

**LEEDS CITY COUNCIL**

**MEETING OF THE COUNCIL**

Held on

Wednesday, 18<sup>th</sup> November 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 THE MEETING OF LEEDS CITY  
COUNCIL HELD ON WEDNESDAY 18<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 2009

THE LORD MAYOR: We are going now to start the Ordinary Meeting of Council.

I have an announcement and I wish to advise Members that the time allowed for the discussion of Minutes and White Papers will be extended now by ten minutes to take account of the time taken in the Extraordinary Meeting.

Also, Members have been circulated with a late item in respect of appointments and a page of Minutes which was not included in the Minutes Book.

ITEM 1 – MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 16<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2009

THE LORD MAYOR: We move now on to the first item on the agenda and I call Councillor John Procter.

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

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Second, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Could we vote on that, please? *(A vote was taken)*  
This is CARRIED.

ITEM 2 – DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

THE LORD MAYOR: Item 2 on the Agenda is the list of written declarations submitted by members is on display in the anteroom, on deposit in public galleries and has been circulated to each Member's place in the Chamber. Are there any further individual declarations or corrections to those notified on the list?

COUNCILLOR COULSON: Yes, Lord Mayor. Looking through this list I have put some in. I would not have done otherwise. Adoption and Fostering Panel, Rawdon and Leodis.

COUNCILLOR FELDMAN: Item 15, Lord Mayor, I am a member of Yorkshire County Cricket Club.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: Do you play for them?

COUNCILLOR CHASTNEY: If we are declaring Adoption Panels I suppose I had better, I am a member of the Elmete Panel.

COUNCILLOR JAROSZ: If we are declaring Adoption and Fostering Panels, I am on the Adoption Panel Elmete.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you very much. I invite members by a show of hands to confirm that they have read the list, or the list as has been amended, and agreed its content insofar as they relate to their own interests. *(Show of hands)*  
Thank you.

### ITEM 3 – COMMUNICATIONS

THE LORD MAYOR: Item number 3, the Chief Executive.

THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE: No communications, Lord Mayor.

### ITEM 4 - DEPUTATIONS

THE LORD MAYOR: Item number 4.

THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE: No Deputations, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you.

### ITEM 5 - REPORT

THE LORD MAYOR: Item number 5, Councillor Brett.

(a)

COUNCILLOR BRETT: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I had hoped that Councillor Harris would be in the Chamber because it is in no small measure due to him that the Leeds Awards are being done.

We have been through a process here and I suspect some of you have seen various things in the last few days. Certainly there have been some impressive CVs for the individuals concerned and I am sure that Council will want to acknowledge and thank the four people who we are proposing get this award for the work that they have done in various parts of Leeds.

It gives me great pleasure to move these nominations, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Lord Mayor, in briefly seconding the resolution I would like to associate myself and my group with the comments made by Councillor Brett. I think this whole idea of having a Leeds Award is an exceptionally good one and enables us to honour people who perhaps otherwise would not be recognised for the good work that they do in the city. I second.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. We will go to a vote, please. *(A vote was taken)* This is PASSED.

(b) Late item - Appointments

THE LORD MAYOR: Item 5(b). I have agreed to the admission of the report as a late item of business under Council Procedure Rule 2.2(f) for the reason of expeditiously securing attendance at meetings.

Councillor Procter now, please.

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

COUNCILLOR BENTLEY: Second, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: *(A vote was taken)* This is PASSED.

## ITEM 5 - QUESTIONS

THE LORD MAYOR: We are now on to Questions. Councillor Wakefield.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Can the Leader of Council provide an update on the court case at London's High Court regarding the validity of the authority's delegated powers between 2004 and early 2008?

COUNCILLOR BRETT: The case concerned was listed for one day. However, on the day it became apparent that one day would be insufficient time to deal with all the issues raised by the Claimant. It was therefore agreed between the parties and by the court that the Judge would start by hearing the argument of what was referred to as Ground 2, which is whether a valid scheme of delegation was in force at the time of the planning decision, and then consider whether or not he could give judgment on that issue only.

At the conclusion of the hearing the Judge indicated he would consider whether he could adjudicate only on Ground 2 without hearing arguments on the other grounds and if he considered that he could, then he announced that he would do just that.

If the Council is successful on the delegation point then the court will list the case for a further hearing to consider the remaining challenges to the planning decision. Such a hearing would be likely to be at the end of December 2009 at the earliest.

However, if the Council loses the delegation point and the court is minded to grant relief without hearing the remainder of the claim, then a further hearing would be unnecessary.

Judgment on the delegation point has been reserved and no indication was given regarding the timescales for handing down the judgment, so we are waiting. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Supplementary, Lord Mayor. Given this has been going since March 2008 and given the importance and significance to this Council, can you explain why no Party Leaders have been briefed and have to rely on reading it in the Yorkshire Evening Post?

COUNCILLOR BRETT: I think for some considerable time some of us were in ignorance of what has been going on. I certainly have asked to be briefed. I was not aware that you had not been briefed. If there is a wish that you get more information I will enquire whether it is possible for that to happen but I do think that some aspects of this case have not been particularly well handled insofar as communication with members is concerned.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, Councillor Brett. We move on now to Councillor Bentley.

COUNCILLOR BENTLEY: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Would the Leader of the Council inform Council on the current situation regarding the strike in Streetscene Services?

COUNCILLOR BRETT: Councillor Carter and myself and Councillor Monaghan met with union leaders yesterday for about 75 minutes. The meeting was

constructive and further talks are being held this afternoon involving two senior officers.

The package which is now on offer, which is still being subject to talks, if it is accepted and introduced will mean that our bin collection service will be among the best paid in Yorkshire and Humber as a whole. Only Bradford, as far as I am aware, pays more than Leeds would pay in this situation and they have still to introduce pay and grading.

To earn this package, our staff would have to do three things: they would have to turn up regularly; they would have to work a full shift; and they would have to reach productivity levels that most other councils have already reached.

I hope this afternoon that we get an answer to the challenge that I now make to the Leader of the Opposition and the Labour Party here. I challenge you, Keith, to tell us this afternoon at some point whether you support this, what we regard as a generous offer and whether you will use your good offices to urge our staff to accept it. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Tell us the offer.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: What is the offer, Richard?

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

COUNCILLOR BENTLEY: Can I ask a question of Keith Wakefield or not? No. Worth a try!

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: What is the offer? Tell us the offer.

THE LORD MAYOR: We are now on to item number 3 and I call on Councillor Paul Wadsworth, please.

COUNCILLOR WADSWORTH: Can the Executive Board Member for City Development & Regeneration provide an update on the Council's Next Generation Transport bid?

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Thank you, my Lord Mayor. In response to Councillor Wadsworth the Next Generation Transport major business scheme has been submitted to the DfT, including all outstanding appendices. The DfT have said they are happy with the proposed means of delivering the local contribution, which runs into some millions of pounds and will be paid for through this Authority and through the ITA.

A decision on whether to grant programme entry status is expected in January 2010 and there are still discussions required with the DfT around the next best of low cost options to the preferred trolleybus.

I want to make it very clear to members of Council that the low cost option is not an option – it is merely revamping the existing bus service. It is not what the people of this city deserve in terms of a 21<sup>st</sup> Century public transport system and the low cost option is not one that we have willingly put in but have been told to put in by the Department for Transport.

Additionally, the next best option, whilst it does deliver some benefits, does not meet the aspirations that this Authority has to provide a 21<sup>st</sup> Century public transport system.

Briefings have been given to all Leeds MPs and some other city region MPs. They are considering writing to Lord Adonis offering their support for NGT and we shall expect to see copies of those letters of support when and if they are sent.

The next stage of the NGT development is a Transport and Works Act Order, currently programmed to be submitted in March 2010. The other ongoing issue is the funding from the Regional Funding Allocation. All the schemes in the current RFA are going through a peer review to establish if they still meet regional objectives and represent good value for money. You ought to be aware that the Department for Transport is making some very, very loud noises about the need to reduce regional transport budgets across the country not by ten per cent, not by 20 per cent but by even more.

Our local MP, Paul Truswell, Mr Wadsworth, spoke in Westminster Hall ten days ago on the need for NGT, for which we thank him. However, it is a little late in the day, a handful of months before he returns to political oblivion, so I hope that he will do something, along with the other Leeds MPs, to bring to the government's attention the disparity in funding which exists from the DfT already. For example, London receives £826 per head of population towards their transport; the people of Yorkshire and the Humber receive just £239. I think that speaks for itself.  
(Applause)

COUNCILLOR BRETT: Shame.

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

COUNCILLOR WADSWORTH: No thank you, my Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: We will move on, then, to Councillor Harrington, please.

COUNCILLOR HARRINGTON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Can the Executive Board Member for Environmental Services offer his personal guarantee that tackling climate change is high on the Council's agenda?

COUNCILLOR MONAGHAN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. The answer is "Yes", both in terms of reducing emissions and adapting to the consequences of a changing climate.

This administration has shown leadership in developing a city-wide climate change strategy and we chaired the Leeds Climate Change Partnership, made up of key local organisations and businesses.

To further demonstrate our commitment we have developed a Climate Change Action Plan which details the specific actions that Leeds City Council will take in support of the Climate Change Strategy. This will be brought to the next Executive Board and, once approved, highlights will be shared with the city's key partners to encourage them to develop Climate Change Action Plans of their own.

Finally, we are taking major steps to address our own corporate carbon footprint and we are one of if not the only Council in the country to commit to reducing our ecological footprint in the Leeds Strategic Plan.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, Councillor Monaghan. A supplementary?

COUNCILLOR HARRINGTON: Yes, a supplementary, thank you very much. It is good to hear other things that are being done but one, could you explain briefly

why the Council has not gone for the 10:10 campaign, which his party nationally have recommended, and why the action plan has taken so long to be presented so long after the original strategy now some months ago?

COUNCILLOR MONAGHAN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. This administration supports the aspirations of the 10:10 campaign. However, we feel that supporting the 10:10 campaign would have significant damage to our current projects to actually reduce carbon emissions across the Council. There is actually a fundamental flaw in the 10:10 campaign that it omits schools.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: it is your party.

COUNCILLOR MONAGHAN: Thirty-three per cent of the emissions from this City Council are from schools and the 10:10 scheme ignores schools completely. It would be irresponsible of us to sign up for the 10:10 campaign, divert resources away from tackling emissions in schools to actually deliver a ten per cent reduction in the Council's own emissions.

This does not mean that we are not taking this seriously, though. The Council has achieved the Carbon Trust Standard, which means we are well ahead of the game in terms of managing carbon reduction commitment and together with other core cities we recently signed the Clinton Climate Initiative.

We take this issue very, very seriously and although we are not signing up to the 10:10 campaign, I can here pledge on behalf of the administration that we will be making much more significant reductions in our emissions in the medium term.  
(Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: I call on Councillor Blackburn.

COUNCILLOR D BLACKBURN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Would the Executive Member for Adult Social Care like to comment on the current situation regarding Roseville Enterprises?

COUNCILLOR HARRAND: Lord Mayor, Roseville Enterprises is a supported business which employs 40 staff, 33 of whom are disabled, operating a laundry. The laundry is hosted by Adult Social Care and provides a service to the Council's residential care homes and also has some small external contracts.

The door factory part of this supported business closed in September and staff have been redeployed into other jobs or are currently being supported by HR and other specialist staff to consider their individual future working arrangements.

The Council has recently revised its strategy regarding employment of disabled people and want to reinforce the policy that disabled people are fully included and supported across the workforce.

In line with this and other national policy, work has recently started to offer staff in the laundry opportunities to think about other jobs across the city, to have work placements with the right support outside the laundry. Work will also take place with managers and staff across the Council to make sure that they are giving the best possible support to disabled staff working in their teams and services.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Blackburn, do you have a supplemental?

COUNCILLOR D BLACKBURN: By way of supplemental, bearing in mind the action necessary as a result of the Ofsted inspection, can the Executive Member assure Council about the future of Roseville laundry?

COUNCILLOR HARRAND: Perhaps before I answer the supplementary I could thank the Member of the Board who take such an interest in Roseville, which is the ultimate cross-party Board of Directors. Councillor Blackburn is the Chair, Councillor Finnigan, Councillor Fox, Councillor Jim McKenna and Councillor Don Wilson. It is all five major parties involved and we are very grateful for what they do.

The inspection by Ofsted was in relation to the Council's Workstep Programme, which delivers on behalf of the Department of Work and Pensions and which we host in Adult Social Care. There are 66 participants in total in the Workstep Programme; 33 referred to are in the supported business and the other are employed in a large range of jobs right across the Council.

The Ofsted inspectors considered that we needed to offer a wider range of work opportunities, particularly to the staff in the supported business. They found that we need to help them raise their expectations and aspirations of what they can achieve, both at work and in assessing their rights outside work, and this is exactly what we are now doing.

The work we have started with disabled staff in the laundry will contribute to demonstrating that we are taking a more challenging and positive approach to the employment of disabled people. Roseville Enterprises continues to carry out the laundry of the Council's residential care homes and some small external contracts. Disabled staff working at the Roseville laundry will not lose their employment with the Council. I will say that again, slowly. Disabled staff working at the Roseville laundry will not lose their employment with the Council but will have the opportunity to try out, if they wish, moving to different and more fulfilling jobs. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. I now call on Councillor Richard Lewis.

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Can the Executive Board Member for City Development please outline how many unresolved Council planning cases there are in this city?

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Yes, my Lord Mayor. At 16<sup>th</sup> November there were 897 undetermined planning applications being dealt with in Planning Services; 122 of these were major developments; 235 minor, 354 housing applications and 176 others. Please do not ask me what the others are.

The number of outstanding planning applications, however, has reduced significantly in the past year due to Labour's economic crisis.

Of the 897 applications, twelve have been submitted by the Council, two are majors, one of them is the Arena, and ten are minors. Some of the applications, my Lord Mayor, refer to planning applications on greenfield sites and I would like to inform Council that, very regrettably, we lost a planning appeal when government appointed inspectors voted to allow a planning application in outline at Greenlea Close, Yeadon for 40 dwellings. We believe that that reversal of this Planning Authority's decision is not safe and will not stand up in court. We are therefore challenging the government's inspector in the High Court. *(Applause)*

Furthermore, Lord Mayor, we have written to the civil servants in the Department for Communities and Local Government asking them to recall planning appeals on the following sites in the city, some of which have still to be determined,



Councillor Lewis. They are Milner Lane, Leeds Road Robin Hood, Pudsey Road Swinhoe, Church Lane Adel, Grimes Dyke York Road, Churchfield Boston, Bagley Lane Farsley, Queen Street Woodend, Allerton Bywater. I regret to tell you that the civil servants have already responded and refused to recall those planning applications, despite the fact that we wrote to all the Leeds MPs asking them to write in support of Leeds City Council. I as yet do not know whether they have or they have not but we will find out.

What I can tell you, Lord Mayor, is that we are tomorrow writing to the Secretary of State, John Denham, asking him to overrule his civil servants and to recall these enquiries so that one local enquiry can be held and we can defend the Council's plans for brownfield regeneration as opposed to building on fast buck profits for the house builders in the city.

My Lord Mayor, they would have to hold these enquiries after the ruling in the High Court. I hope Council agrees with our course of action. *(Applause)*

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

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: Yes thank you, Lord Mayor. On a completely different note, could Councillor Carter inform Council what is being done about the £17m of Section 106 money that is currently in Council coffers and needs to be spent in communities, given his real concerns that he has expressed about the economic downturn?

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: My Lord Mayor, I would have thought that someone who has been on the Council for as long as Councillor Lewis would have taken the article about the so-called levels of funding available in Section 106 moneys for this Council to spend with the pinch of salt it deserves. If he had had a briefing in his new portfolio he would have understood precisely how complicated it is and how, under his administration, too many 106 agreements were tied down too specifically to projects which subsequently could not be delivered, as a result of which too much money sits there unspent which we would love to spend regenerating particularly our parks and green space in the city. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. We move on now to Councillor Cleasby.

COUNCILLOR CLEASBY: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Would the Leader of Council outline what actions have been taken to improve the circulation of taxis in Leeds city centre?

COUNCILLOR BRETT: Thank you, Lord Mayor. As many Members will be aware, in recent months there have been some difficulties in part, I think, caused by not enough work for the taxi trade during the recession and since the congestion with taxis in the city centre over the summer, the Council has worked with the taxi trade to address the problems by providing additional ranks in the city centre.

I want to, at this point, congratulate the officers, some of whom are in my portfolio, some in development, who have worked very rapidly to produce at great speed additional ranks at Lower Briggate and Meadow Lane. Traditionally things like that do take quite a considerable time but we have managed to do this in a few short weeks.

Additional ranks are also planned in other locations in the city centre and these will offer a further 21 24-hour places and 44 at night time.

The taxi trade have also arranged to marshal these ranks at Lower Briggate and Meadow Lane and New Station Street, to allow as smooth a transfer for taxis to the Leeds city station. While these measure have not solve all the problems caused by the recession, I certainly believe that they have improved the situation markedly. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, Councillor Brett. I understand there is not a supplementary question from Councillor Cleasby, so we now move on to Councillor Andres/.

COUNCILLOR ANDREW: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Could the Deputy Leader of Council provide details on the estimated amount of wasted European Regional Development Funding this government has overseen in recent years?

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Thank you, my Lord Mayor. In 2007 the European Community suspended payments of money from the 2000 to 2006 rounds of European Regional Development Fund money grant for six of nine English regions pending confirmation that the programmes had been managed in accordance with the relevant regulations.

They imposed a financial correction of 25m Euros on the UK government. Since that time £22.3m has been repaid by the Department of Communities and Local Government and the Communities and Local Government Select Committee has already condemned the way in which the Department for Communities and Local Government handled European Regional Development Fund funding.

It gets worse. In February a report from the COG Select Committee suggested that the department's total liability in financial corrections could reach a quarter of a billion pounds. They did not feel, they say, that full amount could be realised. Thank Heaven for small mercies.

I wonder if Members would like to contemplate what £250m in fines from the EU for the Department for Communities and Local Government would do to the funding of Local Government in this country.

THE LORD MAYOR: Do you have a supplementary?

COUNCILLOR ANDREW: Yes. Given how tight public finances are, does the Deputy Leader not agree with me that the government's handling of this has been nothing more than completely incompetent?

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Nothing new there then, Lord Mayor. Let me tell you that the Local Government Select Committee, itself dominated by Labour lobby fodder on the back benches, said this amounts to a total of £22.3m of money which Parliament had previously voted for spending being moved away from agreed spending schemes to pay for the earlier incompetence of their own department.

When Labour back benchers, who usually are silent on most things, actually accuse their own Ministers of being incompetent, we know precisely how bad a state this country is in. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, Councillor Carter. I now call on Councillor Judith Blake.

COUNCILLOR BLAKE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Can the Leader of Council offer his cast iron guarantee to Members that tax payers' money is being well spent by his administration?

COUNCILLOR BRETT: I suspect, Lord Mayor, that Councillor Blake will have something to say as a supplementary to suggest the answer is “No”, but I would go so far as to say that at the centre of what Members on our side are doing is delivering value for money services and ensuring that money is very much well spent.

It is not only our side that say that. If you look at the Council’s external auditors, the auditors continue to give us a clean audit certificate but, on top of that, 2008/09 was the first year when the Council’s external auditors have reported to the Council’s use of resources under the Comprehensive Area Assessment.

This Assessment is a far harder test than the previous assessment and has focused on outcomes for local people rather than processes. The new framework assesses Local Authorities against three themes, which are managing finance, governing business and managing resources. For 2008/09 the Council has been assessed at an overall score of Level 3 – the highest being 4 – and what this means is the Council is performing well.

On that basis that the auditors have concluded that the Council has made proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.

For the three year period from 2005/06 to 2007/08 we delivered cashable efficiencies of over £56m and we exceeded the government’s so-called Gershon Target by a whopping 41.5%. For 2008/09 we have delivered further efficiencies of £27m and in our latest budget we are targeting efficiencies of over £20m thus, over the five year period we will have achieved efficiencies of over £100m.

Efficiencies have been delivered across a number of areas including energy, procurement, sickness management, administration, back office functions. Therefore, not only have we sought to protect front line services, we have been able to invest significantly in these services, which are critical to our system.

There is always room for improvement, and I think we are going to hear about that in a minute. All of this I think is a reflection of the importance that we on our side give to value for money and ensuring that tax payers’ money is well spent, Lord Mayor. Thank you.

THE LORD MAYOR: A supplementary, Councillor Blake?

COUNCILLOR BLAKE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Given that we knew for some time about the high profile demonstration in the city centre by the EDL and the police advice not to put up the Christmas tree before the demonstration, could you tell us why your administration wasted £2,000-worth of tax payers’ money on a tree that had to be cut down in the city centre a few days later which was, I quote, “a breakdown in internal communications.”

COUNCILLOR BRETT: I am really quite stunned. £2,000. This Council has an annual spend of £1.5 billion. I am not trying to belittle the things that went wrong there and Councillor Procter, I am sure, will say a bit more about it, but it really is a bit rich.

Let me tell Councillor Blake, cast iron is brittle, it will sometimes shatter and I think you might have chosen a rather better metallic analogy. I am minded of £160,000 at Crossgates. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: I now call on Councillor David Blackburn.

COUNCILLOR D BLACKBURN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Could the Executive Member for Environmental Services tell Council what additional costs have been incurred in the areas under his portfolio due to the bin strike?

COUNCILLOR MONAGHAN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. The current position this week is a projected saving to the Council of £180,000. The weekly additional cost to the Council of the current services we are providing is £64,000 and both these figures include communication costs.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Blackburn?

COUNCILLOR D BLACKBURN: I can tell Council, my supplemental is not about the Christmas tree! By way of a supplemental, can he tell me what the additional costs of additional waste going into landfill are due to the dispute?

COUNCILLOR MONAGHAN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I think given the fact that we are still catching up with refuse collections it will be some time before we know the full implications on landfill tax. However, we are now eleven weeks three days into a strike and I have to thank the managers and those staff who are out there working at the moment delivering fortnightly bin collections. *(Applause)*

They are delivering a fortnightly black refuse collection, a regular green bin collection and a brown waste collection. Green bin collections, normally the crews do two drop offs at the facility.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Answer the question.

COUNCILLOR MONAGHAN: The crews are out there now, they are doing four drop offs and day recycling, showing that actually people are committed to recycling and have been putting out their recycling.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Answer the question.

COUNCILLOR MONAGHAN: We are collecting the brown bins.

COUNCILLOR ATHA: Lord Mayor, on a point of order it is quite outrageous....:

COUNCILLOR: Sit down.

COUNCILLOR ATHA: The point of order requires the person speaking to address the issue in question. He has not answered the question.

COUNCILLOR MONAGHAN: I am answering the question.

THE LORD MAYOR: Quiet, please. Carry on please, Councillor Monaghan.

COUNCILLOR MONAGHAN: Perhaps if Councillor Atha would listen, we are collecting brown bins because the material can still be composted and we will be sending that material to be composted rather than leaving it when it will have to go into landfill.

This administration is committed to minimising the disruption caused by this unnecessary industrial action but we are still committed to maximising recycling. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: We are now at the end of Question time and we are moving in to Recommendations of the Executive Board.

#### ITEM 7 – RECOMMENDATIONS OF EXECUTIVE BOARD

(a)

THE LORD MAYOR: I call on Councillor Brett.

COUNCILLOR BRETT: Lord Mayor, I need, I think, to tell Council that there is an error in the Minute Book on page 144, item 112, where the figure that is on page 7 of the green sheet of one-and-a-half million has somehow mistakenly in the book been mistyped as £1,000,500. That error will be corrected at the December Executive Board. The correct figure is £1,500,000 and, having explained that, I move in terms of the Notice.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Endorsing the explanation made by the Leader of Council I second, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Councillor Finnigan to comment.

COUNCILLOR FINNIGAN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Just very briefly to pay tribute to our Treasury Management Team who work exceptionally hard to make sure that the finances tie up. I have said this in Executive Board and I would like to say it in full Council. They do an excellent job and that, at this particular point, is helping us to combat what is a very difficult financial situation we find ourselves in. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Brett to sum up.

COUNCILLOR BRETT: Thank you, Councillor Finnigan. As many Members here will be aware, congratulations to this small team is something that I have done on many occasions and I know the opposition share that because I have heard Keith on several occasions so on that at least we can agree. I certainly agree with you that this team have saved significant sums of money. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

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

(b)

THE LORD MAYOR: I call now on Councillor Richard Brett.

