaken with staff and trade unions. They wanted better understanding of the aims of the changes and also to understand what other options had been considered.

However, as the meeting progressed I have to say the focus of the debate was less on those decisions themselves but rather the manner in which they had been taken. This was of great concern to all Board members and substitutes who stepped in on the day, as it became clear to all that these decisions had been implemented before the proper call in period had, in fact, expired.

In view of this the Board concluded unanimously that we could do no other than refer the decision back to the Director of Resources for reconsideration. Fellow members, this was a decision that was not taken lightly knowing the administrative problems this would have caused, but the governance arrangements around this decision were very concerning indeed to the Board and we did not feel able to release the decision for implementation.

Can I also add I feel the incisive and appropriate nature of the debate and questioning highlighted the importance of the Scrutiny process and I thank those members who took part. I believe this is an example of Scrutiny functioning at its best.

THE LORD MAYOR: Is there a supplementary?

COUNCILLOR GRAHAME: My Lord Mayor, yes. Doesn't the Chair agree with me that it is very, very disappointing that that Council's constitution has been ignored in this way on more than one occasion this year and in previous years?

COUNCILLOR DOBSON: Yes, Councillor Grahame, I do agree wholeheartedly and suggest that this is a situation that must not be repeated. The key issues for Board members around this particular decision was not, as I say, the rights and wrongs of the decision as the meeting progressed, but how the decision may have been taken and this was not a case of the Board simply being pedantic or precious about a small piece of bureaucratic small print. This is about the circumventing of the democratic process, potentially removing the rights of Councillors from any group to question decision-making. There was a deep dissatisfaction amongst members that the Council's constitution had been bypassed and the decision had been implemented prior to the call-in period. Clearly this should not have happened, especially as the monitoring officer has sent out reminders to decision-makers previously. Also, as you say, this is not the first time in this municipal year that this has happened. Decisions around Cems and Crems and markets in Leeds have also been implemented or partly implemented within the call-in period and I hope the clear message from the Board is that this is not to be repeated.

There is an interesting epilogue to this issue. It was revealed yesterday that the actual decision itself should have been a Council function decision and not an Executive decision because it related to employees' terms and conditions and I think members may see the way this is going. It should not; the decision should have

actually been exempt from the call-in process. I think that just shows that one error here has been compounded by another.

However, I do not consider the three-and-three-quarter hours we spent on the matter was wasted, as it served two very useful purposes. It lanced the boil that has so long troubled members around the proper implementation of decisions and also highlighted the fact that there is a very real and very urgent need for a separate piece of work to enable decision-makers to ensure proper checks and balances are in place to avoid any repetition of this frankly shambolic state of affairs.

I understand this is now already under way and a paper will be presented to the Corporate Governance Committee for their consideration in May. I am very confident my fellow Scrutiny Chairs will also be giving this report very close attention.

I believe the constitution of this Council agreed by Members in this very Chamber must be the bedrock of all decision-making and I believe my Board made that point very clearly indeed. Thank you.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Cleasby.

COUNCILLOR CLEASBY: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Given recent revelations regarding the funding crisis affecting the Learning and Skills Council nationally, what implications does their loss of budget control have for further education in Leeds?

COUNCILLOR HARKER: Thank you, Lord Mayor. The amount, we think, that we are going to be down based on the estimates which were made in December, the under funding will be somewhere in the region of £1,462,000 across our high schools. In the country nationally, the estimate of students to join our sixth forms in September 2009 had risen. The Learning and Skills Council are quite clear about that, it had risen higher than they thought it would but government decided to fund the provision at a static level which means that nationally our sixth forms are short, I think of around £200m.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Supplementary?

COUNCILLOR CLEASBY: Yes, Lord Mayor. By way of supplementary, and bearing in mind that I believe the Chancellor has made some bland statement about funding for sixth form education, just to put it in my mind and other Councillors' minds, the perspective of this problem, could I ask Councillor Harker, what does it actually mean for a typical school? For instance, a typical school where I am a governor, Horsforth School – the best school in this city – what would it mean, in fact, for that school?

COUNCILLOR HARKER: I would like to assure you, Councillor, that Education Leeds is working very closely with all our schools so that we can ensure that all young people in the city who want sixth form education in September will get it. This does mean that we are going to have to get schools to co-operate together so small numbers, say, doing a subject may have to be pooled across a number of schools, but in the case of Horsforth, which you asked about specifically, the figure is down by £51,233 on the figure they expected to receive.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Councillor Anderson.

COUNCILLOR ANDERSON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Does the Leader of Council agree that to promote the economic success of the city centre adequate parking needs to be available?

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Yes thank you, my Lord Mayor. Of course, I agree. It may be interesting to members to know that the Council provides only about 20 per cent of the parking spaces in the city centre, with 2,300 and some on street and 3,500, approximately, off street.

Just to ease the situation as well a little more this year, another 193 spaces have been created by opening some land up at Portland Crescent and Brunswick Terrace and some other temporary car park facilities will be available during the next few months which I think will help us in combating the recession. There is a saying in the private sector, about getting your customers to market and we need to get the retail customers to market – that means making sure they can get into Leeds by public transport or by private transport but to believe that none of them will want to come in their own cars and park is a piece of naivety.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Supplementary? No, thank you. I move on to Councillor Wakefield.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Could the Deputy Leader of the Council confirm which parties are official members of his administration?

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: I am sure that the Deputy Leader will agree with me that whatever, it is definitely not the Labour Party. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Supplementary?

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Thank you for the clarity. I was wondering who was in the administration. Given that the Conservative Party never mislead people...

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Hear, hear.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: ...and that Councillor Schofield never lies to people, could you explain to the Council why you are the only party in this administration that wants to charge people, young people from 16 onwards, for school transport and, in particular, why you want to end the weekly black bin collection, according to a Conservative paper in Temple Newsam?

COUNCILLOR LYONS: Speak with forked tongue.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: Lord Mayor, I have to say considering the Labour Party's performance in the Temple Newsam by-election, I am very surprised that Councillor Wakefield has wanted to remind the public at large...

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Answer the question.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: ...that they went from first to third whereas in that same election the Liberal Democrat vote rose by the biggest margin of any party.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Answer the question.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: At this point I would like to add my congratulations to Councillor Schofield and welcome him back to the Council.

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: Answer the question.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: To answer the question, Councillor Coupar...

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: Good, get on with it.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: ...as a local voter in Temple Newsam I am sure that you have been very confused in terms of the different leaflets that have been put through the door.

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: Only by yours.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: Particularly, I would suggest, the Labour Party leaflet which obviously put out some mis-information which obviously is going to stick at some point and maybe the same information that you are putting out gets taken on by others by mistake...

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: Answer the question.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: ... and gets translated. However, besides the mis-information about other parties, we were also treated to what Labour had to offer us in terms of their own vision and *this* is it. (*showed paper*) (*laughter and applause*)

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: It looks like the chocolate teapot has been at it again.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: Thankfully the voters of Temple Newsam made sure that your vision of Temple Newsam is not that they voted for. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Answer the question.

THE LORD MAYOR: All right then, all right. Let us go on. Thank you, Councillor Lyons. Councillor Dowson, please.

COUNCILLOR DOWSON: Would the Executive Board Member for Children's Services agree with me that it is important to be accurate and honest with the public?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor, Golton, would you care to reply?

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: Yes.

THE LORD MAYOR: Yes, is the answer. Supplementary?

COUNCILLOR DOWSON: I am sorry, it just took him quite a time to answer that one.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: And his last answer.

COUNCILLOR DOWSON: If honesty is so important, could Councillor Golton tell me why the famous Council Spokesperson recently said that you did not increase nursery fees last year when in fact you increased fees by 47%?

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: Councillor Dowson, obviously if you give me the detail of what you want to ask at the Council meeting I could give you chapter and verse. What I will say is that, what I do know of the issue of nursery fees is that the figure that the Labour Party always puts out in terms of being open and honest is always...

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: Absolutely right.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: You are not fit for the job.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: ...the very worse possible scenario for the people who use our Children's Centres and for the vast majority of people - and I am talking about people who might be more challenged, for instance, in terms of being able to afford nursery fees - what I will point out to Councillor Dowson is that year after year Council Children's Centre nursery fees are cheaper than the private alternative, so in terms of being fair to the population that we serve, I think that is quite a good deal.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Not at all.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: In terms of the nursery fees which do increase they increase with the help of parent support workers who work with our parents who are on, for instance, benefits or tax credit, to ensure that the increases which are in place are covered by the increases within those credits that they get from Government.

COUNCILLOR DOWSON: So they did increase?

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: So it means that are parents are not out of pocket and can still continue to get the best quality child education. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Pryke.

COUNCILLOR PRYKE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Would the, I suppose, assistant to the Exec Board member for Central and Corporate agree that introducing individual registration rather than household registration for the electoral roll would be a major step forward in combating electoral fraud?

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Yes, I do, although I have to say I am a little bit disappointed that it will not be introduced until 2014.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: We cannot hear.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: I will just repeat this for Councillor Lyons.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: I am not as deaf as you.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: I am disappointed that the introduction of this will not happen until 2014. Some suggest that this is, of course, for electoral reasons. I could not possibly comment on that. What I will say, of course, is that given the result we had in Temple Newsam where it was so close between all the parties that were involved in fighting it, it is essential that voters feel confident that their vote counts and we want to make sure that any electoral fraud is limited as much as possible. I hope that these rules that are being brought in will help us to achieve that.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Pryke, supplementary?

COUNCILLOR PRYKE: Yes. Given that the Electoral Commission has today reported that Leeds is below the standard in house-to-house enquiries, maintaining the integrity of registration absent vote applications, public awareness and planning for rolling registration at the annual canvas, all of which enable postal voting fraud, would Councillor Golton agree that the Council should now use the proactive anti-fraud measures used by other Councils to deter landlords, agent landlords, agents and other non-residents using properties they have access to to register non-resident and possibly non-existent postal voters?

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: Thank you, Councillor Pryke. As with all information which is brought to our attention where the Council is performing not as well as might

be expected, we do take on all the comments made by the Electoral Commission and, of course, we are working to ensure that we have the correct measures in place to ensure that we will meet the requirements that are expected.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Lobley.

COUNCILLOR LOBLEY: Would the Leader of Council join me in urging the Government to confirm its commitment to extending high speed rail link proposals to Leeds?

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Yes, absolutely. This is actually a very serious issue because I have no doubt whatever that had other political parties not made very strong supportive statements about the need for high speed train to come to Leeds and, indeed, to other major cities, the government's current review would only be looking at going to Birmingham and on to Manchester. It was only after comments from the other two major political parties - I have to say particularly my own where Leeds was specifically mentioned - that the Government, via Lord Adonis, then instructed a company called High Speed 2 to enlarge their area of investigation to look at other northern cities and, indeed, Scotland.

I have written on behalf of the Council to Lord Adonis indicating our determination to lobby very strongly for high speed train to come to Leeds. There are three possible routes that have to be considered and it is very obvious to me again, I have to say, following a meeting of the Transport Regeneration Committee of the LGA, that there was an expectation on the part of some politicians - I have to say mainly of your persuasion - that it was virtually already decided it was going to be the West Coast line and it was going to be to Manchester. That is, quite frankly, not acceptable.

There are three possible routes initially - the West Coast line, the East Coast mainline or, indeed, a central line. What we have undertaken to do at City Region level is to come forward with a proposal from all the city regional Local Authorities we can all sign up to and that would be the basis of what we will then lobby very strongly for.

If we can get the other Local Authorities in this City Region and, indeed, in the rest of Yorkshire and Humber as a group to lobby for one particular solution that will best serve the regeneration and economic growth of our area, then I think we have a much greater chance of success.

I just want to make this appeal, and that is that we would want the Members of Parliament to ensure - Members of Parliament from all parties but for the time being at least the Labour Party's Members are in the majority - to make sure that this discussion, this feasibility study is on a fair and open basis and on a level playing field and that decisions have not already been taken in advance of the work being done.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Supplementary? No. Councillor J Lewis.

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Does the Deputy Leader of Council stand by his comments that an important part of good leadership is being a change agent?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Golton.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am sure that he would.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: If they'd have changed their agents for Temple Newsam they might have got something! *(Laughter)*

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: I have got my fingers crossed that I am going to be the first Labour member to actually have an answer to a question this afternoon. I have got my fingers crossed. We all know that Councillor Golton's idea of change is to step into the Leader's shoes. What I am going to ask, does he agree with me that following the swift reversal on the proposed charges to Sunday car parking in the city centre, straight after Councillor Brett stood up in this Council Chamber at the Budget Meeting and extolled their virtues, shows that this administration is in fact all change and no leadership and it is the people in Leeds that are suffering from this drift and from this lack of leadership?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Golton, would you care to reply?

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: I have to say, one of the greatest ways that Councillor Brett has achieved an agent to change is to make sure that we got rid of 24 years of Labour rule in the city.

COUNCILLOR GRAHAME: You have not. It is the two of you together.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: One reason why that was easier than the Labour Party thought was because we are an administration that listens and whenever we have got a policy we will reconsider if we feel that that is something which needs a suitable response...

COUNCILLOR McKENNA: Budge and fudge.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: ...to the needs of the people and the businesses of Leeds. On this occasion that was what happened. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: More 'U' turns.

COUNCILLOR BLAKE: I do not think Councillor Brett ever realised he had so many questions directed at him. Can Councillor Golton, as Councillor Brett's stand in, explain what steps he has taken to reduce wasteful spending since he became Exec member for the Central and Corporate portfolio? If you could try and answer that on Councillor Brett's behalf.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Golton.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Councillor Blake will be pleased to know that I have been given a little bit of help on this by Doug Leeson. She will be aware I hope, given the fact that we had a budget meeting not too long ago where, of course, the Leader of the Opposition was, I would say, plentiful in his praise for Alan Gay in terms of his management of the Council's finances. I am a little bit surprised to get this question now, I must say.

I will remind Councillor Blake that in terms of the Council's latest Use of Resources Assessment by external audit, we scored a 4, which is the highest possible score and in terms of value for money, to quote the auditor, "The Council continues to demonstrate that overall costs and unit costs for key services demonstrate best value compared to other Local Authorities."

In terms of how Councillor Brett might have been an agent for change to ensure that savings are made, the efficiencies that have been delivered across a number of areas including how we use our energy, our procurement service, sickness

management - although of course there is a lot more to do on that area - administration and back office functions - of course, mindful that all of this is to ensure that we protect our front line services so that we can invest in efficient services for the city of Leeds.

THE LORD MAYOR: Supplementary?

COUNCILLOR BLAKE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Against that backdrop, then, perhaps you could tell us why your administration spent £21.3m on agency fees in 2007/8, a further £10m on consultants, £185,000 on About Leeds and £40,000 on rebranding the Contact Centre. Surely a significant amount of this cash could have been better spent on front line services and, would you not agree, on the redeployment and training of staff now threatened with redundancy?

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: I understand, Lord Mayor - I am not sure where Councillor Blake gets her figures from. I believe it might originally have come from the Taxpayers' Alliance.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Alan Gay.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: She might have to confirm that a bit later. What tends to happen in those circumstances where you get headline figures is that some of the detail gets missed out. In terms of the money that we do spend on agencies, it also includes, I am told, also temporary staff.

In terms of change that Councillor Lewis was talking about earlier, when one does have a progressive system of change to ensure that services are delivered in the best possible circumstances and with the best possible value for money, it means that sometimes during that change you need to have interim arrangements and that includes, sometimes, Lord Mayor, having agency staff to fulfil those interim arrangements.

In terms of making sure you get the best deal for the city of Leeds, we do, of course, need to make sure that we have comparators against the best which is being offered in other Authorities and, of course, other organisations, and that is where the advocacy which is needed from consultants who come as agencies, of course, is most valuable. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Waffle again.

THE LORD MAYOR: I call on Councillor Hamilton.

COUNCILLOR M HAMILTON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Would the Executive Board member for Central and Corporate are to comment on the key local issues he sees affecting the resident of Leeds at the current time?

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I believe that Councillor Hamilton has allowed me the opportunity to comment on this.

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: Is this Leader's Question Time, Stuart?

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: One of the issues which is affecting us, of course, is how our budget has been squeezed because a few years ago the Government decided that we just were a little bit too affluent to get our NRF money and, of course, we have had to be very, very keen to make sure that every penny that we have is spent appropriately. Then, of course, recently, given the economic downturn we are informed through publications like the Municipal Journal that it is the big cities of this

country outside the south-east which have been hit hardest by the economic slump and that places like Leeds and Birmingham are seeing the steepest rise in unemployment which, of course, underlines our understanding that our city has far more needs than central Government might perhaps think.

I am encouraged by some of the headlines that are coming out of the budget which is coming out today which hopefully will seek to build confidence within businesses. In Leeds in terms of reducing our debt the Council, of course, has worked very hard to make sure that we can maintain the sustainability of the credit union and, of course, our Benefits Team are making sure that we get to the right people at the right time to ensure that they do not fall on hard times.

I will, of course, wait for the detail and Councillor Carter might have more information in terms of what it means that the Chancellor has announced that we will become one of the two areas for City Region Development and how that will help us manage our money.

THE LORD MAYOR: Supplementary, Councillor Hamilton?

COUNCILLOR M HAMILTON: Yes, Lord Mayor. Just bringing this down to a local level, then, would Councillor Golton agree that some of the local projects that the Council has been involved in - in particular here I am thinking of the Heart Project at Headingley - had actually an excellent response to the economic downturn and that they should, if the Government will not step in and help Leeds, this administration will.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: Thank you, Councillor Hamilton. The Heart Scheme is, of course, a very good example of the Council taking a risk. It is one of those areas where I think we have to be a little bit more creative than the previous Labour administration has been in terms of giving the opportunity for a community to take on a project and make a success of it. I am very glad that we allowed this particular project because we felt the capacity was shown by the Headingley Development Trust was one that we had to show support for and we will wait to see the results of that vote of confidence to see whether or not this is a suitable model to be repeated elsewhere. As I said, we are going out on a limb on this one and we will be monitoring it very closely.

It is one of those areas where we need to have as many business information units as we can across the city. LEGL has been very successful under Councillor Carter's tutelage and this is also a scheme which will hopefully complement that to ensure that we have new businesses coming in to take on those areas where some of our businesses might not be as successful under the present circumstances.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Councillor Gruen.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Could the Executive Member for Adult Social Services reassure members of Council that the standard of care shown in the BBC's Panorama programme of April 9th is not the level of care that older people in Leeds experience?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Harrand.

COUNCILLOR HARRAND: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I would like to begin by digressing slightly and congratulating Lisa Keenan and the group who presented the first deputation this afternoon. I think it is absolutely outstanding and a model of how these things should be done.

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: Hear, hear, Peter.

COUNCILLOR HARRAND: I am sure that everyone who saw the Panorama programme on April 9th was appalled and disgusted to see vulnerable older people being treated in such a disrespectful, uncaring and neglectful way. I am sure all members of Council will join me in condemning the shocking practices that were highlighted in that programme.

In Leeds we take every possible step to make sure Homecare agencies commissioned by the Council - and we have been commissioning externally for 15 years - and our own in-house provided deliver high quality services to vulnerable people in helping them stay safely and comfortably in their own homes for as long as possible, having regard to their individual wishes and preferences, maintaining and promoting their dignity at all times and working with their families and their carers to ensure people's needs and wishes are met and, as I say, this has been a policy since the mid 1990s.

Thank you to Councillor Gruen for bringing this question forward. It shows how in Leeds elected members are active participants in safeguarding our most vulnerable citizens.

The Council's policy has been set to ensure that all agencies we contract with are rated as good or two star by the Care Quality Commission. One independent sector provider that did not come up to this standard recently was replaced with a different company that did meet our standards. Where poor practice is detected, this is raised with providers at once and targets for rapid improvement are set.

I know that everybody associated with Adult Social Care Services will want nothing but the best possible services to ensure that our most vulnerable citizens are safe, well cared for and respected.

