

**LEEDS CITY COUNCIL**

**MEETING OF THE COUNCIL**

Held on

Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> September 2009

At

THE COUNCIL CHAMBER,  
CIVIC HALL, LEEDS

In the Chair:

THE LORD MAYOR  
(Councillor J Elliott)

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**VERBATIM REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS**

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VERBATIM REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS OF LEEDS CITY COUNCIL MEETING  
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 16<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 2009

THE LORD MAYOR: Good afternoon, everyone. Can I ask that all mobile phones and other electrical equipment in this Council Chamber be switched off when the Council is in session?

I do have some announcements today. On a sad note, I have to announce that on 9<sup>th</sup> August 2009 Honorary Alderman Mrs Christiana Myers, who was Lord Mayor in 1994 and 1995, passed away. The Deputy Lord Mayor, Councillor Andrew Barker, attended her funeral on 18<sup>th</sup> August 2009. I would like the Chamber to stand in silent tribute, please.

*(Silent tribute)*

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- THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Also, on another sad note, I would like to inform you of the death of Baroness Nicky Chapman on 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2009. She was created a life peer in 2004 and had been involved in many community projects in Leeds. During her short time in the House of Lords she sponsored moves to protect the disabled and enhance their rights.

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- Now, on a lighter note, yesterday, with Councillor Frank Robinson, I attended the Yorkshire in Bloom awards at Bridlington and I am delighted to announce that Leeds won the Gold Award and best in its category. *(Applause)*

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- I think with Councillor Robinson we did cheer because it was just wonderful and, other than that, there were many other notable achievements by our various In Bloom groups which are supported by many of our Ward Councillors, which gained between them four golds, six silver gilds, nine silvers and one bronze, plus three Yorkshire Rose special awards. Awards for smaller entries, such as hotels, resulted in five golds, one silver gilt and one bronze. It was, indeed, an outstanding day for Leeds and congratulations to all concerned. *(Applause)*

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- ITEM 1 – MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 15<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2009

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- THE LORD MAYOR: Item number 1 on the agenda, Minutes of the meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> July. Councillor Proctor.

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

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- COUNCILLOR GRUEN: I second, Lord Mayor.

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- THE LORD MAYOR: I call for the vote. *(A vote was taken)* This is CARRIED.

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- ITEM 2 – DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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- THE LORD MAYOR: Item number 2 on the agenda, Declarations of Interest. To announce the list of the written declarations submitted by members is on display in the ante-room, on deposit in public galleries and has been circulated to each member's place in the Chamber.

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• Have we any further individual declarations or corrections to those notified on the list?

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• COUNCILLOR HOLLINGSWORTH: I am sorry, Lord Mayor, yes. I should have declared this. On Item 10, on the Minutes, Exec Board Minute 41, as a member of the Aire Valley Regeneration Board.

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• COUNCILLOR LANCASTER: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Apologise, it should have been recorded I am Chair of the Leeds Tapestry. It is relevant to the White Paper Motion.

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• THE LORD MAYOR: Right. Any more? That is it, right. I would invite members by a show of their hands to confirm that they have read the list, or the list as amended, and agree its contents insofar as they relate to their own interests. (*Show of hands*) Thank you.

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### • ITEM 3 – COMMUNICATIONS

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• THE LORD MAYOR: Item 3, Communications. Chief Executive.

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• THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE: No pertinent communications, Lord Mayor.

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• THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you.

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### • ITEM 4 – DEPUTATIONS

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• THE LORD MAYOR: We now come on to number 4 on the agenda, Deputations.

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• THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE: There are just two deputations this afternoon, Lord Mayor: the first seeks the Council's support for the Time to Change Campaign; the second wishes to make representations on the proposed closure of day centres.

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• THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Councillor Procter.

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• COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I move that all deputations be received.

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• COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Second, Lord Mayor.

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• THE LORD MAYOR: Could we have a vote, please? (*A vote was taken*) This is PASSED.

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• We now would like the first deputation, please.

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### DEPUTATION ONE TIME TO CHANGE CAMPAIGN

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• THE LORD MAYOR: Good afternoon and welcome to today's Council meeting. Please now make your speech to Council, which should not be longer than five minutes, and please begin by introducing the people in your Deputation.

- - MS C WARD: My name is Catherine Ward and I am here representing NHS Leeds on the Time to Change Campaign across Leeds. This is Ruth Steinberg – she is the manager of Information for Mental Health - and Victoria Betton, from Leeds Partnership Foundation Trust.

- - Good afternoon, everybody. I am just going to speak for five minutes about why we are here. We have come to talk about the national Time to Change Campaign and how it affects Leeds and what we are doing in Leeds, really, and we would just really like your support so that you are aware about what is going on and you can engage with your local communities to reduce stigma and discrimination for people with mental health problems and issues. Thank you.

- - Time to Change is a ground breaking programme with national and local activity and it is run over three years. It is funded by the Big Lottery and Comic Relief and it is hoping to reduce stigma and discrimination into mental health and improve physical and mental wellbeing of those with and without mental health problems.

- - I have sent you a paper with lots of information. I am going to whiz through this, it is a bit of a whistle-stop tour, and talk specifically about what we are doing in Leeds.

- - It is England's most ambitious programme to end discrimination faced by people with mental health problems and improve the nation's wellbeing. It is on all of our agendas nationally from local area agreements and it has helped to reduce health inequalities. 44% of people with mental health problems report discrimination from GPs alone and I would just really like to quickly look at this figure on page 4. If you just look at the bottom three people even within our own communities – this is from a survey from Carers and Users about how they feel. People approach them with their mental health problems and are saying that neighbours, employers and immediate families are the ones most at risk from receiving stigma and discrimination by those people.

- - These are the people within your communities, these are the people that you can reach out to and help spread the message of Time to Change and we are hoping that some of you today will be able to be our champions and promote what we are doing across Leeds.

- - There has been lots of advertising nationally. I do not know if you have seen some of the work by Stephen Fry and Alistair Campbell. In Leeds we launched our campaign on June 25<sup>th</sup> at Briggate, had a great big boulder which is looking at reducing stigma and discrimination, so someone smashing the boulder. Lots of local people came and shared their stories with us about their experiences. We had lots of people coming and talking about post-natal depression and bipolar and how that has affected their family and how they have been treated on their local estates.

- - A lot of people get a lot of discrimination through work and by their communities and by their peers, so what we are trying to do in Leeds, we have got a partnership that consists of Information for Mental Health, Volition, Touchstone, Leeds Mind, St Anne's, NHS Leeds, Leeds City Council, LPFT – that is Leeds Partnership Foundation Trust (I am trying not to be too acronymic) – Yorkshire Forward and our health trainers.

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- We are focusing on delivering the campaign through the workplace because we thought that that is where we would be able to reach most of the message to the local community and we have currently got Leeds City Council on board, Hallmark, and Yorkshire Forward supporting the work that we are doing.

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- What are we doing? We provided 24 places on mental health first aid training to offer human resource leads training in return for the delivering the campaign within their company. We have trained people to recognise early signs and symptoms of mental health problems and we link really carefully and closely with community links. We have commissioned art works from some mental health service users and we have produced our own campaign in Leeds which we think is a lot more user friendly and a lot less corporate, and we have got some postcards – if anybody would like some – to promote them and have them at some of their meetings, and we would be more than happy to give those to you.

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- We have encouraged people to be able to talk about the experience of stigma and we are producing promotional materials to challenge discrimination. We are displaying some of our art work at Leeds Light Night and also I do not know if any of you are aware of the Core Cities Event, we are taking this art work down to Birmingham so the six major cities are going to be looking at some of our art work and finding out what we are doing in Leeds.

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- We are evaluating the campaign before and after the first year. We have just bid for a massive Time to Change Roadshow which is going to be happening on 8 October. We had to bid across England for this campaign and we have actually been successful, which is a great achievement for the partnership work, so if you can come down or tell people in your community that we are there. We have got a 1 in 4 Theatre Company performance at the AGM for Leeds Partnership Foundation Trust on the 29<sup>th</sup> and again it is another chance to talk about stigma and discrimination. We are working really, really closely with businesses, so if you can come and support us that would be really, really great. Thank you.

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- THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you very much, the time is now to thank you very much for this. *(Applause)* Councillor Procter.

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

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- COUNCILLOR GRUEN: I second, Lord Mayor.

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- THE LORD MAYOR: Could we have a vote, please? *(A vote was taken)* CARRIED.

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- MS C WARD: Thank you.

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- THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you for attending and for what you have said here today. You will be kept informed of the consideration which your comments will receive. Good afternoon and thank you. *(Applause)*

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DEPUTATION TWO  
ACCESS COMMITTEE FOR LEEDS

THE LORD MAYOR: Good afternoon and welcome to today's Council meeting. Please now make your speech to Council, which should not be longer than five minutes, and please begin by introducing the people in your Deputation.

MR T McSHARRY: Thank you Lord Mayor and elected Members. The members of our deputation are myself, Tim McSharry, David Littlewood, Mary Naylor MBE, Barry Naylor and Linda Watson.

On behalf of the many older and disabled people from communities across Leeds who truly enjoy and value the immense benefits of attending their local day centres, our deputation is here to make an impassioned plea to use, our elected Members, and to ask that you place a moratorium on the planned closure of the six day centres. We would also ask that you facilitate a comprehensive disability impact assessment and review this decision, not simply as it is the best way of meeting the legal duties that are owed by all public bodies, but as a positive way to demonstrate clear and decisive leadership on this critical issue and remove the stress and worry that has been caused to so many people by this decision.

As a registered charity who provide free support and advocacy, we have received many calls from people who are worried about the implications of these closures. It is also clear from the letters in the Yorkshire Evening Post and the many petitions that have been signed, that a great number of Leeds citizens and many City Councillors in this Chamber are concerned about these closures and what they reveal for the future of adult social care in Leeds.

The citizens of Leeds deserve better than this and, whilst there is no room for compromise or complacency, there is a very urgent need for leadership and honesty. High quality, comprehensive social care is central to the social cohesion of this city. The loss of day centres and the undermining of social care policy present a real threat to the social diversity of our communities and the rights, equality and dignity of some of our most vulnerable and disabled citizens.

The integrity, leadership and openness of this Council are not served when disingenuous or ill-informed decisions are made; neither are the citizens of Leeds. The evidence presented in making the case for the six closures seriously failed to give the whole truth. It failed to present evidence from the many people who have tried to access day centres but have encountered a disjointed process that seems more focused on prevention rather than informed and open choice. It failed to highlight the cruel impact the changes to criteria had in excluding many vulnerable older and disabled people. One example is the taking away of social isolation as a key category for access to day services.

It failed to include the effects associated with the removal of the self-referral process and the introduction of a time consuming and difficult process requiring access to a social worker or care manager. It failed also to listen to people who use and value day centres or to appreciate the hidden personal and financial benefits and savings that are found through social interaction, peer support, physical and mental wellbeing and respite for family carers.

As part of this deputation we all positively embrace and support change as part of developing and improving services. However, when it comes to decisions that are founded on budget cuts portrayed as increase in choice and potential signposting to third sector services that have no spare capacity, we are automatically concerned for those vulnerable citizens across Leeds who may simply be missed as a result of closures, falling through the net into social exclusion, deprivation and ill health.

Without honesty there is no integrity; without care there is no community; and without leadership too many of our vulnerable citizens could be missed and condemned to social exclusion, deprivation and ill health.

Please support this deputation and save the day centres. Thank you.  
(Applause) (standing ovation from Labour Group)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Procter.

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

- COUNCILLOR: So you should.

- COUNCILLOR GRUEN: We genuinely mean it – we second.

- THE LORD MAYOR: I would like to call for a vote, please. (A vote was taken) This is PASSED.

- Thank you for attending and for what you have had to say. You will be kept informed of the consideration which your comments will receive. Thank you and good afternoon. (Applause)

#### ITEM 5 – REPORT

(a)

THE LORD MAYOR: to continue now with Item number 5 on the agenda, I call on Councillor Brett.

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

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: I second, my Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Could I have a show of hands for this, please? I am calling for a vote. (A vote was taken) This is CARRIED.

- (b)

- THE LORD MAYOR: I am now on to item 5(b), Councillor Proctor.

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

- COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Second.

- THE LORD MAYOR: All those in favour? (A vote was taken) This is CARRIED.

- (c)

- THE LORD MAYOR: 5(c), Councillor Brett.

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

- COUNCILLOR A CARTER: I second, Lord Mayor.

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- THE LORD MAYOR: I call for a vote, show of hands for, please. (*A vote was taken*) This is CARRIED.
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#### ITEM 6 – QUESTIONS

THE LORD MAYOR: We now come to Questions. I call on Councillor Lewis.

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Can the Executive Board Member for Environmental Services please confirm the original estimate for the annual payment to Glendales this year for the Council and ALMOs' Grounds Maintenance Contract?

COUNCILLOR MONAGHAN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. The amount budgeted for this year for the Glendales' contract was £2,232,854.90. I think that is for highways and the ALMOs. I can break that down for you later if you like.

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Can the Executive Board Member also confirm that Glendales have only been penalised a meagre £1,500 for poor service which means that this administration feels that Glendales, despite the numerous complaints we receive, this administration feels that Glendales does a good job 99.999% of the time? Does he not agree that this administration is unable to secure value for money from its private contractors and the privatisation of the grass cutting in this city has been an abject failure?

COUNCILLOR MONAGHAN: I think it is an absolute nonsense to pretend that the grass cutting service was any better under your administration than it is now. (*Applause*) We are getting more grass cuts a year, we are getting less complaints every year (*interruption*) more areas are added to be cut each year.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Are you mad?

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Cuckoo land.

COUNCILLOR MONAGHAN: I think in terms of the specific point made to those areas missed, if areas are missed – and we do have a monitoring team that go round and inspect – if those areas are then rectified by Glendales, they will not be deducted, so those issues are picked up by us and any mistakes are rectified by Glendales. Those that are not are deducted and those are included, as you say, for over £1,000 deductions in this past year.

THE LORD MAYOR: We are on to the second question now, which is Councillor Hamilton.

COUNCILLOR M HAMILTON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Could the Leader of Council please update Members on the ongoing industrial action in Streetscene services?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Brett.

COUNCILLOR BRETT: Thank you, Lord Mayor. We have, I believe, roughly the same number of our staff working, so about 15% of the normal collection teams for refuse and rather more for other areas of the strike.

I want to explain to Council that this week the Council is buying in some private sector teams to give us the capacity...

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: For how much? How much?



COUNCILLOR BRETT: ...to clear the backlog of black bins. We hope that there will be, shortly, enough capacity to make sure that every house in Leeds does have its black bin emptied at least every two weeks.

I would like to spend a little time, if you will listen, to my explanation as to why this is not strike breaking. *(interruption)* I did not think they would want to listen.

COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: He thinks Maggie's back.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Union busting.

COUNCILLOR BRETT: In my clear understanding, if a member of our staff goes on strike it is illegal for us to buy in a contract agency worker to do that job on the time when that worker was on strike. It is, in my view – and it is certainly the officers' view in this Council – that it is a total nonsense to then go on and say that if the job is not done it cannot ever be done by anyone else. We are quite confident that buying in private sector teams is, firstly, what the people of Leeds would want us to do... *(interruption)*

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Rubbish. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR BRETT: ...to make sure, Lord Mayor, that we do not have health situations develop.

I want to explain a little bit about the background to this because it has been misrepresented and it is quite complete. In 1997---

COUNCILLOR ATHA: Point of order. This is an answer to a question.

COUNCILLOR: Sit down, Bernard.

COUNCILLOR ATHA: You are now in an abuse of question time by making a prepared speech which is not relevant to the question asked and therefore, in my view, it should be ruled out of order. He is abusing the Council.

THE LORD MAYOR: Could I ask, please, which Council Procedure Rule you are referring to?

COUNCILLOR ATHA: I will give you any number that you care. I simply want to make the point that an abuse of the process is an abuse.

COUNCILLOR BRETT: Can I continue, Lord Mayor?

THE LORD MAYOR: It is not an abuse point.

COUNCILLOR BRETT: Can I continue?

THE LORD MAYOR: Yes.

COUNCILLOR BRETT: Thank you, Lord Mayor. In 1997 the Single Status Agreement, which I would characterise with apologies to Barbara Castle, instead of 'In Place of Strife' I think it ought to be titled 'In Place of Strikes' because that Single Status Agreement and the Equal Pay evaluations that have followed from that are at the root of this disagreement.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: I do not understand it.

COUNCILLOR BRETT: It is my belief that in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century it is far better for us to try and work out what someone in the public sector should be paid based on the skills of the job that they are doing and the working conditions – I stress the

working conditions – taken fully into account as well, and that that, leading to equal pay between men and women for similar jobs, is what this Council has supported throughout in this process.

COUNCILLOR: Rubbish

COUNCILLOR BRETT: We support equal pay for men and women. If Labour simply wants to pay these strikers, it will either drive a coach and horses through Equal Pay or will cost the Council a fortune.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: This is not acceptable.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Hamilton, do you have a supplementary?

COUNCILLOR M HAMILTON: I do indeed. Would the Leader of Council care to tell the Council if there is any evidence during this dispute of what we might call dirty tactics? (*interruption*)

COUNCILLOR ATHA: Only your own. Be honest about this.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Yours.

COUNCILLOR BRETT: I have not opened my mouth yet but they do not want to listen, do they?

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: It is a set up.

COUNCILLOR BRETT: It is clear that a minority – and I do accept that most of those who are on strike are not people who would get involved in this, but we have had reports, quite serious ones, two of them, of workers' tyres slashed, of windows broken in houses, bicycles stolen, verbal intimidation. If the Unions want to say that there is not evidence for that, let me say that I personally have evidence, because at twenty-past five on Monday an aggressive message was left on my answer phone by an anonymous caller.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: How do you know it was them?

COUNCILLOR: Have you never had one of those before?

COUNCILLOR ATHA: I will come and hold your hand.

COUNCILLOR BRETT: If you will hear me out, I am quite prepared to explain my take on this. I found the tone menacing and my wife was certainly concerned. Then today, just before noon, 14 sacks of rubbish were dumped outside the front door of my house (*interruption*) – it is interesting, is it not, that some members find that funny – when the police were inside talking to my wife. When my wife opened the front door to let the police out, these 14 bags were piled on the front door. Those bags had tags attached to them saying, "Solidarity with striking Leeds refuse collectors."

I am not, if you will listen, Jim, I am not saying that any of these were done by strikers or Union members. I simply do not know. What I do know is that for the incident today there is evidence and that the police are investigating it and that I can tell you the police are taking this very seriously.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Oh dear.

COUNCILLOR BRETT: I would hope this afternoon that Councillor Wakefield would publicly disassociate both himself and his party from these disgraceful tactics

and I hope later on that he will be willing to do that. (*hear, hear*) Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: I call on Councillor Schofield.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: How pathetic.

COUNCILLOR SCHOFIELD: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Can the Executive Board Member for City Development & Regeneration provide details of the successful projects developed through the Town and District Centre Regeneration scheme?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Carter.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Yes, my Lord Mayor, thank you, Councillor Schofield. We have committed from the administration £11m over six years, ending in 2010/11 to the Town and District Centre Regeneration Scheme and we have seen successful schemes either completed or now under way in Armley, Chapeltown, Farsley, Garforth, Pudsey, Guiseley, Holton, Horsforth, Kippax, Rothwell, Morley Bottoms, Oakwood, Otley, Wetherby and Yeadon and, of course, we also have the scheme in Crossgates.

I remember five years ago we had Baroness Blake of Roundhay. We now have Baron Gruen of Crossgates. Indeed, I have watched unfold with interest the attempts of two of the less wise members of Crossgates – and I notice Councillor Armitage has kept a very discreet distance from the debate – attempting to blame members in other wards, people who live in their own ward, me, the Civic Architect, Uncle Tom Cobley and all, in fact, for a scheme that they promoted, they wanted and they have guided through the process. Indeed, the minutes state, Councillor Schofield, that Councillor Gruen volunteered to steer the proposal through the planning process. (*laughter*) That, Lord Mayor, is in black and white. There is the man, champion of the elderly, who wants to spend £143,000 of taxpayers' money on a pair of gates on a roundabout. There are his priorities. (*interruption*) It is Gruengate. It really is Gruengate. (*Applause*)

My Lord Mayor, no wonder one of his constituents emailed me this week and said he had a better idea for the roundabout – a dual pair of stocks in which Councillors Gruen and Armitage should be placed and the residents of Crossgates invited to do the necessary. (*laughter*)

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: I thought you were ill.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: The sight of you always revives me.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Schofield.

COUNCILLOR SCHOFIELD: Thank you, Lord Mayor. After the bad news, the good news. Is the Deputy Leader of Council aware that in Temple Newsam ward Councillor Hyde, Councillor Lyons and myself are living dangerously by promoting a Welcome to Holton sign?

COUNCILLOR LYONS: It was supposed to be outside my door.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: You have got £94,000 to pay for it.

COUNCILLOR SCHOFIELD: However, we are not raiding the public purse but the money has been raised by contribution from the private sector who will carry the costs.

COUNCILLOR: Well done. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: My Lord Mayor, that amply illustrates the good value of Conservative Councillors and the fact that even the (*inaudible*) could not persuade you, Councillor Lyons. It is not for you a problem. (*laughter*) (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Wakefield.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I will try and ask a relevant and serious question. Can the Leader of the Council confirm that there is an ongoing court case at London's High Court regarding the validity of the Authority's delegated powers between 2004 and 2008?

COUNCILLOR BRETT: Yes, Lord Mayor, I can. The press reports that many of us have seen relate to a preliminary hearing. There has been no finding on the validity of the delegation scheme. The final hearing is set for 28<sup>th</sup> October in the High Court in London and the Council continues to vigorously defend the claim as we believe the scheme was valid and effective and anticipate that the Judgment will vindicate that view.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: That was brief.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Given the importance of this to the Council over many years and given that it is under your portfolio, can you explain to elected members of this Council why many of us read it in the Evening Post as opposed to being briefed well before, given it was over twelve months since?

COUNCILLOR BRETT: I understand those concerns, Lord Mayor, but I do not think in a case which is *sub judice* it would be worth our while this afternoon me making more remarks on this case. I have been very careful in what I have already said and I will be more than happy, Keith, to discuss this with you or with other members after 28<sup>th</sup> October.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: No Leaders' briefing? Cop out.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Grayshon.

COUNCILLOR GRAYSHON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Can the Executive Board Member for Leisure please update Council on the progress made in regard to the building of the new Morley Leisure Centre?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Procter.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Yes thank you, Lord Mayor. I am delighted to be able to report that the new Morley Leisure Centre is progressing as per schedule. The contractor is still working to the original timetable with an opening of the new facility due in June 2010. The main structure of the building is now up with the internal works progressing well and a landscaping scheme is being implemented later on in the year.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: Make sure the Pudsey one is.

THE LORD MAYOR: Do you have a supplementary, Councillor Grayshon?

COUNCILLOR GRAYSHON: No, Lord Mayor, but I wonder if you would allow me to pass an observation this afternoon.

THE LORD MAYOR: No, I am sorry.

COUNCILLOR GRAYSHON: Could I just raise something...

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Sit down.

THE LORD MAYOR: No, you cannot. It cannot be done, I am sorry.  
Question six, Councillor Gruen.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Does the Executive Board Member for City Development agree with me how important it is that members of Plans Panels are allowed to undertake their role without interference in an impartial and objective manner?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Carter.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Thank you, my Lord Mayor. I do indeed and have no problem in answering that in a very simple and straightforward way. I would add a couple of other comments, however.

Many of us in this Chamber remember the days when one political group in particular – it was the last political group to stop this practice – had a group meeting before a planning meeting which, in my view, even at that time left the Council open to serious challenge of political decisions being made on planning applications before the members actually together heard the application presented. I have no need to tell you which was the final group to cease that practice – indeed there was a debate in this Chamber and questions in this Chamber to establish that it had been done.

Absolutely members should judge planning applications wholly impartially and I think members who are Board members know that if they pass any comment one way or another in connection with a live planning application and they are planning members, then they can no longer then take part in the Planning Committee meeting.

I would just raise one other issue and that is the issue of site visits. I know that senior officers are becoming, shall we say, a little taxed by the fact that some members rarely if ever attend site visits prior to planning applications being discussed. I do not think there is a particular hard and fast ruling on this, but I as Exec Board Member with responsibility for Planning, although I do not serve on the Plans Panel myself...

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Not relevant.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: ...for obvious reasons, would make this comment. I think in a very litigious world in which we now live members should very carefully weigh up whether, if they fail to attend the site visit on a particularly contentious planning issue, they should then actually take part in the discussions that follow at the meeting. It is, I think, a matter for personal Councillor choice and it goes to the heart of what Councillor Gruen's question ought to be about and that is that members are seen to be impartial, they are seen to take into account the pros and cons of any planning application in a fair and open manner and that they do exercise their judgment without having taken any notice of pressure from any other quarter.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Can I thank the Member for his lengthy reply and ask him if he is aware of the letter written to the Yorkshire Evening Post by his colleague, Councillor Shelbrooke, regarding the open cast mining application where he insinuates that the Conservative Members on the Panel were aware of his feelings, were canvassed by him and does he condemn any Members being mandated by other colleagues on how to vote?

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: My Lord Mayor, I think it highly unlikely that Councillor Shelbrooke or any other member of Council would do anything that sought to try and mandate any other Member of the Council. Indeed, if Councillor Gruen believes that to be the case, he ought to be taking steps elsewhere and I am sure they will be dealt with in the appropriate manner.

