

LEEDS CITY COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

Held on

Wednesday, 13 July, 2011

At

THE COUNCIL CHAMBER,
CIVIC HALL, LEEDS

In the Chair:

THE LORD MAYOR
(COUNCILLOR REV A TAYLOR)

VERBATIM REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS

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VERBATIM REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS OF LEEDS CITY COUNCIL
MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 13th JULY, 2011

THE LORD MAYOR: Can I first of all, before we start the proceedings, just remind people about their mobile phones and if they are carrying a mobile phone and that happens to be on, you can leave it on but it will cost you and I think, probably in view of inflation, I say £10 now to the Lord Mayor's Charity and I am sure you all agree it is a very worthy cause.

Before we begin the proceedings I have one or two notices to give out. The first one is to announce with regret the recent death of Lord Harewood, who is the Seventh Earl of Harewood. He passed away this Monday, 11th July. He was 88 years old and, as most of you know, he was first cousin to the Queen. He survived a spell in Colditz during the last war. He was a founder of Opera North. He served on the board of English National Opera and in 1961 he became President of Leeds United. I think that after making this announcement I will be writing to the family on behalf of the Council, but before we move on I would invite you all to stand in a moment of silent tribute.

(Silent tribute)

THE LORD MAYOR: On a much lighter note I would like to read the following letter that was dated on 4 July and was received from the Duke and the Duchess of Cambridge. It reads:

"The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge have asked me to write and thank you and all the citizens of Leeds for your very kind congratulations and to send you all their very best wishes. It is a very happy time for their Royal Highnesses and, indeed, for us all and your message was greatly appreciated."

Thank you for that.

ITEM 1 – MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 26 MAY 2011

THE LORD MAYOR: Can we now move on to Item 1 on the Order Paper? I call upon Councillor James Lewis to move that the Minutes be approved.

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: I move, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: To Councillor Lobley, please?

COUNCILLOR LOBLEY: I second, my Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: *(A vote was taken)* CARRIED. Thank you.

ITEM 2 – DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

THE LORD MAYOR: Can we move on now to Item 2, to the Declarations of Interests. The list of written declarations submitted by Members has been on display in the ante-room, on deposit in in public galleries and has been circulated to each Member's place in the Chamber. Before I ask for any further individual declarations,

I would like to ask Mr Pritchard to give us an update on the issues relating to White Paper Number 10.

THE CITY SOLICITOR: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Hopefully you will have either by email or on your chairs a copy of an advice note that was circulated this morning. Yesterday afternoon I received a letter from a solicitor acting for the Conservative Group of the Council urging me to reconsider the position I had taken on declarations of interest in correspondence with Councillor Lobley, failing which court action could result, including injunctive relief seeking to prevent Members from ignoring the provisions of the Code, or post the event, i.e. post today, judicial review proceedings.

Lord Mayor, I thought this was serious enough to prompt me to take specialist legal advice on the position regarding declarations of interest and that advice is contained in the note that has been circulated today.

Lord Mayor, I will briefly go through that advice note because it is clearly an important matter for all Members. It has been prepared in the light of advice received from Colin Crawford of counsel, who specialises in Local Government issues.

“As with all declarations of interest, individual Members should decide whether they have a personal interest that should be declared at the meeting and whether that interest is prejudicial which means that they should withdraw from the Council Chamber at the commencement of the consideration of the item.”

I am sure all Members are aware of that. Next in the notes is the definition of personal interests. I will not go through that in detail; it is in the notes and I am sure you are all familiar with that.

“Having regard to the definition, in terms of membership of the relevant Trade Unions”

- namely the unions mentioned in paragraph 3.2 –

“this clearly gives rise to a personal interest that should be declared. Also, any Member who works for or who has been appointed to a relevant Trade Union or who has received payment from or benefit in kind from a relevant Trade Union should declare a personal interest. Members whose close family or close associates are employed by a relevant Trade Union or who have been appointed to any position by a relevant Trade Union should also declare an interest”

- a personal interest –

“It can also be noted that a personal interest will exist if the decision in relation to that business might reasonably be regarded as affecting your well-being, more than other groups as defined in [paragraph] (b) above. Well-being is not the same as financial position and has been interpreted by the courts to include strongly held beliefs, depending on the particular circumstances. Thus, a person who [holds] strongly held or entrenched views about trade unions, either for or against, could be considered to have personal interest [affecting] his/her well-being to a greater extent than the

majority of other Council tax payers, ratepayers or inhabitants of the authority's area."

That is the personal interest advice.

In terms of prejudicial interest, again, you will be familiar with the definition of prejudicial interest in the Code of Conduct.

"If a Member's interest is limited to being a member of one of the relevant Trade Unions then this alone will not give rise to a prejudicial interest. As seen above, membership is defined as a personal interest and it would require more to take mere membership over the threshold to being a prejudicial interest. That would depend on the relevant facts, which includes the significance of the personal interest in relation to the nature of the decision to be reached, and how this would be viewed by a member of the public.

The Code also specifies that you do not have a prejudicial interest in any business of the authority where that business does not affect your financial position or the financial position of a body of which you are a member. That simply makes clear that this would not be prejudicial interest – it does not mean that if the decision does affect the financial position of a body of which you are a member that it is automatically a prejudicial interest."

It does not follow that it is automatically a prejudicial interest.

"It simply means that where it does affect the financial position of a body of which you are a member then that has to be assessed against the relevant facts, which includes the significance of the personal interest in relation to nature of the decision to be reached, and how this would be viewed by a member of the public.

It should also be noted that the test is not whether in the light of the relevant the personal interest **could** prejudice your judgement, but it is whether it is reasonable to conclude that it is **likely to** do so.

Thus is requires more than to take mere membership over the threshold to being a prejudicial interest"

So, in other words, just mere membership of a trade union is not enough to take you over the threshold and take you into prejudicial interest.

"So, for example, officers or employees of a relevant Trade Union, or who have a close family member or close associate who is an employee or officer of the relevant Trade Union may consider that they have a prejudicial interest having regard to the 'Public Perception Test' referred to --- above."

This is probably the most controversial area:

"Turning to the case of Members who have received any form of payment or payment in kind from a relevant Trade Union including towards election costs (which will include the cost of producing leaflets) then counsel [Colin Crawford] has described the position

on whether or not such funding could give rise to a prejudicial interest as 'borderline'.

Members will have to apply the 'Public Perception Test' referred to --- above to come to a view on whether a member of the public with knowledge of the relevant facts would reasonably regard your interest as so significant that it is likely to prejudice your [assessment] of the public interest.

[So], for example, this perception may well be different if a union or company contributed to party funds generally, whether nationally or locally, and the party then paid your election or leaflet expenses, or whether the contribution was made directly to you or your agent.

There is a potential distinction there. Finally, Lord Mayor:

"Moving away from the question of declarations of interest"

- and talking about predetermination and bias –

"Members should also be mindful of the legal rules concerning predetermination and bias. Members should not approach the consideration of the matter with a 'closed mind' and whilst they are entitled to have a predisposition to a particular view, they should not take part if they have predetermined the matter, whether for or against the motion. In this respect, Members who hold strong views on the merits or demerits of Trade Unions should consider their position before deciding whether they should participate in the debate."

Apologies for labouring that slightly, Lord Mayor, but I think it is an important issue.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, Mr Pritchard. In the light of those remarks, are there any further individual declarations or corrections to those notified on the list?

COUNCILLOR V MORGAN: Lord Mayor, I am Chair of South Seacroft Good Neighbours. It relates to page 9, Item 8.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Councillor Procter?

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Lord Mayor, just in terms of the advice that we have received from the City Solicitor, what I am not clear about is where the advice actually is from counsel that he refers to. It is not *here*, as I understand it. This is a note that has been prepared in light of counsel's advice. I very much would like to see counsel's advice before we proceed, Lord Mayor.

THE CITY SOLICITOR: Lord Mayor, Counsel has had an input into this note of advice. He commented on it this morning and added and amended it this morning.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Lord Mayor, notwithstanding, and I do not wish to hold up proceedings, I am sure that the meeting will continue but I think it is only appropriate that those who are interested in seeing counsel's advice should see counsel's advice as written. I am mindful that the actual White Paper concerned is much later on in the Order Paper and those that may still have concerns would still

have an opportunity to declare their interest before the matter is actually debated, so in no way would releasing that advice hold up proceedings today; it would just enable Members to be in possession of all of the facts, Lord Mayor, which I think is wholly appropriate.

