

LEEDS CITY COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

Held on

Wednesday, 6 April, 2011

At

THE COUNCIL CHAMBER,
CIVIC HALL, LEEDS

In the Chair:

THE LORD MAYOR
(COUNCILLOR J McKENNA)

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VERBATIM REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS OF LEEDS CITY COUNCIL
MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 6th APRIL, 2011

THE LORD MAYOR: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen, Councillors. Can I start the meeting, with your permission? Can I just remind members to switch off their mobile phones while they are in their seats, please.

I have some announcements to make. Can I firstly welcome Bob Pritchard to this Council meeting as the City Solicitor? Bob will be holding the post for an initial six months, so you are very welcome and I hope you enjoy the experience.
(*Applause*)

You will all be aware that Nicole Jackson left the Authority on 31st March. I would like to thank Nicole publicly for all her assistance to me and for her 20 years of service to Leeds City Council.

On 31st March the Lady Mayoress and I attended the first unveiling of the Leeds Memorial Plaque in memory of Danny Freeman. Members of Danny's family were also in attendance. I am sure you all remember Danny – he used to sit up there at every Council meeting. He has attended more Council meetings in his life than most Councillors ever get to attend and he did it voluntarily as well.

On 11th March the Lady Mayoress and I attended the decommissioning of the Ark Royal in Portsmouth and I have to say it was a very, very poignant and sad moment for us. When the Commander dismissed the guard for the last time, when he said, "Guard fall out for the last time" and they walked off, it was really, really sad and it is sad that that connection with Leeds perhaps for the moment is temporarily on hold.

I did write to all the Leaders suggesting that we might change the name of the Blue Room into the Ark Royal Room and I would like comments, please, on that. If there is no objection perhaps we could get on with that fairly quickly. You will be glad to know it is envisaged as zero budget and perhaps if we invite the Lord Lieutenant to represent the Queen to open it for us, we can do it fairly quickly. We are to receive the ship's bell and other artefacts, so we would have enough to actually decorate the room.

Can I also remind you that you are all invited to attend my Civic Service of Thanksgiving on Sunday 8th May at 3.00pm in Leeds Cathedral. That local little affair will be finished on the Thursday before, so you will have a bit of time on your hands.

Following the earthquake and tsunami in Japan, I wrote to his Excellency Naota Kan, the Prime Minister of Japan, to express my sympathy on behalf of the citizens of Leeds.

I know you will all want to wish the best for the future to the following members of Council who are standing down: Ruth Feldman after many years' service; Andrew Barker; and Richard Brett. (*Applause*)

Thank you. Can I bring your attention that I have admitted on to the agenda the following papers, which will be in your pack:

Report detailing amendments to the Officer Delegation Scheme (Executive Functions), Item 5(a) on the Order Paper;

Recommendations of the General Purposes Committee on 30th March 2011, Item 7(b) on the Order Paper;

Minutes of the Executive Board on 30th March 2011, Item 8(a) on the Order Paper;

Minutes of the General Purposes Committee Meeting on 23rd and 30th March 2011, Item 8(s) on the Order Paper;

Minutes of the Employment Committee on 31st March 2011, Item 18 on the Order Paper.

Can we, therefore, go on to Item 1.

ITEM 1 – MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 23rd FEBRUARY 2011

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Gruen.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: I move the Minutes, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR LOBLEY: I second, my Lord Mayor.

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

ITEM 2 – DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

THE LORD MAYOR: Can we move to Item 2, Declarations of Interest. The list of written declarations submitted by members is on display in the ante-room, on deposit in the public gallery and has been circulated to each member's place in the Chamber.

Are there any further individual declarations or corrections to those notified? Councillor Carter?

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Yes, Lord Mayor, I would like to declare an interest as a member of the West Yorkshire Pension Scheme.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, Andrew.

COUNCILLOR FOX: Lord Mayor, having already declared five personal interests can I now add numbers 6, 7 and 8: I am a member of the West Yorkshire Pension Scheme; I am a Trustee of the West Yorkshire Pension Scheme; I am a member of the West Yorkshire Pension Scheme Advisory Committee.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Councillor Harrand, did I see your hand?

COUNCILLOR HARRAND: I am just a member of the West Yorkshire Pension Scheme.

THE LORD MAYOR: Just a member! OK.

COUNCILLOR ROBINSON: Under item 13 I too am a member of the West Yorkshire Pension Scheme.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Marjoram.

COUNCILLOR MARJORAM: Likewise, I am a member of the West Yorkshire Pension scheme.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Nash, please.

COUNCILLOR NASH: My Lord Mayor, I would like to make a correction. On Item 11 regarding the Post Offices, I have a prejudicial interest, not a personal interest and I have to say that it is the responsibility of members to decide what their interest is and I very much regret having to stand up and say so.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, Councillor Nash. Councillor Harper.

COUNCILLOR J HARPER: Yes, my Lord Mayor, I am a member of the West Yorkshire Pension Committee.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Grahame.

COUNCILLOR R GRAHAME: Member of the West Yorkshire Pension Scheme.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Selby.

COUNCILLOR SELBY: Member of the West Yorkshire Pension Scheme.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Can we move *en bloc*?

THE LORD MAYOR: I think we are nearly there. Councillor Congreve.

COUNCILLOR CONGREVE: Item 13, member of the West Yorkshire Pension Scheme, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Selby.

COUNCILLOR SELBY: Personal interest in Item 10 in respect of chairing Social Security Tribunals.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: I am not a member of West Yorkshire Pension Scheme.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Ditto and I imagine that this bench as well.

THE LORD MAYOR: OK, so can we do that? It is one of these things it might have been desirable if we had done in advance, but here we are. Can we record them, please? Is there anybody who has got a different interest, other than West Yorkshire Pension Funds?

COUNCILLOR ATHA: I do not have any interests at all. *(laughter)*

THE LORD MAYOR: That is good to know, Bernard!

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: We always said you were boring!

THE LORD MAYOR: I think we have got that, yes. We are nearly all pensioners, I get the message – apart from James, of course, who is soon to be! *(laughter)*

ITEM 3 - COMMUNICATIONS

THE LORD MAYOR: Can we go on to Item 3, Communications. Chief Executive, please.

THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. There is one communication. I just want to report some amendments to the Council diary, updating members on the senior staffing changes due to the Early Leavers Initiative. I would just like to pay tribute to all of those officers who have left the Council over the last year and thank them for their service to the people of Leeds. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Can we move to Item 4, please, Deputations. I understand there are five deputations. Can we have a vote on receiving those five deputations?

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Can I move that we receive them?

THE LORD MAYOR: Indeed you can, Peter.

COUNCILLOR LOBLEY: Lord Mayor, if I can second.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Can we now vote on it, please? Thank you.

DEPUTATION ONE – WEST PARK RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

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

MR D KEMP: Lord Mayor and Councillors, my name is Douglas Kemp. Can I introduce Ken Tyro, Peter Owen and Neil Craven. We are all representatives of the three Residents' Associations in the area that surround the West Park Centre and it is about the West Park Centre that I wish to speak today.

I would ask the Leader of the Council to approve the appointment of a small committee to work with the Centre to develop and business and action plan to retain and manage the Centre in a way consistent with the needs of the city. I would also ask that he instruct officers to remove the ban on the West Park Centre accepting new tenants.

Many of you will be aware that the Centre in fact is one of the most well-used Council –owned facilities in Leeds with, typically, between 2,000 and 3,000 a week using the centre of a day-time and evening and the weekend. It includes not just residents' associations but the police, various NHS bodies, dance associations, theatre groups and two youth clubs, and of a weekend the Centre is used by the Leeds Reformed Baptist Church with a congregation of over 200. In many respects these are small fry compared to the other main aspect of the Centre's work, and that is in regard to the music and the music tradition of Leeds.

The Centre has almost 40 groups which use the Centre – I say “use” the Centre; rely on the Centre. These include groups such as the Leeds Symphony Orchestra with 85 adult musicians, Leeds Festival Chorus who perform at the Leeds International Concert season with 170 members, West Riding Opera, the Phoenix Concert Bank, the Late Starters Strings with over 60 members, recently the Leeds International Piano Competition held a three day workshop there for children aged between ten and twelve. This was attended by 370 children.

The Centre is also the home of YAMSEN, the Yorkshire Association for Music and Special Educational Needs, which provides fortnightly workshops for adults who are mentally and physically handicapped. That has almost 100 members. There is a Special Needs choir with about 60 members, the One-A- Chord Choir with 80 members, YAMSEN music days which accommodate 80 to 90 children with profound and complex needs which operate five times a year, a wheelchair dance group, accessible music technology club, the City of Leeds Music Ensemble, the City of Leeds Youth Orchestra, with over 80 members, the City of Leeds Youth Wind Band, the City of Leeds Youth Opera, the Leeds Youth Percussion Ensemble, who are performing at the opening ceremony of the European Fencing Championships in July, and many more - many more.

The Council facilities include large rehearsal rooms, a large hall and many offices. These offices have recently been vacated courtesy of the departure of Northern Ballet Theatre and Education Leeds. These would make ideal offices to be rented off on yearly contracts at reasonable commercial rates. The Centre is accessible, there are car parking spaces for over 100 vehicles and secure parking. There are also two large gyms which were released with the departure of the Northern Ballet Theatre.

In the Spring of 2009 the Executive Board asked Council in respect as a matter of priority to consult with users and local community organisations and report back within six months. It is a bit longer than six months since Spring 2009 and nothing has happened. It is important that there is a sensible, realistic appraisal of the future of West Park Centre. It is not just a building that can be left to decline and decay. If it does, it will be a sin, a stain on the musical heritage of Leeds and Yorkshire. Thank you, gentlemen and ladies. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Can I call on Councillor Gruen, please?

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Lord Mayor, thank you. I move that the matter under discussion be referred to the Executive Board.

COUNCILLOR LOBLEY: I second, my Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Can I call for the vote on that, please. (*A vote was taken*) That is CARRIED.

Can I thank you for attending and for what you have said. You will be kept informed of the consideration which your comments will receive. Good afternoon, gentlemen.

DEPUTATION TWO – FRIENDS OF BRAMLEY BATHS

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

SPEAKER: Thank you very much. Lord Mayor, Members of Council, we represent Friends of Bramley Baths. Bramley Baths is an Edwardian building housing a gym, a pool and a fitness room, that serves a population of around 30,000 people, chiefly those living in Bramley and Rodley. The baths were restored in 1992 with civic investment to ensure the survival of the last of eight public baths built in Leeds between 1899 and 1904, one of only 13 that now remain in use and open to the public for swimming in the UK. This is a Grade II listed building, a stunning architectural gem that this city should be proud of, we believe, and that has the features to inspire visits and support from across Leeds and beyond. It offers the user an experience that goes well beyond the act of swimming, an experience that is becoming harder to come by and that could help the City demonstrate why Leeds has something special to offer beyond shopping.

Bramley Baths is a community resource that has served the for over 100 years. The baths are situated in the city's poorest authority ward, West Leeds, in an area with precious few community resources and facilities. It is not just a place for exercise; it is a neutral space where people of all persuasions can rub shoulders and a symbol of civic pride for an area that has previously been stripped of many of its original features.

In February of this year, a campaign backed by local Councillors and the West Leeds MP, fought proposed cuts to reduce the opening hours at Bramley Baths to 29 hours per week from the standard 80 hours. Whilst a recent announcement has started that the Baths will remain open 60 hours per week for the next twelve months, the future beyond this is unclear. The Baths have been running at a deficit and local residents are aware that this resource needs to be used in order for it to survive but we need your help.

There are factors influencing the long term success of this resource that rely on support from you, our Council to help Bramley Baths realise its potential.

Communications about Bramley Baths is next to zero. The team at Bramley Baths, who I have met and spoken with, are full of good and viable ideas for promoting the current service and extending its capability through creative marketing of the space. They are champions of this building, whose voices have been largely ignored and whose ideas are vital to a sustainable future.

There is also no evidence that potential untapped markets have been explored in a meaningful way, though the staff have themselves identified many areas that are ripe for development. They need your active support to improve communications about Bramley Baths, to test services that will appeal to potential new markets, such as early 7.00 am opening and late 10.30 closing. Clearly there is an argument for this type of approach and, critically, demand, given that the opening hours at the much-lauded Armley Leisure Centre are 7.15am – 10.30pm weekdays.

There is in general much more scope for creative thinking around the services offered for filling the pool. Currently the Baths close on Bank Holidays, as do other leisure facilities around the city – a strange and seemingly counter-intuitive approach to making money and providing community resources.

Bramley Baths, amongst its unique features, also has the city's only Russian banya, a steam room – a feature that is little known about more broadly.

The story of Bramley Baths is rich and delightful, and the rationale for ensuring a happier, safer, healthier community is clear and widely evidenced. The Government claims it wants to tackle child obesity, and claims that the UK is a country worth of hosting the Olympic Games – yet locally, in areas like Bramley, we

are apparently not worthy of facilities to enable citizens to exercise affordably or learn the basic strokes needed to compete on any scale, in any arena. Bramley itself is on the River Aire and the Leeds to Liverpool Canal. Swimming is for local children in the long term not simply a form of exercise, but a safety measure.

The recent rescue package is short term and without proper support by the Council's communications resources and by enabling the team on the ground at Bramley Baths to put in place affordable but income earning ideas, the rescue package will only act as a temporary sticking plaster. Many of us believe that Bramley Baths can turn itself around, but only if staff are given the backing to take some positive proactive steps.

I recognise that cuts are necessary and that Bramley Baths needs to address the recorded decline in visitor numbers and find new ways to stimulate revenue. My point is that both of these issues could be addressed with simple steps to identify the services that customers would use, to promote at a very basic level the services already offered, and to simply tell people more about what is there.

Thank you very much. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Can I call on Councillor Gruen, please?

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Lord Mayor, this is an important matter and I move that the issue be referred to the Executive Board for further consideration.

COUNCILLOR LOBLEY: Lord Mayor, I am delighted to second that motion and congratulate you on an excellent presentation.

THE LORD MAYOR: Can I call for the vote on that, please. (*A vote was taken*) That is CARRIED.

Can I thank you for attending and for what you have said. You will be kept informed of the consideration which your comments will receive. Good afternoon to you, ladies.

DEPUTATION 3 – DANOPTRA LTD.

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

MR N HAWKINS: Lord Mayor Members of Council, thank you very much. I am Nick Hawkins and the members of my delegation are John Weir and Phillip Myers.

Lord Mayor, Members of Council, my colleagues and I are very grateful to you for the opportunity to speak to you as a deputation.

As I only have 5 minutes and a lot of information to get in, I hope you will all forgive me if I speak quite quickly. After I have spoken we have material to provide any of you who are interested.

Most of you probably will not know us. I am the Company Secretary and Legal Director of Danoptra Ltd. We are a leisure and sports group. We employ a bit under 4,000 people nationwide – we have many subsidiaries – and our national

headquarters is in Low Lane, at the Kirkstall end of Horsforth, in a mill building built in 1905.

I am going to talk to you about a number of what we believe are serious procedural faults in a conversation area plan and failures to follow clear national guidance, which your planning officers have been involved in, but this is not a wholesale attack on your officers, and I should stress that Paul Stephens, your Head of Economic Development, has been very helpful to us as a company.

However, I do want to stress what the adverse effects of these failures can be. I am sure all Councillors, regardless of political party, are concerned about jobs – keeping jobs and making sure we do not lose jobs – especially here in Leeds. The purpose of our deputation is to highlight to you what we believe the mistakes have been to suggest to you all that there is a solution and that this solution will protect a successful local company.

Predecessor companies which are still part of our Group, which some of you may recall, include Music Hire Group and Kunick – spelt K-U-N-I-C-K, and if you go past our Mill today you will see the name “Gamestec” on the building – that is one of our big trading subsidiaries, the biggest supplier in the UK of machines, pool tables, juke boxes, media screens and the like, to all the big national pub chains. We are also successful manufacturers and exporters and parts of our business are growing worldwide.

We take our responsibilities very seriously; we have an excellent reputation with our regulators, and we raise and contribute a lot of money to charities.

We therefore believe we are good “corporate citizens” and when something crops up in the Council which affects us, we hope that we will see the correct following of procedures and guidance..

I will turn to how that has not happened here. Last Spring we suddenly discovered (at the very last minute, because the consultation document was not addressed to the Chief Executive or to me but just arrived in the general post) that there was a consultation on creating a new Conservation Area in Horsforth – and in the very corner, on the very edge of that proposed area, our Mill building had been include.

I should stress we are not against conservation. If our Mill was genuinely historic – if, say, it had been built in 1705 or 1805, I and my Company would be the first to say it is a candidate for conservation, but it was built in 1905, it is not even Victorian and, as you will hear, it is nothing special and, as you will all know, such 20th Century mills are ten a penny across the North of England. Just because a building has a bit of age, it does not automatically mean it must be kept, or we would never make progress. You cannot freeze everything in aspic.

So what happened and what went wrong here procedurally? It is quite clear that the junior planning officer just followed a pre-planned formula in putting the plan together. How do we know this? Because in the original documentation, a completely different area, miles away from Horsforth, is mentioned. In the first version of the Consultation, it reads that the Draft Appraisal “...provides a clear understanding of the special interest in Barwick in Elmet...” If officers just do a “cut and paste” job, that is the kind of error which slips through, so we are not just talking about us – we are talking about fundamental flaws.

We have gone to a leading national expert, Roger Wools, who has been advising Councils on conservation issues across the North for 30 years and he is a

particular expert on old mills. What he says is: "My conclusion is that conservation designation would not accord with the legislation or guidance in that the area fails to demonstrate sufficient special interest." What he says is, "Horsforth Mill, which your company owns, is early 20th Century, has seen significant alterations and additions, such that it is of little intrinsic interest. It is also in an area that has seen considerable commercial development eroding its former historic character."

The final thing that I want to say before my five minutes is up is this. We respectfully request that, because of the various flaws, relevant officers and Members halt this process pending a review of the proposed conservation area boundary and a more robust and substantive analysis of the perceived special qualities contained therein. As it stands, the process fails to stand up to scrutiny, as does the rationale or evidence base which seeks to underpin it. We could have this conservation area but without our mill included. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Can I call on Councillor Gruen, please?

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

COUNCILLOR LOBLEY: I second, my Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Can we have a vote on that, please. (*A vote was taken*) That is CARRIED.

Can I thank you for attending and for what you have said. You will be kept informed of the consideration which your comments will receive. Good afternoon.

DEPUTATION 4 – LEEDS STUDENT UNIONS

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

MR P GOLD: Lord Mayor and fellow Councillors, my name is Paul Gold and I am a representative of Leeds University Union. This is Jack Shielt also from Leeds University Union, Jo Johnson and Ian Challenger from Leeds Metropolitan University Union.

Lord Mayor and fellow Councillors, we come here today as representatives of the students of the University of Leeds and Leeds Metropolitan University. Combined, we represent over 60,000 students in Leeds, but more than that we feel we speak on behalf of young adults throughout this city and their future within it, which we believe the Article 4 Direction threatens implicitly.

Earlier this year I attended a discussion held by the Leeds Initiative based on the 'What if Leeds' consultation. The wellbeing of our young people was a paramount concern. At the discussion, Tom Riordan asked a question: 'How do we make young people feel valued in Leeds?'

This Article 4 Direction is not the answer. This Direction aims to limit the number of Houses of Multiple Occupation across the city, housing that is essential for young people considering the high cost of owner-occupation and growing need for flexible housing among the young. The question does not appear to be whether we feel valued but whether we feel welcome.

We are not here to engage in a narrow defence of the student area, an issue on which many of you will be familiar. Instead, we are here to urge the Council not to embark on a scheme that, far from having the desired result, will only create fresh problems for Leeds. Article 4 will have no effect on existing HMO numbers in the areas targeted by the Direction. It will not help to reverse high concentrations of HMOs.

We urge the Council to reconsider creating such a large area for the Direction, one that will limit social mobility and exacerbate the perceived problems facing areas of high HMO concentration. It has been chosen to manage areas, in the words of the proposal itself, 'likely to suffer from a displacement of HMO demand from the areas currently experiencing significant problems'.

I hope that the social mobility of our youth is not something that this Council views as a burden that Leeds must suffer. With the average age of a first time buyer in Leeds currently at 37, this Direction can only be detrimental to anyone under this age who wishes to move out of areas of high HMO concentration. By limiting the areas where new affordable shared housing can be found, Article 4 will only enforce the status quo.

It is not only students who will suffer but those who least can afford it: recent graduates, individuals on a low income or benefits, immigrants to this city. The consequences: students and graduates will be forced to stay in the Area of Housing Mix where affordable housing is abundant; young people in general will be forced into these areas or away from the City entirely so that commuting becomes the only option; migrants will have no choice about where they live at all. The city will stagnate.

Moreover, with almost 5000 free bed spaces in the Area of Housing Mix, how can the Council justify the Direction as a necessary tool to restrict further growth of HMOs, at a time when Universities, faced with an uncertain future, predict reduced numbers in the years to come?

Leeds cannot afford to let problems facing a small area of the city dictate policy across its entirety. Leeds deserves better than a one size fits all approach to housing that does nothing to tackle the real social problems facing its residents. Implied is the suggestion that there is something intrinsically wrong with living in HMOs, when in the fact the Council should be looking at where it is failing the occupiers themselves.

In short, the Council are proposing a sledgehammer to crack a nut, a blanket restriction on HMOs, when what is needed is greater management of the existing stock which points to a policy meant to appease a small but vocal minority, while the interests of the majority are ignored.

Given the lack of clarity around the assessment of planning applications, we fear the Direction will be used as a control tool to limit the number of HMOs in a given area and, therefore, to restrict the ability of certain groups of people to live where they choose. This is discrimination via the backdoor, based on socio-economic factors that will disproportionately affect the young.

Students bring many benefits to this city. For those that choose to study here, as well as those who choose to settle here post-graduation, this is a thinly veiled attack on their presence.

We ask the Council to answer the following questions: who benefits from the Direction? Who benefits from depriving people of affordable housing at a time when they most need it? Who benefits from the demonisation of HMO occupiers? Who benefits from the Council enforcing a narrow-minded view of what constitutes a balanced community drawn along age and socio-economic lines?

We ask the Council to consider the impact of the Direction and its geographical scope on Leeds's Housing policy. We urge Council and the Executive Board to reject this proposal and the misconceived area it covers. Thank you.
(Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Can I call on Councillor Gruen, please?

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Lord Mayor, thank you. Can I move that the matter under debate be referred to the Executive Board.

COUNCILLOR LOBLEY: Can I second, my Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Can I call for the vote on that, please. (A vote was taken) That is clearly CARRIED.

Can I thank you for attending and for what you have said. You will be kept informed of the consideration which your comments will receive. Good afternoon.

DEPUTATION 5 – WEST RIDING TRACK LEAGUE

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

MS M PARKER: My Lord Mayor and Members of the Council, we are the West Riding Track League. I have with me Alan Edmondson, Committee Member and a members of Leeds Kirkgate Cycling Club, Joe Parker, one of our youth competitors, I have Richard Simpson, who is our starter, and Francesca Simpson, who is one of our young volunteers.

West Riding Track League was founded in 1945 and since then has organised grass track cycling on the banked oval circuit surrounding the cricket pitch at Roundhay Park. The banked track was built in 1894 for the express purpose of cycle racing – it was not built for cricket - which has continued every summer from Victorian times to the present day, with only the two World Wars stopping competition.

We provide races for all ages and abilities for everyone to take part in from children to adults to pensioners, and even your Councillors. We offer the same mixture of track races from sprints to handicap races and endurance events that you would find at any track meet.

The younger children ride normal bikes but children over twelve and adults have to ride specialised track bikes with a fixed gear, which means as long as the wheels are turning, so are the pedals. This follows the standard rules for track racing and means that special bikes are required.

This is the reason why we have asked to speak before you. Our aim is to raise the numbers taking part, and to provide any Leeds child, including those from deprived backgrounds, the opportunity to pursue their Olympic dream. To do so we

need to provide track bikes for the children to use without the cost of purchasing the series of track bikes they will need as they grow and develop. To achieve this we need to raise funds but finances are very tight and as a non-profit making community sports club, any little profit we make goes straight back into the club. We are currently building six bikes to lend to children who cannot afford to buy them.