If I could return to the need for Members to attend site visits, we have a number of serious, very large applications under discussion at the moment and when I look at the Panel on which Councillor Gruen sits, for example, I find that on 4 June, 2 July and 30 July there were set twelve visits to planning applications. On none of those was Councillor Gruen present.

THE LORD MAYOR: I now call on Councillor Downes, Question seven.

COUNCILLOR DOWNES: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Could the Executive Member for Children's Services tell the outcome of the latest inspection of the fostering service?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Golton.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Yes, following inspection in July the fostering services has moved out of its previous "inadequate" rating and is now rated as "adequate" overall by Ofsted. Encouragingly, this also includes being rated as "good" in several areas, including Be Healthy, Enjoy and Achieve, Economic Wellbeing and Making a Positive Contribution.

The inspection also highlighted positive comments such as the significant progress made to improving service delivery, capacity within the senior management team to bring about change was having an impact, and how the overall strategy for consultation and participation maximises young people's, carers' and parents' involvement in their care.

Of course, we want to be better than "adequate" and the report highlights further areas where we know we can improve. We must take action to do this and move to a rating of "good" or better in future and ultimately, in doing so, further improve the support provided to children and young people in foster care and their carers.

Nevertheless, staff have worked very hard to respond to the last inspection and this work has made an impact. This shows us that where clear action is in place and it is focused in the right areas, you can make improvements quickly and use the new Ofsted inspection regime positively to raise standards across the facilities that we provide.

THE LORD MAYOR: No more questions? Right, we are on to Question eight, Councillor Andrew.

COUNCILLOR ANDREW: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Would the Executive Member for Adult Social Care please comment on the Social Care Green Paper, "Shaping the Future of Care Together"?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Harrand.

COUNCILLOR HARRAND: Thank you, Lord Mayor. All the wrong people are interested in this subject. When it says "care", care and the future of the elderly and people like that, the wrong people get concerned. It is always the youngest member of Council.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: That's me! *(laughter)*

COUNCILLOR HARRAND: I will not take that any further, but are you the youngest? You have the biggest problem of anybody, you. People under 50 – and that is not going to be an enormous number---

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: They paid up for years.

COUNCILLOR HARRAND: Listen carefully. People under 40, take note; people under 30, panic. You have an enormous problem.

When the first mental health service was introduced and the Future of Care was published and it was discussed nationally 60 years ago, male life expectancy was 66. It is now 78. There are now more over 65s than under 18s. More significantly – and this is where you get worried – there were eight working adults for every pensioner in the 1940s; there are four now. By the time you retire there will be two of you! *(laughter)*

This Green Paper sets out the challenge that we have discussed many times in the past. The existing system of care is unsustainable, given the rapidly ageing population, and the Government says we have got to act and, of course, that is not too soon. We cannot sit around and do nothing and ignore the needs of this and future generations of older people.

The Green Paper sets out a number of options of reform and radical suggestions, especially around the future of social care. These proposals have huge implications for Leeds. To help Members understand we have a Members Seminar on the 12<sup>th</sup> – under 40s get your diaries out, please put that in your diary now, everybody, please – and to help the people of Leeds generally, not just ourselves, the existing and future service users, carers and care providers, we are having three seminars on 24<sup>th</sup> September, 28<sup>th</sup> September, 1<sup>st</sup> October. This is the most important debate on social care we have had for 60 years and we want as many people as possible and as young people as possible to support. Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Do you have a supplementary question? Thank you for that. We are on to Question nine now and it is Councillor Lowe.

COUNCILLOR LOWE: Thank you. Does the Leader of Council agree with me how important it is that the Council is open and transparent with the public?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Brett.

COUNCILLOR BRETT: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Yes, the Council is fully committed to being open, honest, transparent with the public. *(interruption)* It forms a key part of our values and our aspiration and culture. We believe that communication is everyone's responsibility and we are fully committed to meaningful consultation, engagement and involvement both internally, within the Council, and externally. We are working hard across all services to ensure that this culture is effectively embedded.

THE LORD MAYOR: Do you have a supplementary, Councillor Lowe?

COUNCILLOR LOWE: Yes, thank you. Does Councillor Brett then join me in congratulating the Liberal Democrat Shadow Transport Secretary, Norman Baker, for his Freedom of Information request which discovered that this Council has paid out over £10m of taxpayers' money between 2004 and 2009 on pavement accidents and the compensation claims that followed? It is the highest in the country and I think that if we are going to be so transparent then we should be transparent with the citizens of Leeds and tell them that our failures to mend the holes in the pavements has caused this enormous drain on our Council's resources.

COUNCILLOR BRETT: I was aware at the time when this happened that there was some dispute about some of the figures and whether we were being compared in an open way.

What I can say absolutely, even though this Freedom of Information request I know caused some concern – and that might be putting it mildly in some quarters – it

is absolutely right that one of our MPs asked that question and if there are things that this Council is not doing well enough, it is right that we look at it and we try to improve.

I know on the business of compensation claims a lot of work has been done and the trend now in this Council, what we pay out, is very definitely downwards, but I am well prepared to accept that there may be more work that needs doing in that particular area.

THE LORD MAYOR: Question 10, Councillor Ann Blackburn.

COUNCILLOR A BLACKBURN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Can the Executive Member for Neighbourhoods and Housing inform me what incentives are currently in place to help Council tenants downsize?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Les Carter.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: The answer is "Yes", but I will answer a bit more. In January 2008 the Council approved a scheme to encourage Council tenants who are currently under-occupying their homes to downsize to more appropriate sized homes. Customers are offered £1,000 per bedroom and a budget of £300,000 has been given to this initiative. This scheme is another strand of the Council's commitment to affordable housing.

THE LORD MAYOR: Do you have a supplementary question, Councillor?

COUNCILLOR A BLACKBURN: Yes, Lord Mayor. Can I then be told how many three bedroom and four bedroom houses this incentive has released?

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Yes, come on then.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: Certainly. I should have answered that first time round to you. Today 115 family sized homes have been released – 70 are three bedroom houses, 20 are four bedroom houses and seven are five bedroom houses. Twenty-five are in West North-West, round your patch. They have a capital value, those properties, of at least £11.5m. It has been phenomenally successful. We have another 102 customers have been accepted and are waiting to find the properties to move to.

In a scheme which some people had a little bit of doubt about whether we were offering enough – and I cannot think who was doubting met but he has laid down, he has gone to sleep I should think – but it has worked out fantastically. To get those houses released means that we have got now 117 families into property and you think, the government has made an announcement recently for us to build 65 social houses. I am not criticising that in any way, shape or form but this is 117 that have been made available for families. Thank you for asking the question.  
(Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: I now call on Councillor Lyons for question number eleven.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: Thank you very much. Can the Executive Board Member for Environmental Services please inform me how much third-party waste is to be received at the Council's planned incinerator? That is how much rubbish you are taking from other towns and cities.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Monaghan.

COUNCILLOR MONAGHAN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. The Council is still evaluating a range of technologies for its residual waste treatment facility. All



members have been briefed on this, or will be briefed through the Area Committee process. The Council has set a limit on the importation of third party waste and will be accepting this at this facility of no more than one per cent.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Lyons?

COUNCILLOR LYONS: Thank you very much. Can Councillor Monaghan also inform the Council how many lorry journeys of this rubbish will equate every year and which communities in East Leeds etc will these lorries be coming through to take their rubbish to your incinerator? It is pretty straightforward. You are going to move this rubbish in and you equate it. I want to know how many lorry loads are coming into Leeds, where they are going and which route they are taking, or if you have thought about that.

COUNCILLOR MONAGHAN: I will reiterate that we are not taking more than one per cent.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: Are you going to get it all in one lorry?

COUNCILLOR MONAGHAN: I think Councillor Lyons is quite forgetting that back in 2001 and his administration, planning permission was granted for the Skelton Grange landfill site operated by BIFA that has absolutely no restrictions or conditions...

COUNCILLOR LYONS: He is not answering the question.

COUNCILLOR MONAGHAN: ...for accepting third party waste for commercial organisations or people outside this city. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR LYONS: Refusing to answer. You are frightened of answering the question.

THE LORD MAYOR: Please sit down. We now come to the end of question time and we are on to Item number 7 on the agenda.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: No answers.

THE LORD MAYOR: The rest of the questions will be answered in writing, I have been reminded about that, so the rest of the questions will be answered in writing.

#### ITEM 7 – RECOMMENDATIONS OF EXECUTIVE BOARD

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

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

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: I second, my Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Finnigan.

COUNCILLOR FINNIGAN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am really commenting very briefly at page 33 which relates to agenda item 7, really just to congratulate our Treasury team on the fine work that they actually do do. Clearly through their efforts, and they are country leaders on this particular matter, they have allowed through their astute approach and their hard work the savings that we need to make sure that the budget continues. They do a fine job and I think we all ought to put down our thanks for the work that they do. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Brett.

COUNCILLOR BRETT: Thank you, Councillor Finnigan, for pointing out that Leeds is top of the league as far as this is concerned. I would like to say that one of the things that particularly pleases me is the way in which the decisions within this area are taken at great speed. I think there may be a number of other areas in the Council where, if we can take a key decision in a couple of hours, we would be very much improving what we were doing and Maureen Taylor and the team that do this – it is a small team of about four staff – have saved huge sums of money. As you are aware, it is in the region of £40m that they have saved in the last three years and that, of course, is money that we can then spend on front line services. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, Councillor Brett. I would like now to call for the vote. *(A vote was taken)* This is CARRIED.

#### ITEM 8 – RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

THE LORD MAYOR: Item number 8, Recommendations of the General Purposes Committee. Councillor Andrew Carter.

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

COUNCILLOR BRETT: I second, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: I call for the vote. *(A vote was taken)* This is CARRIED.

#### ITEM 9 – RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

THE LORD MAYOR: Item number 9, Recommendations of the General Purposes Committee. Councillor Andrew Carter.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Thank you, my Lord Mayor. I move in terms of the Notice.

COUNCILLOR BRETT: I second, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: I call for a vote, please. *(A vote was taken)* This is CARRIED.

#### ITEM 10 - MINUTES

THE LORD MAYOR: Item number 10, Minutes. I call on Councillor Richard Brett.

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

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor John Proctor.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTOR: I second and reserve the right to speak, Lord Mayor. In so doing I would like to seek leave of Council to vary the order of business, Lord Mayor, to move as the next item for debate the reference back which is contained on page 10 in the name of Councillor Lewis.

THE LORD MAYOR: Do we have a seconder for this, please?

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Yes, seconded.

THE LORD MAYOR: All those in favour? *(A vote was taken)* This is CARRIED, so we will deal with that as the next item.

(v) Environmental Services

THE LORD MAYOR: We will go now to the Environmental Services, and I call on Councillor J Lewis.

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I move that the Executive Board reconsiders its decision in relation to the way forward on waste collection services contained in Minute 47 page 65 from the Executive Board Minutes on 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2009.

I do this on behalf of the Labour Group and I do this because I believe the Executive Board, as usual, got it wrong. I think a definition of insanity I have seen is doing the same thing and expecting a different result. Every time this administration has moved to privatise vital public services it has gone badly wrong. In Homecare we had a serious case where over 50 elderly and vulnerable people were left in their beds without any home care because the private contractors brought in by this administration failed to deliver. In grass cutting we have a situation where places in Leeds are left to grow wild – left to grow wild without any grass cut at all because of privatisation by this administration.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: Withdraw that.

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: How, then, with this appalling record, do they expect a private contractor to not only deliver the services we receive at the moment but also to achieve more recycling, more service innovation and provide the new, innovative services we all expect over the years ahead to reduce the amount of waste going to landfill?

I do not believe this can be achieved and I believe the Executive Board have got it wrong.

Councillor Monaghan knows I am right because he told the last Council meeting that the service was not a failing service. There could only be one reason why this administration wants to privatise waste collection and it is because they are hell bent on an agenda of cuts and privatisation across the board.

They say it in the paper – they want to make savings, they want to cut the amount of money spent on this. Let me suggest a couple more savings.

First of all, Councillor Brett and Councillor Monaghan reduce their salaries and expenses on this Council to £13,000. *(public gallery applause)* I would evaluate it – this is based on evaluation I have made of their jobs, I have looked at their working conditions. They do not spend every day out on the streets whatever the weather collecting bins; therefore they should earn less than what they believe bin men in our city earn and they should have their salaries cut straightaway to make these savings. *(Applause)*

This administration should go further and make deep cuts to its bin machine. When they are peddling the same old lies and people are still supporting the strikers, they are obviously getting something wrong there. They should cut the amount they are spending on consultants. Nearly half a million pounds in one year was spent on consultants in City Services. *(Applause)* £200,000 of that was spent on talking to other Councils about waste disposal. What does it say about this administration that

they need to bring in consultants to talk to other Councils? I think it shows that they cannot talk to anybody, I think we can see that.

They should also cut the amount of taxpayers' money spent on agency workers and start investing in a proper workforce in this city. *(Applause)* In a time when people are losing their jobs they should be investing in training and apprenticeships and jobs. They should not be pouring money into private recruitment consultants and private agency workers and gangmasters.

The Labour Group has not denied we need practical savings and they never listen to us but what are they proposing in savings? They are proposing a massive assault on low paid workers in this city. Not their savings – they waste money on spin, they waste money on consultants and they want to take money off some of the lowest paid, hardest working people in this city.

I believe that only people lacking any moral integrity can believe it is right to cut salaries by a third, to cut salaries by thousands of pounds and to push it through by riding a coach and horses through job the evaluation process. They are hiding behind a smokescreen, they are hiding behind it and they should stand up and say what they believe in and stop their weasel words.

Call on Council to send this report back to the Executive Board and ask the Executive Board to put these plans in the waste paper bin where they belong. This is rubbish and needs recycling and needs throwing away. We demand proper plans for a modern, funded Streetscene Services and we demand that low paid workers in this city are treated with respect. I move the reference back, Lord Mayor, and I call on this Council to act with some integrity. *(Applause)*

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

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Ann Blackburn.

COUNCILLOR A BLACKBURN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Where do we start with this one? I think we have got a lot to do on the recycling side of things and the best way to do it is with the workers that we have got. I know that our lads – and I do not know if there are any lasses out there – yes, our lads and lasses then, so I do not upset anybody.

COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: There are lots of them.

COUNCILLOR: We have four lady drivers.

COUNCILLOR A BLACKBURN: Right, they do a good job and I do not see why we should start looking at privatisation. We know that there can be problems where we have already had private contractors in and this is not the way to go.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: Shows what a change of leadership does.  
*(laughter)*

COUNCILLOR A BLACKBURN: I can just see that we are going to have loads of problems once you start getting private contractors in and certainly where our refuse people are concerned I can see as Councillors that our telephones just are not going to stop if we go there, so I do not want to go there.

Not only that, I say the lads and lasses know what they are doing, they have been doing it for ages and to me they should work with them because if we are willing to do that they will work with us, because we have got a lot to do – not just the black bins, the green bins, you name it what colour bins we are going to have in the future - and we need to work with them, not work against them on this.

I support this wholeheartedly. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR LOWE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Obviously I totally support the comments that have just been made by Councillor Blackburn as well as those from my own colleague.

Right at the beginning of this session we were told that the people of Leeds want their bins emptied and that is all. I do not believe that. I think the people of Leeds want a win/win solution for this city. They believe in fairness and justice as well as getting the services that they are paying for and I believe that the people of this city want us (a) to empty their bins; and (b), to come to some resolution with the hard working operatives, the bin men and women of this city. I think that what we are doing at the moment is not achieving that win/win scenario. I think that the operatives have been forced into a situation that nobody wanted and that was not necessary because the discussions have been going on since 2007. There are up and down the country Local Authorities which have reached consensus with the Unions about this issue. Why can't we reach consensus? Is it because we do not want to, because that is clearly what the workers are experiencing and that is what we are experiencing on this side of the Chamber. If you want to do it, you will do it if there is a will for a consensus to be reached.

I do not think it is reasonable to say to hard working men and women that it is all right to lose £6,000, not when you are earning a maximum of £18,000. I think that it is not humane to even enter into debate with people about losing such huge sums of money, not when we say we want to bring the benefits of a wealthy city to all our constituents, because our employees are also our constituents. (*hear, hear*)

I think that we need to go back to the drawing board and think about the moral compass that is currently operating, the value base that we are using and which we are clearly not bringing to the table. It really shocks and frightens me that we are talking to people in this negative way which does not take account of the very real threats posed to their families and their long term employment opportunities.

I think that it is not right that we do not look at other Local Authorities which have been in similar situations to learn what they did in order to reach a reasonable conclusion. I think that that is obviously something we should be doing. We are not doing it now and if we are doing it, then I have not seen that being done and you should tell us about it if that is the case.

I am really happy that equal pay is becoming a reality for many women in this Council. It is not a reality for all women but for many women on this Council it is becoming a reality and I am really proud and pleased about that, and thank you for doing the right thing in relation to those women. Let us do the right thing in relation to all our workers. Please think again about the situation that I think, with respect, you have created and I think you also need to sit down and create the solution which you are not doing. Thank you. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: Lord Mayor, I do wonder how a self-proclaimed caring Council gets itself into the position that we are now in where a section of its workforce faces either privatisation or a major wage cut, and a portion of the workforce that is not particularly well paid – is paid well below the average wage for Leeds and that particular part of our workforce is facing a catastrophic cut in wages. It is acting in the only way that you would expect people to act in those circumstances – by taking industrial action.

The scale of the cut that you are proposing for bin men is absolutely huge. It is of a magnitude that I struggle to get my head round. Even the mine owners back in the 1920s would have struggled to come to a position where they would argue that

the miners' wages should be cut by a third. They would have knocked off a ha'penny an hour or a penny an hour and they would have felt proud of themselves.

It is quite interesting, I think your template is actually a more recent mine negotiator, and that is Ian McGregor backed up by Margaret Thatcher, because that approach is absolutely bloody minded with a group of workers who are acting in the only way that they possibly can.

You are facing down a group of staff who are not worrying about a couple of years' wage freeze or the things that we often have in wage negotiations – some pay reductions at the margins or loss of conditions – but an all-out attack on their standard of living.

For some, everything they have worked for all their working lives is under threat. You have got staff who have done many, many years for you who are now looking and thinking "What kind of Council have I worked for?" because there is a responsibility that we have not just to the people who pay Council tax, not just to everybody who lives in this city but to the people who work for us. We cannot ignore that. We cannot treat them as if they are an inconvenience that can be just put on one side when things get difficult, and that is what we are doing at the moment.

Their homes, their pensions are all under threat. We all make these calculations throughout our lives, do we not, particularly as we get older we do it more and more often about where are we going to be when we are 60, how are we going to get by when we are in straitened circumstances? That is exactly where the bin men and women are now. They are thinking, "Bloody hell, I thought I could make some calculations and some decisions for the future." Everything is going out of the window with what you are proposing.

I have got some idea of what they are facing at the moment because Jim McKenna and myself 20-odd years ago we faced a pay cut, didn't we Jim ? It was more than that.

COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: Seventy eight.

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: When we worked for Yorkshire Rider, but it was nothing like the scale of the cuts that is now being proposed for the bin men and the management of Yorkshire Rider, I have to say, was a damn sight cannier than you have been because they got all their ducks lined up in a row. They dangled the carrots at the right points and what have you, whereas all that you do is you just go for the jugular all the time.

Of course, we were vindicated a few years later when the Directors, who were a wonderful group of men who had declared their loyalty and love of the workforce and how they would do everything for them, Bill Cotton, they all trousered a few million and walked off into the sunset. It was wonderful, wasn't it?

I look at our bin workers and you can see how, in their eyes, they look at the Council as it has developed over the past few years, they see senior officers getting better and better rewarded for their jobs. I am not saying that they do not deserve what they get but they contrast that and they contrast what they see Councillors and the Council Leader are getting, they contrast that with their own position. Where else would you get to – you would look at think well, here is one group on the one hand who is looked after, cosseted and what are they doing not us? They are throwing us into the outer darkness. As I say, who can blame them for their actions?

I actually think Council leaders should be well paid for political leadership, but that is what has been woefully lacking in this dispute. With hindsight people say it was inevitable. There is nothing inevitable about this strike. All it required was a leader to say at some point, how on earth, using commonsense, can we possibly say

that it is fair to treat our bin workers this way? Absolutely no way that you can reach that position but you step by step by step get yourself painted into a corner where you have reached the position that the only thing you can do is throw yourself out of the window to get round it.

You can. You have an opportunity to stop now, at any point, and start properly negotiating with the workforce. It is up to you. You have got to be big enough. Political leadership is about being big. It is not about kicking people who are down and that is what you are doing. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR DOWNES: Thank you, Lord Mayor. The reference back that we are debating is regarding the Way Forward Review of Waste Collection Services and the resolution of the Executive Board that the process of market testing waste collection services be commenced, which is not directly related to the issue that many members have been talking about, or it should be.

In Leeds we are currently recycling over 30% of our waste with aspirations to get to 50%. That comes at a price and you have to find money to be able to collect the additional things that we wish to recycle. I recall just before I was elected back in 2004 there was a dispute with the bin men then over change of working arrangements, change of shifts. That was under the administration opposite and, in fact, funnily enough I picked up over here where we issued a press statement before I joined about the problems with Unison, the GMB, over the new refuse collection and they have not been changed for years.

Population shifts in Leeds have meant that there have been estates building up in certain areas and there has been demolition in other areas and the routes that we currently have that the bin men are doing – if I just interject at this point, I personally have nothing but admiration for the bin men that collect in my street. I have had no problems with them in the past, they work hard, they are there – in fact they wake me up at seven o'clock every Saturday morning but that is great, no problem, they are hard working.

What we have got to do is not stay in the past and keep on with routes where some drivers finish early, they are tasked and finish and so what actually happens is they get paid the same amount as people who work many more hours.

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: How much do you get paid, Rick?

COUNCILLOR DOWNES: When you talk to residents about this issue...

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: A lot of money.

COUNCILLOR DOWNES: ...they are quite surprised if people get different balances.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: How much do you get paid?

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Less than him.

COUNCILLOR DOWNES: The point is that if you were to re-route so that everybody has a fair round, then there will be savings there because you would have removed inefficiencies. There are other ways.

One of the things that struck me, shortly after being elected as a Councillor I became lead member for HR and one of the issues we were addressing was equal pay, which over there you had not done. We addressed the equal pay issue but in amongst that we looked at sickness hours and I was staggered to find out that refuse collectors were at the worst end of this with 30 days a year sickness. We have been trying as a Council to reduce the number of sickness days and so again there you

have got issues where I think you need to look at other options as well as the existing option.

I personally would be quite happy to retain all the existing bin men, change their working practices so that we actually get a more efficient service so that we can recycle more and I think that is the key thing. We need to be looking at how we can meet the targets, because otherwise there are new landfill taxes coming in, LATS, which we have to change how we go about disposing of our rubbish, and it was Councillor Lyons, who I cannot see at the moment, he bleats on about options about where an incinerator is going to be placed. The point is, without coming up with an alternative – I am not saying what our final decision is going to be but at some point something has got to happen to that waste. The only other option is to bury it in landfill, and if you do that we are going to get such high penalties - £11m a year tax. What we have got to do is work a way of trying to be more efficient and that is what the Executive Board chose to do. They have said we will look if this is an option.

Hopefully, if the existing bin men will work to different arrangements, that will then mean that we do not need to outsource it and we can keep it in house, but I think things need to change. I think it needs to be closely looked at, the sickness hours, also the routes and basically that is what the report is saying. Let us move forward, let us look to the future so we can get our recycling up to 50%, otherwise we are going to pay for it through our Council tax, which I am sure nobody wants to do. Thank you.

COUNCILLOR HARRIS: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I strangely find myself agreeing with most of what Alison has been said because it was a very measured contribution, although it was selective in not dealing with how we have reached the point we are now at. Councillor Richard Lewis was similarly measured but could not help straying into the territory that Councillor J Lewis met with thunder the problem with personalising issues. It is a bit like in court. If you bring out the past of somebody giving evidence and you say they are not of good character, then you are equally entitled to pull that back the other way about the person standing in the dock and say, if you insist upon talking about the pay of the Leader of Council, I am just wondering whether the Leader of the Opposition is prepared to talk about what he draws from the Council taxpayers of this city. If he is not prepared to, so that the public understands, last year he was a shade short of £40,000. What does he have to say about that? I have this to say about it. Richard Brett gets £45,000. At least he is doing a job. I am afraid the Leader of the Opposition is little more than a tea-boy now drawing £40,000 a year. Understand that. What is good for the goose is good for the gander.

Ask what each of them are drawing before you point the finger and then when you have finished ask about your permanent Union Branch Secretaries, ask how much they are being paid and ask the question whether they spend every day out on the streets in all types of weather doing a very difficult job, because what is good for the goose is good for the gander. Both sides of the equation have to be put.

The problem we have got here is this has been going on since before I started as Leader of Council. That group over there failed miserably to deal with completely outdated, restrictive practices and it is from that that this problem has flowed coupled with your government's perfectly correct decision to deal with the inequalities of pay between different genders. That is where this whole thing has come from. You failed completely to address it and it is no good saying that somehow the administration overnight has dropped this problem of the refuse collectors. That is not so.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Five years. Where have you been?