THE CITY SOLICITOR: Lord Mayor, again, the advice that I received from Colin Crawford is built into this note, so the advice forms part of this note.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Lord Mayor, I take it the City Solicitor is refusing to release that advice he has obtained from counsel in relation to the declaration of interest of all Members. I find that frankly, Lord Mayor, extraordinary that we cannot see, as a Council, advice that has been obtained to advise us - us - on the rightful declaration of our interests. It is only appropriate that we should see that advice, Lord Mayor. I am not quite sure where we go in terms of the City Solicitor being instructed to release that advice, but it seems bizarre, completely bizarre that there should be any reluctance to release it at this stage. It is something that we all should benefit from and, clearly, would need to benefit from when determining if we have an interest to declare.

THE LORD MAYOR: Do I take it in general terms that that would be the mood of each and every one of us here this afternoon? No. Therefore, we have had advice that has been given. I think we have to take that on the merits on which it has been communicated and therefore we need, as individuals, to make up our own minds on this matter as a way of proceeding. I would point out that if it comes to a debate later on and people are speaking, we would have to be very clear about what we say because of the potential serious allegations that could be made to each particular Member and I would hope that we would all be ready to act responsibly on this one.

We have had the information. In light of that I think we ought to proceed.

Are there, therefore, any further individual declarations or corrections to those notified on the list?

COUNCILLOR PARKER: Lord Mayor, my son is a member of a union.

COUNCILLOR GABRIEL: I would like to have withdrawn a declaration on White Paper 11. I am indeed a landlady but my tenant is not on any benefits whatsoever and would be mortified to see their name on their.

COUNCILLOR TAGGART: Membership of UNITE.

COUNCILLOR CAMPBELL: Yes, Lord Mayor, White Paper 10, personal interest, my wife is a member of the GMB. *(Applause)* I have to say, Lord Mayor, I have never seen her make a boiler, but there we are! *(laughter)* I also need to declare a personal interest as a member of the National Union of Teachers, though it is only a personal interest because they have never offered to pay anything towards my election expenses. *(laughter and applause)*

COUNCILLOR FOX: Thank you, Lord Mayor, personal interest on Item 11, Welfare Reforms. I have a close relative in receipt of benefits and Item 10, I am a member of Otley Action for Older People, which is just on the margin of whether it is personal or not.

COUNCILLOR HARRAND: On the question of legal advice, can we understand...

THE LORD MAYOR: Can I take apologies first? I am looking for anyone who is declaring an interest.

COUNCILLOR HARRAND: I am going to get the opportunity to raise the subject of legal advice again, am I?

THE LORD MAYOR: I am asking about individual declarations of interest.

COUNCILLOR HARRAND: Shall I have the opportunity to raise this again?

THE LORD MAYOR: There may be an opportunity later on in the debate but on this occasion I think not. I want us to keep clear what we are doing and at the moment I am asking for further individual declarations or corrections to those notified on the list, at this particular moment.

COUNCILLOR HARRAND: The question I am not permitted to ask, can we understand that no Member of Council has read this advice, or have some read it and some have not read it? That is the question I would have put if I had been permitted.

THE LORD MAYOR: Right, thank you.

THE CITY SOLICITOR: Can I just clarify once more, the advice is contained in the advice note which all Members of Council have had.

COUNCILLOR ANDERSON: Item 11, they have got me down as a Member of the Leeds Initiative Narrowing the Gap Board. I think that has been made extinct, as far as I know. It is no longer in existence. I am, however, a member of Leeds Initiative Executive but not the Narrowing the Gap Board.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Councillor Andrew Carter.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Close family member in receipt of disabled benefit.

COUNCILLOR GROVES: I have a correction. I am a member of the GMB but I am not a member of UNISON.

THE LORD MAYOR: Any further declarations or corrections to the list? Therefore, can everyone, please, by a show of hands confirm that they have read the list or the list as amended and agreed its contents insofar as they relate to their own interests?
(*Show of hands*) Thank you.

Can I, before we go on to Item 3, extend on your behalf a very sincere and warm welcome to James Nxumalo, the Mayor of Durban, who is with us today (*Applause*); to Linda Mbonambi, who is also here today (*Applause*); and to Shelley Gielink (*Applause*) who is the International Relations Department in Durban.

Can I also extend a warm welcome to members of the public sitting in the public galleries and if you are around later on when it comes to tea, you will be most welcome to join us.

ITEM 3 – COMMUNICATIONS

THE LORD MAYOR: Can I now move on to Item 3 and that is to ask Councillor Yeadon to say something regarding Southern Cross Care Providers. Councillor Yeadon.

COUNCILLOR YEADON: Thank you, Lord Mayor, and thank you for allowing me to make a statement.

Lord Mayor, Members of Council, we have all read with mounting concern the saga of the Southern Cross Care Home business and its trading difficulties. On 11th July the announcement we all feared finally came, that Southern Cross Healthcare is ceasing to run its care homes and that the homes are to be taken over by other providers.

I am in a position to give elected Members some update information and reassurance in relation to the national picture and to that of Leeds.

The current intention is that Southern Cross will stop running its homes over the coming months but this does not mean that the homes will close. The company is working with a number of other parties to ensure continued running of their homes by other providers. Local Authorities, through the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services, are supporting this and are continuing to buy care from them so as not to affect the further viability of the businesses. Some of the landlords are companies who also run care homes and they are likely to take over the running of the homes they already own. They and other providers will be looking at the other homes with the landlords to determine who takes them on.

Some people have asked what would happen if Southern Cross were to go into administration before new operators for homes are found. If this were the case, the official administrator would continue to operate the home and has responsibility to sell the homes as going concerns. The homes would continue to run whilst this happens. All across the country as well as in Leeds ADAS and the Local Authorities are working with Southern Cross and will work with the new providers to ensure smooth transition of ownership and contractual relationships to minimise any disruption for residents and their families. As soon as we start to hear from landlords about the proposals for local care homes, we will make sure there is a good communication plan to keep residents and relatives involved all the way. They will begin to address specific issues about what it means for people living in named care homes. The statement released by Southern Cross suggests that the time scales for this to happen is from now until mid-October.

The Leeds position is currently that we are assured by the Regional Director of Southern Cross that no home in Leeds is under immediate threat of closure due to the current financial situation. I can offer Members of Council the further reassurance in case one of the seven Southern Cross homes were to close. At the last snapshot we had the care capacity in the city taken on 4th July this year that there were over 220 vacancies in independent care homes across the city – an ample number of care beds to step into the breach if it should become necessary.

Lastly, the Director of Adult Social Services has already issued one briefing for Members about the Southern Cross issue and I have asked her to keep Members updated so that you can reassure concerned constituents that we have this matter firmly in hand.

Thank you for your patience. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, Councillor Yeadon.

ITEM 4 - DEPUTATIONS

THE LORD MAYOR: Can we now move on to Item 4? There are four deputations before us this afternoon and they are all fairly clear.

Before the first deputation, can I ask the Chief Executive to say a few words, please?

THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. To report that there are four deputations. The first is TENFOLD, the Leeds Learning Disability Forum regarding people with learning disabilities who live in Leeds; Lingfields and Fir Trees Residents' Group regarding resources in the Moor Allerton area with particular reference to the Open House Community Centre are the second; the third is the Carr Manor Road Safety Group regarding road safety issues in the Carr Manor area; and the fourth is Morley Town Council re the possible closure of Knowle Manor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Can I call upon Councillor James Lewis, please?

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: Thank you. I move that the deputations are received.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Lobley?

COUNCILLOR LOBLEY: I second, my Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: I take it we are all in favour? (*Agreed*)

DEPUTATION 1 – TENFOLD, the Leeds Learning Disability Forum

THE LORD MAYOR: Good afternoon and welcome to today's Council meeting. I am going to ask you to make your speech to Council and it should not be longer than five minutes and if you could, please, begin by introducing the people in your deputation that would be good.

SUSAN: Hello, my name is Susan. I am the Co-Chair of the Leeds Learning Disability Partnership Board.

In January 50 people with learning disabilities took over this Council Chamber. Lots of Councillors gave a small donation so that this was a possibility. We learned about what Councillors do and then we voted on lots of things that matter to us, like transport, housing and employment.

Could Councillor Yeadon, Councillor Davy, Councillor Latty and Councillor Ewans please stand up or hold your hands up? We want to thank you for taking part in our meeting in this great Chamber.

ALAN: Hello, my name is Alan. I am a member of the Fulfilling Lives Customer Council. Like you, we have been elected to speak up for people.

After the Take Over Day we wanted to learn more about making our voices heard and be involved in democracy.

Twelve of us visited the Houses of Parliament in Learning Disability Week. We met six Leeds' MPS. I asked Hilary Benn lots of question. He is my local MP. I asked him about using my bus pass before 9.30 am.

JONATHAN BUTLER: Hello. My name is Jonathan Butler. I am a governor at Leeds Partnership NHS Trust. When we were in London we asked the MPs if they would support us coming to another event in the autumn. They all said they would come.