By providing bikes to borrow, the Manchester Velodrome and tracks such as Scunthorpe are able to attract large numbers of children into their leagues, including those from seriously deprived areas. As a racing league our costs are considerable with insurance and levies to British Cycling which we cannot alter. The cost of the hire of the circuit and cricket pavilion we use for the summer league is £300 for only 30 hours a year.

We would like to ask the Council to consider allowing the West Riding Track League to use the Roundhay park facilities at no cost each year, as well as allowing us to use the pavilion for a small amount of storage during the summer season. The pavilion is little used during the year as there is not a resident cricket club. This would release a £300 per annum to put towards the cost of additional bikes for the use of Leeds children.

We would also like to ask the Council to ensure the League's right to race on the historic track which was built for this purpose, together with the maintenance required to keep the track up to racing standard and continue to allow its use for training purposes.

We cannot match the league's heyday in the 1950s when huge crowds attended as per the photographs, but we have enjoyed an increase of 170% of children taking part and 60% of adults over the last two years, following the Olympic successes in cycling. We have received excellent support from Roundhay Parks Estate Manager, Shaun Gregory, and his Head Gardener, John Roebuck, who have continued to maintain and improve the surface of the track. This has led to the league being awarded the National Men's 400 metre Championship and National Schools championship this summer.

The majority of Great Britain's Olympic and World class cyclists started on either a grass track racing circuit like Roundhay or a Velodrome, including Victoria Pendleton. Indeed, the West Riding Track League's cyclists read like a Who's Who of world class and Olympic competitors from Brian Robinson in the 1950s, Mark Barry and Jonny Clay in the 1980s and 1990's, one of the current top Juniors, Joshua Edmondson, 2011 Great Britain squad riders Lizzie Armistead and Anna Blyth and young Olympic Development Programme rider Matt Rotherham.

Many of these riders did not come from cycling backgrounds or a wealthy one but just happened to live near a grass track. It is no coincidence that the most of the world class cyclists live in the vicinity of a track, and this includes Roundhay.

With no other track circuit in Leeds or for Yorkshire, Roundhay is vital to the development of Leeds cyclists in the pursuit of their cycling dreams and to continue to show the importance of Leeds athletes in world class track competitions. This is why we are asking for your support. Thank you very much for hearing us today.
(Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. I now call on Councillor Gruen, please?

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Lord Mayor, thank you. I move that the matter under consideration be referred to the Executive Board.

COUNCILLOR LOBLEY: I second, my Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Can we all vote on that, please. *(A vote was taken)*
That is CARRIED.

Can I thank you for attending and for what you have said. You will be kept informed of the consideration which your comments will receive and can I wish you good afternoon. Thank you.

MS M PARKER: Thank you very much and good afternoon, Members of Council, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

ITEM 5 - REPORT

(a)

THE LORD MAYOR: Can we move on to Item 5, please. Councillor Wakefield.

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

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: I second, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Can I call for the vote on item 5, please, members? *(A vote was taken)* That is CARRIED.

(b)

THE LORD MAYOR: Can we go on to 5(b), Councillor Wakefield again.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Thank you, Lord Mayor. In moving Item 5(b) in terms of the Notice I would like to say how pleased we are that Freda Matthews has been put forward for this nomination. There she is, up in the gallery. I have worked with her very closely over many years but I am handing the comments and justification to Councillor Gerry Harper who works with her even closer than I have. Congratulations from all of us here. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR G HARPER: Lord Mayor, it is with great pleasure that I speak to support the nomination of Freda Matthews for the Leeds Award. Freda was born in Keighley before eventually moving to Leeds, where she worked as a primary school teacher working with children with special needs. She has lived in Hanover Square, Little Woodhouse, for 52 years with her husband and three children, since moving to our city.

She worked for Leeds City Council Education Department for 40 years before she retired in 1992. Ever since then she has dedicated her life to the local community public service. During this time she worked in numerous organisations in Leeds.

I have known Freda for around 20 years and she is what you would call a true pillar of society. I first met her through my late friend and colleague Councillor Brian Dale who, together with Freda, set up Little Woodhouse Community Association, which is still going strong today. Lord Mayor, you know and I know that Brian would have been delighted that Freda has been nominated for this award.

I would like to name a few of the organisations that Freda has worked with and supported over her many years of public service. She has been a Board Member of the Kashmiri Welfare Association at Woodsley Road Multicultural Centre in Hyde Park; she has been the Chairman of Swarthmore Education Centre; Chair of the Burley Network; a founder member of the Little Woodhouse Community Safety Project; a director of the Yorkshire Archaeological Society; and a member of the Leeds Historical Society.

Lord Mayor, her latest and, in my opinion, greatest project was the setting up with the other residents in Little Woodhouse of the Rosebank Millennium Trust. This is a five-and-a-half acre site in Little Woodhouse which had become neglected over the years and is now a beautiful green lung in the densely populated area of Little Woodhouse.

Recently Freda came up with the idea of commemorating those who died during the bombing in Leeds on 15th March 1941 when 90 people were killed following air raids over Leeds and a stone has been laid on the Rosebank to commemorate this event. It is estimated that if the bombs had been dropped seconds later, they would have been a direct hit on Leeds Town Hall and not the houses in Little Woodhouse.

Lord Mayor and Council, I am sure that you will agree with me that Freda's determination, energy and wise counsel and concerns for others mark her out as a very special individual and, above everything else, she is one of the most special people I have ever met. She really deserves this recognition for everything she has done for her neighbours, her community and for Leeds and I am proud to have her as a friend. Well done, Freda. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Can I ask Councillor Gruen to second, please?

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: I have great pleasure in seconding the nomination.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Leadley, please.

COUNCILLOR LEADLEY: My Lord Mayor, I am happy to be able to join colleagues in welcoming Freda Matthews to the ranks of the Leeds Award. Although I do not know her personally, I do know something of her work. Morley Town Council Planning Committee likes to keep an eye on what is happening elsewhere, so only yesterday evening we looked at the final draft of the Little Woodhouse Neighbourhood Design Statement – I have a copy of it here. This has been one of Freda's projects. It will be useful to those of us who sit on Leeds Plans Panel West and as a stimulant when some of today's less inspiring speakers come on. (*laughter*)

One facet of her earlier life not touched upon in the formal testament is that Freda was a schoolteacher and spent her last few years in the profession with Leeds Travellers' Education Service going to Cottingley Springs with a mobile nursery classroom. When gypsies began to give up horse drawn caravans in the 1960s, they tried to get their children into Leeds schools, from which they were at first barred. Later, the Nursery Bus became a means of introducing traveller children to conventional education from an early age. After retiring, Freda published an article about gypsies in the Aspects of Leeds Local History series in 1998.

My Lord Mayor, I support the recommendation to grant the Leeds Award to Freda Matthews. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, Tom. Councillor Ewens, please.

COUNCILLOR EWENS: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I would like to support this as well. I have not known Freda as long as Gerry has – I have only known her for seven years but I have got to know her pretty well during that time. The things that I would like to comment on particularly are her true devotion to her neighbourhood. It is amazing how much she knows about it and how much she has worked – Neighbourhood Plan, the lot, things that people have already mentioned. Looking at conservation all over the place, trying to keep the city with a better sort of overall feel which is, I think, what conservation tries to do.

The Picnic in the Park last year, which was new, which she did in collaboration with Swarthmore, was brilliant and she will give you the date if anybody would like to come. You bring your own stuff and join in the fun and games and the entertainment and it is a very good way of spending an afternoon.

The thing I would like to say particularly is her devotion to Swarthmore. It is a very short distance from her house, I know, but she was Chair, she is still on the Board and Swarthmore deserves all the support it could get not just from Freda but from all of us because of its provision of lifelong learning, which is the thing which we are in danger of losing. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, Councillor Ewens. Can I now ask Councillor Wakefield to sum up, please?

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: I do formally, Lord Mayor. I think all the compliments have been well made and fully deserved.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Can I now call for the vote please? *(A vote was taken)* That is clearly CARRIED.

ITEM 6 - QUESTIONS

THE LORD MAYOR: Can we move now to Item 6, please, Questions. The first question, Councillor Andrew Carter.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Thank you, my Lord Mayor. I wonder if the Leader of Council could explain to Council why he signed the Fairer Fares campaign letter, which was sent to the Secretary of State for Transport, which referred to the free city bus service in Leeds. His administration is the only one in West Yorkshire to have voted to cancel funding for this free bus service, despite the alternative robust proposals put forward by my Group.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Wakefield.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I signed this because I think if anybody has read the letter and the petition, you would agree with the main thrust of it. If Council would allow me just to read a couple of the key paragraphs to see why I signed it and the Labour Group supported the signing. It says:

“We believe that the city is long overdue an improved transport system currently being enjoyed by some of our neighbours, e.g. York with its Park and Ride service. In addition, Manchester is fortunate to have a bus system backed up by a tram service providing fast and regular access to its centre and sporting facilities out of town.”

The key part for me is the fourth paragraph which says:

“Over the last two years our Metropolitan Borough has seen a 40% increase in real terms in bus fares which has resulted in some people sharing taxis rather than using sustainable public transport methods.”

I think all of us in this Chamber would agree with the main thrust of that argument and, in fact, we have to campaign extremely hard on it. We are one of the cities that is beginning to lose patronage in public transport, largely because - you have seen some of the fares. In places like Headingley you can pay over £2 to go five stops and I know that in ours it is nearly £3 to jump on a bus to travel to Leeds.

I very much support the main thrust of this and in its passing reference to the free bus in the city centre, then I would say simply that I believe we have now got a compromise that we can all support with at 50p charge. It is a good service, it is valuable but the main thrust of this letter is about cheaper, fairer, affordable fares across the city.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, Councillor Wakefield. Councillor Carter – no supplementary. Can we go to question 2 then, Councillor Pryke, please.

COUNCILLOR PRYKE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Can the Executive Member for Environmental Services please give Council details of the remit, cost, progress and level of consultation of his review into the waste PFI project, which he said was taking place in the full Council meeting of 19th July 2010?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Murray, please.

COUNCILLOR MURRAY: Thank you, Lord Mayor. As you know, when we came into power we and the Greens, as we said in July, would like to have had a review to be able to catch up with where we were in that particular process over the incinerator. We did not involve other people in that review, Ralph, because we thought after six years you would be all up to date with what was going on.

The remit of the review was to understand how the procurement exercise is consistent with the Integrated Waste Strategy for Leeds. We want to be reassured that we do not compromise our ambitions in terms of waste minimisation and recycling for future generations and to understand the implications of halting or stopping the scope of the procurement.

The cost of the review was minimal, as it was limited to officers from the service and some procurement officers. The procurement is ongoing and, in terms of level of consultation, I think it was absolutely right, I think it was very responsible, we took our time to explore all of the options available to us in order to ensure that we can come back with the right decision for the people in Leeds.

We are in the meantime continuing to talk to all of those concerned and that will include local people and local communities. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: More than your lot did.

THE LORD MAYOR: Is there a supplementary?

COUNCILLOR PRYKE: There is, Lord Mayor. At last some information about your project, which you have avoided answering for four successive Council meetings. Why haven't residents in the areas near your proposed site been invited

to give evidence to your review? What have you got to hide, and is it a sham?
(*interruption*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Murray, please.

COUNCILLOR MURRAY: The answer to that, of course, Lord Mayor, is - and it is quite loud across from this side - we have definitely got nothing to hide, have we? There is nothing. It is quite clear, I think, considering the publicity that it has had, the questions of Council, the answers that it has had, that you have explored and I would say the people in Richmond Hill and Burmantofts are not ill-informed, they know what is going on, they are not stupid and they know what has happened and they know why they are where they are. In fact, they need to be reminded and we will remind them, will we not, what they need to know. It was under your administration, Ralph - it was your administration that started this procurement process in July 2008. You appointed the two bidders, you appointed the technology, you short-listed them and you also located the locations - you nominated the two locations.

What you did, it was your party's location, it was your party's technology, you decided to proceed with the long procurement process which left only one technology emerging in the process and at the end of the day all we know is you want to jump ship, you want to move but at the end of the day if you jump ship there are no lifeboats out there any more. I am afraid they have all gone. You are going to sink. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Can I call on Councillor Hanley, please.

COUNCILLOR HANLEY: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Lord Mayor, could the leader of Council confirm how much this Council spent on external venue hire in 2009/10 and also 2010/11?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Wakefield please.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Yes, I can confirm that in 2009/10 year the expenditure on venues was £556,000. In 2010/11 year, the expenditure was £253,000.

THE LORD MAYOR: Is there a supplementary, Councillor Hanley?

COUNCILLOR HANLEY: Yes, thank you, Lord Mayor. By way of supplementary, on that information would the Leader of Council perhaps join me in condemning the remarks made by the Conservative Group, our Conservative colleagues, in the Yorkshire Evening Post which attempted to attribute excessive Tory/Lib Dem spending to the new administration when we can clearly see what the reality of the situation is?

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Can I say what a sharp question that was and I really welcome that. You must be a candidate or something because you raise your shot.

I did see the comment in the Evening Post and, of course, I particularly focused on Councillor John Procter because he is becoming now the Arsene Wenger of politics - he never sees offside, he never sees fouls, he never sees dirty tackles because largely he is doing it. (*laughter*)

This is a guy who said he never closed South Leeds Sports Stadium; it was in the budget.

COUNCILLOR PROCTER: You closed it.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: This is a guy who said that he was not going to close libraries; it was in the budget of his administration.

COUNCILLOR PROCTER: No it was not.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: I am extremely worried because some people say it is down to memory and if that is the case, then I think we need to help him. Some people – I think Pauleen Grahame again – says it is down to his great acting abilities. What I do know, the reality is in 2009/10 they spent over half a million, £100,000 on one place, and we as an administration have reduced that by half and we shall continue to monitor that because we have excellent places in this city that are in Council ownership or, indeed, in the voluntary sector.

Thank you for that question and I promise you that we will be keeping a very close eye on the cost of those venues in the future. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Grayshon, please.

COUNCILLOR GRAYSHON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Before I ask my question this afternoon could I send my sympathies to the family of Edward Slaney who was killed in the incident referred to, and my very best wishes to the young lady who was very seriously injured.

I know some members of Council are aware that this accident happened outside the office in which I work, so I actually saw the aftermath of it just after the lorry had turned over. I would also like to thank Leanne Cummings in the Peace and Emergency Planning Unit, who was very supportive that afternoon when I rang the department to tell them what had occurred outside where I work.

My question is, following the tragic accident at the junction of Water Lane and Victoria Road Leeds in which a lorry was blown over, killing one pedestrian and seriously injuring another, can the Executive Board Member give an update regarding the unacceptably high winds in that area and tell us what progress is being made to deal with them.

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

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Thank you, Terry for raising this question here this afternoon. You did email me immediately after the tragic accident happened and raised your concerns.

I am sure everybody in the Council Chamber will echo your sentiments with regard to both victims and relatives and friends over this tragic accident. I am sure everybody recognises the importance of us doing something to prevent further accidents taking place in that area.

There are some urgent temporary arrangements which have been made which are effectively traffic arrangements. Temporary signs have been prepared to advise drivers of high-sided vehicles to divert away from Neville Street during periods when unacceptably high winds are being experienced. Wind sock signs to give drivers a warning of high winds will be installed at key locations. Additional guard rails are being installed along Victoria Road. Longer term measures include a thorough investigation to determine what installations need to be made permanent in terms of signage and guard rails and what have you will take place in the meantime.

With relation to the building, we are working with the developer to install a canopy at second storey level combined with vertical porous baffles at ground level to mitigate the wind problem in the area of the building and I trust that that work will be dealt with in all due haste.

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

COUNCILLOR GRAYSHON: Only to say that I am grateful for the answer and I hope that the work is commenced as quickly as possible.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Can we go to Councillor Dobson, please?

COUNCILLOR DOBSON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Would the Executive Member for Development and Regeneration comment on the planning reforms announced in the recent budget?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Lewis again.

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Yes, it is rather a strange agenda that the Government has come up with in terms of planning reforms, so called, because we have an agenda that is both going for growth and at the same time is all about, supposedly, enhancing localism. We have arbitrary rules set by the Secretary of State being imposed on Local Authorities and not decided locally, and clearly the proposals reduce the power of democratically elected local members to influence planning decisions.

One quote from a non-political source is the President of the Royal Town Planning Institute who has described the proposals as, and I quote, "...a policy that finally buries genuine localism."

The plans clearly are not well thought through and there has been little or no consultation with Local Authorities about how things will work or be implemented.

To give another quote, senior Tory MP Nick Boles has said:

"It is the aim of the Government to promote chaos in the planning system and I think we are all concerned that the new presumption in favour of development could lead to lower policy projects going ahead."

The Government has proposed significant changes to the planning system to remove the barriers to growth and increase local democratic control and it is not clear to me or to many people how compatible these two aims are, given that many communities want to block further development in their areas. Specific proposals include a new presumption in favour of development enshrined in a national pro-growth planning policy, removal of the need for planning permission to convert a property from commercial to residential use and a requirement for Councils to ensure unnecessary burdens to developments are removed by reviewing Section 106 agreements. There is little detail as yet as to how this will work but there are a number of questions I certainly have.

What will happen when local communities decide to go against the national presumption for development? How sustainable or desirable is it to use commercial property as housing? What impact will this have on wider development? Who decides what neighbourhood boundaries are? What about areas where there are divisions within neighbourhoods? How is the detailed planning work requiring officer support going to be funded? Generally, what impact will reducing developer

contributions have on local infrastructure? None of these questions have been answered by the Government so far. I fear very much that we are seeing the Government looking, while cloaking itself in the garments of localism, this is nothing but a return to, as their MP said, chaos within the planning system.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, Councillor Lewis. Councillor Dobson, supplementary?

COUNCILLOR DOBSON: No supplementary.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Can we move to question 6, Matthew Robinson, please.

COUNCILLOR ROBINSON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Would the Executive Board Member for Leisure agree with me that all public consultations initiated by the Council should be both fair and transparent?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Ogilvie.

COUNCILLOR OGILVIE: I do agree that public consultation should be fair and transparent.

COUNCILLOR ROBINSON: Lord Mayor, there is a supplementary. Then would the Executive Board Member for Leisure please confirm that, in light of recent newspaper reports and the outcome of yesterday's City Development call-in, the Council will be fully committed to carrying out a meaningful consultation with all relevant stakeholders, including Ward Members, Parish Councillors and all faith groups, when it comes to developing a cemetery at Whinmoor Grange?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Ogilvie.

COUNCILLOR OGILVIE: As I said at Scrutiny yesterday, I am happy to confirm that that will occur.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Downes, please.

COUNCILLOR DOWNES: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Can the Executive Member for Development tell Council which of Leeds bus services run directly from the station – that can be either the train or the bus station, that was omitted in the question – to the LGI?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Lewis.

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: I was very surprised at this question, Rik, because I see you – if I did not ask James Lewis where a bus runs I would come to you next. He works for Metro and he is asking me where bus services run.

I hope you will trust that I have answered this in terms of the railway station and there are several bus services which are operating from the railway station towards the vicinity of the LGI. I know a commercial operator runs services which pass the hospital directly. Services include the 19 and 19A which run from New Station Street to Westgate and Park Lane, service 1 which operates from Bishopgate Street to Woodhouse Lane, and services 670, 33, 33A and 508 which run from King Street to The Headrow. In addition, the hospital's patient transport service provides a door to door service for eligible patients. The Leeds City Bus is operated on behalf of Metro and provides a service between Leeds rail station and the LGI.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Downes, please.

COUNCILLOR DOWNES: Thank you, Councillor Lewis. I would have expected you to have come to myself or the other Councillor Lewis because I was under the impression somebody had asked you what people should do if we withdrew the funding for the free city bus and the answer was "Catch another service bus" and I wondered whether you were aware that when you took the decision to cease funding the free city bus, whether you were aware that this was potentially disadvantaging people with mobility difficulties wishing to access the LGI via public transport. You mentioned the patient bus but there are no public buses that run to the LGI for people with mobility difficulties to actually get there and so, if you have a disability and you wish to visit friends or relatives at the hospital, all you are doing by cutting the funding by making that decision was to deny people access to the hospital who were coming into Leeds on public transport, leaving them only to come by taxi or private car, so I wonder whether you were aware of that when you took the decision.

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: I am not sure whether that was an answer or a question. I never said that people should get another bus to the LGI. If you can find that somewhere it would be a mis-quote and certainly if I did say it, it certainly was not what I would have intended to say.

Perhaps, Rik, you should remember the discussions that we had down on the Integrated Transport Committee about the free bus. I remember seeing an officer of Metro saying to us a few months back that there was absolutely no way that you could charge on the free city bus because it would affect boarding times, it would no longer be possible to make it run in that way, so effectively he said to us now "How can we work this thing out?" It was, "Well, you have to support this or nothing."

Instead of entering into a proper dialogue with Leeds City Council, having a proper negotiation with all the cards on the table which would have been sensible, we did not get that. I am glad that Metro has now gone out and come to an arrangement with First to run the service as a commercial service, but I have to say that from Metro's point of view you really handled this really poorly and you could have, I think, got a much better deal if you had been sensible, but you do need to think – and we have had the argument about the free bus last time – about what are we trying to do with public transport. Why should this one particular service be free when we see all the rest of our services where everybody is having to pay and where people are being gouged by the bus operators. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Ogilvie, please.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Time to resign, Rik.

COUNCILLOR OGILVIE: Could the Executive Board Member for Neighbourhoods and Housing update members on the latest position regarding the Little London, Beeston Hill and Holbeck PFI Scheme?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Gruen, please.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Thank you, Councillor Ogilvie. I note the interest of all local Ward Members in what is a very important PFI scheme for not just that community but for the whole of the city.

The factual position is that the Council submitted its draft pre-preferred bidder final business case for this project to the Government in October last year. Since then we have been awaiting approval of the proposed preferred bidder, so that is now almost six months ago. We are told it has been delayed, first because of the

Spending Review announcements made last autumn which resulted in some housing PFI schemes being abandoned at that stage and that, of course, included the very significant Leeds Round 6 PFI Independent Living Scheme.

Others were allowed to continue and are now subject to another, separate value for money review by CLG for the Housing Minister. In the meantime we have continued to move forward on planning permissions for the project – these have been secured – and over a month ago the Executive Board approved the closed financial business case for the project. We are now firmly waiting for the Government to come back to us and that remains the position.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Ogilvie.

COUNCILLOR OGILVIE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Can I thank Councillor Gruen for that answer and can I confirm that certainly the residents of my ward in Holbeck are desperate for the work to start. Could he confirm that he will do all he can to bring this to a speedy resolution.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Gruen.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: The answer is yes, we will do all we can. I am grateful to Councillor Carter, who is not in the Chamber at the moment, and to Councillor Golton for their political support with their own Ministers. The CLG has come back to the council and this project represents very good value for money, particularly as it has been developed during one of the most difficult economic climates for many generations. However, we have been told very clearly the expectation despite all of that is that the Government expects us to make additional savings. I anticipate more comment on that later in the Council meeting itself but yes, this administration will do all it can, as will the local Member of Parliament, Hilary Benn, who has also been lobbying on our behalf.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Dunn, please.

COUNCILLOR DUNN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Does the Executive Member for Development and Regeneration join me in welcoming the recent update on the development of the Eastgate Quarter?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Lewis.

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Clearly the recent submissions of planning applications by the developer is an important milestone in moving towards the conclusion of this scheme. The proposal will lead to a £650m development scheme in Leeds City Centre, significant work to a major part of our city and, importantly, up to 4,000 jobs being created.

As I speak negotiations and work is continuing with Hampsons to reach a conclusion on this particular development. It is at that kind of feverish point as things come towards an end of negotiations on a scheme like this, so things are very tense, phone calls are happening all the time. I am trusting that very quickly we will get information which gives the final good news on this particular scheme.

It is important to the city because we have the Trinity Scheme taking place, which is hugely important for us and that work is going ahead. We saw the cranes back in the city centre. Eastgate has been blighted for far too long. We have the section in our city where nothing has been happening for many years. It is a major thoroughfare, it is a major part of the city centre. This scheme will be absolutely massive in terms of Eastgate and in terms of bringing John Lewis into the city. John

Lewis is a kind of flagship retailer who will bring a huge amount to the offer that Leeds has to shoppers. It also has a huge impact on the future of the market, because it will be right next to the market. Not only will it bring benefits while the scheme is being built but it also will bring huge benefits to the market because suddenly you will not have the market next to a big hole in the ground; you will have shops there, you will have connectivity, you will have people going back and forth and that will be good for both sides.