COUNCILLOR HARRIS: I have discussed it with Union leaders when I was Leader of Council. It was one of the first things I was briefed on in 2004 when we



had this problem. It has been going on for years and years and the problem is that only the refuse collectors in this city will not accept what has been forced on us by your government. Quite rightly. *(interruption)* *(Applause)*

Let me tell you about restrictive practice. I witnessed it in my father's business. I have witnessed tailors and cutters who were on task and finished and then the Unions would not budge to bring them into the modern world and failure to do that resulted in what you have seen in this city today – zero garment manufacturing because the Unions would not budge when to do so was in the best interests of their members.

Finally I just want to finish on this point. According to the Sunday Times, 60% of the public prefer cuts in public services to rises in taxation to pay for government deficit. It cannot be both ways. If the refuse workers are to get what they want, then the rest of the Council then must be paid more and taxes will have to rise and the public will have to decide which do they want. Do they want taxes to rise or do they want services to be reduced? It cannot go in both directions. We do not want any reduction in service. We do not want this dispute.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: Any reduction in pay.

COUNCILLOR HARRIS: I tried to avoid this dispute. It takes two parties to sit round the table and they have to come and do it. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR BRETT: Can I start by saying very clearly that whatever happens this afternoon a reference back will not solve where we are.

The process that we have been through over several years, not just a few months, led to a situation where there were over 10,000 people who got back pay who were winners - 8,000 of those, a clear majority, were women; 10,000 stayed roughly the same; and 2,500 were losers. That is where we were at the end of a process that we did not invent in Leeds. We have not any control, really, over the process of pay and grading. The Unions quite rightly have been involved in national agreements and I understand that there are still things that the Unions agree about the process in which this was done.

The leadership that we put forward was to make a conscious decision to put extra into our budget not once but every single year, £8m extra. We did that - and I think that was political leadership - to try and make sure there were more winners than losers.

If anyone asks Andrew and I would we have liked to have had no losers at all, of course we would have loved to have had that situation. The estimate, however, of what that would have cost us is in the region of not £8m a year but £45m a year.

COUNCILLOR: That is rubbish. Incredible.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: I do not believe it.

COUNCILLOR: You can't add up.

COUNCILLOR BRETT: You can complain about that as much as you like but we believe that is a reality. As part of this we have added extra money to the low paid. Of the £8m extra, £1m went into changing the minimum wage paid by Leeds City Council from £6.21 to £6.39 per hour - not a huge increase but as part of a clear revision of what we were doing. Please do not tell us we have done nothing for the lowest paid.

COUNCILLOR: 18p.

COUNCILLOR BRETT: I have to say, being quite open about this, that at no point at all has any officer, as far as I know, come to me or Andrew and said, "We need a political steer. Will we fix this? Can we fiddle it somehow? What can we do?" No-one has asked us to do that but the crucial difference between us and you is that you would have gone to officers and insisted on it. *(interruption)*

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Correct. Absolutely correct. That is what we should be doing.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: And we are proud of it.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Fiddled it.

COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: It is called leadership.

COUNCILLOR BRETT: We can settle this very quickly if we were prepared – and I use my words carefully here – to fiddle this. If we were prepared to redesign these jobs and say...

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: It would not be fiddling.

COUNCILLOR BRETT: ...we want them to do things which will give them more points, it will mean that they score more, they will be paid more, that could be done but the huge, huge risk if it is not real, if we ask them to do something and then they do not actually do that, industrial tribunals will find us out and we will have failed to have a sustainable, fair equal pay situation.

Nobody loses money for 18 months. I wanted to keep talking. Andrew Carter wanted to keep talking.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: No you don't.

COUNCILLOR BRETT: On the days before the strike started we offered further talks on a bonus scheme that I believe would have gone a huge way towards closing the gap that we have been talking about.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: That is rubbish.

COUNCILLOR BRETT: That was offered; the Unions chose to strike. I do not think this strike in itself will solve anything. There will be a need to get back to talks. Most strikes are designed to get the management back to the table. We want to stay at the table and talk. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR FINNIGAN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. One of the striking binnies came in to see me and we had a very pleasant discussion about the situation and problems that are actually facing them. He accepts and I accept that an average of six weeks' sickness absence is unacceptable. That came from him; it did not come from me.

If you add that on to annual leave you are having to get somebody to cover that for the best part of three months a year. It is unacceptable. He feels it is unacceptable; I believe it is unacceptable.

He came in and talked about task and finish. He says it is unacceptable that some crews are knocking off just after lunchtime and other crews are working longer. I agree. It is entirely and utterly unacceptable. It cannot be done. Old practices, they have to actually go.

I have a lot of sympathy. He is losing money as a result of this particular dispute and what we need to explore is getting rid of those practices and looking at

ways of negotiating a settlement that brings those binnies as close as we can to where they are at this particular point. (*hear, hear*) I will say, if nobody else wants to say it, we need to suspend the action and get back to negotiations. There is a discussion and a debate around this productivity package which floats around the £17,000 mark. Let us sit down and negotiate around that and see if there is a way ahead.

I have faith that our bin workers, having spoken to the guy who came to see me, can win any competition when it goes out to market testing. I think there is no doubt at all about that, but what they have to do is change the way that they are operating at this particular time.

Single status is inconvenient in this particular case – of that there is absolutely no doubt. You cannot pick and choose which bits you like and which bits you do not like. I personally was sceptical that it will resolve all problems. It was never going to be a panacea, you were always going to have problems, you were always going to have difficulties with it, but what we need to do is to make sure that we give them the opportunity to compete through this particular process and that really is about suspending the action. Let us negotiate round this particular package that is based on productivity, that is based on changing the way that we are working and have faith that somewhere out there there is an opportunity to come to an agreement and an arrangement that means when they are competing with the private sector they can win, and that is what we want. We want reasonableness, we want fairness, we want to get rid of those poor practices.

We do not believe delaying it and referencing it back is anything other than a gesture. It really is achieving nothing. The bottom line is, let us suspend, let us negotiate, let us get a deal that is fair to all sides. Thank you, Lord Mayor.  
(*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: Lord Mayor, may I start by a comment. I am not prepared to stand here and attack our refuse collectors. They do a superb service for me, they always have done a superb service for me...

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Pay them.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: ...and I am reading the letters in the paper attacking them and I am not happy with them. I am not happy that it is a fact that I understand that somebody with a low income does not have a lot of disposable income. I understand that as well and obviously if you are buying a house, buying things in it, it comes across very, very difficult and very hard to manage.

I am just going to make a few points on this. The first thing is, I think this business – and it is wonderful, this equal opportunities – the way it has been done I think is wrong. I personally do not agree that there are a number of people in a job who should have equal opportunities in that job and men and women should be paid the same. To try and compare across the rest of the Council I think has been very, very difficult and it is not just Leeds that is getting this problem; this problem is all over the country. I have talked to people outside this city and the problem is this, and this is where I am at the present time.

There are three options I looked at on this. The first of them was, let us continue to pay as we are paying now to the refuse collectors. There is no reason why we should not, it is in the budget, we are not finding more money, it is all there, but there are ten-and-a-half thousand other people who could come in against a claim against the Council, and there is a good chance they will bring those claims. That is where the £45m comes about. It is not paying the lads – by God, they would love to have 45 million quid. They would live like kings. It is not that. It is the £45m for the other staff who can make a claim against this Council.

The next option is this. You say well, we cannot take £45m. £45m would mean an 18% increase in rates – even the government would not allow us to do that. Your next option is to say, OK, what else can we do if we are going to continue? The other thing we can do is, we can fire 2,000 staff. That would pay for £45m. I am not prepared to sit there and support the firing of 2,000 of our staff, but that is what you could do.

The third option is the one which I have supported all the way through so far. First of all, let us guarantee the money for a period of time. We have guaranteed it for three years. At this point in time nobody has lost a penny until this strike occurred. Now they are losing money. The first thing is, let see that it is time to talk. Then we need to sit down. We need to use our imaginations. We need to be legal, I agree with Richard, we cannot just willy-nilly con people to do this. We should find ways and methods of making certain those people without that level of income do not lose that amount of money which they cannot afford.

Quite honestly, I could not say at any time that I can accept the £45m expenditure for this Council, which means the poor refuse collectors are out on strike on something which we could not deliver – they cannot win it. We just cannot do it, it is as simple as that. What we can do is sit down and talk to them and try and find ways of means of making it right and proper, so when the lady writes in, which must touch everybody, and says, “Look, I have no home. We are trying to buy this home. We have got children. We are trying to feed them”, then we can look them in the face and say, “We have done our best to get that right.”

I think you are playing politics a bit. Alison did not speak like that, neither did Richard. I thought the other one was a nonsense – absolute disgrace and it threw all sorts of red herrings about and a complete nonsense to what is, in my opinion is an extremely ---

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Well done, James. We are proud of you. Well done.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: It is no good laughing like a Cheshire cat – it is a very, very serious subject and should be treated in that way.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Did you say that to Mark Harris?

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: No, he did not.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: I just hope that we will go back and we will sit down and talk about this subject. Thank you, my Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR CAMPBELL: It is interesting, Lord Mayor, is it not, that we get a groan because somebody wants to speak about this. I must admit, I thought this was going to be the big issue that the Labour Party were going to raise this afternoon. We started off with Councillor J Lewis’s usual contribution...

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Excellent

COUNCILLOR CAMPBELL: ...and this is the whole point, this is the question, I need to ask you a question because who is actually making the decision here? Once we got Councillor Lowe and Councillor R Lewis up, we had what you describe as a sensible contribution to the debate and yet Peter is saying, “Oh no” – actually Richard – “this is our policy.”

COUNCILLOR LYONS: Does anyone know what he is on about? *(laughter)*

COUNCILLOR CAMPBELL: Councillor Finnigan and Councillor Carter, I think if you listen to what they have said, have actually set it out in a nutshell about

where we are and what the position is and I think it is quite clear, because it has been said consistently all the way through, that we did not walk away from the table. There are 18 months to go before anybody loses any money at all. We are saying to you, we are saying to the bin operatives – we will call them bin men, bin operatives – “Look, we are trying to do something about this.” We do not like the idea, none of us like the idea of cutting people’s wages, even though that might be the fashionable phrase these days in government, we do not like to do that.

I take a bit of an issue, actually, with Mark, when he talked about the government forcing - your government forcing – equal pay on us. It is not forced on me. I think it is something we should have been striving for from day one, never mind having it forced on us. We should have been paying those people that reasonable wage from day one. We should not have delayed that payment in the way that we did because we could not get an agreement on this particular issue.

There is an opportunity – it is a very good opportunity – for us to talk this one through and there is a very good opportunity to allow people to get a better deal out of this, but there will not be an opportunity if you stay on strike and there will not be an opportunity for them to demonstrate that they can change their working practices, which everybody says are wrong, to produce the situation where we can do what we want to do, and that is we want to improve the recycling rates in this city, get it up to 50%. We want to be seen as the city that actually drives that agenda. We are not doing that at the moment.

I have to say Councillor Lewis and Councillor Lowe I have a lot of time for what they say. I have no time at all for Councillor J Lewis.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: We have no time for you.

COUNCILLOR CAMPBELL: I will throw a thing at you which will upset you, because you talk about Richard earning £45,000. This is a man who is in charge of an organisation that employs getting on for 25,000 people.

COUNCILLOR BRETT: Thirty-two thousand.

COUNCILLOR CAMPBELL: Thirty-two - it has gone up. 32,000 people, that has got a budget bigger than certain African countries and you are paying him less than you pay headteachers.

Let us just do a bit of a contrast for you. I will look up at the balcony and I will say, is anybody up on the balcony who is in the GMB? Would you like to know how much your General Secretary gets? Over £120,000. Is anybody in the balcony in Unison?

COUNCILLOR LYONS: Yes, I am in Unison.

COUNCILLOR CAMPBELL: You are in Unison. Do you know how much your General Secretary gets?

COUNCILLOR: Too much.

COUNCILLOR CAMPBELL: £140,000 a year. That is nearly £100,000 a year more than him. I do not begrudge him it because I think they do a good job but it is really petty when you start bringing it down to those sorts of levels. If there is an issue, talk about it. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Before I call on Councillor Wakefield, could we please have quiet in this Council Chamber? We have people here who are wanting to listen to what is said and I would be grateful, please, if we could stop all this chuntering. Councillor Wakefield.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Thank you, Lord Mayor. It was good to see Mark back from China. I am not sure whether it was listening to the most irrelevant speech he has ever made but it was good to see him back.

Can I say this from the outset? I can understand why the vast majority of our manual staff workers, the vast majority of the public, believe this is a politically inspired confrontation with the lowest paid workers. I can understand that because never in the over 20 years I have been here have I seen the Leader and the Executive Board Member go to the media so often to issue such provocative comments, and the one that he did not mention and I would like to see him disassociate from, was that he was blaming pickets for violence and intimidation.

Let me tell you this. The police immediately disassociated themselves from that comment and, indeed, turned round and commended the workers for their behaviour and attitude throughout the whole of the industrial dispute so far.  
(Applause)

I think it is a shame, it is a disgrace that a Leader of Council should use his position to abuse ordinary working people trying to get fairness and justice there.

There is evidence that there is a politicisation of this. In May a spokesperson – not a politician – came to the YEP on 9<sup>th</sup> May and said, “We are not proposing to lower the basic salary for staff but are looking to reduce the spiralling cost of overtime and improve productivity across the services. We are not threatening privatisation but we do want to have a more efficient service.”

Completely straight – everyone in this room who has spoken agrees with that, including the Union, so that is in May. Suddenly, in July, Councillor Monaghan comes into the Chamber and starts puffing his chest out and talking about privatisation. The clock is ticking, the clock is ticking away.

Later on in September, only last week, over £100,000 was spent by this Council sending a letter to every citizen talking about the £45m and 18%. This is a time when they are closing day centres, the Children’s Service is in crisis, they are spending £100,000 trying to alienate public support from low paid manual workers who do a job that none of us would do in this room. That is money wasted, totally wasted, because actually it has had a backlash. Many people do it. Many people are still supporting, despite that letter, the struggle of bin workers and cleaners to do it.

Let me just put the blatant fact to you. What you are asking for is increased productivity, end sick pay, try to change the rounds, all things that everybody agrees with, but instead of saying that is what we want, you want that and then you want to take off up to £6,000 off workers in that service. That cannot be acceptable. It is not fair and it is not just. How do you motivate people to work harder when you are taking a third of their pay and, as Les Carter has pointed out, people with mortgages, families, aspirations who will find it more difficult to do. I do not understand that logic.

For my sins I did teach job evaluation for 20 years to managers and Unions in my past and I know and everyone knows it is not an exact science. It can have different outcomes and the proof of that is Wakefield, Barnsley, Hull, Kirklees have all settled fairly – no strike, no industrial action. How come elsewhere they can do it? If there is a political will it proves it can be done and clearly there is not.

Let us not hide behind the science. Let us try and treat people fairly because I know, as I have said before, the people of Leeds recognise the importance of these manual workers. It is a job they depend on, it is essential services, and if you are serious about narrowing the gap, treating with respect and dignity those workers that they deserve, you should sit back at the table like other people have said and start

offering them a fair deal so they can carry on in their lives with dignity and justice and not with what is no more than a direct attack on the lowest paid manual workers in this. If you cannot do it, let this Labour Group take over and we will settle the dispute with honour and dignity. I move, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR GRAYSHON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. We seem to be in somewhat of a very invidious position all the way around with this because it is a difficult one. I am concerned that there is an element of political skulduggery – from what side that is coming I neither know nor care.

It would seem to me to be sensible that the issue is looked at from all angles with regard to our refuse collection and I am sure that our colleagues who work for the Council are more than capable of producing the necessary waste collection services which would allow them to continue in their roles.

I have noticed that we appear to be having some misinformation. I do not think there is any possibility that we are going to stop people's sick pay. I think the concern is the period of time people are taking off sick rather than saying we are not going to pay sick pay. I also think that there is an issue that if people accepted the new working practices it would, in effect, bring their wage up rather than introducing a new working practice and your wage going down. There are all kinds of bits of misinformation which I have heard here this afternoon a few moments ago, which gives me concern.

I think my advice would be to both sides in any kind of dispute is to try for some dispute resolution. I am sure that that has been tried.

Would you be quiet, please? If you think that being on strike pay is funny and it is something that you can all laugh about – I am sure a multimillionaire like you, Ted, would know all about strike pay and not being able to feed your family.

COUNCILLOR HANLEY: I know all about strikers.

COUNCILLOR GRAYSHON: Right, well will you be quiet then, please?

COUNCILLOR HANLEY: I know all about the strikers.

THE LORD MAYOR: Can I just stop you please a minute, Councillor Grayshon?

COUNCILLOR GRAYSHON: You may.

THE LORD MAYOR: Could we please have quiet? Could we please have quiet whilst our speakers speak? The people up here are wanting to know what is being said and I know for a fact people cannot hear when we have all this chuntering going on. Please stop it. Councillor Grayshon, please continue.

COUNCILLOR GRAYSHON: Thank you, Lord Mayor, I am obliged for that. People are rather exercised over this matter.

I think what we need to do, as I was saying, is to try and have some dispute resolution involved in this because one side is saying one thing, another side is saying another. I think there is a varying degree, shall I call it, of misinformation which is going around and I am sure that people do not want to be on strike, they want to be doing the job that they are paid for. There are obviously some fundamental issues with the way that the refuse collection service and other things are running and I think we are all agreed on that, but the way forward is not a lack of communication; it needs to be more communication between the two parties to resolve this unfortunate issue which nobody wants to see and is a very, very serious matter and it is a very sad day for the Council that we are having to discuss this here.

I do hope that following today's meeting the two sides can get together and discuss a way forward and move forward with this, because that is what we all want. Nobody wants people out of pocket but quite clearly we cannot have the Council taxpayers of Leeds footing huge bills, so our job is to look at it from both sides and come up with a conclusion and that is what I hope will happen after today and I would ask that whoever is here from the GMB – the gentleman up there tells us he is at the GMB – Mr Brett is here, I do hope that both sides can get together and move this forward and come to a sensible and amicable resolution. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR TAGGART: Thank you, Lord Mayor. First of all, I believe this Conservative led Tory-Liberal Democrat Coalition has got form when it comes to industrial relations in this city.

When Labour was in power in 2004 we were negotiating with trade union representatives about weekly paid workers because it was our ambition to go to monthly pay. This was happening in many organisations. The discussions were about some kind of payment to compensate the workers for the disruption that was brought about adjusting to being paid once a month. Councillor Harris when he became Leader was quite happy to pay them absolutely nothing at all – in fact he relished it.

Secondly, it was the same administration that abolished the Bank Holiday Tuesdays without any proper going through procedures or negotiations and it was interesting when the matter was referred to Scrutiny, everybody on the Scrutiny end found the administration wanting because even though some people might have said the change was worthwhile getting, the procedures had not been gone through.

Now you try and blame a national agreement on equal value, which is a laudable aim, you blame that for the situation we are in and yet every other Local Authority has had to go through this. There is no strike in Wakefield; there is no strike in Kirklees. Why is there a strike here? We think it is because you have got an appetite on your side to go beyond the mere issues of the collection of refuse in this city because some of you cannot wait to privatise the whole service and teach the Unions a lesson.

The trade unions by the way, Councillor Harris, are not responsible for the decline in manufacturing in the UK. That is to do with the decisions of international capital to take their resources far away to countries where people are paid low wages and are not unionised and where they are sorely exploited. The trade union movement in this country, by the way, which created the party which I am proud to belong to, has fought long and hard for everything they have got. Even the National Health Service – every single thing – maternity pay, paternity leave, all of these things workers have had to fight for. None of them have ever been given without struggle.

Let no-one criticise the Unions for not being interested in recycling. That is total rubbish *(laughter)* if you know what I mean! In the early 1990s when I chaired the Environment Committee we were pioneering because we were getting rid of the black sack collection and we were going to green bins and we were asking people to wheel them and a lot of people did not like it and I had to front up all the public meetings, some of which were quite hairy, but we patiently went through the reasons as to why we had to do this. Then we looked at the situation in Germany and Holland and there was an all-party delegation that went over and we took the GMB with us, we took NUPE, as it then was, with us, because we saw how important it was to work with the workforce and they came back absolutely convinced they cared about the environment as well.



When we think about the people working in the rain and the hail and the snow and the cold weather outside, doing this job day in, day out, they are doing a huge job of work for this city and this planet and the environment. They are part of what we want to achieve, so let us not attack them.

I have talked to some of the people working on my street who have got nothing but disgust for people who cannot be bothered to sort the waste. I suspect everybody here does it, but nothing but disgust because, like me, they care about the planet, so do not let us try and pretend the workers are somehow over there. The workers are part of us and this is a vital service for what this city needs.

This morning when I came out of my house someone had dumped a big plastic bag full of rubbish in my front garden. You may find this strange but despite we have been out of power since 2004, I still find a few people who think it is a Labour Council, so perhaps they thought it was me. Anyway, as I was going to my car to come into Leeds, there was a street meeting going on, a whole group of neighbours. There was one woman who has got a young child and she has got all this child waste and the black bin was full and it is two weeks' worth and she was getting concerned about it. Several of the bins were full to overflowing and not one of them – and by the way, I know these people well, they are not all Labour supporters, they are a mixed bag – every single one of them thought how bad it was to cut – they said, “They are not on strike for more money, are they, Neil? They are actually striking to keep what they have got.” It is the job of the Council to settle and you, Richard, have got to do this. You may think you are showing your virility by standing up to the Unions. That may be part of it.

COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: Lost in translation, Richard.

COUNCILLOR TAGGART: You have got to settle this. It is a disgrace that a big city like Leeds has a completely unnecessary industrial dispute and that the bins are not being emptied.

I leave on this note. We actually had a bin collection this week on my road. We are on a Wednesday but the properties across the road are on a Monday. They have a re-collection. The vehicle came on Monday to the wrong properties. It was one of your private sector scabs you brought in. By the way, that is strike breaking. The work should be done by the workers who are on strike who are represented here today. You are hoping to break the strike. You were due to settle this strike and now you are going to have to and if you cannot do it, step aside – we will take control and we promise to settle this strike and end the misery. Thank you very much.  
(Applause)

COUNCILLOR HARRAND: Thanks, Lord Mayor. I never thought I would say this but I always listen to James Lewis's speech with interest and incredulity. He shoots off at tangents in all directions but this time he shot off and said something about he has major concerns about a private sector provider of Homecare and there are 50 people at risk. Would you like to speak to the Director of Adult Social Care in the morning and give her more details of that because if that is true it is the first I have heard of it, so please tell us. That is more serious than anything we have heard this afternoon.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Sitting and listening to this debate I have begun to feel a bit like Dr Who.

COUNCILLOR: You look a bit like him.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: He is a Time Lord and sometimes he goes to the future and sometimes he goes backwards, and for all the world listening to these people over here, it reminded me...

COUNCILLOR ATHA "These people over here".

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: ...of the 1970s but particularly the early 1970s; the years that preceded their 18 years in the wilderness. They are clearly preparing for that event again but if they do not think that the rest of the country has moved on and actually we are now in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and the rhetoric and the nonsense and the puerile insults of the 1970s are going to work. Well, they are not going to work.

We have here a very difficult issue. Other speakers have spelt out precisely why it is a difficult issue and what really disturbs me is that the Opposition gleefully leapt on something that Richard Brett said I thought extremely accurately, about fiddling it.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Rubbish.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: One of them said, "And we would be proud to fiddle it".

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: We said "fix it.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Fix it.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Because that is what they did for 24 years. In any crisis, anything that demanded leadership...

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Poor argument.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: ...a fiddled solution was found...

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Now we are getting into rhetoric.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: ...and that is why four or five years ago when we took over we found the sorts of things we found, like the £17m black hole in social care. The list was endless. *(interruption)* About the £60m backlog in road repairs. You cannot fiddle this. You cannot fiddle this one because it is the law of the land and there are very clever lawyers out there waiting, waiting for some foolish agreement between employers and Unions that they can drive a coach and horses through.

What we are faced with is how we can avoid as much as is humanly possible any reduction in pay to any of these guys or their workmates.

There is no mileage, it is not sensible to suggest that anybody, any politician who relies on votes, wants people to lose money. We do not, it is nonsense, we cannot possibly, it does not make any sense at all.

COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: But you are doing it. *(interruption)*

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: What we are saying, my Lord Mayor, and has been repeated over and over again, we want to resume talks, we are ready to resume talks. We want to work with the Unions to minimise – absolutely minimise and who knows, if we can eradicate it, great, but nobody can promise that, but we are prepared to work with the Unions to minimise - any reduction in pay there might be. We put forward proposals, we said we will talk them through with you if you do not go on strike. They went on strike.

Come back to work, let the talking restart. We are committed to working with you to minimise any losses and we will work as hard as we can to get those losses as low as possible. As I say, I will be the first to throw my hat in the air with joy if there were no losses at all.

No-one is saying that the refuse collection service is a poor service. What we are all agreed upon, it is a service that needs modernisation and that agenda cannot be avoided. None of you can get away from the need to modernise that service. If you look at some of the other Authorities you have been quoting, you will find they have already modernised their service.

Get back to work, let us get talking, let us sort it out.

Final point. Yet again when leadership is required from the Leader of the Opposition, he cannot even get up and disassociate himself from the unknown people who have made abusive and intimidating phone calls to Councillor Brett's home or disassociate himself from the people who have dumped rubbish. What sort of leadership is that? *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: For a moment of explanation. Many of us remember the miners' strike for a whole year when miners held out for their livelihood, for their families, for their villages and not one word did I hear Councillor Carter talk about condemning the police violence against people. Not once.