We are hoping that lots more people with a learning disability will join in. We are going to run it a bit like Question Time on the telly and it would be great if we could do it here in the Civic Hall.

We have come here today to ask you for your support in making it happen.
(Applause)

ANN: Hello, my name is Ann. Thank you for helping us. Thank you for the Take Over Day and the trip to London where it is really good. I really enjoyed it.

We need a voice. We can do more. We need your help. Can we do this again? (Standing ovation)

THE LORD MAYOR: Can I call upon Councillor James Lewis, please.

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: Thank you. I move that the deputation is referred to the Executive Board. Thank you for coming.

COUNCILLOR LOBLEY: I am delighted to second, Lord Mayor. Thank you.

THE LORD MAYOR: (A vote was taken) CARRIED. Susan and your friends, 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 and a safe journey home. Thank you. (Applause)

DEPUTATION 2 – LINGFIELDS AND FIR TREES RESIDENTS' GROUP

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

MR I GREENBERG: Thank you. Lord Mayor, Councillors, my name is Ian Greenberg and I chair the Lingfield and Fir Trees Tenants' and Residents' Association. I am accompanied by Committee Members Lorraine Townsend and Howard White.

For many years people in the Moor Allerton area worked to establish a community centre to meet the needs of tenants and residents. We were finally granted the use of a former double-fronted shop and a committee of trustees was set

up to manage the Open House Community Centre, as it was named. With professional paid staff and a team of volunteers, all ran reasonably well until just over two years ago when the Outer North East Area Management Committee reduced the annual grant and the paid staff had to be dismissed. The reduced grant had a proviso that moneys were not to be spent employing staff. All decisions were taken by trustees, who were not residents but had appointed themselves. However, at the following AGM they conceded an alteration whereby a management committee would be established allowing residents and users to make decisions involving the day-to-day business. Trustees would be involved in policy making.

Unfortunately, this committee was never allowed to function properly and those who had previously worked in a voluntary capacity quickly left. Soon after, a former trustee who had just lost her job approached the trustees for assistance. Despite the bar on paid employment using taxpayers' funds, the trustees agreed to pay her around £5,000 per annum for just twelve hours per week, with a job title of Sessional Worker, but no job description.

Attempts by the trustees to get free legal advice in order to redefine the meaning of "sessional work" came to nothing. The former trustee was appointed without advertising a vacancy or giving opportunity for others to apply. In fact, it was done in secret. Eventually this became public knowledge and the trustees received a number of complaints, not least from the Residents' Group. Without contrition, the trustees repeated their action a few months later, this time paying the husband. It was three months before residents discovered what had happened.

Recognising their inability to run the Open House Community Centre trustees had, on a number of occasions, asked the Residents' Group to take over the management but then showed reluctance when this offer was accepted. Residents therefore pressed the trustees for a meeting and one was finally arranged for March of this year.

It is at this point that appreciation must go to Councillor Peter Harrand from the trustees for his agreement to chair the meeting. The trustees refused to agree to relinquish management of the centre, or to admit residents on to their committee, preferring to make criticisms of a personal nature. In consequence, the likelihood of the centre closing was put to Councillor Harrand. His response was immediate and forthright – "Over my dead body!" he declared. Will Councillor Harrand now keep to his promise and ensure that the centre remains open?

Soon after this meeting, an ongoing investigation into the management and finances of Open House, which was being conducted by the Commercial Asset Management Section of LCC, was inexplicably stopped.

The four trustees of Open House are self-appointing and unaccountable. They do not live in the area and lack both knowledge and experience of the Lingfield and Fir Trees community. Prior to last year's AGM, without consultation or agreement, they formed themselves into a limited company. Although limited companies are formed to protect the directors rather than the business, this had the added advantage of legalising their possession of around £10,000-worth of property, most of which had been donated by the community and purchased for community use.

Following the meeting a letter was received from Councillor Harrand. His considered opinion was that, because the trustees were a limited company as well as a registered charity, there was nothing that he or the Council could or would do as far

as management of the centre was concerned. We were advised to contact the Charity Commission if we had further complaints. There was no mention of the use or misuse of taxpayers' money.

The current situation is that our community centre is closed more than it is open. Most of the time when the shutters are up, the former trustee and her husband can be seen using the facilities at all hours of the day and night whilst the doors remained locked and residents barred from entry. On a number of occasions the Residents' Group has booked the centre and on one occasion for a meeting with a senior Council officer, and we were unable to gain entry. Occasionally the trustees and their friends have been observed using the centre for private use and by people from outside the area. Individuals from outside the area have been allowed to use the centre for their own personal business ventures without being charged, yet residents have, on occasion, been charged to use the centre.

The trustees have so far refused to surrender the lease and allow a community group to manage the centre properly. Neither have they made any realistic attempt to manage it properly themselves.

THE LORD MAYOR: Can I now ask you to go, please, to your final sentence, because your time is up.

MR I GREENBERG: Yes. Our Area Committee has the stated aim to improve the quality of local decision making and this is understood by residents to mean that we would have say in the management of our community centre and is surely what localisation is about so we therefore call upon the Council---

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Thank you, Ian. (*Applause*) I call upon Councillor James Lewis.

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: Thank you. I move that the matter be referred to the Executive Board for consideration.

COUNCILLOR LOBLEY: I second, my Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: (*A vote was taken*) One against. CARRIED.

Ian, thank you for attending and for what you have said. You will be kept informed of the considerations which your comments will receive. Good afternoon, thank you.

MR I GREENBERG: Thank you.

DEPUTATION 3 – CARR MANOR ROAD SAFETY GROUP

THE LORD MAYOR: Good afternoon and welcome to today's Council meeting. Will you 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 L TAYLOR: Good afternoon. We are here from Carr Manor Road Safety Group. I am Lucy Taylor and this is Barnaby Rosenthal.

The aim of this presentation is to highlight to all Members the significant road safety risks in the Carr Manor Road area.

In response to the Council's proposal to build a new one form entry primary school and attach it to Carr Manor High School, over 500 local residents recently signed a petition, submitted on 27th May, to say that they are concerned about local road safety risks and have requested that the Council address the issues urgently.

We are strongly opposed to the proposal to build a new school on the high school site. We believe that there will be increased staff, parent and school delivery traffic created by the new school without any additional parking facilities and on road that are already dangerously congested at key times of the day.

Whilst educational needs may have been considered as part of the new school proposal, we think that the impact on local residents and increase in road safety risks has not been properly considered. In light of that, we would like Members to make the recommendation to the Executive Board that they reconsider and reject the proposal for a new school in this area.

The existing road risks are as follows. The road that runs directly alongside Carr Manor High School and Carr Manor Primary School (Carr Manor Road) is a busy major bus route with buses passing at ten minute intervals throughout the day.

The road has been narrowed as a traffic calming measure, but this means there is less available parking space for parents and people visiting the school. It also forces buses to squeeze past parked vehicles on one side of the road.

In addition, there is a cycle route on the pavement which means that pupils walking to and from the school have to negotiate buses on one side and bikes on the other.

There is a bus stop at the top end of the road and some Carr Manor residents told us that Carr Manor High School pupils whilst waiting at the bus stop frequently go into their garden and have vandalised their properties.

Carr Manor Primary School Governors have discussed the possibility of a road and community safety project taking place within the school to educate children about their responsibility to residents in the area. However, the Carr Manor Road Safety Group think that the Council should be taking proactive measures to ensure that safety is ensured for all.

Local residents have expressed concern about the absence of parking facilities on Carr Manor Road, which means that parents visiting the school frequently park illegally, creating hazards in the road. This means that pick-up and drop-off times are difficult and dangerous for anyone passing by the school on foot or in a car. This could only be exacerbated by the addition of another school and the traffic that would accompany it.

A concerned resident on Alder Hill Grove, Mr Farooq, reported that his wife is disabled and cannot walk any distance, due to respiratory problems. Mr Farooq has asked that his letter expressing his concerns be included in this presentation, which I will read now.

"Dear Elected Members

I work nights within Leeds. I am a taxi driver and I work for Inner-City cabs. My wife Mrs Farooq is disabled and we have a young son who is in reception at Carr Manor Primary School.

My wife has three degenerative conditions –

Fibromialgia
Nerve debilitating disease
Angina.

My wife is on strong doses of medication to control the pain and symptoms. However, due to the severity of her conditions it is not safe for her to walk any distance. Carr Manor Primary School is at the top of the hill. When the secondary school was developed the road system was changed and the road was narrowed. Parking spaces for residents and visitors were reduced and we were not aware that Carr Manor Primary School has two disabled parking spaces. In future the Headmistress has said to us we can use one of the spaces so that we can pick up and drop off our son to reception.

This is good news for my wife and our family. However, I would like to state in the strongest terms that we are opposed to the proposal to build another school and attach it to Carr Manor High School. We think that there will be far too much disruption to the road system and surrounding areas and it will make travel to and from school even worse for my wife.