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

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Second, my Lord Mayor.

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

(c)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Brett again.

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

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: I second, my Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: A comment from Councillor Leadley.

COUNCILLOR LEADLEY: My Lord Mayor, I would like to say a few words about the Council Business Plan, a report on which begins on page 123. Whether you agree with him or not, the targets set out in appendix 1 are by and large understandable and they should be measurable and trackable. What I have difficulty with is a box of business improvement priorities at the top of page 125, which might be interpreted to mean almost anything. What does "Manage customer expectation" mean? Does it mean tell people that their bins will be emptied twice a year so that they will be grateful if they are emptied once a month? "Increased choice so that customers can access services in more convenient ways" seems a bit vague, as does "Develop joined-up and person centred services designed around the needs of our customers." Perhaps these are mission statements intended to be pinned to walls where they would become invisible parts of the wallpaper. Thank you, my Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, Councillor Leadley. Councillor Brett so sum up.

COUNCILLOR BRETT: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I will not spend a lot of time here. I think the details of what Councillor Leadley said might be best dealt with with a note afterwards. It is interesting that this report when it came to Exec Board did actually show something I commented on then that I want to give credit where it is due. It shows a remarkably small change in the collection rate for Council tax and I think in the circumstances, had we had a drop in the collection of Council tax that was anything like the drop in collection rate of some of our other moneys from planning and parking, we really would have been in great difficulties, so I want to use this opportunity to thank the staff who do the job of collecting Council tax because the changes, as this report shows, in our expectations are only marginally down on what they were earlier. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

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

#### ITEM 8 - MINUTES

THE LORD MAYOR: I call on Councillor Brett yet again.

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

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: I second, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, Councillor Carter.

- (a) Executive Board
- (i) Children's Services.

THE LORD MAYOR: We are now moving on to the Children's Services comments from Councillor Finnigan, to begin.

COUNCILLOR FINNIGAN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am speaking on page 147 Item 120 which is the proposed expansion of primary provision in the Gildersome area.

Clearly myself and my colleagues in the Morley North ward would welcome any investment in our particular area, certainly in our local schools, but we are slightly perplexed at this particular proposal. We are not entirely sure where all these extra children are coming from that would generate a need for this sort of expansion. Certainly we have been very successful collectively in making sure that there are not any overwhelming housing development certainly on greenfield sites in the Drighlington and Gildersome area.

We are in a situation where we are somewhat puzzled and somewhat perplexed at where the children are coming from and we look forward to the opportunity that has been offered by Councillor Harker to come along and have a conversation with him specifically about this particular matter. We know it is going out to consultation at this particular point. We will be bringing to that meeting the views of the local community on this particular matter. We would certainly welcome an opportunity to dig down a little bit deeper into these particular figures to make sure that the money is well spent. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I was just waiting for the applause to die down! *(Laughter)*

Can I try and be constructive for a few minutes because I would like to say that many of us on this side of the Council chamber believe that Councillor Richard Harker is a very sincere and committed person to education. I think that is a view widely shared and I think he is also known to be a very straight person and sincere about his work.

It is, therefore, I think, with great regret in terms of the way he has handled Parklands School and he has done enormous damage to that reputation.

He first of all issues a press release on Parklands which does not mention that this is the last single sex provision in the city and I believe that alone itself deserves a city-wide debate. It needs consultation. It should have been in a press release, it should have been enlisted support, it should have enlisted a debate and I think we are probably due one here, about whether this city needs single sex provision, but the press release said nothing about it.

He then writes to a concerned member of staff, which is perfectly understandable, a member of staff being concerned about proposals to close it, and this is what he put in his email:

“As I am sure you are aware, the paper I am taking to the Executive Board is not the one I might have wished to take.”

I ask you, this is a member of the Executive Board that is writing to a member of staff saying that it is not his paper. If it is not his paper, whose is it? I think that is slightly misleading because he then goes on to spin another misleading statement about whose fault it is that Parklands School is closing.

He actually said at Executive Board – and I have not seen this so blatant since I have been on it – that the reason why Parklands School was closing is because the Secretary of State, Ed Balls, is telling him to. I witnessed a moment that you very rarely see and perhaps it is embarrassing but I take credit to Chris Edwards who actually said, “It is not Ed Balls, the Secretary of State. It is actually an Education Leeds paper and that is why.”

So here we have a member of the Executive Board trying to mislead the public, the press and other members of the Executive Board about the reasons for it.

I say it more with sadness than in anger, because I think this debate deserves better and I hope that when Richard stands up there is an apology to people here, there is an apology to the staff, governors, parents, and there is a commitment to start engaging in what is a very important debate in this city of whether we have single sex education or not.

What I think is that we should stop trying to mislead people. In actual fact the Secretary of State, Ed Balls, praised Parklands for achieving over 30%, as probably many of you have seen that letter. I think probably Richard would want to say something about trying to mislead them because I genuinely do not believe that, but if we are to take this debate seriously then I think the parents, the governors, the staff and the people of Leeds deserve a lot better than what they have so far. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR HARPER: Thank you, my Lord Mayor. I wish to speak on page 136 Minute 96, National Challenge for Structural Change to secondary provision in Leeds. I have noted with interest your plans for secondary school in Leeds which have been made in response to, among other factors, changing demographics. I know that within my own ward of Armley we have the relatively newly-built Swallow Hill Community College. Whilst I welcome a new school being built in my ward, I would have preferred one that was fit for purpose.

I am not asking for anything luxurious, Council - I just wanted enough places for the young people of Armley. The new college can only accommodate 1,200 pupils, but this September there were 1,637 needing places – that is 437 too many.

What did Education Leeds do? They spent £1m of taxpayers' money on an annex across a busy main road some ten minutes' walk away to accommodate three whole year groups.

I am asking the question, is this segregation of years 7, 8 and 9 a good idea? Is spending over £1m fixing a problem many of us anticipated value for money? I do not think so because this works out at £2,500 per pupil. Could this money not have been spent on improving results and raising standards?

I want to know why leading politicians like John Battle MP, Keith Wakefield and why local Councillors were not listened to. I have always said the situation would last for at least six years. Education Leeds admits to four years, although I have to say earlier this year they did talk about this as a temporary period. I do not call four years a temporary period. I am sure the pupils who are going there and who are having to walk across this road and be segregated do not call it a temporary period.

I estimate that over 1,500 pupils will be severely disadvantaged by this crass decision so can I ask, my Lord Mayor, if Education Leeds are looking at the next phase in structuring secondary provision in Leeds, can we make sure they do their homework, they get their sums right and they get it right this time? Thank you, my Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR SELBY: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Page 136, Minute 96, Parklands Girls' High School. Can I first of all give members a brief potted history about the plans around Parklands?

At the end of 2008 the school was told that it will not become an Academy, there was a possibility of becoming a Trust. In the New Year they were talking about an Academy and that it would always be an all girls' school in Leeds. In March of this year the plans changed to move the school to the City of Leeds site and this time it



would be an Academy, and now we are told the school is to close with no replacement of all girls' provision.

I am sure members will be aware that ward members should be consulted about this and it is not unreasonable for me to have been consulted or, for that matter, my ward colleagues, Councillors Morgan and Hyde, given the opportunity of the common courtesy of any discussions about these long lists and changes in the proposals.

If they think the ward members should not be consulted, what about the school governors? Would you expect them to be made aware of the proposals and their views sought and they input put in? Again, you would be disappointed because the governors were not told of these proposals. In fact, the school only found out about the latest plans and these are plans to close the school, they found out about it through the press. That, Lord Mayor, is disgraceful, it is inexcusable, it is a shabby way to treat people who only have done their best for the girls of Parklands.

I cannot deny that the school does have falling rolls but why has this happened? Regular press coverage putting the future of the school in doubt may have put a number of parents off applying for a place. Who would want to send their daughter to a school if the rumour mill is in overdrive that the school was going to close? Again, I accept the building is not of the standard we would like, not require, but again, how much of this has been because the school has been allowed to fall into disrepair? No allegations, just wondering, just asking.

In the Executive Board paper that outlined these proposals it was stated the school was unlikely to reach the floor level next year. The school dispute that and maintain they are on track to exceed this year's results and it has been coverage in the Yorkshire Evening Post and on the radio and television, they did meet the full target this year.

In his letter to Chris Edwards, the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families, Ed Balls, said he was particularly pleased to see Parklands' results, something the school is particularly proud of, something that makes a mockery of Councillor Harker's claim that the government is asking for the school to close.

It was an Education Leeds decision that Councillor Harker is part of and if he was not part of that decision, what is he doing, he might as well step down, because he certainly has no control over Education Leeds.

I think we are entitled to ask the question what commitment has been given to the school for any chance of it remaining open?

On a final point on member consultation, on 7<sup>th</sup> October of this year I contacted the Chief Executive of Education Leeds pointing out the ward members were contacted by the press and the radio about proposals that we had not seen and were not been consulted about. Significantly, on 7<sup>th</sup> October 2008 I made the same complaint when proposals were made last year. In 2008 Ward Councillors were told that this failure to consult would never happen again. We were given a lame excuse in 2008 and another one this time. No doubt we will hear words of apology and a promise that in future we will properly be consulted.

I have to say that if I do hear those words, it will take a lot to persuade me that those words are sincere. If past form is to go by I am more likely to know what is going to happen to Parklands School by reading it in the Evening Post.

I am extremely angry, I am annoyed and disappointed at the total disregard the governors and ward members have been shown throughout this process. It is a shabby and true reflection of the contempt with which this administration treats people when it has its own agenda to pursue. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR MURRAY: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Same page, 136, and it is Minute 96. I would like to comment on those proposals to close the City of Leeds High School. I know it is a school that is close to the heart of many Liberal Democrat members in this room. I also know that it is actually close to the heart of many Labour members because, of course, a number of us were there at the beginning when the late John Smith, the MP, Leader of the Labour Party, opened it. We also know that it has got a Derek Fatchett Learning Centre there which was opened in recent years, so historically a well-resourced and, I think, supported school.

What I would like to begin with really is by quoting a previous Council Minute. That Council was in July and it was 2008 – obviously no-one will remember what was on it but I would like to read a bit of it. Councillor Pryke, Ralph, “I am a governor of the City of Leeds like Councillor Ewens. The school is improving all the time. The attitude of the Opposition running schools down is absolutely appalling. Councillor Atha is the first person I have ever heard to suggest that the City of Leeds might be closing down.” That is what is recorded.

I would like to correct this. The truth of the matter is, of course, that school was always doing fairly badly and this year it has not improved at all – this year it has gone backwards. This year the results have declined. The head teacher, I believe, has also resigned.

I think the bit that I would also like to put right and straightforward is that comment about the attitude of the Opposition. I do not know why we should have an attitude problem. Why should we have an attitude problem when it is our Labour government who has paid for delivering the success that this city is knowing and the success that is included and reported in this report. We have seen real improvements in secondary standards, attendance and behaviour, we are proud of that and at the same time much of the secondary school estate has been remodelled and rebuilt. We are aware of that and we are proud of that.

In other words, without putting it in the words of the report but putting it in our words, today's 16 year olds started school aged five in 1997 as Labour came to power. There has been a transformation in funding and support for schools and, of course, attainment has followed. We are proud that under Labour schools in the most deprived areas have been the fastest growth rise in results with the gap between the poorest kids and the rest narrowing year on year.

We have seen a transformation, we have seen significant improvement – we have seen Leeds get the best results in its history, haven't we, Chris? Yes, with that kind of support and funding. Ralph, why you said what you did I do not quite fully understand. I thought about it and I thought that maybe it was because you were reacting to what was being said at the time, you were trying to protect your colleagues so who were you trying to protect them from?

Let me think about the next Minute on this Council report. Councillor Brett. Councillor Brett stood up after you had finished speaking saying, “Lord Mayor, after a slight interlude when officers have checked the facts, I am rising to say very simply to Councillor Atha, there are no plans to close City of Leeds School.” That is what was said; that was recorded.

COUNCILLOR ATHA: What was that date?

COUNCILLOR MURRAY: Exactly. Well, Lord Mayor, what happened? We only need to read the rest of the report. After a slight interlude – let us call it three months, twelve weeks, six of those were holidays, a report went to Executive Board and in effect the future of City of Leeds was being questioned and was seriously under threat. By March 2009, this year, eight months later, you have two options for the school. That is what you are offering, two options for the school. Not one of them was to keep it open and the other was to close it – both options were to close it. That is what they said.

Here we are, we have got Bernard Atha suggesting that City of Leeds might be closed down, Ralph, you state across the Chamber he should be ashamed. I do not know what you are going to say to your Leader now that he is planning to close the school, but let me put some words in Councillor Brett's place, if you like.

"Councillor Brett: Lord Mayor, after a slight interlude when officers have checked the facts, I am rising to say very simply to Councillor Atha, there are plans to close City of Leeds School."

So what does that mean? What does that mean to the people out there?

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Lies.

COUNCILLOR MURRAY: Not exactly lies – I do not think I would use the word "lies", Peter. What I would use, I would use the word, "Richard, these comments are rubbish." You know all about rubbish, don't you? You are an expert in rubbish. You have filled this city full of rubbish. *(Interruption)*

Yes you have, you have filled the city and in tidier times...

THE LORD MAYOR: I hope you have nearly finished, Councillor.

COUNCILLOR MURRAY: In tidier times I would say, these comments – I hesitate to say these comments should be in the bin because I cannot find a bin to recycle it in – they are all full. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR DOWSON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am speaking on page 139 Minute 103, proposal for statutory expansion of primary provision from September 2010. Here we are again and I have lost track of where we are because we had Plan A, B, C previously and now we must be on H, I, J or maybe even K because these change so often.

The paper that went to Executive Board listed the 14 schools that will see expansion for September 2010 and I have to say I read the report with some disbelief. This problem could and should have been counted long before now. Just to show the extent of the problem, this year there were 15 primary schools that were unable to offer all the nearest children a place. This was up from seven last year. Why were you so late in recognising and reacting to this problem?

It is all very well to say that the increase in numbers was unexpected, but was it really? Between 2002 and 2007 the number of births soared by 17%, more than enough time to start planning for 2010, leaving you no excuse to leave the plans until now.

We believe that the parents and children of Leeds deserve better than a rushed through last minute solution to a problem that was spotted too late. You are

letting them down yet again. It is a failure that the expansion next September will only be consulted on now and let us look at that consultation.

Do you think that you are consulting properly? Do you believe that you are giving the people of Leeds all the information at the relevant time, because I do not. Who do you think stands to be most affected by the decision to expand the size of reception classes for these schools? I will tell you – it is the children who will be starting next September. Have you consulted with the parents of these children? Of course you have not because you managed to time this paper so that the admissions deadline for next September had already passed. You only advertised your plans after parents had filled in and submitted their primary school applications so you now have families across the city who thought long and hard about where to send their child, finally made the decision and now the rug has been pulled out from underneath them.

If you live in Beeston then there is a fair chance that the two closest schools are Beeston Primary and Hugh Gaitskell and guess what? These schools are down to become three form entry. Did parents have that information when they made their choice, when they sat down and went through Ofsted reports and agonised over what would be the best school to send their child to? Were they able to make a fully informed choice? No, they were not because of an appalling lack of planning that meant they were kept in the dark and you have cheated these parents by not giving them the vital information they needed to ensure they make the best choice for their child.

It seems Councillor Finnigan, although part of the administration when it suits them, disagrees with the figures Education Leeds are working from and does not believe that there has been such a large increase in the birth rate in Gildersome – front page of the Morley Observer & Advertiser. At least this shows that the Labour Group are not the only ones with serious reservations about these proposals and I look forward – or I had looked forward – to hearing Councillor Finnigan's contribution, which was very interesting.

Even now when the consultation has started there are huge gaps emerging. We have been told that all children's centres in the affected areas will have copies of the consultation and feedback forms provided to them. I have spoken to parents in some of the affected areas and they do not know anything about the consultation.

The picture does not even get any better for the future. We know that you are planning on bringing further expansion proposals forward for 2011 and 2012. We are facing a Lego-land of portable classrooms across the city and you are condemning an entire generation of school children to a lifetime of education in port cabins. This is simply not acceptable.

What happens if parents reject your proposals or the building is not in place in time? Have you actually got a plan for that? Your solution is three form entry for some schools, but let us look at where those schools are, shall we? Local Authorities were placed under a duty to promote diversity and increased parental choice in planning and securing the provision of school places, encouraging parents to be aspirational in their choices. Why, then, are you not increasing the size of the schools that could not accommodate first choices? These schools tend to be in outer areas – Roundhay, Alwoodley, Morley. Instead you are increasing the size of schools in inner city areas – Harehills, Beeston and Hyde Park, to name three.

A recent report clearly says – and I quote – “It is evident that all ethnic groups are experiencing a decline in the likelihood of gaining their first preference.” You are clearly not addressing the issue.

I have serious concerns that the quality of education will suffer as a result of three form entry. I worry that our hardworking teachers will simply not have the time to ensure that 90 four and five year olds experience the level of care and attention they need.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor, have you finished?

COUNCILLOR DOWSON: One sentence, Lord Mayor, if I may.

THE LORD MAYOR: One sentence only.

COUNCILLOR DOWSON: You have allowed to develop where you are letting down the children of Leeds and rushing around trying to cover your tracks and blame everyone else except yourself for the situation that could and should have been avoided. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, Councillor Dowson. It was a very long sentence!

COUNCILLOR PARNHAM: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I think I will keep that a little briefer. I would like to comment on page 136 Minute 96, which is what Councillor Harker was speaking about, largely.

First of all, though, I would like just to apologise on an education issue to Councillor Mulherin. The other night I blocked her in in the car park when she was late for a parents' evening, so I am sorry about that. It will not happen again.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Resign! *(Laughter)*

COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: Teach Richard how to apologise. Do it with style.

COUNCILLOR PARNHAM: What Councillor Harker was talking about, the new Swallow Hill Community College, I think, affects the children in our ward as well and so I would say probably the best thing to say is that we echo your concerns. We also have got a secondary school, Farnley Park, which has recently lost its head teacher in tragic circumstances. I am sure Education Leeds will do their best to resolve that problem.

I have got a son who goes to Swallow Hill and I must say he thinks it is an excellent school, and I have two daughters who will be going up to the annex that Councillor Harker mentioned over the next couple of years.

One thing I want to just say is, I just want to congratulate Chris Edwards, who is normally here. When I have had briefings with him he has always come across as a very dedicated person who, like me and I am sure like the rest of us, is absolutely passionate about bringing the best out of all our children and especially those who through choice or circumstance live in the inner city. We did that through choice but many others do not have that opportunity to live elsewhere and I think a brand new school at Swallow Hill is an absolutely excellent development in the city and I am sure that our concerns regarding the issues affecting the other school will be noted. Thank you.

COUNCILLOR A BLACKBURN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I would like to speak on page 139, Minute 102, the Playbuilder Initiative update.

I would just like to say that in our view anything that can be done to provide children with better play facilities can only be welcome, therefore we welcome this updated initiative to improve the play provision in these areas. Thank you.

COUNCILLOR D BLACKBURN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I refer to Minute 103, page 139, not 136 as it says on the paper. That is the proposal for the expansion of primary provision.

It is eleven-and-a-half years ago since I got elected and for most of that time we have been talking about surplus places. I have got to say, Richard Harker has done a wonderful job to reduce those surplus spaces, but the fact is what we have learned is the population or the birth rate goes up and down and the fact is, what are the statistics five years ago are not what are going to be the statistics in five years' more time.

One of the problems is, of course, how a school is paid for is about number of pupils, so if you have got spare provision so the school can go up and down, you are not getting funding for it and as I see it, what we should be looking at – and I think this is a central government thing – is proper funding for our schools so we can take account of the fluctuations in population. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR ATHA: On the same Minute that has been exercising us, it really is just to say three things. One is, I think it is appropriate now for Councillor Harker when he winds up to make the apology for misleading the Council only eight or nine months ago when in fact I floated the idea that this school would be closed because I had heard that was the case. I was told that there was great outrage on the other side and all those words called. It turned out to be true.

The sad thing is, either that was incompetence on Councillor Harker's part or he was deliberately misleading the Council. If he was misleading the Council, that is a resignation matter, not an apology matter. If he says, "No, I may be incompetent but I am not dishonest", I would accept the apology (*Laughter*) because if you read back the verbatim, you will see that when I raised this issue there was outrage on the other side, but that is the case. We must have some honesty.

Lord Mayor, a little while ago I was disgusted because Councillor Monaghan was allowed to get away without answering the question and talking about something totally different.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Hear, hear.

COUNCILLOR ATHA: He did not answer the question, what is it costing...

COUNCILLOR: He gave you his answer, Bernard.

COUNCILLOR ATHA: What is it costing to put the extra into landfill? He did not answer it and you did not pursue it because you haven't the bloody guts to pursue it. You have got to make him. So this is a matter of honesty.

I have listened to Councillor Carter over the years as an expert politician. I have never known him lie. You are quite right, I am talking about *him*. I have never known Andrew Carter lie. I have known him to do the card trick and completely mislead, but he has never lied.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: You have never been able to learn it, Bernard. I have tried. Some people cannot learn anything.

COUNCILLOR ATHA: I have never heard him lie, I have never heard, you are quite right, but in this case it is a serious issue and by trying to deflect by humour you do not deflect from the reality of the situation that, in fact, he either lied to the Council eight or nine months ago or he misled us. If it is misled in good faith, then that does imply incompetence – the incompetence he displayed when it takes you five years to see that the demographics of children being born has risen and when he was closing the school on Becket Park Drive, we said but the numbers will go up. “Oh no they will not.” So they closed the school and the next thing is a school a little lower down the valley has to take an extra two forms of entry. This is incompetence and it does not suit us because it affects the children who are the future generation.

I would love to hear an honest statement in reply in respect of my intervention now. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Harker to sum up on the Learning portfolio.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Honest Harker.

COUNCILLOR HARKER: I want to start with Councillor Wakefield. He is quite right to take me to task, I did mislead the Executive Board and I will apologise to the Executive Board next time we meet. I confused what I had read and what I had been told and I was incorrect about the role of the Ed Balls letter on Parklands but not in respect of the rest.

I would like to deal with the other quotation I might not have wished to take. That was said that I did not wish to take it. For a long time I had been hoping that the government would bring forward Wave 13 of the BSF programme. On that was predicated a whole lot of hopes that I had. I actually value girls’ education. I had a dream that we could bring girls’ education into the centre of the city, that it would provide a single sex school for girls in this city that all girls in this city could access because if we are dedicated to single sex education, it should be at an accessible point.

When I taught I ensured on many occasions that, for example, girls would go into a computer lab first so they were not pushed out of the way, that they did not have to share a computer with a boy. We actually have introduced at the City of Leeds School, where I taught and a school I have a great affection for, single sex science lessons, single sex lessons where there was technology involved. I am not against single sex education.

Let us now just go back, please, to the paper I took to Exec Board. That was giving permission for Education Leeds to go away and work up proposals, to work up proposals that we can then go out to consultation on. That is the paper that I will be bringing back to Executive Board in December. The consultation proper will not start till January.

I do want all four consultations that that paper will include to be thorough and in depth. I have spent a lot of time talking to Chris about following the Scrutiny Board enquiry into consultation, how all consultations now must be absolutely crystal clear that they are going on and that people have a chance to have their say, but the problem is with White Papers – and it also refers in part to the next issue I have got to come on to, which is numbers in primary school.

We have to check what each of those papers is doing. The paper that I took last was asking permission of the Executive Board for Education Leeds to work up proposals. I just want to deal with Bernard. If I had had Wave 13 of the BSF money,

the future of the City of Leeds would not have been the one that I had been forced into taking in the last few weeks.

I really ought to have declared an interest. I taught in the school for 19 years and I take exception to the point that I think it was Councillor Murray in a very good speech made about City of Leeds. He forgets it had a much longer history – a much longer history than being open on that site, Derek Fatchett or John Smith. When it was here where the Council offices now are, the housing offices, when this city still had middle schools, that school was a ten form entry school with a six form of over 300 which I was proud of – it was our most successful high school in the city. The great problem for that school was its move to its present site. Since that happened and that decision was made, that school went into decline. That is why I took early retirement, because my job totally disappeared in the school, we were not getting the numbers in and that is a problem that has gone on and is being compounded.

I want to retain on that site a form of education that will enhance education for inner city children which will open doors to high education for them. Keith did say at the last Exec Board there was an aspiration there. I am hoping when he sees the aspiration fleshed out in the next paper he will join with me in that vision.