I am more than happy, along with the Unions *(interruption)* I am giving an explanation. You want an explanation.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Wakefield, could I stop you there, please, and ask you what point you were misrepresented on?

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: I am misrepresented about not being disassociating myself from the violence and the other activities. Firstly---  
*(interruption)*

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Yes or no? Do you disassociate yourself?

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Go to China, Frank – one way. There is no doubt our group and the Unions would always argue against intimidation, violence and association, but what I would say is we would disassociate ourselves from any of that. What I would say is to you and to Councillor Brett, get your proof before you start labelling and attacking Unions without the proper evidence. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Members, I specifically said I was not accusing anybody. I said people who were unknown and that he should be big enough...

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: I have just done it.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: ...and a man enough to disassociate himself.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: I have done it.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: He always fails to do it. *(interruption)*

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: I have done it.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: You had to be forced to do it.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: I never heard you once.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Gruen.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. We have consistently said in this Chamber for two years that a single status agreement that discriminates

against one section of workers to the extent it does is not an agreement. You know there have been a number of iterations about the winners and the losers and it is absolutely right that that formula is got as right as it possibly can be. It cannot be right, it cannot be acceptable, it cannot be a template if one section of people are deliberately discriminated against and lose £5,000 to £6,000 a year. That is not justice, that cannot be right and that is where you have got the opprobrium from the workers and from the public.

You have had plenty of opportunity to get it right and as my colleagues have said, why is it every other single Council has got it right without a strike and you have not? Why is it that we see Councillor Brett almost salivating at the mouth when he can go again and attack the workers in the television studios? Why is it – and I hope that Councillor Monaghan, if you listen one second, will answer these two questions in his summing up. One, how many times has the negotiating Panel met and what votes were cast to actually settle this dispute? How many times and what votes? Listen whether he answers that question.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: We know.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: The second question is, why was there a judgment which was almost unanimous – I will help him out on that one – overwritten politically by you and Councillor Brett? Three, if trust has broken down because of your actions, what can you do now to call the workers back in and offer them a clean slate so they can come back and talk? If you suspend your provocative action of 18 months and then you are out of the door and you are going to get £5,000 less, they might actually listen to you and come back in and talk, which is exactly what Councillor Finnigan was suggesting, but if you carry on on your crooked way and you have a crooked agenda of Union busting, then they will not come in. Why should they come in?

This Council, this leadership – do you know, I would expect it of the Tories, I would expect it of the right wing Tories, but for the Lib Dems to come along and actually lead and outflank – and our right the right wing of the Tories is despicable, incredible and will do you no good whatsoever in terms of your credibility. Your credibility is shot to pieces.

So, Councillor Monaghan, are you going to offer a positive way forward to the people who matter who are listening to you today? What are you going to offer to actually bring people back to talk? *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: And the householders like me who cannot have their bins emptied.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Monaghan.

COUNCILLOR MONAGHAN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. This seems to be being portrayed as an attack by this administration on some of the lowest paid workers in this city and that is complete, complete rubbish.

Ten-and-a-half thousand Council employees as part of pay and grading have seen no change to their salaries. Another ten-and-a-half thousand have actually seen rises to their salaries – that is ten-and-a-half thousand Council employees who are better off. £8m of this Council's money into paid salaries.

Just as an example in the terms of the lowest paid workers, care assistants, before the pay and grading was brought in they were on £12,629 a year. They are now on £16,663 a year. That is 763 staff who have seen that pay rise. Cleaning operatives have gone up from £11,995 to £13,027. That is 1,310 Council employees who have seen over £1,000 increase in their salaries. A thousand of those are

female, by the way. I could go on, there is a long list of Council employees who have actually seen an increase to their salaries.

This administration believes in equality of pay between men and women and we believe in equality of pay between equal jobs.

What the problem here is, the Way Forward Review that you are referencing back has absolutely nothing to do with pay and grading or equal pay.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: It has.

COUNCILLOR MONAGHAN: It is purely about making efficiencies and improvements to the refuse collection service in this city and I have to say, the debate around that has been very sensible and very balanced and I am glad to see there is agreement on most of those improvements that we want to see.

Councillor Blackburn, in response to your comments if we want those other coloured bins for more recycling services, we will only get those if we can actually make those efficiencies and those improvements to free up the money to keep investing in our recycling.

However, this is not the first time that this Council has tried to make these improvements and efficiencies. In 2004 under the previous Labour administration, exactly the same suggestions to do with route rationalisation, tackling sick absence and sick days was implemented. On the first morning it was implemented there was a wildcat strike. By the end of that morning the Labour administration had already backed down to the workers and I am afraid we are not going not back down because we cannot back down for exactly the same reasons that Councillor Les Carter said earlier. *(interruption)*

COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: What type of message is that? No talks, we won't back down.

COUNCILLOR MONAGHAN: Councillor Carter explained why that is impossible and was talking about...

COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: Why can't you explain it to us? *(interruption)*  
No talk, no solution.

COUNCILLOR MONAGHAN: It is quite clear, as has been said by Councillor Brett and agreed with by the Labour group over there, that actually they would fix this by altering the scores. *(interruption)* That is complete nonsense and that would leave us open to legal challenges that could cost this Council considerable amounts of money.

To discuss the scoring, to directly answer Councillor Gruen's question, the scoring Panel met on 6<sup>th</sup> July this year where they agreed a score. That was quality assessed the following day and that was a unanimous decision on the scoring for the refuse collection service by Council staff and by the Union – unanimous agreement – and this is not a Panel where they vote, it is a discussion Panel where a view is sought.

We met again with the Union at their request. We have always met with the Union at their request at any point in the discussions to make sure that we try and avert this strike action. We met again on 3 September to discuss that scoring where the Unions disagreed but we cannot go against the quality assessed independent discussion around the scores. To do that would leave us open to considerable challenges and a huge financial implication for the city so we are not prepared to do that.

However, I think it is clear for me to say, and I think the administration, that we acknowledge that losing £4,500 for any member of staff is significant and will have a huge impact on their life, which is why we are committed to resolving this strike. We have discussed with the Unions already around performance related pay to actually bridge that gap. That offer is still on the table. Councillor Gruen, that offer is on the table; I am making that offer clearly now.

Call off the strike. Having a strike does not benefit anyone in this city.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: What will you call off?

COUNCILLOR MONAGHAN: Call off that strike, come back, sit round the table and we will discuss that option. It is there. I am repeating it now, the offer is on the table. Come back and talk to us and let us reduce that salary gap.

I have to say I am very disappointed that Labour are gesturing around this issue. They should not be moving a reference back on this, on improvements and efficiency.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Nobody wants to strike.

COUNCILLOR MONAGHAN: What they should be doing is agreeing with us that this strike should be called off and that we should all sit round the negotiating table and find agreement on this. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: I now want to call on the vote for the amendment.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Recorded vote.

COUNCILLOR TAGGART: Seconded.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Bring back Smithy!

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

THE LORD MAYOR: The number of people present is 95. The "Yes" 46, abstentions nil, the "No" vote is 49, so this is LOST.

I would just like to, if I may at this stage, we are going back to page 8 but I would just like to say that those visitors who have been here today for this item, I would like to thank you all for the way in which you have conducted yourselves during this very emotive debate. *(Applause)*

#### ITEM 10 – MINUTES

- (a) Executive Board
- (i) Leisure

THE LORD MAYOR: We are now back to page 8 in the green Order Paper and we are dealing now with Leisure. I call on Councillor David Blackburn to speak.

COUNCILLOR D BLACKBURN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I speak on Minute 66 page 27 and Minute 79 page 77. The first one, Minute 66, is regarding response to the delegation re barbecues on Woodhouse Moor.

While I can understand the practicalities of this trial scheme, I have got to say -and we say this from our Group because we have not had the opportunity to elsewhere – that we cannot agree with this scheme. In our view our parks are not there for having barbecues on and it should be stopped, even if it might not be practicable.

Moving on, Minute 79, Vision for Council Leisure Centres. I have to say, as far as – I am speaking here as Outer West Area Chair – the Outer West Area and Pudsey Sports Centre, we are happy to see things being done there but one of our concerns - and ward members were on about this at Area Committee on Friday - is we want to see some movement and some fast movement shortly, particularly regarding the toilets in Pudsey Sports Centre, which are a key part of the development of the Pudsey town centre and we hope we can see some early progress on that. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Thank you, Lord Mayor. It is a pity and understandable so many people going, because I am going to say something that is probably very unusual about John Procter. I actually feel sorry for John Procter.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: I need no pity.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: I think he has got a difficult job, particularly over this issue of the barbecue, because he now knows what the Liberals are like to work with. When they in power they pretend they are not in power, certainly in the community, because many people have said while they are actually for us but we are not in power, it is John Procter's decision.

I came across a very interesting letter – I will come to you, Martin. I came across a very interesting letter and series of correspondence from a lifelong Liberal Dem member and his correspondence is to Lib Dem Councillors in the ward about this issue. Naturally he feels very strongly against it and he wrote to his ward Councillors to see what their views are.

There is a long letter here which I will not go into but he said, he replies, "The majority did not reply but I got the following. James Monaghan." James Monaghan's response to "Will you support me against the barbecues?" was this:

"I will be out of the office starting 14.08 and will not return till 26.08. I will respond to your message when I return. If you require a response sooner, please contact my ward colleagues Martin Hamilton and James Matthews."

Very nice passing the parcel and understandably he puts in brackets:

"(How does this tally..."

- you have got to listen to this very carefully –

"(How does this tally with him being present for the meeting of the Executive Board, because he was there.)"

Councillor James Monaghan was there.

He then writes to Martin Hamilton. It is your turn, Martin. Martin replies:

"Dear [So-and-So],

Can I be absolutely clear that I am not supportive of the proposal to install concrete blocks on Woodhouse Moor. I made this position clear some time ago and if this is the outcome of the Executive Board meeting on Wednesday, it will be without my support."

It will be very interesting because I understand there is still going to be concrete there. It will be interesting to see Martin respond and see which way he votes.

James Matthews, to give him his credit, he does not like your answer but he thinks you are dangerous but straight. He is entitled to his opinion. At least his opinion has always been well known. At least you are for it.

So it goes to Councillor Richard Harker. Where is Richard? Not here, what a shame. Sorry to do this because Richard, showing the leadership and clarity that we all expect of Richard, said:

“Thank you for contacting me on this issue. I appreciate the content of your message. I will discuss all the issues raised by you with colleagues and officers before a very difficult decision has to be made.”

Very clear leadership, we know where he stands on that one. *(laughter)*

Finally, Greg Mulholland, the famous leader of the Lib Dems, Student Prince. What does he say? Very clear position for local people. He says this:

“Firstly, I need to be absolutely clear that Woodhouse Moor is entirely in Leeds Central and Hilary Benn is the MP. *(laughter)*

There is a clear Parliamentary protocol which says that MPs should not become involved with issues in another MP’s constituency.”

Isn’t that classic? Poor old John Procter has got to work with that.

Let me just put it down to this. There are two issues. One, we do not believe the consultation is enough. Five per cent is not a legitimate representative. Secondly, even in your own report you say enforcement cannot be guaranteed by the police or the Council. Here we have a situation where the community, who have sent me photographs of the kind of damage that has been done, have got the worst of both worlds. They have got a pilot barbecue and then they have got an unofficial one and nobody in that administration can guarantee it.

I can understand why they may lose trust not only with local members – with this Council. I kid you not, you are very welcome to look at these, I think many of you have. If that community has to face another year of damage done to the park - branches, seats, cans, glass, needles, year after year – it is time that this administration should leave that ward alone to somebody who can. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR ATHA: I am, like Keith, bit surprised at feeling sorry for John Procter but I am sure he has been dragged into this unwillingly because I do not think his common sense would have allowed him to get to this point.

The real truth is that there is immense local opposition to this proposal on Woodhouse Moor and what amazes me, the attitude of the Lib Dems to this particular remarkable space, the first public park in Leeds.

When they first came into power as part of the Coalition they tried to make part of it a car park. That scheme – do not sound horrified but that is a fact. Councillor Hamilton has said that was not the case because it was part of a Labour plan prior to it. I asked him to show me what proof there was because I and no-one else had any knowledge of that in our time. I have still not received that evidence except one word that he had heard someone say it before.

Even ignoring that first attack, there was second attack when they were going to make a large part of it pitches for the university. Again, we were able to defeat that.



The third attack was when we were going to increase the road through the moor, which is the widest part of the road from the city centre to Lawnswood. That was the bit they were going to widen to make traffic easier – an absolute nonsense. Thank God that was defeated by mutual movement between Councillor Monaghan and one of my own colleagues.

Now the barbecue is the fourth major attack and the reason for the attack and this barbecue is on the basis that it is impossible to police the moor to prevent people having barbecues on it so let us, if we cannot police it, let them do it. It is like saying we cannot catch all the burglars so why bother trying? That is the nature of this decision.

So what they are doing to do is to designate an area for barbecues, but if you designate an area, it has no effect at all unless the rest of the moor is actually policed and the bye-law is enforced. The actual reason for this is a non-reason. You cannot have it both ways. If you cannot police the moor to enforce the bye-law as it is, how will you enforce the law and those bye-laws when in fact barbecues are restricted to only a small area?

When we are asked what kind of space will the barbecue be, we get conflicting views. One, we are told it is not going to be concrete. If it is not concrete, what is it going to be? Have they found some form of grass which is defying of burning, will not burn? The answer is they do not know what it is going to be. Where is the designated area going to be and how big is it? Is it going to be marked off in some way? Again, no answer.

This is something that Councillor Procter, as the Lead Member or the Executive Member, has got himself involved in and I am sure he would not wish to be involved in this way.

I will tell you the answer, John, and it is quite simply this. Let us as a Council say that the bye-laws that cover Woodhouse Moor will be enforced. I have talked to the police and they say, "We will not enforce them but we do realise that if park staff enforce them, the police should find themselves at the place there and then to prevent any difficulties that might arise", so the police will co-operate but in fact we have got to enforce the bye-laws, and that is the answer. It gets rid of this whole problem and, quite frankly, if you were to do that, people would say they were wrong before but they have at least had the common sense to see they are right now.

It is a simple answer to your problem. Let us say we will enforce the bye-laws. Only a handful of prosecutions in the courts for criminal damage and breach of the bye-laws and so on or damage to our property – that would prevent it in the future. If, in fact, we give in to people who break the law and accept that we cannot enforce it so let them get on with it, then in fact we are going down a very difficult track.

I hope that we will come to some sensible conclusion without any rhetoric, without any pointing of one finger saying "This lot over there". All I want to do is to see that we collectively, as a group of people, say the moor is valuable, it is sacred to some people, let us retain its essential character in the middle of the city and let us do away with any possible barbecuing, enforce the bye-laws and we will sort it out by next year. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR OGILVIE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I would like to comment on Minute 79 page 77 about the Vision for Council Leisure Centres.

Can I start by saying that we support the proposals to modernise and improve the quality and facilities of the eight centres mentioned in the first proposals, namely Aireborough, Pudsey, Bramley, Scott Hall, Kirkstall, Otley, Rothwell and Wetherby,

but I would ask Councillor Procter to confirm that there is a definite commitment to fund these in the capital programme, because that is one of the problems about this report. A lot of the proposals seem to be finger in the air hoping that funding can be found, but no clear financial commitment from the Council.

Councillor Lyons will comment on the proposals for Inner East Leeds. When it comes to Outer East, the idea that the people of Garforth and Kippax are going to have to wait till at least 2017, another seven or eight years, before anything happens is simply not acceptable and we clearly do not support that proposal.

We do welcome the proposal for a potential Wellbeing facility including a pool and gym close to the St George's Centre in Middleton, but there again, we have to ask if this is a firm commitment or merely an aspiration. I think the people of Middleton deserve to know.

I have to say that the proposal to close the South Leeds Sports Centre, which ironically is right in the heart of a regeneration area, will not be understood by residents living in some of the most deprived bits of this city.

I recently tested out the theory that is in this report that residents should be within a 20 minute walk of a pool when I walked from Holbeck up to the John Charles Centre, which would be the alternative facility. It took well over the 20 minutes, it was closer to 30 actually, up the hill, through the industrial estate to the aquatic centre at John Charles. There is no direct bus route and, no matter what we might think, the perception of many people in Beeston, Holbeck and Hunslet is that the John Charles Centre is not for the local community but a city-wide facility.

The report acknowledges that many of our leisure centres act as community hubs and the South Leeds Sports Centre certainly does that, which is why closing it would be such a blow to the local community and we will continue to oppose the proposal to close South Leeds.

Finally, Lord Mayor, could I ask Councillor Procter if he thinks it is realistic for any community organisation to be would be in a position to take on the running of any of the centres that are proposed to be closed and whether he has had any interest yet from any such organisations. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR LYONS: Thank you very much, Lord Mayor. I am commenting on page 77 Minute 79, the same one as Adam. It says:

"Re-provision of Fearnville and East Leeds Leisure Centres in the form of one new, purpose built, well being centre with a commitment to deliver and resource by 2010/15.

(v) To seek expressions of interest to transfer East Leeds and Fearnville Leisure Centres to a Community Organisation.

(vi) East Leeds Leisure Centre and Fearnville Leisure Centres to remain under Council management until such time that:-

a) a new well being centre is confirmed; or

b) A suitable community organisation has been identified to whom to transfer the asset(s)."

It sounds really good, does that, although nowt has gone in the budget to sort out what they are going to do and what they are not. One of the first questions that I am asking is where are you going to build this new leisure centre? Nobody has told us where it is going to be. It says somewhere in East Leeds. It will not be near Temple Newsam, I can tell you that.

Have the Council begun to seek any expressions of interest to transfer East Leeds Leisure Centre to community organisations, because all the community I know they have not been near them. When are they going to do it? How viable is the option that it is estimated that around £250,000, quarter of a million pounds a year – we will give it to the people of East Leeds, Halton Moor, and say, “You run it” and it is costing £250,000. It is a bit of a nonsense. They need more than that. They need money in the budget to start sorting out their leisure centre.

A new Wellbeing Centre. When is the expression of interest for Wellbeing Centres going to be made? Has it been already done? The Council states that the Wellbeing Centre should be delivered by 2013 to 2015. That is three years. No money is put in. If it starts falling down you will be back in this Chamber saying, “It is not worth it, it is too much work to do, it has been vandalised, we cannot do nowt about that.” They are not doing anything. They are just going to shut it down and leave it and think, “Oh well, we will be all right, we will be able to close it because it will not be viable.”

You are putting no refurbishment money into the leisure centre, so what are the options? Close it in the future because it is too run down? That is what you will be saying. How will closing these leisure centres help your Closing the Gap? What we have got out there is not just a leisure centre, we have all kinds of people that use the leisure centre. We have all organisations, social services, police, everybody and we have got things I would think about under control within Temple Newsam ward with antisocial behaviour and all the other things that people have got to put up with. Now what we are saying, now that we are up and running and what has been put in to get it there, that what they want to do is shut the centre down so that first of all there is nowhere for people to go, there will be no money to keep it airtight and weather tight to make sure that it is there. How are people going to get to the new place? If you take car ownership, the only cars that you see sometimes on Halton Moor are some that some other people off Halton Moor have stolen and brought on to the estate to blame the lads and lasses who can afford them more. How is it going to impact on different groups?

You know, John, what we are talking about with leisure services – you are in charge and I have no argument against you – what we are asking for is what is going to happen there. Show us some money in it so that we can follow what you are saying. If you want the community to run this and if you are saying it is £250,000 a year, could you advise me where I can get hold of £250,000? I can get people to run it but some of them is ex-bin men so they have not got a lot of money.

All I am asking and what you have put out here is you have put the things out but have not told us what is going to happen or where it is coming from. I speak for Fearnville as well and say as far as we are concerned there it is a nonsense to expect a place like an inner city area, like Halton Moor and East Leeds – East Leeds especially with all the things that are happening there – to come under attack like this. If anywhere you should be putting money in so that we can be saving money for other organisations that we are spending on a daily basis looking after our elderly and especially trying to keep the crime down in that particular area. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR M HAMILTON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. This is on page 72 Minute 66. Let me first of all, Keith, address the matter that you raised about my letter and what I said in that letter.

I am absolutely clear I do not want concrete on Woodhouse Moor and, as I think Councillor Monaghan will explain, we have had meetings with officers who are all happy to accommodate that request for the pilot scheme not to put any concrete, so I hope that clears the matter up. I have been consistent on this throughout and that is what we will get, no concrete.

Lord Mayor, this whole issue is genuinely a difficult issue. I do not think any of us would deny that. I think sometimes it is characterised that there is a huge groundswell of opinion on one side of the argument, i.e. against barbecues, be they purpose built, temporary or whatever. No-one on the other side of the argument - or at least the people who are on the other side of the argument - are students. In fact I can say cannot remember receiving any emails from students on this issue either for or against but I have had emails on both sides of the arguments from other sections of the community. Read into that what you will. The fact is that the students have not actually been communicating with us on this particular issue.

I have got two or three examples of emails I have had from people who have expressed the view that actually they do favour some sort of solution that will allow people to continue to have barbecues. I will not read these out but I can tell you one of the emails is from a very long-standing campaigner in the area who has not publicly made their views known on this issue but is very clear that they want a sensible solution and in their view that could involve having barbecues on the moor. This is someone who is highly respected but does not want to put their head above the parapet, quite frankly, for fear of being ridiculed.

I have had another email from a resident who walks to the moor on a regular basis and he is actually a man with teenage children. He is very happy with the way that the situation is currently handled and actually wants to see barbecues continued to be allowed on the moor. I have also had another email, I have to say, from a Labour Party member in Headingley who also supports barbecues, so I think to characterise this issue as being very much against is actually wrong.

The proposal that has been put forward and agreed by Executive Board is to pilot this for a year, to see if we can enforce outside of the area where barbecues will be allowed and then we will take it from there. We will judge whether it is successful or not and then we will decide whether we want to pursue this further. I think that is a sensible way of proceeding given that, as I say, it is not as black and white as you might consider looking at all the email traffic no doubt you have had. There are lots of silent people who actually might have no view or are quite happy for some form of barbecuing to take place on the moor.

Let me just turn, Lord Mayor, if I may, to some of the remarks that Councillor Atha has made because I feel I have to address those directly. Bernard has this habit of making a series of assertions about particular issues and then not backing that up with any evidence or any particular information, yet when I say something Bernard demands that I provide the evidence. I am sorry, Bernard, but it works both ways. If you want to make allegations then you need to back them up as well.

Let me just say, Lord Mayor, that there is a plan for Woodhouse Moor. That plan that was written was worked up in 2003, back in 2003 when you were still in control. That document includes proposals for a car park, that document included proposals for a barbecue area, so I am sorry but that was something that you were actually working on when you were in control.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Never came to Members.

COUNCILLOR M HAMILTON: You cannot start saying "It is nothing to do with us."

COUNCILLOR ATHA: Under the Standing Orders I refer to, he has misunderstood.

COUNCILLOR M HAMILTON: Lord Mayor, can I continue, please?

COUNCILLOR ATHA: It is a point of order. Under a point of order you have got to sit down until the Lord Mayor has spoken. He is misrepresenting what I said. What I am saying, if he continues to do that then we will check it out after the verbatim is produced. It is not the way to behave.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Hear, hear.

THE LORD MAYOR: Would you like to continue, Councillor?

COUNCILLOR M HAMILTON: I trust that I will be given an extra 30 seconds for that completely meaningless intervention by Councillor Atha. It is the same every time, isn't it?

Lord Mayor, the fact is this plan was in existence and was written up when Labour were in power. The fact is it included barbecue proposals, it included car park proposals. There is no getting away from that; there is a document and that is what is in it.

Let me say, Lord Mayor, we actually decided not to pursue the car park proposal...

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: See the evidence.

COUNCILLOR M HAMILTON: ...because there was opposition. We actually decided not to pursue that issue. He also mentioned the football pitches. There are no football pitches on Woodhouse Moor. Do you know why, Bernard? Because we said we did not want them. Do you know when those proposals came about? They came about as we looked at the grammar school site, planning approval for which was given years before we ran the Council and in that planning permission it said that the football pitches that were being built on the Leeds Grammar School site should be placed on Woodhouse Moor – under your administration, Bernard, not under ours. We did not pursue it; we did not want it.

I think we need to put some perspective on these issues, Lord Mayor. The final one, and I think this is a very important one, is the assertion that Bernard makes about a drinking den, that we propose a drinking den. It is an absolute disgrace that you continue to repeat this allegation when there is no truth in that whatsoever.

COUNCILLOR ATHA: I have never mentioned a drinking den.

COUNCILLOR M HAMILTON: Bernard, I can produce email after email where you have said that. I am sorry, Bernard, it will not do. You cannot make accusations and then not back them up.

COUNCILLOR ATHA: I will back them up.

COUNCILLOR: He needs to visit one!

COUNCILLOR ATHA: Ask Penny Ewens.

COUNCILLOR M HAMILTON: It would do him good to visit one! Lord Mayor, in conclusion, this issue is a tricky one. I think we have come up with a solution which will work. If it does not work then we will not pursue it but this issue is not helped by people like Bernard Atha and others simply stirring it for the sake of a political game when actually they need to look at their own records rather than ours. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR MATTHEWS: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Martin has already said a lot of what I wanted to say but I think the issue here is that actually barbecues we all agree unanimously, I think, it is a problem. No-one is saying it is not a

problem. The fact is that Bernard Atha and John Illingworth – the Laurel and Hardy of Kirkstall Ward – they are happy to ignore the issues. (*interruption*)

COUNCILLOR ATHA: Could I ask which is which?