As I am sure you can imagine, we need to protect my wife from any unnecessary worry or distress as it may effect (*sic*) her health and cause her symptoms to get worse. I have asked my daughter to help me write this letter and this letter represents the views of my wife, myself, and our friends within the local Asian community.”

That is signed by Mr Farooq and four others.

In conclusion, we believe that the impact on the environment and the health of all local residents should be taken into serious consideration because the increased traffic will inevitably cause more pollution within an already busy area of the city.

It is vital that educational needs are balanced with consideration for the impact on the overall quality of life in the Carr Manor Road area. We urge you to acknowledge and recognise the value concerns raised by local residents. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor James Lewis.

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: Thank you. I move that the matter be referred to Executive Board for consideration.

COUNCILLOR LOBLEY: I second, my Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: (*A vote was taken*) CARRIED. Thank you for attending and for what you have said. You will be kept informed of the considerations which your comments will receive, so good afternoon and thank you again.

DEPUTATION - MORLEY TOWN COUNCIL

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

MR T GRAYSHON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Good afternoon and thank you for granting permission for our delegation to be present at today's Council meeting.

Our delegation is made up of Knowle Manor resident Tony Moorhouse, who is stood next to me, local residents Gareth Beevers and Wynn Kidger, Morley town Councillor Catherine Crosby and myself, Morley Town Councillor Terry Grayshon.

The proposals to close Knowle Manor has been met in Morley with some concern. Residents of Knowle Manor, many of whom have lived there for many years, are worried about their future and do not want to be re-homed. They are more than happy with the service provided by the excellent staff and facilities at Knowle Manor.

Monday this week saw the announcement that Southern Cross, one of the largest residential care home providers in the private sector, was ceasing operations. Here in Leeds hundreds of families and people depend on Southern Cross and the service that it provides.

It would seem to us foolhardy to be suggesting the closure of Council-run care homes in Leeds, which includes Knowle Manor, in the current climate and without careful consideration of the Dilnot Report.

We believe that the plans, which amount to the privatisation of residential care for older people in Leeds, are based upon a short term view and greater consideration and investigation needs to be carried out before any decision on the future of residential care in Leeds is made.

There can be no genuine argument for the closure of Knowle Manor, one of only two care homes in Leeds to have received an "Excellent" rating from the Care and Quality Commission. It appears that the Care and Quality Commission rating has not formed part of the decision-making process, as can be seen from the attached option appraisal matrix which was provided by Leeds City Council. I do apologise that Members do not have that in front of them. I was asked to withdraw that document this morning in a telephone call. However, should Members wish to see it I am sure that that can be made available to them.

I shall continue. However, the valuation of each site for "demolition and development of housing" has been one of the factors regarding Day Centres. Surely this cannot be equitable; are the City Council putting profit before people under their care?

Lord Mayor, we request that the proposed closure of Knowle Manor and, indeed, the other care homes in the City of Leeds does not go ahead. We need to ensure that the care of our elderly residents continues and that places like Knowle Manor are able to offer an excellent standard of care to their residents.

I will leave the final words on this to Tony Moorhouse, who has lived in Knowle Manor for eight years. In an interview with the Morley Advertiser and Observer Tony said:

“When I moved in I was told that I would have a bed and a house for life. Now they have gone back on their word. We do not want it to close; it is our home.”

Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Can I call upon Councillor Lewis, please.

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: Thank you. I move that the matter be referred to the Executive Board for consideration.

COUNCILLOR LOBLEY: I second, my Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: (*A vote was taken*) That is CARRIED. Terry, thank you for attending, along with your delegation, and for what you had to say. You will be kept informed of the consideration which your comments will receive. Good afternoon.

MR T GRAYSHON: Thank you, Lord Mayor, good afternoon.

ITEM 5 - REPORT

(a)

THE LORD MAYOR: Can we now move on to Item 5. Councillor James Lewis.

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I move that Item 5(a) be moved in terms of the Notice.

COUNCILLOR LOBLEY: I second, my Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: (*A vote was taken*) CARRIED. Thank you.

(b)

THE LORD MAYOR: Can I call upon Councillor Wakefield, please.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I move that 5(b) be moved in terms of the Notice.

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: I second, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Can I call upon Councillor Pauleen Grahame, please.

COUNCILLOR P GRAHAME: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Lord Mayor, I wish to speak in relation to the Annual Report of Scrutiny. As you will be aware, this year there have been significant changes to the way in which Scrutiny works in Leeds. It therefore seems like a good opportunity to reflect on the achievements of Scrutiny last year and consider the work Scrutiny will be doing this year.

Firstly let me say as the Scrutiny Chair I am very proud of the achievements of all the Scrutiny Boards last year. There is no doubt that the work of our Boards has helped improve services and has contributed to the development of Council policy. The success of Scrutiny was instrumental in the Council being awarded the Excellence Standard for Equality Framework this year. Whatever side of the Chamber you sit on, no-one can deny that the way in which we deliver public services is changing. It is therefore more important than ever that we are outward looking and able to scrutinise creative new ideas about how we deliver services, especially for our most vulnerable residents.

Thanks to the changes to Scrutiny this year, I hope our Boards will be able to make an even bigger difference to public services. We will be able to take a more strategic approach to policy, as well as keeping a watchful eye on how our services are performing. The people who will benefit from this work are, as always, the residents of Leeds. As a Scrutiny Chair I am very proud of the work that was carried out last year; for example at a time the Council faces unprecedented financial challenges I was delighted to see Scrutiny playing a key role in shaping the budget. Scrutiny's input helped make last year's budget preparations the most transparent and inclusive of any I have known. The work of Scrutiny Boards has also demonstrated yet again how effective cross-party work can be, working with Councillor Anderson's Board on the missed bin issue, call centre involvement, Councillor Procter will be attending the September 5th Board working together on the issue of Council officers' non-return of declaration of interest forms which should be mandatory and Members know they have no choice, it has to be returned.

Let me give you an example of how the work of Scrutiny has improved working practices. At the request of the North West (Inner) Area Committee my Board looked at how the Council manages void properties and the disposal of these properties. We considered the roles of Corporate Property Maintenance and Property Services in this process. The Board recommended that both services should be brought together under one directorate. This has now been done - one of the many recommendations which have been implemented to the Council's benefit.

This year all Boards will again be tackling a range of important issues. For my Board perhaps the most important role we will play is in monitoring the budget. However, we also have to look at the usual important subjects of customer service and the way in which our residents access the Council ICT will be another very key enquiry area. The Board will continue to scrutinise the call centre; this was a request of the Executive Member.

I hope this year will see Scrutiny go from strength to strength. My main aim this year is to see more members of the public getting involved in Scrutiny and telling us what they think of Council services.

We are going to see massive changes to our public services as a result of huge Government cuts and increasing pressures on services so I believe it is more important than ever that we find a way to engage the public in Scrutiny so that they are involved in shaping the future of services in Leeds.

I would like to thank all Board Members for their contribution and commitment to Scrutiny Central and Corporate, now known as Resources and Council Functions. I can assure Council that the Board works with and holds the Executive Member, Councillor Wakefield, to account and fully scrutinises his portfolio. We hope to continue with the success of last year as I am sure that the Chairs and Board Members of the other Scrutiny Boards will be working to achieve.

I have to mention Councillor Procter's Board that can only be described as the Ben Hur of Scrutiny. It starts at 9.30am and goes on until after 3.00 pm.

COUNCILLOR TAGGART: The following day!

COUNCILLOR P GRAHAME: I am speaking from experience, I have subbed several times on the Board.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: We work the Members hard, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR P GRAHAME: I would like to say thank you for being given the opportunity to speak on Scrutiny. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Wakefield.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I think that is the first time we have had an overview of the work of the Scrutiny following an Annual Report, so I would like to compliment and congratulate the Chair on, I think, a very balanced view of the work of Scrutiny this year.

I do not think yet we have got parity of esteem, which has always been the ambition of Scrutiny and, I believe many Members in here, but I do think as you have mentioned, Councillor Grahame, that some of the work of Scrutiny Board, from all Scrutiny Boards, has been extremely helpful in changing the practices of this Council, which is what you want to see, more constructive dialogue.

I am looking forward to being scrutinised again next year by all Members of your Board. I do think you are absolutely right to emphasise the need to actually start looking at different ways of working and looking at ways which will save money and yet still provide the service, and I think that is going to be vital over the next few years.

I would just like to thank everybody who has served on Scrutiny Boards. As you mentioned, some people who served under Scrutiny Boards under John Procter have done a fair bit in a day – I think it is six hours without breaks. They deserve medals. I think there has been some good stuff done on that Board and not so good stuff on that Board *(laughter)* but we will look positively over it because I really think all Scrutiny Boards have got a more important role over the next few years. Thanks to every Member and I move, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. *(A vote was taken)* CARRIED.