Let us just go to numbers. I was as shocked as anybody else in this Chamber when the birth rate was told to me. That is why I went to the Chair of Scrutiny and I am waiting for the Chair of Scrutiny to come back, but I am told that one of their expert witnesses – and I stand to be corrected – from the National Office for Statistics said that Leeds was doing a good job and was better than most Authorities. Now we have got it wrong. I make no excuse for that – we did, but we did not just get it wrong in terms of education; we got it wrong in terms of housing, in terms of all sorts of things where those demographics are important. It was not just us; it was the government because the government admitted it had got them wrong. It was over 20 other Local Authorities who were caught out in the same way with the same demographics.

I would now very quickly like to deal with – I have got so much to go through – Swallow Hill. I would like to assure Councillor Harper that every step of the way I and John Battle, John Battle and Education Leeds met, met and met again. John, I have nothing but praise for the support that I personally received during this time from John Battle. I was really very proud to be part of the governing body that awarded John Battle a Fellowship on Friday in the Banqueting Suite at Trinity University College.

We always knew that if you bring two schools – and I think they were six form entry each – together to create an eight form entry, you have for a period of time a surplus of children. We knew that, that was never hidden, it was there right from the beginning. I do not remember being challenged when we were planning this school over this in this Chamber, but I was challenged by John Battle and I sat down with John and talked it through.

I have thanked David for his comments and Councillor Parnham. I got worried though, David, when you stood up because I thought you were going to blame me for the birth rate!

COUNCILLOR LYONS: You are Catholic now so there is no excuse!  
(Laughter)

COUNCILLOR HARKER: Let us just go back then and reiterate. December Executive Board, there will be four proposals. Let us deal with the Parklands one. There will be two proposals in connection with Parklands, two consultations. One



that is city-wide, one that involves the whole city – does this city wish to retain single sex education for girls? The second consultation in connection with Parklands is, should there not be a demand for single sex education, should we establish a co-educational high school on the Parklands site? Whether we can offset each of those I need to talk to the officers about. Those are the two consultations there. There will be a separate consultation in respect of Primrose becoming an Academy and there will be a fourth consultation in respect of City of Leeds becoming a 14 to 19 Centre of Excellence and what that means and I would encourage everybody in this Chamber to get involved. *(Applause)*

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

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: I am sure Members will appreciate from the contribution that Richard has given, I am very lucky as Lead Member to have Richard to aid me on education issues and I do not intend to comment any further on those that have been raised, especially since we are going to have a larger debate in not too long a time on Children's Services in general.

The only thing that is left for me to comment on is Ann Blackburn and Playbuilder. What I can say is I really appreciate her positive comments and especially since – because I did check because I thought am I going to get something negative off Ann – especially since none of these Playbuilder schemes are actually going to be in your ward and that non-partisan, non-where-is-my-bit is actually quite fresh and welcome coming from the Greens. I did appreciate when it got discussed at Exec Board the Labour leadership were concerned that there was not enough in areas like Pudsey.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Just the calm before the storm.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: What we did point out is that the Playbuilder programme that we have actually overseen is there to ensure that we are going to be putting provision in areas which are judged as play poor where previous administrations might have left them out of their play strategy, so it is narrowing the gap, shall we say, with play provision and thank you for welcoming that too..

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, Councillor Golton.

(iii) Adult Health Social Care

THE LORD MAYOR: We move now on to page 10 and (iii), Adult Health Social Care. Councillor Jim McKenna.

COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I would like to speak in relation to Minute 111 on page 143. Specifically I want to talk about the Council's response to the public consultation on proposals to close six much-loved day centres in our city.

Let us start with the good bits, Lord Mayor. It is obviously good news and this is due to the pressure put on by ward Councillors, service users and member of the public the administration has been forced to keep open Naburn Court, Doreen Hamilton and they have identified a new centre in Otley which I believe will be better than the existing one.

We said your plans to shut these centres were flawed. We said they were not right for elderly people or their carers. We said you had to listen and I guess the consultation, there has been a degree of listening but it has not gone as far as we would like for it to go.

I am delighted that the hard work of Councillors, carers and elderly people has forced you to look at the real impact, the human cost – and there is a human cost – of slashing services to vulnerable older people. As I said in my White Paper, our elderly people deserve dignity, respect and genuine choice over their care. Because of that it is absolutely right that you have scrapped some of your proposals to close some of the centres.

That said, progress cannot stop here. We need to see real action, Peter, to secure the long-term future of the centres. We have to decide that the ones we keep open - now we need to know how will you take them forward?

I want to see detailed plans explaining the changes you are proposing at Naburn Court, Doreen Hamilton and the Otley Day Centre. There are many questions that remain unanswered and while that is the case, you are still causing anxiety for the elderly people who use these centres. I want an assurance that this is not the start of a phased closure via the back door.

I also believe it is utterly inappropriate for members of the administration to gloat at the Executive Board about their change of heart. To claim that these revised proposals somehow validate your flawed consultation progress when you are still axing services at three centres is quite frankly disgraceful. This is not a victory for anybody.

The original savings were in your 2009/2010 budget. You fully intended to close all six centres. It is only because of the public, the media and Labour Councillors making enough noise that you have granted a partial reprieve.

Sadly, we must also consider the very bad news. Three fantastic centres are still facing closure. Elderly people using centres in Bramley, Holbeck and Woodhouse fear the same social isolation and loneliness as those using Naburn Court, Doreen Hamilton and Otley. Why then do people in Bramley, Holbeck and Woodhouse still face losing their centres? I fear that once again it is some of the most deprived areas in our city which will see the biggest loss of service as a result of your cost cutting. This will mean those with the greatest need not being able to access their local day centres. For them this will be devastating.

I am urging you to do the right thing for elderly people in Leeds and put a stop to these cruel closures once and for all. If this consultation has shown you anything, it must be, as Councillor Carter said in March 2000 and it is still true today, that elderly people wish to stay in the day centres they are currently attending where they have made friendships, where they get the service and support they required.

My Lord Mayor, a number of my colleagues will talk on individual centres and I am content to leave it there. Thank you. (*Applause*)

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

COUNCILLOR YEADON: Lord Mayor, I would also like to speak in relation to Minute 111, page 143, From Day Centres to Day Services.

I welcome the fact that due to sheer volume of public opposition you have been forced to see reason and keep three centres open, although I must say it is a cautious welcome given that we have seen little information about the detail surrounding these revised proposals.

It is great that people using Naburn Court, Doreen Hamilton and Otley Day Centres will get the support and services they so desperately need and want and what is more they will, we hope, be able to receive the support surrounded by vitally important, familiar friendship groups.

I fear, however, the devil may be in the detail when it comes to your most recent plans. From speaking to ward Councillors I am aware of anxiety about the proposed changes at Naburn Court. In addition, older people at Calverlands have also raised concerns which me, which I will come on to in a moment.

Throughout the consultation period your communication with carers, Councillors and elderly people has been inconsistent, inadequate and confusing. As a result of your poor communication elderly people are still very anxious. Where you have decided to retain services, I would ask you to give service users and staff some much-needed peace of mind by giving them the detail they are looking for in regard to the long-term future of their centres.

I have already noted my concerns about generic service users at Calverlands where you are remodelling the services. You have assured us that will be a top priority to maintain friendship groups, yet I have been contacted by a very distressed carer whose elderly relative, along with seven other people, believes they will not be able to secure a place at the same new centre as their friends. These elderly people are frightened and, as a result of your flawed consultation, still fear that they will lose a service which is very precious to them.

A lack of communication about exactly what services are provided at the nearest alternative centre has also led to distressing fears that elderly people will not receive vital personal care, like bathing. This is naturally very distressing for those older people who currently receive bathing services with a great deal of sensitivity from the wonderful staff at Calverlands. These are vulnerable people who are already bracing themselves for a great deal of upheaval.

I too am very disappointed by your decision to press ahead with the closure of Holbeck, Bramley Lawn and Woodhouse Day Centres. I do not believe this is the right decision for Leeds, for older people or for their carers. In our view, these services are every bit as vital as those you have been forced to save, so I too would urge you to keep these centres open.

It has become worryingly apparent during this consultation that, despite your assertions not the contrary, carers, elderly people and staff members still tell us you are not referring people to day centres generally. Having now decided to close three more centres on top of the four you closed last year, I am very worried about the long-term future of all our remaining day centres.

As we have said before in this Chamber, it does not take a crystal ball to realise that a lack of referrals will result in low attendance figures which, as we have seen, will be used to try and justify doing away with these centres which mean so much to so many local people.

I would ask you, Councillor Harrand, to reassure us today that the future of our remaining centres is secure. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, Councillor Yeadon. I now call on Councillor Peter Gruen.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Lord Mayor, the same Minute, page 143, Minute 111 and I wish to comment on Naburn Court, a hugely popular day centre in Crossgates and Whinmoor.

I am amazed that anybody in the administration can claim a victory in keeping some centres partially open. There has been a crescendo of opposition to these proposals. Certainly for Naburn Court 1,200 people signed the petition. We checked the petition. There were no funny names or funny locations or outside of Leeds – they were all local people within the East area of Leeds.

Service users attended a demonstration with Councillors and volunteers in September. Regular letters to the media were prominent and, of course, the usual Leeds City Council practice that involves that the Chief Officers would send round a quick letter to everybody rubbishing the letters which have come in from the public.

There were articles in the Yorkshire Evening Post and comments led by the editorial from that paper. There was a huge amount of individual letters from carers and service users and there was general opposition to the closures.

My colleagues and I attended three, I think they were called presentations by the Chief Officer in our ward. No-one from the administration attended those presentations, so I can share with you that certainly we did not gain the impression from those presentations that anyone was listening. They were delivered in a staccato, factual, rapid, quick-fire kind of demeanour and questions, I cannot remember questions actually being answered properly but then they take their lead from the Council Members here.

COUNCILLOR: Or Gordon Brown.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: I asked a question at the last Council about referrals and I noticed officers were wincing when I asked the question, as if it was totally unreasonable and I was being unreasonable. I still have not got the answer. I still have not got the answer months later that I asked months ago – when was the last referral to Naburn Court? They probably cannot remember, it was so long ago.

We welcome, of course, the new proposals – it would be churlish not to. The new proposals say the centre will be kept open as a day and a resource centre but they allude to day centre sessions being reduced. They say the sessions will be “complemented” by community activities such as luncheon clubs. A report says it supports in principle local community groups and churches. The building would remain open each week day but would not carry out day centre sessions each day. It promises that further details will be discussed with service users and community groups. Interesting that it does not allude to discussions with ward Councillors and certainly none have taken place.

We have some queries about the staffing in the future, but which local groups will be able to use the building and whether the rental charges would actually be a barrier to community groups using the centre? If we go by the example of the community centres, then I can tell you very few, if any, would be able to afford those kind of charges to use Naburn Court.

How will the centre be staffed if it is not a day care centre on that day? What consultation will take place about the days when the day centre will be open? Which session will be reduced? Which elderly people would lose their place? Will community groups be sympathetic to the sheltered community that lives above the day centre? There are some genuine questions which I want to put on the record

here in Council so officers can actually read them and Councillor Harrand can read them in the verbatim and, hopefully, we might get some responses.

Interestingly enough, when the Director was quoted in the Yorkshire Evening Post saying the proposals were the lesser of two evils and that more unpleasant cuts would have to be made if the current ones did not go through, what does this now mean? Perhaps again someone could explain to us that if you are doing this, what else is in the back pockets of Councillor Harrand and how much worse is yet to come? Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, Councillor Gruen. I call on Councillor Taggart.

COUNCILLOR TAGGART: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Same issue. Lord Mayor, in the 1950s I grew up in Birmingham, the city of my birth, and on the street where I lived there were hardly any people who lived beyond their sixties. Typically men would retire at 65 because they did not have any early retirement in those days and most of them would be dead within two years. As far as my own family was concerned, there were no were old people – everyone seemed to die relatively young. My father is still alive today and he is 87 – he is the longest living member of the Taggart family there has ever been.

COUNCILLOR: Because he is a Tory!

COUNCILLOR TAGGART: And he is a Tory (*Laughter*) and a former Tory Councillor. In fact, he was a paper candidate two years ago and he could barely walk and he almost won and he did not deliver any leaflets or put up any posters, so it just goes to show, doesn't it?

The point about my father is, he is not alone. The whole country is full of people well beyond 65. We have never had such a large population of elderly people. In a way that is something we should celebrate. We should also celebrate what older people can offer. Look at the number of Member of Council here who are well beyond 65 and make a considerable contribution. All of us have gone through our lives changing our attitude towards older people. I told my granddaughters statistically they are all going to live to be over 100 and I have got plans of my own to do the same as well!

COUNCILLOR: You will still be here!

COUNCILLOR TAGGART: Still be here! In these circumstances we know there is water on the moon definitely; maybe if there were Martians and they came down and took an objective view of British society, they would say, "Mmm, big increase in elderly population", you can bet your bottom dollar the local authorities would be providing more services for older people but, my goodness gracious me, what is going on in Leeds? They are cutting back; they are closing.

Bramley Lawn, the figures, the referrals – the numbers are down. Why are they down? Because no-one has been referred. It is a self-fulfilling prophecy. The three Councillors for Bramley and Stallingley have a suspicion – we are cynical people, I am sure it is not based on any kind of truth – that they have given partial relief, if I can call that in respect of Councillor Gruen and his colleagues, in respect of Naburn Court because it is a ward the Tories hope to win - although, by the way, you will not – and the Doreen Hamilton Centre is likewise in a part of the city which is at times marginal, but the Tories have got no chance of winning in Bramley and Stallingley so it is possible to sacrifice the facility at Bramley and Stallingley because

there will be no political consequence for the ruling two parties, but you are making a big mistake.

When the consultation took place I made a particular point about dementia, because we were told that services were being concentrated on people who have dementia, plus we have more people with dementia now than ever before. I am ideologically opposed to putting everyone together that is the same.

We used to do it with special schools, do you remember? I did not know there were all these disabled people when I was a little boy. I never saw them. They went to some other place far away. My father, to go back to the example, has dementia although he is not as bad as some people with dementia. He is deliberately in a home where there are very few people with dementia – they are frail but they have not got dementia – and when I am there with him and he is interacting with other people, it helps him that he is not in a room full of people with dementia.

I have got doubts about the value of day centres stuffed full of people with dementia. I am not sure it is going to do them a great deal of good. What does people good is, because we are human beings, because we are social animals, interacting with other people of different types, shapes and sizes and all the rest of it.

You are failing in your duty, this administration. You should be doing more for older people because there are more of them and they have still got the vote, by the way, that is one thing you should be doing. Secondly, you should not just think about cutting, cutting budgets. This has been a drip, drip, drip, drip, drip and it is not acceptable and once you take these services away, they are taken away. You are upsetting an awful lot of older people throughout the city. You need to understand more the importance of relationships that people form when they go to places like the day centres. None of your fine reports or projections or all the rest of your papers on budgets deal with that issue. You are fundamentally flawed and you show that you do not care. It is a great shame, you have missed an opportunity. If you really cared about older people you would not be doing any of this. Thank you very much, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR CONGREVE: Lord Mayor, I would like to speak in relation to Minute 111 on page 143. Specifically, I want to highlight the devastating impact the Executive Board response to the Day Centre Consultation will have on my ward.

The Report Day Centres to Day Services is very frustrating for me and my ward colleagues. The report states that Holbeck is an area of significant need and also assures us that Holbeck will receive particular focus from Adult Social Care, yet the decision has been taken to do away with one of the few remaining services this community can access.

While I am delighted that it is intended to focus on Holbeck moving forward, that is not good enough for local elderly people who need services and support now. Holbeck is already an area where the health inequalities in Leeds are painfully apparent. Lower life expectancy and a lower quality of life is a reality for many people living in this ward in comparison to other areas of this city. Taking away what few facilities exist is not the way to improve this situation.

Apart from the physical loss of the centre and its services, I have to ask what message this administration is trying to send to the people living in my ward. You would hope that any vulnerable people in this city could look to the Council for help and support. How on earth does slashing services show the people of Holbeck you are genuinely committed to providing them with community based services?

What is worse, I am far from surprised by the decision that has been taken. My understanding is that over the last 14 months elderly people attending the weekly assessment sessions held at the Holbeck Day Centre have not been offered the option of attending the Holbeck Centre. Indeed, the last new service user to take up services at Holbeck Day Centre was back in August 2008.

I fear this is another example of this administration deliberately running down services in order to justify cuts. A lack of referrals will obviously generate falling attendance figures and this is what has happened here. 90% of service users responding to the consultation wanted to remain at Holbeck but agreed to a move because they feared that if they did not make a choice, there would not be an allocated space available for them at any other centre. This view is supported by the service users that I have listened to.

You have to think again about Holbeck. Vague assurances about looking at the situation in Holbeck in the future are simply not good enough. If you are honestly committed to supporting people in Holbeck I will look forward to working with you. In the interim, I must ask you not to abandon the people of Holbeck. This centre is pretty much all they have. *(Applause)* C

COUNCILLOR ATHA: I am speaking on the same Minute. I went to Calverlands the other day to witness the feelings of those local people who have enjoyed the facilities in that very attractive place in Horsforth. I did not see any Horsforth Councillors there and I am not sure that they have actually come out suggesting support for the people who use that centre. There is no doubt whatsoever that the whole report is financially driven. It is not driven because of the interests of the old people; it is driven to save money. That was quite clear - £200,000, £300,000 has been quoted.

I just think that people who are old, like people who are young, should have the right to determine, where they can, what happens to them and what suits them. What is happening now is someone – it may be Peter, it may be his colleagues – are forcing on old people something they do not wish. The consultation which took place, to give Peter, again, his credit, in the report it states very clearly the following, that Calverlands, residents there were against; Bramley Lawn, they were against; Holbeck, they were against; Naburn Court they were against; the Doreen Hamilton they were against; Otley, they were against. Against all the people who are against, the majority in those places – what is happening? Their wishes are being totally ignored – totally ignored.

When we look at Calverlands it makes sense in many ways to move some of the people with dementia who are in Woodhouse out to Horsforth, which is nearer to their home; that makes sense, but the impact of that is that people in Calverlands who are engaged and loved that centre, the day care users, are being pushed out to make room for the people with dementia. When I go and ask what is the plan for them, there is not one yet but it can be worked out. That is just not good enough.

What is even worse and malign and evil and wicked, is when these people in Calverlands were having – not you, Peter – were having a demonstration, the average age was about 85 and some intensely frail and feeble and some with dementia. We got a message, you cannot have the demonstration in their own place there - they have got to do it outside. Outside it was sunny but it was terribly cold and we were being told to go outside with these old folk. It was outrageous.

What is more, when I was there I thought this is damn ridiculous, I am not having that, so a quick word back to their quarters and so what comes out, a nice gentleman, decent, old-fashioned social worker, very sheepish, said, "Look, terribly

sorry, you do not have to go outside, you can have it in a side room.” A side room would not have accommodated one fifth of the people who were there.

It is this malign feeling where they can actually say to old people, “Go outside and have your demonstration outside, not in the place which you, by your 80-odd years of life in this city, have deserved.” It just will not and, quite frankly, I am sure if Peter had been there he would have said, “No, we are not going to have that.” The whole point is, it is happening. It is a sad thing.

The report says, this is a result of the consultation, existing day services are being deliberately run down. Requests for open access to day centres are being denied. Fears that people would lose their day services are real. Additional responsibilities of voluntary sector organisations, will they be able to take them on? All these issues appear in this report and so the whole drift of the report is against the proposals.

Then we come to the end bit, we get the proposals which none of the old people want, that we know are not going to work and which is going to say a few hundred thousand pounds. All I can say is, the vision you have got is wrong and I am quite sure if the majority of you go there without your party affiliations, you would agree with me that what was going on and is going on there is wrong. It is only when we sit down here with us on that side and you on that side that we take up positions that we individually morally know we cannot support.

I hope, Peter, you and your colleagues will think again. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR A BLACKBURN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I would first of all like to speak on page 140 Minute 106 on the Holt Park Wellbeing Centre. That is just to say that I have no problem with this centre being provided at all, it seems to be providing quite a lot of decent facilities, but what I have noticed and what I have asked and has no reply as yet, was that there is no provision been stated in the report about the local school using the swimming facilities there, which is something that does need to be looked at. I would like to get some response and hopefully it will be made clear that the youngsters from the school can use those facilities.

I now go on to page 143 Minute 111, the Day Centres to Day Services. I think a lot has already been said. I do not disagree with what has been said at all with the Members that have already stated things about their local centres and an overall view.

I think it is known, or should be know, that certainly we in the Green Party believe in having day centres for elderly people. It gets them out, they get used to the day centres and not in favour, of course, of closing them down.

We are also, whilst we welcome the change that has been made that half of them can stay partially open, we do believe that is a move forward, we are still concerned about the long term future of these centres. As has been said previously, four were closed and now it was planned to close six but as we know there has been some leeway there so that at least three can stay open part of the time, one of those three, of course, being a better provision.

I also wonder about the numbers, at the end of the day, because I asked, if you may remember last Council meeting, I do not have a day centre in my ward but the one that is nearby is the one in Cottingley and so I did ask for the figures, because it was assumed that the people from Holbeck would go there. I queried the figures before; I asked for the figures to come back to me and I am still not happy because those figures, whilst it says yes, we can include people from Holbeck if they



wish to come here, you are not leaving much room. Also, I am assuming, I know as people get older whilst they might walk with a walking stick now they can get worse – my own mother-in-law who I must admit does not use one of these day centres but nevertheless, she is in her eighties, she is deteriorating so if people need better facilities to walk with these take up room, like my mother-in-law, she has to park it at the side, or they may be in wheelchairs as time goes on. I do not know where the room is for these. I worry about this because now we are talking about increasing the numbers at Springfield and going up to the maximum - the maximum. They have never gone up to that number before. The fact is that generally it was expected that 30 people a day would use it. Now we are talking about it is expected that on one of the days we are talking about 39, if the people from Holbeck go there, which I believe some have expressed an interest to do so.

I am given the figures back now and we are talking about 37, 39 people. I do not know how many of these are in a wheelchair or whatever, I must admit, but I do worry about the space and I have said it before. I do not want them shoved in like---

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor, you are out of time, I am afraid.

COUNCILLOR A BLACKBURN: I do not want them shoved in a place. We have got to allow room. OK then, thank you. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR CAMPBELL: Thank you, Lord Mayor, I will speak on page 142, Minute 110 and while I am at it I might as well do 143, Minute 11.

It is interesting I think, Lord Mayor, that there is a complete divergence of view between the two sides of the Chamber and I think Ann hit it on the nail there. She said that she believed we should have old people's centres and we should stick old people in them whether they want to go in them or not.

COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: She was not talking about you, Colin, honest.

COUNCILLOR CAMPBELL: I think that might be a slight exaggeration.

COUNCILLOR A BLACKBURN: I want plenty of room.

COUNCILLOR CAMPBELL: It intrigues me, Lord Mayor, why has the debate – debate, that is a joke – this afternoon been so patronising towards old people? It really has been a patronising debate. It is about saying, "We want a centre in our ward, we want to put older people in it, that is what they want. They want to go in the centre."

I am slightly concerned, Lord Mayor, because Councillor McKenna, Councillor Yeadon, Councillor Gruen were waxing very lyrical last Council meeting about the lack of consultation etc, etc. Now they actually admit there has been quite a bit of consultation and it has come up with some results but they do not necessarily like those results so they are still going to say that probably there is a secret agenda anyway. Let us talk about a ward where there has been some consultation, some proper consultation. Let me give you a tip, Councillors, it is a bit of useful information.

COUNCILLOR TAGGART: Who is being patronising now?

COUNCILLOR CAMPBELL: I am being patronising to you! *(Laughter)* I will give you a bit of advice. My ward colleagues and I, it is true Councillor Gruen (he has gone) was very vocal at the last meeting, asking me to get up and comment because there has been some considerable discussion about facilities in Otley. I

looked at my ward colleagues and my ward colleagues and I, like everybody else, were concerned when we heard that there was going to be the possibility of the centre in Otley closing. You can do two things, of course. You can dash off to the press, you can get a petition up, you can go to a demonstration, or you can have a discussion.

We actually did express our concerns but we actually had a discussion. My ward colleagues and I have been to at least half a dozen meetings with officers, we have asked for endless information, we talked to a number of community groups and because of that discussion and because of that conversation that these groups have had, the consultations worked, because actually the department and the community groups and ourselves have look at what the situation is in Otley and come up with a solution.