It is an incredibly positive development that we are seeing. My fingers are crossed that everything will go according to plan and that within a matter of days we shall have some really good news for the Council. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, Councillor Lewis. Councillor Dunn.

COUNCILLOR DUNN: Lord Mayor, I thank Councillor Lewis for that excellent response. I have no supplementary. Thank you.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Wadsworth, please.

COUNCILLOR WADSWORTH: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Will the Executive Board Member for Neighbourhoods and Housing confirm that under the new locality working arrangements each Area Committee will receive the same amount of resources as in the financial year 2010/11?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Gruen.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Lord Mayor, Councillor Wadsworth will be pleased that I am not going to give him the Nick Clegg response that he gave yesterday to a question in the House of Commons which was, "I can't be bothered to answer your question." A great example for the man who is going to introduce greater democracy, supposedly, into our constitution.

The answer to your question is that the amount of money that the Council is putting into these services is broadly equivalent to last year. You will say "Ah, I smell a rat – broadly equivalent."

COUNCILLOR: We do.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: You must not because you have to trust me on this.
(laughter)

COUNCILLOR PROCTER: Even your own side are laughing!

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: My own side trust me in these matters.

COUNCILLOR PROCTER: That is not what they tell us.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: The Council lost over half a million pounds in grant last year from the reduction in funding by your Government. Previously this service has not been delegated, therefore the budget has never been allocated on an Area by Area Committee basis and it is not possible to set out how much has been, would have been, might have been spent by each Area Committee to date. However, in future we will set out a very strong, very transparent, very clear SLA with each local Area Committee which will give far greater accountability for the level of services provided in each of our areas, far more than under you and previous administrations.
(Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Wadsworth?

COUNCILLOR WADSWORTH: Yes, there is one. Would Councillor Gruen agree with me that each Area Committee should receive the same resource as last year, or the resource should be increased to cover extra services that are taking place? Just to remind Councillor Gruen, in actual fact this Government is having to make these cuts because his Government spent millions and millions of pounds on a credit card it could not afford. I think he seems to have forgotten that – he does have a short memory so I need to remind him of that.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Gruen.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Lord Mayor, I do not think I was asked a question.

COUNCILLOR PROCTER: Is that it?

COUNCILLOR SMITH: A Cleggian response.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Pryke.

COUNCILLOR PRYKE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. This is question for Councillor Ogilvie. I am not quite sure how it managed to end up as the Executive Member for Environmental Services, so Councillor Murray does not have to bring out his Titanic and iceberg analogies again.

Could the Executive Member for Leisure explain why his Party's promise to keep East Leeds Leisure Centre open has been broken?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Ogilvie.

COUNCILLOR OGILVIE: East Leeds Leisure Centre closed at the end of the month as agreed by full Council as part of the Council's budget where, of course, we had to find savings to the tune of £90m. We are ensuring however – and Councillor Lyons has been instrumental in this – that youth provision continues from the building.

THE LORD MAYOR: Supplementary?

COUNCILLOR PRYKE: Thank you for that. Those members who were present at the Scrutiny meeting yesterday will have noted your positive response to Councillor Atkinson with her concerns about Bramley Baths and Bramley Library as well and we will all have noticed today your positive response towards the delegation from the Friends of Bramley Baths with their concerns about the health and everything else. (*interruption*) Why do your concerns for them not apply to the people of East Leeds? What have you got in for East Leeds? (*interruption*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Gruen.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: thank you, Lord Mayor. With the greatest respect, Councillor Pryke, you seem to be in denial about the actions of your Government which has just forced through the largest cuts on level of Government funding in living memory. I would suggest instead of asking me questions you need to ask your new friend Eric Pickles what he is going to do about it. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR PROCTER: Rubbish.

THE LORD MAYOR: Members, that concludes the 30 minutes of Questions. The questions we have not got to will be answered by written letter. Thank you.

ITEM 7(a) – RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE GENERAL PURPOSES
COMMITTEE

THE LORD MAYOR: Can we move on to 7(a), please. Councillor Wakefield.

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

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: I second, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Can I call for the vote, members? *(A vote was taken)*
That is CARRIED.

ITEM 7(b) – RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE GENERAL PURPOSES
COMMITTEE

THE LORD MAYOR: Can we go to 7(b), Councillor Wakefield, please.

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

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: I second, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Can I call for the vote, please? *(A vote was taken)*
That is CARRIED, thank you.

ITEM 8 - MINUTES

THE LORD MAYOR: Can we go on to Minutes, Item 8. Councillor Wakefield, please.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Very good exercise this for my knee, Lord Mayor. Can I move in terms of the Notice.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Lord Mayor, I second and reserve my right to speak.

THE LORD MAYOR: Can I invite comments, please? Councillor Jack Dunn.

- (a) Executive Board
- (i) Environmental Services

COUNCILLOR DUNN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I wish to speak on Minute 183 on page 56, the finding of the 2010 Domestic Energy Report.

Lord Mayor, as a bit of background to this report for those Members who might not be aware, we were set back in 1996 as part of the Home Energy Conservation Act, the challenge of increasing the energy efficiency of the city's housing stock by 30% in 2011. I am delighted to say that we have as a city exceeded this target with an overall city-wide improvement of 3.43% in 2010, which resulted in a cumulative total of 30.51%.

It would be impossible in short comment to highlight every statistic but I can also report on improvement in both private sector and public sector SAP energy ratings and carbon dioxide reductions in the whole housing stock for the year of 49.58 tonnes. Of course, we can always achieve more and I am very hopeful that the work we will be doing as a Local Authority in the future will continue to contribute to greater improvements.

However, it would be amiss of me not to mention statistics in the report that should concern Members in all wards. That is around the fuel poverty. In 2010 fuel poverty in private sector properties was calculated to have increased from 22% to 27%. While it is stated that this is partly because of rising November and December 2010 fuel prices, this is undoubtedly a worry and underlines, if we need it, how important it is that this Council and National Government are putting in time and resources to meet this continued challenge of poverty head on.

It is therefore pleasing that this Council has decided to show leadership on this issue and pursue a free solar PV initiative and insulation scheme. This, along with other initiatives that we are currently providing, will undoubtedly help in achieving the goal of reducing fuel poverty across our city and I look forward to both schemes being rolled out in the near future. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Illingworth, please.

COUNCILLOR ILLINGWORTH: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I rise to speak on Minute 198, page 52, which is to use the anticipated income from photovoltaic cells to fund the home insulation scheme.

Lord Mayor, I am sure that every member of Council will welcome this initiative and wish it every success. It comes not a moment too soon but, in welcoming these proposals, we should reflect on the urgency of our situation and realise how much further we have to go.

If delivered in full this scheme will insulate 64,500 homes, save residents about £11m in their fuel bills and reduce annual CO₂ emissions by 68,000 tonnes. It will take 4,800 households out of fuel poverty, although this will only reduce fuel poverty in our city by about two per cent.

There are numerous obstacles to greater progress - many roofs face the wrong direction and are unsuitable for photovoltaic cells. Even if every available house was converted, the total energy yield is still quite small. Our biggest problem is that roughly half the houses within the city are classified as hard to treat. Many are fundamentally unsuitable for low cost insulation schemes. They were built before the widespread introduction of cavity walls and many have dormers fitted to the roof space, leading to massive heat losses through the walls and roof.

It is easy to talk of clearance redevelopment but we must remember these hard to treat properties are peoples' homes, their life savings are tied up in them, their pension funds, their hopes, their dreams. There are significant climate costs from demolition and new build. This is not going to be an easy problem to solve and it will take many years to put an effective solution into operation.

There is a popular misconception, Lord Mayor, that our response to climate change is limited to plastic bags and pizza flyers. We can blame the media for this but it commonly takes some time for new ideas to sink in. Our problem as responsible politicians is that many of our electors have little concept of the scale of adjustment that is required. We can try to lead but we can only proceed where the public are prepared to follow.

Lord Mayor, it is a sad truth that in a little over one hundred years round about ten per cent of the world's population have managed to burn about half the oil that must last the human race for the last of eternity. It does not take a genius to see that, in a time of rising demand, this oil supply will soon be exhausted. Coal supplies will last somewhat longer but with twice the effect of oil burning on climate change. Whether or not there are political restrictions on future consumption, exhaustion of accessible supplies will inevitably result in massive increases in our energy costs. Fuel poverty will be a problem for many years to come.

There is also misconception that one cold winter means that climate change has gone away. It has not. Global average temperatures continue their upward trend. Glaciers and ice caps continue to retreat. Water shortages are still restricting agricultural output and, in the longer term, our most densely populated cities and our best agricultural land are threatened by rising sea levels. Forced migration is a major threat to world peace.

In any event, we face a massive readjustment as we attempt to reduce our consumption of fossil fuels by 80% to 90% over the next 40 years. In simple terms, this corresponds to using our cars not once per day but once per fortnight.

What else can be done? Certainly we must develop new technologies – ground source heat pumps, for example, combined heat and power. I hope it may soon be possible to introduce such measures in central Leeds in partnership with local businesses, the National Health Service and the universities.

There are also great opportunities to improve insulation and to introduce heat pumps and combined heat and power for individual high rise blocks.

All these schemes, Lord Mayor, although desirable, are simply picking the low-hanging fruit. I come back to those thousands upon thousands of hard to treat properties where we desperately need some better solutions.

One thing is certain – I doubt very much that one size fits all. The solution, when it comes, is going to depend on a versatile, adaptable and highly skilled workforce. That is why it is so important to make a start on developing this new economy by embarking on these early pilot schemes that are described in the papers today. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, Councillor Illingworth. Can I just remind you before I call the next speaker, Councillor Groves, that this is a maiden speech, although it is not marked in your notes. Councillor Groves, please.

COUNCILLOR GROVES: Thank you. Lord Mayor, I would like to speak on page 52 Minute 58 and the solar PV initiative use of income to fund home insulation scheme report.

My Lord Mayor, in these challenging times it is absolutely vital that we are innovative in how we approach the task of creating green growth, jobs and skills. I believe that as one of the UK's largest Councils we have the responsibility to show the required leadership on this agenda, not just in our city, not just regionally, but nationally. That is why I am so pleased that as a Council we are pursuing both the solar PV initiative and the home insulation scheme which will be of great benefit to households in the long term right across the city.

So what can be achieved through both of these schemes? From a very general perspective both projects hit many of the priorities in the Leeds Strategic

Plan and Climate Change Strategy, from reducing carbon emissions, supporting the vulnerable to assisting in the reduction of mortality rates in the most deprived areas.

In regards specifically to the solar PV initiative, I am delighted that the decision has been taken to extend the initial number of systems to be installed on Council homes from 1,000 to 5,000 homes, which really sends out a message we are determined to press on and build on this project.

The free insulation alone, if delivered in full, would save residents £11m a year and reduce CO₂ emissions by 68,000. It would also take 4,800 households out of fuel poverty which, given the statistics pointed out by my colleague Councillor Dunn earlier, would certainly be much welcomed, tie in also the potential to create training jobs and I believe these projects which offer us some real positive change are opportunities for us for the future.

Both schemes are, of course, in the early stages with some details around delivery, finance and other issues still to be agreed. In principle I believe we should welcome both the schemes as an undoubted step in the right direction.

Of course, couple with what we are doing as a Local Authority must be matched by the work of the Government and I have seen some energy efficient proposals included in the Green Deal and around the Green Band but we will have to see the exact devil in the detail on both projects.

In the meantime as a Council we cannot afford to stand still and I applaud the direction which we are taking on the Green agenda. Thank you, Lord Mayor.
(Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, Councillor Groves. Councillor Brett, please.

COUNCILLOR BRETT: Thank you, Lord Mayor. In my last Council meeting (*interruption*) in your first speech, Lord Mayor, there is some sort of protocol that you are supposed to keep quiet. I am absolutely delighted that Labour Members feel free to respond in the way that I knew they would. What I was going to say before I was interrupted was congratulations to councillor Groves and, at the risk of upsetting my side, I actually agree with her and with Councillor Illingworth because I am speaking about the same Minute and I suspect that most of us in this Chamber would feel that this scheme is something that we can support.

About four or five years ago my wife and I bought some solar panels, not photovoltaic but the sun heating water. At the time, it was a bit risky in terms of would we get our money back because we were told it would be in the region of 30 years before it would save us what we were spending. Since then the cost of electricity has gone up, so it has turned out to be a very good deal. It is a Leeds company that made our solar panels and I suspect that if they were made on the scale that this scheme is dealing with photovoltaics, the cost would roughly halve. There is real advantage in getting into a scheme like this with new technology where the sheer scale of it means that it is going to be effective.

I mention my own solar panels just to say to people, solar works. It does what it says on the tin. We actually find that we use about a third less electricity because of that. The current wisdom about Libya seems to be it is all about oil. I think in the future it is going to be about the sun that is there because I think there will be, from many countries that are nearer to the equator, there will be electricity generated and fed to us in northern climates as the years go on.

I am particularly pleased to hear Councillor Illingworth talking about not burning, because I have changed my view on the incinerator simply because...
(*interruption*)

COUNCILLOR: Because you are not in power.

COUNCILLOR BRETT: I hope you will add a few seconds, Lord Mayor; that was predictable, as I am sure you will agree. Just before Christmas there was a national announcement that all the types of plastics that could not be recycled were going to be fed in a pilot plant in London to be crunched up and to make diesel, and the very point that Councillor Illingworth has made, we should not be burning plastics, has made me think about incinerators to the point that I now do not believe that it is something the Council should do. (*interruption*)

I am particularly pleased to hear that the scheme that we are talking about in this Minute might be widened to more than just Council houses. I am making no secret of the fact that in a few weeks' time my agenda will be doing seven years of DIY jobs in my house, we are intending to downsize and I hope that in a few months' time there might be the possibility of my wife and I getting a special deal to have photovoltaic cells on our new house through the Council. Thank you, Lord Mayor.
(*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, Councillor Brett. Can I call on Councillor Lamb, please.

COUNCILLOR LAMB: Thank you, Lord Mayor. It always cheers me when you get a groan before you have even started. You know you must be doing something right!

One of the things I think we can all be proud of on all sides is the levels of recycling that we have achieved over the last few years in the city and one of the things that Councillor Brett just touched on was incineration. Some residents in my ward have been having a problem with recycling of late and they have also been considering taking to incinerating their own waste as they are still struggling to have their bins collected on the right days at the right times.

Several months ago – and I have got a list of quotes from Councillor Murray here – he assured us that the problem was being resolved, that there was no chaos in the city around the bin collections and there were teething problems. Here we are five months on and we are still receiving problems, as your officers only on Wednesday this week wrote to one of my constituents:

“It is apparent that the level of service you have received over the past few months, especially in relation to missed bin collections, has not been acceptable.

That was on Wednesday, 6th April, some five months since the route rationalisation.

There are many people in my ward and in many other wards around the city who are still suffering terrible problems with their bin collections. The Chairman of Boston Spa Parish Council has to send a weekly email to the department to tell them

that, yet again, bins in Boston Spa have not been collected. Councillor Murray will recall that just before Christmas I went to see him in his office with Councillor Wilkinson to try and, in my usual helpful way, get some solutions to the problem and since the bin men were struggling to even find some of the streets on the route and it seems the department had lost some of the routes, I offered to go in the vans and help them to go and find them and spend a day and drive round. Of course, that was declined on health and safety grounds. The offer still stands because they still seem to be struggling to find some of the routes in our ward.

If you go back through, on 18th November Councillor Murray told us that fundamentally the routes are fine. They might need tinkering with but this package of changes can be delivered. There is no doubt about that. Can he tell us when he is planning to deliver it?

We moved on to January. Councillor Wakefield said, “On behalf of the administration we accept that the bin service has not been good enough for the people of Leeds. We have never denied it, we are not trying to run away from political accountability.” Would he accept it is still not good enough and when will he start to take some accountability?

To finish off, Lord Mayor, I think I will turn to Councillor Dobson’s comments, which I agree with entirely in commenting on this. “When people have come to me”, Councillor Dobson said, “what do you think about the service?” he said, “I think it is a shambles. I think the administration needs to sort it out.” I think Councillor Dobson was spot on. It is just a shame that five months on they still have not managed to do it. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Lobley, please.

COUNCILLOR LOBLEY: Thank you, my Lord Mayor. In discussing this Domestic Energy Report I think it is very important that, as we look at who has spoken around the room and the subjects that they have covered, we have got to split here the two different sides of things. There is the high-minded aspirations. Councillor Illingworth talks about what appears to be district heating systems. Presumably he would like to see some sort of Bulgarian style housing blocks in the future as well with the heat on, summer or winter. We certainly have that in the Civic Hall here, which does not ever seem to have been sorted out.

It is all well and good having all of these high-minded ideas and it is all well and good passing resolutions of Council or having all of these reports, but if you do not, I think they call it ‘walk the talk’, then you have got a bit of a problem.

I remember Councillor Clegg Gruen, on the front bench there - who refuses to answer questions that are not interesting, such as the one from my colleague, Councillor Wadsworth earlier on - whooping with delight when a motion was passed by the Council about a reduction in carbon emissions, but am I right, Peter, there will appear to be a 4x4 two-and-a-half litre petrol powered Jaguar parked outside that I keep seeing you getting in and out of, so I am not sure where your 40% reduction has come from in that. (*interruption*) All of those cars are 4x4.

What I am talking about here is the high-minded rhetoric about these wonderful great schemes and then getting back to the basics, the basics of what this

Council is meant to do. I want to follow on from Councillor Lamb's points here because I have to tell Councillor Murray I am heartily, heartily sick and tired of receiving complaints about the green bin collection. If we are going to take recycling seriously in this city, as well we should, then if the green bins are not being emptied we are not doing a very good job. Why should residents bother themselves to separate their rubbish if the Council, five months after a route change, still cannot pick up people's green bins? We have even had round here a dedicated manager given to us to try and help us out with this problem and we are still having the problems months on. It is not acceptable and so far, as far as I can see, there has really been no significant action taken whatsoever.

If we all want all of the people in Leeds to get involved in some of your highfaluting and high-minded environmental schemes, then we as a Council should be sorting out the basics, the basic environmental services that we provide.

In short – and I am just looking to see if I have missed anything from my notes here. “Have a go at Councillor Murray”, it says (*laughter*) – I cannot see anything else. I would just, please, urge Councillor Murray to sort this mess out once and for all. My residents are sick of it, I think the manager whose name I am now giving out to everybody saying, “Don't contact me any more, contact this guy, copy me in”, he is sick of it and I want you to take political responsibility for sorting out the mess that the rest of us are having to deal with here. It is unacceptable, it is unacceptable to the residents and can you please, please do something about it. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Kendall, please.

COUNCILLOR KENDALL: Thank you, my Lord Mayor. I would like to reinforce the message of my two colleagues about bins. For years we have been told green is good – it is good for us, it is good for the environment, it is good for the planet.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Blue is bad, green is good.

COUNCILLOR KENDALL: If you are bin in Roundhay, green is not good. You get filled to breaking point, you will be surrounded by bursting plastic bags, you will be an object of frustration to the resident who has you, you will be an object of annoyance to people trying to navigate the pavement and you will be neglected by those who are supposed to provide you with a service.

Yes, we have had an improvement since the almost unfortunate officer has become the target of all the Roundhay bin problems. I reinforce it with a summary every weekend, having directed individual residents to contact him. Sometimes you have to repeat a message. How often do we have to repeat this message?

I know things have improved so for some green bins life is good again, but look at all *these*. I have got these in the last few days. Some of them are about black bins. You do not need a degree in binmanship, you just need proactive management, not just identifying the problems but ensuring they are dealt with on the ground. Is there a glass wall between management and operatives? Needless to say, in industry heads would have rolled long ago. Sadly, public service in this instance seems to equate with, “Take it or leave it, it is no skin off my nose.”

One old lady in Back Wetherby Road has been waiting since the start of the new system in October for her green bin to be emptied – nineteen weeks. You could have started and fought and had World War Three over and done with by now in that time. Please, let us not have World War Three, let us have our bins emptied.
(Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Schofield, please.

COUNCILLOR SCHOFIELD: Thank you, Lord Mayor. There has been an occurrence of problems with the different coloured bins again after a period of improvement, but we still have problems of the timing. I think householders would be more confident in the service if the collection was at the same time of day. Some people have been intimidated by one or two letters, perhaps from over zealous officials, who have threatened people when the bin has been left out more than the day because of a failure in pick up, particularly elderly people who get more concerned about these things, perhaps, than some of the more robust youth would.

I wonder if the Executive Member could tell us if the timing of the collection - even if the day is the correct day – is going to be standardised and people can rely on the same pick up time roughly each day? Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

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

COUNCILLOR WILKINSON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Councillor Murray has on numerous occasions said that any collection missed would, if reported, be picked up within 24 to 36 hours. A week last Friday most of the west of Boston Spa, including my own, was missed. I reported this and was advised that a back up service would be made on the Saturday or Monday; it was not. I reported this and was advised that they would do their level best to collect the following day; they did not. The collection took place 168 hours later. If Councillor Murray is trying to work this out, it is seven days. In other words, we missed a whole week. Many residents are asking, are the Council trying to change to a fortnightly bin collection by the back door?

I have an email here which advises a resident in Clifford that he missed his green bin collection and would have a back up collection within 48 to 72 hours – that is a bit different to the 24 to 36. It was not picked up. Twelve days later it is still uncollected. The resident contacted the Wetherby News and they ran it in last week's paper. He stated that he was fed up with the lack of service and was not prepared to take it up to Thorp Arch recycling centre and would put his recyclable materials in the black bin. This would certainly not please the Green Party members of the Labour/Morley Independent/ Green Party Coalition. May residents are putting out their bins on the due collection date and leaving them out until collected.

Please will Councillor Murray have Boston Spa and Clifford looked at and ensure that they are not singled out for a second class collection service. Thank you.
(Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor David Blackburn, please.

COUNCILLOR D BLACKBURN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I refer to page 52 on the extra papers, Minute 198, the solar PV initiative.

I have got to say, this is great news. It is only the beginning but what it does is, it gives us the opportunity of delivering cheap electricity to people who are very, very hard up at the present time with the current economic situation and also from that, out of the profits of it, it allows us to do things like, on our street properties out of part of the profit it also allows us to part finance some of the initiative to do with the insulation scheme.

I think this is fantastic and I have got to say a lot of the work behind this comes from the little committee that I Chair that Councillor Anderson, Councillor Monaghan and Councillor Illingworth are on and, let us put it this way, there is much more to come, I think. It just shows you, when we get together and work cross-party wise how well we can do. I would just say to the Leader of Council, can we continue that committee.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Pryke, please.

COUNCILLOR PRYKE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am speaking on the same Minute as colleagues and, of course, I agree with them on the points they have made. I had some similar statistics to those that John brought up earlier on and so I will not read that part of the speech.

I very much welcome the PV scheme because it is a step towards using far more renewables in Leeds and it is a very good example for other areas. I very much welcome the support the Government has given to the renewable sector. I am not so keen on the support they are giving to the nuclear sector, needless to say.

I have a few concerns about the way they are handling the feed in tariff proposals at the moment. I understand why they are wanting to stop hedge funds in the City of London from farming any Government subsidies but I do not want to see any disincentive to medium sized schemes, such as putting cells on top of civic buildings. I hope that my colleagues will be able to have some influence with the Ministers on that. Equally, I do not want the money going abroad to benefit hedge funds.

Solar PV is a major step forward in using renewables and renewables are a reminder of what has gone wrong with our energy systems so far in the world. We are approaching the 25th anniversary of Chernobyl, the worst nuclear accident in the world that we know of which was, of course, hushed up for several days after it happened. This city has a long and very honourable tradition of supporting the Chernobyl Children's Fund and the visits of the children from Belarus and Ukraine to the UK. In recent years the President of Belarus has put blocks in the way of bringing those children to our country because we have been critical of his human rights record. I hope we never stop being critical of his human rights record and I hope he will allow the children of his country to visit our country.