One last point is that we are all safe guardians of vulnerable people in our city and all have a part to play in ensuring that people in the care system are treated well, appropriately and respected. I hope that all members will at all times vigilant in raising any causes for concern. I know that all responsible members will bring to our attention at once any cases where they feel we do not meet the appropriate standards.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Peter Gruen, supplementary? I am sorry, Peter, we have run out of time.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: I thought once we started we continue with the supplementary? I keep trying but obviously it is terribly difficult.

THE LORD MAYOR: We come to the end of our question time. Thank you. I am sorry for all the disappointments that I can see all around the Chamber.

ITEM 7 - RECOMMENDATIONS OF EXECUTIVE BOARD

THE LORD MAYOR: We must go on to Item 7, Recommendations of the Executive Board, and I call on Councillor Carter.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: I move the item in terms of the notice, Lord Mayor. It is actually the Climate Change Strategy.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Smith?

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

COUNCILLOR OGILVIE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I would like to briefly comment on the Climate Change Strategy. The document that we have in the papers is a start and we at least welcome that on this side of the Chamber. I guess if we were marking it out of ten we would give it maybe a four - a start but with currently little realistic chance of achieving anything that is in it.

Can I say we do not doubt the commitment of the officers who have prepared the Strategy - I know they are personally really committed to the climate change agenda - nor do we doubt that there are members on all sides of the Chamber who care very much about this agenda.

The issue is that after nearly two years of preparation the Climate Change Strategy simply does not go far enough. If you have read it you will see that it is a very worthy document but it does not actually commit the Council or the city to anything much.

One of the problems, I think, is that towards the end of last year it is quite clear that the brakes were firmly applied, the strategy was delayed with the result that what is left is a strategy without any clear actions or specific targets and no resources to fund it. I agree with Friends of the Earth who were calling for clear interim targets to be built into the strategy and I would be grateful if Councillor Smith would comment on that when he gets up to speak.

Lord Mayor, Councillor Illingworth will speak in a moment about the real threats we face as a city if we do not take the challenges we face by climate change seriously. There are also real opportunities for the city and our residents. We have spoken before about how in Kirklees every home which is suitable is receiving loft and cavity wall insulation for free, regardless of income, showing how being good for the environment can actually help to improve people's quality of life as well as saving them money.

We have also spoken before about how we should be making the Leeds City Region the leader in environmental technologies, producing the jobs of the future for our residents.

Lord Mayor, Friends of the Earth have said - and I think we have all had an e-mail from them - that the city as the regional centre has failed to show significant leadership in this strategy in developing a low carbon economy, and I tend to agree.

As I said at the Budget Council, it is time that we step up to the mark and show that tackling climate change is not just about ticking clocks but requires political leadership from every member of the Executive Board over there so that it is integrated into all departments in the Council. You talk enough about there being one Council - if that is not just rhetoric it is time to turn your words into action on climate change. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR ILLINGWORTH: Thank you, Lord Mayor. With the benefit of hindsight generations yet unborn will marvel at this Council meeting. How come, they will ask, when faced with this real and present threat did Leeds City Council do so little?

The evidence shows that climate change is by far the greatest threat facing humanity - the greatest threat that has ever faced humanity. It is bigger than the problems posed by AIDS or drug addiction, more important by far than our current

financial difficulties. Climate change is an issue that haunts not only the present generation but generations yet to come.

How can we say this, Lord Mayor, when we are only talking about a few degrees rise in average temperature compared with the 30 degrees variation between winter and summer? Surely, many people say, this simply means that we can plant our petunias a fortnight earlier.

World class researchers from the US National Academy of Sciences, and in England from the Royal Society, are warning Governments that urgent action is required right now. We cannot afford to wait until the damage is more obvious. The immediate threat is global food production. Lack of rain or rain in the wrong season has catastrophic effects on farmers. In southern Europe drought is already threatening agricultural output. The Australians are well aware of this problem. It will get worse in the future.

Many great river systems are fed throughout the year from glacial melt water. As those places disappear the steady, reliable flows will be replaced by massive floods and seasonal droughts. Meteorologists predict an increased number of extreme weather events. It is not merely the loss of property or the people who are killed or injured in the disaster; it is the prolonged economic disruption and loss of agricultural output that threatens the entire planet.

In the longer term, the rise in sea levels would mean quite literally the end of civilisation, with many of our major cities and productive lowland areas permanently flooded by the sea. At present we can only guess about how long it will take to melt the polar icecaps. We expect the North Pole to be open water in our lifetimes, although this will not directly affect sea levels. What matters is the seven metre rise in sea level when the Greenland Icecap melts and the 67 metre rise when the Antarctic slowly melts as well. This will bring the shoreline into central Leeds, with billions of people displaced from their homes, even though I doubt that many of us will see it in our lifetime.

We must understand the scale of the action required: 80% cuts in greenhouse gases by 2050, although it is increasingly seen as an under-estimate. These cuts must apply to all major contributors - that is to commerce, domestic heating and transport.

We know that our climate is inherently unstable. Positive feedback amplifies initially small effects so that over thousands or millions of years global climate has repeatedly swung from one extreme to the other. In the distant past the entire planet has frozen from pole to pole and during the Permian Extinction it got so hot that it killed 95% of the species on the planet.

These massive swings and a host of smaller events have been closely linked to atmospheric carbon dioxide. This is not speculation or guesswork; this is solid evidence from drill cores, geology, chemical measurements. There is incontrovertible scientific evidence that industrial and domestic carbon dioxide production from fossil fuels is affecting the climate. So far it has produced about 0.8 of a degree rise in global temperatures, with another 1.2 degrees already in the pipeline from longer term effects, even if we switched off all our factories, cars and power stations tomorrow.

The problem, Lord Mayor, is that many people are not yet ready for the scale of the cuts required. We can only do what the public will let us do. This is a challenge for responsible politicians not to seek short-term advantage and thereby sink the ship

that we all must sail in, but to embark on a sustained public education about the threats that we all face.

Lord Mayor, it also needs leadership. The Council's current proposals are woefully inadequate. They will not be even nearly sufficient - they will not cure the problem. We have to start somewhere, Lord Mayor, but time is rapidly running out. Thank you. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR A BLACKBURN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I do not think I need to say that I agree with everything that Councillor Illingworth says.

We also welcome the Leeds Climate Change Strategy but we do not think it goes far enough. The Strategy mentions new National Indicators concerned with reducing carbon emissions and adapting to climate change, but unlike other Authorities in the city region, Leeds has not adopted National Indicator 186 into the Local Area Agreement. Leeds needs to set interim targets for the reduction by 40% by 2020.

We need to encourage home energy efficiency and to help with this we hope that this Council adopt a recharge scheme for energy conservation on renewables as mentioned in our budget amendment. We also think that this Council should lead by example by fitting solar panels on its buildings and housing stock, though a combination of wind power and solar power could be used in some schemes.

We need to move to encourage people to use sustainable transport. We ask that this Council introduces a 'Leave your car at home one day per week' for all its staff and that Councillors sign a pledge to not use their cars also for one day per week.

Walking, cycling, bus and train use need to be encouraged as an alternative to the car and trains used as an alternative where possible to the aeroplane. We also need joined-up cycle lanes, not just cycle lanes that run along a small part of a busy road. Again, we would like to see a target of increasing cycling levels, such as a quarter by 2010 which has been agreed by the York City Council.

As for waste, we welcome this strategy mentions in it about products should have a long life and be recycled at the end of their life. However, it does not mention the famous - or famous in Green Party terms anyway - five Rs - refuse, reduce, reuse, repair and recycle. The recycle, of course, is a last resort.

We note that it also mentions on site renewables including wind turbines - again we are pleased about that but it mentions them in private developments and, of course, we want to see more of this type of thing in private developments but also, as I said, in Council buildings as well.

In the document it mentions about the scheme that uses heat from waste but it uses that as part of incineration. I do not think I need tell you that we are not in favour of incineration.

However, all in all, as I have said, we welcome that there is something there but it does need a lot more work on in - in other words it needs a lot of beefing up for us to be happy with it. Thank you, my Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR SMITH: Lord Mayor, where to start. Councillor Illingworth, I find myself agreeing with a large amount of what you have said, which is a first, I think, for me. He is absolutely right - climate change is the single biggest issue facing not

only this Council but businesses and people in Leeds, across the country and, indeed, across the world.

He did say though - and I will not agree with him on this - that it is woefully inadequate and I ask myself - of course perhaps John is not the most typical member of the Labour Party but I ask myself what his party is doing if the Government's stimulus package has 6.5% of its spending on green issues, which is the smallest percentage of any country in Western Europe, any country in the developed world. In fact even France, who we look to quite often as not being very environmentally friendly, are spending 10% as against our 6.5%.

I am surprised that no-one has brought up the question of the airport because the Friends of the Earth report which has been widely referred to talks about emissions from the airport in the fullness of time potentially contributing the whole of the CO₂ emissions allowed for Leeds. What did the members on the Plans Panel do? The person who brought up climate change on that was my colleague Councillor Matthews and not anyone from any other party. I am a little bit concerned about some of the claims that are made from the Labour members. Councillor...

COUNCILLOR ATHA: (*inaudible*) what the decision was.

COUNCILLOR SMITH: That was my understanding, Councillor Atha.

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: Never believe the Lib Dems.

COUNCILLOR SMITH: Councillor Ogilvie, of course, has sat on the Climate Change Partnership and scores it four out of ten. I am surprised that some of the comments he has made were not made earlier but he did refer to the Friends of the Earth and it seems that he has been briefed more by Friends of the Earth than by time spent on the committee. They do criticise the targets but in fact if you look you will find that we have broken down the 80% target into equal tonnages of CO₂ across each year and we will monitor progress on that.

In terms of home energy efficiency, I can tell you that the Fuel Service Team are currently negotiating a new discounted energy efficiency scheme to cover ten wards in the coming financial year.

Moving to Councillor Blackburn, she mentioned her disappointment at us not adopting National Indicator 186 and the reason we did not adopt that indicator was that Government research showed that 80% of CO₂ emissions for an area is outside our control and for that reason we have adopted NI 185 to show leadership. We have also committed to influence others and this is where the strategy comes in because it is not the City Council's strategy, it is the strategy for the city. The City Council will play its part and it will take a leading part but it needs a partnership of everyone in this city - citizens, businesses, educational establishments and ourselves - in order to achieve what we are looking for. It has taken two years to bring to fruition. It has very much been a partnership effort, it has had widespread consultation and now we are at the stage where we are publishing the strategy. It is a call to action, it is a working document, it will change as we go along. Once we have published it, which is what we are doing now, we will then be working on the action plan. It is a working document. We will bring it back to Council on a six monthly basis to report progress. I am confident that we can make good progress in this arena. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Thank you, my Lord Mayor. Just very briefly - Steve said most of what needed saying in response except to reiterate, this is a work

in progress. Nobody is pretending it goes far enough, that it addresses all the issues, but I believe it is a very good start.

Steve mentioned the importance of working in partnership and it is not just in partnership with other organisations in this city, because if you believe that Leeds on its own is going to make some sort of sea change in attitudes and in performance in terms of combating climate change, I am afraid you are not living in the real world.

However, together with our partners not just in this city but outside it, we can make a very significant change and when I introduce the next item I will comment further on that because it ties in with something that Councillor Golton said a little earlier.

The other point I would make is this, that I think most of us find it extremely difficult to accept some of your well-meaning criticisms when, as Councillor Smith has just pointed out, in terms of spending a percentage of GDP on taking measures to combat carbon emissions, the Government is the worst in Western Europe. If you look at investment in public transport infrastructure in Yorkshire and the Humber, we get the worst deal of any region in England. We are all committed to the fact that we need to persuade people by offering them a real, efficient and green alternative, to get them out of the cars wherever possible, but come on, when you are having a go at us I hope you are making much stronger comments to your own Government because we have just dealt with the emission issues and now we are dealing with transport - we will go to housing if you want, where the steps you are taking to make sure your mates in the volume house builders actually build houses that are going to be fit for purpose in the latter part of the 21st Century are pathetic - pathetic.

Do not just lecture us and come along and say our climate change document does not go far enough, it does not do this, it does not do that. We know it has a long way to go but my goodness me, I really do hope that you are being a lot more forceful in the comments you are passing to your own Government and your own Members of Parliament, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR LYONS: Same as you would be.

THE LORD MAYOR: We now call for a vote. (*A vote was taken*) Those in favour would you please show? Those against? The motion, then, CARRIED. Thank you.

ITEM 8 - RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

THE LORD MAYOR: Item 8, Recommendations of the General Purposes Committee.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: I move item 8 in the terms of the Notice, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR BENTLEY: I second, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: We call for a vote again here then. (*A vote was taken*) Those in favour please show. Those against? That is CARRIED, thank you.

ITEM 9 - MINUTES

THE LORD MAYOR: Item 9, then, Minutes. Councillor Carter.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Yes, my Lord Mayor. In moving the Minutes of the Exec Board and the other issues there related, I would like to just comment briefly and inform members of something very important that has developed through the announcement of the budget this afternoon. I think all members will be aware that some little time ago all the City Regions were invited to bid to the Secretary of State for communities to be a forerunner City Region which would mean entering into discussions with the Government about a series of devolved powers to the City Region that current rest with the Government or outside agencies.

I am delighted to be able to inform you that the Leeds City Region is one of the two pilots which the Government has agreed to and has been incorporated in the budget statement by the Chancellor this afternoon. This gives a very real opportunity for this City Region and the Local Authorities that comprise it to prove not just to the Government - and I think this is very important but to prove not just to the Government - but to the two other major political parties in the next twelve months that actually Local Government can deliver real change at a local level to the benefit of all its citizens in a wider area than just the Local Authority boundaries.

The Secretary of State, Hazel Blears, rang me this morning actually to congratulate the Leeds City Region on its bid and the fact that we have been successful. I thanked her for that and said we were very grateful that Leeds City Region had been accepted. Most city regions put bids in and some of you will have seen that Birmingham are less than amused - or the West Midlands - that they are not one of the two successful forerunner bids.

I also want to express my thanks to the Secretariat of the Leeds City Region which happens to be based here in Leeds, because they were very much involved in driving forward the document, the big document which I have here, and I know which all party Leaders have got a copy of because I sent it to them some time ago. I want to thank them for their professionalism in the presentation of that bid against very stiff competition.

What does it mean? It means that we will be discussing with the Government how we can work more closely to gain devolved powers on a number of areas of critical importance to the city: housing and regeneration; high level skills and innovation; and also on transport and on accelerated development zones; also on becoming an innovation hub, and that is the point I wanted to lead to my earlier comments.

The innovation hub is going to be critical to the development of new technologies and new industries to serve the City Region economy and the national economy and they have to be sustainable. That must be going to be a part of a much wider policy on combating things like climate change and the rest and that is why I made the comments I made a little earlier about the need to work together on a much wider basis because surely a group of Authorities running from Craven in the west to Selby in the east, part of North Yorkshire and running down to Barnsley, working together with its partners on innovation and development of new industries and new technology, has to be a good thing for everybody, not just in our City Region but way beyond.

We have been given, I think, a major opportunity. The three major political parties in the next twelve months will all be, I think, making more statements about the importance of localism. My party has already made some pretty far-reaching proposals, as have the Liberal Democrats and, I think, this is an acceptance and I am prepared to accept it at face value, by the Government and certainly by the Secretary of State, to give her due credit, certainly by the Secretary of State - that actually

Local Government over this past number of years has had far too much taken away from it and the tide is turning, but it is up to us to prove that we can make this work.

We have a very strong City Region Partnership. I have been amazed how it has developed. All three major parties are represented on the Board, which I chair. There are Labour leaders from Kirklees, from Barnsley and from Wakefield and Conservative Leaders from Selby, North Yorkshire and all the rest, there are Liberal Democrat Leaders from York, and we work very, very well together in terms of addressing the issues and making sure we get our agenda in front of the national politicians again of all parties.

I do believe that this could be a watershed and we have been given an opportunity and now we have to make it work. I think if we do make it work it will be perhaps not for my generation of local politicians or Keith's or one or two other people's but certainly for younger politicians in this Chamber and people who have not yet come along, a real opportunity to go back to the days when local Government did a lot more than it is currently able to do without being told precisely how to do it by Central Government and that has got to be - that has got to be - a good thing for local democracy, it has got to be a good thing for the people of this City Region.

I am delighted to be able to tell you of those things today. I am well aware that many people in this Chamber are not as well briefed on the City Region as they ought to be and we are going to arrange a series of briefings through the Whips for all members of all political parties and I shall be inviting Exec Board members and Group Leaders to separate briefings as well so that everybody is as well informed as it is possible to be as these discussions unfold. To start with they will be discussions but if I can tell you, the Government is looking to have some deals in place with us in the next three to six months, so it is a short timescale for things starting to happen and so we take it as a compliment to the City Region, we take it at face value as a genuine attempt to start working more closely with Local Government and if that is the case - and I hope that it is - then I think it is a very good day indeed for Local Government in this city. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Bentley.

COUNCILLOR BENTLEY: I second and reserve the right to speak.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Could I ask Councillor Wakefield?

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Yes, thank you, Lord Mayor. I will speak very briefly because Councillor Carter is absolutely right, we only found out - or certainly I did - as I was coming to the Chamber because that is how late the news broke. What I would like to say is that we criticise the Labour Government when it is wrong and I do not believe we have ever hesitated to do that, and many of us have stood up and argued against quangos because we believe many of those functions should be delivered locally. When it gets it right, like it has today with this announcement, then I think all of us should praise the Labour Government for recognising not only the role of Leeds as being the economic engine of the region, but also the fact that local Government can deliver and that, if you like, it is the pendulum swinging back at long last to local Government.

As Councillor Carter has mentioned, there appears to be a number of responsibilities and functions which we desperately need as we tackle the recession: housing, innovation, employment, transport and others. I very much welcome them coming back to Local Government and for us to be put on trial and I am absolutely confident that we have the capacity and the skills to make this work on behalf of the people of Leeds.

What I would urge - and I think it was just in the last comment or two - is that we do this in a democratic way. You are absolutely right about the City Region being represented by leaders of the region, but what we have not had outside of that role is very little involvement and I would urge, Andrew, you we mentioned a briefing - I think we want more than that. We want real involvement in some of these decisions that have been made locally. I think, as I say, that will excite this Chamber because at long last after many years of being starved of real responsibilities, and you really find out when you go through this recession we have been given some rights and responsibilities and roles.

I very much welcome that, welcome Hazel Blears's comment and maybe there is one person also we should praise as well, and that is Rosie Winterton, who happens to be in my view the best Yorkshire Minister we have ever had because she is seriously committed to Local Government and she is seriously committed to engage all members of all parties on behalf of this region. Congratulations to her and I look forward to a report coming back here to see what role we can play in the future. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR A TAYLOR: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am sure that Councillor Golton in summing up this section will be ready to respond to the decision which has just been made which is altogether good for the city and for the region and also can I just say how much I value both speakers, both Andrew and Keith, in what they have to say today. It seems as if there is a spirit of glasnost which I hope has entered into the Chamber once again and that people can work together in order for the benefit of this city.

I am really commenting on Minute 225 on page 71 about the Joint Service Centre in Harehills. It is basically to say, as you would expect, how much this is going to be valued by the citizens of Gipton and Harehills, who will very much benefit from it.

The environmental services that are going to be place there, the credit union which will be placed there and the PCT will be there to deliver health services that this particular area not only of Gipton and Harehills but also the residents of Burmantofts and Richmond Hill who live in the Harehills area will also benefit from.

I am hoping that we are going to be proactive about it. I note that it is hopefully going to be ready for occupation by the year 2010 and if that does happen, and I hope it will, that it will be a very, very valuable asset to those people in that area along with the new Children's Centre which is there. It is something that we all ought to be proud of and, as I say, I very much welcome it and wish the project well and I hope that we will be able to deliver it with speed. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR MONAGHAN: Thank you, Lord Mayor, speaking to Minute 248 on page 83, the Ward Based Initiatives Fund. I would like to welcome the administration's commitment to extend this scheme and I think it shows that the commitment ultimately to tackling climate change by bringing forward this money.

In Headingley we are using this in one of the most deprived areas of our ward and we are actually using it to improve bin yards to improve the standard and to reduce antisocial behaviour that happens in the bin yards and to actually make it a more pleasant place, stop landlords fly tipping in them and to encourage people to use them for the purpose they are meant for.