I am quite happy with the solution and the reason I am quite happy with it is---

COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: I am happy with Otley too, Colin. I am happy with Otley.

COUNCILLOR CAMPBELL: I think the interesting thing is, is it not, that it came about because there was discussion by Members, not by your shouting at them last meeting. That is what the difference is. We have a situation now in Otley...

COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: We did exactly the same in our wards. That is why they kept three open.

COUNCILLOR CAMPBELL: I think, Lord Mayor, we have a much better situation in Otley where we are going to get a much better facility and for that I think I want to put on record... *(Interruption)*

COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: We want the same in Holbeck.

COUNCILLOR CAMPBELL: I would like to put on record, Lord Mayor, my thanks to Councillor Harrand and the officers in the department for the effort they have put in to try and come up with a solution in Otley.

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: They say it is not political.

COUNCILLOR CAMPBELL: I can appreciate, Lord Mayor, there is a lot of baying on the other side because they have got wards and they have got elections coming up and they need to get voters, but I think it was very telling...

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: That is all they will be getting - a vote.

COUNCILLOR CAMPBELL: It was very telling Councillor Taggart's comments. His first part was quite interesting about his father, his grandfather being more active. Yes they are, that is true. The second part, which was the Labour Party's criteria for where you got services. If you recall the criteria was, is this a Labour ward? If it is a Labour ward you get services; if it is not, you do not. That is a telling comment, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR HARRIS: Thank you, Lord Mayor, speaking on that same Minute 111 page 143. If I were in Opposition, when I was I would be saying exactly what the Labour Group are saying today and it is understandable that they are. My colleagues will not thank me for some of the things I am about to say but bugger it!

The unpalatable truth is, and I wonder whether the press will print it, is that the whole thing is completely unaffordable. The entire thing that our society has created is now unaffordable and we have created expectations amongst the public that can no longer be met. That is the God's honest truth, and more than that we have created a situation where everything defaults to government and the public sector. Society expects that the public sector will now step in and do everything. They will care for the ill, for the elderly, it is no longer the individuals or society's responsibility. It is now government just do everything and it cannot be afforded. The butt end of all of this – and it is scandalous – is the way in which the elderly are being treated.

When I was in Opposition – and I am not going to score an opportunist political point – we were on the verge of entering to an unprecedented boom and I did not see any government pour money into the care for the elderly the way they have quite rightly poured money into care for the young, into schools and PFI projects, into the NHS. If a commensurate amount of money for such a radically ageing population was not made available in good times, then it certainly is not going to be made available by any government in bad times. That is the dreadful, dreadful, unpalatable truth that we are all going to have to come to terms with, even me. It would seem I am here a bit longer than I anticipated, even I will have to come to terms with it and this actually is what no politician is prepared to stand up and say. Nobody is prepared to say to the public it just cannot be afforded the way you are being led to believe it can be.

I heard on the radio yesterday an opinion poll. They found what the public want to have done about the chasm in public finances and the bulk of the public prefer cuts in services to a rise in tax. Fine, but when the cuts in services come, where will those cuts be? Which services will be cut? Is it defence? Is it police? Is it health? Is it education? Is it care for the elderly? I fear, actually in the end because of what I said earlier, that it is the elderly who carry the can increasingly in our society. We have a duty, therefore, to stand up and speak the truth.

I now we have got the political to-ing and fro-ing, I know we have got elections coming up. I know when I was in Opposition what I said about day centres. I understand all that but it has gone beyond that now. We all have a duty to speak the unpalatable truth, that some things are going to have to change. We cannot carry on like this. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR D BLACKBURN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I was not going to speak in this debate but after the comments of Councillor Campbell, I feel I have to do. Some of us in this Chamber do not have day centres in our wards but we have people we represent who want to attend day centres. We do not want to force them but they want to attend them. Our problem with this is that where most of the people who live in our ward attend is at Cottingley and as a result of some of these closures, if you get the figures, we are talking about Cottingley being near capacity. We are concerned about where our constituents will go. They cannot go to Bramley Lawn because that is being closed down, so where are they going to go? What this is about capacity, us supplying the capacity for a requirement that is out there.

I have got to say what Councillor Harris just said there, it just proves where Liberal Democrats are going – the new Thatcherites. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: I now call upon Councillor Peter Harrand to sum up.

COUNCILLOR HARRAND: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I understand I have got an hour and a half to debate and answer all these questions – is that right? Probably not!

There is a lot of mis-information about these proposals and suggestions and a lot of it has been perpetuated this afternoon.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: I wonder where this is coming from.

THE LORD MAYOR: Can we let Councillor Harrand speak, please, and listen to what he has to say?

COUNCILLOR HARRAND: The worst by many miles was in the Evening Post this week which had a photograph of the Calverlands meeting and the caption said, "Calverlands Day Centres uses and their friends and families protest over a shake-up which they fear will leave them with nowhere to go." Whoever fed them that I do not know but nobody will lose the service. If I get the chance to say nothing else, nobody will get to lose the service from Leeds City Council as a result of what we are talking about today.

Also I stress which I say at this stage, friendship groups are more important than buildings. We will make the buildings fit the friendship groups, not the friendship groups fit the buildings. That is a theme that has been through all the discussions and what we stick to now.

I will try and answer as many questions as possible that have been raised during the debate.

Jim, thank you for your gracious words about the decisions we took. Perhaps we do not quite see the reasoning in the way you did. You ask about details. If we turned up the day after the announcements and said, "Here is all the details of what we are planning", there would be an uproar because you would say, "You have had it all planned all along, you knew just what you were doing", so we will not have the details until we have talked to everybody. We have to listen to everybody's individual preferences and we will make the details fit with what people tell us they want.

Who was next? Councillor Yeadon, Calverlands. This request, and somebody rang Queenswood Drive Day Centre, you tell us, for eight people from Calverlands to go there on Wednesday as a group of friends. If somebody picked up the phone, rang Queenswood and said, "Can eight of us come on Wednesdays?" – now come on, that is not the way to do it and everybody knows that is not the way to do it. If it had been done through the normal channels which Councillors would know about if they had been asked, we can accommodate those sort of requests. If anybody says, "No, you cannot come, full stop", I would be surprised and it would be wrong. Places will be allocated in detail for each and every individual who is affected. We cannot have block bookings of people saying they speak for another seven people.

Lucinda said some people will no longer be access the same level of care, such as a hoist for bathing. Rubbish. Everybody who currently gets a service, they will continue to get the service that they need and which they have always had.

The corresponding lack of referrals. The lack of referrals is because they are applying national criteria. Exactly the same level of referrals are (*Interruption*) applied in 80% of all the cities in England. Their access to care services is a national policy and we abide by the same policy as 80% of other Local Authorities.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: Repeat that, I did not hear it.

COUNCILLOR HARRAND: We are operating national policy the same as 80% of other Local Authorities.

Councillor Gruen has been using the Freedom of Information Services, I understand. You have had a lot of information, Peter. Not much of it has been used, as far as I can see. I thought we were going to get a lot of detailed responses as a result of all those information requests but nothing has happened yet.

The same applies to your point about what days are we going to close them. If we knew what days we were going to close them we would have announced it on the day and you would have said, "Fait accompli, knew what you were doing before you started."

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: If you give way I will use all the information.

COUNCILLOR HARRAND: Probably not, no. Naburn Court, one of the points you made, the problems we had about Naburn Court, it was factual – gosh. I do not apologise for that.

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: You should have been there and listened to the consultation.

COUNCILLOR HARRAND: Councillor Congreve. I went to see Angela and I think Adam was there on Friday last week. The difficulties with Holbeck are a hell of a lot more than a day centre closing and 13 ladies not being able to get their service in the same centre. Angela has a very good understanding of Holbeck and she has made several speeches which are very impressive. Do Members know it is no longer possible to buy fresh fruit in Holbeck? There is no shop or supermarket or petrol station – you cannot buy an apple in Holbeck. Is that not something wider than the day services provision? Holbeck deserves fresh fruit and, if you do not mind me saying, it is not Beeston and Holbeck, it is Holbeck which needs special attention. I went to see Angela; we are going to get a meeting of the people from Development, from Learning and Leisure, from Area Management, from Adult Social Care and we will see what we can do about Holbeck. David, you are very welcome to come and join in and tell us what is necessary but I accept that Holbeck is a special case and we will certainly do everything that we can do to improve it.

Councillor Taggart, I am not responsible for Social Services in Birmingham in the 1960s but the point you are making – where is Neil? – about older people is our point, not your point. Older people are living longer and, as you say, in their sixties they are no longer decrepit and past it. They are more independent, they are more lively – they are less likely to want to go and sit and play bingo all afternoon in a community centre that they are taken to at a time that suits other people and they are taken home from at a time that suits other people.

It is in the figures – 2000 people on a good day to fill every social services day centre, 2000 people would be looked after by the City Council. On the same day the voluntary community sector looks after 25,000 people. That is the way of the future. Do not pretend that you can turn that tide because the voluntary community sector are there in front of us and they are providing better services more often than not to those which we provide.

Who else did we have? Councillor Atha. Why were there no Horsforth Councillors at the Calverlands event that you were at last week. That was restricted to local Councillors, was it not? Horsforth includes Garforth – there were Garforth Councillors there, were there not? There were Councillors from a long way from

Calverlands. The Horsforth Councillors did not know anything about it till it was over, did you? They were not invited.

COUNCILLOR: You were on television looking like a lemon, Bernard!

COUNCILLOR ATHA: You find a lot of ideas up in Horsforth, that is a fact.

COUNCILLOR HARRAND: The reason there were no Horsforth Councillors there is because no Horsforth Councillors were invited there. Who organised that event I am only 99% sure but it was not anybody...

COUNCILLOR ATHA: It was the mother of one of the residents.

COUNCILLOR HARRAND: I think it was actually the daughter – the daughter of one of the residents, I suspect – I had better be careful – who also organised the newspaper articles, the radio articles etc. That has been one individual who has organised that. Very effective and certainly worth listening to but not a great wave of public opinion sweeping across Calverlands, I would suggest.

Ann, Councillor Blackburn, the point you made for Holt Park yes, absolutely right, but as soon as Holt Park is opened and everybody sees it, everybody will want one. It is the future, it is a wonderful place.

I was not sure about the phrase about “shoving our old people into a place”. This is not what we are going to do. We are going to ask them what they want, provide them with what they want as far as we possibly can, so shoving them in a place is not...

COUNCILLOR A BLACKBURN: You are misunderstanding what I mean. I was meaning we wanted room for them and I do not believe there is.

COUNCILLOR HARRAND: We must move on, thank you. Mark, I see the services, the future for social services different from what you are saying. From your community as well, the Jewish Centre on Stonegate Road is the absolute epitome of what we are trying to do. If all communities in every ward had a service like this provided at Stonegate Road, we could abolish social services. It is absolutely first class and we wish that we could afford and deliver it for everybody else.

The point about Social Services cuts is obviously not right. There has been more money spent on Social Services every year that I have been responsible than the rate of inflation in any other department in the city, so the use of cuts in the context of Adult Social Care is certainly entirely inappropriate. We are spending more, we are spending it better and we will also spend it better in the future.

I will finish where I started because I can refute every individual person. No service user will lose any service they are getting at present. Friendship groups will dictate where people go - buildings will not dictate where people go.

Please raise your eyes from the immediate problems of individuals going to individuals, sitting in the same chair. When you listen to these people talking, as I said before, what you get from these ladies is, “I do not care where they take me as long as I can sit next to Mary”, and that is the point, people count more than buildings. If we provide the service for the people, the buildings are much less important. There is more to social service provision and day care than standing having demonstrations outside day centres in the cold standing for photographs. It is a much wider subject and I hope that eventually we will have a reasonable

discussion which looks at individuals rather than short-term buildings-related issues. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, Councillor Harrand.

(iv) Central & Corporate

THE LORD MAYOR: We are now on to Central & Corporate and I call on Councillor Wakefield.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Can I refer to Minute 112 on page 114? That really is about the financial help monitoring. There was a statement that said the cost of this industrial dispute is £0.01m. I think that and the figure that was mentioned today is actually a gross under-estimate not only in financial costs but, indeed, the human cost. We are talking about low paid staff who have had to struggle for eleven weeks without any income coming in.

It now represents the longest public service dispute in the history of Leeds – I think Neil can vouch for that. There can only be one person held responsible – amongst others but one main one – and that is Councillor Brett who, for four weeks, refused to negotiate with people who were taking a cut of a third and instead of responding them to negotiate, he actually threatened to privatise.

Of course, we have heard all the insults about them being skivers, lazy, violent people. How has that helped to settle the dispute? It is made even worse by Councillor Monaghan. Here we were at a stage of negotiations where everybody was committed to keeping the constructive comments, not to go to the press in case it unbalanced the negotiations. It was at a sensitive stage and what do we get? We have Councillor Monaghan going to the press saying that he had shot to pieces the union figures for bins per hour. Even Councillor Carter had to admit that it was far too simplistic to put 220 bins out and say Bradford do it and Manchester.

I take my hat off to you there, you did say it and it was the right thing to say because anybody can pluck figures out of the air. I could say out of the 400 hours of the ten week dispute, only 13½ hrs have been spent negotiating, but we know the world is simplistic.

I know Councillor Monaghan is an expert on erotic sex – he once told us that – but he is completely out of his depth in industrial relations. Completely, without a clue and it is embarrassing to see.

If you ask me the question earlier, Councillor Brett, what I really think about efficiency, like the unions and like us, we want to see efficiency and productivity but let me tell you this, you employ managers. You employ managers to draw up rounds and actually increase efficiency. Why are they not doing it? If you want to control sick pay, you have a sickness procedure. Why do they not actually follow through the sickness procedure? You do not threaten and bully and intimidate and threaten to privatise them if you have got an industrial relations problem. You actually use the management that you pay for. It is simple. That is the way in industrial relations.

I very much welcome today the step up in negotiations in the last two days because all we want to see – you asked me what we want to see – I want to see the unions sitting down with the officers trying to negotiate a fair and just settlement that gives dignity and respect back to those low paid workers who, frankly, gave had nothing but insults for eleven weeks. That is what I want.

What I do not want to see is the constant baiting of low paid staff in this city, the constant calling of them, the constant deriding of their efforts. If it is so easy, why isn't the private sector that we have employed now struggling to provide an efficient service in parts of our city that there is at least – parts of my ward and I will take you to that have not had a service very, very quickly, in ten weeks, eleven weeks, so that is how easy this job is. What we want is a service restored to the public of Leeds. I would want to stop rubbishing low paid staff of this Council for a fair and just settlement. That is what we want, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: Thank you, Lord Mayor. On the same Minute, who would have thought a couple of months back that we would still be sitting here discussing the bin strike? Honestly, did any of us think that this strike would go on longer than a week, two weeks? Here we are eleven weeks on. Seriously if people thought that it would go on this long what on earth were you doing to allow it to go on this long? This is the one universal service, the one service that everybody gets and we totally failed to provide it to many of our residents. I go to some parts of my ward and I can see plastic bags piled up 20 feet away from somebody's bedroom window – stinking plastic bags full of rubbish. That is absolutely intolerable. You might think that this was some kind of playback of the winter of discontent or something like that. It is not, it is 2009 and it is you who is responsible for it because you have sleep walked into this dispute without a Plan A, without a Plan B, without a Plan C as to what you are going to do about it.

Let us just think about some of the costs because when I have had discussions with officers, it has been a bit disappointing because they have said, "Well, it is not really costing us a great deal."

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Do not believe it.

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: I do not believe it because we are not getting a service, that is the first thing, it is very partial, but there are huge hidden costs that we are going to pay the bill for later on. It is not this month, it is not next month – it will be next year, the year after. Let us just think of a few.

There was quite a good article by John Battle about the whole issue of re-educating people to recycle. How much effort have we put in as a Council into getting people to recycle? Major, major issue for us over the past few years. We would all agree on that, would we not? What are we all doing at the moment? What I am having to do I am afraid – and bad habits die hard and we will all be doing it, we will do whatever we can to get rid of our rubbish. Come the day when we get a proper service back again we will have to work damned hard to get back to the position we were in before this strike started.

Landfill tax – that is an issue, "We cannot give you any information on this." Surely it would be possible to do a simple calculation. I know that my colleague Councillor Wakefield said it was on the back of a fag packet. We have got plenty of officers who could do a proper calculation and it would not be so difficult, would it, but they have not done it and I want to see that.

There is reputational damage to the city, when we look like something out of the dark ages. Who would have thought Leeds, an industrial dispute with the Council going on for nearly three months?

Among the hidden things, our senior officers are spending a huge amount of time on this dispute. OK, they are not in negotiations but they are working behind the scenes, they are in the discussions all the time and whenever you have that situation, you cannot think that senior officers are like firemen who sit around cooking their



bacon and eggs, playing snooker, waiting for the shout. When the shout comes they get involved, right?

COUNCILLOR HARRAND: Our fire fighters do not spend their day doing that.

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: Peter, behave yourself. That idea that fire fighters just go down, right there is a fire, let us go down and sort it out, come back and go back to bed. My brother in law was a fireman so I know what the score is. That view of senior officers that all they are there to do is to solve a problem when it occurs, because what you do is, you actually take them away from all the issues they should be dealing with and for God's sake, look at what we have had on the agenda this afternoon. Those are the serious issues that our senior officers should be dealing with day after day after day but we have not because they are spending time on this unnecessary dispute.

Everybody wants to end this dispute, particularly the people out on the cobbles at Henshaw and Crossgreen. They are desperate to go back to work and they are desperate for something to happen but it is not happening because we are proceeding at a deadly slow pace.

Lastly, there is reputational damage and the big reputation that is damaged is Richard Brett's because he will always be remembered, no matter how long he is involved in politics, as the man who led this Council into an unnecessary dispute with the binmen. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR LYONS: Thank you very much, Lord Mayor. I wish to speak on page 144 Minute 112. Lord Mayor, I would also like to speak regarding the Financial Health Monitoring update which highlights this administration's supposed costs and the insufficient attempts to deal with the ongoing strike from the Leeds binmen.

First of all, what you have said, and you seem to glory in it, that you are saving £250,000 with the binmen being on strike. That is what he said, that lad over there. That is with our people, some of them have worked for over 35 years for us. This is thanks, we gave some awards today for people that work for us for a long while and have done a lot of jobs. Who is thinking of the binmen who are working for us and the people on lower incomes? Not a lot of you – you want to run them down.

What you have saved, you have saved £250,000, a quarter of a million pounds. I know people in my area that have not had one collection yet there has not been one collection and if anyone is going to say any different, I will show them and give them evidence. No doubt about it, they have not been collected.

What we have got is green bins – what is going to happen with all the green bins because they have only just started in some areas collecting green bins. They are all contaminated now, they are going to landfill, so all that – oh yes they are, I will bet you and tell you they are going in landfill.

COUNCILLOR: Oh no they're not.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: They are going to landfill because they are contaminated. I followed them today.

Brown bins. What about brown bins? Rotting and smelling in our areas. You know what they say, Lord Mayor, is if they do not like the case they start attacking the speaker. You attack me, I have been at it a long while.

People have to wheel bins in and then wheel them back out again because they say they are coming round on a certain day. The promises were made by Councillor Brett that he would empty black bins or bins once a fortnight so people are doing that, so what is happening, they are not coming so they are wheeling bins back in again, so the day after the binmen are coming round and that is where you get your figures. They are not collecting them because people did not put them out.

What they have started doing as the strike is going on is putting all the rubbish outside in the streets and it is not so long since you were fining people for leaving bins outside. They are fined so all these are outside now.

Muck and rats. Rats, and I can prove it. Go along Old Moor Avenue and Selby Road – dead rats crushed in the road. They were not crushed before because there were not any, there was no rubbish for them to play about with so you have all rats in that particular area. It is not that I go looking for them, people have come and told me about this.

What we say is that Council states on this £250,000. You have just been to the press as if we had won a raffle or something and said you have started 50 new binmen and 20 drivers. Is that cost included in your saving or is that against your £250,000? We have suddenly got to, in this day and age, we are starting 70 new people on the bin rounds. If I was a cynic I would say it was strike breaking at its worst – and it worst, and people should be ashamed to be associated with it. Most people know who is to blame for this strike and they are not frightened to say who it is and they are saying loud and clear – not my words, their words. “It is Brett”, they say, “it is that Councillor Brett that is to blame.” We will take it from there.

What we are talking about, binmen - the thieves and vagabonds and rogues who won't come to work. Yes, what I know of them, we have got church wardens, we have got governors, we have got hospital visitors – they are all binmen. They are lovely when they are outside and they are a pride for everybody and they are good citizens. Why is it when they come into work or they go on strike that they are no good? Why do you malign these people when you know they are part of our communities and they are doing a good job and they are doing it right and it is you that has got it wrong and it is time you went and talked to Chief Exec and got round a table.

We will not take the Queen's Counsel expenses in at this particular time but that should go on as well and so to getting a fair deal for everybody, both the Council, the people that want the service and the bin people. Thank you, Lord Mayor.  
(Applause)

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Mick, a cheer for me! I very much want to continue from where my colleagues have been speaking about the Minute 112 on page 144, the Financial Health, and the million pounds that has been wasted so far on this sad and sorry strike – a million pounds that has been wasted, a million pounds that has been wasted by this strike being dragged on by the gestures and the lack of leadership from this administration.

Frankly, I do not think anybody on the Labour benches – and probably many people on the back benches over there who are cowed into silence – believe the figures that this administration is generating. Come on, how can anybody believe anything Councillor Brett says?

Let us look back at some of the things he has said. On 7<sup>th</sup> September, the first day of the strike, he said, “There is no real appetite for strike action and the

unions will fail miserably.” Eleven weeks three days we are in with a solid strike. It is quite clear there is an appetite for strike action. That statement has no credibility.

Then he obviously had a little sleep and saw how solid the strike was, so on 8<sup>th</sup> September he accused the unions of resorting to dirty tactics. Eleven weeks two days on, has there been any evidence of these dirty tactics? No. Another Councillor Brett statement that lacks complete credibility.

He must have started believing his own publicity because a week later on 14 September he was talking of growing reports of union intimidation and dirty tricks. Ten weeks two days after that have we had any evidence of that? Again, another Councillor Brett statement that lacks any credibility.

I think it shows that nothing this administration says can be believed on the strike action.

Let us look again – and believe me, I am not writing Councillor Brett’s biography here but I have looked at some of the reasons he thinks we have got a strike. On September 19<sup>th</sup> he said it was about equal pay – that is what he told the BBC. By September 28<sup>th</sup> it had turned into modernisation and sickness. By October 21<sup>st</sup> it was all about productivity. In the Daily Mirror on November 6<sup>th</sup> we were back to pay fairness as if taking a third off low paid workers was a fair pay approach.

Quite clearly this administration has not had a clue all the way through, has lacked credibility, it has cost this Council money, nobody believes the figures they have given, it has led to rubbish piling up in the streets, led to the longest and most bitter dispute in Yorkshire since the Miners’ Strike and they still do not seem to have a clue what they have been doing.

Colleagues, I think anybody looking at this rationally, doing an assessment of Councillor Brett’s and Councillor Monaghan’s performance, would say that in the working hours available since the strike has started only three per cent of those have been spent negotiating a settlement for this. I think that means they have clearly not getting their performance bonus this year.

I think once the litter is cleared off the streets and the landfill sites are open again, not only is it the rubbish that is piling up that needs to go, it is this administration that needs to follow it into the landfill sites and have an administration that looks after low paid staff in this city, looks after our citizens, gets the rubbish moving again. The farce of the private contractors has shown how valuable our binmen are to the city. They are worth every penny and I think it is a disgrace the way they have been treated. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR RAFIQUE: Lord Mayor, I would like to speak on Minute 112 on the Financial Health Monitoring Report for 2009/10 and specifically in relation to the projected £6,000 overspend on the Neighbourhood and Housing or neighbourhood budget. I believe it is about time that the Council got its priorities right and I believe that tackling the serious burglary problems we are currently experiencing in Leeds needs to be at the forefront of the Council’s agenda. Nationally, burglary rates have been falling over the last six years. However, rats for Leeds have been on the increase and the Home Office figures for 2009/08 clearly show loud and clear that Leeds has a real burglary problem.

The total numbers of reported domestic burglaries in Leeds has risen from 8,466 in 2007/08 to 9,340 in the latest period. That is a staggering increase of 870 cases in a year. The situation is worse when you consider that annual burglary figures have increased year on year since 2005 when the number was just 7,743 –

that is 7,743 cases – that is an increase of over 1,500 incidents since 2005, Lord Mayor.