COUNCILLOR MATTHEWS: I will let you make your own assumptions there. The problem is, it is a problem, so we have come up with an idea, officers have come up with an idea on how to deal with the issue because the resources are not there, are simply not there to deal with the scale of the problem so we have come up with an alternative.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: No enforcement.

COUNCILLOR MATTHEWS: The key thing that Councillor Hamilton mentioned is that it is a divided issue as well. There are emails from all over the spectrum and actually 71% of the people who responded to the consultation survey were in favour of the barbecue area, so let us not be---

COUNCILLOR ATHA: They did not go to the (*inaudible*), that is why.

COUNCILLOR MATTHEWS: Bernard, we can prove all of your accusations and I will dig out the emails for you and I will forward them on.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: It is 10,000 people.

COUNCILLOR MATTHEWS: The point is, Councillor Illingworth, Councillor Atha have spent so much time throwing this issue around, stirring this issue up in the area and it is very unhelpful.

COUNCILLOR ATHA: Defending the moor.

COUNCILLOR MATTHEWS: No, I will tell you what you are doing, Councillor Atha. You are playing party politics.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: You are supposed to represent.

COUNCILLOR MATTHEWS: Poor Councillor Yeadon over there is on her own in Kirkstall Ward at the moment because you spend most of your time in Hyde Park and Woodhouse and Headingley interfering. (*interruption*)

Councillor Yeadon can take that as compliment but quite honestly I would not relish having ward colleagues like yourselves.

The point is you spend most of your time manipulating facts, twisting figures and actually we are trying to come up with a solution. Let me reiterate that this is a trial – this is a trial. We are going to give it a go next summer. If it improves the situation, then brilliant, excellent for the moor and we have protected the moor for years to come. If it does not work then we will hold our hands up next year at this full Council and we will say we were wrong and we will look at other solutions. Councillor Procter said that this morning.

I think it is nice that you have some sympathy for Councillor Procter. I have some sympathy for Councillor Procter...

COUNCILLOR J PROCTOR: Don't need it.

COUNCILLOR MATTHEWS: ...because he has had to sit through those stupid call-ins that Councillor Illingworth has brought forward. This morning was a complete joke, stirring up an issue, coming forward with a façade of consultation and then talking complete and utter rubbish.

Let us turn back to the main issue for Councillor Atha. The main issue for Councillor Atha and Councillor Illingworth is that Hyde Park and Woodhouse is a marginal ward and you are playing party politics. I think it is a disgrace, actually.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Let the community decide.

COUNCILLOR MATTHEWS: I think you should probably focus on some of the serious issues in your ward, some of the serious issues that are going on in this city and stop interfering in other things. It is us who are trying to protect Woodhouse Moor and we will continue to protect it for years to come. Thank you, Lord Mayor.  
(Applause)

COUNCILLOR MONAGHAN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I think I will say this for clarity because so often things get said around this and then get distorted or misrepresented. There will be no concrete blocks on Woodhouse Moor as part of the barbecue trial.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: There will be no enforcement.

COUNCILLOR MONAGHAN: There will be no paving, there will be no Grasscrete. Headingley Councillors, Hyde Park and Woodhouse Councillors have all said, "We do not want this." However, the claim that keeps being repeated back to us that there are going to be concrete blocks. We have said it publicly, I say it in every single letter I send, every single email I send, I am saying it on record here and I am sure I have said it on record several other times, but to be clear, no concrete, no paving, no Grasscrete, no nothing.

COUNCILLOR ATHA: What are you going to have?

COUNCILLOR MONAGHAN: This is a one year trial of a barbecue area. It is a designated area for people to have barbecues in. It does not have to have concrete.

COUNCILLOR ATHA: What are you going to have? Just paint the grass? You are burning on the grass?

COUNCILLOR MONAGHAN: Yes.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Burning on the grass? Oh my God!

COUNCILLOR MONAGHAN: It is a long journey. We are not putting any concrete blocks in. I would like to just say, I thought Councillor Wakefield's comments were particularly below the belt. I think all the Councillors in this Chamber work very, very hard all year round and to have it held against me that I go on holiday for two weeks in this Chamber is quite unpleasant.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Why didn't you respond?

COUNCILLOR MONAGHAN: I do not ask you what holidays you go on. I am sure you work very hard for your residents; I work very hard for my residents and I do not want that held against me that I go away for two weeks once a year.

I think what the Labour Party are doing is the worst part of political populism. It is jumping on a bandwagon and actually if you really listen to the views that were coming in...

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: The Lib Dems never do that.

COUNCILLOR MONAGHAN: ...the representative views, you would actually hear there are lots of people who have different views to those that keep being repeated in the paper and keep being repeated in emails we are receiving. In terms of the letter, I know the resident you are talking about on Cumberland Road. He did get a reply from me, he got a written response and every single resident who has emailed myself and my colleagues in Headingley on this issue has had an emailed response and it is the same 30 or 40 people every single time and every single time we give them the decency of a full and honest response.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: We will see.

COUNCILLOR MONAGHAN: What I think the problem here is that this issue has been blown out of all proportion and is actually distracting from a lot of really, really important things that are going on in Headingley. We are hearing that from a lot of our activists. You are talking about those activists, we are not listening to their views. Actually we are listening to the views of the activists who are working for the positive things in Headingley and they are incredibly frustrated about the attitudes that are going on about this and the nonsense that has been said and they want a line drawing under this, we want a line drawing under this. Let us do a trial, let us debate it after that trial and let us get on with some of the really important things in Headingley that we are working on around the HEART scheme, new doctors' surgeries, licensing issues and dealing with refuse issues beyond the current strike. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR W HYDE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Just a quick couple of points to set Councillor Lyons's mind at rest. I can tell him quite categorically, Lord Mayor, that the so far non-existent East Leeds Leisure site will not be located on the so far non-existent site which he is always claiming is where the incinerator is going to go. *(laughter)*

COUNCILLOR LYONS: You are telling us where it is now.

COUNCILLOR W HYDE: When we discover it we will tell you. The second point, I think he also needs to know that, despite the falling use of the present East Leeds Leisure Centre, despite the escalating costs that are being faced all the time, despite the biggest loss making centre, in fact, in the city, we have no intention of closing the present East Leeds Leisure Centre until such time as a new state of the art centre is provided and what he has said so far he has totally ignored that fact and that comes about because of the petitions that Councillor Schofield and myself in particular have made to Councillor Proctor over this issue. I can assure you that we will not allow any closures in advance of the new provision coming on stream. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR PRYKE: On the same matter which was raised by Councillor Ogilvie as well as Councillor Lyons on the replacement centre for East Leeds, I really have to ask if provision for deprived communities was the principal aim of building swimming pools in the past, why was there never one built in Richmond Hill when you were the Councillor there?

COUNCILLOR LYONS: But there was.

COUNCILLOR PRYKE: When did you close it? Why did you close it?

COUNCILLOR LYONS: Lord Mayor, point of personal explanation. It was built.

THE LORD MAYOR: I am sorry, you will have to sit down. You will have to sit down. Please sit down.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: The leisure centre – get your facts right.



THE LORD MAYOR: Please sit down. I am sorry, carry on, please.

COUNCILLOR PRYKE: There are numerous deprived communities around the city that do not have swimming pools within 20 minutes' walk. I can think of Harehills and I can think of Burmantofts. I can think of other bits of the city, of Hunslet and Beeston and Holbeck.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: We have got damp patches on the walls.

COUNCILLOR PRYKE: You never built swimming pools there. This administration is trying to redress that by providing a new facility accessible to all of the people of East Leeds by building something, probably on the A64 corridor, as well you know, Mick.

The other thing about East Leeds is that when people do not have cars they tend to catch buses. Do you remember – it is a big thing that lots of people can get on and it runs on a set route and there are routes from Halton Moor to York Road. There are not any routes from Burmantofts and Richmond Hill and Harehills to Fearnville or to East Leeds, so they are doubly deprived, even by your own definitions.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: But you are not closing ours.

COUNCILLOR PRYKE: The other thing raised was, of course, Woodhouse Moor, and as the Chair of City Development and Scrutiny it has been on our agenda for all but one of our meetings this year. We have had more meetings this year than any other year on this and it is coming back next time as well.

Until today the meetings were fairly apolitical. Perhaps the political nature of today's call-in was dictated by the substitute members from the Labour Party.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: A very good substitute you got as well.

COUNCILLOR PRYKE: As members of the Scrutiny Board are aware, as visitors to the Scrutiny Board will be aware, the vocal opponents of the proposal for a barbecue have probably over-egged the pudding a bit too much. The exaggerations of their arguments which Bernard has reiterated...

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Look at the photos.

COUNCILLOR PRYKE: ...are not helping their argument with us any longer to the extent even Councillor Beverley did not vote with the Labour Group for the first time.

It will come back to Scrutiny in future and we will have to deal with it in future but I would ask all members to be as open about that as possible.

The other mention of Woodhouse Moor from Bernard about the huge road widening. It is a metre and a bit for a bus lane. It is not a huge road widening. It lasted, if I remember, for something like 35 metres in total at the university end of Woodhouse Moor. Have you not had a proposal to build Supertram over the moor at some time? How much would that have taken up?

COUNCILLOR ATHA: I have not personally, no.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Oh yes you have.

COUNCILLOR PRYKE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Collective responsibility it is called, Bernard.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Lord Mayor at last, and I need more, I think, than the five minutes that are allocated for me to try and deal with all of these proposals, but let us start by dealing with Woodhouse Moor. I know there are people in the gallery who are concerned and have been waiting a long time to hear this particular element of the debate.

As was said earlier by Councillor Hamilton, there is not a lot of difference, actually, between all of the parties who are talking about the issue of barbecues and camp fires on Woodhouse Moor. All of us recognise that they are a problem, all of us want to do something about it. The only difference is that the proposal that is currently on the table is one that some people disagree with. I can understand that. What I have said throughout all of this debate, however, is this is not the proposal that first came forward from officers. That was Option 1 in the Exec Board report. There was Option 3 which ultimately was supported for a limited area and a limited trial. The trial will go ahead. If the trial proves successful clearly the position that was adopted at the Executive Board will have been right. If the trial is not successful then clearly and I and colleagues will have been proved wrong and will then have to still address our minds as to how we deal with the issue of barbecues and camp fires on Woodhouse Moor.

Indeed, most of the photographs that you have seen today are not about barbecues – they are about people using moor areas. Some may say, and I can quite agree with them, people abusing the moor area. The large number of drinks bottles that are discarded, the unacceptable litter that is there, the camp fires that are lit and again the camp fires that go on late into the night and yet more camp fires as well, and yet more camp fires and more camp fires, again, all of which are very serious issues that we want to get to grips with and want to tackle. It is all about how we do that.

Members opposite who say you have got nothing in about enforcement – you have not read the papers. There is a lot about enforcement. There needs to be rigid enforcement of this proposal and that is what we have said we will do.

Let us stick with Woodhouse Moor for a minute but let us just ask ourselves the question, why are Labour suddenly – suddenly – so interested in this issue? I have to say to the people who are interested in this particular matter that it is not a long-term, long held belief of the Labour Group at all and I would caution Councillor Rhodes-Clayton about new friends. Indeed, I always advise my children to be very wary of strangers and I always say never go in a vehicle, never go in a vehicle with a stranger. However, it is my understanding that you accompanied Councillor – what's his name?

COUNCILLOR ATHA: Brett.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Illingworth, Councillor Illingworth, to Farnley Hall, him already having been to Farnley Hall, the head offices of Parks and Countryside, on Monday of this week. At 4.45, Councillor Illingworth demanding – demanding – the filing cabinets are open for him to inspect documents (him already having inspected the documents earlier in the day) and refusing to leave the building until he had access to the appropriate documents, demanding that the Chief Executive of the Council be summoned to deal with the matter and the like.

Those of us who are used to Councillor Illingworth's tactics and, dare I say it, the abuse of officers, are used to those tactics being deployed. I have to say I think it is rather petty and childish. He sought to mislead the Scrutiny Board today on call-in and again that just further debases the whole point of call-in.

Maybe I should draw Members' attention to a meeting that took place on 7 July where members of the community came forward and were concerned about the public consultation, quite understandably. They raised those issues and what then happened? All parties – all parties – who were represented on that Scrutiny Board agreed with the Department and said that the consultation had been conducted in an appropriate manner. Not just members on this side – members on that side as well, and yet Councillor Wakefield conveniently forgets and ignores that particular issue. Why does he do that? Because politically it is convenient at the moment, is it not, to do so? Again, on 5 September the issue was brought again in terms of cost benefit analysis and all bar two members – two Labour members – again voted in favour. Councillor Harington quite rightly, wisely, voted in support of the administration's position and view.

Is all of this, I ask myself, this new found interest, is all of this and your new found friends, Linda, is all about this suddenly trying to win you over to their cause? Of course it is not. It is all about Gerry Harper is this. It is all about Gerry Harper being selected, his letters to the paper and him putting the cosh on the rest of you guys to say, "Come on, support my campaign to get elected and to try and get us back into power." That is what this is really all about.

What we have said all along is that we will listen to the people, we have listened to the people. The original proposals that came out did not find favour with the Executive Board, they have consequently been amended and a trial – a trial – will be implemented to see how that particular area and that issue is dealt with.

Let us move on now, shall we, to the second point that was raised and that is about leisure centres. Haven't we just heard it all? Haven't we just heard it all? What did these guys do? What was their proposal for the leisure centres in this city? They commissioned a KPMG report in 1997, it reported 2000. Councillor Atha and his colleagues did not like what was in the report. What did they then do? They did what they always do with things – they shoved it in the bottom drawer of the filing cabinet, closed it and locked the drawer and tried to forget all about it. The first thing I was presented with when coming into office, the first thing I was presented with was this KPMG report by the then Director saying, "You have got to see this, Councillor. It explains all of the problems that we have got in our leisure centres."

They did not want to do anything about it. That is the truth of the matter. That was the situation. Turn your back, turn a blind eye, pretend there is nothing wrong and it will all be all right. Actually, it will not be all all right because people do not want to go to clapped out, outdated leisure facilities. They actually want to go to new, modern appropriate leisure facilities and that is what we are seeking to provide in Armley and I am very pleased we are able to do that in Armley and also in Morley. I am delighted we are able to do that in Morley.

My hope and the vision for leisure centres was centred all around us still being able to get an appropriate PFI funding to move forward. We have had to amend that vision in light of the catastrophic mess that the Labour Government has got us into nationally because they are not making any more PFI credits available so we have had to amend our proposal. Yes, Councillor Lyons says, "But where is the funding?" It says in the Exec report, actually, where the funding is. It talks about where the funding will come on stream. Yes, it will require in the future capital programme provision being made. What this administration is saying is when that time arrives, that is what we will do. That is what we will do. If you lot were in power I doubt if that is what you would do at all.

I would, however, direct Councillor Ogilvie and Councillor Lyons to the actual record of what took place at the Exec Board and once again I am afraid your Leader has perhaps slightly misled you on the position of your group...

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: It is in the Minutes.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: ...because in actual fact he was in favour of Proposal 1; Proposal 2 which was Inner East. He did not vote against it. No, he abstained.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Yes.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: He abstained from it.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Till you see the money.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: When I pushed him on it, what did he say? "Oh well, when we see the money, then we will be in favour of it."

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Yes.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: So hold on, hold on – Mick, I have news for you, if I find the money he is in favour of closing East Leeds. That is what he said. That is what he said.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: No he is not.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: No I am not. Stop it, John.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: I have news for Councillor Ogilvie. He said the same, I am afraid, about South Leeds. If I could find the money he is in favour of closing it, so put that in your leaflets and go tell your electorate that, because we will be. Labour are in favour of closing those leisure centres providing we can find the money. That is rich, isn't it? They mess up nationally, they deny us that opportunity of PFI credit and now it is all up to us, we have got to find the money. Let me tell you, that is just what we are going to try and do. We will try and find that money.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Show me the money.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: I am surprised Councillor Blake is silent in this debate.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: He is digging deep.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Absolutely stunned.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: You are getting desperate.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Of course, there was originally a proposal to close Middleton.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: You have gone desperate.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: There was originally a proposal to close Middleton and what did we do? We listened, as we always do, public consultation, (*interruption*) we reflected on the representations we received and we came forward with amended proposals to build a brand new state of the art facility in Middleton – in Middleton. I would have thought the least – the least - Councillor Blake and colleagues could have done was to have welcomed that fantastic initiative benefiting some of the poorest people in the community, because that is what we have done. It is not open yet – no, but again we have given a commitment that actually the existing facilities will not close until...

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Go and have a lie down, John.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: ... we are ready to replace them with new.

Councillor Lyons and Councillor Wakefield talk about community transfer, community handover.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Have a lie down, John.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: I am more than happy to bring both of them on the discussions that have happened to date. Lord Mayor, we are seeking to deal with this matter and provide solutions. The Labour Group just want to run away and hide as usual. *(Applause)*

(ii) Adult Social Health Care

THE LORD MAYOR: We are now on to the Adult Health Social Care and I call on Councillor Ann Blackburn.

COUNCILLOR A BLACKBURN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am speaking on page 63 Minute 43 and 44, and page 64 Minute 46.

On the issue of day centres, I know that we are spending money on dementia centres, which is fine, I have got no problem with that at all, good thing, but this should not be at the expense of day centres. As most of us know they provide a lifeline so they should not be used for that. Then, of course, it mentions about Neighbourhood Networks. Again, Neighbourhood Networks in general do a good job, they provide extra facilities in the area and although we know that they are going to be busy lately because, of course, they have got new contractual arrangements coming up for 2010 and 2011 for them to enter into, but some will be going to extend what they have got and that, but in the middle of that we have got day centres closing and being offloaded on to Neighbourhood Networks and I do not know if they can cope with it. I am saying that I do see the work that Neighbourhood Networks do is as an enhancement to our day centres and not a replacement for them.

I wish to go on to speak about the transfer of commissioning responsibilities from the NHS to the Council. I am extremely concerned about this, as the Department of Health have committed to maintain the current value of transfer funds within the funding allocation to the NHS for the next two years with the intention that from the start of 2011/12 an equal amount will transfer directly to this Local Authority. However, it is possible that the Department of Health could determine not to pass on the full agreed value, so we have to say where will the shortfall come from? I would imagine this Council. We will have to see.

I would just say that we need to keep an eye on this. I know when I have had briefings with officers that they are as concerned as I am. I think we will have to keep an eye on it, as I have said, as the guidance does not guarantee a precise match at the point of actual transfer, so just watch out for this one because I think it might come back again. OK, thank you.

COUNCILLOR LOBLEY: Thank you, my Lord Mayor. I would like to speak briefly on Minute 44 at page 63. Also I am personally very grateful for the continued support that the Council administration gives to Neighbourhood Networks in this city. I was Chairman of Community Action for Roundhay Elderly for a period of three years and felt very well supported as Chairman by the department and also we were very grateful for the funding.

I do not think you can underestimate the importance of these Neighbourhood Network organisations and the excellent value for money that they provide. For what would probably be the cost of keeping one elderly person per year in a residential care home, we provide support for around 550 people on our books every year with all the sorts of problems that people who want to remain independent, who want to

stay living in their own homes, would struggle with if they do not have that family support around them.

I am always minded to think of our project manager – our excellent project manager – at CARE who always gives the example of a lady who had a dead fox on her lawn and she rang up the Council to say, “What do I do with this dead fox?” and was told just to deposit it in the black wheelie bin and pop it out and the Council would take it away. Well, that is brilliant, but when you walk with a Zimmer frame you are going to have a bit of a job on getting a dead fox into a wheelie bin.

This lady had no neighbours who could help her out, she had no family who could help her out, but she rang up our Neighbourhood Network and they got a volunteer round there to sort it out. It is that sort of service that the Council simply cannot provide, cannot afford to provide as well, and works with local enthusiastic volunteers who want to help out local people. It is just a winning formula from start to finish.

I would also like to add as well a lot of these Neighbourhood Networks do put on some excellent schemes. Councillor Blackburn mentioned about day centres. We have a weekly session called CARE Connect where the elderly people go and decide what it is that they want to have as entertainment every week. They have holidays away, there are all sorts of things organised for them and it is always incredibly popular.

I think that there are many ways to provide services and I think that Neighbourhood Networks across this city certainly do provide some excellent services for people.

Finally on a completely unrelated note I would just like to remind the North East Inner Area Committee we are having a photo just before we go for our sandwiches, outside the front, for our leaflet. Sorry for the diversion there, Lord Mayor, and thank you all for listening to my local plug about the Community Action for Roundhay Elderly, an excellent Neighbourhood Network. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: That was different! Thank you. We are now out of time and I would like to call on Councillor Richard Brett to exercise the right of final reply.

COUNCILLOR BRETT: Thank you, Lord Mayor. We had a long debate about the reference back. I would just like to pick up a couple of points that, even though I spoke in that debate, I did not have time to make.

One, Richard Lewis was talking about in some detail, 20 years ago, a case with Yorkshire Rider. I want to stress that under the new arrangements the sorts of things that may have happened in the past are simply not possible, we believe, at the moment. I want to reiterate again the wish of the administration which I hope has been made quite clear, that if the strike is called off we will get very quickly, immediately, into substantive talks which we think have the option of going a long way towards solving the problem and I want to absolutely reinforce what Andrew Carter has already said that neither of us want to see any of the workers involved on the extreme end of the sums that have been talked about. We would hope that we can find a process that does end safely in a situation where they can be paid what I have characterised a fair day's wage for a fair day's work.

For Neil, he talked in that debate about a number of things but said at one point that there had been two years of attack on low paid workers. I want to point out to him very clearly that the date when Andrew Carter and I were first told that the process that we had agreed to quite clearly after the two and a half thousand losers had been discovered, we only learned that that was not going to close the gap when we learned the result from 7<sup>th</sup> July and, as has already been said, four Union reps were involved in that meeting about the scoring of the jobs, the job evaluation

scoring, four of the management team were in that meeting and it reached agreement. The scores, sadly, that were reported to us were at a level that would not solve the problem. Our long term attempts to solve the problem through pay and grading, we only learned that that was not going to be easy to resolve a relatively short time ago.

Turning to Woodhouse Moor, I want to again agree with what Councillor Procter has said. I do not actually think there is a huge difference between various people here. There is shared concern about bonfires where tree branches are burned, where parts of park benches are burned, where a lot of alcohol is drunk and huge amounts of mess is left. If there is a difference it is a difference about the philosophy of what a park should be about.

I think on our side we are prepared to listen to the local community to try and consider leisure activities that local residents want to partake of and problems over barbecues in recent months have not been confined to Woodhouse Moor. I have found scorch marks from barbecues in virtually every Leeds City Council park I have been in over this summer, so it is not unique to Woodhouse Moor.

I want to stress and agree with what Councillor Procter said that the solution, whatever we do in this, is around enforcement and part of the plans we are beginning to put in place are around improving the enforcement and the plans that we have in place will not work unless we can improve enforcement, whether or not there is a special barbecue area.

Councillor Lyons may need reminding that we are in the midst of a pretty grim recession and I do not want to get into the details of whose fault it was because we may readily disagree about that, but I want to try and point out to him that magic wand politics saying East Leeds needs more money, I am afraid in the near future that is unlikely to work.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: When did I say that?

COUNCILLOR BRETT: This afternoon, I heard you.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: You are making it up.

COUNCILLOR BRETT: The vision of what we would like to do when resources become available is quite clear.

I would like to thank the members for the Headingley Ward for making it quite clear that there will be no concrete in any form in the area that is going to be created on Woodhouse Moor. I want to stress that nothing will be done in this pilot that will be irreversible and my only remark, as an outsider, is that those who are adamant that there is this huge majority which is against doing anything with barbecues, whatever the difficulties – and I am not saying it was perfect over the consultation – how do you explain that a clear majority of the forms that were returned said, “We think having a barbecue area is a way forward”?

COUNCILLOR LYONS: You fiddled them.

COUNCILLOR BRETT: We certainly did not fiddle them. That once again reinforces an approach which is a huge gulf between you and us, Mick.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: I was there all morning and I found out how you did it.

COUNCILLOR BRETT: I would like to thank my ward colleague, Councillor Pryke, for making it quite clear the transport difficulties that exist very clearly for people in Harehills and people in Burmantofts and Richmond Hill to get to a

swimming pool at the moment and he is quite right to point out that the previous administration's so called proud record of building pools for the poorest had missed out completely some of the poorest areas in Leeds.

Turning, if I may, to the adult section where lack of time means that the Exec Board member, Councillor Harrand, is not able to respond to the remarks that were made, I am sure he would have no difficulty welcoming, as I can, what Matthew Lobley said. I want to reinforce what he said about the value of third sector involvement.

I think those of us who know something about this area outside Leeds would want to stress that whatever the difficulties that there have been in recent times over Neighbourhood Networks, we are trying to put them on a more rational footing. There have been some complaints in some areas that some of the groups have had funding that others have not. There are plans now, following the July Exec Board, to spend more money on the Neighbourhood Networks, to put them on a rational footing, but they already give value for money and you might be surprised to learn that a network like this does not exist in some places. Leeds has a very good network that we can be proud of and we want to develop further.