I have mentioned before in relation to Chernobyl that, although it seems a very long way away, the Chernobyl accident actually directly affected the people of Leeds. The radioactive rain that followed the accident fell on the western side of this city. It fell on Pudsey, Horsforth, Guiseley and Rawdon and Otley. Because this country has incredibly good medical records, epidemiologists have now traced that we have had more than 1,400 excess infant deaths as a result of the radioactivity that fell on this

country and, regrettably, Bradford health district, which got the same amount of radioactive rain as the western part of our city, has the highest record amongst those, so it is very likely that within the Leeds district people here have suffered in similar ways.

We have heard more recently about the accident in Fukushima Daiichi but we do not know the full effects of it yet. We do know that the main radioactivity released from that accident is going to hit this country some time in the next week and we wait to see what effect it has. Its effects on Japan are desperate. Taken with the effects of the tsunami which caused it in the first place brings us to the reason for not putting nuclear reactors on tectonic plate joints liable to suffer tsunamis. You might have thought that was fairly basic; they obviously did not when Tokyo Electric Power built their plant a few years ago.

The reason why Chernobyl blew up and Fukushima had the catastrophic accident is because coolant was lost. There were not enough back up systems in place to deal with the loss of coolant and the same fault affects reactors in this country and other European countries. I would urge this Council to oppose such reactors anywhere near us. Thank you, Lord Mayor (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Anderson, please.

COUNCILLOR ANDERSON: I am referring to page 56, Minute 183, bins again. I will start off by conceding that, since the last time I spoke, there have been improvements in the bin service, I will grant you that, but you have heard today from a number of colleagues the problems that are still existing.

Tom, I do not know if you can remember when we met up in the Leaders' Board Room and I mentioned the fact about vehicles coming from Cross Green all the way across to Hopedales, and I was told by someone – and I would like you to check out who it was who told me that – that I was telling a lie. That was not the case. I am here to tell you that yet again on Saturday the bin routes in the Hopedales failed because the crew originated from Cross Green and had other things that caused the problems. Somewhere along the line some people are probably, in all honesty, not giving you the true and full picture because you and I have spoken about this and I know that you have got a top ten priority that you are asking for to get resolved, so I know that you are trying to do something about it.

We have had promises, promises, promises. In Councillor Dowson's ward I have been getting copied into correspondence from one of her residents who, despite promises, promises, promises, this is not going to reduce the carbon footprint of the city if we keep having to send out recovery vehicles and back up vehicles all over the place to fill in this street here, that street there. It is not economic, it is not cost-effective in terms of what we are trying to do.

We also seem to have vehicle reliability problems as well just now, so how inefficient or otherwise are the vehicles? Have you got a handle on it? I ask the question open-endedly and I genuinely do not know the answer to that question, but it is happening more and more.

To return back to the photovoltaics and various other comments here, what I would like Councillor Murray just to confirm whether he agrees with Councillor

Blackburn that this is only the beginning or, like me, is he concerned that this sudden transfer to Greenism from the Labour Party had one reason and one reason only behind it this year, and that was to keep the Greens on board and now, after today, you will not need them any more...

COUNCILLOR: Why is that?

COUNCILLOR ANDERSON: Because you are going to discard them. As far as I know you are going to try and take out their Leader and, as a result of that, you would then have one more seat. Is that not simple mathematics? You then do not need them as much because (*interruption*) – so which is it? Are you genuinely in favour of putting extra money into this or are you looking to try and help your colleagues, Councillor Ogilvie and Councillor Yeadon beside you, who this year have had to make a number of difficult and controversial decisions and are you going to start transferring money from the Energy and Green initiatives to try and help them out of some of the messes that they have got because when you do not need them, are you really going to be as committed? Thank you very much, Lord Mayor.
(*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Lancaster, please.

COUNCILLOR LANCASTER: Thank you, Lord Mayor, and thank you also to my colleagues for voicing their concerns about the lack of a service in their wards, because I was beginning to think I was the only one.

I will read an example that I got, 25th March, so it was last Friday:

“I don’t know what to do. Our bins have not been emptied for eight weeks now. I have made nine phone calls to the Council and on each occasion promised the bins would be emptied within 48 hours. They still have not been done. Could you please advise me what to do?”

I read that because I was told originally you must put them through the officers who have been delegated to deal with each of the wards and also, if these complaints were not registered through the Contact Centre you would not get a view of how the service was being delivered, but in desperation you have to include anybody just to get the job done.

Another example of a lady in Green Park phoned to complain her black bins were not emptied again, this seems to be continually month after month. She said she heard one of the crew say to another that the bins were not full enough to empty and she says she is fed up with the service, they will come one week not another, why can’t they come every week.

Not far away, in Green Court, this gentleman rings me up I would say every week and one week when they did come to empty the bins they missed him, so he had to ring me again.

Lingfield Close. Now, Lingfield Close had not had their bins emptied for four months, so it will be about four or five weeks ago now I got a call on the Friday to say they had been missed again, so I did actually go and see Tom Riordan and I spoke to

Neil Evans. "Oh, it is all right, they will be emptied on the Saturday." That weekend came and went. I was promised, "Don't worry, it will happen the following Friday." That weekend came and went and by the third week I was stood with the bins and I actually rang the officer at home who assured me they would get somebody out to do it. It is not what you want to report to senior officers but it is not working.

Contrary to Councillor Lamb I have driven round with officers and shown them where the problems are. I have said in this email, I have emailed everyone apart from my cat to try and get it resolved.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: That is where you are going wrong because this lot could not run a bath.

COUNCILLOR LANCASTER: I have been copied into emails, directed the managers and supervisors to sort it. I have complained to the high and mighty but there were repeated failures. Am I a Leeds City Councillor or a seconded refuse officer?

Tom, I actually sent you an email and I have not had a reply. I sent it on 30th March. I said:

"The problems with Lingfield Close collection is not acceptable, black bins missed again."

I am wondering next time, when the green bins are going to be due, will they be missed again? I have explained about the three consecutive Fridays and Saturdays. I have explained about having to phone the director. My last sentence was:

"This week an elderly lady's wheel-out regularly missed."

That is happening every week. She got a letter eight weeks ago to say she was on a wheel-out and her neighbour either has to run out and put the bin out and she is not always available, but this is happening and I have actually said to you, Tom, I only need to hear that Green Park and Green Court have been missed again and here we go again and again. I have asked you to sort it, please.

I have been getting hundreds of complaints and the awful thing now is, because I guess it is filtering down to the drivers and the refuse men and women, they are becoming abusive because these residents are actually running out and saying, "Hey, you have missed me again" and I have actually sent off some of the reports of what has been said to the residents.

It does not do anybody any good. The service may be working well for many but if it does not work for you it is 100% failure and I just wonder when the Lib Dems were in administration and agreed to reorganise rounds and make substantial savings but you said you could cut back even further, is this the straw that broke the camel's back? What is next? These extra crews that have been brought in to solve the problem but at what extra cost? Please can we have a full review and find out why these are repeated failures? Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Grayshon, please.

COUNCILLOR GRAYSHON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I wish to speak on the same Minute as Councillor Lancaster in regard to refuse collections and the curious world of how the Council really does not run a service very well and when people contact their local Councillors, what happens from that point? I believe that there is nothing really wrong with making a mistake provided you learn from that mistake, but these mistakes just seem to continue, continue and continue. I really did not want to mention officers' names but Brenda has started a trend so I too shall mention Neil Evans. I have sent requests to Neil to deal with. One of my colleagues at work wanted a mattress collecting. They rang our Call Centre, they were waiting eleven minutes. I said, "Give me your address and I will the Town Hall at Morley, our office, to send off a request for that." The request simply said that we wanted somebody to ring my colleague back. That was on 24th March. She has not received a phone call. The standard of service is not acceptable.

What concerns me more is, I think Tom Murray was copied into that email, Neil Evans was copied into that email. All that has happened is that it has been bounced to the Members' refuse enquiry email. I could have done that myself if I had wanted to. I do not raise things with senior officers just because I have nothing to do that particular day. There is a fundamental problem and it needs to be addressed.

One estate in Morley seems to suffer more than others. The Glen estate seems, every time there is a collection some of it is collected, some of it is not collected, there are a number of excuses generated. I find it quite fascinating and I know that it has been discussed in this Council Chamber before that in 2011 the vehicles we use are not equipped with satellite navigation and they travel all over the city. If I was travelling all over the city I would switch on my satellite navigation to ensure I knew where I was going. It is incredulous that this facility is not available. You can buy a satellite navigation system for under £100.

We seem to be piling up, as well as bags of rubbish everywhere, excuse after excuse after excuse for this service not working. It is not good enough. It needs to be dealt with and I am with my colleagues here that we need to have an enquiry into why the service is not working. I am not being party political, I do not see that as my role here, I see myself more as, in legal terms, *amicus curiae*, a friend to the court – a friend to the Council, indeed. There is a problem – please will somebody look at it because this is just farce turned fiasco, really. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Murray to sum up, please.

COUNCILLOR MURRAY: Thank you, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR: We hear what you say.

COUNCILLOR MURRAY: Can I start first of all by talking about the plans that we talked about, the domestic energy plans, the PV and the sort, the insulation scheme. I think the comments I have heard over that period of a year I think there is a genuine interest on all sides, David, is there not, on doing more and full work on addressing the climate change agenda, and I think that is outside the political debate that we do have about things. The foremost driver, of course, for that plan is what has been mentioned – that is about reducing carbon emissions by about 40% in about ten years' time.

One of the points that came up in those plans – it has not been mentioned – is you might think well, that is a pretty hefty target to it and to get on with, but if you look at what has happened in the past, in the last five years that is what has happened. In the last five years we have had 18% carbon reduction, 18% energy reduction and a 20% cost reduction, so in effect by getting down our carbon footprint not only are we actually doing something around the climate issues and challenges to the city in that broader sense, we are also saving money in the budget. I think that is the point, there is a double hit there and we need to build on that experience and get on with it and save more money in the budget and cut down on our carbon footprint.

The Domestic Energy Report that people have commented about, if you look into that and you look at some of the activity that has gone on, the activities that have cut and had most effect is loft insulation and it is cavity wall insulation. In fact we know that there are problems. John highlighted a number of problems around those issues and there are some big challenges there.

One of the questions that you did ask, Barry, and you asked it as a question for Question time earlier on about the fact it says, “Are you committed to continue with the scheme beyond 2011/21?” It is a good question to ask to get away from the context that you have described it in. The answer is that we have got the funding for 2011/12, you know we have got enough funding to be able to do about £6,500 properties, which is a significant number, with some matched funding, but you also know that the PV scheme, the photovoltaic scheme, is cleverly being used because it is a free service and what it will do is produce a profit to the Council. What the council is intending to do, as David explained, is to use that profit to maximise getting more capital through potential borrowing and that, as you know, will actually produce more funding for future years so that the 2012/13 year will have money to be able to continue to do about 13,000 properties and if there are other funding schemes that are built into it showing we might be able to get grants from, is it the Regional Growth Fund and the Deep (?) bid that we put in would produce significant funding.

What you are seeing Barry is not money that needs to be transferred. What you see is that our investment of £1.3m in actual fact is probably going to produce ten times that to be able to do nearly 33,000 properties in this city in the way that we want to do it. No need to transfer any money elsewhere.

Let me just get on to the thing that obviously is the greatest headache, the greatest pain and I am sorry to hear everything has been said again today which was said, perhaps, at the last Council meeting – these lingering problems, these real problems that distress an awful lot of us and involve an awful lot of us.

Can I tell you this, Gerald, you asked this question again, did you not, to Council, so just let me tell you what the answer would have been if I had had the time to tell you what was happening here. Gerald was asking me what about the black, green and brown bin collection service, what is going on? He asked for the city-wide picture and this is what I have been told by officers. The average hours of failed collections each day has fallen. In January it was 25 hours but now the missed collection is now down to three hours per day. It has improved, Barry. Would you believe, it has improved to a collection rate where the missed hours is three hours per day? This level of missed bin collection equates to about 0.5% of the collections being missed each day and 99.5% collection rate. Obviously when you are calling and telling me what is going on, I am trying to link the problems that you are talking

about to this kind of information that I have got. There is clearly, as somebody said – a review needs to go on, we need to dig deeper and you have done that in Scrutiny, have you not, Barry? You started off looking at what is happening so that we can actually reconnect and get that service going properly. I apologise to those people who are not getting that service.

In the second paragraph, just again, this is the figures and the facts that I have been given, 441 requests for action to be taken per week. That is currently what is going on but I asked what happened this time last year? The answer was, 460 per week in the same period. Somehow or other, I do not know whether the facts and the figures are stacking up but the picture I am getting is obviously mixed but the priorities are what we want and the priorities are to get that service back on track and to be sorted out quickly.

My final little word on the bins. Valerie, you asked a question about what happened when your administration was around and doing it, so I hope you do not mind me saying this but it is my last little word on this. Who said, “In parts of the ward the Refuse Street Scene is beyond parody.” Who said:

“I am a Councillor; I cannot get my own bin emptied, it is so bad. If the Headingley Councillors were in opposition then the issue would be on every focus leaflet and you would have a public meeting every month to rant about the issue because it would be in our interests to do so. Technically we are in power but we have not the faintest idea what to do about the situation and so the issue just drags on. The area is filthy and a disgrace in many parts.”

2008, a guy called David Morton, who left. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

(i) Neighbourhoods and Housing

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Can we move on to Neighbourhoods and Housing, Councillor Grayshon, please.

COUNCILLOR GRAYSHON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. A similar topic to the previous one which I believe is managed by the same folk as the other issue that we have had. I only wish that I could stand up and say I think it is working fabulously and it does not need delegating anywhere but you probably have guessed that I do not think the Street Scene management is particularly awe inspiring. It is a number of questions and one of my colleagues very kindly rang me the other morning at seven o'clock – it was one of those days I did not have any meetings until about 10.00 so I thought I would have a little lie in. However, when I answered the phone a hysterical Councillor Elliott was telling me that they had not been and it was Morley in Bloom day – *mirabile dictu*, perhaps, but not that surprising to hear.

We need to look at Street Scene as well as refuse collection I am afraid, Tom. Delegating it to Area Committees is perhaps a way forward because that is going down to a local level where people know what is going on and I am not being disrespectful to you when I say that, but we all like to know what it is that is going on in our own area.

Currently in Morley we have an holistic approach to dealing with Street Scene matters which involves Morley Town Council and the Probation Service who are operating a Community Payback scheme for Morley Town Council. Their chaps and chapesses go out to do the work in all weathers, collect the rubbish, cut down whatever, bag it up and then the City Council chaps go out and collect that. That seems to be working very successfully and I am grateful to our colleagues in Street Scene for facilitating that.

Moving forward, I do think that we need to look at the Street Scene services, as I have said, because they seem to be a law unto themselves in many ways and when things are referred we have a similar set of circumstances to the refuse collections.

I do not think that you need to be Angela Lansbury to see the clues. There is obviously something wrong; it needs to be investigated further and we need to deal with that.

One of the things I will say with regard to contacting officers at the Council, and I know that Leeds has been to an extent ridiculed for the worst city, I believe, for potholes in the entire country. Three weeks ago this Friday I emailed a senior officer about the Community Payback scheme and their request to me that perhaps they could help go and fill in some of those potholes.

I would think and you would probably think that is a jolly good idea, let's see how we can progress it. After chasing it up I received an email from one senior officers that said, "Ah, Councillor, there may be health and safety implications and you have to pass a training course to do this, it is £600, but it depends what it is they want to do."

I can find a reason not to do it. What I want is somebody to tell me a reason how it can be done and we can go out there and fix these potholes. I do not want wishy-washy nonsense but three weeks later this Friday I have not had wishy-washy nonsense – I have had nothing apart from, "There you are, there is an issue." I know Pauleen and Peter are chuckling at this because I know you have had issues with potholes in your area and if we can get the Community Pay Back people involved then that is what we should be doing but this sort of *laissez-faire*, I will reply perhaps, perhaps I will not – I am afraid it is no good and it is going to have to stop.

Having said all that, Lord Mayor, thank you and I will sit down. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Councillor Gerald Harper, please.

COUNCILLOR G HARPER: Gerald Harper! My Sunday name – only my mother used to call me that.

COUNCILLOR: When you had been naughty!

COUNCILLOR G HARPER: God bless her, yes.

COUNCILLOR TAGGART: There were other things she called you as well.

COUNCILLOR G HARPER: No, you are right there. Lord Mayor, I want to speak on Minute 184 page 57 regarding the Little London PFI. A couple of days ago

I visited some residents in Little London about outstanding repairs and I have to say as an elected Member of the Council I was lost for words and upset that here we are in the year 2011 and people are still living in such poor housing conditions.

These homes are in desperate need of repair. Many of them have got metal windows which are warped and they have got gaps at the top and bottom and there are draughts and water flowing in and through them. They have covered them with tape to try and top the water coming in and the cold air, and they have had to suffer for all this bad cold winter with it. The ceilings and walls are damp with black mould. The Council has been out and painted them on numerous occasions but not made any difference. The kitchens are old and broken and need replacement. The bathrooms are in a terrible condition, as is the electrical wiring and they have only got these old electric storage heaters to heat their homes and they cost an absolute fortune to run, so subsequently they have got enormous bills.

Over the last ten years there has been very little spent in the area because the residents were told that the PFI was coming, it was going to solve all their problems, their homes would be transformed with new windows, kitchens, bathrooms etc like the other parts of the city.

Lord Mayor, I think the people of Little London are so desperate for the scheme to go ahead it is really not fair for the Government to stall any more on this issue. The houses and flats are deteriorating by the day. People's health is suffering as a result.

There was a recent study done, I was at a conference recently and it was found that if you lived in Little London, because of all the problems (not just housing), your life expectancy was ten years less – ten years less – than if you live a few miles up the road, which is very, very appalling in this day and age; it is really upsetting.

I just hope the scheme gets the go-ahead soon. The Government says it wants further efficiency savings from the proposed scheme but, because of inflation, it is not going to get them because it is costing an average £1m extra for each month. This is a £190m scheme and inflation is eating away at the costs.

I know the whole community is behind it and I know that all the political parties have worked on it in the last few years. I would just ask that all the Leaders of all the Groups join our Leader, Councillor Keith Wakefield, and our Exec Board Member, Peter Gruen, to put pressure on the Government to approve this scheme as soon as possible and give our people in Little London somewhere decent to live sooner rather than later. Thanks. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Akhtar, please.

COUNCILLOR AKHTAR: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I would like to speak on page 57 Minute 184, Little London and Beeston Hill and Holbeck PFI project. Like Councillor Harper and, I am sure, many others around this Chamber, I cannot pretend not to be disappointed that we have not had the go-ahead for this scheme. It is vital to the future of the communities such as republic of Little London and it is very frustrating that the Government has not so far shown the same level of commitment to this project for the benefit of our communities.

Local residents in my ward have been right behind this scheme from the outset and why wouldn't they? The benefit of its enormous 125 new homes in Little London alone and further more 922 refurbishments and tremendous environment benefits for the local people. With this project we have the chance to transfer these neighbourhoods. So many people have worked extremely hard to get us in this point and I have no doubt that they will continue to do this until the funding is secured and work starts on the grounds.

This is no less than the community deserves. Local people have been very vocal in their support for this scheme and hopefully that will ultimately help the Government decision. Indeed, the local communities in Hyde Park and Little London and Woodhouse are showing us how much they care for the communities and how they are prepared to lead the way in changing things for the better. Many Members will recall the petition to the Council by residents of Hyde Park last July. They were rightly concerned about the deprivation and the social inclusion in the communities and wanted the Council to do something about it. I have to say, I have been delighted by the response of both Council and the community since then. On receiving the deputation the Council listened to the concerns of the local community and immediately set about looking for ways to improve things. It is encouraging to see things are now starting to happen.

The Hyde Park Neighbourhood Improvement Board is now established and meeting regularly. The Board membership is very diverse, including elected Members, officers from services such as Area Management and Street Scene, key partners such as university and the police and, most important, the community groups and the members of the community. They are the ones who are driving this agenda and it is fantastic that they are so fully involved.

Hyde Park Neighbourhood Conference also recently took place at the Cardigan Centre, offering members of the public a chance to have their say on improvement plans. The conference was well attended and made a wonderful contribution to the work we are doing in the area. It helped us pin down some of the key issues that we need to address and ensure that we have everyone pulling in the same direction towards solving them.

The importance of letting the community have their say cannot be underestimated (*sic*) and with this in mind I understand there is another conference being planned for the evening so those unable to make the first event will have the opportunity to have their say.

When you consider the Council's current financial position, I appreciate and I think that the people of Hyde Park appreciate too that there is little extra money that we can throw at this moment. However, I am very confident that with such a strong community support and involvement, this project can make a real difference to the local people in Hyde Park.

The same is true for the PFI project getting the go-ahead. Wouldn't it be a fantastic kick start to our improvement efforts in this area?

With the community's total support I have no doubt that we will get the go-ahead. I just hope that this comes sooner rather than later. Thank you, my Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Councillor Pauleen Grahame, please.

COUNCILLOR P GRAHAME: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Lord Mayor, I would like to comment on page 53 Minute 199, the delegation of Street Scene functions to Area Committees. Like many members I have endured some frustrating experiences with Street Scene services in recent years. I am sure all members can recall occasions when streets have been left unswept or neighbourhoods have been blighted by litter. These are issues that really have an impact on the appearance and therefore the atmosphere of neighbourhoods. I genuinely believe that when we make our neighbourhoods clean and attractive, then community pride and cohesion soon follows. That is why we, as elected members, always get frustrated when the streets in our wards are not kept up to the standards we expect. It is fundamental to the wellbeing of our neighbourhoods and it is vital we get it right. I was therefore extremely enthusiastic to hear that responsibility for many of these services is soon to be delegated to Area Committees. This will provide us with a genuine opportunity to shape a service that is so important to our residents.

This latest report to Executive Board indicates the amount of progress that has been made in recent months. Every Area Committee has had at least one workshop outlining the services that will be delegated and a second round of workshops is currently taking place which will help us agree a Service Level Agreement on which we can build the service for our areas.

The report also takes the necessary steps to amend the constitution so that these services can be delegated to Area Committees. This emphasises the fact that this is a real delegation of power which will give Committees genuine control over how Street Scene services operate in their area.

I have no doubt that, as this project continues to progress in the weeks and months ahead, more members will recognise the potential impact of this change. For the first time Area Committees will have responsibility and control over key Council services in their locality. If we feel something is not being done correctly, we will have the opportunity to put it right. If we think a particular area needs intensive treatment from a specific service, we will be able to ensure that those areas get the attention they need.

As elected members this ability to directly influence what goes on in our communities is exactly what we should want. Of course, with power comes responsibility. As Area Committees we will have to work together, either as an entire Committee or through a specific sub-group, to ensure we provide a service that meets the needs of our residents. It is important that we embrace this new power and give it our full support if we want to make the most of it.

I also note from the paper that serious consideration is being given to the possibility of delegating further functions to Area Committees in future. I understand the Youth Service is currently being considered as the next service, where members may be given a direct say. I know this is an issue that many members are very passionate about and would be really eager to get more directly involved.

I am sure we would all welcome seeing further services delegated to us but, if we want this to happen, it is essential that we get this first delegation right. From the

work that has been done so far I am confident that we are moving in the right direction. No doubt this hard work will continue in the weeks and months ahead, enabling Committees to agree their budgets and SLAs. This is a crucial stage of the process and it is worth taking our time to get this right. In my area at least members are being fully involved in this decision, which will help us to provide the best possible service to our residents once we are up and running. We will need to hit the ground running to ensure there is continuity of service and I for one am ready and eager to embrace this challenge. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Richard Lewis, please.

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I wish to speak on Minute 200, page 53. I was very interested to listen to Gerry and Javaid talking about Little London because the issue I want to raise is again about the unfinished business from the Decent Homes Programme. Actually, I was just thinking that while us old lags here – there are one or two here – remember how much...

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Speak for yourself.

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: You will understand what I am saying in a minute. How much Council house repairs dominated our lives only a few years back, particularly at this time of year. You would go canvassing on some streets, you had to take a pad with you and before you had done about six houses you had got four repair requests. It was awful and we have achieved an absolute, huge amount. I really have to say that Charlie Falconer's Decent Homes Initiative was one of the best things that came out of the last Labour Government. It has transformed people's lives in many, many ways and I think it often gets forgotten about. It really has achieved a lot.