This is investment that otherwise Headingley would not have got. We are not in an NRF area, we do not fit the regular areas for capacity deprived so this funding is

particularly welcome to giving ward members the opportunity to invest in areas where we see need in our wards and it gives us a chance to make Headingley a greener and cleaner place, so I welcome this initiative very much. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR DOWNES: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Just before I start, just to welcome the announcement about the Leeds City Region. I was yesterday up in Harrogate first thing and then over in Skipton launching the new Metro Rail Card zones 6 and 7, so this is already the City Region starting to work together, so I just inform members of that.

Moving on to the Ward Based Initiative, I would like to echo the sentiments of Councillor Monaghan. I am pleased that we are continuing this roll out and in my ward, Otley and Yeadon, we have already committed money to a local school for solar panels, we have a second school which is interested in it. Basically what we have done is we have gone out to the community and we have invited bids for environmental project to reduce the carbon footprint of voluntary and community based organisations. We are also working with the local Scout Group to provide a heating scheme for their hut and also insulation for a sports club, so we are working with the community to try and bring green incentives and reduce the carbon footprint. I would urge all other members to consider going that and to get the Ward Based Initiative money spent. Thank you.

COUNCILLOR ATHA: Lord Mayor, I want to refer to Item 247 on page 82. This is a PFI proposal for a waste site, transfer site, in Kirkstall. It is an item that has been before us before and I really want to ask the Council - we are the Council but the people on that side of the Council who have the majority when you all get together - to look again at this proposal to site a transfer station in the heart of a whole complex of back-to-back houses which are very dense houses.

The proposal has led to enormous opposition from the people in the area, because their experience has been plagues of flies in the summer and noxious smells which, quite frankly, none of us would experience outside of one of the old fashioned abattoirs. It really is quite appalling and the prospect of this coming back to the area in Kirkstall is frightening the people there in a way that has to be realised.

The truth is it is in the wrong place, the site. It should never have been considered, given its location. We are told from the reports, do not worry, it is going to be a new building, there will be no smell and no flies. If that is the case - if it is the case - I ask you, why not put this waste transfer site where the rubbish is coming from, which is up the valley, because it is taking that larger area outside? If it has no smell, if it has no problems, then why put it in lorries and bring the lorries down one of the busiest roads in the city, if not the busiest road, through a remarkable construction which is called the Kirkstall Gyrotory System, and that into the city centre, almost?

It just does not make sense. It does not make sense environmentally, it does not make sense for the people in Kirkstall and it does not make sense commercially. If you think of all the extra mileage that these heavy lorries are doing coming from, say, just from the Horsforth roundabout which is not a location where there would be a site, bringing it two miles into the city centre and then two miles back out. You are saying hundreds of trips every year will take place during the course of the next ten years and the impact on the environment, the pollution and so on which we have been discussing earlier, it just does not make sense.

If the reports are telling the truth and putting this centre in Kirkstall will not involve smells, will not involve flies, then there is no reason on earth why it should not be placed closer to the origin of the waste it is bringing in.

We are told anyway, do not worry because the waste that is coming in will be much less in volume than previously. The answer to that is, I am told by the people in the business, no, it will not be a lot less in tonnage but the material that causes the flies and the smells has now been isolated and that is the bit that is being brought - not the total. You do not get smells from glass, you do not get smells from wood or paper. You get it from rotting materials and those are the things that are being brought into that centre, according to the people who apparently are going to be using it.

Another thing I would say, it was chosen after a search. Guess what, the search took in a whole range of places known in advance to be too small. If they say it requires 0.5 of this and they look at one at 0.21 and say, "Sorry, it is too small." The site I mentioned at Horsforth is not too small, it is the right size. It is off the ring road, there is not a house anywhere near, it is on an industrial estate. It is also two miles closer to the origin of the waste that is being collected. We are told, "No, we cannot use that because although it is the right size in acreage, it is just difficult to develop." That does not make any kind of sense.

I would think if it is a site which will not create any smells or will not create any flies, then let us put it where the material is coming from, save all this additional tonnage coming in and out and of course vehicles coming in and out to take it to the incinerator on the other side of Leeds.

I ask Steven and his colleagues to look at this realistically and say if you were the Councillors for this area would you not be fighting as hard as we are? You would because you would know it is wrong. If there was no alternative and that was the only site then I would say yes, we have to accept it. That is not the case and so I ask you in the spirit simply of good will, look again at this site. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you.

COUNCILLOR YEADON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I just want to quickly use this opportunity to correct Councillor Smith and to state that actually as Councillor Andrew pointed out, the first person to mention emissions last week at Plans was myself but it is all right, Steve, everybody makes mistakes. That is fine.

I would also like to comment on page 82 Minute 247. As my colleague has already pointed out, this site is in a highly residential areas with schools, homes, shops, restaurants and an entertainment complex and it is also on one of the busiest roads not only in my ward but possibly the city.

The impact that this transfer station will have on the local community and residents cannot be underestimated. We know this because these people have had to suffer in the past. This period of respite - fire closed the site several years ago - has been a literal breath of fresh air for many of the local residents who live immediately within the vicinity and beyond. These past few years people have been able to enjoy an environment free from the plagues of flies and putrid smells that once emanated from Evanston Avenue. The accounts of summer days where the stench could be smelled for miles around have now become something of Kirkstall legend and we do not want to return to those.

The suggestion that this site is appropriate is ridiculous. The A65 has its own problems and we really do not need to be adding to them. This eternal home to traffic jams does not need the added stress of countless waste vehicles traipsing up and down on a daily basis. We do not need rubbish being strewn along Kirkstall

Road from passing vehicles which we had in the past. We need to look for a solution to this traffic chaos and not contribute to it.

Its position next to the Cardigan Fields Entertainment Complex also raises major concerns. The complex is visited each day by hundreds of people from across the city and surrounding areas. It brings a major economic boost to this inner city area and I do not think that a passing visitor will find having a pizza in this establishment next door to one of the main waste transfer sites in the city that mouth watering.

As ward Councillors we are receiving endless objections from local people and local businesses. The governing body of the local primary school, only yards away from the proposed site, have expressed their concerns in a written objection but I fear that these voices will not be heard.

Will this public consultation be a mockery? Not only is it a year too late but it seems to me that the decision has already been made. Kirkstall is the only site to have been identified. How this site with its many flaws can be the preferred option to me is incomprehensible.

Lord Mayor, the strength of feeling on this subject in Kirkstall is immense. Local people are dreading the implementation of this proposal. We need to ensure that other more appropriate sites are considered and we need to guarantee that the public consultation is real and meaningful and substantial so that local people's views are heard and it is not merely an empty tick box exercise. Thank you. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR ILLINGWORTH: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I would also like to speak on page 82 Minute 247, the PFI programme and, like my colleagues, I am concerned about the waste transfer station in Kirkstall. Lord Mayor, this station is going to handle the foulest and most disgusting fraction of the waste stream. It is those elements that remain when all the recycled materials have been taken out of the waste stream. The flies and smell from the previous waste transfer station were a frequent nuisance throughout the surrounding very densely populated area.

The contractors tendering for the Council's disposal service have already been told that they have got to site their facilities in Kirkstall and in these circumstances this planned public consultation about the waste transfer station is nothing more than a cynical and rather cruel sham.

Lord Mayor, our present refuse system works quite well without any transfer station so its reintroduction into one of the most congested, densely populated areas of our city really can only be seen as a backward step. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR M HAMILTON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I was not going to speak on this particular Minute but having heard what we have heard from the three Kirkstall Councillors I think we need to put a few facts right. We had an interesting discussion on this matter at the last Area Committee.

I think the basic fact that we need to understand here is that we are not talking about a brand new site that has just been chosen just like that at the drop of a hat. That site has been there for many, many years. It has been there for probably 40 years. For many of those, in fact for just about all those 40 years, Councillor Atha, you have been a Councillor for the area, Councillor Illingworth has been a Councillor for many, many, probably 30 of those 40 years as well, and you are talking about the old plant and how terrible was and the smells and flies and everything. You were not

very good at getting rid of in those days, were you? It was there for a long time and you did not manage to get rid of it...

COUNCILLOR ATHA: We did, we arranged to have it burned down! *(laughter)*

COUNCILLOR M HAMILTON: That is right, you were so ineffective in actually getting your political leader to sort it out that you had to go and torch the place! It is a bit of a concern that. The Cardigan Fields Development was built in the last what, 20, 25 years, while you were in power so if you were so bothered about the pollution that was being caused by that site, how come you agreed to give planning permission for that particular site?

I think this is huge hypocrisy, actually. The fact is that if you had been offered what is on the table now...

COUNCILLOR ATHA: I am being insulted now.

COUNCILLOR: You will know when we are being insulting, Bernard!

COUNCILLOR M HAMILTON: The fact is that if this scheme had been offered to you when Labour was running the Council you would have bitten the leadership's hands off because it is a lot better than what was there before it was burned down, there is no doubt about it, and you would have bitten their hands off.

The only reason that this debate has started now is because of the fire because you think we can start with a blank sheet and that is the only reason that you are creating that issue. I have to say that you talk about food waste and all the flies and everything. Councillor Golton will correct some of these descriptions that we have heard on this but if you are so bothered about the food waste, how come Councillor Wakefield and his Board colleagues decided not to take up the opportunity of a pilot to pilot the food waste collections scheme, because presumably that means that Labour are not bothered about trying to deal with food waste.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Because of the weekly black bin collection that you refuse to accept.

COUNCILLOR M HAMILTON: Presumably you do not want to deal with food waste and would rather give up the transfer sites, so that I am afraid it is complete hypocrisy from that side. I think we need to have those facts...

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Has it been hot today, Martin?

COUNCILLOR M HAMILTON: ...on the table before we hear from the Labour Kirkstall Councillors. Thank you.

THE LORD MAYOR: I call on Councillor Golton to sum up.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I will start off with Councillor Taylor. I too am very keen to see the Joint Service Centre become a reality in your ward as, of course, when I used to be a lad I grew up in your ward and it is nice to see that after many years of under investment the area has received some significant *(inaudible)* in terms of getting that Joint Service Centre and, of course, before that, Shine.

It is in my role as Children's Services Lead Member that I am particularly keen that it is associated with the new Children's Centre. As I said before, we have a lot of parental support offered in our Children's Centres and to have that supplemented by

the work that the Credit Union can give and also the PCT for some of our more vulnerable families in the city, I think it is a real good example of how co-location is essential to make sure that we have wrap around services for some of the most vulnerable members of our city.

James Monaghan and Rik Downes. It is really good to think that we as a Council, given our limited resources, can make sure that we can strategically start something off and these Ward Based Funds which have been made available to us to create something to tackle climate change even in a very small way. It is something which is very valuable, especially if it is associated with schools which a lot of these schemes are. I do urge any member who has not yet allocated them to talk to the governing bodies of the schools in their communities to make sure that what investment we can offer as a Council we can actually ensure it teaches the next generation to work a little bit more environmentally friendly than we do.

I have also seen from the budget schemes mentioned today that the Government has also taken a leaf from our book and has done something similar in terms of investing in environmental schemes but I believe they are doing something offshore as opposed to our own work on school buildings.

COUNCILLOR NASH: I am sorry, I am sitting here and trying to listen and I cannot hear.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: I prefer that, actually! *(Laughter)*

COUNCILLOR NASH: Lord Mayor, I do not want anyone from that side to say we told you something in the Council and we have not been told

COUNCILLOR CLEASBY: Lord Mayor, I am prepared to let Councillor Nash sit here and I will go outside. *(Laughter)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Golton, would you maybe throw your voice a bit more.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: I was in the wrong position.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Very much so, I agree with that.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: I have heard some tales.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: I hope this is more amenable for you, Councillor Nash. Going on to the next area, the transfer station in Kirkstall. I think my colleague Councillor Hamilton has already pointed out the somewhat surprising turn that we have had from the three Kirkstall Councillors. I have to say in terms of it being a recycling plant, they have a very good example of recycling the same argument three times over and we would have actually finished five minutes earlier had they not all had the same thing.

What is incomprehensible...

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Very interesting, that.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: ...and Councillor Yeadon used that word, incomprehensible that this site should be considered considering that it has been a waste treatment site for about 40 years. That is incomprehensible that you find it incomprehensible.

In terms of the issue that you said about local people, you said that the prospect is frightening them and then Councillor Illingworth talks about the foulest and most disgusting part of the waste stream being treated there. That is the reason why your citizens are frightened, Councillor Illingworth, because you are filling them with mis-information to make them fear change...

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Never.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: ...instead of actually taking on board the reality which is what would go into that site does not involve food waste, so how can it have the same effects as the waste that your administration took to that site in its original form?

In terms of mis-information as well, Lord Mayor, of course, this is a great tradition in Kirkstall because if I remember rightly when there was Kirkstall by-election when Councillor Yeadon was very lucky to get in, shall I say, there was a certain Labour document going round that implied that there was going to be an incinerator on that site.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: It still might be there.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: So I would like to have the opportunity to lay the record straight in Kirkstall. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: They cannot tell the truth at all.

(ii) Development & Regeneration

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, Councillor Golton. Right, we go on to Development and Regeneration. I call on Councillor Lancaster, please.

COUNCILLOR LANCASTER: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am speaking to page 64 Minute 211. I welcome the earlier comments by Councillor Andrew Carter about improving transport near the markets, that area, because I also welcome improving the links between the shopping areas and the markets. The markets are a vibrant and vital part of shopping in Leeds.

I was rather pleased when I was reading some information the other day that Emmaus, the charity that collects unwanted goods and refurbishes them and then sells them at a lot cost but also gives work to unemployed people and homeless people, that they have taken a stall in the market and that alongside the Leeds City Council stall that gives out help information.

With these examples I would hope that we could be creative about what other services could be delivered from the market alongside definitely improving – we would like to have more traders. I do not want to take away the number of traders and certainly and possibilities of new traders but I do think an injection like that would make it more lively and sustainable.

Yesterday's announcement that one of the supermarkets got a profit of £3.1b – can we compare prices? In a shopping bag of vegetable salad, fruit and meat from a supermarket, that would be £38. From our Leeds City Council markets it is £22. That is a saving of £16 a week to a family, £60 a month and that is including a reduction in packaging as well.

There is a saying if you don't use it, you lose it, and I have used those because that is my household bill every week. I was encouraged two years ago to go back

shopping in the market and that is what we do, that is where all our vegetables and fruit and meat comes from, is the market, and I can thoroughly recommend it. I am not here just saying it. I wonder how many of the Council members use the markets.

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: I do.

COUNCILLOR LANCASTER: That is really good to hear because I think for us to stand here in Council, it is very easy to stand here and say about the demise of the market and the trade, but if you do support that I would encourage you to spread the word. Certainly the potatoes are far better than any I have tasted in the supermarkets and anybody can challenge me to that.

On that note, thank you very much for listening. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR M HAMILTON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I would like to speak on this Minute too. I think the Council welcomes the decision by the Executive Board to give the go-ahead to the Heart scheme at the former Headingley Primary School. Councillor Monaghan is going to say a bit about this scheme but I just really wanted to make a few brief remarks.

The scheme has been a long time in gestation. As we all know the school closed some years ago and it has taken a fair amount of time to get to the point where the Council was able to make a positive decision to go ahead with this. There has been considerable Council investment in the scheme, about £500,000 of money, which actually we hope will be recouped when the community centre which will be incorporated into the new building is sold on in a few years' time, so actually the Council may have been breaking even on this particular scheme. The Area Committee is also putting in money but more importantly about half a million pounds of money has also been raised by various grants and loans. Perhaps most remarkable of all under this scheme the Headingley Development Trust, who have been working on the scheme for the last three or four years have actually managed to obtain over £100,000 from public subscription. People have actually bought shares in the Heart scheme to enable it to go ahead. I think it is quite remarkable. I do not think anything like that has happened in recent years in Leeds or indeed round the country. It is the sort of thing that used to happen a hundred years ago where you had public subscriptions to enable projects to happen, so I think that is really good.

I think it is a leap of faith actually on the part of the Council to give the go-ahead to the Heart scheme. I was in a conference in London a couple of weeks ago, a planning conference, and a number of people came up to me who have heard about the Heart scheme and really congratulated the Council on backing such an initiative and they were really impressed that we had actually given the go ahead and given that support to it. They said that really they were not aware of any other schemes that had gone ahead without Government support, that a scheme like this that relies solely on local support, local grants and grants applied for and Council money. I think in fact that we have probably got the first in the country in that respect and I think it is something that we should be very, very proud of.

I really applaud the Council and the Executive Board for finally giving us the go-ahead on this scheme because I know how difficult it is and I know that there are certain risks attached. We feel that the people involved are a very high calibre, I have to say, and we have got every chance that this will succeed and that is why we were particularly pleased to find the result.

As I say, the people involved in this are really the ones who have made it happen. Without their energy, without their enthusiasm and without their vision to

actually turn this former primary school into an arts and business centre we would not be where we are today, so I think whilst congratulations are certainly due to the Council for its role in this, the main congratulations should go to those people in Headingley who have seen this scheme succeed. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR MONAGHAN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I too would like to speak on Minute 213 on page 65. I would like to congratulate members of the Headingley Development Trust for all the work they have put in to get this scheme to the point where the Council felt confident in their abilities to hand over the asset.

Just a few words of thanks I would like to give. One is to the Executive Board for taking the decision to support the scheme and to the Council Leaders who I know spent a lot of time working with us to make the scheme acceptable. I would also like to thank the Council officers who worked on this because a lot of them put in a lot of time behind the scenes and have actually thought outside their Council box and really tried to be innovative in this.

The last thanks I would like to give is actually to the Area Committee who originally pledged £100,000 to this scheme and I think that is one of the reasons that it actually kept the scheme under consideration in the early days, and that was a cross-party support. I would like to say it is amazing what we can achieve when we do work together for the benefit of the area rather than when we actually work apart. I have to say I think some of that spirit seems to have gone from the North West Area Committee recently but it does show what we can achieve when we are working positively together.

I would like to talk a bit about the Heart scheme. The scheme itself will actually convert the old former Headingley Primary School into business incubating units, an arts centre and actually will re-provide the Headingley Community Centre, so at this economic downturn we are actually investing in new business incubation units and supporting the arts in Headingley and also getting a state of the art, modern community centre replacing what I have to say is a very poor community centre at the moment in Headingley.

This is more than just the Heart scheme with Headingley Primary School. It also offers a glimmer of hope for a lot of long term residents in Headingley. As you know we have a very large transient population in Headingley and we welcome students because they make a huge difference to the economy in Leeds and bring a vibrancy to the city, but there are lots of problems associated with this and hopefully this scheme is something that the Council investing in this will actually give those students an opportunity and a reason to stay in Headingley and also give Headingley residents a reason to stay in Headingley and perhaps encourage more families to move into the area.

As Councillor Hamilton said, this is a very innovative scheme and I think we will be reading about this a lot in national journals as this scheme progresses and I really do hope that you can support other such schemes, the LEGI schemes have been incredibly successful but we should be looking at other ways where we can support community asset transfer, but we should be mindful that not all community organisations will be able to have the skills, talents and resources that Headingley Development Trust have brought to bear on this, so I think we should really acknowledge the success of the Headingley Development Trust, so I congratulate them again. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR D BLACKBURN: Lord Mayor, I refer to page 85, Minute 253, the City Development Scrutiny Enquiry into resident parking schemes. First of all I

can say, Councillor Pryke, I found that the most entertaining presentation ever at Executive Board. *(Applause)* I will say sometimes you sit there, whether you are on the Executive Board or sitting at the back as I do now, sometimes you sit there and you are totally bored. Well, I really enjoyed that.

Moving on to the recommendations in the report, I support the Executive's decision to take no action, to authorise officers to take no action, particularly on recommendation one, which came up with, I have got to say, the potty idea of allowing residents to pay for their own residents only parking. To me what that would do is, if you can afford it you can have it; if you cannot afford it, you cannot have it and to me it should be done on the basis of what is needed. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Atha, please.

COUNCILLOR ATHA: I hear the call, Lord Mayor. I want to refer to the item on page 83.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Which park are you looking for, Bernard?