I think I may have misheard Ann Blackburn because I think I heard her to say – but I am not absolutely sure that I have got this right – that she said we were closing day centres and we were offloading the work on to Neighbourhood Networks. I suspect after tea we are going to be returning to this but I just want to put you right. There is absolutely not in any sense at all anyone's suggestion that if a day centre closes the people who go there be sorted out by a Neighbourhood Network. That is not what we are saying at all. I do not quite know how you got the wrong end of the stick there. *(interruption)*

What we may be saying, and we will return to this after tea, I suspect, is that if you want to maximise the spend that you have on a particular budget for adults, is it not sensible to look at the way that you are spending it, and if we have a number of our day centres that are under-used, is it not sensible to look? We will return to that, Lord Mayor, after tea when I am sure there will be a lively debate. Thank you.  
*(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, Councillor Brett. If you did not hear what Councillor Blackburn said I am really not surprised. There has been so much talking this afternoon in this Chamber when other people have been giving their speeches, which has really not been acceptable.

I want now to call for a vote on the motion to receive the Minutes. *(A vote was taken)* We feel that is CARRIED. Thank you.

I would like to say to the visitors in the public gallery that we are now retiring for tea in to the Banqueting Suite and everyone is welcome to join us there.

*(Council adjourned for a short time)*

#### ITEM 11 – WHITE PAPER MOTION – DAY CENTRE CLOSURES

THE LORD MAYOR: We are ready to begin again and on page 12 with the White Paper Motion number 11, Day Centre Closures. I now call on Councillor McKenna.



COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Lord Mayor, I move our White Paper on the proposed closure of the six day centres. What I want to talk about today is this administration's proposal to close six of our much loved day care centres across the city.

Let me just remind Council also, this is after closing four other centres last year. If the current proposals to close six more goes ahead as this administration plans, we will have seen ten of our city's day care centres closed by this Christmas. That number is almost half of our day care centres in the city. Peter, your heartless plans will force elderly people from the centres they love, staff they know and friends they have made. You talk about reprovion of services for some of the most disadvantage people in Leeds and I fear the worst.

Despite the jargon, despite your spin we all know what reprovion means, Peter. It means cuts and closures. Sadly, I am not surprised that a Tory dominated administration wants to cut vital public services. Over on our side of the Chamber we believe in services that protect the vulnerable in our society and we support the necessary day care for our elderly. We believe that our older citizens deserve respect, dignity and genuine choice over their own care. We therefore simply believe that these centres must remain open.

We are told, Peter, you are closing centres because attendance figures have fallen. Yes, they have. They have fallen since the eligibility criteria changed in 2005. However, the real issue is that according to the professionals and the carers, you are simply not referring people to our day care centres. Take a look at our correspondence on this side of the Chamber from carers. We are repeatedly told by members of the public that their elderly relatives are refused extra days at a centre or, indeed, any days at all. Let us be honest, Peter, it does not take a crystal ball to predict that if you stop referring people to day care centres then attendance will fall.

I am also not surprised that having closed four centres last year you are now telling us that attendance figures are still dropping, we will have to close more day care centres. It becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy, does it not, Councillor Harrand?

What does this say about the priorities of this Council? What is more – and I do not think I am alone in being alarmed – we are seeing this administration predict in the local press that more unpleasant savings will have to be made if the six day care centres closures do not go ahead. What could be more unpleasant than forcing vulnerable elderly people from their day care centres and away from their friendship groups? What is more unpleasant than creating more social exclusion, isolation and loneliness for our elderly people?

Peter, you repeatedly tell us that these cuts are actually about giving older people more choice about their care. What nonsense. This is not about choice. This is all about cutting back on expenditure on the elderly. Please tell me, Peter, how is closing much loved day centres providing a choice for our elderly people? This action takes away the choice of attending day care centres and for the people faced with closure, where will they go? Where do they want to go? They want to stay where they are.

Again, this is really about cold, hard cash, not care. Your budget for 2009/10 shows you have already accounted for the savings that will be made from these closures in this year's budget. So much for meaningful consultation.

The current day care centres system is not perfect, it is not the perfect reflection of the demand for care from our communities, but reducing the number of day care centres at a time when the number of older people is increasing is certainly not the way to improve this situation. Your plans will leave East Leeds in particular with an appalling lack of elderly day care facilities and, as your own colleagues,

Councillors Campbell and Kirkland, have also pointed out, Otley is out on a limb and stands to lose an important local centre.

Let us look at Otley as an example, Peter. That centre has provided decades of support, companionship and contact for local people and their carers. The impact of that weekly session for elderly people and the respite it provides for the carers is invaluable. Councillors Kirkland and Campbell are right to be concerned for these elderly people who stand to lose their centre in Otley and we on this side of the Chamber support their cause, but that compassion and understanding from the Otley Councillors must now be extended beyond their own ward to the rest of the city – to Bramley and Stanningley, to Burmantofts and Richmond Hill and I am sure Councillor Brett will agree with me on that one, to Beeston and Holbeck, to Hyde Park and Woodhouse and to Crossgates and Whinmoor.

People in Beeston and the other wards mentioned are no less deserving of a good local day care centre and as my colleagues, the Beeston Ward Councillors, will tell you, Beeston is already suffering from a lack of general services. Their day centre is one of the few facilities that vulnerable people can rely upon in their community and you are about to take that away from them.

What are the alternatives for these people? Well, Peter, frankly, there are not any. We all know that Peter and the Adult Services sees the Neighbourhood Networks as the solution to the cost cutting closure of day centres in their locality. They rightly point to the many examples of good practices that take place within the Neighbourhood Networks, but they fail to see that the Networks have very few paid staff and they were created to complement adult social services day centres, not to replace them.

The Networks cannot address issues regarding safeguarding or personal hygiene and it would be wrong to expect their untrained volunteers or their very few paid staff to do so.

It is also interesting to note that many of these organisations have waiting lists for their services because of the volume of referrals from Adult Social Care – referrals that could be easily accommodated in their own centres where they are running numbers down in order to close them.

Peter, I say again, the Neighbourhood Networks are not the answer. They have not the staff or the skills to replace the work that goes on in our day care centres on a daily basis.

These plans are ill conceived and fatally flawed. They will result in older people travelling a longer distance to find places at day care centres outside of their own communities, and others will simply be trapped in their own homes staring at four bare walls 24/7. Is this the way to treat this generation of our elderly people, a generation that took us through Britain's darkest days in the Second World War? Is this how we repay them on the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the outbreak?

Taking away what little there is in terms of local day care centres and the much needed services they provide seems to me and our group as unjust and unnecessarily cruel. I am asking this administration today to think again and put our elderly people first. Please put a stop to these closures. I therefore move, my Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

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

THE LORD MAYOR: We now move to Councillor Harrand to move an amendment.

COUNCILLOR HARRAND: Lord Mayor, if there is a theme to this afternoon's Council meeting, it is always about let us not change anything, let us go back to some glorious time in the past. We got all that in the debate on waste disposal and we got it in the debate on leisure. Everything was perfect at some stage in the past – do not change it.

It is an unusual position where the administration is saying this is not good enough, we can do better than this, and the Opposition is saying leave it alone, just spend more money doing what you have been doing for the last 20 years and everything will be all right. These roles have been reversed.

I cannot think of a single major development in social care while I have been responsible over five years that has received the wholehearted support from the Labour Party. From Learning Disability Services to the principle of personalisation, the Opposition always refuses to support progress. That is fine, that is what Oppositions do and it is anything improved, everything stays as it is.

Personal choice and self-directed support is exactly what all of us do all day. We choose things for our own priorities. It is not something when just we do it, it is something we must encourage older people to do at a time in your life at which no longer you are able to choose and make your own decisions. You resist choice – we are for it.

The provision of day services evolved even when you were in power. Two basic understandings have been made clear and they have been central at all times in the report, to us as they were to you. We shall not take day centres away from any present user. I said that at Doreen Hamilton when I went last week and I will say it again. If we implement some or all of these proposals, nobody will lose provisions. I am not quite sure that comes through in the Labour Party press releases.

The second understanding is groups of friends will stay together. This cropped up when I went to Osmanthorpe last week as well and the lady said to me, "As long as I can be with my friends it is not so important where they take me to." I suspect most people think like that as well. The same lady also said to me, "If you close it, will the Labour Party open it again?", so perhaps you would tell us that at the end.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: Yes.

COUNCILLOR HARRAND: Then there is a suggestion that this is to save money from the Social Care budget.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: *(inaudible)*

COUNCILLOR HARRAND: What was that?

COUNCILLOR FINNIGAN: One of them said yes.

COUNCILLOR ATHA: Save £600,000.

COUNCILLOR HARRAND: Mick Lyons commits the Labour Group to reopen them all. Have you got that, Keith?

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Yes, we have got it.

COUNCILLOR HARRAND: Then there is the suggestion that this is to save money from the Social Care budget. The Social Care Budget has increased faster than the total expenditure of the city ever since I have been responsible for it and every £100 we do not spend on maintaining buildings we will give to older people to choose what they want to do with the money and not to take what we give them. We

should have done it years ago and now we are trying to catch up cities who are already giving their citizens the benefits of increased choice and control. We are in the last quartile, as the jargon is, in this sort of provision.

This policy is not something we have dreamt up locally. It is happening everywhere. This policy broadly is in line with Conservative Party policy right across the country. It is broadly in line with the Liberal Democrat policy nationally. It is precisely in line with Labour Party policy. This is exactly what the Department of Health tell us to do, it is exactly what the Secretary of State tells us to do – is anybody listening? No.

This is exactly what the Department of Health is encouraging us to do. It is exactly what the Care Quality Commission is telling us to do. When they came to see us last year this is exactly the theme of their report, buildings based provision is fading, out of date. This is not Leeds Labour policy. When we claim some perfect world of 1984 that never really existed, that was when the Council knew what was best for everyone, and we gave ourselves (*inaudible*) at our times in our buildings. Decreasing numbers of people prepared to be told that this is where they will go, this is when they will arrive, this is when we take you home and the service will cease when it suits us. Not at all.

That is not the approach taken by Neighbourhood Networks which we have dealt with before the break. They spotted that people's needs and wishes are changing and they have moved to fill the gap. This is a gap that has arisen out of people staying fitter for longer and only needing a small amount of help to enable them to stay independent. 1500 people on a good day go to our day care centres. How many people go to Neighbourhood Networks? 15,000 – ten times as many use these as day care centres. I think the point was made that 15,000 use the Neighbourhood Networks.

The point you made about safeguarding Neighbourhood Networks was not really appropriate, Jim. You might like to think about that. Neighbourhood Networks were first developed when Labour was in power and they blossomed under the Labour Party and if you want to take credit for them growing and blooming, fine by me, take all the credit. They are an asset to the city we should all be grateful for.

Jim, this is your White Paper and you have obviously spent a lot of time thinking about the subject and the future of social care. In your winding up on the same theme as Councillor Gruen demanding the answers to questions, what would you do if you were in power and had to react to these changes in (*inaudible*) policies and professional inspectors' reports? Would you ignore them or would you be converted? Actually I will answer for you – you would try and do both. You would definitely try and do both, but you cannot afford to do both. There is not the money in the budget now and at any time in the future to expand Neighbourhood Networks and continue providing the day centres that we do operate, so we have to change something.

Yesterday we had the first mention by Mr Brown of cuts. If you do this, you proceed the way you are advocating the future of social care, there will have to be cuts somewhere because we cannot afford everything, so we have had the first Brown cuts yesterday and now tell us where will be the McKenna cuts? Thank you. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR LOWE: It is what you do with it, though, isn't it?

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

COUNCILLOR A BLACKBURN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. We have been saying that there are six day centres, consultation has been carried out on proposals to close them.

Can I start off with saying that Bramley Lawn and Councillor Brett has asked if I was suggesting that Neighbourhood Networks were to take the place of them. Actually, if you look in the Executive papers on these appendices in the back, under Bramley Lawn it actually says in the comments:

“In the light of local needs and geography it should be considered whether there is a need for some smaller scale reprovision to serve the Bramley/Armley area. A Neighbourhood Networks partnership might be a potential provider”

so that is something that might be suggested, it would seem to replace them or to help the people of Bramley Lawn who do not wish to be allocated places elsewhere, so it does come under the thought process, obviously.

Let us have a look at this proposal that people could, if they wish to continue using the day centre, go elsewhere to the day centres. My – not my local centre, I do not have a day centre in my ward but I do know that people who use them, most people go to Cottingley and of course, that is not one of the six here, but it has been suggested that some people may well relocate to Cottingley, so I give that as an example. I have not done the figures on the others but I have on this one. It was suggested that Holbeck (now just to the arithmetic here, please, if you have got your pen and paper, simple addition) who have an average daily attendance of 13 and Holbeck Neighbourhood Service have an attendance of ten, though they are not open every day, so that is 23, and then the one at Cottingley, Springfield, has a rough daily attendance of 18, so that is 41, is it not? The centre’s daily capacity at Springfield is 30.

When I raised this with the officers that were briefing me, they said, “Well, yes, there should be more capacity there at Springfield so they should be able to take a few more, do not worry about that. I question whether everyone who wants to keep together in the groups, which I would imagine people do, if they all want to go on the same day, and I do not know how many of these people have got wheelchairs, they are going to need room for that. Then, of course, there is the question of future service users that live in the Cottingley/Wortley area, so you are going to need some spare capacity, yet I am told there is a capacity of 30, yet the idea is that there would be 41 if these suggestions went forward.

I just do not think it has been really closely looked at because, as I have said, we want there to be some spare capacity, we want there to be some room for wheelchairs and it seems to me that we are talking about cramming people in. That to me is not what day centres are about at all. You do not want to cram people in like sardines so they can shut some down and just cram them all in there. That is not good enough – it is not good enough at all.

As I say, you can see the figures do not bear out what we have been told and quite clearly the solution of them has not been looked at properly. I think that people seem to be happy that the day centres are there. I do not want any to close. I have got nothing wrong about people that want to take direct payments, that is fine, I am all in favour if people want to do that, but a lot of people do not. Thank you very much. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR D BLACKBURN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. It must be nine, ten years ago and we were all in different seating arrangements – Labour were over *there* and the Liberal Democrats, I think, were *there*, the Conservatives were *there* and I was somewhere over the back.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: They were better arrangement days.

COUNCILLOR D BLACKBURN: The then Leader of Leeds City Council, Brian Walker, came with this great idea of shutting day centres down and funnily enough the arguments that are coming from *that* side came from *that* side when there were different people sitting there and the arguments that came from the Opposition are exactly the same now.

I will tell you something, my view was then we should not shut day centres down and my view is still we should not shut day centres down.

I have got to say Councillor Ann Blackburn and myself had a briefing on Monday night from officers and I have got to say. I always go to briefings with an open mind and quite honestly yes, if we have got a day centre and nobody is going and nobody wants to go, I am not for wasting money, but I have got to say, after that briefing I am more convinced we should not shut them down than I was before we had started.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Job well done!

COUNCILLOR D BLACKBURN: I think the only thing at the moment, let us have another think about this. Support Jim's resolution. Thank you.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Lord Mayor, Naburn Court is a day centre in my ward. I do not want to see it closed. My two ward colleagues do not want to see it closed. The carers who are there do not want to see it closed for the residents who visit. They do not want to see it closed. They come from as far afield as Kippax and Wetherby and not just Whinmoor, in case you thought Whinmoor is expendable. The community does not want to see it closed. More than 1200 people today handed over a petition to us to make it clear that they were against it.

In the newspapers it is absolutely clear that the vast majority of people do not want to see it closed – "Day Centres under threat", "Fear over Day Centre closures", "Six more Day Centres to close", "Threat to future of wonderful centre for elderly", "Day Centre set to close." "This place has become our lives." "Holbeck Centre regulars fight closure bid." Then we come to the press release in Otley:

"A service that has provided a focal point for elderly people in Otley for decades could close as part of the city-wide shake up. However, worried ward Councillors say they will fight the proposed closures."

There is a wonderful quote from Councillor Campbell, totally against it, and Councillor Kirkland:

"...pretty cross about it because this centre provides a very good service for the people of the town."

When Councillor Campbell is "pretty cross" he is blood angry. Then we have the classic, Councillor Kirkland:

"The trouble is we were consulted about this after the decision was taken."

"...after the decision was taken." When we were briefed we were told no decisions had been taken, but clearly the administration Councillors know better. They know the decisions have been taken.

Then we have a remarkable interview with the Director:

"Savings elsewhere would be more unpleasant."

She is quoted over three or four column inches. I would expect and the people who have been in contact with me on the letter pages following that remarkable interview suggest that that would be more appropriate for Councillor Harrand because we have had a golden rule in this Council long before most of us were here, when we were *there* and you were *there*; nothing has changed. It is officers are here to advise. Even the most senior officers are here to advise. The policy is made by politicians and political statements are made by politicians. That has been the golden rule ever since we have been here and I think that it is the right rule and I hope Mr Rogerson will reinforce that that is the right rule, but the apparent judgment made by many people is that when we say "Closing day centres" – closing day centres – "is the lesser of the two evils according to the Council boss behind the controversial plan" – QED almost.

The officer who is in charge of this review kindly came to see me because I put a FOI request about certain information and she said to me that this was a desk top management exercise – I quote, a desk top management exercise. Do you know what that means? Some bod sitting in some office in Merrion House with another couple of bods on a desk thinking about and planning what this exercise should be. That is what a desk top exercise is, not going out and consulting, not talking to anybody else but they do a desk top exercise – quick and dirty, back of fag packet, there it is, desk top exercise.

I asked in the FOI and I repeated when I met this officer, "Can you tell me when the last referral to Naburn Court was? I want to know that information." I have been refused that information. It has still not come to me, despite my requests. Carers and people tell me no referrals have been made for months and months and months. They cannot remember the last referral to Naburn Court. If that is correct, then clearly it will be under-used and, as Councillor McKenna said, it is a self-fulfilling prophecy. You do not send anybody there, it is under-used, hey presto, it is closing. What a philosophy that is and no wonder people do not trust.

Councillor Brett, you talked of transparency and trust. Yet again you have failed on both counts. People are worried, people are anxious and these are elderly, vulnerable people whose joy it is once a week to go and visit together. Please re-think, please stop. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR ATHA: Lord Mayor, looking back a bit in history, which some of us have been doing today, I can remember a remarkable Conservative Alderman and then Councillor, Peggy White, who had a relationship with a Labour Chief Whip, Bill Merritt. These two provide a consensus between them across the two parties - the Liberal Dems did not exist and the Liberals were very few – and they would have turned over in their graves if they were buried – one is and one is not, thank God – because they saw social services as something which transcended party bickering, which we should all look at in the best interests of the people we are there to serve.

What I find nowadays, and I am privy to it too, is what we are really bothered about in this Council is scoring points. It is points which do not matter because no-one gives a damn at the end of it. It is a question of trying to win an argument on paper and that is a nonsense.

Those two did care and I think we should go back to that same time where people like that ignored the political aspects of it and said what is in the best interests of our customers, our clients?

There is no doubt whatsoever – and it is a pity that we are saying this – that the general consensus is that you are failing as an administration in this particular area of social services. You quote some headlines – I will quote others. "City Council still failing children at risk of abuse, say inspectors" and it gives the damning conclusions. That is not us making a political point – it is the newspapers making a political point. Yorkshire Post, here is another one, "Child protection found wanting"

and then it gives the details. This is not us making things up so we can attack you. These are the statements that have come through the press and if you are accusing the press of bias we think that is very strange because we see the bias in your direction rather than ours.

Worse, we come to a recent letter that appears which many of you may not have seen but some will. This is written by someone who for good reason remains anonymous but is in the social services department, or what we used to call social services.

First of all, she says:

“I can categorically say that older people are being denied places at day centres because they do not meet the critical criteria for this provision”

That has already been raised.

“Even worse, some older people who were attending day centres have lost their places because, for example, they no longer meet the criteria for door to door transport to their centres. With the closure of day centres and the tightening of criteria for the remaining places, there is the loss of friendships, a hot meal, bathing, chiropody and social interaction.”

This may sound like words but if you have got some old person who has to wear incontinence pads and during the day needs to have some treatment, you cannot get that done by free volunteers. You have got to have proper staff, you have got to have them in the place and you have got to have the facilities for them. To think that that could be allowed to happen is a damned disgrace. She goes along more modest lines.

“What happened to preventative work to assist older people to avoid falling into the critical state of old age? There is a veiled threat from Sandy Keene that savings elsewhere would be more unpleasant. What does this mean?”

She goes on to talk about taking someone's services away. That has been happening anyway.

“Many frail, older people in Leeds have lost their frozen meals service and criteria for the home care service is so tight that even frail people in their nineties are being denied help. This is just wrong. I thought that Local Authorities had a legal obligation to provide help to vulnerable adults.

Then there is talk of their flagship neighbourhood scheme for older people taking on some of the work of Adult Social Care. Currently Neighbourhood schemes are going through a complicated process of procurement. This means they are having to win a contract from Adult Social Services to receive funding that most have had anyway for ten to 15 years. What a criminal waste of time and effort all that is. At this late stage, in the pre-qualification questionnaire phase, it is not at all clear what additional work the Neighbourhood schemes will have to take on.”

Quite frankly, I think we all recognise that across there, the people who are doing this, are not heartless folk, they are not people without a conscience, but what I do say, you are embarking on a route which is going to cause harm and damage to so many old people. I went to some in Woodhouse. They were distraught, those few



that were *compos mentis*. The majority were not *compos mentis*, they were dementia people who were going to move to Horsforth, I think it was, but the people who were going to move into a space were going to have to be vacated by the customers who were not going to have that service at all. It makes sense to move people who are going down to Woodhouse who came from Horsforth to go into Horsforth, but there is no sense in denying that centre to the rest of the population because it performs for dementia patients within a whole two or three four square or radius miles. They are going to hand it over to a voluntary body so that splendid resource will be lost. It is just not fair, just not just, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR TAGGART: Lord Mayor, Councillor Harrand's amendment includes the words that, "The Council should note the extensive and successful efforts being made by officers to consult widely." Last week, Lord Mayor, we had a meeting of the West Leeds Inner Area Committee which I now have the privilege of chairing – at least I do at the moment, anyway – and it was not on the agenda. I discussed the issue with officers and I insisted that we have to take an item on the agenda. Rightly the other members objected to a substantial document – that is what it was – being handed round the meeting. I did not really mind a double sided A4 because even the average Councillor can cope with that, and it is not a proper way to consult people, to have that kind of discussion and debate so late in the day. I think Councillor Harrand should think again before he writes such confident words about consultation.

Bramley Lawn is in my ward and it is up for closure. I asked to see the attendance and referral figures. Absolutely fascinating. Of course, you would expect that the number of users and referrals from 2004, let us say, would probably rise on the basis that there are more older people around than there were in 2004. Of course, the other significant thing that happened in 2004 is that the Coalition sitting over there came to power. If you look at the graph it is absolutely astonishing. The figures are fairly level and then when the change of power takes place you see a massive decline and an almost continuous downward line right through to today. Officers say, "We have not got many users at Bramley Lawn, it is not a needed facility and therefore we had better close it." The fact is whether you have declared it or not, the administration sitting over there has wanted to reduce the number of day centres and it just so happens the basis of referral has changed and become more difficult and many day centres have had few referrals in recent times which to me represents a criminal under-use of a Council resource which is available there for all the people.

When I was at school, which is a long time ago, I did not know anybody in a wheelchair. I knew a blind teacher because my music teacher at school, who was a fine musician, was blind, but in the main in my school, a grammar school in Warwickshire, everybody was able bodied. Then I later discovered there was a special school not far away, just a few yards away, and I went there a few times with my friends from school and we helped out and we came across people with all kinds of issues which were facing them in their daily lives. Of course, until the 1970s/80s we had a kind of apartheid in this country, did we not? We treated people with special needs disgracefully, separately. They were ignored, they were forgotten and the able bodied population did not even think much about them at all, never saw them.

I am someone who believes that when it comes to dealing with services for older people, the better the mix the better it is for everybody because you do not just need help and support from professional workers and volunteers that come in; you actually have the social cohesion and interaction between people who get to know each other. People have got different kinds of issues. Somebody might be very frail but quite active mentally. I can remember years ago going into a home for the elderly run by the Council and people doing bingo. I said, "My God, if I get to this age, please, I do not want to do bingo, I have got a brain" and we have that mindset. We should recognise that everyone has got different qualities and abilities and

attributes. I just think it is a form of apartheid saying to people with dementia, "We will group all you off together." It does not do them any good at all. It does not do them any good at all but you can actually benefit some people with dementia, or different stages of dementia, by being amongst people who have not got dementia. It is like going back to the 1960s, my school days.

You are saying we are concentrating services on the people with dementia. No, what you are doing, you are cutting the service to save money and Sandy Keene was honest in the Evening Post when she is quoted, "Savings elsewhere would be more unpleasant." This is about money. From your point of view it is about cutting millions of pounds out of the budget but for the people of Leeds it is about not caring for people in our community, like we should care about everybody and their needs. You have got this clearly, substantially, absolutely wrong and you are out of step with the people in Leeds.

Yes, let us have broad services. Yes, let us try and prioritise as much as we can. Let us try and meet the needs of individuals, but the answer, members of Council, is not to shut these day centres. Thank again. Thank you. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR ARMITAGE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I want to speak in support of Councillor McKenna's White Paper. Specifically I want to talk about Naburn Court, which is in my ward of Crossgates and Whinmoor.

Once again East Leeds is bearing the brunt of your cost cutting and service slashing. Not only have you taken away training facilities from East Leeds to help people get back to work, you are now punishing the elderly in our area. There are already very few day centres in East Leeds and yet, despite this poor provision, you want to take away what little there is for the vulnerable, elderly people by closing Naburn Court.