(c)

THE LORD MAYOR: Can I call upon Councillor James Lewis.

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

COUNCILLOR NASH: I second, my Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Can I call upon Councillor Matthews, please.

COUNCILLOR MATTHEWS: Thank you, Lord Mayor. In moving the amendment in the Order Paper on behalf of my Group, I am referring to the remuneration to the Chair of the Climate Change Working Group. We have some concerns as it stands that it does not appear to be a properly constituted committee: they do not publish minutes publicly; the Chair does not appear to be elected by Council; is the Chair a Councillor? There is no information in the report and we feel in the interests of transparency to the public if we are remunerating a Councillor to do such an important job, then we need more information.

We as a Group think it should be a committee that has teeth, it is an important subject that we should all rally behind – maybe not everyone in the Chamber agrees with me on that - but we do believe it is important that if we are going to remunerate a Councillor on such an issue that we should have more information and it should be transparent.

Unless our amendment passes we as a Group do not feel we can support this report and we would wish that it was brought back to Council with more information. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Martin Hamilton.

COUNCILLOR M HAMILTON: Second and reserve the right to speak.

THE LORD MAYOR: Can I call upon Councillor Andrew Carter.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Thank you, my Lord Mayor. May I begin by very belatedly congratulating you on your elevation to the Lord Mayoralty. As you know, I was unable to attend the meeting when you were installed, so please accept my good wishes.

I do not want to particularly belabour the points I am going to make because usually we try to endeavour not to pass too many comments on the issue of Member remuneration. However, can I say, I do have some sympathy with the point that has been put forward by Councillor Matthews, because if we are going to create a new body, then surely it should be a body that is open to public scrutiny and is set up in the normal way.

Unfortunately we cannot support the amendment because even if it became part of the substantive resolution, we would have some serious objections. We do not believe at this time that we should be creating additional remunerated posts.

Councillor Wakefield and myself and, indeed, Councillor Golton agreed before the budget round this last time that Members who receive over a certain amount would take a 3% reduction, something which I wholeheartedly support. We also agreed other measures to try and reduce Members' allowances.

This paper does indicate an overall reduction of almost £3,000 in Members' allowances, but we have missed a significant opportunity to make a more significant reduction than that, probably £20,000 or £30,000, which I think would be a very good message to send to the people of Leeds at this appropriate time.

I do not propose to say any more than that but those are the reasons why we will not support this – not because we do not think that we should make the £2,000 reduction but because it could have been more.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Wakefield.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Thank you, Lord Mayor. First of all, I do welcome the professionalism of the authors of this report. They do understand Local Government and, although we never agree with them over the level of remuneration, I think they offer some professional comments and advice which are useful to absorb, it not accept.

First of all, I welcome the recognition of the extra importance attached to a couple of lead Members, Councillor Hanley and Councillor Dowson, who are working in Children's Services. I think that is only right and proper they should be recognised for that role. I also recognise the importance of climate change work that is being done by Councillor Blackburn.

What I did not accept in the report is that we should delete Executive posts. One, I do not think it is in their terms of reference to do so. I think they look at the remuneration and responsibility and they should not be looking at what is our decision as a Council; secondly, I think that when you look at the new responsibilities that are emerging with health, then it is clear we will have to create a post at the appropriate time to make sure that the health responsibilities for Local Authority is something which we welcome but is recognised and remunerated because of the importance of its responsibility.

If you were to recall the Remuneration Panel it would cost you £3,000 to have that debate...

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: We should not do that.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: ...and we should not do that. We should have the flexibility to change things as we move along without calling back people to discuss remuneration.

If I can just briefly mention about the work of the Climate Change Group. Actually, I have never seen Councillor Ann Blackburn or David Blackburn as quiet, shy, retiring people. I think everybody knows what they do and a lot of the work that they have done...

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: We might wish they were retiring.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: A lot of the work they have done over the insulation scheme, over the solar panels, is work which I think we have heard many times last year and I think many people have shared that success because it gives Leeds a real cutting edge about being serious and important about green issues.

I do not see any secrecy. The one thing I believe we are guilty of in Local Government is we tend to bureaucratised things and stifle things. I am all for having papers to the Executive Board following that, that is only right and proper and that is one thing we do because they will not have Executive powers, but if there is initiative coming out of that work, that gets reported into the Executive Board. If you were to have this as a formal sub-committee with no powers at all, it would cost £5,000 to service. I am far more relaxed at being flexible and praising the work and urging the work that goes on without any bureaucratic ties or procedures to tie them.

On that, I too reject the amendment and hope that we can continue the work done on the Climate Change Group.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Martin Hamilton.

COUNCILLOR M HAMILTON: Lord Mayor, I do not think anyone – we are certainly not saying that we are disparaging the work of the committee – I know Councillor Monaghan was on it last year. We see the work as being important. I think there is a basic principle here which is that if you are paying people to do a job, they should be accountable. We do that with Area Committees, with the Executive Board – we have a Council Chamber here where people can be questioned and challenged about what they do. It seems to me that if we are doing a substantial amount of money for someone to chair a body then there should be the opportunity at some stage for us to account for what they do and the way we normally do that is to have properly constituted committees through the annual meeting where we have terms of reference for the committees, we have a named Chair, we have a membership of a group, minutes and agendas are also available for public scrutiny.

I do not see any of that costing money, actually; it is simply something that we would do at the annual meeting. We have not done it on this occasion so we should do it at the next meeting and then we can discuss, we can have a debate about whether or not the person should be paid, who is the person, are they double-hatted, in which case no additional allowance would be required, for example.

As things stand, we do not even know who the person is. We are talking about David Blackburn but actually we do not know that. We do not know if that is the case. It could be Les Carter, although I think Les Carter and climate change is not a sentence I have uttered before.

It is really that point. We are not opposing the principle; we are simply saying let us get this on a proper footing through Council so it can be accountable. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor James Lewis to sum up, please.

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I think a Climate Change Group chaired by Councillor J L Carter would be focused on increasing climate change, not reducing it as I think he would replace bus lanes with Mercedes Benz lanes – I think that is one of the ideas he has put to us in the past.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: Wonderful!

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: I have heard what both the Lib Dem Members have said and I think they have very much spoken about the bureaucracy which they wish to impose on it and I think it is a very accountable group and if it reports to Executive Board I think that is really important. I think we can also see very clearly already, just in the year it has been running, some of the many schemes it has been involved in. Councillor Wakefield touched on some of them. It has also worked on, I understand, feed-in tariffs, the Green Deal, renewable heating initiative and many other initiatives.

It is cross-party, it is working, it is showing results, it is accountable to Executive Board and I think the Lib Dems wish to wrap it up in bureaucracy at a cost to the Council – and we are in a time of austerity – I think is the wrong approach to take. It is very well meaning, some of the comments made, but I do think this is something that needs to be got on with rather than wrapped up in bureaucracy. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Can I now call for a vote first of all on the amendment in the name of Councillor Matthews. (*A vote was taken*) I think that that amendment might have been defeated! LOST

Can I now call for a vote on the motion in the name of Councillor James Lewis? (*A vote was taken*) [One abstention]. CARRIED.

ITEM 6 - QUESTIONS

THE LORD MAYOR: Can we now move on to Item 6, Questions. Councillor Marjoram.

COUNCILLOR MARJORAM: Thank you, my Lord Mayor. Does the Executive Board Member for City Development believe that private firms with enough money should be able to control the actions of a Council registered Civil Enforcement Officer?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Dobson.

COUNCILLOR DOBSON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. In picking up this question obviously the answer, Councillor Marjoram, is "No". All registered CEOs act for the Council adopting and following Council regulations as part of their duties and they are regulated according to the rules by the Council. They are not controlled by any third party irrespective of how much money that third party may or may not have.

COUNCILLOR MARJORAM: There is, indeed, a supplementary, Lord Mayor, before you ask. If that is the case, then, was it wrong of Leeds City Council to accept £2000 in training and equipment fees from Leeds Bradford International Airport for airport staff to patrol as civil enforcement officers on the approach roads to the airport? Perhaps in answering the question you may wish to bear in mind that the average revenue per enforcement officer per day in Leeds is £300 and yet the two airport staff, in the several months that they have both been employed, raised just £105, which is three fixed penalty notices.

Would he agree with me that they are there not for public safety or the benefit of the Council, but to enforce the airport's rip-off car park kiss and fly tax?
(*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR DOBSON: Thank you for that supplementary. I think if we start to unpick this from the beginning, really in terms of the partnership work that the Council is trying to develop – and we have talked about austere times – that is where we are and I think there was a genuine feeling by the Council in terms of doing this collaboration to actually make some savings.