Two wards in particular jump out from these latest figures - Gipton and Harehills and Crossgates and Whinmoor. These two wards have seen the biggest increase in domestic burglaries in the past year, with an increase of 168, 163 cases respectively. In addition, Gipton and Harehills has the highest recorded number of offences in Leeds, with 564.

Our recent survey of home insurance claims labelled the LS8 area post code as the fifth worst in the country for burglaries. LS15 is placed 15<sup>th</sup> in the same survey.

Lord Mayor, it is true that the current levels have traditionally spiked inner city areas. However, when you look closely into the figures since 2004 when this administration took control of this city, the largest ward increases are all in the inner city wards. Domestic burglary rates in City and Hunslet, Crossgates and Whinmoor, Burmantofts and Richmond Hill and Beeston and Holbeck have all increased by over 100 cases since 2004. This clearly demonstrates that this administration is lacking vision and neglecting the areas which require the most attention.

Councillor Les Carter has responded to the increase in burglaries by saying that extra resources would be allocated to tackle the problem, including extra home security and better intelligence sharing between Council, police and agencies.

We, of course, welcome these measures, particularly in Gipton and Harehills where the burglary rates are so high. However, it is disappointing that it took the situation to become so bad before the Council stepped into taking action. This Council should be proactive in its role in tackling crime and not just reactive when the issue becomes so bad and makes the headlines.

What this administration has failed to answer is exactly why Leeds has higher burglary rates than the other major cities and why have they lost control of this situation?

I believe, Lord Mayor, that this administration has become too complacent, it has failed to invest enough money into burglary reduction. In the past they have even reduced funding to key areas for burglary prevention such as alley gating. Indeed, in 2009 Budget Report this Group – Labour Group, have pledged to allocate an additional £100,000 resources to aid burglary reduction across the city. The administration, on the other hand, reduce funding for alley gating from £121,000 in 2005 to just £80,000 in 2008, so when the residents across Leeds asked why burglary rates are higher in Leeds than any other major city, in fact most of the members in this Chamber will be surprised to hear that Leeds is ranked 167 out of 176 Local Authorities in the country for burglary reduction.

The simple answer is this administration has lost the plot, got their priorities wrong and failed to invest the right amount of money and resources into tackling key problems, especially inner city area. At the time when the future of some of our neighbourhood wardens is in doubt, Lord Mayor, the residents of Leeds need assurance that safety of their homes and possessions is being taken seriously by this administration. Sadly, the latest figures for burglaries will do little to ease their concerns. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR NASH: My Lord Mayor, I would like to speak on the same Minute but it is regarding Section 106 moneys. First of all, I should like to give credit to my colleague, Mohamed Iqbal, who brought this to the attention of all of us.

Previously when we have enquired we have just hit a blank wall, it has been swept under the carpet. We have been told, we have been consulted.

I should just mention at this stage that Councillor Brett has asked me to go and see him last week to discuss this issue. It was less than 24 hours' notice and I not attend but offered two other dates and I did not hear anything from him.

We are informed that Members are consulted when Section 106 money is spent, and so they are - when it is spent. I was consulted on Queen's Square in Leeds where it is proposed 100 grand is going to be spent, but the whole problem is that Members of the Council are not given the choice where the money should be spent. *(Interruption)*

COUNCILLOR: Of course you are.

COUNCILLOR NASH: If you will just listen I will give you two instances. We have in my ward a project call the Greenhouse. It is the conversion of the former Shaftsbury House into fairly luxurious flats. In the brochure they advertised it is within two minutes' walk of South Leeds Sports Centre. The Section 106 money is to be spent on improving Beeston Road, traffic calming, planting trees, this, that and the other. If the local Councillors were asked, if the local community was asked where would you like this money spending, they would say on the sports centre and do a lower key thing on Beeston Road.

In the City and Hunslet Ward is the area between Burnley Road and Kirkstall Road where Yorkshire Television is. It may surprise you to know that that area is in Hunslet. We have now got a student township there, multi-million pounds-worth of flats and there is a lot of Section 106 money coming from it. Where is it being spent? I, as a local Councillor, do not know but I know this *(interruption)* that the small Marlborough estate opposite Park Lane College, which is the traditional type of Council estate with a multi-storey block there and maisonettes, are plagued with noise from students coming from town late at night. They are suffering all the disbenefit of the planning game and some of these students are actually picnicking and drinking and sitting on the grass in front of their windows.

Three years ago they asked if the area could be fence off – not to make it a Fort Knox but to make it appear to everybody that this is private property and people cannot just wander in and picnic in front of people's windows. Blank wall – “Oh, we have not got the money.” This is three years ago.

It is quite clear that my ward of City and Hunslet, which has the most of Section 106 money in the coffers, in your coffers, is being short changed and it is time that somebody got a grip of this matter. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR D BLACKBURN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I refer to page 137 Minute 98, and the Leader of the Council will be happy to know that I am being the good guy this time, so I am actually welcoming something. It is to do with 2010, the year of volunteering, and the Leader of Council knows quite well that I am very enthusiastic about this because as part of Narrowing the Gap Group we have talked about this.

I think this is a great opportunity to do things that otherwise would not get done. We have all got to play our part in this and use our Area Committees to build up capacity locally so we can get projects where we can get these volunteers into. It is a fantastic idea and I think it will be fantastic for this city. I do not want it just to be a year; I would like it to go on for many years. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR A BLACKBURN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am yet another councillor that is going to speak on page 144 Minute 112 on Financial Health Monitoring. I think you can guess really where I am going to go. Nowhere different than where has been gone before but I have to say that we are concerned about the finances of the Council in relation to this bin strike and I have to ask for an answer to my husband's question earlier for the estimated cost of additional waste going to landfill due to the dispute, as it was not answered by Councillor Monaghan and I ask you to work it out.

It cannot be rocket science – I know it is not rocket science but we do want to know, we are not going to forget about it so please do get us that figure.

Now I move on to the dispute itself. I think we have heard lots of comments about that, none which I disagree with. We in our Group have heard both sides of it and spoke to both the Chief Officer and also the unions. It was very interesting, I must say. We have got to say, now come this is still going on after eleven weeks?

For those of you who do not know, both David and I in previous lives have been involved with trade unions. I used to be a Branch Secretary, albeit many years ago but I was at a large company and I just do not understand how for the first four weeks nobody wanted to talk. I cannot understand that, because clearly we should have been talking from Day One.

I remember going back to the last Council meeting, I remember both Leaders saying that they would talk if the refuse workers went back to work. As I said, I know from my own experience that it does not work like that because you talk to people, if you want to get people back to work – all right, I worked for British Steel at that time and I know in industry you do not want to lose orders, you have got your drivers on strike you want to get them back because if you lose your orders, the likelihood is your company will not get them back, but I know this is not industry, but nevertheless it is sense to get talking, get round the table as soon as you can. We are still doing that after eleven weeks.

All the country seems to know, what is going on in Leeds? You see comments popping up all over the place. I am hoping that now, I know there are other things on the table and I know things have been put to you by the unions and I am sure that with some give and take, if we want to – and I know from my point of view and people in my ward that everybody wants it, I am sure everybody else wants it, I am sure everybody wants it certainly, so I hope that we are near an end to it now and that our lads and lasses get back to work.

I know for one thing, I keep seeing all these comments coming up about our lads and lasses are in the service here. I will tell you something, I would not want to be out in all weathers running round back to the bins. I have seen them in my street. I would not want to do it. The miles they must cover per day, I do not know and I realise that different rounds, some are longer than others and all this, but I ask any of you, would you like to have a day out doing that? I think it would be very educational and certainly for all of us perhaps because we might understand a bit more then what these lads and lasses do.

As I said, I hope that seriously it is going to get settled soon and that we get things sorted back to an even keel because it is not doing anybody any good for it to be going on as long as it has done. Thank you. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR PRYKE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Contrary to the green Order Paper I am actually speaking on Minute 97, which is on page 137, and it is about the

Joint Service Centres which, of course, I welcome, particularly the one at Compton Road because it will benefit the people of Burmantofts as well as the people of Harehills. Amongst other things it is going to have an improved library and a credit union branch. In passing I want to welcome the government's tightening of rules on credit unions and the support by our Council officers to Michael McGeown in running the Leeds Credit Union.

Of course, the JSC, both JSCs are filling a gap in areas which do not have One Stop Centres. Some parts of the city, some wards in the city have got more than one One Stop Centre – Seacroft, Halton Moor, for example – and you wonder why the people there are so deserving of such coverage by the city while so many other parts of the city do not have One Stop Centres or Joint Service Centres. For the answer, you just need to look at where the government is proposing to refurbish stations before next May. Of course, they are all in Labour marginal constituencies, so it is the pork barrel vote that determined where the One Stop Centres were put.

I am very pleased these two Joint Service Centres are going to fill part of the gap. You will have noticed that one of them is in Chapel Allerton, which is a ward represented by the Labour Party, so that disproves the allegation that this administration favours, say, day centres in our wards because, if that was the case, Calverlands would have been saved and Naburn Court would have been closed, demonstrating this administration is fair in the application of moneys. *(Interruption)*

Labour Councillors like to go on about those in greatest need and we represent some of the most deprived parts of the city. Well, you do not. I represent the most deprived part of the city and it is called Burmantofts and Richmond Hill, but we three Councillors do not go on and on about it.

Amongst other things when talking about social services or provision of JSCs or whatever else, it is not a cut if you are increasing the funding on things and the funding for Adult Social Care is increasing. It is not a cut. I will repeat it – it is not a cut. Please stop saying that because it does not have any credibility because the funding is increasing.

Councillor Rafique had a go at the administration over burglary figures when he seems to have ignored the fact that the Labour Government has denied this Council Working Neighbourhoods Funding. Alley gates were paid for from SSCF money. We do not have it any more, therefore your government is stopping us preparing for alley gates. It is as simple as.

Councillor Nash has a go at Section 106 moneys. I refer her to the last Scrutiny Board that I chaired where we had a very full paper explaining the situation and Section 106 money, explaining that Councillors are consulted fully about the spending of Section 106 money in their wards and we even had a piece about how the money from your student residences – by the way, who gave them planning permission? - could be spent on Burley Park, because that is the nearest bit of green space to that area. If you want fencing around the Marlboroughs, you need to go to the ALMO because it is ALMO property, and ask the ALMO for that. We get fences in East North East homes – I do not know why you cannot have it in your area, but do not blame this administration – talk to your ALMO constructively.

Amongst other things I want to lament the probable failure of the JSC at Kirkstall. The City and Regional Partnership Scrutiny Board on which I also sit had a report on this at their last meeting and it is fairly evident that the PCT, which is run by you, in trying to put only children and adult mental health services there, is sabotaging the joint working which we want to see from this side in the city. We

would like a Joint Service Centre in Kirkstall – your government is stopping us from doing it. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR M HAMILTON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Minute 112 and 114, page 145 and page 144. It is the Health Monitoring and the Treasury Management. Before I talk about that I would just like to add to Ralph's comments on Section 106 because I have never heard such nonsense from this Chamber for many months. In certainly my ward we have no problem spending our 106 money. We are actually at zero balance and we would like some more, thank you very much. I do not understand where this is coming from.

It is very simple. When a planning application is submitted, I think local ward Members look at the application, decide if we want to see that particular application go through, if we want to object to it but also if there is a possibility of a 106 contribution we also make comments about where we would like to see that money spent. By following through from Day One right to the end you then ensure that when it comes to the thing being built and the money being released, we can actually get on and spend it on projects.

Where the student accommodation is concerned - I notice Councillor Nash is not paying attention to this but I think she should because it is important information – a lot of those schemes come to the City Centre Plans Panel which I chair. Councillor Nash is also a Member of that Plans Panel, so if we want to pin down where 106 moneys are spent, what better opportunity than to actually mention it at the meetings and say, "I would like it spent on this, I would like it spent on that." I do not remember Councillor Nash ever making those comments. She is not listening, no, because she does not want to hear but the fact is that she has the opportunity and we all do and that opportunity is spurned, so I am really very surprised about the comments we have heard on 106.

Turning to the financial monitoring, clearly we are in difficult times and I think it is interesting to note that the report refers to a deficit at the moment of £5.5m, but actually if you compare that with last year, the last financial year, we were running on an overspend of about £5.3, so actually the financial situation is not that different to last year. What is different is the huge extra pressures we are under as a result of the recession, so in spite of all those pressures, in spite of the fact that revenue from parking is down, in spite of the fact that revenue from planning applications is well down, we are actually in no worse position than we were a year ago. I think that is testament to the hard work of our finance department producing very effective financial projections and also the work of this administration in protecting the Council taxpayers' money.

Talk about protecting the Council taxpayers' money because, of course, the other side of the coin is how we actually invest that money to get the best out of it. We have one of the best performing Treasury Management teams in the country. We pay the lowest interest rates of many Councils in terms of borrowings which actually generates extra money. We are generating something like £2m extra this year on top of what we are projecting which we can then re-invest in services, so I think that the general picture is one of very, very effective financial management and raising what money we can in very difficult financial times.

I would contrast that, Lord Mayor, with the performance of the government on this issue because whilst the Council is doing its best to fight the recession and it actually is doing a very good job, it seems to me, the government really is not helping at all. We have heard about NGT where once again we have got to go through, run through the mill in terms of actually getting approvals. We have heard about the arena – disgraceful treatment that we have had from the government on the arena



where we have had to go down to government and try and ask for money and then they said no, you cannot have it because we do not feel that we have demonstrated the impact that we have. Lord Mayor, one of the impacts that an arena in Leeds would have is to create jobs. What better way to ride out a recession than creating jobs and yet the government do not want us to do that and so they have presided over financial mismanagement for the last decade, it seems to me. We went into recession earlier than most countries, we will be out of recession later than most countries. This Council is actually trying to do something to sort that out by building an arena, by trying to get money from Yorkshire Forward to do that and they turn round and say, "Sorry, you cannot have it." We will be debating this in more detail later but I think that is a good example of the sort of thing that we are faced with.

Finally, Lord Mayor, I think we do need to take a balanced view of this. The Council is doing a very good job it seems to me, on the financial side of things. The government really is not helping and above all the Leeds MPs, the Leeds Labour MPs are not helping at all. What impact are they having to go to the government and say, "Let us help Leeds, let us bat for Leeds, let us try and help Leeds ride out the recession." We hear nothing from them about that. I think the fact that a number of them are retiring at the next general election either voluntarily or in some cases no doubt will be forced into retirement, I think that is a jolly good thing.

The Council is doing a very good job on this, the government is not helping at all and good riddance to those MPs, I say. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Thank you, my Lord Mayor. I think that to have a debate actually today on the strike is distinctly unhelpful, particularly when the Labour Group – where has Victor Meldrew, Keith the Mediator gone? He is over there. We will come to Keith the Mediator in a minute.

As Members of the Labour Group, because of their close connections with the strikers, know we are as we speak in detailed discussions with the trade unions about a way forward. They have on two occasions and two occasions only, as far as I am aware, asked to meet with Councillor Brett and myself in person. On both those occasions we have agreed to meet them.

It is simply not true, Councillor Blackburn, to say that talks have not been going on. It was not this Council that walked away from talks in the summer. It was the unions. When the unions knew their Members still had pay protection, nobody was losing anything. The only reason that the refuse workers and the others on strike have lost money now is because they are on strike for no other reason, because we guaranteed them pay protection and we also said we would work with the unions to narrow the pay gap caused through evaluation.

I have said before and I know I speak for both Richard and myself when I say it was our intention to move as closely as we could to ringing that gap down to zero because nobody, no politician particularly wants to say to people, you are going to lose salary, you are going to lose wages. It just is a complete denial of why politicians exist.

Our officers have been meeting with the unions constantly since that time but I have to tell you, I have to reiterate what Richard said, the offer now on the table would mean that our refuse collectors were the second highest paid refuse collectors in the region – not in the county, in Yorkshire and Humberside. Over £18,500 for a refuse collector, over £21,500 for a wagon driver.

We ask one thing in return and what we ask is they actually work more of the hours that they are contracted to work and paid to work. That is all we ask because if

they work a fair day's work for a fair day's pay, if they agree to the re-routing – and I will come back to the re-routing in a moment – if they agree to the re-routing, this Council or the Council taxpayers of Leeds will save millions of pounds. It will enable this Council to roll out a fortnightly green bin recycling collection. It guarantees, incidentally, that those workers will continue to work within the public sector and for Leeds City Council but it does mean that the practice of task and finish – and task and finish meaning that if you finish at half-past eleven in a morning you can go home, or you finish at half-past two in the afternoon you can go home – will no longer continue. Everybody accepts – I do not care what industry you have worked in, what profession you have worked in, throughout the last 30 years every profession, every industry, every trade has gone through rigorous re-evaluation to drive forward efficiencies – everybody, it would appear with the exception of the refuse collectors in Leeds.

Let me very quickly say this. You refer to this as being the longest dispute. Let me tell you about the shortest dispute. The shortest dispute was when the last Labour administration between 2003 and 2004 tried to get best value and introduced re-routing. The refuse workers went out on strike. It lasted one and a half days because Keith the Mediator, who was the Leader of the Council, was in fact Keith the Capitulator because the Council tore up the re-routing and the men went back to work and that is why we are where we are today. No sorry, Keith, not Keith the Mediator – Keith the Capitulator. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR CAMPBELL: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Can I speak on page 144, Minute 112? I was going to, in my capacity as Chair of Plans West, touch on the 106 issue but I think Councillor Hamilton has quite eloquently pointed out why there does not seem to be much 106 money spent in City and Hunslet.

I think the comments that have been made about the dispute or the bin dispute show a real lack of understanding on the Labour Group about reality, I think. Can I just touch on something Councillor Lyons said, which was about missed collections, and he was saying people are ringing him up and telling him they have not had their bins collected for ten weeks. If people ring me up and say the bin is not collected I get on to Cleansing and they go and empty it.

What I suppose that means is if Councillor Lyons presumably would like to pass those on to Councillor Schofield or Councillor Hyde, they will ensure those bins are emptied.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: That is where are with the strike with people like that. I do not need any other Councillors.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: Throw him out, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Carry on, Councillor Campbell.

COUNCILLOR CAMPBELL: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I think somebody touched on the issue of low paid workers and I think that is where it all started, actually. The discussion started about low paid workers. We talk about low paid workers getting £18,500 a year or £21,000 a year. Actually if you were a teacher starting off in your job you would be quite happy to get £21,000 a year, because you do not. If you are a nursery assistant who has gone through a three year college course, you would be absolutely happy to get £18,500. If you were a care worker in one of our homes dealing with old people, dealing with incontinent old people, you would be really happy to get £18,500 a year, so let us talk about why the whole process went on and that is about reorganising it so that we were teaching people fairly.

It is true what Andrew said that if we actually, if our binmen actually worked the hours that they are contracted to do, which is seven o'clock in the morning till quarter-to five at night, there would not be an issue. We could pick up as many bins as we are suggesting they do and, as Andrew said, we could up our recycling rates and every single person in this room needs us to up our recycling rates. It is not just for us, it is for the planet and it is for our kids. We have got to do that but the stumbling block at the moment is the simple fact that we cannot persuade people to actually work their contracted hours and do that.

I asked for some figures about when people finished and you may or may not know that the bin wagons all have transponders on which tells you where they are, which is useful to know. It also tells you when they are back in the depot.

I have just looked at one or two rounds here and I am looking at Councillor Wakefield, at his round. In the week before the strike – remember these are people who are contracted to work from seven o'clock in the morning to quarter-to five at night – the bin wagon on Councillor Wakefield's route was back in the yard parked up and everybody had gone home at 1.35.

COUNCILLOR GRAHAME: I wish they were here to listen to you.

COUNCILLOR CAMPBELL: It does not take much to work out how many bins they could have collected in the extra four hours.

Let us move on to our good friend Councillor Lyons. Again, if I look at Councillor Lyons's round in the week before the bin strike, I noticed that they actually finished at 20-past one on this day. Unfortunately Councillor Gruen has not spoken, which is a bit of a problem, really, because I have got his bin round down here, but I will give you it anyway. On Councillor Gruen's round the binmen really grafted that day because they started at seven o'clock, the bin wagon was back in the yard parked up and everybody had gone home at twelve o'clock.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: You are maligning our people out there.

COUNCILLOR CAMPBELL: I have just decided we probably need to talk about Bernard because Bernard was saying what sterling work---

THE LORD MAYOR: Time, Councillor Campbell. I am sorry about that. Right, we are now moving on to Councillor J L Carter.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: My Lord Mayor, I am not going to speak about the bins today. The great shame is and I mean this sincerely, you heard what I said last Council, I wish you would go to your colleagues and say, "Look, you are going to get paid, it is going to be settled." Do not waste their Christmas for them. Get them back to work. *(Interruption)*

My Lord Mayor, I wish to speak on the nonsense spoken by Councillor Rafique, who I think has gone home now, I cannot see him anywhere. What he fails to tell you is one or two other factors when he talks about crime.

First of all, the figures at the moment are 9,000 burglaries. They have increased from seven to nine and I am not happy about that and we are trying to get that out. When I took over from their administration it was 16,000 burglaries in the city – 16,000 a year. Did I hear one of them say anything at the time? Not one word from any of them. We have brought it down from 16 to 7 and then subsequently it has gone back up to 9.

Why is the increase there?

COUNCILLOR: The recession.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: It could be the recession but I think it is something different. They have a prison service which has a revolving door on it. Nobody goes in and stays in nowadays. The go in/out, in/out. The same people – people doing 40, 50 burglaries and that lot over there should be ashamed of themselves.

We tried to do all sorts to stop this. Let me give you a few other figures as well. Let me give you a few other figures. Crime, since I have been sat in this job – if you are going to blame me for it – has gone down 32% in this city – more than anywhere else in the country. More than anywhere else in the country. We have put more money into Safer Leeds than any other administration – any administration – that has been in this city and you ought to be pleased about it because it is mainly your wards and I get people coming to me and saying, “Thank you for our PCSOs” because they know this administration put them in and you would not put them in. I get people saying thank you for that and you prime them to say thank you for it as well.

The problem with Councillor Rafique is, he comes along to the meetings and officers tell me he never makes a contribution. He does not contribute anything to the Safer Leeds Board – not a thing except it is an open meeting, we talk about crime, we talk about statistics and everything and he runs off to his labour Group saying, “Oh, do a press statement on this” and he does it on what he wants and that is all he does. To be quite honest I think you should get somebody else there, somebody who might contribute to it because he certainly does not contribute to it.

COUNCILLOR LANCASTER: I will come on it.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: You cannot come on for their representative, can you? You would have to join them and you could not afford their subs! Their subs are outrageous. You could not possibly afford it.

We have currently got the NPJA, that is the National Police Improvement Agency and I had a meeting with them yesterday morning. They are saying the partnership is working well and that is the Crime Protection partnership. It is working well, which I am a member of and I Chair.

That is a partnership which is trying to help across this city in all sorts of ways. It might be in children’s safety, it might be in burglary – all sorts of different crimes and I will not let Councillor Rafique – he can insult means much as he wants but he is not going to insult the people who sit on that particular partnership because the people on that partnership are working to protect people in this city, they have given a lot of time to it, a lot of imagination, a lot of work.

So, my Lord Mayor, I think there is one minute to go so I will keep talking for a little bit longer. Let me just say – I want to go home and I certainly do not want to listen to any of you for the rest of the afternoon.

Lord Mayor, can I finally say as far as I am concerned, ask Councillor Rafique to start contributing and not to simply be a moaner. Thank you, my Lord Mayor.  
(Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, Councillor Carter. We are now going to Councillor Brett for wind up time and a final summing up.

COUNCILLOR BRETT: I want to start, Lord Mayor, by announcing to Council that this is the last meeting for Dave Page and I would like, on your behalf, to say to Dave thank you very much for all the work over many, many years that you have done and I know many of you may well want to say something today either at tea today or later on, so thank you very much Dave. (*Applause*)

I will start with the Central & Corporate things and if I have time return to Adults and Children. I would like to start by thanking a number of people and welcoming the comments that Councillor Pryke, Councillor Blackburn, Councillor Andrew Carter, Councillor J L Carter, Councillor Campbell all made.

I think Councillor Rafique has had an answer from Les Carter. I am slightly mystified at this. He seems to be complaining that there was a £600,000 overspend and yet we were not spending enough. There is something not quite right there but as has already been pointed out, it was somebody well away from Leeds – and we all contested it, to be fair you did as well – the horrendous decision for us not to have the Working Neighbourhoods Fund. That has in no small way contributed to some of the things which are going wrong. I accept just as Les has that the numbers on burglary are going the wrong way at the moment. I have done in recent times. I have seen some figures for my ward over the last few months that have actually got better.