COUNCILLOR ATHA: No, I have found West Park. I pass it on the way home.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: I am trying to be helpful.

COUNCILLOR ATHA: You actually are being helpful and I in return will ask now for your help because really I have got here (a), persuade Andrew Carter – this may be the first time I have ever done this, mind you – to save an outstanding public resource. We have just heard from our colleagues over there how pleased they are about the Headingley resource centre. West Park Centre is an arts centre of incredible value. I know you appreciate that. It is also the only local community centre for the whole area. Again, colleagues on the far side in Weetwood have conceded that.

It is a resource which is used incredibly heavily by all kinds of people throughout the year. It is estimated or calculated that something like 2,000 people use it per week. It is a total mixture of young people, old people, people of all colours, ethnic backgrounds and different tastes. It is an educational centre because a lot of education work is done there. It is the base for a very large number of users and the Leeds Reform Church which uses it every Saturday. Remember this building that starts opening at seven and goes on at least until late evening, 9.15, 9.30 except on Saturday when it finishes earlier. It is open all day on Sunday. There is no other public building that gets that degree of use.

The regular users of the centre include the Leeds Reform Baptist Church, 20 Leeds youth music groups, 20 groups go there for rehearsals and shows, A-level music technology students, Leeds Symphony Orchestra – one of the best amateur orchestras in the country – the West Riding Opera – a first class amateur opera company – the Free Range Choir, the School of Rock and Pop – that is more in my line – Leeds NHS Stop Smoking Services - that is definitely not in my line – Gamblers Anonymous – well, that might suit some of you – Girls' Youth groups, youth services, Leeds Ballroom Dance Group, Yamsen Choir, the Leeds Late Starters - I could go on because there is a list at least twice as long as that of users. There are other groups in there, the people who assist the travellers in their particular circumstances.

The case for saving this centre is overwhelming. It is so overwhelming that at the Inner North West Area Committee some months ago, all of the members, all the

Council members, voted unanimously to save the centre and ask for it to be taken off the disposal list. Admittedly, when it came to the Council a little later in the stern presence of Andrew Carter, whose benign glance or malign glance either cheers or defeats the members, they then changed their minds and did not vote as they had voted in the Inner North West Area Committee and the committee had voted to take it off the list when it came here - oh no.

Then Councillor Carter at least was honest and over the many years I have known him I do not think I have ever found him out to be lying. Treating the truth with a certain amount of intelligent disrespect is one thing, but never not telling the truth – and he was quite clear, he said, “There is no plan at this moment to sell” but he did not say that it would not be sold, but he did say let us keep it on the for sale list.

If you refuse to take it off, you are only doing that because you intend in the end to sell it. This is why I ask you, Andrew, to give serious thought. It is not a matter of losing face by changing your mind. You gain face by changing your mind and I know full well that if you can be persuaded, I would be happy to give my time – not a lot of it to take your time, but ten or twelve minutes to persuade you that it would be a scandal to do one thing wrong. You have been very generous to Opera North, you have been very generous to the Northern Ballet Theatre; all of those things I approve of. You have been very generous to the Dance Centre and so many other things. It would be ludicrous when you are putting good money into those very, very worthwhile organisations that the city of Leeds to close down the major arts resource and the major community resource and all the opposition that that will receive.

I ask you to reconsider and if I can help you in your consideration to reconsider, I shall be happy to do so and give you every credit when you make the decision that would cheer up so many in the city of Leeds. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR BLAKE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Also speaking to Minute 253 page 85.

Could I just say that I think we all welcomed the Scrutiny Board investigation into a very real issue. It is a major problem where there is on street parking caused by unofficial park and riding and I think the Scrutiny enquiry did look at all of the issues involved, but I have to say like Councillor Blackburn we did not agree with the recommendations that you came forward with. I think there is a real issue of fairness here where people's lives are blighted by selfish people driving into the city and then we come out and ask them to actually pay for a parking scheme to stop this from happening. I think that was one of the basic flaws in the scheme.

I have to just expand slightly on what David said because Councillor Pryke did come and make a very eloquent speech to Executive Board and I think it is a shame that more people were not able to hear that, because I think he had some very interesting points to make about the somewhat perverse priorities of the administration here and in particular their failures to deliver priorities particularly to those most vulnerable and needy living within our inner city wards, and with particular reference to affordable housing.

However, I think there is an important point here because I think one of the reasons why Councillor Pryke was so exercised, if you like, was because I think there was an issue that actually got right to the heart of the Scrutiny process. I think Scrutiny Boards are entitled to investigate the issues that they see are priorities that come before them and the truth is that this report coming to Executive Board was pre-empted by a press release from Councillor Carter where he basically said he did not welcome the enquiry, it was a waste of time and they certainly would not be supporting it.

I think if Scrutiny Board spent the time putting a lot of effort into the work that they do, they at least deserve a good hearing and a good opportunity to come to Executive Board and present their findings. The whole situation leaves us still with a very real problem. This problem has not gone away. I do not know from the conclusions of the discussion of the Executive Board whether Scrutiny is going to look at it again but it is a subject that needs further investigation to stop some of the worst excesses of people bringing their cars in, dumping them and either walking into work or getting the bus. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR CHASTNEY: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Just to clarify a couple of points and going back to the West Park Centre, which Councillor Atha just spoke on.

I think we can all be agreed on the importance of this centre, all the Councillors in that area would agree with a lot of the sentiments there. I would like to highlight some of the difference in the approach here that has been taken on either side. It really does need some attention put to it.

Firstly I would welcome the fact that very recently leadership on both sides here, be it some of them representatives, did come into the heart of the community and clarify the most recent and up to date situation as far as they could see it and I am sure Councillor Carter will continue to update us on that situation. They also committed to the groups that were using it and providing services at the centre that they would continue to work with them and I am sure we will get that continued assurance from Councillor Carter. I felt that that was a most reasonable response to the situation that could be taken at this stage.

If we contrast this, then, with some of the political games I am feeling were being played there, some of the scaremongering and half truths that are being spun, I am finding it quite deeply concerning. If we are all really concerned, as I am sure we are all, about this centre's future, I do not feel anything threatens any more than some of these half truths about its imminent closure and something of that nature. I do not see anything else is more irresponsible and off-putting for current and indeed future users in that kind of rhetoric, which I find very unhelpful.

Lord Mayor, I see you are aware from recent media speculation that there is a slight appetite for spin in the Labour Party, certainly at government level, which is unending so all I would do is urge that this type of tactic is not applied in this case any longer on this very important community centre. Thank you. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR PRYKE: Thank you, Lord Mayor, and thank you for the compliments, colleagues, from the Scrutiny Board.

COUNCILLOR McKENNA: What did you say at the Executive Board? Can you repeat it?

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Repeat everything you said at Executive Board.

COUNCILLOR PRYKE: A couple of points in response. The problem with the Scrutiny process that we have is the system we are landed with by your government. The Exec Board, or more precisely the Cabinet, has total power in Leeds.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: No it does not.

COUNCILLOR PRYKE: Scrutiny cannot do anything about it, so they can make recommendations but they are free to ignore it. That is the system we work with, given to us by your government. That could change.

I also want to correct a misinterpretation by David suggesting that people should pay for their own schemes. If you read the report correctly you will see that we are suggesting mixed schemes where we would have pay parking on one side contributing to the provision of residents' parking on the other side of the road. Mix and match schemes of all the different varieties of parking arrangements that are possible and that was to alleviate the problem we had with funding.

The administration only allocates £350,000 per annum for this type of scheme and also the cycling provision, pedestrian provision scheme. That is not very much money for a scheme this size.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Could you develop that point a bit?

COUNCILLOR PRYKE: I will let you do it later, Keith, if you want. Average residents parking space costs the city £230. We are not going to get many such spaces out of the money that is available and that is why the Scrutiny Board looked at alternative ways of funding these schemes.

We looked at other Authorities around the country which charge up to £1500 a year for the right to park on your street and we rejected those, obviously.

We do want to provide some relief for the people who are suffering from commuters who are parking outside their homes every day of the week and a residents' parking scheme is the way to do it. Already there is a massive backlog of demand for these schemes. For example, the scheme that is due to come into place around St James's hospital in a year and a half's time was first requested by Maggie Giles Hill, I understand, ten years ago, so residents there have had to wait, or will have to wait twelve years for their scheme. Some schemes happen a bit quicker than that but most will have to wait a long time and as demand is increasing from lots of wards within the area, within the ring road and even beyond the ring road, those people will have to wait even longer and I am afraid Scrutiny is of the opinion that the Council will have to address the problem. I am sure that Councillor Carter will have something to say about it.

THE LORD MAYOR: I do not know that we have a few complaints about the sound.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Lord Mayor, we cannot hear the voice, the clarity of the voice, not just the volume.

THE LORD MAYOR: I call Councillor Andrew Carter.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Crikey, look what you've done now!

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Turn it down now, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: I will just deal with a few of the issues because a lot of them are going to be picked up, I think, later on, anyway.

First of all, Heart. A very professional group of people who have doggedly and determinedly pressed ahead, some might say despite any obstacle that could be thrown at them. It is simply this, at the end of the day. We have a building there which is in the heart of a community. There are likely to be no purchasers for it, largely thanks to your government, and a very, very professional organisation who have put together a package of things that can be done in that community which has got the wholehearted support of the ward members and the Area Committee. Not

only that, they are actually backing up that with throwing in Area Committee money, Ward Based Initiative money, they have sacrificed another scheme in their own ward because that is their priority.

I happen to think that if once you depart from the strategic direction of the Council, if there are different schemes in a ward that money is being provided for and ward members all have to make choices, and this is perhaps where we part company sometimes. You seem to think, some of you, you can demand things but not have to make any of the choices that go with it. Well, these chaps over here actually made some choices and that is what you are going to be asked to do at some stage, and I will come to that in a moment.

I am more than happy where there is that level of support - and I know Richard agrees with me, as do the rest of the Executive – if ward Councillors say that is what we want with that money in their ward, they fine by me. You represent or they represent that community in this particular case but it may equally be in my community or Councillor Finnigan's or wherever.

Just take that as read, but you will be asked to make some decisions yourselves. Do not come along saying, "We just want more money", because quite frankly it ain't there but there is money for all sorts of schemes in every ward in this city, just about, and if the ward members think there is a priority that they think is greater and they have got the confidence and the support of their community, then I for one am not going to stand in the way of it.

I wish them every success because I think that building at Headingley, the situation of where it is is an example of what a community group can achieve. I compare that with a number of others which we get weekly and we have to be robust about this, otherwise it will not just be the District Auditor and the opposition, quite rightly – it will be the Government saying, "We did not say to give you carte blanche to give away Council assets to anyone who comes along with a half baked scheme. These schemes have got to stack up."

Kirkgate Market. I do not want to get into a debate that there will be later on today, but we do value the market and, as Barry will indicate a bit later, we appreciate as much as anybody else a lot of flexibility is going to have to be used, particularly now when we have got two major retail schemes which would have had a major regenerative impact in that area on hold, so I absolutely take on board Councillor Lancaster's comments.

West Park. It is not for sale. I must remind you, Bernard, that this crazy Asset Register thing that we have was devised when you were in power. I guess you did not know it had been devised but it was certainly devised when you were in power and this particular piece of land was put on the register that says "For disposal" by your party when you were a leading member.

I think the thing is a misnomer; it also has the effect of giving a very wrong impression, so this is what we are going to do. The officers have been instructed that the Asset Register has to be re-examined and split down very clearly into two parts – one where we know we are disposing of an asset and others where we have surplus assets which will become available and upon which we have to make a decision and do some discussing, and that is what we are doing at West Park with all the people who are up there. Our determination is to keep the community centres going at West Park. As simple as that.

Finally and very quickly, residents only parking. I thought we had a splendid bit of backwards and forwards within Council and I thoroughly enjoyed it. I take a dim

view of Councillor Blake raising the subject when she is on record as voting against having Scrutiny Committees in this Council year after year after year when we used to put White Papers down about it, so I am not taking lectures from her on the subject. Scrutiny and the Executive have to have a robust relationship. I am perfectly prepared for Scrutiny to investigate anything that they want but they must be prepared for Exec Board members saying, "We have not as an Exec Board asked for that piece of work doing." It is sponsored by Scrutiny and that is fine. There must be a distinction made always between the two. We took the right decision. It would have been wrong to introduce a residents only car parking charges and yes, we do need more money in the fund to provide them. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you.

(iii) Environmental Services

THE LORD MAYOR: Right, Environmental Services. Councillor Lowe.

COUNCILLOR LOWE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am commenting on Minute 233 page 76 and thank you for the flowers. At the last Council meeting I spoke of our Group's support for the principle of weekly food collections and also of the extension with regard to the waste collection programme, but I also stressed that we did not support a move to fortnightly black bin collections, which is the price we would have to pay for weekly food collections.

This Council was told by Councillor Andrew Carter that there were no plans to reduce black bin collections and, indeed, this has been the mantra of your administration for the last three years. In response to my own White Paper that I tabled in April 2006, Councillor John Procter insisted – and I quote – "There are no proposals to implement alternate weekly black bin collections. Got it? Got it? It is pretty simple, pretty straightforward."

Councillor Andrew Carter also reiterated this stance, claiming that the policy did not exist, while Stuart Golton accused me of creating smoke and mirrors in order to get a golden nugget for the election...

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Typical.

COUNCILLOR LOWE: ...even though I was not a candidate. Why then, despite your protestation of three years ago, and even at the last Council meeting, did the Executive Board which was held on 11 September 2007, agree to introduce fortnightly black bin collections? I have got the minutes here if anyone wants to dispute that.

Despite your promises – this is Councillor Les Carter this time – that we will not force this on people, it being a consultation exercise that we were insisting you undertake comes back, we will not force it on people and that is something we will not do.

What consultation has been taken before you took the decision to implement fortnightly black bin collection?

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: We have not taken the decision.

COUNCILLOR LOWE: Where was that reported to members? At the last meeting I was very clear that you plan to bring in fortnightly black bin collections and I was practically called a liar. I said then and I say it again, I am not a liar, I have got the facts and you are the ones who are not telling the truth. The move to fortnightly

black bin collections is in the Waste Strategy. It was agreed in September 2007 Executive Board and yet you still deny it. Added to this there have been no consultations with the people of this city. By your actions this administration treats everyone in this city with contempt and in doing so, you render yourselves contemptible. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR CONGREVE: Lord Mayor, I speak on the Executive Board Minute 233 page 76. No-one would deny in principle significant investment for the garden waste collection scheme is a positive step, but is it right that this kind of investment is being made by the Council as pockets of my ward, such as Cottingley, are still operating on the black bag system? Would this money not be better spent to make sure that these households currently without a black bin are provided with one?

I know that many residents would welcome a garden waste collection scheme. Indeed, many, many more residents of Cottingley would be overjoyed to have a black wheelie bin collection service instead of the current black bag one and the resulting litter from all the split bags, not to mention the lack of green waste recycling bins, or a collection service that collects on a prescribed day.

The Council's recycling strategy was passed in September 2007. Two years on and still there is little movement on black bins being provided for some households in my ward – not only Cottingley but there are other smaller pockets. Is there a danger that the Council's strategy is becoming exclusive and not inclusive to all residents in this city?

How is this going to be addressed? What is the Council's strategy and vision to solve this problem? Are there any time scales? Is funding available to provide black bins so that they can be distributed to these households?

Councillor Wakefield has requested a paper back to the Executive Board on this specific issue. I welcome Councillor Wakefield's intervention and can only hope that this report will provide comprehensive answers to the points that I have raised. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR RENSHAW: Lord Mayor, I would like to speak on page 76 Minute 233, the garden waste collection scheme.

Lord Mayor, I do not think there is anyone in this Chamber who in principle does not welcome investment in recycling facilities and I am pleased that areas of Ardsley and Robin Hood are being included in the garden collection service scheme, although there is an element of inconsistency but the fact remains that as some residents are given the opportunity to increase their recycling, there are other residents living in the areas of my ward still waiting for the Council to even provide a green bin.

This is simply not good enough and I want to know when the Council is finally going to address this issue. Surely the Council should be looking to encompass every single household in its attempt to boost recycling rates in our city, not including some areas and leaving out others. I have spoken to a number of residents who are absolutely desperate to recycle but are being left deeply frustrated because no green bin is forthcoming. No wonder some people have an attitude of "Why bother recycling?" when the Council cannot even be bothered to provide them with the tools they require to encourage them to recycle.

When are the adequate vehicles we require to deliver this service as well as the adequate workforce to be put in place? Secondly, it is absolutely vital that any investment in recycling facilities must be matched by the standard of the Council's

rubbish collection service. I have to say that this service – if you can call it that – can only be described as poor. Day in, day out I am being contacted by residents telling me their black bins are not being collected every week. Day in, day out I am hearing from those residents lucky enough to have green bins that their monthly collections are also being missed.

What are we left with? Residents left with overflowing bins and the stench of rotting rubbish? It is simply unacceptable that people are being left in this situation is accepted and it has to change immediately. Yes, there are mitigating circumstances for some of the problems but you cannot put all the blame on them. This is not something that has happened overnight but this is a long term, ongoing problem.

Councillor Brett said in January, “If people think that all Leeds City Council ought to do is empty bins and clean the streets, then they are very much mistaken.” I hope Councillor Smith can answer that question. It seems that the Council cannot even do that. It really is time that your administration took some responsibility and did something about it. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: I call on Councillor Smith to sum up.

COUNCILLOR SMITH: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I will speak to Councillor Renshaw's points first and it is absolutely right that people are upset when bins are missed, be they black bin or any other kind of bin. Unfortunately I do not have any figures with me to tell you what the percentage of missed bins is but I will happily provide them after the meeting.

In terms of people desperate to recycle, yes, there are a number of people desperate to recycle but if you look at the history of waste collection in the city, the older members here can remember when everybody had a galvanised bin and had your ashes in the bottom and the service was the same---

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: We are not that old.

COUNCILLOR SMITH: You are not.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: I am still a young man.

COUNCILLOR SMITH: You are just a nipper, Keith, of course, yes. That was the case then, very much a one size fits all. We do not have that situation any more. We need to provide appropriate facilities in appropriate areas. I want everybody in the city to be able to recycle. Unfortunately there are some areas of the city where it proves very problematic and where the experience is that giving people green bins has resulted in contamination and we do try to educate people but the problem is one bin can contaminate the whole load. We are looking at how we can increase participation across the city.

I have a member of my family who lives in Cottingley, in your ward, so he does tell me about the problems that he faces there from time to time so I am aware of those.

If you read the Minute to which the Councillors have referred, it does say that a report will be submitted to a future meeting of the Board. That report will come very soon. I can assure you that there will be a weekly bin collection as part of that and you will see that when it comes.

The Minute does talk about garden waste collections, so I am happy to say that we have collected about 15,000 tons of garden waste since April 2008 – that is more

than 1,500 tons more than we anticipated. The recycling rate is now up over 30% after five years of this administration and I contrast that to the 14% it stood at after 20-odd years of yours. Landfill is down by over 8% and nearly 18,000 tons less waste was buried in the ground last year. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

(iv) Neighbourhoods & Housing

THE LORD MAYOR: Neighbourhoods and Housing, Councillor Hollingsworth.

COUNCILLOR HOLLINGSWORTH: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I speak to page 66 minute 215 on the EASEL West Leeds Gateway Worklessness project. I want to welcome this project. It is going to run for a year in an attempt to help improve the situation of people who are not in work.

Given the economic situation which we have heard that urban cities like Leeds in the North of England is suffering more than certainly other areas in the South East of England, it is a most welcome scheme even though it is only covering a small area. The area it covers are the EASEL areas of Halton Moor, Osmanthorpe and Gipton and, indeed, Wortley in West Leeds.

It is going to deal with the problems of worklessness via trying to tackle it over a wide area including housing, health education, childcare, debts and obviously skills that people need. It is going to try and co-ordinate in with the present services being offered to people like that from Job Centre Plus, Children's Services, Job Skills, social landlords. I hope it is going to be a good success and I hope we will be able to provide funding to expand it across the whole EASEL area where it will be much needed and across West Leeds as well. Thank you very much, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Councillor Lancaster.