There are some places where it has not hit. Ann and David have raised the issue of the five room houses, as has Bernard, where there are big issues that you have to tackle. The Waterloo estate is a similar estate in that it is system built, it is not fully cavity walled and I have a horror story a bit like Gerry's where I remember going with Claire Warren, the Chief Officer from Leeds West North West into a home and we walked in and you could see that the whole gable end inside was damp. It must have been about this time of year. The tenant was just absolutely so sceptical about us achieving anything to change that property. He said, "I could paper the walls with all the promises I have got from you Councillors."

It is awful when you have that kind of lack of trust that you will ever be able to achieve anything. That must be three years ago and I am very glad that we are in that position where we are now moving to do what those houses need, to give them a full insulation job, full internal works, kitchens and bathrooms, that will bring them up to a 21st Century standard. It is a real achievement.

It is a real achievement too that we have changed the whole nature of that estate and we have brought in a mix of tenure there that has really, I think, given the area an uplift.

That is fairly achievable. Waterloo estate, 90 properties, 90 families are satisfied – about two million quid. If we look at places like Little London, Beeston Hill – much, much larger estates with much more fundamental problems – problems that are not just about the design of the properties, which is bad enough – they have

always been poor, a lot of them are just poured concrete. I am just trying to think whether it is Laing Easyform or it is Wimpey No Fines. Whichever it is, they are difficult properties to keep well heated, they tend to be damp, they are just very poor quality housing.

It must be many years ago that I carried out pilot projects on one street in Little London in the hope that one day we would be able to replicate it and we have not. That must be 15 years ago that we did that work, so the rest of the estate cries out for that. It also cries out for remodelling and the same goes for Beeston Hill. Those estates that were designed in the 1970s were horrible. They have too many rat runs, they are just not people friendly. One of the big things about PFI and why we wanted PFI for those estates was to transform them, to actually remodel and make them a different kind of place.

It is not just about kitchens and bathrooms in those estates. It is about doing something far more important – actually opening them up, selective demolition of what we call the flying bedroom flats to give the place a much better feel.

I am very concerned that we are getting the same answer from the Government on PFI housing as we got on so many other capital schemes, whether it is NGT or Flood Alleviation, which is always, “Well, we would like you to go away and shave a little bit more off. Shave a little bit more off and then you can come back to us with a best and final bid and we will have a think about it again and we will give you an answer in six months’, nine months’ time”, because people have already been waiting far too long on those estates. We really need to tackle them, we really need to do something to give those people faith in us because people do not see it as the Government that is not giving the money – they see it as us, because we are the landlord.

I am very keen that every effort is made by all the parties in here to get that money for those estates. We have been working far too long, people have been waiting a decade for this to happen and please, please help to get that money out of the Government. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Blake, please.

COUNCILLOR BLAKE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am speaking to Minute 201, page 54 of the extra pack. I am speaking to welcome the Joint Neighbourhoods and Housing and Children’s Services report on the Young People’s Employability Initiative.

As we know in Leeds there are approximately 1,700 young people aged 16 to 18 who are not in education, training or employment and also around 6,000 19 to 24 year-old Job Seeker Allowance claimants.

This initiative will be based on a partnership with Leeds City College and other post-16 providers working closely with our business community. Its aim is to improve the employability of young people in Leeds and therefore to reduce the number of young people in the city who are currently NEET.

We are developing a tailor-made programme of skills training, work experience and continued support to enable 600 young people between the ages of 16

and 24 to move into employment, an apprenticeship or accredited learning. Most importantly the aim is that this leads to lasting, sustainable jobs and training. It will be delivered as a priority work strand for Employment Leeds, helping employers in the city effectively to support and link the unemployed into the opportunities available.

Lord Mayor, reducing the number of young people not in education, training or employment is one of the three key priorities or obsessions of the Children's Trust Board. All of our partners in the city are signed up to this. The Employability Initiative will be delivered as a priority work strand for the Board. Understanding the barriers to learning and giving support to overcome them is crucial for us to deliver our goal successfully. The integration of Education Leeds into Children's Services will help us to join forces more effectively with our learning community to deliver this very important work for Leeds, but let us just think about the background to this Initiative and why it is so important today.

We know that unemployment is rising; we know that youth unemployment is rising even faster. Most importantly, young people and their families have borne the brunt of Government cuts. First to go last June was a massive amount of area based grant that was targeted to support our young people move from school to training and to work. We have pledged to do all we can to prevent our young people from becoming the lost generation. What we have witnessed over the past few months is nothing short of an assault on their life chance opportunities. What have we seen? We have seen the slashing of Educational Maintenance Allowance, the tripling of tuition fees leading to chaos around university funding that has resulted and also the removal of the Future Jobs Fund that has created so many opportunities for so many young people already. This was a scheme that was successful, proven and now, guess what, it has gone.

Lord Mayor, let us not forget today. Today is a very important day in the financial lives of many of our most vulnerable in Leeds today. It sees the introduction of the most anti-family budget measures seen for a generation. (*hear, hear*) A budget so trumpeted by this Government that sees Child Benefit, Working Tax Credits frozen and the childcare element of the Working Tax Credits cut.

COUNCILLOR: The country is broke thanks to you lot.

COUNCILLOR BLAKE: Then yesterday we had the spectacle of Nick Clegg standing up and talking about child poverty and social mobility. What a sick joke.

I am delighted that City College is leading the way in this new partnership venture. We will work with all our partners through the Children's Trust Board to enable it to go from strength to strength.

Here in Leeds we will continue to do all that we can to protect the most vulnerable and to improve the life chances for our young people. We believe they are our future and we will do everything in our power to prevent them from becoming your lost generation. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Dowson, please.

COUNCILLOR DOWSON: Lord Mayor, I also am speaking on page 54, Minute 201, the Employability Initiative.

This is an extremely important initiative for our young people and when you consider the current national picture, rising youth unemployment, rocketing tuition fees and the removal of incentives to remain in education such as, as has previously been mentioned, the short-sighted decision to withdraw the Educational Maintenance Allowance for the majority of students. You have to worry about what the future is for many of the young people here in Leeds.

Everywhere they turn our young people find a world that is more competitive. Those leaving school or colleges today do not have the same array of choices that a youngster just a few years ago would have enjoyed. Thousands hoping to attend university this year saw their hopes dashed as universities slashed places to cope with budget cuts. In future years, many children who would at one time have aspired to attend university will not even dare to dream about higher education for fear of the mountain of debt that will await them at the end of it. Many bright, talented young people are therefore likely to be left looking for employment and training in a jobs market where it is increasingly difficult for them to get a foothold.

Over the past year we have worked extremely hard to tackle the NEETS problem in Leeds. Even so, there are still 1,700 young people currently NEET in Leeds and I am sure we will all agree that this figure is too high. Sadly, I fear it is only likely to rise unless we in Leeds take positive action.

The number of young people whose status is not known is just now 4.3% and that is down 38.8% in a year, and that is the lowest figure we have ever achieved in Leeds. This is a great achievement, as reducing the number of not known is vital in taking a step to helping the children who are NEET. Reducing the number of young people who are NEET is already a key priority, as Councillor Blake has already said, for the Children's Trust Board here in Leeds. We are also working hard to further reduce the number of those who we do not know what they are doing now. It is essential that we get these children as soon as possible and provide them with the support they need to avoid falling into long term unemployment.

The Employability Initiative is a key part of our strategy to do this. We are investing £500,000 with matched funding coming from City College to provide targeted support for young people who are struggling to find education, employment or training opportunities. (*Applause*) That is right, £500,000 – a wonderful figure.

We know funding and finding work and training opportunities is extremely tough for the current generation but that makes it all the more important that we act now to support them and prevent them slipping through the net and becoming long term unemployed. This scheme will target those youngsters who have only been unemployed for a short length of time. It will provide them with practical skills that will make it easier to find work, whilst also equipping them with many of the qualities that are so important to employers – a strong work ethic, a good attitude, communication skills and, perhaps more importantly, meaningful work experience.

Combining our own funding with that of the City College, we hope to be able to help 600 young people with this Initiative, If, as anticipated, between 40% and

60% of those supported achieve positive outcomes, then this scheme will have proved invaluable.

We believe that there is great potential for us to do even more. We are talking to other post-16 providers and we will be encouraging them to sign up to partner us in this work. We will also be taking and using our experience with businesses. Councillor Wakefield has launched a scheme, a hundred apprenticeships – new apprenticeships from a hundred employers – and I am pleased to say we have actually smashed that target with new businesses coming on board all the time. *(Applause)*

We hope that this approach will lead to us being able to increase the investment in the scheme and consequently help more young people. Helping our young people to build a future they deserve is a top priority for this administration. To achieve this we will need to work very closely in partnership with others. This incentive is a clear indication of our commitment, the Council, the City College, post-16 providers and all major Leeds employers working together for the good of our young people.

I strongly believe that through this approach we can buck the trend, the national trend, and deliver a brighter future for our young people here in Leeds. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Jarosz, please.

COUNCILLOR JAROSZ: Lord Mayor, I would also like to comment on page 54, Minute 201, the Employability Initiative for Young People.

Much of what I was going to say has already been said but I think I need to emphasise that at a time when it is so tough for young people to find employment and when so many youngsters can no longer be certain of progressing to higher education, it is essential that our Council does our very best for the young people of Leeds.

As you have heard, some of the statistics in this report do not make encouraging reading - 1,700 NEETS aged 16 to 18, 6,000 19 to 24 year olds claiming Job Seekers Allowance in our city. Wherever possible we must do all we can to prevent these youngsters from becoming long term unemployed because we all know what associated problems unemployment brings.

Of course, with the jobs market being so flat and the competition for every vacancy being so fierce, it is essential that young people have the right skills to help them stand out in a crowd. Young people need life skills and work experience to give them the possibility of finding work.

This Initiative will help some of our young people gain these important skills. They will receive a tailored package of support, working on literacy, numeracy and IT skills as well as vocational skills such as food hygiene and manual handling which will help them find work in specific sectors. They will also gain from softer skills which make them more employable with a programme covering team work, attitude and behaviour and, most essential, confidence. Employers are clear, these are the skills they expect recruits to have, so completing this programme will give these young people the edge in the jobs market. They will undoubtedly gain from the work

experience they will complete through this scheme, whilst they also get practical help with CVs and job search.

As you have heard, it is envisaged that 40% to 60% of those supported through the scheme will achieve positive outcomes. In partnership with the City College, 600 youngsters will be supported and as many as 400 could achieve positive outcomes such as apprenticeships, training opportunities and, of course, employment.

It is also our intention, as you have heard, to encourage other post-16 providers and private sector partners to take part in this scheme. If we can achieve this the number of young people we are able to help will increase considerably – a fantastic achievement which would make a real difference to the lives of young people and their future chances.

As the paper makes clear, whilst the present economic conditions make finding employment very tough, there are opportunities in Leeds in the future – major developments like the Arena, Trinity and Eastgate developments are set to create around 10,000 new jobs in Leeds in the coming years.

Those with the right skills, a good attitude and plenty of work experience behind them will undoubtedly be at the front of the queue. It is our responsibility to ensure that the young people of Leeds are properly equipped to take advantage of these opportunities. Those who are supported through this initiative will certainly be better placed to do just that. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Golton, please.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I was initially just going to speak on one Minute but now I will speak on two.

COUNCILLOR: Where is your Group?

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: Where is my Group? I am sorry, my Lord Mayor, I decided to wear a different cologne today and it has had an effect, as you can see!

Let us get down to business. The same Minute that Councillor Blake and Councillor Dowson have talked upon. I have to say, the way that you can seek to re-write history and try and make out that everything under you is rosy and everything under us is an absolute disaster is really, really quite breathtaking, I have to say.

COUNCILLOR TAGGART: Why don't you put (*inaudible*) Nick Clegg in your leaflet?

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: Let us start off with the EMA. Yes, the EMA was brought in, it was appreciated by many young people. We are in very different times and what needs to happen with the EMA is that that money is targeted to those children who need it most. That is what this Government is going to do.

When it comes to tuition fees, a very difficult decision to take – one, of course, that has had significant impact on my own Party but one thing you do when you make a difficult decision is that you try and make sure the outcomes of that difficult

decision have some kind of progressive element to it and, I have to say, it is down to this Government, the first Government ever to take on board the universities, elite institutions, and say to them, "You want to charge maximum fees? Well, you have got to make sure that you give us a threshold for the amount of children you take from working class families on board." That never happened under New Labour. All that talk about opportunity – never happened.

As for cuts, the in-year cuts last year - you are not going to re-write history – the in-year cuts last year, you could have cut any part of the Council budget last year but what you chose to do – it was your choice – was to take everything from Children's Services. That is your choice. Do not talk to me about protecting the vulnerable young in this city. (*interruption*)

Let us just remember, it is this administration that are putting 20% cuts on to all of its voluntary sector partners – and I used "partners" in inverted commas - because they are the easiest to cut and that is why you did it, 20% cuts. When it comes to protecting the vulnerable, one of those bodies, we discovered yesterday, at Corporate Carers, is going to be Barnardo's, who provide a service for our Looked After Children which is called Children's Rights and they go into our children's homes and they talk to our children and they make sure that they are getting exactly what they should be getting, not just taking officers' comments for granted. That is going to get cut by 20%. Do not talk to us (*interruption*) about how you are committed to protecting the vulnerable when you can cut organisations like that while you put £7m extra hoarded away into your accounts. It is not honest.

Anyway, as far as the Employability Initiative is concerned, I am glad you put it in place because it was our idea. It was not even in your budget. There was £500,000 not accounted for. We saw that, we took it and we made it a Youth Opportunities Employability Grant. Thanks very much, because imitation is the greatest form of flattery.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: We will not be imitating you, Stewart, that is for sure.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: In terms of the issue I was originally going to talk about, the devolving of powers to the Area Committees. I have to say, Pauleen Grahame, I am really sorry, you are going to be one disappointed woman at the end of next year because the devolution that is offered in these terms is one that is set up for failure. Do you know who is going to get the blame for it? You are going to get the blame for it because as a local elected Councillor people are going to get told, it is all down to the local Councillors now the performance of your environmental services – it is all down to them. Do you know what? They could have chosen to give us the budget or they could choose to do Service Level Agreements. What they chose to do is give us a Service Level Agreement, but they gave us a Service Level Agreement where there is no management information upon which to measure the performance of the people who are out there doing the job, yes, and that, of course, means that you cannot actually direct it anywhere.

When it comes to the services that come under the devolution, you are not allowed to spend less on *this* service to therefore spend more on *that* service. All you are allowed to do is move one service from one part of your ward to another, so basically you are robbing Peter to pay Paul. If you had a budget, it is far more honest,

it is far more straightforward. People will understand that. The voters in this city, what difference are they going to see from the devolution which is put forward by this administration? No difference whatsoever. If you devolved a budget and were honest with people, you would then have Councillors who would be accountable for the money which they spend because of the choices that they make; you would actually have staff, because they would be associated with that budget, who were also able to be monitored and supervised for their performance, and you would also actually get some residents who were actually engaged and willing to be part of the process as opposed to what happens at the moment where the bins do not get emptied, they call and call and call, they get in touch with their Councillor who calls and calls and calls and nothing happens. You will have to do a damn sight better if you think this devolution is going to do something for the city services in this city. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Anderson, please.

COUNCILLOR ANDERSON: Lord Mayor, thank you very much. I am, speaking to page 53 Minute 199. Some of you have, unfortunately, listened to me going on *ad nauseum* about this disgraceful thing we are just about to go through but what I want to make clear from the beginning is, I do support the principle of delegating environmental services to the Area Committees but – and that is where the big ‘but’ comes in – I have got a number of questions and queries. For example, how are you actually going to get senior officers to start listening to elected members? What is suddenly going to transform them from one day totally ignoring us to the next day actually listening and working with us, and that is irrespective of which party has been in power and what we have been talking about over the last umpteen years since I got on Council. What are you going to do to try and get them to listen to us for a change?

As Councillor Golton said, what is it you are actually delegating? Do you actually know? There is confusion out there. Is it the budget? Is it just the decision that is being delegated? What is it? You need to make it clear as to what is happening.

Councillor Wadsworth asked a question earlier on and, Councillor Gruen, you were as unequivocal as ever. What we want to know is, will each area get the same level of resource? You cannot confirm that because it is not your intention to do so, so you are misleading people by not coming out clearly and saying – I will give you another opportunity when you are summing up to say clearly that each area will get at least the same level of resource as they currently have. That is what we are saying is the minimum that we are after.

Councillor Cleasby has been representing the views of the (Outer) North West very clearly recently and making sure with officers and he has been able to get some things done. Let us continue working and taking this forward.

There is also no clear management and operational responsibility set out in the Service Level Agreement. Have you actually read it through and actually understand what they are putting in there, because it was not put in – and he is not to blame in this respect, Councillor Gruen, he was not the one who has written the Service Level Agreement, so are you certain that the people who have actually written the Service Level Agreement are actually delivering what you think you are being delivered? I have no doubt that in Group Councillor Gruen has eloquently explained everything to

you and possibly if I was listening to him I might actually be in agreement with what he is saying, but are you convinced that the officers in the Service Level Agreement are actually putting in what Councillor Gruen is setting out that he is doing? What checks and balances are you putting in place?

There are not enough resources to currently deliver the minimum service. Come out to certainly our area and you will see that there are a number of streets have not been cleaned regularly yet they have had the tick to say that they have been cleaned regularly. Go into Horsforth, go into Otley and there are roads there that have not been done. If all of a sudden we do start doing these ones, by the agreements in the Service Level Agreement there are not physically enough resources to get round. Have a look at what is happening in your own wards and whether or not it has all been delivered and how it is going to be delivered in the future.

We do not even know the base line. You have brought forward a policy without even knowing what the base line is, what level of services we get, how much money is spent on it, what level of flexibility is actually in there.

I am also concerned at the monitoring regime that is going to be put in place. The next thing that is going to happen is you are going to start top-slicing the budgets and saying oh, it all has to be put back into the centre again because we need to build up a monitoring regime. You look quizzical at me but nobody has been able to categorically deny that there will be no intention to centralise yet again the monitoring and as to what is happening and build up another arm of officers to try and check the checkers the whole time.

You have also forgotten to put in leaf clearance into the Service Level Agreement that you have put out in the (Outer) North West. You have not thought it through.

What I am asking you to do is get it right first time. Think again what you are doing, work with us all to get it done. I certainly will state to you publicly I will work with you to try and get these issues resolved. Let us try and do it together, let us not rush into it because if you look at the Labour leaflets that are going out just now all over the place, all your wishes are coming true. All of a sudden, thanks to Councillor Gruen, everything is going to be solved. Your streets are going to be so clean you are going to be able to eat food off them. Not quite, unfortunately, because I do not think the service is ready to change as much as you seem to think it is because we have still got problems in the area of street cleaning no matter which ward you go into in the city, and some wards are actually worse than others in terms of what you are doing.

What I am asking you to do is slow down a bit, work with us, work with Area Committees so that we get it right and we get it right together instead of this rushing through for political reasons because all that is being done is for political reasons and nothing else. Thank you very much. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Kendall, please.

COUNCILLOR KENDALL: I do not wish to speak, thank you.

THE LORD MAYOR: I am sorry, it was not communicated to me, that, I am afraid. Councillor Gruen to sum up, please.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Lord Mayor, thank you very much. I would like to begin by thanking Mr Pritchard for bringing calm and peace to this Council meeting. We warned him before he came that this was a tempestuous affair and clearly his influence already has been such that we have had a very civilised and engaging debate.

COUNCILLOR PROCTER: So far.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: I will also, if he is going to listen to me, thank Neil Evans and his team for the work all of his officers have done with us in Neighbourhoods and Housing for this year. It has been a very challenging and difficult year with in-year cuts, early leavers, lots of change apart from all the normal business, and I genuinely want to extend my thanks to everybody in Neighbourhoods and Housing. *(Applause)*

I also want to thank all of the Area Chairs who have worked with me for the whole of this year, Barry, and been very closely involved in certainly all the issues around delegations and perhaps they have not told you that but I pay tribute to all of them because they have played a major part.

One theme which ran through this debate from whether it is about the delegations or Little London or the Waterloo estate or Employability, is the difference we can make to people's lives and the determination of the Labour Group and this administration to make that difference and go that extra mile to make that difference. How shocking that, when we discuss Hyde Park and Headingley, there are four Liberal Councillors present throughout that debate and none of the others could be bothered to be present in the Council Chamber. They are probably out trying to save their necks in Headingley leafleting somewhere or whatever, but at one stage Councillor Golton was the only member of the Lib Dem front bench and there were three others and that really sums up where they have got to and where they will be after May.

I think, Lord Mayor, if I may start on Little London and Hyde Park. This is one of the most difficult and galling issues for any Council. The scheme has jumped so many hurdles and was started by local ward members throughout the area ten years ago. When we had a Regional Homes Agency, they were fully supportive of the scheme. They understood that we had already got extra good value for money. Richard Lewis is absolutely right – jump another hoop, jump another hoop. The salami tactics all the time, actually the communities suffer.

If I share with you just one statistic out of many, every month's delay costs us £1m and at the same time some of these people in London are saying to us, "You have to find more savings." We have to find £1m-worth of savings for every month's delay before we make any savings. Isn't that absolutely crazy? In the meantime, the community that Gerry and Javaid and others and Adam earlier on when he spoke represent, continue not to get delivery of what they actually have fought for and need for such a long time.

So yes, the Executive Board will do all it can. The Chief Executive is doing all he can, the MP is, the Leader of Council but at the end of the day we are stuck with a Minister who has had this on his desk – actually he has had it waiting (it must be a

very big desk) on the desk for some time. It finally came into the middle of his desk; it has now gone off his desk again and it is with the civil servants in London and doesn't that inspire you with great confidence and hope for this project?

COUNCILLOR PROCTER: You used to be one of them.

COUNCILLOR: What, a Minister?

COUNCILLOR PROCTER: You used to be one of them, didn't you, Peter?

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: I am a little gloomy about the progress we are making but we will do all we can and I thank everybody involved for all their support.

On the environmental delegations, having expressed my thanks to officers and colleagues I have to be frank with you and I agree with Terry and I agree with other people that the environmental Street Scene service which we inherited last year is not up to scratch. It needs to be changed. It will be changed; it is changing and you are going to be part of those changes.

It was very interesting in the (Outer) East Area Committee and at Exec Board, the light got turned on for one or two of the Tory Councillors and the light turned on like a switch and they suddenly said, "My God, all this is about making us responsible." It is but whilst our colleagues here and there welcome the involvement, want to be involved, want to monitor, want to ensure a good service is provided for their constituents, are willing to roll up their sleeves and get stuck in, those people over there think, "We can't blame officers any more because we will have to blame ourselves for not getting involved. My God, isn't that terrible!" (*interruption*)

COUNCILLOR PROCTER: That is not what was said and you now it. That was not what was said.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Why are you Councillors? You are Councillors for actually representing and getting the best value and championing your constituents.

COUNCILLOR PROCTER: Yes and you are going to try and take the resource away from us.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: We are going – I praised you too soon. We will deliver a better service. You need to be engaged.

COUNCILLOR PROCTER: Give us the money and we will.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Councillor Procter, I have a list here of Conservative Councillors who have not attended either of the workshops and you are top of it. You speak as ever---

COUNCILLOR PROCTER: You are talking about workshops. Devolve the money and we will get on with the job.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: You speak from a position of ignorance, as you so often have all year.

COUNCILLOR PROCTER: That is great coming from you.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: I am so pleased you are back in the Chamber to make any kind of contribution.

Let me move on from that to the Waterloo estate.

COUNCILLOR PROCTER: Another leadership speech, Keith, this, clearly.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: You are far off the mark.

COUNCILLOR: Like yours.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Let me say the Waterloo estate, just like the others in West North West, will have money invested in them, the programme will continue. I am grateful to the ALMOs, all three of them, for the work that they do and for the delivery they have made and will continue to make into next year.

The Employability debate. Let me start by thanking Councillors Blake and Dowson for their collegiate approach and their support on this particular matter. I am delighted we have put forward this paper and this Initiative and, most of all, I am grateful to the Labour Group for allowing us to invest an additional £500,000 now into this Initiative. It underscores our commitment to young people, to employment, to training, to apprenticeships and we will across the board, through Richard Lewis and planning decisions and through Children's Services and through Neighbourhoods and Housing and wherever possible we will combine to champion the fact that we want more local jobs, more employment and more meaningful employment.