Can I say to Councillor Nash, that when I invited the City & Hunslet Councillors to come to a meeting with me it was three or four weeks ago so why you only got an invite with 24 hours' notice, I will investigate what went wrong there. It was certainly not my intention that you got a notice so late that you would not come. It was a genuine invitation and I hope that we can have the discussion at some later point.

Let me turn to the allegation that has been made on a number of occasions and which I think needs to be refuted. The first thing I say is, I have heard Keith on several occasions talk about how politics is not something that should ever be personalised. I have actually been on the media in the last few weeks to explain if necessary to one or two people that if I were run over by the proverbial bus the Council's stance on this strike would not change. Andrew Carter and I are simply the spokespeople for a whole range of people – senior officers and Cabinet – and our position is represented by us; it is not entirely decided by us.

What I would say to you is that talks, particularly over pay and grading, started not on Day One – I have not counted it up but it is probably Day Minus 201. Last March we started the serious talks with the unions. We had had talks before then about some of these issues but we said to them, things have got to change. Productivity has got to change. They said to us at that point, yes, we will talk about productivity but only after you sort out the pay loss, so for three months we talked about pay and grading. It ended with yet another review, on 7<sup>th</sup> July we got the outcome which said sorry, and it was agreed by the four people in the union side just as the four people on the management side, sorry the collectors have to stay at A1, we cannot close the gap, the £4,500 gap using pay and grading.

We then scratched our heads. On working day minus one, on the Friday before the strike started, talks were going on about productivity. We did not call those talks off; we offered to continue them. We said to the unions, "Look, you have got a mandate to strike but you do not have to strike from next Monday. Let us carry on talking." They refused and I was sad at that point that that is what had happened.

When on Day Two of the strike Tony Pearson went on Look North and I watched him on Look North saying at that point very clearly, "This strike can be solved because there is a productivity deal to be done". That was the gist of what he said and at that point I talked to our senior HR staff and said look, below the radar give him a phone call, see whether he is willing to talk to us about that very same point, about productivity, now. The answer we got back was, "No." As soon as the unions were willing to talk about productivity, we talked. Senior officers talked for over 40 hours – a huge commitment in time to try and get a deal. The offer that is on the table now, that offer came from those 40 hours of talks and we still think it is a very good offer. We have already said today precisely what we think that means – that package means, I repeat, they would be the best paid refuse collectors, bar Bradford, in the Yorkshire and Humber region.

I am still saddened by some of the things that are said. This is a strike of last resort. Not when you have got 18 months of pay protection left. How can it be a strike of last resort when there are 18 months of pay protection left?

I hope – I do not want to say too much more though I am tempted because there are negotiations going on, this is a sensitive time.

I want to say a little bit about the Adults issues because some things are said in anger, some things are said with emotion. Councillor Jim McKenna, who I very much respect, said we were slashing services. I listened very closely to you, Jim. We are slashing services, is what you said.

I want to repeat, because Peter has already said this – at no point, either at the beginning or anywhere in the consultation has anyone said anything other than the service to anyone and everyone who goes to a day centre is guaranteed. That is the first point I want to make.

The second point I want to make is the myth that these day centres are a bit like primary schools – that they are local to a particular ward, local to a small area. In reality, it is quite possible that a number of people who live in my ward would have been affected if Naburn Court had closed. Only eight out of 80 users that go to the Doreen Hamilton Centre, only eight actually live in the ward that it is situated in – my ward – so all of these centres – and it does not matter if there is one in your ward or not, we should be looking at all of these centres as resources for the city as a whole.

The thing that perhaps worried me most about many of the Opposition comments was distilled perhaps by Bernard's "The vision is wrong." I think already some people have said that we on this side have a very different vision. The year of volunteering has been mentioned. Peter has said hugely more numbers of older people are helped by Neighbourhood Networks. We have the vision that if we have half empty day centres it makes sense to consider many of the people are being bussed to them anyway, it makes sense to try and have those centres well used and have extra resources going to people who at the moment we cannot help.

At the very same Exec Board meeting that we started the consultation over the day centres, we had a paper saying and promising that we will put more money into the Neighbourhood Networks. That is the way forward. That is a way in which we help more people, in which we say to people who are over 65, "You are in control of your destiny. You choose." There is not what we had 25 or 30 years ago, only day centres.

COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: He said it was unaffordable.

COUNCILLOR BRETT: I would disagree with some of the things that have been said but what I would agree with Councillor Harris on is that if the State is to do all of this, it is unaffordable. That is why we need volunteers. That is why having 20,000 more volunteers in Leeds next year will be crucial.

If I have a little bit of time left, Lord Mayor, to turn to Children's, where I could not understand some of what Councillor Dowson was saying about the primary expansion. I got quite confused where at one stage she was saying that there was not enough space in the inner city but then said why don't you build extra schools in Roundhay? You have either got to have some confidence in the data, difficult though it is in these new times in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. We cannot control free movement about Europe, we have had people coming from Poland, we have had extra people coming in not placed or controlled by us, through the asylum system. These are difficult times, so I hope, Lord Mayor, we can begin to work together to solve these problems. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: I would like now to call for the vote on the motion to receive the Minutes.

COUNCILLOR NASH: Point of personal explanation. I was misrepresented. I received an invitation from Councillor Brett a week as yesterdays on the Tuesday. His secretary apologised for the short notice and it was a meeting for the Wednesday and I offered two alternative dates. *(Interruption)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you for that, Councillor Nash. I am moving to the vote on the motion to receive the Minutes. *(A vote was taken)* This is CARRIED. I just want to be quite sure with my colleagues that this is so.

We are now ready to break for well deserved tea. I would like to invite all the people in the public gallery to join us in the Banqueting Suite. We shall recommence again at half-past. Thank you.

*(Short adjournment)*

#### ITEM 9 – WHITE PAPER MOTION – CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

THE LORD MAYOR: If we can settle down now, we are going to carry on with the White Paper Motion Children and Young People by Councillor Jarosz.

COUNCILLOR JAROSZ: My Lord Mayor, I am submitting this White Paper because the Labour Group cannot any longer sit by and watch this administration systematically fail your people at each and every turn. My colleagues will be speaking about the failures at every stage of a young person's life, so I am going to concentrate on our young adults and particularly those who are classified not in education, employment or training – NEETs, as they are know. Nice little word, NEETs, but it is not nice for those who are involved. There is also another category – those who are Not Known – Not Known.

The city has an unacceptable level of young NEETS and Not Knowns. In September this year the level of NEETS stood at 10.3% and the level of Not Knowns 36.6%, up from 27.2% last year. If you do not like percentages, and I admit I do not, they can be very misleading, I will give you the actual numbers. This equates to 2,462 young people who are NEET and 9,596 Not Knowns. This gives a total of 12,058 young people this administration has let down. Over 12,000 young people who do not really know what they are doing with their lives; over 12,000 young

people who, when they needed help and advice and guidance on what to do next, were left floundering because this administration could not get its act together.

We have a level of NEETS at 10.3%. If you just put that in perspective the Department of Children, Schools and Families' target for NEETs is 6.8. I am sure we can all agree that we are more than just a little way of meeting this target. Indeed, since 2004 there have only been two months when the level of NEETS has been higher than it is now. This is an absolutely shocking situation and one that you all should be ashamed of.

At the current rate of NEETS and Not Knowns the projected life-time cost to the city is in the region of £300m. We simply cannot afford for this to be the case and you now need to take responsibility and take steps to put this situation right, because the statistics are truly frightening.

The annual figures to 2009 show that Leeds has a NEET level which is eighth amongst eleven statistical neighbours, twelfth of 15 of Yorkshire and Humberside, and 2.8% above the national average. As far as Not Knowns are concerned, we are eleventh of eleven amongst our statistical neighbours and 14<sup>th</sup> out of 15 in Yorkshire and Humberside, and 2.4 points above the national average, so we are bottom in the statistical neighbours grouping and the worst performing of eleven Authorities and second from bottom in the entire Yorkshire and Humberside region.

Not only that, Leeds is amongst the five lowest performing Local Authorities nationally on the Year 11 September Guarantee – that is a guarantee of a place in education or training for every Year 11 student and we are amongst the worst five in the entire country. That really is something to be ashamed of.

I should point out that the figures just quoted and figures discussed at the conference held on 3 November here at the Civic Hall, a conference that Councillor Harker and Councillor Lamb spoke at, the figures that therefore I hope you are not going to dismiss. How on earth have you managed to create a situation where Leeds is amongst the worst performing Authorities in the country for the provision it makes for young people. I know that more people are staying on at school and this is the only silver lining, but the fact remains that the increase in the numbers staying is mirrored by an increase in the numbers who are not staying on and those who simply we do not know about – we do not know where they are, what is happening to them.

This is a situation that is rapidly growing out of control. It is a situation we are going to get hold of right now in order to make sure that the young people of Leeds do not become a lost generation simply because we did not do enough to give them a decent future.

We know that some children are more at risk of becoming NEETS than others - those with low self-esteem, low aspirations, those from areas of high deprivation and high worklessness rates. We know that worklessness patterns tend to be repeated from generation to generation so it follows that those young people whose parents are not working are at greater risk of becoming NEET. More needs to be done to reach out to young people but also to their parents. If we know all of this why are we not doing more to tackle the problem? If we know who is at risk, if we know that early intervention is the key, if we know that the problem is cyclical, why are we continuing to condemn generation after generation to a life of deprivation?

Do you not believe that the people of Leeds deserve more because we on this side of the Chamber certainly do and that is why we are calling you to do more and to actually make a difference to people's lives and start narrowing the ever-increasing gap.



In your budget last year you made a commitment to create 250 apprenticeships and we finally got the figure today of how many have actually commenced, and it is 97. It is not even as if you have not had financial help. The Council successfully bid for future jobs fund money of £4.7m and this will create 734 jobs for young people who have been claiming Job Seekers' Allowance for twelve months. The Labour Government has shown its commitment to helping young people to find work by setting out its fund worth £1b and thank goodness it did because at least some of the young people of Leeds will be able to benefit.

As I see it, one of the reasons for such a bad record is that we do not have a joined-up, cohesive jobs and skills agenda. We have lots of different departments, and believe me, I have been round them all – Environment and Neighbourhoods, City Development, Children's Services and outside agencies, all working on their own projects, tackling the problem from various angles in the way they see best.

Partnership structures are wobbly and they lack focus. We need four Rs – we need re-engagement, retraining, recruitment and retention. It smacks of tinkering around at the edges of the problem with no-one taking overall responsibility. What we are lacking is some form of over-view, a co-ordination of effort to ensure that within the Council as a whole, we are offering the best possible service to our young people to give them the best possible start and opportunities in life.

The Council will be taking responsibility for 16 to 19 funding from the Learning and Skills Council by next April. This is an opportunity that the Council cannot afford to miss. I hope that you grab this opportunity because after five long years of failure, the young people of Leeds deserve more. The time has come to stop the rhetoric and be strong and positive steps to be taken to give our young people the best possible chance in life. Thank you, my Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: I now call on Councillor Mulherin to second.

COUNCILLOR MULHERIN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I second Councillor Jarosz's White Paper. I am sure all members in this Chamber are aware that the Council is undertaking a review of Children's Services. We can only hope that this review is as illuminating as it needs to be because, make no mistake, this is make or break – there is no room for failure.

This needs to be a complete re-examination of the running of Children's Services from top to bottom. The children of Leeds deserve nothing less. The Labour Group is fully committed to offering any help we can to ensure that this review is transparent, thorough and provides the drive for real improvement that is needed.

We on this side of the Chamber must also ask, how did we get into this mess in the first place? The answer is simple. After only three years your over-inflated, top-heavy, £1.85m superstructure has failed. Quite simply, as we have said time and time again, you got it wrong and it is the children and young people of this city who have suffered as a result.

I truly believe you have had every opportunity to remedy the situation and yet for too long, Councillor Golton, you have simply dismissed our concerns and those raised by one inspection after another. For far too long you have accused us of trying to score political points when we said you were failing to safeguard the most vulnerable children but the fact is now that you have nowhere left to hide and no-one left to blame.

Let me briefly remind members of the findings of the most recent Ofsted inspection last June. Contacts, referral and assessment arrangements were riddled with inconsistent practice, out of date procedures and poor record keeping. A random check of case files found that seven out of 23 children were left at potential risk of serious harm. Let me repeat that – seven out of 23 children being left at potential risk of serious harm. That is almost one in three children from that random sample.

How can you possibly think that you are putting the safeguarding of children at the forefront of your priorities? The Labour Group's first and overriding concern is and always has been the welfare of children in Leeds and it should be yours too, but you have repeatedly shown that this is not the case.

You make the right noises but, Councillor Brett, may I remind you once again of your words in this Chamber in June 2007 when you said, "In my role I am particularly aware of the importance of ensuring our city-wide approach to safeguarding makes our children and young people safe in their homes, schools and communities. We take this responsibility extremely seriously and that is why it continues to be one of our highest priorities."

Your words, Councillor Brett, but you do not act on these words, you do not live up to your promises and that is why you are continuing to let this city's children down time and time again.

On behalf of the Labour Group I will say that we sincerely hope that lessons have been learned since the Ofsted inspection earlier this year. We note the changes that Jackie Wilson's team have introduced to address the inspector's concerns, but we fear that the swift response on this occasion is in stark contrast to all that had gone before with the inspections last year. Had you taken those inspections seriously and pressed for the root and branch review that was needed then, we may not have been in the situation we are now in.

The Labour Group remains gravely concerned at the state of Children's Services and the lack of seriousness with which the Executive Board Member treats the situation. You have a dreadful track record but it would be unfair to blame Councillor Golton alone. He is, after all, the third Exec Board member since 2004 in that role who has shown that he is not up to the job.

We do not believe that the administration has the capacity to drive forward Children's Services. The problems are endemic and your responsibility has to be accepted. Perhaps this time, Councillor Golton, you will lead from the top and step aside.

At the last Council meeting you said, "I do not think I am going to answer all the questions or give the reassurances that the labour party opposite are asking." We will not stand by and allow the systematic destruction of Children's Services in this city through a lack of political leadership, ability and dedication. If you cannot give the reassurances that we are asking for on behalf of the people of Leeds, then the time has clearly come for you to go. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Golton to move an amendment.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Actually, Councillor Mulherin, I was hoping for something a little bit more constructive from the Labour Party after the previous two White Papers that we have had in this Chamber where the Labour Party once again keeps talking about the concerns that you are raising that we are not supposed to be responding to.

The things that we are responding to, Councillor Mulherin, are the things which are important, and that is what is found, for instance, when Ofsted comes to our city and sees that there are weaknesses and we as an Authority and we as an administration have a responsibility to make sure that we act and act in a way which is actually something which is productive.

What I find – and I have also studied the verbatim, Councillor Mulherin – is that each time the Labour Party brings forward another motion on Children's Services rubbishing the work of thousands of people who are there working every day to improve the situation of our children in this city.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: No we are not. You are responsible.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: I am afraid you do rubbish that by default by criticising the administration because you do not offer any alternatives...

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: You are the man.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: ...whatsoever in terms of what we are actually doing to address the situations that we have in front of us.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: That is pathetic.

My Lord Mayor, by making this motion a comprehensive Children's Services motion, it just goes to show how myopic and how shallow and how shrill their approach is to Children's Services. Children's Services is a very, very wide area and there is a lot of excellence out there in this city, Lord Mayor. Hopefully some of my colleagues will be able to show you the examples that there are out there. I know a lot of your colleagues, actually, know that there is that out there, but unfortunately you have not represented them fully in the words that you have spoken about today.

I have only got five minutes. I have not had the 15 minutes you have had to trash what goes on in this city about Children's Services and to imply that it is some kind of disaster zone is absolutely incredible.

Councillor Mulherin, since the Labour Party lost control of this Council, this administration has overseen ongoing year on year improvement in outcomes for children in this city through Children's Services. You might not like the model with which we have chosen to do so, which was to set up a Director of Children's Services Unit. I have to say that in those first few years it made a big difference so that now in this city we have a level of partnership, we have a level of understanding amongst our own officers and amongst our partners in terms of how you need to wrap services around the individual child. That capacity has been in place because of the work that has been done by the Director of Children's Services Unit.

We are reviewing our Children's Trust arrangements. Do you know why? Because the environment of Children's Services changes on a more rapid scale than it does in any other part of this Council. The amount of legislation, the amount of directives that comes out of Whitehall and the DCSF is phenomenal and we need to make sure that our structures are up to date and are fit for purpose to addressing those concerns.

In terms of results, I just have to say, this Council has been the best GCSE results ever in this city and you are trying to imply that it is imploding around us. In terms of the areas that you have actually mentioned, you say that we ignore concerns that were raised by Ofsted. I have to point out to you that we have recently

been re-inspected for our fostering service and that fostering inspection was positive. I have to point out that every single residential home in this city, not one of them is inadequate and in fact they are all adequate to excellent. Stop trying to make out that the people who are working for this administration and this Council are actually providing less than should be expected for the children in this city.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: You are the guy.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: In terms of the inspection that you have already referred to, which is the inspection of our assessment services where, yes, there was some very disturbing evidence brought forward to us, what I can say is that work has been done by Jackie Wilson, our new Chief Officer for Social Care in the city and her team, a huge amount of work has been done to ensure that we address every single point which has been raised by the Ofsted inspection. Remember, this was as forensic examination of what we do within our assessment teams. It was going into a particular team at a particular time and focusing in on a very small wedge of files. What we needed to do in response to that was ensure that we reviewed all of those files where children are seen as being at potential neglect or abuse and we have to make sure that our teams who are working in the Contact Centre, where they have had over a third more calls in the wake of Baby P, that those people feel supported and are able to refer those to the correct people so that they can have a response which is within the right time scales.

All I can say, Councillor Mulherin, is by my words I will not ever reassure you, I know that, but to tell you the truth, I am not really here to reassure you; I am here to reassure this Council as a wider group of people. This Council as a wider group of people and the people of Leeds because they are the ones that need reassurance and I have to say, your motions, continual motions which are simplistic and offer no alternatives to what is actually happening through this administration are not helping the situation in this city in terms of building confidence in our Children's Services. On that, Lord Mayor, I shall sit down. *(Applause)*

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

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Harker to comment.

COUNCILLOR HARKER: Thank you, Lord Mayor. With just five minutes to speak I am going to try and deal with the issues that I want to put before Council today and I am going to start with Early Years. Currently we have 48 Children's Centres and we will have 58 by 2010, making this city the largest provider. We currently support over 11,000 families and almost 15,000 children. It is this good Early Years that is closing the gap between disadvantaged children before they start in their primary schools.

I will go now on to education. This administration, with the help of Education Leeds, has operated a sound, secure and robust management resources. Sound financial planning has enabled changes in funding levels to be managed effectively and without disruption to core services. Over the last two years, approximately £2,500,000 has been used to support Children's Services and Education Leeds's contract has been reduced in real terms by five per cent and they are still delivering more.

At the same time there has been a significant increase in the staffing that we provide through education within the Children's Services, around safeguarding, teenage pregnancy, workforce development, performance management and communications. Tight fiscal management has allowed us to continue to support

families and community organisations to a figure over the six years we have been in administration of over, I think it is, £25m. This administration is still putting more money into schools year by year.

Councillor Murray – I applause what Councillor Murray has said earlier on the Minutes. This year we did see the best results in GCSE but between 2004 when we took over and 2009, there has been a 22% rise in the number of young people leaving school with five A-G GCSE or equivalent. That represents another, an extra 17,000 young people leaving school with good qualifications to move on to further education and hopefully to higher education.

Leeds is nationally recognised for its approach to developing extended services and now we have highly effective clusters of schools and children's centres working across the city to develop and deliver more effective and efficient services for children, young people and their families.

Ninety per cent of Leeds schools now hold the National Healthy Schools Award. Leeds schools exceed the national targets when it comes to sport, young people accessing two hours a week of high quality sport and PE. Ninety-one per cent of schools have already reached that standard and we expect it to reach a hundred per cent.

Mentoring. We work in partnership with around 50 organisations within education, business and the voluntary sector. We have heard about the volunteering earlier and I hope more people will volunteer for school mentoring. Each year around 4,000 young people benefit from support and volunteering mentors. We work in partnership to support families. Parents can now access an increasing range of support, the Step Programme just being one item in that list.

We have successfully implemented investing in Diverse City Leadership programme, so that our aspiring black and minority ethnic middle and senior leaders in our schools can access the National College for School Leadership in the hope that some of them will come on to be heads in our own city.

The number of permanent exclusions in Leeds schools has fallen significantly in recent years, with a 62% reduction since we took power in 2004, which exceeds the national trend.

In January 2005 we established six specialist inclusion learning centres and we are going through a review of those now, they have been very successful. Since 2004/05 attendance in primary and secondary schools in this city has continued to improve and persistent absence is down.

The Steven Lawrence award for racial integration is going national – it was launched by the Secretary of State when he visited the awards ceremony.

Significant work is taking place to tackle bullying in Leeds schools, with half of all secondary schools and many primary schools engaged in progressive anti-bullying ambassador programmes.

The Computers for Pupils Programme is targeted at those youngsters from the ten per cent most deprived backgrounds and has provided computer equipment and internet connectivity to homes to these young people and their families. More than 3,250 new devices have been delivered to children and families through this scheme in 2008/09.

THE LORD MAYOR: I am afraid I have to stop you there.

COUNCILLOR HARKER: I could go on, Lord Mayor, because there is still here in fact a page and a half of other really good things like investment in primary schools.

COUNCILLOR: Can we have an extension?

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you very much. (*Applause*) I call on Councillor Chastney to comment, please.

COUNCILLOR CHASTNEY: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I think today despite some of the suggestions we have had and are likely to get later to the contrary, I think we should actually really have a true reflection of where we are actually with Children's Services and an honest situation.

That is, we are facing significant challenges, I think that is something that we must and we have already accepted, but hopefully it also should be seen that we are actually driving forward in the right direction and we are tackling these challenges that we have identified.

I do not want to get drawn into agonising over the history of some of the debates over the facts and the figures and delving too much into arguments over the quality of service and responding to quite recent, fairly poorly phrased arguments, I am afraid, which were lacking in any kind of alternative and constructive solution.

I want to focus on something a bit different then, because I think other members will be able to point out the merits or otherwise of the service. I think unfortunately a lot of people have got entrenched positions anyway.

I would rather pick out something a bit more constructive and that is to highlight the fact that we have, we are and we always push this agenda forward, achieve our Children and Young People's Plan, always do so much better then and we achieve better lives for the children of this city when we are working together. It is pretty disappointing to see a stand back and criticise attitude from some people.

I am pretty pleased to say that when I think about it I do not think this is actually a true reflection of most people in this Chamber - perhaps what they say but actually from what you see of people's actions over the years that is not their true reflection, most people are positive and from what I see everyone has played a positive part in responding to these challenges. The vast majority have acted, not complained, they have contributed, have not criticised and quite simply most have had a positive input that we can see in so many places if we just look around.

We see it in new Children's Champions, in Corporate Carers, school governors, adoption panellists, in so many roles that have an inherent link to the lives of our children. It is not just a few Members, it is Members I am seeing across the whole Chamber have had these positive contributions and it is not just what they are saying, they are actually doing things and I think that is really important to reflect.

Just look at Children's Champions, for example, the new role that came in earlier this year. They are providing a new way of connecting ward Members with Children's Services at a closer and deeper level and where we have got children's Champions from various parties. They are already getting a deeper result with that positive connection. Take, for example, Councillor Gabriel's work – I know a lot of people have spoken very positively about that. She has looked very specifically at teen pregnancy and I have heard that already we are getting a positive response

from that. Other Children's Champions in their areas have also taken on the role really positively and they are taking good steps and good action.

Then we can also look at Corporate Carers and Foster Panel Members, for example. Again, that is Members from across the Council, lots of people involved specifically in the lives of looked after children and I have seen great individual effort from lots of individuals who have been taking the opportunity to visit children's homes or speak with foster carers or meeting with children and looked after people, which is the great highlight I had of last week and looking at some of the improved outcomes. I know they have been touched on, I will not go into the detail but you know, improved school attendance, you can look at educational attainment and many other aspects that there will be. You cannot help but say things are going up and that is great but also it is fair to say that this initial input is not without its value, that Members from this Council from all over have played a part in that.