COUNCILLOR LANCASTER: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Firstly, I think it would be wise if I declared an interest as a member of the West Yorkshire Police Authority in speaking to this next item. It refers to the Prevent Programme, the preventing violence, violent extremism agenda. There is a new policy area for many Local Authorities. The approach for most Local Authorities has been to use the skills and networks of existing community groups to deliver Prevent projects that build on the strength, capacity of the community to withstand extremist messages.

Councillors have an extremely important part to play in the day to day communication with the community which allows Councillors to manage the relationship between the community and the Local Authority. That is why I was rather alarmed to see the headline in the Yorkshire Evening Post, "Police to check schools for militant Islamic..." – I do apologise, it is the Yorkshire Post, not the Yorkshire Evening Post – "...to check schools..." and I understand at the time that this was disputed by people who attended the conference at the Town Hall.

The reason I am bringing it up is lots of us work very closely with all our communities to engage with people from all different faiths and we have some really good examples and I wanted to put that marker down today that there is a minority that spoil it for others but certainly I just wanted to object to that report. Thank you.

COUNCILLOR D BLACKBURN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am speaking to page 77, Minute 236 on Council house rents. First of all, can I welcome the government's change of mind in the housing subsidy that allows us now to have an increase in Council house rents that is more applicable. I still think it is too high, by the way, but it is more applicable than the one that was.

Unfortunately it is a pity they did not get it right the first time and, secondly, it is a pity that the costs of implementing the changes in the rents have got to be met out of the Housing Revenue Account. I think it is about time the government, if they are going to make a mistake, which they have obviously done here, that they pay for it. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: On the same Minute page 77, Minute 236, I likewise welcome the Minister's change of heart on the rent increase which effectively halves it and I am sure that this does as well. I just wonder whether Les, who was so keen to send out a letter to all tenants last year condemning the government for the way the Housing Revenue Account works and gave a very partial view on the situation. I would not say it was misleading, that is a terrible word to use. However, did not point out that if you took into account capital as well as revenue, Leeds actually came out very well last year, about 27 million quid to the good. Perhaps Les will issue a press release to the Evening Post and send a nice letter to tenants pointing these facts out.

Can I just say I welcome what Margaret Beckett has done? It was very much a commonsense answer to a problem where a rent formula was driven by one particular month's inflation. She did the right thing and a common sense, pragmatic approach which has benefited all the Council tenants. What I would like Les to perhaps do is give a bit of an indication of quite how that is going to work out for tenants in terms of paying back money that they have paid because one increase was implemented to start with. Obviously we were put in a very difficult situation but we are in a position where people will have paid money that they should not really have paid. Thanks, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR GRAYSHON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I did not really intend speaking on this item but I am going to speak on Item 235, the Leeds Prevent Programme on pages 77, and I do hope that members to the right of me would extend the courtesy of listening to what I am going to say.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: Open your bloody mouth (*inaudible*)

COUNCILLOR GRAYSHON: An example, Lord Mayor, of such behaviour.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: No-one stood up there.

COUNCILLOR GRAYSHON: Have you finished?

COUNCILLOR LYONS: Aye.

COUNCILLOR GRAYSHON: Thank you very much.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: It's all right.

COUNCILLOR GRAYSHON: Ten years ago this week the city of London was terrorised by a number of explosions which were set off by extremist David Copeland. I am sure you will remember that on 30th April a bomb exploded in Old Compton Street in London in a bar called the Admiral Duncan which killed a number of people. The people in these attacks were targeted because of their ethnic origin and latterly the people who died because of their sexuality. In mentioning this I do hope members of Council will take time to remember the victims of those terrible acts and that extremism is in all forms not wanted in this country, be it Islamic extremism or right wing extremism. We simply do not want that kind of nonsense in this country and, as I say, my thoughts on the 30th will be with those people who were murdered and their families and the survivors, some of whom live with appalling injuries. I hope you will join me on the 30th in thinking of those people who died in the Soho

bombings and those who were injured in the other incidents in Brick Lane and elsewhere in London. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: I call Councillor J L Carter to sum up.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: Thank you, Lord Mayor. First of all, Councillor Illingworth, this is a pilot scheme, it is going to some of the most deprived areas in the city – as you know it is going to Gipton, Osmanthorpe and Wortley and they are amongst the highest people for claiming out of work benefits and that is fulfilled by the NI 153 Indicator which shows that.

We have now hopefully got things put in place the staff are nearly in place now so that will be going ahead. The interesting thing about this scheme is that it really was part of a debate with ministers when it came in a certain way are we right to get this particular money. I think they are interested in this – they are very interested in seeing the way forward. We have just seen in the budget £1.5b, £1.7b provided to Job Centre Networks. There has got to be some cohesion on working together. That is not this, do not get me wrong, that is not this, but this is a way of helping families and yes, thanks for the comments, it will go along and it will work.

As far as Prevent is concerned, I agree with what has been said, cannot disagree with anything that has been said. Contest is the name of the government's strategy which stands for Counter Terrorist Strategy and Prevent is one spur of that. One thing I would always point out, we are not trying to put spies into schools, we are not trying to put spies into anywhere. We are trying to bring about the situation where people live together, act together, work together in cohesion and that if people do feel they have to go down a trail which is the wrong trail to go down, there are people who can help them not go down that trail.

Can I just make one point absolutely clear? The Yorkshire Post I think were wrong in the way they (*inaudible*) Yes OK, it is yesterday's fish and chip papers but let me just make this point. No-one has put police officers in schools to try and spy on Islamic children. That was implied. Nobody has done that, nobody intends to do that and nobody will do that.

Can I just give you some facts on the rent increase? Yes, it would have been helpful if it had been said earlier. The question for the administration, to be quite honest, when the first part came through from the government that we might be able to get a reduced rent, we had to accept – and that was in the thing – that we would deal with the administration and the cost, the reduction in rent would come off. That was agreed, I do not go back on agreements. It is nice, it would have been nice to argue it and say they should pay more but I accept that.

Just to give you some notification on when these things are going to happen. Richard, so you know, the revised rents have been calculated for all tenants and they have also now been loaded on to the Council's system. That is the first thing. Next week, commencing 27th April, notification letters for proposed rent change will be sent to the printers and it is intended that they will be dispatched the week commencing 4th May. That is dispatched to people.

I am not signing these. I am quite happy to sign them if you would like me to sign them but I am not signing them. They are being sent out by the Director. We have still got this 28 day consultation but following that it is intended the new average rent backdated to 6th April will be fully implemented from 1st June. Tenants who have overpaid through direct debits will have future payments adjusted to reflect higher rent payments that they have made since 6th April. Tenants who are in receipt of housing benefit or partially in receipt of housing benefit, they should be altered

obviously in the normal way but those not using those who pay cash, effectively, they will have a statement sent to them which will show the adjusted figure and then they will be able to adjust their payment, so they will be able to get that money back. OK, is that followed through? If I have not explained it, please, I will say it again if I have missed any part of it. Is that OK. That is fine, that covers the whole gambit of what is going to happen. I am delighted we are going to reduce it down, it must help people.

Just a quickie before we finish, and I am just sticking this on at the end which is a bit naughty, really. The budget has also put in £500m to provide a kickstart for stalled housing projects. Let us just keep our fingers crossed. We are all pushing for it, let us hope that gives us money there. There is an extra £80m is to be provided for shared equity mortgage schemes. Council, we will be bidding as hard as we can to get our hands on it. Thank you, my Lord Mayor.

(v) Children's Services

THE LORD MAYOR: On to Children's Services. I call on Councillor Finnigan.

COUNCILLOR FINNIGAN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am speaking at page 78, Minute 238 and Minute 240, so you get double benefit here. It is a BOGOF offer.

Certainly looking at 238, Revised Membership of the Admissions Forum, I think this is an entirely regrettable position that the government has adopted on this particular matter. Ed Balls and his department of families, cock up, smears, whatever they call themselves nowadays, has introduced something that again is not in the interests of local communities and the interests of local students. We certainly saw this before in terms of the appeals process and this attempt to try and exclude members. There has been a 'U' turn on that. In this particular case related to the Admissions Forum, trying to minimise the input of elected members is not wise and certainly we have had problems and difficulties with admissions in our particular area and I think the more input we have got across the board from all Board members the better things would be.

Turning to Minute 240, it is just to welcome the news about Morley High School and its new music block. This has been long overdue and certainly the school is achieving great things and will achieve even greater things with the addition of this new music block and the additional money that is going into the new science block at Bruntcliffe High School. Again, it is a high school that is working hard and achieving great things. We start to see the end of the use of portakabins on this particular site – not before time. We must pass on our thanks to the fact that both of these schools will be getting a fair share of funding. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR A TAYLOR: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am speaking on Minute 240, paragraph D on page 78 about Bankside Primary School. Twenty-four years ago I had a telephone call from the Head of the then Harehills Primary School which was on the site of what is now Bankside and the phone call came from the late Miss Trickett. Just let me explain, she was affectionately known as the late Miss Trickett by all her colleagues because she never arrived on time for any meeting.

Later I went into the school to see her and she said, "We have got a problem" and the problem was there was a huge split in the gable wall of the school and, in effect, it was falling apart. She was very concerned about it because the previous day when she had left school that split was not there. It was then decided that Education Leeds ought to get involved fairly quickly and as a result of all of that the school had to be condemned and the pupils had to be bussed out to other schools. I

think, Neil, perhaps you and I were talking about it as well on that occasion and I remember when you came round to see me about it in the old Vicarage.

COUNCILLOR TAGGART: There was, I think, a very nice drink. I can still taste it now!

COUNCILLOR A TAYLOR: As a result of that the new school was built. I said all along that you really ought to look at the population figures for the area because a school of 250 was just going to be far too inadequate and within the first six months when I went in to conduct one of the assemblies, I was stepping over children in the corridor. Within the first year there was a portakabin and, as things developed, the whole site was filled with portakabins to the extent that the play area and the play times had to be staggered and it was not the most ideal place for young children to be educated.

I am not sure to what extent that had a detrimental effect on their education but I am absolutely thrilled now to hear that the school is going to be rebuilt and it is going to be rebuilt two storey to cater for the needs of the local community and it was that that I suggested 24 years ago. It is a pity, really, that that was not looked at seriously at that time.

I would also hope as well that when we look at other similar areas within the city that cater for areas in that part of the inner city where there is an obvious increase in the population of children, that we do think ahead and we do be bold in some of our planning. While I welcome it, it is just a bit too late but I am pleased it has taken place and I hope that we will learn from it. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR PRYKE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. This is on Minute 241, page 80, and it is about the new Richmond Hill Primary School that is going to be built. It is a two form entry school to be built to replace the existing Richmond Hill Primary School and Mount St Mary's Primary School.

The ward members welcome the development, needless to say, and commend Education Leeds for the conduct of the consultation exercise which has been adequate but not over done. We were a bit surprised that the Panel put up by Education Leeds for the main public meeting in the Irish Centre on York Road did not get as many questions as they had expected from the parents and residents who came to the meeting. Again, the small consultation that happened at the Richmond Hill Forum, the people present seemed to be fairly happy about the prospect of the school changing, or the arrangements changing. Their main concern was about the access for lorries for building of the new school and where the entrances and exits would be, not about what would happen to the kids in the meantime.

We have some concerns about how the school will manage while it has a dual site at Richmond Hill and the existing portakabins at Mount St Mary's. We understand that the kids are not going to be walked or bussed between the two sites, which are quite a long way apart for primary school aged children, during the school day while the school is running on both sites and we hope that the transition will be very smooth into the new building when it is complete the year after next.

We now understand that the numbers of primary school aged children in the east wedge is rising again such that all the existing schools may well be full within a year or two and perhaps echoing Councillor Taylor's concerns about the Bankside replacement school for Harehills Primary, Education Leeds perhaps needs to look at arranging or asking for designs of buildings that can be added to without just bunging portakabins in the playground, which is what we seem to do in Leeds. We do not

know yet whether the new building is two storey or one storey, which would help. We look forward to seeing it.

Members will have heard over the years the saga of Mount St Mary's Primary School, primarily from Councillor Lyons who is the Chair of Governors there.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Marvellous.

COUNCILLOR PRYKE: He fought for the school to be kept open against the Roman Catholic Diocese who were determined to close it because they are certain that they have enough educational provision within the parish and within our ward for all the parents who want an RC education, namely St Patrick's Primary School on the other side of the York Road and, of course, Corpus Christie is not too far away either, going the other way.

One lady came up to me after the most recent Richmond Hill Forum and said that she understood that Councillor Lyons had said that Mount St Mary's Primary School would only be closed over his dead body.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: (*inaudible*) Catholic priest who said he is going to bury me.

COUNCILLOR PRYKE: None of us would ask him to make that sacrifice!
(*Laughter*)

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: We would!

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Don't take a vote on it!

COUNCILLOR PRYKE: We will not take a vote, it is all right, Mick. Anyway, we welcome the new school and hope the transition goes well. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR D BLACKBURN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I refer to page 68, Minute 218, which is Machinery of Government's Changes and 14 to 19 Commissioning Arrangements.

I have got to say, the present set up is extremely confusing, is all over the place and what we have got there in this document is worse. I am obviously not having a go at Richard because it is not Richard's responsibility this – I do not actually think it is the Secretary of State's, I think it is civil servants' – but the complicated way they are doing things is totally ridiculous. To actually getting governance back to elected members and elected member involvement is not there and I am totally unhappy and I know that is shared with a number of other people in this Chamber. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Lord Mayor, I would like to, bearing in mind that we had a very important statement from the Leader earlier on which took ten minutes, I would like to move suspension of Standing Orders to complete Children's Services and to take Adult Health and Social Care, two issues we never come and discuss at this Council. I hope that you will agree to extend that to hear those two sets of Minutes, please, and I move that.

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: Seconded.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Lord Mayor, this is all news to us. We have Whips' meetings in advance and we are completely unaware of this and will not support it.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: You were not aware of it because I had really hoped we would get to those at least but because we have had a very important and lengthy statement from the Leader that took ten minutes out of the time that we would normally have in this debate. With all goodwill of all parties we should have ten or 15 minutes to finish Children's Services and for once in this Council to have one speaker on Adult Social Care. If you are not prepared to do that, then really it is very remiss of you.

COUNCILLOR HARKER: It will take nearly 40 minutes to finish Children's Services.

THE LORD MAYOR: We have had a proposer and a seconder. We are going to take a vote on that, on the suspension.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: I move a recorded vote.

(A recorded vote was taken on the suspension of Standing Orders)

THE LORD MAYOR: The figures are present 91; "Yes" vote 41; Abstentions 0; "No" 50. The suspension motion is LOST.

We are also now out of time so I will call Councillor Carter.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Thank you, my Lord Mayor. Let me just briefly address that final point. The Council meeting up to the recorded vote, the request for suspension of Standing Orders, I thought had been a great deal more civilised than the last couple of meetings.

I just want to address this, actually, to the Leader of the Opposition rather than to the Chief Whip of the Opposition. If some common courtesy had been shown, if there had been the usual calling of the Whips together at some stage during what has gone on, it might have been a very different result in terms of what has just happened, but to be frank, to leave it until 20-to five and then stand up and ask for suspension of Standing Orders having not had the common courtesy to talk to the other Whips I think quite frankly, Peter, you got what you deserve.

I just have to say, there are two ways of doing things. There is the way that goes straightforward and the way that goes like *that*. Just take the straightforward one – it will result in a lot better working of this Council.

My Lord Mayor, if I could just turn to the issues that have been discussed. There was a number first and then the end came up on Children's Services. I just want to pick up on a couple of the points. The situation of the school places in Burmantofts. I think everyone is very happy that we are now moving forward with a new school there and hopefully that will resolve the situation. My understanding was there had been a lot of agreement about how that was going to be achieved, so hopefully that is going to be OK.

Councillor Blackburn is quite right about the complicated systems that we are burdened with and it is constant. On the one hand, we had the good news earlier today and then the constant nibbling away at what elected members are able to do and what they are not able to do. We are still, I have to say, a long way away from establishing what I think is the proper relationship between Central Government of any party and Local Government of any party. We are still a long way away which is why I think the announcement I made earlier was so important. When you see these

things - and there are other things and when we come on to the housing debate we will touch on it again, I have no doubt.

On the issue of bins, Councillor Smith has made it clear that a weekly bin collection is going to continue. One of the problems that are residents are going to face is not the lack of bin collection but the number of bin collections, because what we are going to be discussing and it will be coming, I think, pretty soon to Exec Board, is the number of bin collections during a week that may be taking place. My understanding of it is that there will be a minimum of two, possibly three with bins of various different colours for various different things and a weekly black bin collection.

We have a pilot scheme on food waste which we all know about, which Councillor Smith very bravely seems to have volunteered his own ward for, and when the pilot scheme has taken place we shall have a proper evaluation of the results which everybody will be very welcome to participate in.

One of the issues that we do face in refuse collection, of course - and we are now discussing it with the unions and that is no secret, it has been in the press - we have to have a much more modern approach to the collection service and that is what we are trying to achieve; hopefully we will achieve it with our employees. We have been talking to the unions, I am not going to go into the details because it would be wrong to do so here and now but those talks are ongoing and we have to have a modern, 21st Century system of rounds and collection and dealing with all our waste and, to be frank, I think we can be very proud of the fact that recycling is now up to 30%. We have moved light years in five years in terms of the recycling that this city is doing.

I have a very firm commitment, as regards black bins and I am not going to accuse you of anything, Alison, because I know you too well, but what I was saying is, we have said there will be a weekly black bin collection and, as far as I am concerned, there will be.

We are the only party that has not talked about Temple Newsam, the Conservatives. Strange, considering we were the ones who won! I think I will just leave it at that, then, other than to say I spent most of the day on election day in Temple Newsam searching for Mick Lyons. I was really anxious to find him and talk to him about a whole series of things. I could not find him anywhere. Anyone know where Mick was on election day? You are not going to get me - no, no, no.

COUNCILLOR: He was not skiing.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: I know where he will be at the next election.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: If we're lucky, Mick! The final point that I want just to go back on is this residents' parking scheme business, and not to discuss the Scrutiny report, either its presentation or rebuttal, but to discuss the issue itself because it is a very important issue. There is not a ward in this city that I am aware of that does not have issues over the need for some form of residents' parking. It is my view, and I think it is shared by the majority of members in the Council, that actually a lot of the problems of parking have been contributed to by the Local Authority or things that have happened that perhaps we cannot do anything about but certainly are not the residents' fault, and that is one of the reasons why I do not think it is at all acceptable when there are so many other charges residents have to pay now for all manner of things that we should be seeking to charge, but it does raise the very important question of how do we deliver residents only parking schemes.

There is the mainstream funding, and it has been criticised by a few people, the level of it and that is not unreasonable, but I have to remind you it is a great deal more than it was five years ago and we will continue to seek to put more money into that particular budget.

There are other ways as well of tackling it. There is Ward Based Initiative money and I know some members have already indicated that they would spend Ward Based Initiative money, or indeed Area Committee money, to see schemes implemented that perhaps were not in priority terms across the city at the top of the list but maybe in their ward at the very top of the list so, if you like, I am back to the point I made a little earlier about ward members taking responsibility, and I am sure most of you are more than willing to do that, for taking decisions to see the priorities you want to see dealt with in your ward actually dealt with, and there are sums of money available. We can argue about whether they are sufficient, and I would probably agree with you it is never sufficient; however, money is available. We are very open to looking at how we can perhaps speed up the process.

I think one of the issues as well that you will have all seen in the papers in the last couple of days are the 20 mile an hour speed limits in residential areas, and I welcome what the Government has done there because that is going to enable us to speed up our programme, I hope, of home zones around schools at 20 miles an hour, and that is something which we will be taking very much on board and probably, I think, a good idea to look at it in conjunction with the issue of residents only parking. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. We are calling now for a vote on the motion to receive the Minutes. *(A vote was taken)* Those in favour please show. Those against? The motion is CARRIED.

Before we adjourn could I just ask our legal representative to explain something?