One of the things that we realise with public sector jobs going and people talking about well, we will mop up these jobs from the private sector, actually even if there are private sector jobs, they will be different jobs, they will be different people. It will not be the same people from the public sector who are losing their jobs who will magically walk into private sector jobs.

We have to fight for this city and we have to fight for jobs and employment throughout all of the city and we will do so. I am grateful to Leeds City College, the College of Building and others who will partner this initiative.

Most of all, this debate shows there is a real passion and a real strength of feeling in the administration to move this city forward despite the obstacles, despite the barriers and despite the intransigence of Cameron and Clegg. We will move on. Thank you. *(Applause)*

(iii) Children's Services

THE LORD MAYOR: Can we move on to Children's Services then, please. Councillor Rafique, please.

COUNCILLOR RAFIQUE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I would like to comment on page 59, Minute 186. It is always a great pleasure to congratulate departments when a good inspection report is received and the recent unannounced

inspection of contact referral and assessment arrangements within Children's Services is no exception.

As I am sure you will already be aware, inspectors noted and Councillor Golton, if you are listening, this is the quote from the inspectors' report:

“A remarkable and impressive improvement in the quality of services inspected and the safety of children in the city.”

This is from when you were in charge. It is a remarkable improvement and quite rightly as well, I think they made that note.

Just moving on, we have always said that protection of vulnerable children is one of our top priorities and will always remain so and we were all equally disappointed when the previous unannounced inspection in 2009 came back with such damning criticism. There have been some very significant changes made to the Children's Services department since then. We have had the Improvement Board new management in place and a new independent Chair of the Safeguarding Board. We have recruited an additional 40 social workers and 20 advanced practitioners, underlining our commitment to target resources at the front line.

It is extremely encouraging to see that those changes and the new direction of travel were and are the right thing to do. Most importantly, in the most recent visit the inspectors did not find any cases where children had been left at potential risk of harm. I am sure that this is something that will be welcomed by all.

The welfare and safety of vulnerable children is something we simply cannot afford to take for granted and I am delighted that we are seeing the progress that we need to ensure that our children are safe. It goes without saying that there are still areas in which we need to improve and we are taking the necessary steps to make those improvements. We know, for example, that our electronic social care record system does not meet the requirements of the service and, as you all know, we are in the process of rectifying that. We have an improvement programme in place to improve the quality of recording and we are working hard with our strategic partners to ensure that all joint visits meet the agreed protocol.

I would also like to put on record my thanks to all the staff within Children's Services who have worked so hard to bring this department up to scratch and may I also take this opportunity to extend my thanks to Nigel Richardson and Councillor Judith Blake who have been absolutely determined to make the improvements that were needed.

I am confident this inspection is just the start and that Children's Services in Leeds will go from strength to strength. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Morgan, please.

COUNCILLOR MORGAN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am talking on page 59, Minute 186 but first of all I would like to say that I am very, very proud of the work that Children's Services undertake here in Leeds. The remarkable turn-around that has taken place is testament to the continued hard work and dedication shown by

our staff. I know that others will be speaking on this specific inspection and so I would like to take the time to comment on a couple of others.

The announced inspection that Ofsted undertook of our Adoption Service in December of last year showed a service that is efficient and first class. So Adoption. Our Adoption Service was rated “Good” overall and in the category of helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do, the service received an “Outstanding” rating. Aspects, including organisation, helping children to make a positive contribution and safety were all deemed to be “Good”.

Maintaining such a high standard of service is impressive when you consider that Leeds is the second largest Local Authority Adoption Service in the country, helping to place around 80 children each year. The service supports all people affected by adoption, both currently and historically which, given the sensitive and potentially damaging nature of adoption, is vital.

Operating efficiently on such a large scale is remarkable considering how complicated the process of adoption is and all the work that contributes to a single adoption is really hard work. According to the report, the safety of Leeds’s children is assured by the Adoption Service’s rigorous decision-making process and that is good.

However, we cannot be complacent and the service still has room for improvement and several recommendations for progress were made, including more thorough checks about prospective adopters and the printing of the Children’s Guide in all formats to meet the needs of children from all backgrounds. Targets for improvement have been set by Ofsted that the Authority will aim to meet over the next six months, so we are moving very, very well.

The work that the Adoption Service provides should be praised, but what is more vital is ensuring this high standard is maintained. Children and young people affected by adoption are vulnerable and making sure they receive extra care and attention will be top of our list. Troubled children who seek themselves finding families have often been neglected and, sadly, abused. These traumas can manifest themselves through emotional issues and problems with behaviour which, for adopting families, can pose real difficulties. The Adoption Service ensures that this transition for children and young people, as well as the families, is as smooth and unproblematical as possible.

Now, youth offending – another nice speech. We have recently had the results of the inspection of the Youth Offending Services and, once again, we have performed extremely well. I would like to pay tribute to the Youth Offending staff. Their dedication and hard work, often in very challenging circumstances, really is fantastic and they are a credit to the profession, this Council and our city in general.

The Youth Offending Service was rated as requiring only minimal improvement in a number of the key areas and I am delighted to say that the Leeds scores were very close to the highest rating achieved from those recorded in the English and Welsh regions. How about that? Fantastic.

I am sure we, everybody here today in this Chamber, will be very pleased with both our Adoption and Youth Offending Services and pleased that their hard work has

been recognised by Ofsted. Well done to everybody. Thank you, Lord Mayor.
(*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. We are now in the Winding Up procedure. Could I call upon Councillor Wakefield to exercise his final right of reply.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Thank you, Lord Mayor. While we are in this cordial mood, can I thank you for this year's service. I do not attribute today's peace and calm to Bob Pritchard; I attribute it to the Chairing of this meeting which I think you have done very well throughout the year. It has been difficult, it has been challenging but I think you have handled it with humour and understanding, so thank you, Lord Mayor.

The other person I want to thank for her service and wish her all the best, of course, is Councillor Ruth Feldman, who has always represented her community to her best efforts and has always been very courteous and kind, I think, to all people here, so I wish you all the best Ruth. Finally, now he is back in the room, I would like to say best wishes to Richard. He leaves a legacy behind – most of us are deaf as a result of shouting at us for six years (*laughter*), but seriously, I wish you all the best in the future. I regard today's booing of you as a form of endearment and love and devotion to you, so do not walk out thinking that we all hate you! (*laughter*)

I think it is probably worth reflecting, without repeating many of the excellent contributions today that, despite all those challenges we have had in terms of the budget and in terms of the narrow majority that we had, we still managed to achieve some progress this year. I think we have heard about the PFI scheme, which is long overdue and, as people eloquently said, this is about giving the community decent houses for the first time for years. If anybody has seen those houses that they have to live in, they would be thoroughly ashamed of saying that is 21st Century housing conditions.

I would like to put on record Councillor Carter and Councillor Golton's involvement in that because we all lobbied extremely hard and I do think we are getting nearer to actually putting forward a scheme.

Of course the other one again we have had very passionate speeches about, providing young people with jobs and opportunities and training. Six hundred is a start – there is a huge mountain to climb but I am delighted by the response of the employers, the Chamber, the Colleges and all of us in here because this is something that we really have to address with a sense of urgency for our young people here.

I would also like to say – I know there has been a lot of comments about this but actually I think the work we have done on climate change, fuel poverty and all the things have been well worth doing this year, so I think what it proves is that actually all parties have been involved in some aspect of that. I would even say from the Children's Services that although we have just had an excellent report and inspection, Councillor Golton did offer his full support and so did others and we cannot make progress unless you actually all of you are behind this particular service, so I think that is worth saying.

There is a very serious issue coming down the line, because all of this is at risk. All the work that we do, I think, is at serious risk because two weeks ago we had

a bill in Parliament called Localism and that Localism got hidden by the Budget Statement. What it actually means is that all our services have to be out to tender. It is only the police that will not be. I believe this will do serious damage to public services and Local Government in this country.

If you look for instance, I do not mind, say, the Town and Parish Councils being involved, I think that is right, if they want to take some of the services, perfectly relaxed about that, and I do not mind the voluntary sector because they already do a huge amount in Social Services for us, so I think they are fair. What you never hear of is the large companies that are swimming around looking for easy pickings from Councils up and down the country.

I think that we have to do something together on this, in all seriousness, because when Children's Services went wrong – and this is not point scoring – what we were able to do is put together a strategy, change the services, put the resources in and all of us get focused within days and weeks that we got that report that was condemning us. We did that in days and weeks. The only private sector company service I know that went wrong here some years ago was the grass cutting service called Glendales, and it took three years to put right. Fortunately, there were not any lives at stake. It was a bit of an embarrassment, it was a bit of humiliation but there were not any lives at stake.

I really fear that the contract culture will seriously weaken and undermine the role of Local Government, the role of Members, the role of Council to actually co-ordinate and respond to emergencies. That is why I think all of us are in public service but if you look at contract culture when it happens, it can be very chaotic, very confusing and very hard to turn round. If you have got a service going wrong, how long does it take to change a contract?

I say this to colleagues. It is a pre-election Council, I think it has probably been the quietest one I have ever experienced today. I think if there is something we can do, if there is something we can unite on then we ought to stand up for public services and Local Government at least, whatever perspective.

I kind of came in today and enjoyed listening to many contributions, and I thought why do we not just put aside some time to do it? Instead of this Liberal Manifesto, which was written by a great novelist, Michael Meadowcroft, instead of claiming for the Arena – you have to read this – which no-one can claim that, you have to recognise who drove the Arena and I think that is a fair point – instead of claiming you did all the roads, instead of claiming you get localism, why do we not actually start taking politics and our role extremely seriously? I would say that to the Conservative colleagues as well. Today's White Paper was not seriously addressing the dangers of Local Government.

I will tell you one thing I know we will do. In the next few weeks, clearly up to the election, I know that we will not only be out opposing the budget but we will be opposing the break-up of public services and Local Government as a future threat in this city because that is what the people of Leeds want us to do. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Can I now call for a vote on the motion to receive the Minutes? *(A vote was taken)* That is CARRIED.

We will now adjourn for tea. Can I ask you to be back in your seats promptly at 5.20, please, and may I invite our guests in the gallery to come in and have some refreshment with us as well. Thank you,

(Council adjourned for a short time)

THE LORD MAYOR: Can I, with your indulgence, call upon Councillor Lewis to make a very short announcement, and I am sure you will all be interested. Councillor Lewis, please.

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: Thank you, Lord Mayor, for your indulgence. I thought everybody would like to hear the news that the development agreement for the Eastgate Scheme has been signed today. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you for that, Councillor Lewis. I think we are all very pleased about that.

ITEM 9 – WHITE PAPER MOTION – SUB-POST OFFICES & COUNCIL SERVICES

THE LORD MAYOR: Could we move on to White Papers, please? White Paper 9 in the name of Martin Hamilton, please.

COUNCILLOR M HAMILTON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Lord Mayor, I think it is fair to say that post offices have been an issue of debate in this Chamber and elsewhere for quite a few years now and there is no doubt that if you look at the impact of successive Governments, actually, it has not been a particularly good one and I do not think there is much to be proud of there. Certainly post office closures have been taking place on a regular basis for decades now. That means that, in spite of what we would all acknowledge that the post office played a role within our communities, they have been gradually undermined and thousands of post offices have closed in recent years across the country. Indeed, in Leeds between 2000 and 2010 something like 66 post offices have closed – 66 over the course of a decade. That is not a record that I think we should be proud of.

It seems to me that we have responsibility to ensure that what remains of the post office network is actually allowed to flourish and even, if possible, to reverse the decline in the post office closures and try and reopen some of the ones that have closed, but certainly to protect what we have got seems to me to be a vitally important thing.

What I am trying to do with this White Paper is to begin a dialogue with the Post Office Ltd with a view to entering into a partnership between the Council and the post office to look at how we might introduce more services through the post office so that they then have a wider remit and hopefully we could protect them and save them from further closure.

That was a benefit obviously in that you are protecting the post office network as it exists at the moment. You are also providing Council services closer to the people who actually use them and I think also it is a more efficient way very often of

delivering Council services. It is more efficient for these things to be done at a local level.

This is not something that is new and, of course, the Council already has, over the last few years, introduced a number of activities within post offices that were previously carried out elsewhere, but I think this is taking it a step further and there are a couple of examples of other Councils that have taken this particular initiative forward.

For example, in Essex they have actually reopened six post offices as a result of partnership working with the post office. Closer to home, in Sheffield there has been a pilot running for the last six to nine months and this has been a partnership between the Post Office and the Federation of Sub-Postmasters. The result of this so far are that a couple of post offices have actually been reopened, they have been looking at how they might re-provide the services of six further post offices that have been closed, possibly through a mobile post office service or something else, but I think most importantly, what this partnership has done is really to protect the post offices that are already there.

The Sheffield scheme I have to say, Lord Mayor, was the result of a long-running campaign across all the main parties in Sheffield. It was not a Lib Dem initiative, it was actually something that all the parties signed up to. This is going back as far as 2008 when they first started talking about it and it was actually launched following a resolution to full Council which all parties supported.

I have to say, I had hoped that this evening we might also get all party support for this motion because it is not a political motion, I think it is a very sensible suggestion that I am putting forward.

I am a bit disappointed, I have to say, that the Labour Group have chosen to put down an amendment which effectively removes the main impetus of this, which is to actually look into this properly, to have the conversation with the Post Office and to report back to Executive Board and to see what can be done. The Labour amendment really gets rid of that, the substance of the White Paper, and so I am disappointed that that has happened.

Lord Mayor, the key to this initiative being successful is obviously the willingness of the Council to provide more services at a local level. It is not just about reopening or saving post offices but it is actually about protecting what we have got, and protecting what we have got is done by expanding the remit so they have got more activities to carry out and more people use them and then the other ancillary services are then used as well.

There are lots of things that we could look at – things like blue badge provision, resident only parking permits, payment of parking fines. There are lots of things that the Council currently manages that could be managed by post offices and I think part of this initiative would be actually to go away and look at all the things that the Council does and come up with a list of things that could be done in partnership with the post offices.

As I said, Lord Mayor, I do not think any of us can be particularly proud of the way that this issue has gone in the last few years and I think all parties have been

guilty of neglect – benign neglect, I suppose you would call it. I think we do need now to look at the future. We need to try and save what we have got and enhance it.

The current Government has actually, I think, made some welcome noises in this direction. They have set aside about £1.3b to the post office system to modernise the post office, to continue the subsidy, so that hopefully that will underpin what we have already got and ensure that we do not have further closures.

They have also been piloting some of their own schemes so pilots of the pension credit scheme, some National Insurance activities can be carried out at post offices now and also there is something that the Council could consider which is a system that has been piloted where all the various Government forms that are produced can be downloaded and printed off at post offices so you can go along and get the form you need. That is something that I think you could certainly run from post offices in Leeds.

I think the most important thing that the Government has done is to commit absolutely to no more post office closures. I think that is vitally important.

It seems to me we do now have an opportunity to look again and this and really to see how we can support our post offices in Leeds.

Lord Mayor, I have to say, Labour's amendment does really wreck the whole impetus of what I was trying to do. Yes, it does acknowledge that there is business going through post offices that are from the Council, yes, it certainly does that. It also has a bit of a go at some recent initiatives that have failed with the Government – the post office bidding and failing to bid for DWP, for benefit payments and the green giro service – but actually the fact that the post office nationally has failed to win some of these contracts surely strengthens the argument the Council needs to try and support the post office locally. That is the whole point, we need to do things locally. We should not be relying on the Government to support our network.

Lord Mayor, other Authorities have shown – I have mentioned Essex and Sheffield but there are other examples as well – that it is possible to make real progress here and I think for that reason alone it would be nice if Peter would withdraw his amendment so we can support what I think is a very sensible motion which was written with the intention of obtaining all-party support. I really think it would be nice if we could all move forward as a Council, as a group, to ensure that in future we have a post office network in Leeds that everyone can be proud of. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, Martin. Councillor Lamb, please.

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

THE LORD MAYOR: Can I ask Councillor Gruen to move an amendment, please?

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Lord Mayor, thank you very much and Martin, thank you for moving the resolution. I actually thought that our amendment was a friendly and a helpful amendment because this White Paper asks us to enter into

discussions with the Post Office and to establish a new partnership aiming to use the network of local sub-post offices to deliver Council services.

The first question I then ask myself is what services do we already provide through the post office? We provide a payment service. In 2010/11 over 650,000 payments for Council Tax, housing rents and sundry debts totalling £46m have been made from Post Office Counters Ltd. At a cost of 36p per transaction, this amounts to an annual cost to the Council of £234,000.

Secondly, the pay out service. The Council uses the post office pay out service to pay school clothing allowance. During 2010/11 around 15,000 totalling £600k are made through post offices. At a cost of £1.15 per transaction, this amounts to an annual cost to the Council of £17,250.

Thirdly, banking services. The post office provides cash banking facilities for Council facilities such as sports centres in areas of the city where there are no Nat West branches. Around £6.5m has been banked at post offices this year at a cost to the Council of £28,000.

What I am saying, colleagues, is we already support massively the post office.

The motion is entirely silent on what else we could do and our amendment simply says yes, let us go ahead, let us discuss but actually let us put a little bit more caution in because what are the further Councillor Hamilton is looking to actually devolve to the post offices?

History shows us we have to be quite careful. There are two services – one was called Validate, about benefit review forms for Crown Post Offices, and the second one was Pay Out, a service to use pay out to cover refunds, particularly Council Tax refunds, which have been unsuccessful. The point of the amendment is yes, we are in favour of a good, positive, continuing burgeoning relationship with the Post Office but, secondly, we actually want some work to be done by officers and by other colleagues to establish the framework, what the scope is before we actually just simply say what a good idea it is, let us delegate more services.

If Councillor Hamilton can spell out – or Councillor Lamb – what these additional services are, how they have been researched, whether or not they fit into the Council's philosophy, then we might think again. However, this is not intended to be a wrecking resolution. We are building on the kind of work that the previous administration did in terms of its co-operation with the Post Office. We are keen to continue that; we just would like it to go at a pace and with the intelligence behind it that actually it will work, and that is the only reason for an amendment which actually we hope you will accept so that we can move forward, and our undertaking is that we want to move forward. Thank you.

THE LORD MAYOR: Can I call on Councillor Dunn, please, to second.

COUNCILLOR DUNN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. In recognising the spirit and intentions of this White Paper, I nevertheless support the amendment.

All members probably value the post office, particularly sub-post offices. They provide a vital link to residents in remote communities, like some of the villages

in my own ward. Without them, many people in these villages would struggle to access many vital services and, as a Council, we should be doing what we can to ensure that they remain viable and accessible to residents.

Indeed, the Council does already work closely with post offices to provide some services with payments for Council Tax and housing, rents payable at the post office; certain payments can also be made to the customers via the post office.

I understand that other services have been considered for provision through the post office but for various reasons these have been discounted as not viable, notably due to the cost to the taxpayer being too high or the service not being more convenient than the existing system.

I am certainly supportive of the principle that the post office should be allowed to diversify if that helps to ensure that we retain post offices in outlying areas. However, with Council finances being as tight as they are, it would not be prudent for us to provide our services through the post offices unless there was a genuine saving to the Council. I understand that the post office is under consideration to operate the verification service for the new universal benefit and this certainly does seem like something that could be beneficial to both the post office and the public. This is a service that will be used by millions of people across the country, so would probably make good business sense for the post offices as well as ensuring convenient access to the public. That is something I would certainly support and I therefore support the Labour Group amendment. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Can I call on Councillor Bentley, please.

COUNCILLOR BENTLEY: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I fully support Councillor Martin Hamilton's White Paper on this and the reason that I actually want to discuss this is because I think every community in Leeds would benefit from more services being within their post office. Not only will the communities benefit, I also think the Council would benefit.

In my ward when I was elected in 2004 I had six post offices, and this is really sad because today I have one post office. We have 17,500 residents, we have no bank, we have two ATMs. It is absolutely desperate in some of our communities. In 2005 Labour closed three – three, that was half – of our post offices in one fell swoop, two of which were in our most deprived wards where we have got many elderly residents, some young families and car ownership is low. I have to say that we were told in the Silk Mills when they closed that one, "It is OK because you can go to Horsforth Post Office, it is just half a mile down the road." Actually, it is half a mile down the road and 'down the road' is on a very steep slope. For some of our elderly, disabled, mums with buggies and young children, it is extremely difficult for them to deal with that. I have to say, the whole process was a total devastation to our families and we felt we had had the heart of our communities ripped out.

The closures were down to the Labour Government's relentless stride to reduce businesses from the post offices by encouraging everyone to go on line - applications for car tax, TV licences and paying benefits into banks rather than trying to build up on the actual platform of a business.

Had Labour, instead of withdrawing those sorts of services and encouraging people to move to other forms of paying for services, put more services into the post office, which I believe they could have done, we would have had a thriving network of post offices in the heart of our community.

In 2008, defying any logic or business acumen, we lost our most profitable post office in Far Headingley. Who would close a profitable business, I ask you? It is absolutely incredible and yet there was another blow to the Silk Mills at that time because, guess what else? They closed the very post office in Horsforth that they told our residents in Silk Mills area to go to.

The then Lib Dem/Tory administration tried to get the post office to share accommodation and increase Council transactions over the counter. Guess what? I think Councillor Brett was the Leader at the time.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: That says it all.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Now we know why it went wrong.

COUNCILLOR BENTLEY: The Post Office refused to enter into any extent of discussions about this or future commitments to partnership working. It was clear from that point on that the Government actually wanted to close our post offices despite residents – and I think this went across the whole board in all sorts of areas, I think Bramley was one as well, if I remember correctly.

I am sorry, we should have been able to keep our post office services much better had Labour looked after them better.

As you aware, which I think Councillor Gruen has alluded to and certainly Councillor Hamilton, the previous administration did actually encourage the Council to offer some more services through the post office, such as housing benefit, Council Tax and business rate, and that has actually been relatively successful, but I do not think we should be complacent. We can offer more services such as parking permits, fines, Metro card renewals, etc, and take the lead from other cities like Sheffield and Essex where they have made great strides in developing and keeping their post offices.

I do not fully understand what the Big Society is, to be perfectly frank.
(*interruption*)

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Ask Alan Lamb.

COUNCILLOR BENTLEY: It is difficult to understand the concept, but I will tell you what I think it is. I think it is locality working and I think that is what this is all about. I think that if we are really committed as local Councillors, elected representatives and leaders of the community, then actually this is an opportunity that we cannot fail to miss (*sic*) and if we promote and develop this opportunity, we might actually increase income generation for the Council which would be great, because that is what we are trying to do at the moment.

I really do feel that this is the right time economically to do this and to share services and I think this will be a win-win situation for the Council, residents and local communities. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Lamb, please.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Not true, by the way.

COUNCILLOR LAMB: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I cannot resist the opportunity to explain what the Big Society is. (*interruption*) To be fair, the Lord Mayor asked me to try and spice up proceedings because he was a bit bored in the first session! (*laughter*)

I will tell you, the Big Society is what the volunteers and community groups and various people have been doing in my community and various others for the last 50 years – it is just that somebody has put a name to it now. That is my version of what it is, anyway.

Coming to the motion, I am afraid I might have to disappoint the Lord Mayor and try and be conciliatory for once in this. I live in a small village right on the border of West Yorkshire and North Yorkshire called Walton. It would be completely irresponsible to promote the fact there is only one really fantastic pub in the village which does some wonderful food the Fox and Hounds at Walton, so I will not mention that because that would be very irresponsible!

COUNCILLOR PROCTER: What is the number?

COUNCILLOR LAMB: 842192, bookings available! *(laughter)* It is the only thing in the village other than a telephone box and a post box. There used to be a post office but the former Director of City Development lives in that now. *(laughter)*

It is quite an affluent community. For a lot of people the fact there are no services in the village can be quite attractive and it is no problem to jump into the car and go into Wetherby or Boston Spa and use the facilities there, but the history of the village is, a lot of it was owned by the Bramham estate and a lot of people that lived there historically were very low wage workers and a lot of people that have been there all their lives cannot actually afford to work out. There are a lot of elderly people and they have to go at least three miles to access the nearest post office. We very nearly lost our post office in Wetherby last year and had to fight very hard to keep it.