Let us look at school governors, a prime example. How many of us actually play the role of the school governor? It is pretty obvious just scanning the list of declarations of interest the vast majority of people are school governors at at least one, two or many schools. Let us not under-estimate how important that actually is in achieving the high educational aims that we have and addressing the ongoing challenges.

There are many good things going on in the schools as well – Healthy Schools, Innovation, Equality, the sport there and again the key point is there is a lot of governor work involved in that that is hidden behind that.

Let us look lastly at Adoption Panels, then. I think it is particularly important again, it is only dealing with a small aspect of it but it is inevitably one of the most important decisions in the child's life. I look round the Chamber and I can see Members including Councillor Jarosz, Councillor Coulson, Councillor Kendal who have had a long-standing service in this of which I am appreciative.

I think I am running out of time, so I think just to say there have been good, positive things going on and yes, there have been challenges but we are seeing how we face this. All the times we have addressed these things best are when we have been working together so I think what I would say, I am appreciative of all the work that goes on and I think the positive involvement reflects in the future and that in the place of a few negative commentators that are criticising without providing any kind of solution, they are actually going to be crowded out by the vast true majority who actually are suggesting positive ways of meeting these challenges but also they are actually taking part in that, so all the people that actually are doing that, I am appreciative of that and thank you and please keep doing it. Thank you. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR BENTLEY: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am dismayed at the Labour Government's failure to deal with child poverty. We have two million children in poverty – that is one in five of all children and if the government wants to halve child poverty by 2010, it needs to spend £4b.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Your government put them there.

COUNCILLOR BENTLEY: This is small beer compared to the £25b that it would cost if these children fail at school and are more likely to become teenage parents, criminalised and end up as unemployed adults. Again, a small sum compared to the billions that have been thrown at our failing banking system.

Does the government not care about this? I think not, but we in Leeds do care. We have brought in millions of pounds to families by reviewing people's

benefits entitlement which gives families more money in their pockets to improve their lives.

I am sure we are all aware of the link between poverty and ill health, which contributes to the ten year mortality discrepancy between some areas of the city and the most deprived.

In Leeds we are addressing this by improving the health of our children and by encouraging them to continue to lead healthier lives as they grow up. I want to tell you about some of the good things that we are doing here in Leeds.

Education Leeds is leading the way with its Healthy Schools Initiative which received beacon status in its second year, resulting in staff being invited to speak at prestigious national events. In the Audit Commission Head teacher survey, 79% of schools were rated the provision of information and support to children and young people health as being good or excellent and an impression 92% of schools have achieved our National Healthy Schools status and we expect to hit our target of 95% in December.

This will be rewarded with something like £1.6m, which will help in rolling out the new National Health School Enhancement Model to Leeds schools to address the priorities of teenage pregnancy, obesity, emotional health and substance misuses in our most deprived wards.

107 schools have achieved our Advanced Health Status Award. We know that one in four of us will suffer from some sort of mental health issue in our lives and we need to address this problem sooner rather than later. The Pathfinder Project delivers targeted mental health support in schools for children between the ages of five and 13, with learning mentors, bereavement guidance and long-term support for the child in their family. This effective project was awarded £55,000 to deliver a mini-project with a pupil referral unit.

Working with extended services we have developed the Children in Leeds ABC Best Practice Procurement toolkit, which is unique to Leeds – another development which has attracted national interest, showing what an innovative Authority we are. Exercise is an important aspect of being health and in Leeds we exceeded our target with 91% of children receiving two hours of quality physical education and sport a week in schools. We are also addressing taking up of free school meals through the Leeds School Meals Strategy and Healthy Schools Partnership. This is an important issue for some of our most deprived areas.

Leeds was the first authority to develop a packed lunch policy which has been emulated across local and national Authorities. Our Be Healthy challenge in four years has seen changes from just do one thing well to another national beacon project, Be Healthy Family Challenge of Eat Well and Move More. Nine schools are involved in this and many more want to be involved in this programme. We have trained 140 Be Health Stay Safe young leaders and 2,115 families have participated in this project.

Our focus on working with families has attracted interest from there Local Authorities and a government office and in the next year we want to develop the school based programme Be Healthy Be Creative with our key partner, Find Your Talent.

Thirty-one schools took part in the Leeds Sustainable Schools Programme for 2008/09 and already results are showing the pupils' behaviour and attitudes to their environment are changing.



THE LORD MAYOR: I am afraid I will have to stop you there, Councillor Bentley, your time is up. I now call on Councillor Chapman.

COUNCILLOR CHAPMAN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am speaking in favour of Councillor Golton's amendment. I think it is very important to look at many of the good things that are taking place in Children's Services portfolio. I am going to look at the progress of the Playbuilder Initiatives.

Playbuilder is an initiative funded by the DCSF to create or significantly improve 22 play areas across the city. This administration has identified the play poor areas across the city and has fairly distributed the money to the areas where it is needed the most in the north, south, west and east of the city. All sites have been approved by the Executive Board. There will be eleven in year one and eleven in year two and the whole programme should be completed by March 2011. Work has started on site on the first project at Deepdale Recreation Ground, Boston Spa, and Gipton Square and Potter Newton Park project will begin (*Interruption*) – have I misread that? I apologise, I have.

Gipton Square and Potter Newton Park projects will begin this month. Before concept designs are embarked on detailed consultations have to take place. These consultations events have been well supported and have produced good and useful outcomes. All the site specific information is collated and the work phases are already identified. Scheme designs and concept drawing for all year one outstanding items are being prepared for approval.

With this progress in mind we as a Council should look forward in March 2011 when our young people will be able to enjoy an extra 22 play sites. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR IQBAL: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am speaking in support of Councillor Jarosz's White Paper and as I believe the administration is continuing to let down the young people in our city at every opportunity.

I was disappointed with Councillor Golton's response, or the amendment and if this is the performance from an Executive Member I think you should resign. I will give you some facts and figures.

I want to focus on the gap in educational attainment that is apparent between the city average and children from inner city wards. Children who are eligible for free school meals, looked after children, children with statements of special educational need and BME children. I believe that this difference leads to different life chances and that this difference is something that we as a Council should be working hard to minimise.

The problems start early as is evidence by the provisional GCSE results. The number of children eligible for free school meals who have achieved five A\*-C grades including English and Maths fell by 3.5% in last year's total. Not only that but the gap between eligible and non-eligible children actually increased to a totally unacceptable 36%. If you exclude English and maths the gap was still 35%. How can you justify such a huge difference in levels of achievement between these two groups of children? Why are you allowing such a gulf to develop between children who come from more deprived backgrounds and the children who are lucky enough to belong to more prosperous families? Why are you not doing enough to ensure that instead of getting worse, you actually are living up to your promise to narrow the gap?

It is encouraging to see that there are some improvements for the figures for looked after children but this should not lead to complacency. There is still more to be

done to ensure that these children close the gap between themselves and the Leeds average which is still far too big. With regard to figures for pupils with special educational needs, there are improvements but again with a caveat. In the overwhelming majority of cases performance improved but there is still much work to be done with statemented pupils who saw a drop in the numbers achieving five or more grade A\*-C and also there was a drop in the numbers leaving without any qualifications at all.

The figure is still too high at 19%. These vulnerable children deserve better and we should be doing everything we can to ensure that the education they receive is the best it can be, enabling them to achieve their maximum potential.

Moving on to BME pupils, if we look at the results for numbers of pupils who attained five A\*-C grades excluding English and Maths, the picture is mixed. Bangladeshi pupils are among the most improved but general levels of attainment for Asian heritage pupils do remain below average, with one group over 13% lower. Mixed heritage pupils are again below the city average but more encouragingly, black African pupils have a 14% improvement in achievement. However, I was sad and very disappointed to see that so many groups have fallen behind on last year's performance in the gold standard that is five or more A\*-C grades including English and Maths, including Bangladeshi children, Kashmiri, black Caribbean, Chinese and mixed Asian and white among others.

Indeed, children categorised as other backgrounds saw a massive 29.2% drop in levels of achievement. This is totally unacceptable.

Out of the 22 ethnic groupings, only seven hit the Leeds average of 45.6% attaining the gold standard, which is simply not good enough. I find this quite shocking and again question how you can fail so dramatically in ensuring that children from all backgrounds have the best possible chance in life starting with the best possible education.

We have a situation in the city where we are facing a shortage of primary school places and the proposals put forward are to increase the size of reception classes in certain primary schools. Again, though, we see the same pattern emerging. It is the inner city schools that are facing the biggest increases with Beeston being particularly badly hit.

You say that you encourage parents to be aspirational in their preferences for their children, yet in reality there is no real choice. The high achieving schools are all over-subscribed and so it does not matter how many parents from deprived inner city wards put, for the sake of argument, Roundhay School as their first choice – they have absolutely no chance of getting in. You are dangling a carrot that can never be caught and just making more clear the startling difference between the real choices parents have that are entirely dependent on where in the city they happen to live.

This is a failure and it is something you should be ashamed of. You are letting down our young people at the very start of their lives.

THE LORD MAYOR: I am afraid, Councillor Iqbal, I will have to stop you there. I am sorry about that.

COUNCILLOR IQBAL: Can I finish off the last sentence?

THE LORD MAYOR: Go on, last sentence then.

COUNCILLOR IQBAL: Children only get one chance at a good education and if that chance is missed because they happen to live in a different part of the city, then we are condemning them to a life typically categorised by poor achievement, increased chances of becoming NEET, increased chances of *(Interruption)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Iqbal, I have to stop you. I am sorry about that. *(Applause)* Councillor Lowe.

COUNCILLOR LOWE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I will try and keep it in five minutes and not have very long sentences!

I would like to speak in support of Councillor Jarosz's White Paper and to specifically focus on the Connexions contract, which was recently commissioned by this Council. My Lord Mayor, Councillor Jarosz has already outlined how the disjointed and rudderless approach to Youth Services in this city has impacted so badly on our young people and their life chances and life choices.

I fear the situation in Youth Services is only going to get worse and the reasons for this decline rest squarely on this administration's shoulders. For those members who may not be aware, the Council made a decision back in September to award an organisation called IGEN a £5m contract to deliver the NEET Connexions contract across all five...

COUNCILLOR LAMB: I do not think it is proper to discuss this contract in full Council.

COUNCILLOR LOWE: I am not going to be saying anything that is below the line – this is not below the line. It is not below the line.

COUNCILLOR ATHA: Can you ask him to quote the Standing Order?

COUNCILLOR LOWE: It is not below the line.

THE LORD MAYOR: Is there any advice from my lawyer?

COUNCILLOR LOWE: Can I have the time back, please?

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Which one? There are 99 lawyers here.

THE LORD MAYOR: Keep quiet until I have just had a word, please, with Miss Jackson. Could you tell us, Councillor Lamb, what you think is not appropriate?

COUNCILLOR Lamb: There is a process being gone through to award the contract. Through Scrutiny there has been an opportunity to refer it back to the Executive Board, which was not taken, and that is the appropriate... *(Interruption)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Please be quiet and let me hear what has to be said.

COUNCILLOR LOWE: Lord Mayor, it is a commercially sensitive contract and by discussing it in this forum there is a distinct possibility that *(Interruption)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Just a moment, please.

THE ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE (Corporate Governance): My understanding of the situation on that contract is the decision was taken to award the contract, that decision was then called in by Scrutiny. Scrutiny then referred it back for reconsideration and the Chief Officer reconsidered and decided to take the same

decision. Therefore, as far as I am concerned, a decision has been taken to award the contract.

Councillor Lowe when she is talking about it should not be going into any of the nitty gritty of commercially sensitive information but I do not think there is a problem in talking about the fact that a contract has been awarded.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, Miss Jackson. Would you carry on now, please, Councillor Lowe?

COUNCILLOR LOWE: Can I start my five minutes? Thank you. The purpose of my submission is that I think that this is evidence that - the thing I want to talk about is evidence - of the failure of the Council to properly support children and young people as is the theme of the White Paper that has been drawn to our attention by Councillor Jarosz.

As I was just saying, there has been this contract that has been let for £5m to IGEN. The impact of this decision has been immense, not just on young people and the NEET provision in the city but also on the voluntary sector and it is also the case that as a consequence of this decision making, some voluntary sector organisations are in serious financial difficulty and one possibly in the south, where there are lots and lots of Superap areas, is likely to close next year.

It was for these reasons that Councillor Ogilvie and myself asked for the pink papers surrounding the decision and what we found was genuinely shocking and disturbing and I think that I can also say that Councillor David Blackburn shared our thoughts and joined in with us to then take this to the Scrutiny Board.

It would be impossible to list every point and clearly I do not want to raise any issues that are below the line, but there were concerns over the financial status of all the organisations but particularly the successful bidder, the process leading up to the writing of the tender specification, the lack of emphasis on locality within the bids, the perception of the public and other key stakeholders in the make up of the decision Panel, not the actuality of that but the perception by others, and how the decommissioning of existing providers as well as any sub-contracting arrangements, might be taken forward and how they would be better than the existing arrangements.

As I say, we took that to Scrutiny Board and we were delighted that every member of the Scrutiny Board agreed with our concerns. Imagine our astonishment, then, when after only eleven days we all received an email saying that not only had all our points been considered, but that the contract had now been signed. I think this is not just a smack in the face for democracy and the Scrutiny process but also for the NEET provision in this city, because there are lots and lots of serious questions about provision of an efficient and effective NEET service which were not addressed, I do not think, within that process. This is my concern, that NEET is a major issue and I think that this contract is fundamentally flawed and will not deliver because predominantly of the lack of the locality issue that was raised at the Scrutiny Board. I think that that was the biggest issue for me which was not addressed.

Obviously I cannot go into the confidential reasons which were provided to the Scrutiny Board and to members in response to the call in, but what I can say is that the response raised more questions than it answered.

I am disappointed that the Scrutiny Board's legitimate concerns were so summarily dismissed, but I am also, to be frank, devastated that our young people

are now potentially condemned to a life of poverty and exclusion, because that is where NEET ends up for many, many people.

I think that this is further evidence of the failure Children's Directorate to support children and young people in this city and yet further evidence which I think some questions might be asked about the leadership of that department. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR OGILVIE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I would also like to speak in support of Councillor Jarosz's White Paper and, like Councillor Lowe...

THE LORD MAYOR: Excuse me, would you mind for a minute, please?

COUNCILLOR LOBLEY: If I could just declare an interest. I am not sure if one of the subcontractors of IGEN will be Renew and Renewal, of which I am Chairman.

THE LORD MAYOR: Right, we have noted that, thank you. Sorry about that, Councillor Ogilvie. Would you like to continue?

COUNCILLOR OGILVIE: I will start again. I would also like to speak in support of Councillor Jarosz's White Paper and, like Councillor Lowe, express my dismay at this administration's decision to approve the release of the Connexions contract to IGEN, a decision that, as Councillor Lowe has said, raises real concerns about this Council's ability to tackle the growing NEET problem in this city.

Councillor Golton, Councillor Harker you could, if you had been brave enough, have admitted that serious mistakes were made in this tendering process. Instead you have ignored the unanimous and crystal clear message from Scrutiny and in so doing have sentenced Youth Services in this city to an uncertain and disjointed future.

Can I make it clear that this is not an attack on IGEN; rather it is an attack on the failure of this Council, which you run, allegedly, to make sure that this contract was managed and delivered in a manner that you would expect of a Council of this size.

The ramifications, Lord Mayor, of your decision to allow this contract are huge. Not only is there no clear strategy for engaging with some of the hardest to reach young people in our city, in each of our neighbourhoods which, in essence, was what this contract was all about; not only has this process put in jeopardy, as Councillor Lowe has said, some of our key voluntary sector organisations, but it brings into question the democratic processes of this Council and the relevance of Scrutiny.

How can members here and the wider public have any faith in the Scrutiny or call-in process when their unanimous call-in decision can be ignored and overturned in a matter of days? Surely when Scrutiny successfully calls in a decision like this, there is a clear case for some or all of those reviewing the decision being independent from those who were involved in the original decision making process.

I have also grave concerns that you are misusing your power to put information below the line and the comments that Councillor Lamb made earlier I think just reinforce that. Any Councillor who wants to know about the review of this decision had to put in a request for the papers, all of which were confidential below the line. Everyone understands the need for certain sensitive information being kept confidential, but by handling it in this way it seriously damages your commitment to clear and transparent decision making. *(hear, hear)*

Lord Mayor, let us be clear, this decision was one purely of your making. This administration is wholly responsible. You cannot, as you usually do, blame anyone else. You are letting down our young people, you are putting at risk our key voluntary sector organisations in the city and you have trampled all over and humiliated Scrutiny. What a mess. It is a disgrace. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR BLAKE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I would just like to start by saying welcome back to Councillor Golton in his mode of denial. We all know that there are excellent people working in Children's Services in this city and we are not talking about the service they are giving. What we are talking about is the support that they get from you and the Department of Children's Services. Often the concerns we raise in this Chamber we raise on their behalf as they do not feel they have a voice in any other route.

We have heard today very clearly about the complete shambles concerning the letting of the Connexions contract. I thought it was very telling after Councillor Jarosz's opening speech that neither of you, Councillor Golton or Councillor Harker, took the opportunity to respond to the issues that she raised in her speech at the beginning.

This debate centres on the delivery of a vital service to young people in this city, especially those at risk of falling through the net. It centres particularly on the needs to be delivered locally to prevent those at risk falling out of the system and particularly it involves the need for partnership work and especially the need for trust and co-operation between all the relevant agencies.

I have to tell you, it is hard to express the anger, dismay and complete frustration that is felt by the current voluntary sector providers that have lost their contracts. We have heard about the Scrutiny debate and the fact, uniquely, I think, that it was a unanimous decision of all parties at the Scrutiny Board to ask the officers to go back and look again. I think we have seen very clearly the complete disregard for the Scrutiny process that now exists in this city.

Serious concerns were raised at that hearing and there is complete disrespect, I believe, that there has been no input into this debate from the elected members sitting on Executive Board who are responsible.

I have to say that there is an even more fundamental question that is being asked, is what was the involvement of those two Executive members in the whole of this saga? We are talking about a decision here that involves over £15m of public money – a major decision affecting the wellbeing and future life chances for hundreds of vulnerable young people, so why was this decision left to officers to determine in the first place? We would like to know the views of the responsible Members and, indeed, their involvement in the discussions behind the scenes. What was their response to the call in? Do they actually have a view? We have not heard it expressed today. Do you actually know how damaging the decision has been that has been made?

The whole impact of this story is the complete erosion of trust between the voluntary sector and Youth Services. Any idea of integration – and we are talking about the integrated Youth Support Services here – lies in tatters and complete disillusionment.

I have to say, this has largely resulted from a complete lack of transparency in the process. The exclusion of a locality voice in the decision making process and the whole notion of fairness have been thrown out of the window.

The comment I have had expressed to me from those affected is that in those parts of the city, partnership is now dead.

We have heard a great deal over the past few months about the crisis in delivering front line services in the Children's sector. We have heard about incompetence and lack of Member involvement and the result, what we have here is the prospect of a reduced service to young people, yet again more money being spent on managers, around £200,000, which will mean less money spent on providing the front line service needed on the ground. Would you please explain how this is value for money and how it would lead to better outcomes for our young people?

This process has revealed serious weaknesses about the way decisions are made and implemented in this city – weaknesses that will have a profound effect on the wellbeing of our young people. We need an urgent investigation, an urgent review and we have no confidence in Members opposite's ability to lead these services – a lack of confidence, I have to say, that is now shared by significant key partner agencies in this city.

Please, take notice of us this time. We have raised these concerns on numerous occasions. Our young people deserve better. Thank you, Lord Mayor.  
(Applause)

COUNCILLOR A BLACKBURN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I just want to say in this, of course, this White Paper covers a large amount of areas in Children's Services and I am not saying that there are problems in all of them because I do not know that there is.

If you remember I spoke before about safeguarding and I believe that there are some things being put in place that should improve matters there although we know, of course, that we did need a lot of improving to do.

I am going to wait till the result of this, see what happens there. I hope things go well. Thank you.

COUNCILLOR BALE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. The rather stark wording of Councillor Jarosz's White Paper really is a sweeping condemnation of Children's Services in Leeds and in the week before yet another Ofsted inspection.

Labour Members say, as they always do that, of course, they are not criticising the front line staff concerned but when you say that we are systematically failing children across Leeds, they cannot help but see that as implied criticism of those teachers and social workers and early years professionals and youth workers who are working their socks off to do well for the children of Leeds.

Over a period of five and a half years that I have been involved there was a time when I was very concerned about the uncertainty of political direction of the Children's Services portfolio and I said so in a number of places and so I hope it has some credibility if I say now that I am convinced more than at any other time in that five and a half years that Children's Services does have strong political direction, that it does have determined leadership by the Director and her staff, and the staff on the ground really are pulling out all the stops to modernise the service.

Councillor Blake says that some of those staff talk to elected Members about their concerns and of course they do. This is a period of very great uncertainty and it has got to be a period of very great change. I would hope that Members right across

the Chamber would accept that we are not going to do better in Children's Services unless we do things differently. There has to be change and that change is bound to cause concern among the staff.

I would also say that the DCS model that has been referred to, I was doubtful, I was very dubious about that at the outset. I was wrong. It actually has worked extremely well. It has worked better than a traditional command and control organisational structure would have worked because it has allowed the Director of a small team to concentrate on building partnerships and to operating at area level, at the locality level. In that respect, it has worked well.

The proposer and seconder of the substantive motion concentrated on what was a sweeping condemnation and actually focused on two very specific areas – NEETs and child protection.

So far as NEETs is concerned, yes, of course there is a concern and there was a concern when you left office five and a half years ago. There is a concern in every large industrial city in Britain, particularly – and I take Councillor Iqbal's point – about the disparity between wards, about the disparity between various groups in society of achievement. There is no doubt we have to do better than that, as all Authorities do, but I think there is a determination to do that and there is a distinct sign of improvement. There is no doubt – you are talking about systematic failing – there is an endemic failing not just in Leeds but throughout the UK in the extent to which we are failing the most vulnerable and deprived young people. Some of that, I believe, goes right back to the introduction of comprehensive education – not because comprehensive education was wrong at all, I am not an advocate of grammar schools, I did not go to one and I do not support them, but the implementation was clumsy and in many respects it damaged the life chances of young people. There are very real doubts as to whether a present day Richard Hoggart or Alan Bennett in Leeds would have made it in the way that they did and that must be a condemnation of the city.

So far as child protection is concerned, again there are deep rooted social problems and I have to say, some of those social problems are problems which your government's social policy has worsened over the last twelve years rather than improved.

Leave that party politics aside. This is a joint effort and it has to be a joint effort particularly at the area level. I would call, in the week before this further inspection, upon all Members to work together to make things better for children in Leeds, because that is a lot more important than scoring political points. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I actually welcome the last contribution because I think at least he talked about the issue at hand and there are points that I would disagree with, but I do think you put your finger on some of the key themes of this debate.

Firstly, let me preface my comments with two quick statements. Firstly, I would like to thank the officers for all the work they have done and particularly David Page, who probably was not in the room when we expressed our appreciation of all the work he has done over the years, particularly bringing into this city millions of pounds to invest in our schools, so that is largely down to a lot of work you have done, David. I am sure I speak for all of us – thanks very much for that contribution. You are crap at your quizzes but you are very good at that. *(Laughter and applause)*



The second thing that I want to say is that whatever we said here, and I have listened very carefully, it is about the politicians, the representatives and not about the officers. Like you, when it comes to the right time I know that our group will be fully behind the officers in improving the service for children. That is our commitment and always has been and whilst when we are in trouble with Ofsted we had our debates in here but when you went out, to your credit, Councillor Carter, you did support the Council as a whole and we would do so in the next few weeks under those circumstances.

I think the Children Act, if I am honest, was always going to be a difficult challenge and I always think can it really be achieved, all those objectives? I tell you, if we can avoid a Victoria Climbié or a Baby P or a Casey Mullen, then it is worth the challenge.

Our Labour Group very much welcomes the structural review that is now taking place and we are going to play our full part in that, because it is your right.

I do not agree with your comments about the unit. In fact, I think we have been consistent over the last four years about our view about the structure not being coherent and actually not producing the clout that you need in a Council like that, but that is a philosophical and political difference, John, that I think we can have in this Chamber.

What I want to concentrate on, and sadly it is only five minutes, is actually what I also think needs to change is the political attitudes and the relationship and the involvement, and I will come on to say why.