Closure of Naburn Court is, quite simply, not wanted. The elderly people who use it do not want it, their carers do not want it and our local people certainly do not want it, so please stop it.

If you do not believe me look at the evidence. Today I have received over 1,180 signatures on a petition from people in my area who do not want Naburn Court to close. You have to take heed of this. This is a very important issue to the elderly people out there. This is not something that you understand, Councillor Brett. After all, you have 600 people who have signed a petition protesting against the closure of the Doreen Hamilton Centre which is in your ward. Your consultations have been a shambles. Your communication with carers has been absolutely appalling and vulnerable people in my ward are anxious, frightened and are suffering as a result of your cost cutting proposals.

Naburn Court provides safety, stability, it gives people precious contact with the outside world and excellent care from wonderful staff. Staff genuinely care and through their work they give the elderly people confidence, dignity and a sense of well being. Many people who use this centre have very little or any mobility. Without this centre, their disabilities would make them prisoners in their own homes. Because of Naburn Court they are able to get out of the house, meet their friends, socialise in a safe and familiar environment.

You tell us now that to close Naburn Court you will condemn many of these elderly people to loneliness and isolation. You will also snatch a few precious hours of respite away from many loving and committed carers – carers who currently treasure the little time Naburn Court allows them.

I ask you to think again regarding your proposals. There are so many people that this affects and you should be ashamed of yourselves to go through this with. Can I say, what I want to know today and what we want to know and everybody else

on this side wants to know, when is this administration actually going to put the needs of elderly people first? Thank you. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR CASTLE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I wish to speak in support of Councillor Harrand's amendment. A friend who lives in the south of England recently arranged a surprise party for the 80<sup>th</sup> birthday of her mother. When I enquired how the party had gone, I was told, "It was dreadful." Apparently her mother had been mortified that the fact that she had turned 80 had been broadcast to the world. When my friend asked her mother why she was not proud to have reached the age of 80 in good health, her mother had responded that she was sure that now everyone knew her age she would be dragged away to play bingo.

There were no Neighbourhood Networks in the area where my friend lives but there were a lot of well meaning people in the town who believed that once one reaches the ages of 60 the desire to listen to music, to visit the theatre, to draw or to paint disappears. All one wants to do is play bingo.

If my friend's mother had moved in the village of Shadwell in my ward, she would have been happy to declare that she was over the age of 60 because then she would have been able to take part in programmes and schemes organised by Moor Allerton Elderly Care, affectionately known as MAEcare, which is well supported by this Council.

MAEcare encourages older people to maximise their health and wellbeing by providing easy access to healthy exercise groups. A swimming group has been developed and a walking group gives members the opportunity to make new friends while taking gentle walks in some of the lovely countryside around our city. The Companions in Concert Group enables members who love music and the theatre to attend performances when otherwise they would not feel able to participate. Events are held at the local library and joint events are organised with local schools, which have the benefit of developing a better understanding between the two generations. The MAEcare outings are always popular, with recent visits to Castle Howard, the autumn flower show in Harrogate and The Deep in Hull.

MAEcare is not just there to provide social activities. People who have retired but who have a lot to give the community volunteer as drivers to take older people to medical appointments, the Post Office, the bank and anywhere else they need to go. The Live at Home Scheme helps to solve the problems that may undermine an older person's confidence in feeling able to cope with independent living in their own home. The scheme aims to find routes to solving problems with home maintenance and repairs, garden work and home security.

I will end by assuring Councillor Gruen, one of the residents of Shadwell, that he will be very welcome as a MAEcare volunteer when he finds himself with more time on his hands after May 2010. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: We shall see.

COUNCILLOR LANCASTER: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Can I declare an interest? I have been a member, Chair and Vice Chair of MENA for the last eleven years. I did not know you were going to speak but certainly thank you for that and you really echo some of my points as well.

I got involved with MENA, as I said, eleven years ago and I do wonder sometimes in this Council how many people do really realise what they do. You have just had a really good insight into that. Usually when I speak to the people at the meetings they usually say they can manage through the week, it can be weekends when they feel lonely. The churches have got involved and they put on a luncheon club once a month. They do agree that maybe they ought to do that twice a month because they have been really successful and there has been no shortage of

volunteers in teams of twelve, so there are three teams, so that means the volunteers have only got to do it once a month and I am very proud to stand here and say I am the leader of the blue team – it is my turn again in November. A three course meal is cooked, they have various activities as well as bingo, as well as enjoying the meal and I know that is very welcome.

MENA arrange week's holidays all over the country. I know they went to Torquay, which I felt was a bit too far but that is where the group who wanted to go chose. They have day trips, they enjoy tai chi, they have a swimming group and a theatre group and one of the volunteers who does an excellent job, she is a former home care team leader and she spends all day Tuesday, she commits that every week, where she bobs in and sees people who have maybe come out of hospital and just lack the confidence for that first trip to the shops after they have been in hospital.

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: What about day centres?

COUNCILLOR LANCASTER: Also she might sew a button or do a bit of sewing. I know we are talking about day care centres, Councillor Coupar, but there has been mention of the Networks taking on the work of the day care centres so I just want to say the involvement that I have had with MENA, I have been every step of the way involvement with social care and I would not have agreed for them to take on the extra work. They are providing services that the local people want. The organisations have regular meetings and find out what those local people would like in their area, activities that they can enjoy and be together and be with neighbours and friends. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR WILKINSON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Day care is not all about providing day centres. In the North East Committee Area we have the Wetherby ward, which does not have a day centre. We have the Harewood ward, which does not have a day centre. We have the Alwoodley ward, which does not have a day centre.

What we do have in Wetherby is WISE. WISE is an acronym for Wetherby in Support of the Elderly, which is a voluntary group that looks after the elderly in our area.

In 2003, with initial help from the NHS and social services, WISE was created and since the start the organisation has gone from strength to strength with many dozens of volunteers assisting not only the elderly but those who find difficulty in helping themselves.

Just a few examples.

COUNCILLOR GRAHAME: I think you are misunderstanding this paper.

COUNCILLOR WILKINSON: I will carry on.

THE LORD MAYOR: Carry on, Councillor Wilkinson.

COUNCILLOR WILKINSON: A few examples. A new partnership between WISE and the Red Cross offering home support when people are discharged from hospital. This helps the hospital bed situation. Help with shopping, prescription collection, cleaning and assisting with paper work. Other examples are IT courses in Wetherby, Boston Sap, Bramley; a befriending service where people are visited in their own home so that they have got the benefit of being in their own home, which they like; they attend parties, social outings and luncheon clubs. The Wetherby Ward members and the Harewood Ward members both support this organisation financially and we think it is good if not better than day centres. Thank you. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR GRAYSHON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I think this really is about empowering elderly people to help themselves. We have heard of a number of organisations. In Morley we have Morley Elderly Action, we do not have a centre for the elderly and whilst there will probably always be a need for people who need specialist care, the issue with regard to day centres, as someone has pointed out, is a money one. To use a phrase that some more mature people in the Council Chamber may recognise, you cannot have your shilling and your bun. Where do you spend the money? Surely you spend it where you can help the most people.

Some people may say it is quite patronising to tell elderly people what they want. Suzi speaks eloquently and presents a petition saying that she spoke to people and collected signatures. The issue is one which is a difficult issue because we do not have a bottomless pit of money so we need to spend the money where it is going to bring about the best value and I would suggest that the Neighbourhood Networks are there, they are well established, they are well used and we are now living in a more modern society where those people who we would term to be elderly are not elderly. It is an often-heard phrase that people I know who are in their seventies will say, "Well, I have been to help old Mrs So-and-So down the road" and old Mrs So-and-So is 60 not 70, she is considerably younger. People see themselves as being younger than they are. That is one of the problems.

The issue is, we cannot do everything we would want to all the time and we have to direct those funds where they will have the biggest effect and I would suggest that the Neighbourhood Networks are the way to go with this. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR YEADON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am speaking in support of the White Paper in the name of Councillor McKenna. I am slightly confused because at one point earlier on in today's proceedings when Councillor Brett reassured Councillor Blackburn by saying that the Neighbourhood Networks were not going to tip up those people who did not have a service with the closure of day centres, yet I have just sat through quite a long debate about how fantastic Neighbourhood Networks are. I can assure you, over this side of the Chamber we completely agree with everything that has just been said. Neighbourhood Networks are fantastic and we agree they are, but what we do not necessarily agree is that you can only have one and not the other.

Neighbourhood Networks were introduced to enhance day service provision, not to replace it, and if that is what we are talking about, then this is a dramatic change in the way that service delivery is happening in this city and it is something that needs to be discussed in a more succinct way than are happening at the consultations at the moment.

There have been a few contradictions today. One contradiction is during the consultations that one of the day centres, Woodhouse Day Centre, is closing because members have to travel too far to get there. It is over-subscribed at the moment. It is a specialist dementia service which provides seven days' care and people are travelling – and I agree – a long way to actually get to that service, but then on the other hand we are closing day centres in the east of the city so that people who live in the east of the city are going to have to travel out of their local community to access a provision, so there does not seem to be any kind of thorough clear thinking behind these proposals.

Councillor McKenna has already suggested that we recognise that day services are not perfect and perhaps we have to ask why are day services not perfect? Why have they not been given the leadership so that they are doing a good job? Councillor Harrand, I support the concept of progress and it is about empowerment. Changes must be driven through person-centred planning. Changes have to be person-centred driven, not budget-centred driven and at the moment the budget was set before the consultation began, so rather than the views of service

users influencing service delivery, it is about money and this is hardly acceptable and you are hardly putting those vulnerable people at the heart of what has been discussed.

I can assure you it is not only just the Labour Group who feel this way. In March 2000 Councillor Andrew Carter stood up and told the Council:

“A visit to a day care centre might not mean a lot to us Councillors in general but means a great deal to these elderly people. It is the highlight of their week.”

I quite agree with you, Councillor Carter, and I also agree the other comments you had that day when you said:

“Elderly people wish to stay in the day centres that they are currently attending where they have made friendships, where they get the service and support that they require.”

Councillor Carter, I think you were spot on when you said this - and I will not say that very often – when you said that it was vitally important that elderly people go to elderly day centres and are not disadvantaged. I am afraid that they are going to be disadvantaged.

Councillor Harrand said earlier that for those Councillors under 30 they should be panicking. I am panicking. I might be that 120 year old woman in the future that you often talk about, and there are plenty of reasons to worry about the plan in the short term, but I have to ask, what on earth is Leeds going to do in the long term?

Currently the fastest growing age group in the UK is the over 80s. The number of people with dementia is set to double in the next 30 years and the number of people over 50 with learning disabilities is going to increase by 53% by 2021. Our city will need more, not less, services for elderly people and I am sorry, there is just no getting away from that. We have a statutory responsibility and we have to stop passing the buck.

Let us think about this again and let us not be dictated to by a budget but by the vulnerable people who use these services. Thank you. *(Applause)*

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

COUNCILLOR BRETT: Thank you, Lord Mayor. The first thing I want to make clear, regardless of what has been said by anyone, is that no decision has yet been made. *(interruption)* Are you unhappy that no decision has been made? Technically and in reality a decision on this has to be made by Executive Board and consultation is consultation and I will say more about that in just a minute.

There have been some quite serious allegations made and I would urge, please, administration Gruen, if you have evidence of blocking people going to Naburn Court please can you give details to me and I will investigate. They are serious allegations.

Councillor Atha, if you have names of people who have been denied meals on wheels, can you give me the name, the details? I will investigate.

COUNCILLOR ATHA: You should know who they are because you are in charge. You should not be asking me. *(interruption)*

COUNCILLOR HARKER: Bernard, give us the names and don't argue.

COUNCILLOR ATHA: No, you just find them out. You should know. You are cheating on this.

COUNCILLOR BRETT: Consultation means that you listen. I have been to Doreen Hamilton, spent an hour and a half listening to the residents there and I was very interested what they had to say. A lot of things that they said have been absolutely reflected in what has been said in this debate.

The sort of things I heard again and again were about the thoughts of losing the service and several of the remarks have been along the lines of, "What will I do if I do not have the service?" Nobody is saying anything other than we are absolutely guaranteeing that anyone who goes to a day centre now will continue to go to a day centre and, further than that, we are guaranteeing they will go with friends.  
(interruption)

That guarantee is not going to be easy, necessarily, to work through. If anyone thinks that in the current climate – and the debate we are about to have (I always seem to be forward looking this afternoon) if anyone thinks that in the current climate we can somehow ignore what inspectors and the Quality Care Commission actually say to us, then I think they are dreaming. We have to listen to what the inspectors say and the inspectors have said to us that they have concerns about our day care centres.

Let us just step back and think about what has happened. In the last 30 or 40 years miracles have happened. People are living longer. People who get to the age of retirement now have much higher expectations about what they will do. Councillor Castle made it absolutely clear that many people who are well into their eighties do not see themselves going to day centres. In the last year I am told 436 new people went to day centres in Leeds, so if in one or two places there have been particular difficulties, I want to hear about them because clearly new people are coming to day centres.

I want to absolutely insist that if anyone thinks this is a cut and dried thing, it is about saving money – no, it is not.

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: It is.

COUNCILLOR BRETT: You can believe what you like but my words to my side and to anyone else who wants to listen to me is, it is not.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: Well said, Richard.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Better tell the officers that.

COUNCILLOR BRETT: I very much want us to provide the best possible services to as many older people in Leeds as we can possibly manage, whatever their needs. Some of them have needs that can only be met by going to a day centre and that will continue. Many others have needs that will be better met if we can improve the Neighbourhood Networks and that is why we want to put more money into the Neighbourhood Networks to improve that service.

We are certain, sadly, in the situation we are coming to that there will be pressure on the service. There will be pressure on the service for the reasons I have just said – people are living longer. It will be more and more difficult to meet everybody's needs in the way that we would all wish and it for that reason that we have started this consultation. I cannot speak for other Exec Board members but in my head there is no cut and dried decision. I will look at it again when it comes to Exec Board and I would think that other members of the Exec Board would look at it. There is no certainty in my head that what was started in the consultation will actually

go ahead, but the case for looking at it again is very, very clear. We have to use money wisely. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: That was a bit lukewarm.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, Councillor Brett. We now move to the vote. No, we move to Councillor McKenna to sum up.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: I would rather go to the vote.

THE LORD MAYOR: We will stick with you, Councillor McKenna.

COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: Thank you, Lord Mayor. That has been a very interesting debate and I think we have bottomed the fact that the cuts and closures are about money. I am grateful to Terry Grayshon who has pointed that out. Richard seems to be resisting that fact but it does actually come down to that. I will come back to Richard.

Peter, can I say firstly that we do support changes. Many of my colleagues and myself sit on the Personalisation Working Group. We do support changes. What we do not support is your budget cuts. I will come back to that question you asked me, Peter, do not worry. Just wait, you will get your chance.

COUNCILLOR: A lot more money than you had.

COUNCILLOR HARRAND: A lot more than you offered to put in. £300,000 more.

COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: Can I thank Ann for her support and I totally agree with her. Indeed, she has put a good suggestion forward that we might be looking at smaller facilities, looking at the services we provide and, Peter, I hope you are listening, compared to the Networks we could do a lot better in our day centres. You are in charge – you can do that, they have the skills, they have the staff. The Neighbourhood Networks do it on a shoestring. My own organisation does it, I know it is true, but the figures you mentioned regarding attendance is fanciful. It is fanciful, they are simply not there. I know that, they are fanciful, OK.

David was right, actually, he did remind me about 2002 under our erstwhile Leader Brian Walker when there was a closures programme put forward and surprisingly enough, Richard, some of the centres were the same. I certainly remember Bernard speaking about Woodhouse as a closure but, you know, we did stop them and you know why we stopped them? Because this Group, the people around here had the courage to say to our own party, our own Executive Members, “You ain’t doing this”. Do not think for a minute that you did because you were a smaller number than we were. We stopped it. People like me stopped it. We did not let them do it. That is how much day care centres mean to us.

Councillor Campbell – is he there? I cannot see him but I can see Councillor Kirkland. Why do you not show the same courage? Stand up for the day centres. Fine words are OK but actions are what count.

COUNCILLOR ARMITAGE: That is right.

COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: Let me tell you if you do not believe me on that one, Graham, please listen and you too, Richard, you listen too. Take it from the Liberal Democrat website, “Anger over unfair charging”. You remember that one? 2003, this is what the Liberals said on their website at the time:

“When push comes to shove it is easy to tell people you do not agree but you soon find out if words are backed up with convictions



and courage that the people of Leeds expect from their Councillors.”

You said that. I could not have put it better myself. Show the courage.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: I am amazed it is still on the website.

COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: Richard, you said only in January of this year, “Helping people most in need is one of the major reasons why I came into Local Government.” These people are very, very much in need, Peter. I work in the sector, I know...

COUNCILLOR BRETT: But they are not losing a service.

COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: ...and it is growing all the time. Thankfully, as somebody said, we are all living longer but we are not living longer healthy. Have you seen some of these people coming from the doctor's with a prescription? I actually pick some up for some of them and you have a small sized bag like a bag of shopping from Morrison's with the drugs they have to take for the week. These are very vulnerable people.

Neil, I totally agree with you. Suzi, you are quite right, East Leeds are going to be particularly badly hit. There are serious gaps there. Ann Castle talked about healthy 60 year olds. Jus for change, Ann, has anybody got the courage in this Chamber to put up their hand if they are over the age of 60? I am. I do not need these centres. I still go running, I climb mountains, I swim, I go to the theatre, I ride my bike. Les doesn't because you can tell he does not, but I do. *(laughter)* Of course these centres are not for 60 year olds like you, Ann. The average age is 85 and they all have physical mobility problems. Sixty year olds, I go to the cinema – I even go to night clubs now and again. Come with me! *(Applause)* What you said is great but it is nonsense. *(interruption)* She comes with me!

Councillor Grayshon, I am very grateful to you, you put your finger on it straightaway. You should be in there running the budget instead of some of this lot over here. It is about money. It is about money. It is about money.

COUNCILLOR GRAYSHON: It is best value, really.

COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: No, it is about money. It is about money. There was something else. Referrals. I said in my speech that Neighbourhood Networks are full, there are at busting point, they have waiting lists because Adult Social Services, Peter, do not refer them to their own centres, they refer them to the Neighbourhood Networks, but they are full, there is a capacity problem. They do a great job, they have very few dedicated staff and volunteers. They cannot do personal care and hygiene that takes place in day centres. They cannot do safeguarding. They have neither the skills – they cannot. We listen and we pass it on to the proper officer but we cannot personally do it.

COUNCILLOR HARRAND: Is there a greater risk?

COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: OK, so to come back to it, Peter, this consultation is flawed. Graham Kirkland said it, they are consulting after the decision is made. Neil said it. I was at that meeting. They rushed a paper through because somebody said, “We are going to consult the area committees.” Our area committee was that day. If they had missed that there was not another one until October. You will have stopped talking to people in October. We would not have been consulted. We got the document. I read it before but some of my colleagues did not. What type of consultation is that, Peter. What type of consultation is it?

I think it was you, Peter, was it not, you said you knew a very, very caring Councillor called Peggy White who really cared about people. I used to know a very caring Councillor called Peter Harrand and I have sat many times on social services and he was saying all the right things then. He is saying all the wrong things now. What he is saying is conditioned by money.

I have to finish, I know – I could say a lot more. Look, the CSCI report, Peter – I am coming on to it, Peter, just have patience. Hold your patience. I will get there. The CSCI report did emphasise the need to move away from building-based services. *(interruption)* I will, Peter – I hope the Lord Mayor will allow me to. *(interruption)* CSCI report emphasised the need to move away from building based-services but – and it is a big ‘but’, is it not – at present there is no viable alternative to building-based centres. If there is, tell us what that alternative is. Do we mean the street? Do we mean the local park? There is no alternative at present. You have not come up with an alternative.

It is still early days regarding direct payments. We are not there yet, hopefully we will be there and it will provide choice. We are not there, you are not offering a Plan B. You have no Plan B. Plan A, close them. Simply taking away buildings will not improve services. Also, the closure programme does not fit with the ideals of the government on what you are saying. It does not.

COUNCILLOR HARRAND: Oh but it does.

COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: No it does not, Peter. It does not. Your consultation exercise is flawed – it is flawed. You will not listen to what has been said. You say something that you have said, you say it in Opposition but when you are in power you want to close them. We had the courage to stand up against our own Executive and stop closures. You should give your group a free vote. If these closures go ahead and these people mainly, Ann, they are 85 not 60 year olds – we are fine, we can go to the cinema – 80, 85, we have people 96 and 98 living in their own home. If there is no centres for them Peter, do you know what will happen? They will sit in their own room watching, listening to the telly not to see what is going on but to hear the sound of a human voice...

COUNCILLOR HARRAND: They will always go to a centre. Nobody will have their centre taken away.

COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: ... and it will cost you more in the long run because you will have to take them into full nursing care which costs £600 to £800 a week. It is crazy economics. It will cost you more if there are no day centres. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: I now call for the vote.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Recorded vote, please.

COUNCILLOR TAGGART: Seconded.

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

THE LORD MAYOR: Numbers present were 93. The “Yes” vote was 47, the abstentions were nil and the “No” vote was 46, so therefore it is CARRIED.

We now come to the substantive motion.

COUNCILLOR BENTLEY: Recorded vote, please.

COUNCILLOR PRYKE: Seconded.

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

THE LORD MAYOR: Those present 93, the “Yes” vote is 50, abstentions 4 and the “No” vote 39. The substantive motion is CARRIED.

#### ITEM 12 – WHITE PAPER MOTION – SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN

THE LORD MAYOR: We now move on to the motion in the name of Councillor Golton, Safeguarding Children. Councillor Golton.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: Lord Mayor, it is now six weeks since Ofsted made unannounced inspections of social care teams.

THE LORD MAYOR: Would you stop a minute, Councillor Golton? Could we have quiet, please?

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. The purpose of this White Paper is to report back on the commitment and progress made to address the findings of that inspection. It is also an opportunity to provide assurance to members and to the people of Leeds, given the context of a series of reports highlighting safeguarding concerns for the Council. It also offers me the opportunity to reiterate the confidence that I and other members have in our social care professionals to meet the challenge of improving practice under challenging circumstances.

My accountability to you is not only raised on a personal commitment to you are colleagues but is stipulated through guidance. Lord Mayor, I am the only member of Executive Board to have my job description codified by Statute and my job description is here, it is included in this document produced by the Department of Children’s Services, and my job description stretches to eight pages.

If you will allow me, I will just read from two of the sections which refer to my relationship with members and also to Council:

“The Lead Member for Children’s Services has political responsibility for the leadership, strategy and effectiveness of local children’s services. Once designated the Lead Member should have a working relationship with other members of the Local Authority and the wider community based on mutual challenge and support.”

I emphasise the “mutual challenge and support”, Lord Mayor, because I am grateful for that which I have had of late since the inspection. It goes on:

“As politicians Lead Members should not get drawn into the detailed day to day management of service delivery but as elected representatives they should be proactive in developing the local vision and driving improvements for local people. They should communicate this vision for children to the Cabinet, Executive and to other Councillors.”

Lord Mayor, that is why I am here today, to report on a particularly crucial area that members will be concerned with.

Members will recall the Council meeting when we shared the disbelief at the shocking death of Casey Leigh Mullens. I was not Lead Member at the time but the Serious Case Review was undertaken by the local Safeguarding Children Board during my watch, it was investigated and published during my term. There were serious lessons to learn from this case and the guidance is clear in setting out how I

should approach such matters as Lead Member. If you will indulge me again, Lord Mayor, the section of the guidance which refers to safeguarding:

“Lead Members are politically accountable for ensuring that the Local Authority fulfils its legal responsibilities for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. They should focus in particular on satisfying themselves that there are systems in place for effective co-ordination of work with other agencies with relevant responsibilities such as the police and the NHS. Lead Members should also take steps to assure themselves that effective quality assurance systems are in place and functioning effectively in the Local Authority and for challenging partner agencies on how they fulfil their responsibilities.”

Lord Mayor, the Serious Case Review provided specific recommendations for better safeguarding within and between agencies. Some months prior to publishing of that Serious Case Review I met with the independent Chair of the Local Safeguarding Children's Board. I did this to assure myself, as is stated in the guidance, that recommendations would be taken on board by all the relevant partners including Children's Social Care. I was informed that assurances had been made by all of those agencies that all relevant actions had been taken.

Members will be aware that Ofsted inspectors carried out an unannounced inspection of two of our social care referral teams the day after the Serious Case Review was published and members will be aware of the inspectors' findings. I was informed personally by the inspectors the following day.

Lord Mayor, I have to say it was a body blow to me, made all the harder given the responsibility to you and to the people of Leeds to learn that those essential safeguarding lessons from the Serious Case Review had not been embedded in consistent front line practice. Like all members, my first instinct was to seek answers from those responsible why this was the case. Nevertheless, my responsibilities do not afford me the indulgence of pursuing scapegoats when the immediate priority is guaranteeing the safety of vulnerable children.

The six weeks since the inspection has been an intense period for staff from across the Children's Services spectrum. The same spirit of common purpose that produced a positive re-inspection of our fostering service referred to earlier in this meeting, Lord Mayor, has been applied to tackling the concerns raised over our referral teams. Thousands of files have been reviewed to ensure that no child referred should be left at potential risk of serious harm. Professional social care management support, already planned pre-inspection, to better manage safeguarding enquiry received by colleagues in the call centre has been accelerated.