The post office is going through a challenging time anyway. The growth of the internet and email means how many times now do we actually sit down and write a letter? Frequently we use email. The advance of EBay and Amazon helped a little bit but the call on post office services is changing and they have to adapt and change with it.

The reason I wanted to support Councillor Hamilton's proposal and that I would not support the Labour amendment, despite the fact that I accept the spirit that it is put down in, I think there is one thing that it misses and it is the opportunity for shared services for the Council. The point of this is, it is not just about what services the Council can provide through the post office; it is the fact that sometimes, maybe, where a post office is under threat and it just cannot be made viable in a locality, there is an opportunity to share where you think we are maybe having to look at closing libraries and leisure centres and these facilities, we should have the opportunity which this paper in the name of Councillor Hamilton does give the opportunity for the Council to engage with the Post Office and look potentially at sharing services in One-Stop centres, in leisure centres, in libraries and in other parts of the community.

Unfortunately the paper that Councillor Gruen has put down does not leave the Council with the flexibility to look at that, as I understand it. That is the single reason – I think there is an opportunity, actually, for us to come up with something together here and fight; really I do not think there is a single person in this room who does not value the contribution that the post office makes and how important it is, particularly to some of those most vulnerable and disadvantaged people in communities, and we have to find a different, more flexible way to be able to offer that service to them. With Councillor Hamilton's paper, it does not guarantee anything but there is the opportunity for us to enter in to those kind of discussions

that give us the change to share services and to give the post office the opportunity to keep things going where maybe it is not viable in a small community at the moment.

For that reason and that reason alone, I would urge everybody – I hope perhaps the Labour Group might on that basis consider withdrawing their amendment and perhaps we can have a unified paper going forward and this is something we can all show a united commitment to post offices in communities throughout the city. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Hamilton to sum up, please.

COUNCILLOR HAMILTON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Well, I have to say, I do not detect huge opposition to the motion we have put down which makes it all the more curious why it has been amended and amended in such a way as to remove the guts of the motion, which is actually to do something.

I fully accept some of the comments that Peter and Jack have made, but the point about the motion is to say the Chief Executive starts a dialogue, a report is brought back. It does not set a time scale so we can think about the sorts of services that we would like to look at. It does not have to happen tomorrow – this can happen over the course of the next few months – but the whole point about my motion – and you have deleted that bit – is to actually say we are going to do something as a Council. I think it is a real shame that your motion removes those things.

Lord Mayor, just perhaps to reflect on some of the comments that were made then, there are lots of other services that can be incorporated into this. I mentioned a couple but I could read a long list of things that we could consider. I think Alan made a point that I was also going to make in summing up which is actually about shared services as well, so it is not just about finding other things for the post office to do but it is about saying are there some other services, Council services, One Stop shops etc, where we can incorporate a post office provision.

I think by broadening it in that way again we strengthen the post office network for the benefit of the people of Leeds. I think you make a very good point there.

Sue mentioned some of the devastating effects of post office closures. The post office closes and then the residents are told it is OK, there is one down the road half a mile away and then the one that is half a mile away closes and then before you know it you end up with a situation where residents really do not have access to anything useful without jumping on a couple of buses.

Again, this is trying to get away from that, trying to look at ways in which these services can be provided in a way that is accessible to as many people as possible.

Lord Mayor, I would urge Councillor Gruen to reflect on the amendment that he has submitted – an amendment which, as I say, removes any commitment on the part of this Council to even look at this issue, and I think that is the big disappointment. It is actually deleting everything apart from the first three words and then changing the motion completely. I have not heard anyone disagree with the sentiments that I have expressed in the White Paper and yet those particular sentiments have been deleted from the motion by your amendment.

I would ask you, Peter, to be statesmanlike on this, if you like, and accept that, as we sometimes do in this Council, we do not all have the monopoly on good

ideas. On this occasion I think we are all actually agreed that this is a sensible way forward and I think on that basis withdraw the amendment and we can all support this and go forward united. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Can I now call for a vote on the amendment in the name of Councillor Gruen? *(A vote was taken)* That is very close. Can I ask you to use your desks? Some of the members have barely put a pen up and I would not want to miscount.

(A recorded vote was held on the amendment)

THE LORD MAYOR: There are 89 members present and voting. The “Yes” vote is 46, abstentions zero and the “No” vote is 43, which means that the amendment is now the substantive motion. You can see why I could not count that, it was too close.

Can we move on now to vote on the motion as the substantive motion? *(A vote was taken)* That is clearly CARRIED.

ITEM 10 – WHITE PAPER MOTION – YORKSHIRE HEART CENTRE

THE LORD MAYOR: Can we go on to Item 10, White Paper motion in the name of Councillor Dobson. Councillor Dobson, please.

COUNCILLOR DOBSON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. In moving this White Paper, before we get into the nuts and bolts of the arguments for children’s cardiac services saying in Leeds, I thought the most compelling three words I have heard on the debate so far came from Kevin Watterson in the Yorkshire Evening Post following the Regional Health Scrutiny meeting. Three simple words – kids will die. First of all you think, come on, Kevin, I know you are an Australian and a blunt speaker but kids will die? When you actually drill down into this argument, that could potentially be the outcome of the Safe and Sustainable Review as it stands in terms of what has been offered in the consultation process.

For members who are not familiar with it the idea is – and it is NHS driven, it is now three years old, it was a directive from the NHS Medical Director – that cardiac surgery for children had to be delivered in a safe and sustainable way. Clearly, everybody in this room can sign up to that. Of course services have to be delivered safely and they have to be delivered in a way that is sustainable going forward.

There are currently eleven centres in use, but actually that is now down to ten because one has dropped out of the process. The idea is to have either six or seven regional centres in England delivering acute children’s cardiac surgery.

I think there are a few little things you have to get out of the way straightaway on this one. There is no politics in this other than the 99 of us in this room acting collectively this afternoon with our partners in the region. I am Chairing a Regional Health Scrutiny Board for Yorkshire and Humber and I must say I have had a fantastic response to that right across the piece in terms of what we are trying to drill down into about the consultation.

It is not about politics, therefore; it is not about NHS cuts; it is not about the revised commissioning arrangements and it is not about anything else to do with the current health debate. It is a simple argument about safe and sustainable services, so can we sign up for that principle? I would suggest yes, of course we can.

The problem we have and the problem I would like to expand upon is, I do not think that the consultation exercise in any of the four options makes the case for Leeds. In fact, Leeds only features in one of the four. Nor is it about Newcastle Freeman Hospital as opposed to Leeds or Liverpool Alder Hey as opposed to Leeds. It is about the case for Leeds. I think the consultation process and the four options that have been presented to us are skewed against our city.

One of the big factors in putting this document together was the population and who is served by which particular units. I think the argument for two centres in London is probably well made, based on the population. Birmingham features in all the four options, as does Liverpool, but why not Leeds? If we are looking at population, we have 750,000 people living in the city. By 2028 there will be seven million people living in the Yorkshire and Humber region and 14 million people can access Leeds within two hours. Really compelling arguments in terms of getting to Leeds as a regional centre.

We also score badly on what I have been calling in layman's terms the bolt-ons – that is other things that other hospitals we are told can provide. In terms of Newcastle they do about ten transplants a year and whilst those transplants, of course, are of fantastic importance to the recipients, should it really have had such an impact on the overall consultation? I am not convinced.

Also ECMO. I do not do acronyms but roughly what I have been told, ECMO is the ability to put people on heart and lung mechanical operation for prolonged periods. Kevin Watterson says yes, but every time we do a bypass we put people on mechanical heart and lung during the course of the procedure. ECMO is a red herring.

The other argument has been about capacity. Leeds already delivers 340 procedures a year. What the consultation process is saying, they want you to hit the magic 400. We are doing that with three surgeons. The consultation said, we want you to have four. Leeds Teaching Hospitals Trust have said look, we are fully committed and signed up to finding a fourth surgeon for 60 procedures, but we will do it, but what people like Kevin Watterson are saying, Leeds is so well placed to deliver this service, to provide another 60 procedures per annum would be falling off a log. It really would.

Then again, the consultation just does not balance because Bristol, which features in all the options, they have been told they will only do a maximum of 360, so right across the piece there does not seem to be any balance or reason in the consultation process.

When you put people choice in to the argument, what if they refer in hospital or the people themselves say, "Actually, I do not want to go to Newcastle. I do not want to go to Liverpool. I might want to go to Birmingham Children's Hospital and I can, it is my right." There is no guarantee that if Leeds is taken out of the equation

people will go to either Newcastle or, indeed, Liverpool, so this mythical 400 figure again, I would suggest, is something of a red herring.

Leeds has been through a massive reconfiguration programme of our hospital estate and Leeds Teaching Hospital Trust, right over the road, now have a dedicated Children's Inpatient Hospital. It cost £34m to deliver and it has not been easy to deliver. On Health Scrutiny last year the number of times people like myself and Councillor Lamb over there knocked heads with Leeds Teaching Hospital Trust about some of the people who were the overall losers in the process – talking about renal patients and patients with acute dermatology conditions – are without number. We have not always had the easiest of relationships with the LTH team but on this one I think we can stand shoulder to shoulder with them because they are saying we have got a service over the road that can deliver anything you want us to deliver in terms of acute children's care. When the child comes in with an acute heart condition, there might be all sorts of other factors that play into that child's life, other health needs. We have got it all under one roof in an holistic setting in Leeds. Fantastic.

In fact, what Mike Blackburn, who is a senior consultant in children's cardiology also told me and the Joint Board is that if these services are lost, it is like taking the foundations of the whole thing away. A lot of these people will be having heart surgery and heart procedures in Leeds for ever – into adulthood and beyond - and if you take that essential component out of Leeds, the whole cardiac procedures that go on in Leeds would be in jeopardy. It is that serious. It is almost like we have redeveloped a service, £34m, you have got a brand new building, you have taken the roof off to watch the rain come in. It does not make sense.

Going back to the meeting, it was interesting because we had senior clinicians at that meeting. I have spoken about the ever forceful Mr Watterson but also Mark Dorowski, Mike Blackburn - senior clinicians. Mike told us a tale and there was a young lady with him called Lois Brown. Lois's daughter, Amelie, lives in Skipton, had an acute heart episode. Mike Dorowski, because he is at LGI, could immediately get an emergency ambulance to shoot up to Skipton, stabilise the child on the scene, bring her back into Leeds, she was resuscitated and in the fullness of time she was operated upon, all under one roof.

These are died-in-the-wool, hard-nose surgeons who have been around a bit and they were mad as hell. There was no mock indignation, they were furious that this work could potentially be leaving Leeds. They do not see the point.

Kevin Watterson said, "It is an evidence-based industry that we are in. I do not want to play on people's heart strings" – and actually neither do I today. It is evidence-based. Leeds can deliver everything we need Leeds to deliver in terms of children's heart surgery.

Amelie's story is just one of many. The Joint Working Board went over to the Jubilee Wing. We met loads of parents in there and these are young, 20-something people with perhaps their first or second child. What I found really compelling is just looking in these people's eyes, because they were scared. Many of us in this room have been young parents at one time or another, we know what it is like to have a healthy child in the house – it is challenging. To have one child with acute heart needs over the road and then you have got dad running backwards and forwards looking after the other child, it is challenging – it is incredibly challenging and yet

these people from Holmfirth, from Wakefield, from Pontefract, looked us in the eyes and said, “This place has been our lifeline” because the facility is there for mum to stay with the child while dad goes off and does the extended care, it is great.

I have seen the orange light so I will move on quickly. I think the Secretary of State will find our arguments compelling, I genuinely do, because there is a case there to be made.

Just to sum up, can Leeds deliver safely? Undoubtedly. Can Leeds deliver in a sustained way? Undoubtedly. Have we got a huge population that needs this service in the region, that is ever burgeoning? Undoubtedly. Is the safe and sustainable consultation process flawed? Colleagues, undoubtedly.

We need to get behind this and do something about it. Thanks for your attention. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Lobley, please, to second.

COUNCILLOR LOBLEY: Thank you very much, my Lord Mayor. I am seconding this on behalf of Andrew Carter who, unfortunately, has had to leave to look after Amanda.

I just want to start off by saying that I thought the speech by Councillor Dobson was excellent. You raised so many crucial points in what you said that I think anyone around this Chamber would struggle to disagree with any of those points. I thank you for such a measured speech.

I am also very pleased as well, I think probably the first time I heard about this was actually one of our MPs, Stuart Andrew, on TV discussing this matter and he and all of the other Leeds MPs who have been involved have all been equally excellent in raising this issue and standing up for the city of Leeds and services for the people of Leeds, so I am very grateful for all of them.

Councillor Dobson raised a number of the points that I wanted to raise, so I shall not make those again but I would really like just to raise a couple of points. The hospital has centralised all of its children’s services, as Councillor Dobson mentioned, on one site and this is apparently one of only two centres in the UK to have done this, the other one being all the way down in Southampton. The British Congenital Cardiac Association released a statement saying that co-location of clinical services on one site is essential and I think all of us would probably agree with that.

The LGI is at the forefront of work on inherited cardiac conditions and it has got an excellent record for providing safe, high quality children’s surgery in the city.

There are other factors as well; some may say they are minor but nonetheless. The Yorkshire region has a significantly higher birth rate than that in the north-east and with the wider catchment area as well it seems rather perverse that Leeds should be only in one of the four options that are currently being considered.

The reports that are being considered also seem to contain some inaccuracies. They say that Leeds has no transition nurse and separate paediatric ICUs but the Leeds unit actually has both of these. Leeds apparently has said, according to this

report, that it could not do more than 600 operations but I am told that the unit was never actually asked this question. These are things that need addressing before the decision-makers take their decision.

There also does not seem to be enough emphasis placed on the importance of co-location in this report, going back to my earlier comment about Leeds and Southampton being the two co-located sites. I am pleased in a way that when the NHS is talking about what it is that they are going to do, they are seemingly talking here about quality and volume and not cuts as, again, Councillor Dobson mentioned.

I have some other concerns as well, particularly around staff. We have some staff in the city who I am sure are probably beyond the age at which many people in the city would stop working and they have a wealth of experience and one has to ask if this facility was closed here in Leeds, how many of those people would think, “Well, do you know what, I am going to move up to Newcastle, or I am going to move to Liverpool and I am going to set myself up again.” One of the things I always worry about with this like this is that we can lose a wealth of experience and expertise. The LGI has some fantastic staff, the most famous case, of course, being Richard Hammond, the BBC TV presenter rushed into the LGI and looked after by probably one of the finest surgeons if not in the country then in the world. We need to make sure that we keep those people and do not lose that expertise.

Finally, I really want to make sure that we do not just write to the Secretary of State about this but we also make sure that we write to all of the key decision-makers because there will be many people along the way writing reports and making recommendations and I think that we should make sure that we make our views known to all of those people. It seems crazy to me to remove a service, as so well put by Councillor Dobson likening it to building a wing and removing the roof. It does not seem to make any sense in as £34m new centre but certainly I know all of us here have been campaigning for a long time – we campaigned for a new Children’s Hospital, we got this facility and I think in the end we are satisfied that that is a good thing to receive.

I would really urge all of the members of the public who have not yet been involved in the consultation to get involved. I believe the period of consultation finishes at the start of July. I really just want to reiterate on behalf of my Group that Leeds is a massively important city. It is the centre of the Leeds City Region, it has all of the transport links that means that it is accessible to all of the potential clients for this service and I would just like to finish by further reiterating that I would urge the Secretary of State and all the other key decision-makers to please keep the facility in Leeds. It is crucial, it is very important and none of us want to lose it. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Before I call the next speaker, can I remind you that it is Councillor Pat Latty’s maiden speech. Pat, please

COUNCILLOR P LATTY: Most of the points have already been raised but I am going to go on with my speech. The question of whether Leeds should be the centre for children’s heart surgery in the north of England is one which I feel very passionately about, and I am a mother, grandmother (twelve grandchildren) and was a registered sick children’s nurse. I am no different from thousands of women across the north and it gives me a very personal and sympathetic view.

Leeds is accessible to nearly 14 million people within two hours' travel time. Five and a half million of those live in Yorkshire and Humberside. This compares very favourably with Newcastle, which is accessible to only 2.8 million and is a long drive up the A1 not only in miles, but in time taken.

On top of that, Leeds has a capacity to expand further and has all its children's services on one site. In Newcastle they are split between two hospitals three miles apart. Not only that, but Leeds has all its key clinical services on one site. Whatever might happen whilst a child is in the care of our heart unit, there is someone on hand who can deal with it. That key need is found only in Leeds and Southampton and the British Congenital Cardiac Association has recognised that in a statement, saying:

“For these services to remain sustainable in the long term, co-location of key clinical services is therefore essential.”

Other facts that support Leeds's claim: it is at the forefront of work on inherited cardiac conditions; it has a first class record of safe, high quality children's heart surgery; the birth rate in the Yorkshire region is significantly higher than in the north-east, so logically the demand will rise here more than Newcastle. Not only are these facts overlooked in the review, there are several inaccuracies: for example, saying that Leeds has no paediatric intensive care unit – it has; no transition nurse – there is; the statement that Leeds could not do more than 600 operations - the question was never asked; little emphasis was given to co-location of services.

Finally, I can empathise with all the mothers and grandmothers in our region. If one of mine were to need heart surgery, I would want it here in Leeds, in a hospital in which I have the utmost faith. In Leeds we have one of the finest teaching hospitals in Europe. It deserves to be better served than this.

Lord Mayor, I support this motion. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Blake, please.

COUNCILLOR BLAKE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am speaking in support of Councillor Dobson's White Paper today, as everyone else in the Chamber is doing. I think all of us know just how important a debate for the city of Leeds this is and particularly, as we have heard, bearing in mind how much has been done in recent years to secure the one site services for children at the LGI.

I really do welcome the all-party support that is coming together to fight to save the unit and it is not just support from Leeds, as we have heard. MPs from all over the region and Councils are also supporting the case very strongly.

Many of us have had first hand experience either through our families or our friends of the fantastic work of the unit and I think, as Pat says, I would like to say many of us approach this from the perspective of parents rather than as politicians. I am sure like me you will have received many astonishing accounts of the work that has been done there.

The actual support for the unit from patients and their families is absolutely overwhelming. It is hard enough to imagine the impact of your child undergoing life

saving surgery but then to add to that the stress of distance travel and the extra risk that that involves is hard to contemplate.

One of the emails I received from parents of a little boy who was diagnosed actually in the womb with having severe problems, ended up having to have treatment in the unit for over eleven months. This is the other issue about the type of treatment. It is not a one fix, easy operation that you can then hope to walk out within weeks. Much of the treatment goes on, as we have heard, for many, many months.

We know about the children's services and the reconfiguration and we also know really clearly in this Chamber the enormous public support for the dedicated children's hospital. It represented a massive investment in the future of children's services for the LGI and I know that people in Leeds were and remain hugely proud of that commitment. The potential loss of the cardiac surgery services threatens to undermine the city's vision of a one site children's hospital.

We have heard a lot about the actual review itself, the lack of consideration for the co-location of services – absolutely critical. Children who require cardiac surgery frequently present a range of complex conditions that mean they need quickly to access other specialist paediatric services. Leeds already provides that access and, do not forget, one of the key drivers for putting all the services on the LGI was responding to the stress that parents felt of having to move quickly between St James's and the LGI, never mind from between hospitals around the region.

Leeds also has the added benefit of being a major teaching hospital in Europe and has a proven track record of success when it comes to performing cutting edge cardiac surgery safely. What we have not perhaps dwelt on is the impact that would also be felt in adult cardiac services, as the two are closely linked and, indeed, the surgeons and physicians involved in the work often work across the two services.

The other things that have not been considered, I think, we have talked about the transfer times for the travel to Newcastle. What we have not talked about is the babies who come in in a blue light ambulance to have a heart problem ruled in or out. This service alone would not be available and about 400 babies came in in this way in 2010/11.

The consistency of staff and treatment gives staff confidence as their child faces life threatening surgery. This consistency is absolutely crucial and will be very difficult to sustain over long distances. We know that the population that Leeds services is around 14 million within two hours. As Pat said, Newcastle is only 2.8 million. My point here is that surely when we are talking about service provision, that service provision should follow population. What seems to be happening here is not the location but it is actually looking at the specialism that happens to be being delivered from Newcastle at this moment in time. That cannot be a sustainable basis for deciding on where services are delivered.

Let all of us combine together and lobby on behalf of all the patients that use the service, but we have a great role to play in encouraging our constituents to sign the petition so that we can show the real strength of feeling about this issue in Leeds and the region. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Kirkland, please.

COUNCILLOR KIRKLAND: Yes, Lord Mayor, I too rise to support Councillor Dobson. I had better explain, I have got a personal interest. That personal interest was that I was a working GP from 1961 to 1998 but I retired in 1998 so I no longer have a prejudicial interest.

I have actual experience of a number of young patients who needed heart surgery and, like Councillor Blake, I have actually seen a couple of patients where the diagnosis was made before the baby was born. That does raise a lot of very difficult problems. In fact, some of the children need surgery several times – not twice but more than twice, and dragging yourself back to hospital a hundred miles away when you are sick is quite a dire experience. I can tell you that from experience. Not all parents have cars. There was a good example of this on Look North BBC when a small child was taken by pushchair from Barnsley to the LGI and you did not really have to be a doctor to know that that child was quite ill. Obviously by the time it got to the LGI it was a lot worse.

The pool of expertise in the LGI is not just doctors and surgeons. It is specialist nurses, intensive care nurses and technicians who do an absolutely amazing job with an extraordinary skill. I would not even like to try to start doing that.

The surgery itself changes and it is different for each patient, so if a patient has got a particular problem, they do not necessarily have an identical operation to somebody else with the same problem because each patient is just that little bit different and certainly from when I started to when I retired, the change was absolutely amazing. We had an enormous number of patients who were not even considered for surgery; it was considered quite easy surgery by the time I retired.

Yorkshire is England's biggest county – in fact, I would go so far as to say it is the best. Lincolnshire is the second biggest county. You put the first and second biggest counties together and where is the children's heart unit? Nowhere to be seen.

A single sentence from one of these patients, and some of them are old enough to have quite good expression of their experiences and their fears and concerns, or from their relatives, in one sentence is worth more than all the words that have been spoken here today because it is the families and the patients themselves that bear the brunt of the problem. I think that the committee that is making the assessment has got a problem because they wanted an exact number of units over the country and what they have actually got is enough for that number of units and a half to three-quarters as well. I really wonder whether Leeds and Newcastle ought to have a unit.

I can say to the parents that we are here, we are all aware of what your concerns are and we will do our damndest to make sure that what you want is what you get. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, Graham. Councillor Brett, please.

COUNCILLOR BRETT: Thank you, Lord Mayor. In what will be my last speech in this Chamber I want to try and make sure that my own side at least listen to me so I want to start by pointing out that from this point the Leader and Whip have no power over what I say at all (*laughter*) but I am in support of this motion so I suspect I am not going to say too much that upsets them.

We would all want, as Councillor Dobson has made clear, an analysis which leads to the best possible treatment. I agree with Councillor Dobson that it is not the fact that a review is taking place that upsets us – it is the conclusions from that flawed review that we need to look at.

Last week I was listening to one medical expert who said something that really stopped me in my tracks, because this so-called expert said, “Clinical judgment is always the deciding factor.” I beg to disagree with that because I think for many key operations and many medical treatments, the users’ perspective is actually very important. There is actually an emotional attachment to a particular hospital. If you have been in a hospital and been successfully treated, then I think that is something that we feel strongly about. As has already been said, the travelling of long distances, it is the family that bears the brunt of that, not the medical practitioners.

I simply cannot understand why, if you look at a map of the North of England and you look at the three places that are being considered, you say right, people would come to these three centres – to Leeds, to Liverpool, to Newcastle – from all directions. If you look at Liverpool, at 180 degrees is sea. If you look at Newcastle – and I know it is slightly inland but very nearly 180 degrees is sea. If it seems to me almost an open and shut case that Leeds has a very strong case to reconsider on this.

I want particularly to emphasise in the rest of my time the last sentence of this motion because I had a discussion with Richard Lewis yesterday where we agreed that most of the time, on 80%, perhaps, of the issues that concern us as politicians in Leeds, all parties agree and we are here, as we always are in this Chamber, about the 20% that we disagree on and, of course, I am as proud to be a Lib Dem as you are of your parties and I do not stop disagreeing where that is necessary.