I will give you some examples of some of the checks and balances that are in place that may actually help to move this forward. There are clearly named officers working at the airport who actually implement this scheme. All appeals are considered in the normal, proper fashion as we would if we were doing the job ourselves and all the tickets are scrutinised for accuracy.

Let us be clear, there is clearly a need for enforcement in this area, not just in terms of the yellow lines and the congestion around the airport but in terms of the underlying matters of security that, frankly, are not going to go away.

However, there is an elephant in the room and I think you have referred to it in the nature of the £2 charges that are being applied by Leeds Bradford Airport. Officers tell me that when we actually entered into this partnership agreement we were not aware that subsequently the airport were going to impose this charge, so that leaves us with a dilemma, does it not? Following the £2 charge, I immediately requested that all the checks and balances I have referred to earlier are, in fact, in place and robust and the answer to that is clearly "Yes". However, fair play, I think that had we been aware of this £2 when we actually had these negotiations about entering into this partnership it might have had a very different outcome and, as a result of that, we are actively seeking a review about our position in this arrangement, this partnership deal, in the light of this £2 charge. It will be addressed. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Can I call upon Councillor Martin Hamilton.

COUNCILLOR M HAMILTON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Would the Executive Board Member for Adult Health and social Care outline current timescales the Council is taking to install adaptations to allow older people to remain in their homes?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Gruen.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Lord Mayor, I have been asked to reply to this question. Thank you, Councillor Hamilton. The data from the Adaptations Agency for 2010/11, and there is a split between high, medium and low, so for high level adaptations the waiting time is 13 weeks, for medium 21 weeks and for low, 27 weeks.

COUNCILLOR M HAMILTON: Thank you for that information, Councillor Gruen, so would you agree with me that a constituent of Councillor Kirkland's who had severe arthritis and serious mobility problems having to wait 15 months for a stairlift – 15 months – is unacceptable and could you therefore have another look at those figures and see if actually those statistics are correct, because it sounds to me like they are not.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: That length of time is entirely unacceptable, it should not happen. I have to share with you, though, that the waiting times now are considerably less than they were, say, in 2007/08 when high was 33 weeks compared to now 13; medium was 65 weeks compared to now 21; and low as 57 compared to now 27.

There have been substantial improvements but I will task the ALMOs to continue to improve because people who are waiting for these adaptations are vulnerable people who want quick solutions, so thank you for the question.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Driver.

COUNCILLOR DRIVER: Yes, Lord Mayor. Would the Leader of Council join me in welcoming the announcement that the new NHS National Commissioning Board will be based here in Leeds at Quarry House?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Wakefield.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Thank you, Lord Mayor and thank you, Councillor Driver. Actually there will be 900 new health related-jobs at Quarry House and I think that is something that we should all welcome because, given that the economy is now stuttering – and I think it has only found 113,000 jobs nationally (not

in the North by the way, mainly in the South) – given that we are losing thousands of jobs in the public sector, given that we are losing thousands of jobs in the private sector, this is an enormous boost for local people who are being forced out of jobs.

What it does, it places Leeds in a very strong position to work with its partners in terms of the university - which is the fifth largest university – in terms of the hospital – which is the largest teaching hospital in Europe – and other partners, to develop a health economy and start to compete in what will be a global market worth £300b by 2015.

I hope that we really see this as a catalyst because, frankly, the report in the Yorkshire Post on Saturday which says that the North-South divide is growing is a very depressing message for the North and we need to do everything we can to attract investment, to grow our own economy so that our young people are not denied any future in this city. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Finnigan.

COUNCILLOR FINNIGAN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Can the Executive Board Member for Adult Health and Social Care confirm the total number of places available in private residential care homes across the Morley area during the week commencing 4th July 2011.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Yeadon.

COUNCILLOR YEADON: Certainly. On 4th July this year there were three vacancies at Stone Gables and two at Springfield House, Morley North. There were four vacancies at Vivian House in Morley South. In the wider south-east area there were seven vacancies at Lofthouse Grange and six vacancies at West Ridings in Ardsley and Robin Hood. There were two vacancies at Copper Hill and eight vacancies at Victoria House in City and Hunslet. There were six vacancies at Nesfield Lodge in Middleton. In Kippax and Methley there was one vacancy at The Cedars, 18 vacancies at Ashlands Home, which specialises in dementia, and nine vacancies at Bywater Hall, a home for people with dementia. At Garforth and Swillington there were 16 vacancies at Springfield, five at St Armands, two at the Coach House and one at The Hollies. There were a further three places at Mount Carmel in Crossgates and Whinmoor.

By my reckoning, that is 66 general places and 27 for people with dementia all within the south-east area, which includes Morley. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR FINNIGAN: Thank you, Lord Mayor, for that expansive reply to a question I did not ask. (*laughter*) I wonder if it would be possible for that information to be passed to me in writing.

COUNCILLOR YEADON: My pleasure.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Renshaw.

COUNCILLOR RENSHAW: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Would the Executive Member for Adult Health and Social Care please update Council on progress to improve employment opportunities for people with learning disabilities?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Yeadon.

COUNCILLOR YEADON: Thank you. I am sure all Members will agree that this Council should be fully committed to supporting employment opportunities for people with disabilities, particularly in light of the excellent deputation that we had earlier today.

There are several excellent Council-supported projects which have gone from strength to strength in recent years and do some truly inspirational work to help people with disabilities compete for employment opportunities on an equal footing.

Osmanthorpe Resource Centre helps people with head trauma and physical disabilities to do this through the Wooden Tops Project. The project is a social enterprise that specialises in the design, manufacture and sale of garden furniture and accessories. It helps people learn skills and qualities useful in real working life and the last three years it has seen eight participants move on to the mainstream community. Mariners Resource Centre supports people with physical and/or sensory impairment through the Green Shoots project. Participants are trained in horticultural skills, helping them develop transferable skills for the job market. Around ten participants recently completed the City and Guilds Qualification in practical horticultural skills.

The city-wide Work Well partnership project launched in 2009 to improve the employment chances for people with mental health problems. It co-ordinates existing services to combine the expertise of employment and mental health workers. Since 2009 it has helped over 40 people move into paid employment, over 25 people retain their employment, over 67 people move into voluntary work or work placements, and over 60 people accessing training and vocational educational courses.

Of course, we are changing the whole ethos of our Learning Disability Day Service so that, instead of segregating people with learning disabilities, we provide opportunities for them to take part in every-day activities in their communities, including training and volunteering and help people build up skills for employment.

We still have a long way to go to ensure that people with disabilities enjoy the same opportunities as everyone else but, as you can see, there are some examples of some really excellent work that this Council can be proud of. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Procter.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Can the Executive Board Member for Leisure please inform Council how many tickets to date have been sold for Opera in the Park and how much income his policy to charge for this event has generated?

COUNCILLOR OGILVIE: Lord Mayor, I can advise that 4,240 tickets have been sold to date, generating £48,428. The event is scheduled for the end of the month. I would like to take this opportunity to encourage everyone who enjoys this event to get booking their tickets. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Lord Mayor, yes, there is a supplementary. I am not sure why everyone was applauding that figure, I must say. I know finance is not the strong point of the Executive Member but as there is an additional cost in the budget of delivering this event of £50,000 – that is £50,000 – the moneys he has received in income to date do not even cover the costs.

Would he therefore not agree with me that it is high time he abandoned this bizarre policy of charging, enabled this event, which is only a matter of a handful of days away, to go ahead free of charge, as happened under our administration, and allow the 45,000 – 45,000 – who have traditionally enjoyed this event to enjoy it once again, Lord Mayor? *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR OGILVIE: Lord Mayor, can I start by just reminding Councillor Procter, this is not a decision that we took lightly. It is a decision forced on us as a result of the massive cuts your Government imposed on us. I know you do not like us reminding you of that fact.

Can I also remind you that when we consulted staff and the public about how we should face the massive cuts...

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: You are losing money.

COUNCILLOR OGILVIE: ...that were being imposed, one of the ideas that they sent back to us – and we had over 3,000 replies from staff – is that we should look at charging for events.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: Another 45,000 did not agree with that, did they?

COUNCILLOR OGILVIE: Indeed, there was another an editorial in the Yorkshire Evening Post last week that urged the Council to consider charging for Party in the Park and I am sure that is a debate that will continue.

In terms of ticket sales I think a lot of people are waiting till closer to the day to buy their tickets. As we are asking people to pay for this event, we have had to change the way that we do things but we are actually trying to save money as well. One of the things that we have scrapped is taken away the VIP area - and I apologise to anyone who enjoyed that – and also by not doing a ticket launch.

It is too early to say the final cost as we are still in the middle of the event built-up but our aim is to keep at or about the same budget as last year. I know a few days ago we were £8k over our target standstill spend and I know today this is down to £3k with all expectations it will go down further.