Given the hundreds of extra calls that all Local Authorities are receiving after Baby Peter, this work is essential to make sure our social care teams are not overloaded and have the space to take on the further workload associated with the improved practice that we require.

Our Chief Officer of Children's Social Care, appointed just weeks before inspection, has accelerated the task she had already been set to embed consistency and compliance across teams. She has provided close support, guidance and challenge to individual managers so that our front line staff may be provided with the necessary guidance to deliver consistent safeguarding.

The time restrictions for debate do not allow me to provide further detail here. However, over the past six weeks I have made a point of involving members in both the findings of the inspection and the challenge ahead of us. Briefings for Children's Champions and the Chair of Scrutiny were prioritised in the first days in recognition of

their key roles and their commitment in influencing delivery of children's services locally.

I am grateful for the further discussions that I have been able to have with colleagues from the different groups represented on this Council. The overwhelming message that I have received from colleagues is that they share the approach that however unpalatable the comments from Ofsted were, they should be approached as an opportunity to act and improve and that the involvement of all members in this Chamber is essential to ensure that partnership working and standards are there in our own neighbourhoods. I urge you to support the White Paper. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Hyde to second.

COUNCILLOR W HYDE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. In seconding this White Paper I want to take the opportunity to update Council on the very detailed work which is in progress at the present time by Scrutiny Board Children's Services. The Board, Lord Mayor, recently set up two separate but related working groups. This followed an earlier meeting at the beginning of 2008 which identified the need to have a major focus on the area of safeguarding and this came about in the light of the issues raised in the Ofsted 2008 Annual Performance Assessment letter.

Strands to the Board's Safeguarding Enquiry work are resources to consider the adequacy of the current Children's Social Work resources and to meet core protection responsibilities. The other group is one looking at preventative duty, consider the universal safeguarding duty and preventative work particularly at a wedge level.

Two separate working groups are tackling each of these things, as I have already mentioned. Some joint meetings, some members being on both groups ensure continuity. At the end of the process the working groups will come together to consider their findings jointly before reporting back to the full Board.

Clearly, Lord Mayor, it would be inappropriate at this stage to anticipate the likely conclusions and recommendations from this work but I can say at this stage that work so far as been extremely valuable in building up a picture of what is happening at local and city-wide and at national level.

The main work has been under way since July. It started with a joint meeting of both Safeguarding Working Groups, members discussed the national perspective, in particular Lord Laming's report and the government response, the Social Work Taskforce report and the new Ofsted inspection framework. We discussed these with the Chief Officer and the Safeguarding Board manager.

Since then the Resources Working Group has had two further sessions, first in August with the two senior Service Delivery Managers who took members through the various stages of the journey that a child experience, from initial referral through to a potential child protection plan. We also discussed some of the current work being undertaken in response to the recent Ofsted unannounced inspection. Last week a couple of us visited a social work duty team office and next week we will be talking to care management team staff and those responsible for drawing up child protection plans. This would give us further insight into what the staff are experiencing on the front line.

The Resources Group will also be looking next week at detailed information on the numbers of social workers, the numbers of children at risk and the budget implications. The final strand of the Resources work will concern recruitment and retention, service transformation of children's social care and the handling of serious case review.

The Preventative Duty Working Group has a number of meetings planned for October and will start out by looking at the progress of the CRF(?) process in Leeds before talking to representatives from a range of partners on the Council's services Education, Early Years, external services such as the police and health authority, community and faith sectors. The purpose of that will be to discuss their respective contributions to the safeguarding of children and young people. We will also be meeting with the Chairs of some of the Local Area Safeguarding Boards.

The remainder of the working group meetings will take place throughout September and October. I look forward, Lord Mayor, to the Scrutiny Board producing some robust and detailed recommendations in due course and I hope that Council will have found this explanation of the ongoing work of the Scrutiny Board useful and I am very pleased to second and support the White Paper in the name of Councillor Golton. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, Councillor Hyde. I now call on Councillor Blake to move an amendment.

COUNCILLOR BLAKE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Can I say it gives me no pleasure at all today to be moving the amendment to Councillor Golton's White Paper on this, today of all days when, yet again, another catalogue of failures from the service has hit the front page of the YEP.

I listened very carefully to Councillor Brett in the last debate when he said that if anyone thinks that we can ignore inspectors they are dreaming. Well, you must have been dreaming because the home in question that is raised in this, the children's home with some of the most vulnerable children in the city, was inspected in December, a whole list of findings were put forward and it was subject to an unannounced inspection again in the summer when it was found that the recommendations had not been acted on. We are talking about staff being accused of highlighting excessive use of physical intervention and this is one of the most serious reports and I hope you will have a look at it, but to my mind that should have been commented on by Councillor Golton today. I listened very carefully to what he had to say and I have to say none of it gave me the confidence or the assurance that he asked for to withdraw the amendment that we have put down.

I have to tell Council, this debate is a continuation of a whole catalogue of failures that we have reported over the years to Council on the performance of our Children's Services and, in particular, to the failures of all three Liberal Executive Members who have been in place since the department was set up some four years ago.

You all remember Councillor Jennings in this role, I am sure. You all know what happened to him. He ended up being ditched by his own party but his failings right at the beginning led to the structural weaknesses that we now have in the department – lack of Member involvement, lack of accountability and, above all, lack of leadership from the role of the Executive Member, especially now with Councillor Golton.

In fact, you know, I struggle to recall who the third Member was. I do not know if with any of you it springs go mind but, of course, it was Councillor Brett. Can anyone remember any significant contribution made by him to the Children's agenda in this city?

Council, the unannounced inspection report into Children's Services in our city this summer has revealed a service in crisis; a department set up, I have to say, with huge resources behind it to secure the safety and wellbeing of some of our most vulnerable children. It has been shown to be riddled with the most basic and fundamental weaknesses that any of us could imagine.

Lord Mayor, just to illustrate briefly to Council just how serious the findings of this inspection were, I will quote from the letter that was sent by the Director of Children's Services to key partners in the city highlighting the points that were raised. She acknowledged:

"Our response to child protection referrals does not meet statutory guidance, does not ensure that children are adequately safeguarded and in particular some of the key procedures are out of date. Some case records identified children as having been left at potential risk of serious harm. The quality of information passed to children's services from the Council's contact centre is inconsistent. Thresholds for access to children's services are unclear. Involvement of agencies from outside in the assessment of children at potential risk of harm is very limited."

I hope all of you Council Members have read the letter from the inspector in full. It makes shocking reading and I hope all of you on your side, each and every one of you, are ashamed of what has been allowed to happen.

Lord Mayor, the unannounced inspection looked at the case reviews of 23 children. Out of these seven – I repeat seven – were identified as having been left at potential risk of serious harm – nearly one third. In addition, it found that children are not always seen, even when there are concerns about their safety. That means when a school in my patch refers a child on because they are seriously concerned, that child may not have been seen by our social care services.

This has to be the most serious and damning report into our children's services ever. The tragedy is that you had warning of this last year. The APA Inspection report highlighted serious concerns. Our rating dropped from "Good" to "Adequate". All the signs were there. We called a special Council meeting to demand action. We questioned your capacity for leadership then, Councillor Golton. We highlighted your complacency, your arrogance and your refusal to take our concerns seriously.

The fact is we do not actually believe you understand what the problem is. You have asked for assurances, I have no doubt about that, but you have just accepted without question that everything is OK. It says in the report just because performance management systems are in place that is not evidence that they are having an impact on improvement of services.

Councillor Golton, please can you tell us how you have tried to get that evidence? You could have come to my ward last week. I asked a few questions of Children's Services staff. Yes, the staff knew that there was an action plan that had been put in place, put together as a result of the inspection. Yes, they knew about the lack of adequate partnership work. Yes, they had set up a meeting to discuss safeguarding domestic abuse with key partners, but guess who failed to attend the meeting? Who did not bother to turn up? Representatives from Social Care. No-one attended that meeting on their behalf. What confidence does that give us that you are on to the case?

I said in January in the special meeting that we called, Councillor Golton, that you are in denial about what is actually happening out on the ground, out on the patch. We have reported in on numerous occasions the experience that professionals working with children have actually had to deal with. The APA last year said that you under-estimate the number of important weaknesses. That means you do not take seriously enough the amount of weaknesses and, crucially, that you over-value the areas where progress is being made. That is something that we have drawn to your attention repeatedly, whether it be at Executive Board and whether it be in this Council. As I said, complacent and inadequate.

I would say, Councillor Golton, you have had your warnings and you have failed, failed miserably to give the leadership that this important area of our Council demands. Particularly you have failed to ensure that the children in our city are safe. We do not, on this side, have the assurance that you are up to the job and I will just say there is only one thing that you can do now. Do the honourable thing, Stewart – resign and stop pretending that you are up to the job. Just do it and go. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Lord Mayor, under Councillor Procedure Rule 4.2 can I seek leave of Council to suspend Council Procedures Rules to allow the seconder of this amendment so speak and also the further amendment in the name of Councillor A Blackburn to be put and seconded by Councillor Parnham. Thank you.

THE LORD MAYOR: Do we have a seconder, please?

COUNCILLOR BENTLEY: Yes.

THE LORD MAYOR: We now need to vote on this, please. (*A vote was taken*) This is CARRIED, so I now call on Councillor Mulherin to second the amendment.

COUNCILLOR MULHERIN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I cannot say I am happy to second the amendment to this White Paper because I am appalled we are in a position where such an amendment is necessary.

With varying degrees of disappointment, anger and disgust I must remember to question the competence of the administration opposite to run Children's Services in Leeds. In June 2007 Councillor Brett, then in charge of Children's Services in the city, stated in this Chamber the safeguarding of the city's children and young people was one of his administration's highest priorities. Unfortunately the recent Ofsted inspection has shown that an issue that is supposedly one of your highest priorities does not meet statutory guidelines and does not ensure that children are adequately safeguarded.

Your contacts, referral and assessment arrangements are riddled with inconsistent practice, out of date procedures, poor record keeping and other unacceptable failures as outlined earlier by Councillor Blake that have left a number of vulnerable children in this city at potential risk of serious harm, a situation which we on the Labour Group find deplorable; a situation, however, that as recently as January this year the Liberal Democrat Group seemed to be oblivious off.

At the Special Council Meeting we called in January, Councillor Campbell declared that he was confident that, as a local Councillor and as a corporate parent, as a responsible adult, he felt that the department that was serving our children was working properly. It is a sad fact that the Labour Group has never had the confidence in Councillor Golton's supervision of Children's Services that Councillor Campbell professed in January to have. We have not been silent on this issue. We have raised our concerns at every level – at Council, at Executive Board and at Scrutiny Board meetings. All we have received in return were assurances that everything was fine. We have come up against an unwillingness to accept criticism, an unwillingness to learn from mistakes; an unwillingness even to face the fact that anything was really wrong.

Your misguided self-belief even went so far as to exaggerate the results of the JAR review, claiming that the elements of it that were good were in fact very good. This showed a breathtaking level of arrogance. If you were judged to be very good you would have received a "Very good" rating. Instead you convinced yourself that all was well when the stark reality was that the department you have



responsibility for, Councillor Golton, was leaving children at potential risk of serious harm.

When the Labour Group called the Special Council Meeting in January, you criticised us for, in your words, attempting to ferment disquiet within the people of Leeds in terms of the quality of the services that they are getting for the most vulnerable members of our city. I hope now, Councillor Golton, that you will accept that we were right to highlight the failings that had already been brought to light then and I also hope that you have the humility to accept that when we have repeatedly warned you about the failings within safeguarding services, you were wrong to sweep those warnings under the carpet.

You have had opportunity after opportunity to put right the failings that are now too apparent to everyone, even yourselves, to see and each time you have been too arrogant, too complacent to make the changes that were desperately needed and, as a result, some of the most vulnerable children in this city have been let down in a way that could have had disastrous consequences.

At the Special Council Meeting in January I expressed my concern and the concerns of the Labour Group that you were not taking the JAR report seriously and that by ignoring the warning signs contained within it, you may very well be putting vulnerable children at risk. It saddens, frustrates and, to be perfectly honest, angers me that you chose to ignore those concerns which this most recent Ofsted inspection report has proved to be justified.

The question now is how do we proceed? Unfortunately it is still eight months away until May so the protection of vulnerable children in Leeds rests in your administration's hands until then. What I want to know now is how you are going to gain our confidence and the city's trust in your ability to protect those children.

It is all very well having produced an action plan in response to this report but the real test is how the children in this city are served from now on and the underlying questions and failures cannot be ignored, particularly in light of the repeated warnings from this side and from previous inspections.

When will you learn the responsibility you have to the children of Leeds requires you to put their safety as your top priority and not disregard the comments from this side because we are politically opposed?

After the tragedy in Haringey you said, "We in Leeds have a proactive partnership. We do not react to crises as the only means of change." The recent inspection and subsequent reaction from Children's Services has shown that change here will only occur when a damning report is received. The officers' reaction has been swift but has served only to highlight an unforgiveable lack of leadership, accountability and I can only assume interest from yourself.

Today you summed up by saying that the recent reports should be approached as an opportunity to act and improve. The opportunity to act and improve has been given to you several times over already. You did not take it. I think you should go. (*hear, hear*) (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: I now call on Councillor Ann Blackburn to move a second amendment.

COUNCILLOR A BLACKBURN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I think a lot has been said already and so I do not want to waste time going over a lot of it again, but we have to bear in mind this unannounced inspection on 21 and 22 January and the results and I am told that when the inspector went in one of our offices, that I do not know if he was a he or a she, picked out three files and of those there were concerns with two. They then picked out another 20 out of 100, so of the 23 case records

reviewed by inspectors, seven were identified as being left at potential risk of serious harm.

Yes, our officers did take immediate action – they had to do, obviously, they did take quick action, I will give them that and they looked at another 1600 cases, I was told, which they checked. These cases have been passed, probably filed away somewhere. Of those they found 61, 3.8% and out of those – I am sorry, yes, 1,600 were then checked since April and of those 61, 3.8%, got a visit and 329 needed more work doing on them.

Needless to say it worries me when there could be files lurking in our offices, or there have been files there, the inspector came across them, where work had not been completed, where we should have done visits but we did not. There are children there that could have been God knows what happen so yes, we did it but it took the inspector to come in to make us do it. It is not good enough. It just is not good enough. *(hear, hear) (Applause)* Every child out there that somebody out there refers, we should be looking at that case as quick as we can, seeing if it does need a visit or not and then working through the case until we can feel that it can be signed off, so we are not frightened if an inspector comes in and looks. They can look all they like because we have done our job properly. Obviously we have not and whilst I know, yes, we are trying to improve, but as was said when the inspector went in, there were improvements being made but the inspector still found things when they went and visited.

It has been mentioned about the Extraordinary Council Meeting we had on 28 January when we were rated as “Adequate” because the inspector had concerns again and so here we are, months later and, I have to say, do we have the confidence that the children are looked after by our social care?

COUNCILLOR: No, we have not.

COUNCILLOR A BLACKBURN: I wish I could say we had but, quite frankly, I have not and this is a sorry thing for a large place like Leeds to say that. I feel ashamed that I have to say that but that is that I think and I do not want to take anything away from the fact that we do have some good social services workers out there. I even said is it because we do not have enough people working for us, is this where the mistakes have happened, but I understand that is not the case so there is no reasoning, although there is no excuse anyway but I even asked that and I was told “No.”

On 28<sup>th</sup> January my group showed that we were not happy then and we put forward something that could be done that could help matters, that this Council did not do. Today, I find that I am asking that again because no matter what is said we are getting “adequate”, “adequate”, “adequate” – no “good”. We want to be “good”, we want to have the confidence – I want to have the confidence that our department are doing things right, that there is no child out there that might be waiting for somebody to visit, somebody from our social services to visit and they could not get that visit.

That is why I put the motion that I put today, because I think that we do need an Advisory Committee to the Executive Board and I think now that if you cannot look at that now after all that has happened, quite frankly I have to say what are you playing at, because if you care for the kids out there like I do, you have got to do something else than what you are doing. Thank you. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR PARNHAM: Lord Mayor, Council, thank you for giving me this opportunity to speak and to second the amendment from Councillor Blackburn. It has been a very interesting day and there are lots of important issues that have been debated and talked about. I think really as individual Councillors I do not think there is anything more important than the care and welfare of children in this city.

Councillors Blake and Mulherin have referred to the letter from the inspector. I do not want to go over it but I ask all Councillors when they have a minute just to have a look at it – it is only three pages – and some of the content is quite alarming, saying that the quality of information is inconsistent, thresholds for access to Children's Services are unclear, procedures for child protection are out of date, there are inconsistent practices, record keeping is poor, significant delays and the supervision of staff is variable.

Councillors Blake and Mulherin have referred to personal issues of potential criticism of individuals. I do not want to go there. What I want to do is back Councillor Blackburn in coming up with a potential solution. Clearly as a Council we do not want to keep reacting to the reports of inspectors. We want to be proactive as a Council, not reactive, especially in this crucial area of child care, so what we are suggesting for the second time, as Councillor Blackburn said – we did try to get this through in January, so a full eight months ago – is to set up an Advisory Committee to the Executive Board. We believe that the Advisory Committee made up of Councillors will bring in the necessary rigour to the system which is clearly at present missing, so we think that is a potential solution. I second Councillor Blackburn's amendment. (*Applause*)

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

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. It has not been particularly good listening for me, as you can probably understand, but as I mentioned earlier in my speech, Lord Mayor, my own interests are not the ones that are at the forefront of my mind at this moment in time, so I am not actually going to comment in terms of the tone of those speeches from Councillor Blake or Councillor Mulherin.

What I will say is, in terms of the Labour Party and their confidence in the Lead Member for Children's Services, I do not think I have ever heard them say that they had confidence in any Lead Member that there has been on this Council in terms of Children's Services, because they fundamentally disagreed with the model that we set up on the Council to drive performance within Children's Services.

I have to say that the comments that have been made from Councillor Blake and Councillor Mulherin and Councillors Parnham and Blackburn of the alarm at what they heard and what they read within the letter, I can assure you it is exactly the kind of emotion that I had. I appreciate that the only emotion they seem to be able to perceive in me is arrogance and complacency – I can assure you that I also feel anger, I also feel frustration and I also feel commitment. That is one of the things that I have tried to channel positively in terms of the response to the inspection that we have had recently.

I will point again to the guidance in terms of my role. I keep pointing to the guidance because I think that the Labour Party have a misunderstanding in terms of just what a Lead Member is responsible for and just what a Director of Children's Services is responsible for. What I will say is, I am accountable. I am particularly accountable and I already pointed that out in my speech earlier.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Blame the officer.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: I will also point out a couple of the other areas.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Blame the officer.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: I am not blaming the officer at all. What I will point out is what my role is meant to be.

One thing that it does mention is that:

“The Lead Member will have access to inspection reports and the findings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to raise particular issues. The Lead Member should use that intelligence to help ensure that the Director of Children’s Services and other senior officers in the Local Authority are held to account for their contribution to improving children’s wellbeing.”

That does not mean to say that you take on a witch hunt. What it does mean is that you hold them to account for their efficacy and for the results in their service.

No, it was not very good reading to find out what happened in our assessment teams, but what you do do when you are proactive is that you take that evidence and you make sure that it works for us in the future to ensure that what we do have is a top class service developing over time.

I will also point to that particular book to answer some of the concerns from Councillor Blackburn. I am not sure that the solution that you are offering in your White Paper is perhaps the best way to make sure there is rapid change, as it seems there is going to be another level through which you pass decision making. What I will commit to you is that the rigour that I do have from Children’s Scrutiny Board and also from the Children’s Champions in the area, I have to say, Councillor Blake, individual members of your party are very co-operative and actually have been thankful for the attention that they have had from me as Lead Member to help settle some of the problems within their areas. I appreciate that you might not have seen that because obviously I do not think you are directly shadowing me on this particular portfolio and I have not seen much of my shadow over the past twelve months in terms of going to Children in Leeds Partnership Meetings, for instance.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: He is blaming (*inaudible*)

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Yes, everybody.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: To conclude, Lord Mayor, I do not think I am going to answer all the questions or give the reassurances that the Labour Party opposite are asking. What I will say is, they keep telling me about the warnings that they are giving me. The only warnings that I seem to get are from the Labour Party saying, “You are not good enough”, not actually offering any solutions or any way of doing things any differently.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: We told you about the structure.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: I will also point out, Lord Mayor, that Councillor Blake talks about a meeting within her ward where Children’s Social Services did not turn up to a joint working. That is the first that I have heard of that. Her colleagues in other areas in the city would have been straight on the phone to me to find out why that happened.

I would also point out, Lord Mayor, that since inspection I have pointed out that I have briefed Children’s Champions, who are a multi-party membership, and we appreciate their help in making sure that services are embedded within the communities in the shape of their communities, all party.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Resign, Stewart.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: I have also been asked to brief the Leader of the Morley Independents. I was also asked to brief the Leader of the Greens. I was also asked to brief the Conservative Party Group and I was also asked to brief the Liberal Party Group. I offered to have a personal conversation with Councillor Wakefield or

any of his senior team once he was briefed by the Director of Children's Services. I have yet to...

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: I have only just been briefed. Do you mind? Stop blaming everybody else bar yourself.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: What I am trying to point out, Keith, is that your portrayal of somebody who is distant, arrogant and complacent does not meet with the actions of myself as Lead Member. I can appreciate...

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: That is the arrogance.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: Lord Mayor, I do not think I am going to actually persuade anybody on that bench...

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: No, you are not.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: ...in terms of the efficacy but what I will say is to the rest of Council, I hope that you will join me in the joint work that we will need to take forward to ensure that our services are consistent, that our services are compliant and that our staff are supported, for instance, through members going to visit their local social work teams in the same way as Councillor Blake mentioned she has done, I know that Councillor Blackburn has done, I know that all of the members in this hall have done.

We need to be better informed, to listen to our professionals to ensure that they get all the guidance and help that they require and I shall be doing that from my viewpoint at Lead Member as well. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Vote for Ann Blackburn.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, Councillor Golton. I now call for the vote.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Recorded vote on the amendment.

COUNCILLOR TAGGART: Seconded.

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

THE LORD MAYOR: Those present number 88. The "Yes" vote is 39, abstentions 3, and the "No" vote is 46, so there this is LOST.

THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE: Did the request for a recorded vote run through all of them?

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Yes.

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

THE LORD MAYOR: We have 88 people present, the "Yes" vote was 42, abstentions nil and the "No" vote is 46." This has been LOST.

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

THE LORD MAYOR: Those present are 88, the "Yes" vote is 46, the abstentions are 4 and the "No" vote is 38. Therefore, it is CARRIED.

### ITEM 13 – WHITE PAPER MOTION – MEAT FREE DAY

THE LORD MAYOR: We now come on to the White Paper of Councillor Robert Finnigan. We have actually come to the end of time now, so things are going to be formally moved and seconded. However, with this particular one of Councillor Finnigan's we need to seek leave of Council for other words to be put into the motion.

COUNCILLOR FINNIGAN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. With the permission of Council under Procedure Rule 14.10 to seek leave of Council to alter the motion by the addition of the words "and local food sourcing" to the last sentence.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Is that agreed by council? AGREED

COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: Lord Mayor, I did not understand that, I am sorry.

THE LORD MAYOR: Just read your paper would you? *(laughter)* It is on the paper in front of you.

COUNCILLOR FINNIGAN: I would like to formally move this resolution.

COUNCILLOR D BLACKBURN: I formally second.

THE LORD MAYOR: All in favour? *(A vote was taken)* I think it is LOST. I am sorry, Councillor Finnigan, I think it is lost. I am independent – I am apolitical and it is lost.

### ITEM 14 – WHITE PAPER MOTION – LETTINGS POLICY

THE LORD MAYOR: We come now on to the White Paper in the name of Peter Gruen on Lettings Policy.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: My most popular speech tonight, Lord Mayor. I seek leave of Council to withdraw the White Paper.

THE LORD MAYOR: Can we vote on that, please? *(A vote was taken)*

### ITEM 15 – WHITE PAPER MOTION – PROCEDURE RULE 3.1(d) – Leeds TAPESTRY

THE LORD MAYOR: We now come to the White Paper in the name of Brenda Lancaster.

COUNCILLOR LANCASTER: Can I move the White Paper, Lord Mayor, thank you.

COUNCILLOR KENDAL: I second, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Could we have a vote? *(A vote was taken)* That is CARRIED.

### ITEM 16 – WHITE PAPER MOTION – PROCEDURE RULE 3.1(d) – TETLEY'S BREWERY

THE LORD MAYOR: We are on to number 16, the motion put forward by Councillor Hollingsworth.

COUNCILLOR HOLLINGSWORTH: I move the motion, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR D BLACKBURN: I formally second.

THE LORD MAYOR: Could we put that to the vote, please? *(A vote was taken)* This is CARRIED.

ITEM 17 – WHITE PAPER MOTION – PROCEDURE RULE 3.1(d) – HIGH  
SPEED RAIL LINK

THE LORD MAYOR: Number 17, the white Paper in the name of Councillor Andrew Carter.

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

COUNCILLOR BRETT: I second, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: I put it to the vote. *(A vote was taken)* This is CARRIED.

That brings us to the end of this Council meeting. Thank you very much for your attendance.

*(The meeting closed at 7.37 p.m.)*

Council rose at Time Not Specified