The problem, it seems to me, is that the 20% disagreement sometimes happens with such passion and such commitment that it infects the 80% of the time when we agree. The last sentence of this motion, I believe, is the best possible way to get this thought about again. We have got to involve not just MPs from Leeds but MPs from the areas that I think will be really badly affected by this – it is the east coast, it is North Lincolnshire, it is Hull. They would have dreadful journeys to either of the possible alternatives.

Let us be honest, we do not have, sadly, a history of the MPs in Leeds working well together, and I say that advisedly very much including Greg Mulholland, who is not always the easiest guy to get on with. (*laughter*) We must all of us, as we leave this place today if we vote for this motion, as I hope we all will, I hope will all not just go through the motions of saying “Yes, we voted for the motion”. If we are really going to get something done on this we have to contact the MPs who we can influence and implore them to work together on this crucial issue and get this thought about again. It really does matter, Lord Mayor. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, Richard. I shall always remember your last speech! It is a shame there is not some more. Never mind. Ann Blackburn, please.

COUNCILLOR A BLACKBURN: Yes, thank you, Lord Mayor. I do not think any of us can disagree with what has been said by the previous speakers, really.

A lot of them have brought various things to the debate but I think that we can all agree, really – we want to keep the cardiac surgeons and the facility in Leeds. I do not think any of us here disagree with that.

It does concern me that it seems that some of the information that has gone forward has not been correct, and if people are making a judgment on something that is not correct when it is so important, I think that needs looking into by everybody concerned, be it the MPs and the people at the NHS because it is so important.

It is so important we keep it in Leeds because, as has been said, it looks as if, if it is not going to be in Leeds, I know Liverpool and Newcastle have been mentioned but it seems from the reports that people tend to think that if it is not in Leeds it will be in Newcastle. Newcastle is a long, long way to go and people that have got sick children, it has already been said that consultants have said that in fact some of these children just would not make it. A couple of consultants have said that – maybe others have said that as well. If consultants say that, then I think they should know what they are talking about. It is a long way. You have got a child that will probably be dead when he or she gets there.

Is that what we want? Of course we don't. We want to provide a good service for our children and not only our children, adults as well because if this goes from Leeds, it will not just be children that are affected, though that has been the main thing that has been reported, but in fact it will be adults as well because there will not be any consultants here, there will not be any beds for anybody who needs that service. It will be the total service. If we do not have it in Leeds, if we have to go Newcastle, that is going to be a big ask for a lot of people. Yes, they are going to have to do it but what does it mean? If you do not have a car which, of course as a Green we are trying to persuade people not to use their cars but a lot of people do not have cars. If you have got a child or a relative that has going to be in Newcastle, how do you go and see them every day unless you go and book in Newcastle and stop there, I suppose, because it is too far to be going up and down from Leeds to Newcastle if you do not have a car. You cannot do it. In Leeds it is a different matter – it is a bus ride or car ride.

Even if you come, as lot of people do, a lot of people come into Leeds from just outside Leeds like Skipton and whatever, then you can get there quite easily on the train. Newcastle, you cannot. You can get from Skipton on the train, you can get there by buses. Newcastle is a long way away and obviously Leeds is a big city. It is the sort of city which should have this. We should have this facility and I just do not understand why they are even thinking of taking it away but they are, so all I can say is that we have got to work together and try and keep it in Leeds and do our damndest to do that, lobby MPs and whoever we have got to lobby, we have got to do it because I just do not want to think what might happen if we do not. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, Ann. Can I call upon Councillor Atha, please. Bernard.

COUNCILLOR ATHA: Lord Mayor, I am not on the list so don't think you have missed something. I am speaking only because it is an opportunity to hijack a good cause and I am hijacking a good cause.

I am Chairman of the Leeds Teaching Hospitals Foundation. This is a charity that supports the NHS in Leeds, the hospitals in Leeds, and is very much concerned with development of the children's hospital. Just a quick brief word on it, and I am doing it because not one person disagrees with anything that you have said or anyone else has said. The case is absolutely made and there is no argument against it. What I am going to put to you is something that we might do something about it.

First of all, we all ought to join the campaign which, that goes without saying, is what Councillor Dobson is suggesting. Actually to help in terms of money, the charitable foundation of which I happen to be the Chairman temporarily, or for the next year or two, raised well over £3.5m, which bought us £6m of linear accelerators which went into the Bexley Unit, which has made Leeds one of the world centres for cancer treatment with radiology. We have just presented them with another £2m to have a Chair in Clinical Oncology which will make Leeds, along with either other hospitals in the world, seen as the leaders in this particular field. That is something we have got to be proud of but it has only happened because we have been able to raise these large sums of money, £1m of which came from that marvellous chap Jimi Heselden, who so sadly died so tragically not very long ago.

We also presented £1.5m for one of the robotic arms which treats – it is really surgery by remote control but it does allow for the most precise, fine degree of surgery that there is and we will hopefully be presenting them with another one. When we bought this for Leeds there were only three other hospitals in the country that had these robotic arms, yet in South Korea there are more robotic arms there, something like 15 to 20 by comparison. These are tools which now, or should be, the every day tool used by many surgeons for the least invasive surgery there is.

Just a few days ago we raised £200,000 to provide the Children's Hospital in Leeds with a brand new operating theatre. I can imagine what it is like if you are a surgeon and you are operating on a child *that* size; the size of the heart is about the size of a walnut and the degree of precision required for those operations is just amazing.

£200,000 is going to buy the latest theatre - mechanised, all-singing, dancing theatre. Without that money that would not have been bought.

Why am I telling you all this? Because I would think that if every person here, with the commitment that we all passionately have for this Children's Hospital and for the general heart surgery in Leeds in total, which is also at some risk, of each one of us made the determination to do something to raise just a hundred quid, or a thousand quid – how do you do that? Most of you are Governors of schools, you get the school to do one event to raise fifty to a hundred quid and send it in to the charity. You can, in fact, do so many similar things like that, quite simple things to raise money which goes direct to the Children's Hospital and you can be sure if you raise a hundred quid, a hundred quid goes into the fund and is not spent on any – any – costs of any other kind. It is a straight hundred in and hundred out. All the overheads have been taken care of by other funding.

I do ask that if you really are passionate, to issue words and make brave speeches is easy; to actually do something about it is not very difficult but is something we often do not do and I would ask you all to consider the ways in which. One big way we could work in a way that would harm nobody but would make an

enormous difference to the Children's Hospital and make the place child friendly when they come in. I went to Alder Hey, which is an old hospital but where the kids go in their in their hundreds they go in and they see walls, they want to play with the things on there. They forget about their ailments.

If we as a Council decided that we would ask all our employees when they get their monthly pay cheque to donate the final coppers on those – say 99p or 2p added on – to donate that to a figure which could so easily be deducted and translate it straightaway to the hospital, that would be marvellous and only with a bit of additional documentation, which needs doing only once and with the cyber world that some of you are familiar with can be done straightaway, that can be gift aided and that would turn the £100,000 into another 25% addition.

It is something we can do and the consequences of us deciding to do this means that the Children's Hospital in Leeds will benefit. Of course, it is not the hospital that benefits – it is the children that go in there and I will guarantee if anyone went in there, and I am sure you will have seen them going in, the poor, tiny creatures but I feel more sorry for the parents and the anguish they are going through. We can do something to assist them.

I just thank Dobbo, as we might call him, for the work he has done on this bid. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Grayshon.

COUNCILLOR GRAYSHON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I will tell Councillor Atha I will send you £100 of my own money.

COUNCILLOR: Good for you.

COUNCILLOR ATHA: Gift aided!

COUNCILLOR GRAYSHON: It is a charities trust account that I have, Bernard, so it is already dealt with, all that kind of thing.

There are two things that stand out to me this afternoon as we have been discussing things here. One is the Bridgewater Place issue, which is a tragedy which, as a City Council, we can and should do something about. When that accident occurred, as I looked out of my office window which is at one side of Victoria Bridge, the accident occurred at the other side of Victoria Bridge, which is about the length of this from the edge of the building that I work in, within a few minutes of my colleagues ringing the emergency service paramedics were on the scene and, of course, as we know, they all do a wonderful job and they are to be credit for the work that they do.

The other thing that we can do and should do and will do is to ensure that this facility remains in Leeds because we have heard stories of the children who were affected by this, the distances that they would have to travel which, in some cases, would be a distance too far, I am afraid. These services need to remain in Leeds. It is the third largest city in the United Kingdom and it is quite right that we should have these facilities here.

I have spoken to my colleagues and we are completely in support of Councillor Dobson's paper. I agree with Richard Brett that, once again, we need to persuade those people who sit in Westminster that they need to be extremely proactive when dealing with this and they need to make sure that their voices are heard, as we will make sure that our voices in this Chamber are heard. I am sure that with a concerted approach from everyone involved, that such a campaign will be successful.

I would at this stage just like to say to those families who are involved and who are worrying that we will do all we can in this Council Chamber to ensure that this service continues in Leeds. Leeds always seems to get the fluffy end of the lollipop when it comes to things. I am rather tired of that and this is one of the things that we really need to stand up to. I have already signed the petition, I have already had discussions with people about this and let us all join together and ensure that we can save this facility in Leeds. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Dobson to sum up, please.

COUNCILLOR DOBSON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. First of all, can I thank colleagues sincerely for the contributions made in this debate, both thoughtful, measured, informative and I genuinely thank you all but a special thank you to Pat Latty, making her maiden speech. I think it is important that we do focus on the family. Pat was speaking as a mother and a grandmother. As I say, lots of us are parents in this room and it is extremely compelling and important to a lot of us that these services do stay in the city.

I thought Matt Lobley made a couple of very interesting and good points about staff movement but talking about staff, what about the next generation of young cardiologists coming through the ranks who are at Leeds Teaching Hospital Trust – the best place to learn their business under the best cardiologists in the country. I worry for the future of the service right across the piece, never mind what does or does not happen in Leeds. I think Matt was also right to focus on the fact that we have to spread the message out further. I can say that Leeds Teaching Hospitals Trust are completely, completely focused on retaining these services in the city. The specialist commissioning group, the PCT, the GP Consortium are all completely on board and behind this campaign which is, of course, useful.

COUNCILLOR: All the staff.

COUNCILLOR DOBSON: Thank you, Councillor, the staff.

Richard Brett, yes, you are absolutely right, we have had a fantastic response, actually, from all MPs right across the piece, right across the region. I was going to mention Stuart Andrew in my speech but I was barred by time but Stuart, yes, was one of the trailblazers on it, actually. I have to say that in the Hull region and the east coast region they are extremely, extremely worried about the impact that losing Leeds would have on their particular services in terms of the transportation issue. The east coast and Hull consider themselves particularly vulnerable in this.

Ann, the professional element and how the consultation has been put together by the Steering Group. I will choose my words carefully but these are professional people whom I am sure have gone into this with the best of possible intentions.

However, I think it is human nature to be protectionist about your services in your areas and I will say no more than there was not one single representative from Leeds on the Steering Group and I actually think that the whole argument around the composition of the Steering Group is actually quite well highlighted in tonight's Yorkshire Evening Post. I will say no more than that.

Bernard, you are absolutely right about the experience that youngsters get in Leeds. When we went to Jubilee we looked at a couple of areas. One was a children's play area. It was extremely well stocked, beautifully clean, lovely environment. That was for youngsters who were basically being calmed down, relaxed, call it what you will, before they went in for some really incredibly difficult procedures. Again, from the parent experience they have a lovely play area for children who had had operations, who were post-operation, on the road to recovery, sat playing with their parents in a lovely, safe, warm environment. That cannot be under-estimated (*sic*) at all.

I always say the same thing about the 99 of us in this room when I am talking to friends and other people and community groups outside this Chamber, that after four years here I have come to the conclusion – I think the 99 of us are the best and most under-used resource this Council has in getting out that message to communities. We are the people, and I know that every single person in this room has fantastic links through school governance, through ward forums, through community focus groups, through your tenants and residents' groups, through your playgroups, through whoever you are involved with. What I would ask you all is, spread the word that this consultation is live, it is happening, people must react to it as a matter of some urgency. A very simple link is www.CHFS.org.uk, which will take you to an online petition link which I would encourage everybody in your communities to sign up to.

I think the other thing about this situation is, it is not irretrievable. We are not here today to say, "Hasn't Leeds had a bad rap, what a shame. We have said something in Council – we can all move on." I think the ball is still very much in play here, I genuinely do. I am convinced that the consultation is flawed. I am convinced the more pressure we, as politicians and our communities, put on the deliverers of the Safe and Sustainable Consultation the better and I think there is definite room for manoeuvre. I am not entirely convinced that any of the four consultation options are the best option and I think there should be a compromise that includes the biggest region and county in the country.

Just to finish, I will again leave the last word to the hugely impressive Mr Watterson, who said, "This is where doctors go wrong. The population should not have to follow the doctor; the doctor should follow the population." We have made the case. When a lawyer of Bernard's stature says the case is made, it is made and we have made the case for Leeds, I suggest. We have got the population – three quarters of a million people here, seven million in the region within a certain amount of time, and the massively effective access links that we have got into the city make the case for Leeds. I think the case is there to be made. The doctors should follow the population, not the other way round and I would like to thank colleagues sincerely for the very vocal and intellectual debate that has been had this afternoon. Thank you very much indeed. I move the motion. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, Councillor Dobson. Can I now call for the vote on the motion? *(A vote was taken)* That is UNANIMOUS. Well done.

ITEM 11 - WHITE PAPER MOTION - DISABILITY LIVING ALLOWANCE

THE LORD MAYOR: Can we go on to Item 11, White Paper motion in the name of Councillor Yeadon. Councillor Yeadon, please.

COUNCILLOR YEADON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I would like to move the White Paper regarding the Government's proposals first highlighted in the Comprehensive Spending Review to remove the mobility component of DLA to those living in residential care.

I am sure we all know someone who has benefited through DLA and I am not ashamed to say that I did myself when I was a child. I am sure I do not have to spell out the contribution that the mobility component of this benefit makes to meeting the extra transport costs people with disabilities face every day.

This benefit is a vital tool empowering people with disabilities to live independently and it is my belief that this tool should be available to all those who need it regardless of their accommodation type. It should not be right that a person with a learning disability living in a local MENCAP-run accommodation which happens to be a registered care home does not receive this benefit when a person with a learning disability who lives in an independent living project run by the Local Authority does.

I was hopeful that we could have this debate without descending into party political argy-bargy, so I am a tad disappointed of the tone of Councillor Golton's amendment but, hey, I do not think my White Paper is a million miles away from the motion that was passed at the Lib Dem Spring Conference only a few weeks ago, so I am hoping, Stewart, that should be reassuring.

I will acknowledge that the Government consultation on the consultation response published after my White Paper was submitted confirmed that this proposal would be delayed and a review would take place through the Personal Independent Payment overhaul. However, what the response does not say is that this policy has been withdrawn. It does not say that this proposal is off the table and that is where we want this proposal to be – off that table.

It is not just myself and the Lib Dem Spring Conference that has concerns about the idea. A coalition of 40 different disability organisations are campaigning very effectively against this idea. A survey of people living in residential homes conducted by MENCAP, SCOPE, Leonard Cheshire Disability, found that 100% of residents used their DLA mobility component to help them get out and about. They spent it on accessible transport, mobility aids, taxis and towards the cost of a Motability car. This enabled them to attend medical appointments, get to work, meet up with friends and family, attend college, volunteer for a good cause – all in aid of the Big Society – and go to the cinema or theatre, but just generally play an active, independent and valued role in society, which is exactly what Government policy has been seeking for over ten years from the Valuing People White Paper in 2001, Putting

People First in 2007 and even to the Coalition Government's Capable Communities and Active Citizens Consultation published last year which claims to want to help people to be independent.

If this proposal is implemented it will be a complete contradiction to the policy of empowerment, personalisation and active citizenship. MENCAP, Leonard Cheshire and SCOPE's survey found that if the Government's proposal became a reality, 80% of the respondents of their survey would see much less of their family and friends; 73% said that they would lose their independence. We do not want to go back to a time when people with disabilities were out of sight and out of mind, which is why it is vital that this proposal is not just reviewed but abandoned completely.

What I hope is that the review of this proposal highlights some of the myths which have allowed for this idea to be dreamt up in the first place. The idea that Local Authority contracts would cover costs relating to residents' mobility needs is wholly unrealistic, particularly at this time of budgetary crisis. Leeds City Council contracts with care homes do not cover these costs and, quite frankly, at this moment in time we would struggle to do so.

One of the beauties of the mobility component is that it is paid directly to the individual carer and it is up to them how it is used. You could say it was the first version of self-directed support. Individuals should not be dependent on their care provider to get about. This Government has announced a review, but until Clause 83 of the Welfare Reform Bill is completely withdrawn, this vital benefit remains under threat.

Let us send a clear message to the Government that a review is not enough, we want a definite commitment that mobility will not be limited. I move. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Selby, please.

COUNCILLOR SELBY: Thank you, Lord Mayor. In seconding this amendment may I point out that so far as the amendment moved by Councillor Golton is concerned, he refers to or gives the impression that the mobility component will continue and it is being reviewed, all that is happening at a moment is a review. Let us deal with what the reality is. The reality is Clause 83(1)(b) of the Bill, "No amount in respect of personal independence payment" – that is the proposals to take the disability living allowance – "which is attributable to entitlements of the mobility component is payable in respect of a person for a period when the person meets the condition in sub-section 2." Sub-section 2 the condition is that, "The person is an inpatient of a hospital or similar institution or a resident of a care home in circumstances in which any of the costs of any qualifying service is provided for the person are borne out of the public or local funds by virtue of a specified enactment."

In reality, Clause 83(1)(b) and 83(2) are still there, notwithstanding the comments about a review. That in effect means that we are taking away the independence of people living in residential care, in Local Authority homes who have the benefit of the mobility component but they will not be able to go out on trips or anything of that nature because they will not be able to afford to because the mobility allowance has been taken away.

When the Welfare Reform Bill was discussed in the House of Commons, the Labour Party put down an amendment to decline giving a second reading, one of the reasons being because of proposals to withdraw the mobility components of the Disability Living Allowance from people in residential care and failure to provide sufficient safeguards for future necessary reform. That is what the Labour Party's view was. We were against this mean, spiteful measure that is proposed by this Conservative-led Government.

What happened in the vote? Deliberately, wilfully, cheerfully and spitefully the following Members of Parliament voted against that very sensible amendment. Who were they? Stuart Andrew, Greg Mulholland and even Councillor Procter's friend Alec Shelbrooke.

COUNCILLOR PROCTER: He is Councillor Wakefield's friend.

COUNCILLOR: You leave Alec alone! He is in and out of the news like a yo-yo.

COUNCILLOR SELBY: What we do know, we know he is not a friend of theirs over that. That is the reality of what is happening.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: I am going to his wedding.

COUNCILLOR PROCTER: Yes, you got the wedding invite.

COUNCILLOR SELBY: As Councillor Yeadon highlighted, many, many organisations have campaigned to ask the Government to review this matter. When the Prime Minister last week was asked, bearing in mind all that was happening, what was his approach, basically to say there is a review, shut up, go away. His comments were, "The review of DLA is rolled into the Personal Independence Payment. This is how we will reform the mobility component." He did not say he is going to take it away. It is in the White Paper.

The amendment from Councillor Golton does not talk in terms of welcoming the removal of this mean-minded, spiteful suggestion. What his amendment deals with is this, it welcomes the Government's decision to look at this measure as part of the introduction of the PIP which will ensure the mobility needs of people in residential care are guaranteed in the most appropriate way." What the hell does that mean? I will be interested, should Councillor Golton move his amendment, it will be interesting to hear exactly how he is going to explain what is the appropriate way.
(interruption)

No, because this is the reality. Over 40 organisations campaigning for the disabled have said, "Please take this item out of the Bill." All we are asking is that this item - we are asking in this White Paper - be taken out of the Bill. We would like your support on that, not a review, not at this time next year. We are having a review, because of the Conservative-led incompetence on the reforms to the National Health Service. This is another review to try and kick things into the long grass as well.

The whole approach of the Conservative Party on this reminds me of the person who played the part in the film Thank You for Smoking, a gentleman by the name of Nick Naylor, a handsome, smooth-talking tobacco lobbyist trying to persuade

people to smoke cigarettes. It was an extremely good satirical film. It reminded me, when I saw it, of David Cameron and Stewart Golton in terms of smooth talking.

THE LORD MAYOR: Can you finish, Councillor?

COUNCILLOR SELBY: Yes, certainly.

THE LORD MAYOR: We are in the winding-up process.

COUNCILLOR SELBY: That is fine. I shall sit down then. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Unfortunately Councillor Golton is not going to be able to make any comments. *(interruption)* Could I ask Councillor Golton to move his amendment without comments, please?

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: I move. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Well done!

COUNCILLOR G LATTY: I missed out on speaking so I am certainly not missing out on seconding!

THE LORD MAYOR: Moved with aplomb! Can we now go on to a vote on the amendment. I did not hear any bell. Has there been a bell? *(bell rung)* I hear a bell!

Can we go on to the vote on the amendment in the name of Councillor Golton. *(A vote was taken)* That is LOST, that amendment.

Can we now vote on the main motion in the name of Councillor Yeadon, please? *(A vote was taken)* That motion is CARRIED.

ITEM 12 – WHITE PAPER MOTION - CUTS TO FRONTLINE SERVICES

THE LORD MAYOR: That takes us on to 12. Do you wish to move at this stage?

COUNCILLOR LOBLEY: Lord Mayor, under provision of Council Procedure Rule 12.2(b) and (c) I would like to seek leave of Council to introduce the motion before proceeding to address Council on it.

THE LORD MAYOR: All right. You will not be able to address. Can we vote in favour of Procedure Rule 12.2? *(A vote was taken)* That is LOST so we will not discuss that one.

ITEM 13 – WHITE PAPER MOTION – PROCEDURE RULE 3.1(d) – LOCAL GOVERNMENT PENSION SCHEME.

THE LORD MAYOR: Can we go on to 13, please? Could I ask, the White Paper in the name of James Lewis, for James to move without comment?

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: I move, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR MULHERIN: Formally second, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Fox to move an amendment.

COUNCILLOR FOX: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Having waited five-and-a-half hours, may I formally move the amendment! *(laughter)*

COUNCILLOR LOBLEY: I second, my Lord Mayor, and try to catch up.

THE LORD MAYOR: OK, we have to move fast now. Can I have a vote on the amendment? *(A vote was taken)* That is clearly LOST.

Can we go on and vote for the motion in the name of Councillor Lewis unamended, White Paper 13. *(A vote was taken)* That is clearly CARRIED.

ITEM 14 – WHITE PAPER MOTION – PROCEDURE RULE 3.1(d) – HIGH SPEED RAIL LINK.

THE LORD MAYOR: Item 14, can I ask Richard Lewis to move this?

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

COUNCILLOR LOBLEY: I will second that, thank you.

THE LORD MAYOR: All those in favour of that motion please show? *(A vote was taken)* That is cleared CARRIED.

ITEM 15 – WHITE PAPER MOTION –PROCEDURE RULE 3.1(d) –AIR POLLUTION FEASIBILITY STUDY

THE LORD MAYOR: We are on to 15 now, White Paper motion in the name of James Monaghan. James?

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

COUNCILLOR A BLACKBURN: Formally second, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Can I call for a vote? *(A vote was taken)* That is clearly CARRIED, thank you.

ITEM 16 – WHITE PAPER MOTION – PROCEDURE RULE 3.1(d) – PLANNING APPLICATIONS AND HIGHWAYS MATTERS

THE LORD MAYOR: White Paper motion 16 in the name of Andrew Carter. Councillor Loble, are you on this?

COUNCILLOR LOBLEY: I move the motion, my Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR CLEASBY: Second, Lord Mayor, and reserve the right not to speak. *(laughter)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Very wise, Brian! Can I call for the vote on that? *(A vote was taken)*

Surprisingly, that clears the agenda. Thank you very much. Can I wish all those who are contesting the election on 5th May all the very best.

COUNCILLOR TAGGART: Including yourself, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Including myself, yes. Even the Lord Mayor. Thank you very much and safe journey home.

(The meeting closed at 7.12 pm)