Can I assure Council that we are doing all we can to market the event and our priority is to get as many tickets sold as possible, and I hope Members from all sides will support the event. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Matthews.

COUNCILLOR MATTHEWS: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Does Councillor Wakefield still agree with me that members of the public are regularly being put at unacceptable risk in Headingley as a result of irresponsible private hire drivers illegally plying for hire?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Dobson is replying to this.

COUNCILLOR DOBSON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Yes, Councillor Matthews, clearly the administration are concerned about the issue of plying for hire and it remains a priority of the Taxi and Private Hire Licensing Section. There are a

series of measures ongoing that we are introducing to tackle this, I can offer you those assurances.

THE LORD MAYOR: Is there a supplementary?

COUNCILLOR MATTHEWS: Yes please, Lord Mayor. That is an unacceptable answer, quite frankly, Lord Mayor. On 17th November Councillor Wakefield assured me that:

“...on a serious issue, it is extremely dangerous. I think it undermines the trade, it gives them a bad reputation and undermines other professions like there have been and I think officers are now talking to the trade to see whether we can raise money to increase the amount of enforcement officers”.

Councillor Armitage on 16 April says:

“To help us crack down on those who do not comply with the law, we are doubling the number of enforcement officers we employ and increasing the hours they patrol in the city centre”

she added. City centre only, Lord Mayor, so can I ask, is the safety of people in Headingley less important to this administration, given the situation is getting worse since Councillor Wakefield answered my question last time, Lord Mayor?

COUNCILLOR DOBSON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Picking up on the city centre issue, really the statistics in terms of prosecutions do not really pan out with that argument. Out of 25 prosecutions last year, twelve were in the Headingley area.

COUNCILLOR MATTHEWS: Go and visit.

COUNCILLOR DOBSON: They are the facts – they speak for themselves, surely.

In terms of support officers, I think what you have got to be mindful of is that we are in a situation where we work collaboratively with West Yorkshire Police and their numbers on this issue are reducing. We can only work with the raw materials we have got. If you want to get into a debate about why we find ourselves in those financial situations we will have one, but I do not think it is perhaps appropriate when we are talking about a serious issue like this.

I think what we are doing is clearly working with special police officers to get them trained up to do more of the sort of covert test purchasing work that brought around the twelve successes in your ward and the 25 across the city. I also think it is worth mentioning that we are aware of what is going on in Headingley. I believe there is a hotspot around the new establishment – or new to me, anyway – The Box, which we highlight as one of the hotspots and we are doing some high vis work around that and some test purchasing.

Increased use of CCTV footage has reduced in one case that is pending for court in the moment, and that is an area of work, working with Leeds Watch, that we do intend to expand on.

Really, Councillor Matthews, I take these problems seriously. We all use private hire, we all want them to be of a decent standard and we all want to act within

the law. I think one of the big things from my perspective is, I think it is something Councillor Wakefield raised previously, a small rogue element – 25 prosecutions out of how many on the road, I do not know, perhaps Councillor Armitage would – is really impacting on the majority of decent traders who are actually working within the law. That said, do we take it seriously? Of course we do.

As I bed into this role, one thing I would like to do is actually see how these operations work in practice. If you care to join me one evening and play the role of late-night reveller, I am sure it will be an interesting piece of work we could do collaboratively.

COUNCILLOR MATTHEWS: He has already done it.

COUNCILLOR: There's an offer.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: I got a better offer.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Lowe.

COUNCILLOR LOWE: Would the Executive Members for Children's Services please update Council on the performance of the Leeds Mentoring Service?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Blake.

COUNCILLOR BLAKE: Thank you, Councillor Lowe. I welcome the opportunity to update Council on this really important service. Many Councillors have been involved over the years and have come to respect and value the work that has been undertaken.

Just by way of background, over the last seven years Leeds Mentoring has grown from a service that supported 100 young people to a service that now supports, every year, 4,000 of our most vulnerable young people and it has become a nationally approved provider through the Home Office and nationally recognised as being at the forefront of provision in this field.

Many partnerships have been built up, I know, including Members, but businesses, universities, local communities who give freely of their time to support our vision and our young people by acting as mentors and giving them role models.

Unfortunately, in October 2010 we received confirmation from the Coalition Government that the Aim Higher funding that was used to support this service was going to cease and we found ourselves in the position of having to issue redundancy notices for the service staff for March 2011.

We then took the decision to offer the Mentoring Service as a traded service and officers from Children's Services have been out around all of the schools in particular taking this out as an opportunity for them to invest in this most valued work.

I am really delighted to inform Council that, up to date, 13 secondaries and 18 primaries have joined up to commission this work and, in fact, have exceeded the original target that we went out for. We have also commissioned a mentoring service to support our looked-after children.

I am sure everyone involved in this who has been to the annual awards and seen the real life-changing results of the work that has been done will join me in

welcoming this important step forward. We have been able to cancel the redundancy notices and actually are looking to increase the service going forward. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Is there a supplementary?

COUNCILLOR LOWE: No supplementary; you cannot gild a lily.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Councillor Gettings.

COUNCILLOR GETTINGS: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Is it possible for Council to have a brief update on the progress of the Leeds Arena?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Richard Lewis, please.

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Thanks, Bob, for giving me the opportunity to update Council on this issue.

Groundwork started on site in February and construction of the Arena started on May 23rd. Construction is on time and in budget. This can be seen visually on the site, which is a hub of construction activity with cranes and a number of local sub-contractors working on the steel concrete foundations, shear walls and cores. Construction is due to be complete in March 2013, with an opening in spring/summer of that year.

This week an on-site visitor centre opened and a webcam will also go on the internet to give people a chance to see the construction activity as it happens. We have opened an on-site job shop with any member of the public can visit and speak to a member of staff about employment and training opportunities. This is one of the first construction sites in the country to do this for local residents. *(Applause)*

A key priority of the administration is to maximise the number of apprenticeships made available to young people through major developments like the Leeds Arena. Our target on this project is to create 60 new apprenticeships and aid the completion of 30 more. We are working in close partnerships with Job Centres, local schools, the College of Building in delivering these plans.

The main contractor, BAM, has provided support to a number of community projects. It is working with local partners such as Little London Arts Group and Shine in Harehills. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Is there a supplementary?

COUNCILLOR GETTINGS: Yes, Lord Mayor. I am interested to know, would the Arena be run by Leeds City Council staff or will it be run by an outside agency?

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: The Arena will be run by SMG Europe, who have signed a 25 year agreement with the Council to do this. This follows a competitive process concluded in 2008 to select an operator. SMG have experience of operating arenas across Europe, including the MEN Arena in Manchester, the Metro Arena in Newcastle and the Oslo Spectrum Arena.

The Council will act as a landlord once the Arena is built and not have any day-to-day responsibility for running it. No financial support will be given by the Council for the operation or running of the Arena.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor MacNiven.

COUNCILLOR MacNIVEN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Can the Executive Board Member for Neighbourhoods, Housing and Regeneration update Members on efforts to tackle Leeds' long-standing burglary problem?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Gruen.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Councillor MacNiven, thank you for the question. Leeds has a long-standing problem with domestic burglary and, despite significant improvement, it has proven very difficult to achieve a sustained reduction in burglary numbers.

Some progress has been made so in this year, 2010/11, there were 8,869 burglaries, which is a 7% reduction from the previous year, and a long way from the peak in 2002/03 of nearly 17,000 burglaries.

However, our performance does not lie significantly above others; we are a poor performer and therefore I took a report to Executive Board following the Safer Leeds Executive's recently developed strategy for burglary reduction. That strategy sets out an ambition of the partnership to reduce recorded burglary and central to the strategy is a desire to improve safety and security so that residents are safe and feel safer in their homes.

For an investment in the next two years of £1.3m, clear, measurable success criteria have been set and partner organisations, such as Offender Management, Criminal Justice, the police, Children's Service and Youth Service and others, including the ALMOs, have all opted into that programme and we now have some very clear schemes which are about to be implemented.

None of this can be a guarantee but at least we are genuinely trying to address what is an unacceptably high level of burglaries and seeking public support to do so. I congratulate the Yorkshire Evening Post on their recent series of articles over the last week or two. They have given unprecedented coverage to the high level of crime in certain parts of our city, so whilst in some there have been reductions, in others there have been very substantial increases and I know ward Members in those wards will be particularly concerned. I will work with those ward Members to try to ensure that we do everything possible to bring down the rate of burglary.

THE LORD MAYOR: Is there a supplementary?

COUNCILLOR MacNIVEN: Is Councillor Gruen satisfied that the Safer Leeds Partnership is doing all it can to reduce crime figures in Leeds?