THE ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE (Corporate Governance): In relation to the voting on Councillor Gruen's motion to suspend Council procedure rules, you will recall there seemed to be some confusion as to the seat that Councillor Schofield was sitting in. Looking at the recorded vote sheet that has come out of the system, it would appear that there were two votes cast, one in Councillor Marjoram's seat and one in Councillor Schofield's seat.

COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: Standards!

THE ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE (Corporate Governance): Therefore, for the avoidance of doubt, the actual figures on that recorded vote - and the recorded vote sheets will be amended to reflect this - were present 90; "Yes" 41; Abstentions nil; "No" 49.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you for that explanation. We now adjourn for some refreshment and we will see you all shortly. Thank you.

(The Council adjourned for a short time)

ITEM 10 - WHITE PAPER MOTION - CHANGES TO LETTINGS POLICY

THE LORD MAYOR: Item 10, White Paper Motion - Changes to Lettings Policy. I call on Councillor Richard Lewis.

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Firstly, Lord Mayor, I think I have to seek leave of Council to delete the word "instructs" in the second paragraph and replace it with the word "requests".

THE LORD MAYOR: Could I ask Council to signify if they are in agreement with that? Yes, thank you. Go ahead, then, Councillor Lewis.

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Housing is one of the staples of case work and thanks to Decency we no longer have to deal with constant issues around repairs, window replacement and the like, but issues around lettings are a constant major cause of concern to many of us at our surgeries and on the doorstep.

I would particularly like to highlight two issues around lettings. One is that people in dire housing need often perceive the lettings policy to be unfair and that is exacerbated by the scarcity of properties within the city. Secondly, people complain about mayhem being caused by inappropriate lettings where we have particular individuals or families who move into a neighbourhood causing problems for everyone else. I think if we had all been out on the knock, as we normally are in the month of April, we would have all had plenty of these cases come to our notice in a way that they often do not because people do not see Councillors as being the kind of natural place to go with those concerns.

Both issues can lead to lack of confidence that the Council is on their side. People see the system as a bureaucracy which applies rules for its own convenience rather than in their interests. The petition which came to Council not so long ago from Queenswood Heights sums up better than I can how people can feel that officialdom and us as the people who guide it are completely unsympathetic and only want to be fair to the person causing the problems.

This is not just a kind of anecdotal issue that concerns me here. My colleagues will all give you examples from all over the city of the same kind of problems and it is not just a Leeds problem. There is a recent YouGov poll which showed that nationally 42% of Council tenants said they had suffered from antisocial behaviour over the past two years. That is more than two fifths who have been deprived of the peaceful enjoyment of their homes. Perhaps more worryingly, 51% said they did not have confidence in their landlord to tackle the problem.

The cost of one disruptive family or individual can be huge for a community. Many of the costs can only be measured in human misery. Long-standing tenants can be driven away. In extreme cases streets can be emptied by one family.

My very limited study of economics taught me about Gresham's Law, which is about bad money driving good money out of circulation. In housing terms this is Gresham's Law - you have bad tenants who manage to drive good tenants out of circulation.

The costs for landlords are also huge. In officer time, the cost of repairs, in void costs and eventually legal costs in terms of evictions. At the very worst you end up paying for demolition. It is perhaps worth reflecting that this is not just about Council estates - this can be streets where there are a few Council properties - and I am thinking of Scarth Avenue in Harehills as a recent example - where the Council ended up knocking down the whole street, primarily because of issues around the behaviour of some residents. Obviously that cost came to the Council.

The spur to raise the issue again is the fact that the Council is shortly to create some new communities itself through small Council housing developments. One of

the lessons that I have learned is that who you put in a development on Day One is crucial to that area for future generations. Those of us who have had experience of Leeds Partnership Homes learned that we often had housing associations which came into areas which they did not really understand and were not able to manage those areas and we ended up within a very short time with empty streets where we had put in investment and we had handed over properties to them. That should not have happened, but it did.

This White Paper is not about reinstating some hands-on gatekeeping role for Councillors. It is not about recreating some kind of licensing committee for Councillors to look into every letting or anything of the kind. It is about looking at where we are and tailoring our lettings policy to meet the needs of the citizens of this city and using the legislation for their benefit.

For instance, the legislation recognises the importance of maintaining sustainability and mixed communities and allocations can be made on that basis. Nor is it wrong to bar people for their previous behaviour, and to some degree we do, as long as you tell people why they are excluded.

This is not about easy answers. There is no kind of magic bullet here that will solve all our problems. On the one hand there are far more people today coming into Council properties who have what we call chaotic lifestyles - who are very difficult to manage in any way and pose a huge problem for any community they are dropped into. On the other hand, we are operating a rationing system where there is not enough of the commodity to go round and so we cannot be effectively fair.

I do believe it is our duty to give a clear message that, as custodians of a very scarce resource, we will do our best to deliver a system that all our citizens see as fair. Lord Mayor, I commend this White Paper to Council. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: I call upon Councillor McKenna.

COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: My Lord Mayor, I can formally second and reserve my right to speak.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Councillor Elliott, please.

COUNCILLOR ELLIOTT: Thank you, Lord Mayor. The Morley Borough Independents have the greatest of pleasure in supporting the position propounded by Councillor Lewis. In particular, we would welcome a new look being taken at the policy of placing known troublesome tenants amongst settled social communities. This has caused much unhappiness in a number of areas, especially when elderly communities have been disrupted, as has happened on a number of occasions, by this policy.

It is another example of something being fine in theory but fatally flawed in practice, so let us look again at the present policy and this time more from the viewpoint of existing communities rather than the troublesome tenants who are a nuisance wherever they do. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR PRYKE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. We are supporting Councillor Lewis's motion as well. I heard from your colleagues that you had difficulty hearing me earlier on so I will try a bit harder.

Burmantofts and Richmond Hill has its fair proportion of Council housing and it has probably more than a fair proportion of antisocial behaviour if you average out across the city. We have our dispersal orders and we have had quite a number of

operation champions and their like to deal with it, spearheaded by the NPT. While it is fair to say there is antisocial behaviour amongst tenants and their relatives of Council housing, it is my perception that from attending nearly all the Tasking Meetings since they have been going in that ward, we get much more trouble from tenants and families of tenants of private rented housing.

Richard is quite right in saying that there are Council houses which we are responsible for in non-Council estate areas because, of course, Leeds City Council bought up an awful lot of formerly private housing in the past. They are now Council houses managed by our ALMOs.

I would give due credit to East North East Homes housing officers in our area and the ASB officers who work with them in dealing quite effectively with antisocial behaviour and other similar problems from tenants in East North East Homes properties. It seems to be easier with the current provisions they have available with the changes in the lettings policy and the changes to the choice based letting system that Councillor Carter has put through the Executive Board to deal with those problems in Council housing whereas we have much greater difficulties with the antisocial behaviour coming from private tenants. We would look forward to all measures to deal with ASB from those people rather than just strengthening the measures with Council tenants.

It has been said in the past in our area some time ago that Leeds City Council ran a system of sin bins where troublesome tenants got dumped on a street or a particular area. I think it was said about Scarth Avenue in the past. I am not quite sure because it is not in my ward. I think we have corrected that perception. There are not sin bins and the ALMOs do not operate them and I do not think they have operated them since they have been around, but that does not remove the problem that particular streets get it worse than other streets and that has to be dealt with.

Again, I come back to the thing that private tenants and their relatives and visitors need to be dealt with probably a little more forcefully and set against that the slight worry that ASBOs and ABCs and ASBO warnings and so on are tending to criminalise the young rather unnecessarily.

I am pleased that ASBU and the ASB officers and the ALMOs have quite a range of options to deal with troublesome tenants and I look forward to a fairer deal for all of our residents by fair application of the measures we can take in the city. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR A BLACKBURN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. We too support this White Paper. Most of us will have dealt with cases of antisocial behaviour and know the misery that antisocial tenants can have on their neighbourhoods and they can also attract other people to their homes who also behave in a problematic manner.

It can have the effect that decent tenants want to move out of the area and can lead to decent people not wanting to move into it. Of course, we know what happens there, that then we have areas that can become more problematic than we would like and it is difficult to sort them out. I think we have all seen it and what happens then? Of course decent people want to move out, other people that cause problems move in. What is the answer? Usually in the past it has been pull them down.

I had a problem like this in my ward some time ago and I did set about tackling it with the police and with housing. This was a tenant again who was bringing people into the area - did not live round there but it attracted them - but unfortunately I got it sorted out too late because then people wanted to move out and subsequently, yes, that housing was pulled down. I must admit I have seen it happening in another area

and I have been quicker on to it and I have got it sorted out, but nevertheless we do need to sort out troublesome tenants quicker than we have been doing. I know that there are laws there and everything but I feel like Councillor Lewis that there is more that we could do and we do owe it to the decent people that have to put up with all the noise etc, we do owe it to them that we do something about it. Thank you.
(Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Wakefield.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Apologies for that, I was being distracted by antisocial behaviour! Firstly can I on behalf of the Labour Group - by the way, Lord Mayor thank you for your year of office and charring that, I think this is the last formal meeting (Applause). As all of us I think understand you probably had one of the most difficult years that I can remember and I am sure other people can remember but you have always been extremely fair and generous and flexible with all of us, allowing full and proper debate, so congratulations on your year of office.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you indeed.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Best wishes for the future. I am sure you are going to give me extra time now, now I have done all the creeping!

Firstly, while I am congratulating everybody, can I also congratulate Scrutiny Board for their work on this lettings policy because it is their recommendations about antisocial behaviour tenants that has led them to getting a lower priority in the waiting list, in the lettings list, and I think that is appropriate and it is right.

I also think their idea about tenants showing photographs is also important because subletting is also another vehicle of antisocial behaviour. I think Scrutiny have done some excellent work on this particular issue.

This White Paper is not about antisocial behaviour alone. I think that has been dealt with as far as you can within the Human Rights. What this White Paper is trying to do - and I obviously am looking forward to Councillor Les Carter's comments because we have discussed this at Executive Board - is shape a lettings policy to deal with the proposals of affordable houses, clusters of affordable houses within our own wards like Bramley, like Pudsey, like Armley and like Middleton.

I think that certainly our group would say that choice based lettings is a very blunt instrument to tackle these new communities within existing communities. I think choice based lettings, if you take it what it was supposed to be about, improving the rate of voids, turnovers, choice and therefore income revenue, achieves that, but what it does not achieve is those cohesive and sustainable communities that we want to see.

I think many of us can regale each other - and Councillor Parker is over there and Councillor Lewis - in the 1990s when we built some affordable houses in Kippax, we were not aware that what was going to happen is that too many tenants of the same circumstances - single parents on benefits - were going to live right next door to an estate of sheltered accommodation and that created, inevitably, tensions.

Also on an individual basis I can recall all three of us pleading with the housing management, please do not let this house to a ten year old lad and a mother when the ten year old lad had a record as long as our arms on terrorising, burgling old people in that street. Sadly we were not listened to, he was put in and that street, which was a stable street mainly of old people, were terrorised for two years and they

went through hell. It is only now that we have had to take legal action to evict this person and his family, sadly for him and he has gone into secure accommodation, that now that street can breathe again. There are too many examples that we could all quote of the frustrations and anger of people saying they are following the lettings policy and we have to pick up the consequences of that with communities of decent, ordinary people being extremely angry.

What I want to see is a proper debate and discussion. I want to see a group that comes together and decides where we are doing affordable houses let us look at the lettings policy because what we all want, we all want affordable homes, we all want them in our community because they are desperately needed, but we want our communities to welcome them as a desperate answer to their needs and not fear them because what they are going to get for the rest of their stay is hell and mayhem and chaos.

I hope, Les, that we can. You have said that Scrutiny Board is due to report. I think we need to stop waiting, it is over twelve months, and let us get on with it because affordable houses are needed and we want those desperately to be a part of our existing community and not act against it. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR DRIVER: Lord Mayor, I too rise to support the paper in the name of Councillor Lewis and to say a little bit, perhaps, about the issues I believe which can be seen as positive and proactive in creating community pride rather than community failure in areas where we have this opportunity to locate people successfully rather than unsuccessfully on our estates and in our housing, wherever it happens to be.

My experience as a Councillor in Leeds 10 over 30 years is largely fire-fighting these situations, not really of being able to look at them positively and move forward to saying, "That is the Middleton, that is the Belle Isle, that is the Hunslet we are trying to create." It was always an attempt to stop the worst happening. I think we have got to being to build into our policies ways of doing that.

We are community champions, Lord Mayor. That is one of the titles we get as local Councillors and I believe that one of the things we do have to do is to begin to profile our communities in such a way that they are balanced, safe, secure, all the things that we see as the good things and that that is the balance that has to be maintained. Really, I do not see why choice based lettings cannot be done within that framework. I believe that is where we have missed out up to now and I do hope that in the kind of review work that has gone on and I hope will continue to go on, we will begin to ask ourselves those positive questions - what kind of proud Middleton are creating for the next 20 years, I say to myself? What are we trying to do to make sure that we will have people who not only want to live there out of sheer defiance of the system but because it has become the place where their networks, where their culture, where the things that they enjoy doing can be properly lived out. It is not just about economics. It is about creating the situation in which people who can live together successfully can do so.

Today is a day, Lord Mayor, for us when there has been a young person evicted in the courts from a house in Middleton. It does say to us just how clearly these divisions show up in the life of a community. We have got to stop that happening and quite clearly this person would have been given a tenancy because of his/her needs, but without taking into account these other factors as well.

I suggest, Lord Mayor, that there are things we can do to take this forward and I urge members to support the paper in the name of Councillor Lewis. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: My Lord Mayor, in his opening speech Councillor Lewis indicated that some of us might talk about the issues locally that we have some difficulties with in terms of the lettings policy. I have some statistics here which indicate that for the Swarcliffe area in our ward there are more than a hundred bids for every single potential letting. There is a lot of misery behind those statistics, people who have been in week after week and the average time to be housed is more than a year, and in some cases more than two years. It is further evidence of the real misery that is inflicted on people who are in desperate housing conditions and all they want to do is have a home for themselves and their family.

I also think that in 2009 we should be looking forward and not backward and I think those of us - and I think this is probably near all of us - who actually hold advice sessions or surgeries will find people come to us and say that one of the issues with the lettings policy is regarding teenagers having to share bedrooms. Again we are now, as I said, in the kind of society and the kind of time where equality matters and when it is entirely wrong, I think, for such issues not to be debated to see if there is a better way forward.

This White Paper very clearly calls for a debate, a review, consultation and a consideration of this so that we move forward, something we can all agree with and hopefully will be for the benefit of the people we represent. Many of our tenants, I think, would welcome that.

I was very pleased that Councillor Wakefield aligned this particular debate to the affordable housing because I think that is the crux of the matter. If we are finally able to build some more affordable houses, then that will give us some capacity to move forward on and potentially act as a release valve to some of these key issues which are of real concerns in our communities. I think that it seems to me to be the overwhelming impression that our colleagues on Council also have, so I commend this White Paper to you.

COUNCILLOR DAVEY: Thank you, Lord Mayor, speaking in support of Councillor Lewis's White Paper. Like my colleagues I recognise and welcome the importance of the review of the lettings policy which was agreed at October's Executive Board. I fully support the principle behind choice based lettings. However, the fact remains that I have real concerns about the way it operates within the city. I do not in principle object to the concept of choice based lettings for social housing tenants and I cannot disagree with the aim to give tenants greater control of where they want to live. Equally, I cannot argue with the idea of giving tenants the responsibility to pursue properties they believe best suits their needs.

Whatever the theory, in reality for the bulk of tenants any theoretical choice they have is severely constrained. The truth is that it is simply not possible for most tenants to let a suitable property in a preferred location. The choice is constrained by geography, it is constrained by a shortage of housing stock and it is constrained by the ever increasing numbers of high priority applicants.

Choice based letting alone cannot adequately address the housing situation in Leeds and we need a much more radical review of the way that we will respond to this desperate housing need.

Starting with the geography topic, most tenants have a strong knowledge of the local area that they want to live in. They want to remain in the communities that they have been living in, they want to remain close to family and friends and if this was possible it would generally be an example of a successful, sustainable community - but it is not possible. Prospective tenants are lucky to get a property allocation at all, even if they bid for homes right across the city, which most people do not want to do.

All of us in this Chamber know the huge numbers we are dealing with. Let me give you a refresher. On 1st April 2008 - and this is not an April Fool's joke - there were 24,444 households on the housing waiting list, so that is nearly 24-and-a-half thousand households. The choice of homes for these people is all but non-existent. There simply is not the stock available and Councillor Gruen has touched on that briefly.

Just giving you a few examples across the city, Fearnley Close in Armley, 112 bids; Broom Crescent in Belle Isle, 170; Torre Green in Burmantofts, 213; Cross Flatts Crescent in my ward, 151; Thorn Grove in Gipton, 222; Martin Grove in Kirkstall, 202; Ramshead Approach in Seacroft, 324. I could go on and on.

All of these homes with their hundreds of bids went to individuals with the highest priority status, priority extra, and none of us can dispute the need to house the most vulnerable. I do believe that the priority bands must be used in any choice based lettings system if we are to ensure that the housing need is balanced with the desire to provide choice. However, this has meant in many instances that tenants are being allocated to homes in unsuitable communities and this in itself is causing problems for both tenants and communities. This cannot be fair and it is not fair. It is not fair for new tenants trying to build a new life for themselves and their families; it is not fair for existing communities; and it is not fair for the housing managers who are struggling to maintain that difficult balance between need and choice on a daily basis.

Therefore, I am asking everyone here today to commit to work together to find a way to improve this city's lettings policy. Choice based lettings provides a great theoretical starting point but we must adapt it to ensure that we do not damage our communities or disadvantage the vulnerable. Thank you. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR BEVERLEY: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I welcome this motion and I am pleased to see that this is an issue that all the different parties on this Council clearly agree on.

I think we need to do far more to preserve a decent quality of life for our tenants and to create greater disincentives for people behaving in a disgraceful and uncivilised manner. I believe this motion is a step in the right direction and it has my full support. Thank you.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: Thank you, my Lord Mayor. I hope that today is not the end of a debate but the start of a debate. When Richard put this White Paper down, we could have done the usual thing, put an amendment in and all the rest of it. That would have just been playing games.

Just one or two points that do want to making, though. A lot of work was done by the Scrutiny Board and I generated that because I went to the Scrutiny Board and asked if they would do it. However, I think what is wrong or has been wrong with Scrutiny Boards - I think we have improved now - is that reports were not coming back to the Executive, they just went to the administration. I am looking through - I think what has been put in since that report went through?

Reduced preference for unsuitable customers has been put in. Photographing of main joint tenants, that has been put in. Statements tackling fraud has been put in. Reduced preference on grounds of behaviour - these have been put in.

The two things we have got to ask is, are they being policed properly, because the allocations are not done by the Council, the allocation is done by the ALMO, so you have got to be very careful who actually polices them. However, that does not answer everything. We have a situation - and I have not got *(inaudible)* round this

Council where people going to a home in the middle of other people and ruin their lives. Not ruin their lives, they ruin the life for everybody living round them totally. The reality is, if I could just go in and get them by the scruff of the neck and pull them out and throw them somewhere I would do, but it is not as simple as that. It is not as simple as that.

Sometimes when we are looking at other lettings, I have had a go at officers and I had a go at them recently saying, "Why do you do this? Why did you put people there? Why do you not do this?" We still have to house families and sometimes they are not suitable for going in, so we have got to look at that. They are not always suitable where families go in and the people they go in with. I do not care who you are, if you are in a flat and you have got some kids, you are an elderly person, you want quiet. If you have got kids you want a bit of noise, a bit of company, a bit of life. That is not what I am really concerned about.

Just on one or two things that have been said. Councillor Davey, the 24,000, the 31,000 - it was 31,000, it is now 24,000 - it is meaningless, the most meaningless figure we have. It is not even a waiting list. It is actually called something completely different. Contained within there are homeless people, priority people, and that drops it down to a very small number.