I will not go on about Stuart all the time because we have gone over that ground, but I will just point you to two comments. When we had a special Council meeting in January we pointed out our concerns. Councillor Golton – and he has done it a bit today but we will not dwell on it – to imply deficiency in this area, Lord Mayor, is an insult to the partners in the police and the health service and different Council departments. We were talking about the structure. We got immediate rebuttal, like today.

We then got the last Council meeting where we all got his job description. If you remember – and if you do not, here it is – “I keep pointing to the guidance because I think 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.” That was offloading. That was shifting the responsibility.

What I think we should do is have a look at the structure. Let us move positively into three areas. Firstly, if you look at the Executive Board paper, only 50 papers have come in the last four years out of 500 – that is 5% - and only 3% have been about action. Every elected member is a corporate...

COUNCILLOR: Ten per cent.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Do not worry, I will get better! Wait till you see my budget – it is a lot better than yours! If you look at that you have got to say every Member in this room is a corporate guardian and yet we never have the opportunity to debate it. We never do it because it does not come to Executive Board, so we have to have these White Papers.

If you look at the Scrutiny Board, ask yourself, is it right, every credit to Bill, no disrespect to you – is it right you should put Children’s and Education on it and

ask above all, all our experiences, you hinted at it, our locality working, our area working has been non-existent.

I think that is the kind of comment I would expect Councillor Golton to make, that he has to improve locality working. We cannot do it from the outside. We have to have it in our own area. We have to have the information and the commitment and if we do, if we start altering the structure radically, as you pointed out, I think we can make the improvements, but let us get the political attitudes right, let us take some responsibility and let us get some engagement from Members in this room. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR CLEASBY: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Could I first apologise to the administration because I am about to step out of line and actually agree with a member of the Labour Party – in fact two members of the Labour Party. Keith finished up by saying that we should dissolve the political part of this thing. Bearing in mind what we have been through during his administration, that is really a difficult thing to swallow.

The one I want to agree with is Councillor Blake. Councillor Blake said, “Our young people deserve better.” Yes, Judith, could not agree with you more. Have I stepped too far out of line? I will continue then, Lord Mayor.

She also said earlier that our officers did depend and need a lot more support. Absolutely right, could not agree more.

If you go back to the papers at 174 and 175 of today's meeting, 17 September – I apologise, Chair, if I did step too far out of line in my questioning of the Youth Service and Keith Burton had to come to the rescue of Richard Harker, who I was maligning at the time, and perhaps a little bit of John Paxton because John very proud of what he does in the Youth Service and I understand that pride, but what I do not understand is those people in this city who do not think that when funding only arrives for 25% of our youngsters to provide youth work that that is a good thing. That is a bad thing. 75% of our young people in our city do not have provision, the funding does not come to this city.

I would like our youth workers and our youth leaders, our organisers, our senior officers, to step out of line a little bit and take us all to task. There should be funding for 100% of our young people, not just 25%.

I will give you another figure that I had to draw out by being a little bit nasty. There are 64,000 young people in this city in the age group that I am talking about. You have all gone on about young people. Eventually they become, the people I am talking about, those 64,000 – you work it out yourself what the figure is – 75% - how many thousands of those are young people who do not have the youth provision in the city? That is because it is not provided by the government, so I would now like to disagree with Councillor Blake because, Councillor Blake, I found it offensive in your last leaflet in the Outer North West that where you are hoping to become a Member of Parliament, when you attack this city for the lack of youth provision. Now you know why there is a lack of youth provision. God help the area if you ever succeed in your aspirations but then let us hope that you will learn and make the funding available for 100% provision for the young people of our city. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR FINNIGAN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I often feel sorry for the long suffering public up there who listen to what we are actually saying and certainly have to listen to some of our colleagues on my right. They think we are going to hell in a hand cart to listen to some of my colleagues. On my left there is a view that

everything is rosy in the garden. Like Oliver Cromwell, we have to look at it warts and all. There are some things that Children's Services do well, of that there can be little argument; there are some things that do not work so well.

To a degree I agree with - and I am sure he will be flattered by this - Keith Wakefield in terms of getting locality working sorted out and how you can localise this to make sure that things work better. Certainly locally we look at how the education service is working in our particular patch, and it is working well but they are often frustrated at how other sections of Children's Services are operating and the fact that they do not seem to be helping and assisting them for some of the problems. I will give you an example is Bruntcliffe High School where they are dealing with all the kids who are not keen on the academic by involving them in more vocational approaches, and they often feel as if they are not getting the help and the support elsewhere. Indeed, some of the schools feel that they are doing the job of Children's Services and co-ordination does not actually exist.

Here I pay tribute to my colleague Councillor Bob Gettings, who is doing an excellent job as Children's Champion in our particular area, who has identified that the policies at the top are fine and the aspirations are great, a lot of the staff at the cutting edge are great, but somewhere in the middle it is getting lost in translation and we are in a situation where in things like extended schools and other areas it is not working as well as it should.

People will know that we have had significant concerns about the Youth Service. We have said that year in year out, we still have significant concerns about the Youth Service and how that actually operates, how that actually integrates on to a locality basis. That is something that we need to seriously think about.

Ultimately we are in a position where if we are going to offer all young people in our particular areas the best opportunities possible, surely what we would all hope to actually achieve is a question of getting that integration better, it is a question of making sure that that partnership genuinely exists and that schools and local social services departments and all the rest of it do feel as if they are part of a whole, because at this particular point they are still operating often independently of each other and they could achieve so much more if they did actually help and co-ordinate.

I do have to say in terms of the safeguarding yes, it is a sad state of affairs that Ofsted came in but having said that, if my history is correct, I believe Ofsted went to Haringey just before Baby P and found that their Children's Services were operating fine. If that is the case then we have to have some serious concerns about it. Certainly in Morley at the time when I have referred cases, as I have done on safeguarding issues, they have been efficient, they have come back to me quickly, they have dealt with the matter well and thoroughly.

There is a cultural issue. There are issues about wider national problems and the national culture and how we actually deal with that that we have got to address as well as this, but ultimately it is about getting the locality right, it is about getting that integration right and making sure that it works better than it is.

We do have faith in Stuart. We do believe that he is working hard and he is beginning to make progress. There is no point suggesting that everything is rosy in the garden; it actually is not. We do not think that calling for resignations is a particularly constructive and productive way of dealing with this, but we have a lot of work to do. It is down to all of us, all 99 of us to make sure that it works better on a locality basis, it works better in our neighbourhoods and that we achieve what we all want to achieve, which is the best break possible for all our children. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: I just want to add two or three points which have not yet been covered, so they are additional points. Councillor Golton asked an hour or so ago for some specific concerns. I think some of my colleagues have outlined some specific concerns.

I want to add one more and that is the rate of admissions that are now currently happening into primary and secondary schools. I can quote, like Councillor Harker, 2004 to 2009. 2004 – primary school admission were at 96% for pupils getting their first, second or third choice. They are now below 90%. For high schools it was running well above 90% and is now only running at about 80%, so the last five years far, far more pupils are not getting their first, their second or their third choice in admissions. That is a real democratic deficit for the parents and for young people in this city.

The second point, Councillor Harker, your eulogy of all the projects you were doing are a fantastic compliment to the Labour Government and the money they have been putting into education for the last twelve years. As soon as you do not get a slice of money, you then are stuck and say you have not got a Plan A, you have not got a Plan B and you cannot do anything and the City of Leeds has gone up the wall.

It is interesting that none of the Hyde Park Councillors, very vociferous outside this Chamber about City of Leeds school, have the bottle to stand up in here and support their local school.

The third comment I want to make is one about governance. I was actually amazed that the seconder of this White Paper is Councillor Hyde, who is also the Scrutiny Chair of the Children's Services Scrutiny Board.

COUNCILLOR: Absolutely.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: It is an appalling indictment and shows the crass governance of this administration that the Scrutiny Chair, who is supposed to actually independently overlook a Scrutiny process, seconds a resolution from the controlling group in terms of Children's Services as a whole. Have you not got anybody else who could do that? If we attack Leeds Teaching Hospitals and ask Councillor Dobson to lead it, you will condemn us as being absolutely introverted etc, etc. This is a disgrace, frankly, and no wonder the Scrutiny process in Children's Services was found to be wanting. What actually did Councillor Hyde do after his Scrutiny Board fully supported the call in? He has not spoken yet so perhaps he can tell us, did he talk to Councillor Harker, did he talk to Councillor Golton? Did they have some plan to say yes, that is what we will do? Was the plan thrown into disarray by an officer acting unilaterally?

I remember leading a call in in the last municipal year and being reassured by the Chief Executive that this disdain and contempt of Scrutiny would never happen again. This administration have become serial offenders in terms of the Scrutiny process. Very soon we are going to have trouble getting people to turn up at Scrutiny Boards because they think their time will be totally wasted and if an inspection team independently outside this Authority asks us to comment on that, we are bound to say, are we not, that it is wrong for the administration in all the key portfolios to scrutinise itself and when things go wrong, no further action is taken.

What I will tell you is this. If a Councillor had taken that decision that has been taken, you could not whistle for two seconds before you would be in front of Standards for disrespecting your office. That is what would happen if we had taken that kind of decision in the light of the vote that had taken place within the Scrutiny

Board and yet again we find that elected Members are treated with total contempt. I have yet to hear the Scrutiny Board Chair publicly say what he thinks about this and actually condemn it. He has a chance now to stand up and do so. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR W HYDE: Thank you, Lord Mayor, exercising the right to speak. I had not intended to but given that rather nonsensical tirade from Councillor Gruen, I will start with the position of the Scrutiny Board.

I have difficulty in understanding how on the one hand it can be alleged that the Scrutiny Board unanimously agreed that a matter should be referred back for reconsideration and then at the same time be accused of being party to the decision in some strange way. Clearly there is a difference between being Scrutiny Board Chair or being a member of the Scrutiny Board and also being a member of the administration and that is where we are from. It was quite clear that this opportunity was going to be used by the Opposition to raise the matter of the Scrutiny Board decision on call in.

Can I congratulate Councillors Lowe and Ogilvie for bringing this matter to Scrutiny for call in, because it was successful and it was unanimously supported but they knew and Councillor Gruen knows that the panels of Scrutiny are such that they can refer issues back to the responsible officer. What they cannot do, and it was never intended that they should be able to do, is to change that decision.

That is what we did. Scrutiny Board passed that resolution and sent it back. If in fact the Members opposite feel that that has now reached the end of the road, perhaps I can give them some reassurance. I know that it has not reached the end of the road and that the issue is being addressed in other parts of the Council and we shall, I am sure, in the near future hear more about it, but I think really and more importantly, Lord Mayor, what we need to do today is to keep a reasonable sense of balance about all this. Yes, certainly, we are concerned about NEETs, certainly we are concerned about the Not Knowns, but really, is that what it is all about? You have heard from my colleagues, particularly Councillors Golton and Harker, about some of the things that have been achieved, and it has been really quite a remarkable achievement.

In fact, not famous for supporting the Conservative cause, there is a bit in today's Guardian which might be of interests to Members opposite where it is talking about a Leeds initiative that is being nationally applauded. What it says in today's Guardian is that children with disabilities in Leeds and their carers will soon be enjoying a much greater choice of shorter breaks thanks to a new Leeds City Council and NHS Leeds Primary Care Trust initiative. That is one area, and I think it is a very important area too, where we are breaking new ground.

If I have sufficient time, I will just deal with one or two points that Councillor Harker was not able to comment on. I do think it is important, particularly in relation to the comment most recently made about primary schools. I do not think it is properly appreciated that in the last five years Leeds has targeted major investment to the tune of capital receipts coming from the disposal of school sites that have been invested in the primary sector. In fact in excess of £15m of receipts underpinned our £40m primary review programme.

Yes, OK, we know that there are still problems, there probably always will be problems, but they are being tackled and as a result of the primary review programme, three PFI projects, we have been able to build 21 new primary schools.

Really, that is all part of the balance and I think we need to take that along with the improvements in the secondary schools as a result of the PFI scheme, when

you look at the computers for pupils programme that has helped youngsters on computers in our most deprived areas, then I think you have to take an overall view of the service. It is not perfect, I doubt it ever will be, but it is wrong to say that we are failing badly. In my view we are succeeding on balance and we are going to get there in the areas where we are still working. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR D BLACKBURN: The trouble I have with this motion and the trouble I have with the amendment is it is all black and white and the truth of it is the grey area in between. I think on Children's Services there is much that has been done that is to be applauded. There are other things where I think there are problems. One of them we know about, there is going to be an inspection and I will not talk about that because obviously we will see what the inspector thinks and I hope and pray that we are successful.

Moving on, the IGEN contracts, I was the third one of the people that called it in with Councillor Lowe and Councillor Ogilvie. I have got to say, the process that that went through made Scrutiny totally worthless. We still do not know, we debated issues there that were raised and we still have not got the answers to them and the Scrutiny Board have not, as far as I know.

I have got to say, Councillor Hyde, I welcome the fact that you say that the issue is not closed yet and things are going further, but there were definite issues. I would not have signed the call in had I not thought there were issues to look at there of transparency and other things. The thing is, something wants looking at and something wants changing regarding that because the fact is that having the same people reviewing it and then not answering the questions that colleagues raised – and Adam and Alison actually raised most of the questions – I think is totally disgusting.

As I say, on the motion there is a lot that needs doing, there is a lot that has been done. I am not going to criticise Stuart at the moment, but get your finger out and do something. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR LAMB: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Lord Mayor, we face many challenges in Children's Services in this city, as do cities around the country. We have also had many successes that we should be celebrating. The earlier part of the debate from Councillor Jarosz and Councillor Mulherin was pretty pathetic, I thought. We have had some more sensible contributions since *(Interruption)*.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Kettle and black

COUNCILLOR LAMB: Kettle and black, yes. I presume you will be allowing me the same time as the others, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: No heckling is allowed.

COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: Democratic process.

COUNCILLOR LAMB: To be honest, at the start of this – and I am glad Keith Wakefield brought it round to a more sensible level of debate...

COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: Why are you spoiling it?

COUNCILLOR LAMB: ...but from Councillor Jarosz and Councillor Mulherin, to be perfectly honest not since John Prescott began his battle against bulimia have we had a Labour politician regurgitate such garbage.

They showed a complete lack of understanding of the issue. You talked about the NEET conference on 3 November, which I opened and closed. I do know you were not there and if you had been you might have learned something about the issues at hand. You also referred to the lifetime cost of NEETs, the £300m. I wonder if you know where that figure came from? Do you? No, you are looking at your shoes. It is really good to see a member of the Opposition quoting Iain Duncan-Smith, the former Leader of the Conservative Party, who is an expert now on social justice. *(Interruption)*

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: He is also the former Leader.

COUNCILLOR LAMB: I do know all about that, Bill. I am sure you will congratulate Iain Duncan-Smith on the work he has done, since you have been good enough to quote his research for the Centre of Social Justice.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Don't be put off. Carry on.

COUNCILLOR LAMB: One of the things I was going to recount was how much was spent in Crossgates and Whinmoor on the ward allocations, which actually is not far short of the amount, it is just about the same amount as they managed to spend on the gates on the roundabouts and the glorious technicolour there. When you talk about priorities, our priority is to spend money on youth provision in Crossgates and Whinmoor. Yours was to spend it on gates on roundabouts.

COUNCILLOR GRAHAME: You are taking credit for what has already been put forward. That is all you do.

COUNCILLOR LAMB: Let us look at some of the successes we have. This year more than 16,000 children and young people attended the Breeze events in the summer. Breeze is one of the leading examples of youth provision in the country and it is no surprise that Labour Ministers are scrambling to come up to Leeds to look at and take on the ideas that we put forward and the things that we are doing fantastic work on. It is a great shame that you do down the work – I will tell you what, if you talked a little less and listened a little more you might actually learn something. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR LYONS: We will not learn it off you, that's for sure.

COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: You want to shut us up.

COUNCILLOR LAMB: It is incredible that so many Labour Ministers keep coming to this city to look at the good work that we are doing. There is another one coming, some Minister for Buttons and Paperclips in the Home Office is coming on Monday to look at the work we are doing on tackling knife crime and to copy it and to roll it out across the country because of the successful pilot here. The My Place grant of just short of £5m...

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Are you supposed to be being constructive?

COUNCILLOR LAMB: ...for the youth huts in South Leeds and I recognise and congratulate the work that some of the members opposite have done on that.

There are so many good things that are going on but the proposer and seconder ignored the issues, they are making it too simplistic. They are not recognising the problems that their own government have caused in the issues.

We do not have jurisdiction over the welfare system in this Council and that is one of the leading problems why there is such deep poverty in the communities that you have represented for 24 years and your government has been in power for twelve years.

Under your government – get this one – two million young people have left school without a single GCSE in the last ten years – two million. Whose fault is that? Are you going to blame all that on this administration? That is your government's fault.

COUNCILLOR: Education, education, education.

COUNCILLOR: Do you remember Margaret Thatcher?

COUNCILLOR LAMB: I remember Margaret Thatcher, yes. She was the last one that had to fix the economy and that comes to the final point. What worst indictment is there of your commitment to children and young people to saddle them with a £1.6 trillion debt that they are going to have to pay off for the rest of their lives? Each child born in this country today has a debt of £20,000. That is the legacy that your government has lost. When it comes to education and Children's Services, your moral compass is more like a dodgy second-hand sat nav that only has one instruction – turn left. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: I now want to call on Councillor Jarosz to sum up.  
*(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR JAROSZ: Right, I will try and answer as much as I can but there has been an awful lot of hot air in here.

Let us just start – I have got that many bits of paper here I don't know where to start. Let us just – I apologise because I am going to sound like a broken record here. Proposed 28 Children's Centres paid for by a Labour Government. *(Applause)* Playbuilder Initiatives paid for by a Labour Government. *(Applause)* Improved educational outcomes for so many young people in Leeds and nationally thanks to a better learning environment – new schools, more teachers, smaller class sizes – thanks to a Labour Government. *(Applause)*

I thank Richard Harker for reminding us of all the investment made by a Labour Government in improving children and young people's services, lives and prospects.

Despite a much healthier and wealthier environment for education and Children's Services created by our government, in Leeds we still have the appalling NEET figures referred to earlier. There are so many NEETs that we could fill the John Charles Stadium with the young people leaving school and winding up out of education, employment or training.

We still have looked after children who have far worse educational outcomes than their peers and who are three times more likely to end up as teenage mums. We still have children from all sorts of disadvantage backgrounds falling through the gaps in the service you provide, as Councillor Iqbal explained earlier.

If I could just carry on – I am always carrying on! In 1996/97 Leeds received £4.6m from the government for education. In 2009/10 that figure had risen to £74m, so that is from £4.6m to £74m. These figures speak volumes about the commitment of a Labour Government to provide the best possible education for the young people of Leeds.



COUNCILLOR: How much have they given us for social care?

COUNCILLOR JAROSZ: Since 2004 alone the investment has doubled. Labour has given you the tools to make schools in Leeds the best they can be.

COUNCILLOR: And what do you do with them?

COUNCILLOR JAROSZ: Exactly, and we have seen improvements in results but the fact is, there is still a big gap between the groups – it is too big.

COUNCILLOR: Why are you leaving more children in poverty?

COUNCILLOR JAROSZ: Improvements have nowhere near mirrored the fantastic investment that has been made. £4.6m to £74m and look what you have done with it?

COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: Wasted it.

COUNCILLOR JAROSZ: As far as Councillor Mulherin's point about there is a crisis in inspection after inspection, you have failed to take inspections seriously. *(Interruption)*

You have an Executive Member up here who has little idea about what is going on, who has lived in denial and still tried to spin his way out of the mess – the mess of inconsistent practices and remember the figure that Councillor Mulherin gave – seven out of 23 children at risk of serious harm.

COUNCILLOR: Rubbish.

COUNCILLOR JAROSZ: Some of the most vulnerable children in this city have been let down by your continued and unforgiveable failures in safeguarding.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Will somebody shut her up?

COUNCILLOR JAROSZ: I want to make sure everyone hears, not just you lot. I know you lot are not listening but some other people might be.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Jarosz, just a minute, please. Could I please have quiet? We want to get through this. Please let Councillor Jarosz speak. Just be quiet and listen to what she has to say. We have had come into the public gallery some people who are quite keen to hear what is said, from Leeds University. Please be quiet.

COUNCILLOR JAROSZ: Councillors Ogilvie and Lowe highlighted the contract that was awarded to a company even though Members from all parties were against it. Not only is this a slight on democracy but we have to question the impact on the future of both Youth Services and voluntary sector. Councillor Iqbal mentioned children from deprived backgrounds not achieving their results and we have worries about the BME performance and looked after children, which is far below the Leeds average.

Councillor Golton, in your amendment you have referred to two previous White Papers adopted by Council, stating you remain determined to fulfil the objectives of those White Papers. The fact remains that in the January White Paper you noted the actions taken to improve performance in the areas of concern and in September you promised to learn the lessons of the latest inspection. It is painfully

clear that, in spite of your professed best intentions, you have failed to learn the lessons from January and I have no confidence in your ability that you have learned any lessons from September.

Quite frankly, I feel the repetition of your determination to learn lessons is quite tiresome and so I find your amendment both pointless and insulting and you have proved beyond any doubt that you are incapable of living up to your own promises. I urge you to support my White Paper. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. I am now going to call for a vote on the amendment in the name of Councillor S Golton. *(A vote was taken)* CARRIED.

This now becomes the substantive motion and I would like to take votes on that, please. *(A vote was taken)* This is CARRIED.

#### ITEM 11 – WHITE PAPER MOTION – LEEDS ARENA

COUNCILLOR M HAMILTON: Lord Mayor, can I beg leave of Council to withdraw from the Order Paper White Paper 11 in the name of Councillor Andrew Carter?

THE LORD MAYOR: Does Councillor Matthews agree to that as the seconder?

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: I will second, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: No, does Councillor Matthews agree to that being withdrawn?

COUNCILLOR MATTHEWS: Yes, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: You do. Thank you. Do we agree, does the full Council agree to that being withdrawn? *(Agreed)* Thank you.

#### ITEM 12 – WHITE PAPER MOTION – KIRKGATE MARKET

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Lord Mayor, similarly the White Paper in the name of Councillor Dobson. Could I ask leave of Council to withdraw?

THE LORD MAYOR: Does Councillor Taggart agree with that as the seconder?

COUNCILLOR TAGGART: Yes.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Does full Council agree to withdrawing that? *(Agreed)* Thank you.

#### ITEM 10 – WHITE PAPER MOTION – ROAD TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS

THE LORD MAYOR: We are moving on to number 10, the White Paper in the name of Councillor Grayshon. These we will just vote on when we have had them formally moved and seconded. Councillor Grayshon.

COUNCILLOR GRAYSHON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am obliged. I wish to move the White Paper in terms of the Notice.

COUNCILLOR FINNIGAN: Formally second, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Could we vote on that, please? *(A vote was taken)* It is CARRIED, is that.

ITEM 13 – WHITE PAPER MOTION - Procedure Rule 3.1(d) – BRITISH BEE POPULATION

THE LORD MAYOR: We are on to number 13, the White Paper Motion in the name of Councillor Selby.

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

COUNCILLOR D BLACKBURN: I formally second, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Call for the vote, please. *(A vote was taken)* That is CARRIED.

ITEM 14 - WHITE PAPER MOTION - Procedure Rule 3.1(d) – LEEDS RHINOS

THE LORD MAYOR: White Paper number 14 in the name of Councillor Smith.

COUNCILLOR SMITH: Thank you, Lord Mayor. With great pleasure I move in terms of the Notice.

COUNCILLOR LANCASTER: I second, Lord Mayor.

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

ITEM 15 – WHITE PAPER MOTION - Procedure Rule 3.1(d) - YORKSHIRE COUNTY CRICKET CLUB

THE LORD MAYOR: White Paper number 15 in the name of Councillor Hamilton.

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

COUNCILLOR LEADLEY: I second the motion, Lord Mayor.

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

ITEM 16 – WHITE PAPER MOTION - Procedure Rule 3.1(d) - VAT RATES FOR BUILDING REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE

THE LORD MAYOR: The White Paper number 16 in the name of Councillor Andrew.

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

COUNCILLOR PROCTER: Second, Lord Mayor.

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

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Should have been debated.

THE LORD MAYOR: We are now at the end of proceedings and I would just like to say welcome to students from Leeds University who have been brought by Councillor Andrew and I am sorry that you are here at the end. I hope that you will come earlier in future and enjoy what this Council Chamber has to offer.

Thank you very much everybody for your attendance. That is the end of the meeting.

*(The meeting closed at 7.25 pm)*