We have 58,000 houses in the city under the Council's control and those 58,000 in the main are full. We have not got thousands of homes empty. We have got to make a decision at some stage, what do we do with people? What do we do with people? I will give you an example. In Bramley they had a family which was causing hell. The officers wanted to move them. One of the things which we insisted - and Keith was there - we insisted at Executive Board, if you are going to move a family into an area which has been causing problems in another area, you must go to the ward Councillors and get the ward Councillors' approval - not veto, we will not give them a veto but they have to put a joint case forward of why not.

I know where that family was supposed to go, to Horsforth. I know Horsforth and I know the mega problems they have got there and the ward Councillors stood up and said, "No, come on, we have got our own. We cannot take them there."

Somehow we have got to find some way of dealing with those families. Somehow we have got to find a way of dealing with them. I am not certain what the answer is but we cannot just - the law does not allow us just to say people can live on the streets and go on the streets and I do not think anybody in this Council Chamber wants that. You could set up what you might call sink estates - I am not saying you should, you could - and you could put all your resources into there and all the problem families into one area. I am not even certain that is an answer.

Putting it out on to the table, there is no knock about on this, this is dead straight. What the proposal asks is that a report is brought to the Executive Board. That report will be brought to Executive Board and all the comments that have been made today, I want answers to those comments in writing for debate.

Not everything was said today we will change. Not everything can be a local lettings policy and we would all like a local lettings policy. I would have one for my area, you would have one, Keith, for your area and all the rest of it. We cannot all rely on that but the main thing is that the debate has started, all these things are on the table. The officers are there at the back, they have got a copy of the verbatim. A report will come and then we will go further with it.

Scrutiny, as I say, they have done a lot of work on this but I would like them now to sent their report direct to us as well as what we get from the officers, but I

would like the Scrutiny report to come to us as well because it did not before, it went round the different areas, and Barry can come and talk and someone from the actual Scrutiny can talk about this.

On that basis, yes, we will be voting for this, yes, it is the start of a debate not the end of a debate and I hope at some stage we can get some conclusion to this because at the end of the day it is not us who suffer. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, Councillor Carter.

THE LORD MAYOR: I call upon Councillor Lewis, then, to sum up.

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: Thank you, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: I reserved my right to speak, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: I am sorry, he said he would second. I call on Councillor McKenna. I am sorry about that.

COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am delighted, listening to this debate there has been so much common ground around here and everybody has made a very positive contribution and I wish we had more debates like that.

I am not going to labour the point, I am not going to read my speech but there was one area that I would like to deal with and I would just like to deal with it very briefly. It was dealt with by Councillor Wakefield and it is about the effect on elderly people and we do have those problems in our ward.

In Armley we have a lot of tower blocks and in those tower blocks they are usually occupied by older people, people over 40 and, indeed, elderly people. It is particularly suitable. The reality of allocating one unsuitable tenant to that block has massive consequences for everybody living around that flat. Not only do they increase noise and chaotic lifestyles, they disrupt elderly neighbours and they also invade shared space, which is very invasive for elderly people.

Elderly residents have spoken to me, Janet and Alison on these matters and they have said how unsuitable this can be for them, it can make their lives pretty miserable.

Elderly people are saying to me they are fed up with late night parties, groups of youths smoking around the shared entrance and people coming and going late at night. It might be a minority of individuals but their lifestyles are simply not suited to the slower pace of life in elderly communities and perhaps, Les, that is something - I will leave it there and I am sure you understand this very well but that is perhaps one area that I would like to be taken into account very seriously and looked at, the mix of ages, because people have worked all their life and they are retired and I think they have a right to peace and tranquillity without having disruptive parties and this type of thing going on. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Yes, thank you. We will go to Councillor Lewis now to sum up.

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Lettings policy is only one part of the problem. It is also about neighbourhood management, it is about a whole host of things. I thank everybody for the comments they have made because I think what it has indicated is that we are all saying the same thing about this problem.

I am very keen that we have a lettings policy that has the confidence of people out there. I think that is desperately important that people feel that we are being rational in what we are doing. As I said before, we are running a rationing system and that is always going to be unfair because there is not enough to go round. However, when we are seen as acting in a kind of perverse way in our allocation, people lose confidence in us. I think it is important that we are seen as having a policy that is as fair as it can be.

A few years ago we did a review of the lettings policy, I think in the mid-1990s, where it was the first time where we had ever tried something called decision conferencing. I think it was fairly crude at the time but what was good about it was that we were able to get people from all the parties in the same room, not just looking at a report, "Housing Committee was asked to support this report" or whatever. We actually got people round the table looking at options of how they could make things work. I think this is an opportunity where we could almost revisit that in a much more sophisticated way with other stakeholders because we need other people on board. We need the Tenants' Federation, we need people like that on board as stakeholders in this. I think if we can do that, from what has been said here we can come up with a better policy than we have had before. We can send a very positive message out because I think a lot of this is about messages and perception. It is about people feeling that we as a Council actually care, that we are doing our best to use the properties that we have in a sensible way and that we are not going to tolerate nonsense.

It is far more difficult to deal with a problem once it has occurred than to prevent it happening; far more expensive.

I will not touch on many of the things that have been said. I think there are so many eloquent examples. Just one thing I will say, Keith mentioned new communities. I was talking to a vicar from Bradford and he was saying how in the 1990s the estate he lives on and works on, they suddenly built next door to it a whole chunk of housing association properties. Not only when those properties were let did they just suck out a chunk of tenants from the Council properties into the housing association properties causing a huge kind of voids problem, but they created another problem because it was an example that Keith was putting forward of a whole lot of people with the same problems where there was really no kind of understanding of what you were doing in creating a community. There is a message not just for us but I think for the partners that we are working with on affordable housing to make sure we get this right. It is desperately important that we are seen as the kind of exemplars and that we are leading on this and it is not just a matter where we do have new developments of a numbers game - we have built a hundred new properties, we have built 20 new properties or whatever. It is about creating proper communities there.

Just to sum up, I thank everybody for their comments and let us move to the vote. Thank you, Lord Mayor (*Applause*).

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. We will now come to the vote on the motion that was proposed by Councillor Lewis. (*A vote was taken*) All those in favour of the motion, please? Those against? Abstentions, no. That was truly CARRIED and thank you all. (*Applause*) Well done.

ITEM 11 - WHITE PAPER MOTION - EXTENSION OF THE HIGHER RATE OF MOBILITY COMPONENT TO BLIND PEOPLE

THE LORD MAYOR: Item 11, White Paper Motion in the name of Councillor Finnigan.

COUNCILLOR FINNIGAN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am formally moving this resolution just to give people a little bit of background behind it and to try and explain what we are trying to achieve here.

Prior to 1992 if you were blind it did not actually mean that you obtained any help or assistance in terms of your mobility and difficulties. There was an allowance called the Mobility Allowance that was purely paid to people who had physical limitations and blind people were excluded at that particular point, notwithstanding the fact that if you are blind you probably have the most difficulty in terms of your transport needs.

1992, the Conservative Government, to their credit, introduced Disability Living Allowance that for the first time awarded a lower rate of mobility component to people who were blind, who had those difficulties. It still maintained the higher rate of mobility component for people with physical limitations but they introduced a rate of benefit that was a small amount that granted people who were blind some help and assistance with the complications and difficulties and the expense of getting out and about.

Subsequent to that there has been a lot of campaigning and a lot of pushing for changes. The RNIB in 2006 set up their Taken for a Ride campaign where they set out a particular campaign targeted very much at MPs to try and persuade them to change the legislation to accommodate blind people and to recognise that in many ways blind people have the highest mobility difficulties of anybody within our community and, as such, the financial recognition should be there in the same way that it is if you have got bad knees or you have got a poor heart or you have got arthritis or whatever.

Several lobbies of Parliament have followed on from that particular action. They have pushed very hard. Certainly we know that there have been organisations, the RNIB is perhaps the well known one but other organisations representing disabled groups have pushed for this particular change. Other individuals have pushed for this change; the same with political parties, they have discussed and debated this. I am aware that the Green Party discussed this at one of their conferences. I suspect other political parties have as well and everybody was lobbying for that change that was necessary.

Subsequent to that the news did break in March this year that the Government has accepted that it is time for a particular change and that from 2011 there will be this change where people who are blind can be put on the same footing as people with equally significant disabilities and they will get the same financial support that they need to help and assist them get out and about.

The difference is quite substantial. Certainly financially speaking there is a difference of almost £30 a week between one rate and the other rate. Certainly one of the senses that we would all dread losing is our sight because that particular point if you lose other parts of your body you can perhaps function in terms of your own mobility. If you lose your sight then your ability to get from A to B is always going to be restricted and you are always going to have great difficulties.

To a degree what we are trying to do here is two things. One is pass down to all Councillors the fact that there is this news, you have blind people within your own wards and they need to be aware and they need to be aware of the fact that there is cross-party support across the nation for this particular change. The other one is just to recognise the fact that even though it has taken the best part of 20 years to get this sort of justice for blind people, ultimately those who have campaigned hard, their

commitments, their tenacity ought to be recognised and that is a good thing; those individuals who have campaigned for these changes also ought to be recognised; and the other recognition is that ultimately at Parliamentary level this has got full support across all parties. That is good news, this is a good news story. It is regrettable perhaps that it has taken 19 years to get this fair deal for blind people but I think it ought to be warmly welcomed.

Lord Mayor, I formally move this White Paper. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. In calling on Councillor Parnham to second I would remind Council that it is his maiden speech and certainly you will show due respect. Councillor Parnham.

COUNCILLOR PARNHAM: Thank you, Lord Mayor and thank you Councillor Finnigan for what I would like to say is a typically eloquent speech.

I would also like to take this opportunity very briefly to thank the people of Farnley and Wortley who very kindly last September lent me their vote and I must say I am very privileged and proud to represent those people and I hope to do my best for them in this Chamber and elsewhere.

I suppose in the tradition of maiden speeches the best ones are always kept brief and I will do my best to do that - it is a very short speech.

I think it is an easy motion for us all to support. Certainly the Green Party has supported the increase in the allowance for many years and the Green Group here certainly does it well. I think it is important to note that the issue of disability and how we see disability is something that is at the heart of human rights and human rights is certainly something that I am keen to promote while I am a member of this Chamber.

It is a little unfortunate that we have to wait until at least 2011 but at least it is a good point, as Councillor Finnigan said, and we should all support it.

One of the things I would just like to say very briefly is that the Green Group here and the Green Party in general argue for a redefining of society, redefining it according to the perspectives of all people and not just the majority here, the non-disabled. I think that is important for us in our daily lives and also in the Chamber. I did not script this particularly, I wanted to see how the day unfolded and I noted how many good contributions we have all made today. I also noted the group of people who came with the deputation, I made a note here, the All Means All Group and how they came and the young woman spoke extremely eloquently on behalf of her client group. She said £10,000 would open up the whole of the city centre to a new group who need and deserve accessibility. Why should they be excluded because of our priorities? They need accessibility and they need to be able to achieve all their aims and hopes and ambitions. I think that is important for us all to remember in our role as Councillors.

Also, when we are dealing with ongoing issues, something that is close to a colleague of mine here, the Roseville project, we need to always bear in mind that we are not here just for the able bodied but we are here for other people too.

I am delighted to second the motion. We the Green Group certainly support the motion. Thank you. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR ATHA: I would like to say just a few words in support of this. It is also giving me great pleasure because the last time I complimented Councillor Finnigan over there for a resolution he was proposing was many years ago when he

was a member of the Labour Party on the extreme left wing and I felt there is another good socialist. Our paths have sadly diverged but nevertheless here we are and I am pleased to support this particular resolution because in fact it illustrates I think what is genuinely in his nature and that is a care for people with disability and that I think we all recognise and would approve of.

I have been associated with people with physical and sensory and mental disabilities for a long time and I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to another person after Councillor Finnigan, which is unusual - Peter Harrand, who is more recent. I mentioned at this meeting, two or three meetings ago, that I was involved with people with mental handicap being banned from - I am opposing that ban - from the International Paralympics and as a result of being banned from the International Paralympics, the mentally handicapped - or we say now learning disability - athletes have been denied access to the many, many millions of pounds which have been put into sport for people with disability. It is immoral, it is wrong, it is untenable.

I said something like this in the Council meeting some time ago and Peter Harrand, to his very great credit, took up the issue, very kindly wrote to the Minister, did not get a very satisfactory response and I did not from the Secretary at all, and I have written subsequently, but it is that degree of care which I think lurks within each of us if we are only given the chance to express it and to activate it.

Despite previous things I might have said about you and doubtless will say again in the future, on this occasion can I say thank you for producing this resolution and allowing us to again act in accordance as a full Council. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Finnigan, do you want to exercise your right of reply?

COUNCILLOR FINNIGAN: Before we just move to the vote, I think there is full support for this particular resolution. It is progress, it is a pity it has taken so long but it is welcome news that ultimately we are unified in the Chamber, unified down at Parliament and blind people will start to get a fair deal, that is the important thing, so move to the vote, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. We shall go to the vote now. (*A vote was taken*) Those in favour of the motion in Councillor Finnigan's name please show. Those against? Abstentions, no. Again, well and truly CARRIED. Thank you indeed.

ITEM 12 - WHITE PAPER MOTION - POTENTIAL IMPACT OF NEW HOUSING ON GREEN BELT AND GREENFIELD SITES

THE LORD MAYOR: Item 12, White Paper Motion. Councillor Andrew Carter, I believe you want to make...

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Let us go for the hat trick, my Lord Mayor! Can I ask leave of Council before moving the motion to seek certain amendments which I understand, having had a discussion with the Leader of the Opposition and with my seconder, is acceptable and will result in the withdrawal of the amendment and hopefully all party agreement.

If I could refer you first of all to the second paragraph...

THE LORD MAYOR: Shall I just ask if they all agree?

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: They do not know what it is yet.

THE LORD MAYOR: You are happy that the alteration is made? Yes, thank you.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: The second paragraph, nine lines down, after the word "of", remove "Government backed." In the last paragraph, the fourth line down, remove the word "Government's" and then delete everything in the last paragraph after the word "to" three lines from the bottom and add, "lobby Government not to allow inappropriate greenfield and green belt development in Leeds."

THE LORD MAYOR: I hope you have all got that.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Thank you, my Lord Mayor, and members of Council. With those amendments...

THE LORD MAYOR: Would you like us to vote on that? I think it might be more appropriate at this time. (*A vote was taken*) Those in favour of those alterations? Anybody against? CARRIED.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: I am doing my best to get the thing moving.

THE LORD MAYOR: Off you go. Get cracking.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Thank you, Lord Mayor. My Lord Mayor, this White Paper, the reason for being very happy to get all party support is because in the light of what I announced earlier, one of the main discussions we will be having is hopefully on how you fund and bring about accelerated development zones. The one in Leeds which is well known to most of you will involve a significant housing development on a brownfield site and develop a lot of affordable housing.

I think that is extremely important and I am trying to get across a message to Government office and, indeed, to the Government, that opposition to building on green belt and greenfield sites is not a matter of trying to stop the building of much needed affordable housing on developable, sustainable and brownfield sites. The two positions are entirely complementary because what is the point - what is the point - of building on greenfield sites in unsustainable locations that result in excessive amounts of travel to and from work for the residents, that result in small communities - of which we have a lot in Leeds - coalescing so you cannot tell where the heck you are, which with due respect to our friends in Manchester is what happens if you travel over there, you do not know when you are in Oldham, when you are in Manchester, when you are in Salford and when you are in Trafford because they all join each other, there is no longer anything to separate the communities.

I do not think allowing that to happen in Leeds is any good to anybody, whether you are somebody waiting for a house or somebody who is lucky enough to live in a house or a flat or whatever. There is absolutely no point whatever in destroying independent communities with a good environment among them just for the sake of it, just to get numbers.

What I hope we can get across - let me tell you, when we had the last debate on these issues and we voted ultimately unanimously to scrap the RSM, that message went back to Government Ministers from Government office here so fast that it was unanimous, the effect can be quite surprising. Ultimately we have had some extremely constructive discussions with Tony Wright and with Margaret Beckett

about housing and where we need to provide it and where we can provide it, so there is a lot of common ground but there is this continued obsession on numbers. In the particular circumstances we find ourselves in economically, we all know these numbers are unachievable, they are just not going to happen, so why pretend?

The Planning Inspectors - this is the perverse thing - the ultimate decision was very good, we were all very pleased with it but if you the Inspector's reasoning, it is all over the place and it links back into these numbers that Margaret Beckett has said are unachievable, at least in the short term - most of us would say in the medium term - but at some stage an appeal is going to go the wrong way.

The other and perhaps the most critical point is, I think the volume house builders are part of the problem, they are not part of the solution. All they are doing is looking - these are the same people who have been knocking on the Chancellor's door wanting help but they are the same people who found the money to land bank greenfield sites around this city and every other but they have not got the money to keep developments going that are already on site and they are asking for Government money.

If they get direct help, all they will do is seek to build on easily developable greenfield sites. They will walk away from our regeneration sites and you look at EASEL, with a bit of luck EASEL will move ahead because of what has been announced today and we will find out very shortly if we are going to get that money. If EASEL falls by the wayside, I tell you this, you will not see the regeneration of that area for 20 years. That is what you are talking about. You are talking about regeneration schemes that this Council has been promoting under your control and under our control for years that are stopped because of the economic situation the country is in, that will not start again for years if the house builders get their own way. They are not part of the solution at the moment but they will have to be part of the solution if the Government takes a firm line and we all say look, we all know what the agenda needs to be, we need to develop more affordable housing, there are sites available, some of them are difficult, some of them need some help and I readily accept that is the case. We have been putting our money, the citizens of Leeds's money, into schemes to keep them going. The Government seem to be doing something similar but we have got to get away from this perverse situation where the house builders are working to a completely different agenda, and it is an agenda that I think is extremely damaging to the future of Leeds as a city and a city of a lot of separate communities.

It is most important, therefore, I think, that we do get all party support and I am please that we are going to get that.

The other issue is that when you go for these numbers, a lot of us remember the building of the 1960s. This Council has been paying to put right the mass building of the 1960s for the past 40 years and I can just see in 40 years' time another set of Councillors in this Chamber debating money going in to what the lady was talking about, 5M houses or something today on Queenswood Drive. Those sort of developments that previous Governments when they suddenly went for numbers rather than being a little bit more inventive, a little bit more ingenious, a little bit more thoughtful about how you can actually deliver greater housing numbers.

I know we get some criticism about the affordable housing position in Leeds but I have to say this, that actually even in a recession we are going to deliver more affordable housing units next year than we did four years ago or five years ago and that is because we have put our best foot forward with the Strategic Housing Partnership, 87 acres of land, and with a bit of luck the money is going to be there to make sure those sites can be developed, brownfield sites. There are other areas of

land all over the city in different wards that we could identify if we have the wherewithal to do it without destroying the green environment that Leeds, I think, is famous for. They used to say if you fly over Leeds and look at all the green spaces around Leeds, what you see is one of the greenest cities in the country and that is something to be proud of, not to throw away lightly.

Members of Council, I hope you will support the resolution. It is not anti-housing, it is not anti-affordable housing. What is is, is saying that we can achieve two objectives if we use some commonsense and work together and the Government drops once and for all these ridiculous RSS housing targets that are totally meaningless and undeliverable and actually are going to get in the way of regeneration. I move the resolution, my Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Golton to second.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I second the motion from two different angles. One, I am a resident of the community which is mentioned within the motion so it would be remiss if I did not actually offer my opinions on the experience that the communities of Rothwell and Oulton went through over the past two years, all due to the fact that Central Government is wishing to impose a model on us as local people and give us something that did not fit our community.

We have in the city I believe it is about 35 different pieces of pass land, which is land that we have set aside as being minded for eventual development of housing in a sustainable manner when demand suggests that we need it.

Because of the unhelpful comments that we had from Government, we, of course, had, as Councillor Carter mentioned, outsiders - in our case, in our community, a rather rich gentleman who lived on the Isle of Man - who came in and bought up virtually all the land between Rothwell and Oulton and the M62. He bought these pieces of pass land as well because he thought, "There is my weak link and if Government is telling me that they want to build on greenfield sites, if I can get in there then basically I can get the rest of the land that I have bought developed as well." That is why the planning applications were put in place.

Simultaneously to those planning applications, of course, our Caroline Flint, who was then the Housing Minister was, of course, floating the idea of eco-towns which were to tell us that future development for housing would be lovely, would be green and that we would all be Barbara and Tom Good, this marvellous sustainable lifestyle. Of course, for the people of Rothwell and Oulton it meant having 15,000 new homes built on your doorstep which involved tarmac because I do not think you can get environmentally friendly tarmac, which involved bricks and mortar, which I do not think you have any alternative to those really, either, in terms of environmental sustainability, and they were all going to land on the land just to the south of these communities, not because we in Leeds decided that that was what was appropriate for the development of our city, but because Central Government decided that was a model they wished to pursue because developers told them that was the best way for them to deliver it.

One of the issues that we do have with our crisis is that we do have to manage it but also, of course, we have to take the opportunities that come with it as well and this is where the City Region comes in. One of the reasons why I was so taken on board with the City Region in terms of knowing it was a credible body was that it actually did fight back on the eco-town issue and the Leaders came together and saw off the eco-town bid for the Leeds City Region area.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Are you going to talk about the White Paper?

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: We are still talking about the White Paper because it pointed out that like-minded local people...

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: You are completely off it

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: ... could come together and can decide local solutions for themselves without having Central Government imposing policy upon them and I assume that was the nature of the motion which was down in front of this Council...

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: You have not read it.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: I think we have. On that point, Lord Mayor, I would like to say that I do appreciate the comments that came from the Planning Inspector but I do realise that the battle is not over and I do appreciate the fact that we can come together all party to ensure that our local development plans remain local development plans and do not have undue influence from outside and I hope the City Region takes that forward. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR BLAKE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Can I ask for leave to withdraw the amendment in my name before I speak?

THE LORD MAYOR: Secunder?

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Yes, I think so.

THE LORD MAYOR: Council agree to that? Against? No. Thank you.
AGREED.

COUNCILLOR BLAKE: Before I speak I have to say, I do not think Councillor Golton's comments actually contributed anything to the debate that we were having here about what we are facing and before we start, I think we have to acknowledge that central policy actually does make a difference in planning terms and since the policies have changed, we in Leeds have actually managed to lead the country in successfully developing on brownfield sites and I think that is something we really ought to be proud of.

I would also like to underline our commitment, as we have heard earlier tonight, about providing homes for our communities. Our support of this in no way, shape or form means that we are against developing houses that are much needed for our communities. As we know, there is enormous demand for new housing and I think there is an element in this debate that we perhaps have not picked up on that this does not all have to be new build housing, it can be around regeneration. I think through the comments of the Inspector in his letter there are all sorts of issues around the bringing back student housing into use, for example, that we have not touched on tonight.

The issues about sustainable communities have been well made and particularly I just want to reinforce our commitment to protecting regeneration schemes in the city. We must take advantage of all the opportunities that are coming to us to do this, to build new Council housing and to respond to the needs of people in this city with respect to the types of housing that is required. This not just about numbers, it is about the size, it is about location, as we have mentioned, and particularly about types of tenure. To do this we have to make sure we have a proper housing needs assessment for the city.

As has been said, we have come very close to agreeing on the RSS figures and we have in our commitment to talking to Government about this I think we have been consistent and particularly all this has been changed again by the economic climate and the reality of the drop in land prices, the slow down in development, developers walking off site. We have to welcome Margaret Beckett's statement that we must face up to the reality of the situation. Stuart, she mentions all the time that she in Government does not want to be taking on the role that Local Authorities should be playing in determining their own local plans.

The Inspector actually threw out the application as being premature as it was pass land and I have to say, I am concerned that all the way through his letter he makes some very challenging comments and I think we should all be concerned by his comments. I would hope that as a result of this we could actually get together to really understand where he is coming from because he does make reference repeatedly to the fact that he is not convinced of the robustness of the data that we have been putting into the system.

I think the best way that we can defend areas where we do not want development to happen is to look at our policies, to make sure that officers have got all the information, that all that information is properly communicated to members so that the case we make can be properly defended.

I have to say, I would hope as a local Planning Authority we are doing everything we can to dampen down the speculation, to do everything we can to stop the developers thinking that they can jump the queue if they have bought land speculatively, that actually there is no point them putting in applications out of sequence. We know that in fact this pressure is going to be there and we know that in the system there will be applications that will be coming forward.

I think this is a crucial debate, a serious debate and a debate that we all have a contribution to make a difference. It is about the needs of all of the people in the city and all of our communities. When we are talking about green belt, greenfield, we are also talking about green space in our inner city communities that are already under pressure and need defending as strongly as possible and as strongly as any debate about the green belt situation. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: I call on Councillor Gruen to comment.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Four very quick points, all of which are non-controversial - which means they are non-controversial.

I think the first one is Andrew is absolutely right, when this Council speaks with a united voice it does send a message. Sometimes we under-estimate the influence that that kind of power actually has. I think some Blackberrys will be very busy transmitting messages about what this Council is saying on this particular issue.

The second one is about developers. Green belt land is very easy to build on. It has no contamination, it is usually unfettered land, it is easy access and builders want to build on there because they maximise their profits.

Brownfield land, on the other hand, has been contaminated, has often laid to waste for years if not decades and needs investment to go into initially to actually bring to life.

It is in all of our interests that that kind of land which is lying vacant is brought back into proper use but only - and this is an important point - if it pays due interest to the communities that are local and does not just plonk on what I call leg of lamb

housing but actually ensures that there is proper infrastructure for the community and proper green belt facilities etc, etc.

Certainly - and I think the point that has been made very well by Councillor Blake - green belt, i.e. a nice, pleasant environment, does not just go for the outer area. There has to be some green lungs within the inner city areas too. I think that is important.

Fourthly, my final point is that when we come to look at affordable housing, it is extremely important that it has to go through the due planning process and again I make the point that developers should not think they can come and simply put on minimalist houses, cheap housing which is not properly integrated into the communities and does not give benefit within those communities.

I hope with those few comments we all welcome the direction of travel on this White Paper and I hope proper heed is taken elsewhere. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR LEADLEY: My Lord Mayor, we seem to debate housing targets at almost every meeting of Council. All those debates come to one conclusion which is that national policy and Yorkshire and Humberside Regional Spatial Strategy are well out of step with reality and were before the recent economic collapse.

One of the problems which Planning Inspectors have is that they must be seen to show regard for adopting planning policy at face value no matter how unrealistic or even ludicrous it may seem. Even when dismissing an appeal on grounds that the site is greenfield or not well served by public transport, as happened with the protected area of land at Oulton, an inspector must show that the dismissal has been made in the context of RSS targets as they stand, even if hardly anyone still believes in them.

It is a fact that RSS, which has superseded the Leeds UDP housing targets, calls for an average of 4,740 new dwellings a year in Leeds until 2026, mostly to add to stock with a few to replace demolitions. When some of us met those responsible for RSS in this Chamber a few months ago, they showed no sign of retreating from existing targets. It looked merely as if the construction industry would be expected to build faster and faster as 2026 approached to balance current shortfalls. There were even hints that targets might be increased, perhaps influenced by theories that up to a quarter of East Europeans would be living in England by the year 2050.

What is needed is housing targets which are ambitious and realistic, neither projecting ever upwards from the hysteria at the peak of a boom nor reflecting the gloom at the bottom of a slump. A middle path must be chosen. Changing Leeds's RSS targets is essential and urgent so that sensible figures can be built into the Local Development Framework which we should be completing within the next couple of years. Meanwhile we must persevere with measures aimed at keeping the construction industry moving, such as building new Council houses, persevering with the PFI schemes, encouraging housing associations to build and campaigning for reduced VAT on building refurbishment. We could also press the Housing Corporation to remove its apparent refusal to fund modernisation of back-to-back houses. At one time they were all supposed to be gone by 2010 but I am sure that many of them will outlast practically everyone within this Chamber, possibly even the youngest people here.

Both the original motion and the amendment have their political slants. Either or both could have been supported at a pinch but an agreed compromise is better. Thank you, my Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR PARNHAM: Thank you, Lord Mayor, and thank you, Councillor Carter for the motion. Let me just say - I will keep this brief again - I wrote something in big capital letters and underlined it - this city's greenbelt is not up for grabs. I think that is what the bottom line is for us and the Green Group.

First of all, I just want to make a couple of points. First of all, I am a member at present of the Development Plans Panel and it is a body that looks at development within the city and housing in particular and we are aware of the pressures both from central Government targets and also, as you may be aware, one of the members here has got a personal interest in the building trade so we are aware of the pressures that builders and developers and associated trades face during this recession.

I think the Green Party and the Green Group here are committed to providing environmentally sustainable and integrated communities. We are certainly very much in favour of re-using existing housing sites and developing brownfield sites and in particular something that is of interest to me is the EASEL project which Councillor Carter mentioned and I am sure we are all aware of. It is something that we can all look to in Leeds as a model for development in other parts of the city.

So, that is it. Let us hope we can send a united cross-party message to Central Government, again this city's green belt is not up for grabs. Thank you, we support the motion. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR LOBLEY: Thank you, my Lord Mayor. I think we are all agreed this afternoon has really been a little bit dull, has it not, with us all getting on with each other. Tragically, I know it will upset Councillor Wakefield because I know he enjoys my speeches when I get myself worked up but this afternoon I am not going to. I am very calm indeed. I have just given up, really.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: You are getting old, that's your trouble.

COUNCILLOR LOBLEY: The point that really I wanted to get across today is this annual target for houses at 4,300, this arbitrary figure equates if you split it into - using some rudimentary mathematics - 130 houses per ward per year. Just thinking about my ward at Roundhay and looking at the space that is available there, you would struggle to get one year's worth of that housing allocation over the next 20 years, never mind that amount every year.

Ultimately what it comes down to is a matter of space and that means either gardens or green belt. I know along with a lot of my other colleagues on the Council none of us are very keen on building in back gardens but we are also not keen on building on the green belt. These figures really are arbitrary that the Government have come up with and I think we will see particularly with changes in the economy there will definitely be some other factors to take into account. I do not think we will have as many people coming to this country seeking work and therefore seeking housing and so we will also see as well a fall in demand when we have been out and about doing campaigning. We have seen that there have been an awful lot of houses up for sale and up for let which are empty which is unusual, so I have a feeling there will be a lot more properties on the market and when they become more affordable, then I think this demand for three million houses will be proved to be nonsense.

Ultimately, I think everybody is expecting a change of Government around his time next year.

COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: Not everybody.

COUNCILLOR LOBLEY: We certainly are on these benches.

COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: Liberal Democrats? Don't be silly!

COUNCILLOR LOBLEY: Ultimately any target stretching out to 2026 I am sure will largely be an irrelevance shortly after this time next year.

If I am going to summarise and keep it all from being too controversial, I just want to finish by plagiarising a line of the great John Prescott by saying that the protection of the green belt in Leeds is one of our proudest achievements and we do not intend to build on it. Thank you. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: Lord Mayor, again I am standing up. I think all parties have to protect the green belt. When I was Chair of Planning - it seems a long time ago now - we always had a policy of protecting our green belt. A lot of you here will remember a former Leader called John Trickett, and John Trickett used to say that Leeds was the greenest city in the country, and he said it so often people started believing it.

I once went on one of these jollies and I was in Austria and I talked to this guy - I cannot remember his name - and he was from Vienna and he was called Dr Something and he was a planning expert. He said to me, "You claim that Leeds is the greenest city" and I am saying, "That is just a ploy, we claim that we are a 24 hour city and everybody believed us" and he said, "No, Leeds is not the greenest city, that is Vienna. Vienna is definitely the greenest city" and then he said, "But I think Leeds may be she is the second greenest city." I said, "Hang on a bit, you are saying Vienna is the greenest and we are the second?" He said, "Yes." I said, "That will do for me, I will go along with that, pal."

We have always protected the green belt, we have always had a policy where it should be brownfield first when it is suitable. Andrew, in my ward we lost a school called Benjamin Gott and planners saw it as a brownfield site and wanted to build simply more houses on it and Alison - she is not here - and myself and Janet fought tooth and nail. We did not want more houses, we want something that was going to enhance the community and on that site now stands the Lazer Centre. I have heard the lead member from - was it you, Matthew Lobley? - somebody said what a wonderful - yes, I have seen you there - what a wonderful facility it was, but actually there should have been houses on there. Our policy in planning, some are very suitable for housing - riverside, canal side, the Armley Valley - forget about Kirkstall Valley that you hear John talking about all the time, ours is still green on our side. The Kirkstall Valley side has got houses, back-to-backs called Ardle Avenue and what have you. On ours we have got Gotts Park and we have got green and there is a green valley. We fought for it. We have done that before.

You know, I remember Andrew, the invasion of the green belt, come to us and I will not mention any particular development but there was loads of development and Andrew as a local Councillor was not having it and we backed him up. There was nothing political about it. We went forward, we said, "This is not acceptable." You live in a ward, you have a view for your ward and you fight for that ward.

I was going to say something nice about Stuart but he sidetracked me a little bit. I was going to say it is a proper example of him and Don - is Don there? No, he has gone out, Don Wilson. Don Wilson and him went along to the enquiry and they made all the right arguments and they were backed up by our planning policy. Judith is right, Andrew, we do have to make sure that they are robust and we have to strengthen them because landlords will always try it on. This was a trying on. It is

not new to us, it happens all the time but as long as we go ahead with this policy and we fight for not just the green belt - the green belt is hugely important - but the little areas, the little recreation where kids kick footballs in Armley, in Wortley, in Seacroft and I dare say areas of Pudsey where there is not a lot of green space near the town. These are the things as Councillors we have to stand up and sometimes, sometimes, we actually have to stand up to our own officers and say, "Yes, I know we agreed this policy, yes I know it is for development but we cannot afford to lose this and we are not prepared to lose it." We must do this as Councillors and we will continue to do it.

With that, I think we can all agree on this one. We know the target, as Councillor Leadley said, is crazy in this economic climate and I do tend to lean towards you that it was probably crazy before we had the credit crunch as well, but as long as we are all on the same side we can go on together and I think that we should all support this and sing on the same hymn sheet. If we are going to get three motions and we all agree, I do not know what I am going to do, actually. I think I am going to have to - go to Planning, that is a good idea! Again, Lord Mayor, it has been a wonderful year, I echo the sentiments, you have been excellent and fair in the Chair. Thank you very much. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, we will ask Councillor Carter to sum up.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Thank you, my Lord Mayor. Just to get rid of any doubt in anybody's minds, green belt, greenfield, playing field, green space, green lung - call it what you want they are all green and none of them - none of them - are up for grabs. I hope that message goes back loud and clear to anybody who wants to listen.

Can I just pick up the point on the statistics because the Planning Officers are absolutely in no doubt at all about this Local Authority's policy - in no doubt at all. The problem they have and the problem we have are these, as Tom Leadley rightly referred to, the RSS numbers.

If the RSS was scrapped and if they reverted to the old RSS for a period of time, our statistics in terms of availability of housing land would stack up sufficiently to enable us to be much more confident of winning at appeal after appeal after appeal.

The problem is - and this White Paper refer to is - that the inspectorate refer to the RSS figures as though they are deliverable and as though they are written in tablets of stone. We cannot get away from that. The number one objective has got to be to persuade the Government to scrap the RSS figures and do it - they do not need an Act of Parliament, they can just do it. The Minister could do it tomorrow if she could get it past her Cabinet colleagues, I have to say in particular past the Prime Minister. It would be hugely helpful because it would take away all that pressure that is on our planners, on our elected Councillors. They are living in a very dangerous world that is not in tune with reality because the figures are not going to be delivered but by leaving the figures there they put green spaces wherever they are - inner, outer, middle - under more threat and that target is our prime objective, to get it scrapped.

I think you have been a bit unkind to Stuart because he very rightly mentioned eco-towns. The eco-town concept was flawed from the start and actually it was nine Council Leaders, again representing all three major parties on the City Region, saying to the Government, "We ain't having it. Forget it. We are not having it in Leeds." I tell you, I will not be using a rude word but the then Housing Minister referred to us collectively as a set of somethings, casting doubt on our parentage, so

I am reliably informed by somebody who should know. We are still there and she has gone.

The new Housing Minister, Tony Wright, answering to Margaret Beckett, the Secretary of State, he has had an extremely productive discussion with those same Council Leaders about a growth points developed on brownfield sites to eco standards, so we have gone from a eco settlement of thousands of houses on green belt, it could be anywhere all round Leeds - and Garforth was an area that was mentioned at one stage and certainly we know about Oulton - we have gone from that ridiculous concept to something which is deliverable on brownfield land and through this new arrangement we hope we have got we can actually deliver. I think Stuart was absolutely right to mention that.

In conclusion, we want to make sure that we protect all our green spaces wherever they are. We want to enhance them and if possible it would be nice to think we could gain some extra ones around the place, particularly in the areas that Jim has mentioned and other areas we can all think of around the city. I have to remind you how this Council, both Councillor Brett and myself, spoke out extremely forcibly and strongly about the need to prevent development on the playing field at Leeds Girls' High School and we made - I know members of the Planning Committee cannot say a word but Councillor Brett and I thought as we are not members of the Planning Committee we can make very plain our objections to that sort of green space being lost in the inner city. You can replicate that all around.

I think by sending a clear message from all of us to Government, keep the pressure on, a general election is coming and I am not going to get into predictions, but what I can tell you is it is a very useful opportunity for local politicians like us because or once our national parties - and I make no distinction between any of them in this - need us more than we need them and that is a position we should never lose sight of because as we move towards the general election all sorts of things they would love to do which we do not want them to do, whether they are yours, yours or mine, they could be talked out of and we can talk them out of it and that is why we need to speak with one voice on things like this. I move the resolution, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. We come to the vote for the motion as amended, or altered, rather. *(A vote was taken)* Those in favour of the motion under Councillor Carter's name please show. Thank you, indeed. Anyone against? No abstentions? That is immensely CARRIED, indeed. Congratulations to the Council.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: That is the hat trick, there you go.

ITEM 13 - WHITE PAPER MOTION - LEEDS KIRKGATE MARKET

THE LORD MAYOR: The clock up there says seven o'clock. We will vote now on - I call on Councillor Wakefield.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: I never think you can be too unkind to Stuart but on this basis I think, due to the time and importance of the issue of the market, I would like to ask permission - and I will read the appropriate quote - for Council to support this. Under provision of Council Procedure Rule 14.11 and the consent of the seconder, I seek leave of Council to withdraw the White Paper and I do that, not because I do not think the market is important. It is extremely important and I think we need a much longer debate than the remaining five or ten minutes. With that, I ask Council.

THE LORD MAYOR: You wish to withdraw? Does Council give leave for the White Paper to be withdrawn? *(A vote was taken)* Yes, that was CARRIED. Thank you.

ITEM 14 - WHITE PAPER MOTION -
THE CURRENT ECONOMIC RECESSION

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Lobley.

COUNCILLOR LOBLEY: Lord Mayor, I too, under rule 14.11 seek to withdraw the motion for much the same reasons as Keith, in order to hopefully debate it in full at a later time.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: I accept, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: You agree. Does Council agree? *(A vote was taken)* Anyone against that? No. CARRIED.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: That is five.

ITEM 15 - WHITE PAPER MOTION - ARMED FORCES DAY

THE LORD MAYOR: Item 15, Councillor Lancaster.

COUNCILLOR LANCASTER: I move the White Paper.

COUNCILLOR ATHA: I second on your behalf.

COUNCILLOR GRAYSHON: Yes, Lord Mayor, I did have some notes written down but to expedite matters, it is a great privilege to be able to...

THE LORD MAYOR: It is not for debate, I am sorry.

COUNCILLOR GRAYSHON: If I may continue.

THE LORD MAYOR: You are formally seconding?

COUNCILLOR GRAYSHON: Yes, that is the bit I have to say.

THE LORD MAYOR: I did not want you to start developing. Council gives permission? *(A vote was taken)* All those in favour then? Marvellous again. Anybody against? CARRIED.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: That is six!

THE LORD MAYOR: I cannot find anything else, so thank you for your attendance indeed and I also congratulate you on a very civilised meeting. Thank you.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Standing ovation)*

(The meeting closed at 7.05 pm)