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Thank you for that. While ever the Safer Leeds Partnership exists and it is not usurped by a Police Commissioner who is due to come into being, thanks to the national Government next year, I am satisfied that we are working together in a very good, close, positive partnership. As Councillor Les Carter, who is also on the Safer Leeds Partnership, knows, we are now turning our mind actively towards how the partnership will work next year and, frankly, colleagues, to ensure that money raised in Leeds for policing and for community safety in Leeds stays in Leeds and does not go elsewhere.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Lobley.

COUNCILLOR LOBLEY: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Following recent local media reports, does the Leader of Council have any plans to reduce staff mileage rates to the 45p per mile recommended by Government for 2011/12?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Wakefield.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Thank you, Lord Mayor. No.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Loble, is there a supplementary?

COUNCILLOR LOBLEY: I do indeed, Lord Mayor, thank you for that and thank you for the straight response there from the Leader of Council.

I would also ask the Leader of Council whether he has sought any advice on behalf of the officers of this Council who are in receipt of figures of up to £1,239 as a lump sum per annum and up to 65 pence per mile for usage of their car, whether this actually constitutes additional income on which they should be taxed and, in effect, is Leeds City Council assisting officers of this Council in earning money, in effect, which is not having tax paid on it? Could you please comment on that? Thank you.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Wakefield.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: If Councillor Loble had done his research properly, first of all he would have got the fact that it is not the Government that is recommending the 45p, it is the HMRC. He also would have found out that it is actually not within the remit of this Council to talk about car allowances; it is a part of the national negotiations and has been for some considerable time, of which your administration subscribed to, and the fact, if you are unhappy then I would suggest that you write to the Employer's Organisation, probably as the press release is indicating from the tax lines as a Tax Alliance supporter, maybe you would write as a Conservative, and ask them if they are prepared to look at it because the vast majority of employers on that body are actually local Conservative Authorities. If there are changes, then we do it through the national organisation negotiations and not through the local.

Let me just say this, I wish he would be more bothered about bankers' bonuses than public sector workers. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Golton.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: I am sorry, Lord Mayor, I was enjoying that so much! I was going to ask the Leader of Council to confirm his commitment to diverting waste from landfill, but I understand Councillor Dobson is going to reply

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: He is the expert.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Dobson.

COUNCILLOR DOBSON: Yes, happy to give that assurance.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: By way of supplementary, Lord Mayor, this is not an incinerator question. I am actually going to refer to the Food Waste Recycling Scheme which runs in Rothwell. I call it a scheme because it was a trial about a year ago. What I was going to ask as a supplementary, Lord Mayor, of the Leader, was

whether he would like the Food Waste Recycling Scheme extended into his ward, which is neighbouring mine, and was considered in the first round but he turned it down.

Of course, Councillor Dobson's ward actually sits next to my ward as well and I am sure the people in Swillington would love to have some food waste recycling. I want to ask him, does he recognise the benefits that the Food Waste Recycling Scheme has brought to Rothwell and does he agree that it would be a good idea to extend that into his ward as a first stage in terms of achieving the recycling rates that we enjoy in Rothwell to the rest of the city, which is diverting thousands of pounds from landfill tax paid to Government – where, of course, we never see it again – and which could be spent on furthering the recycling ambitions of Leeds' citizens.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Dobson.

COUNCILLOR DOBSON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Yes, again, let us start from the top. The Food Waste Scheme, I think it is fair to say, has been extremely effective. I think where it falls down is it is not, at the moment, particularly cost effective and that is the situation we find ourselves in. At the moment for every tonne of food waste that we actually produce it is costing us £40 per tonne to remove. Sadly, again in the current climate we can have that debate if you wish; that is not sustainable.

What is sustainable and what officers are actively looking at at the moment on my behalf is the idea of an anaerobic digester, which will be able to take forward a lot of the city's ambitions around food waste, but to actually make that happen you would need something in the region of, I think, from the early briefings I have had, about 50,000 tonnes of the stuff. We do not produce that from the roadside so what we would need to do, really, is look at a city-wide approach to how we actually deal with food waste.

I think the argument for composting is well made and, in fact, I have actually written to Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny Board asking them if they will look at this piece of work going forward in terms of how we can make this, perhaps, a reality for the city.

You say it is not a question about anything else other than food waste but I think I should try and turn this round a little bit and perhaps go into an area where greater men have tried and failed, to actually pin a Liberal Democrat down on something, which is this. We are talking about your commitment of moving away from landfill. Is that a commitment that the Liberals will share with us right cross the piece, because, as you know, there are changes coming down the track for this city to move us away from landfill. We know why we have to move away from landfill. It is cost-prohibitive, £80 a tonne for every tonne we put in the ground. By 2013 that equates to something like £16m per annum – unsustainable from this Authority's perspective.

I am hoping in the fullness of time we can actually get a definitive position from the Liberals on where they stand on the issue of landfill – or anything.

COUNCILLOR TAGGART: Anything.

COUNCILLOR DOBSON: Anything would be a start. Moving on to some of the other headlines that have perhaps been omitted from Councillor Golton's question, 40% recycling in April and May. We have hit it for the first time and I would

like to thank the staff there for actually achieving that for the first time in Leeds. There is good work going on in this Authority and work we should be talking about.

Three per cent reduction in landfill year on year from 2009/10 to 2010/11 – all good news, all good headlines and perhaps things you should be talking about more openly in this Council. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. We have now come to the end of questions and for those people who have not yet asked a question, there will be a written reply to each person during the course of events.

ITEM 7 – RECOMMENDATIONS OF EXECUTIVE BOARD

THE LORD MAYOR: Can I now turn to page 12 and to item 7 and call upon Councillor Wakefield.

(a)

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Can I move the item in terms of the Notice, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Can I call upon Councillor Richard Lewis

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

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Fox.

COUNCILLOR FOX: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I just want to take this opportunity to refer to the Natural Resources and Waste Development Plan document which we are asked to approve for submission to the Secretary of State this afternoon. I speak as a Councillor for and resident of Adel and Wharfedale ward, as a resident of Arthington and a member of Arthington Parish Council, to refer particularly to the Council's continuing policy to resist the extraction of sand and gravel east of Otley, effectively embracing all of Arthington parish.

Clearly I support this policy, not least because Adel and Wharfedale generally and Arthington has large areas of special landscape quality and sand and gravel extraction east of Pool would be an environmental catastrophe, partly associated with the inadequate local roads that would be severely impacted by heavy goods vehicle movements and what have you.

I welcome the Council's continuing resistance to the extraction of sand and gravel. I note with regret that North Yorkshire County Council chose to actually, in a sense, challenge that policy on the grounds that this city should be providing its own sand and gravel resources. Life is not like that and it is a concern that they should have chosen to do this. They were free to do it and I accept that, but it is regrettable.

My Lord Mayor, very briefly, I would just say that it is very encouraging that the whole process of consultation was non-controversial within this Council, very much non-party political and that there is a genuine support, I feel, within the Council for the strategy and long may it remain the Council's policy that it will continue to resist sand and gravel extraction within the Wharfe Valley east of Pool. Thank you, my Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Can I call Councillor Wakefield, please, to sum up?

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Yes, thank you, Lord Mayor. I will not take too long. I am delighted you are pleased with the Council's position on the extraction of sand and gravel in the area you have identified. Sadly, we have had sand and gravel and coal extraction in our area for over 20 years and although we have resisted on a number of occasions, the policy has always favoured the line that we should actually sacrifice in the national interest our minerals there and they can cause considerable disruption.

Unlike coal extraction, we get very little out of the sand and gravel. It is there, they come in, there is no community compensation and I can assure you, they do disrupt and disturb the local communities, but that is not a reason why we should not support your view. I am glad we are, as a Council, protecting communities and areas of great beauty. I will just point to our area of the city which has taken its fair share of disruption over many, many years in terms of open casting sand and gravel and so on.

With that I move formally, Lord Mayor. Thank you.

THE LORD MAYOR: I now call for a vote on Item 7(a). *(A vote was taken)*
CARRIED.

(b)

THE LORD MAYOR: Can we move on to Item 7(b). Councillor Wakefield?

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

COUNCILLOR BLAKE: I second, Lord Mayor, and in doing so I would like to take the opportunity, if I may, just to give a brief update on the Ombudsman Report that came to public attention this week as the Ombudswoman gave a press statement.

As Council will be aware, the Ombudswoman received three complaints from Children's Services going back over a number of years to 2004 and she found in all three cases that the Council's response was inadequate.

I just want to assure Council that through the work of the Children and Young People's Plan and the partnership that has been put together, this situation has been treated with real seriousness. I do not know if any of you have had the opportunity to read the reports but they are very, very serious and quite shocking indictments of some of the services that these vulnerable young people received in our city.

Can I assure Council that normally in these cases the Ombudswoman would recommend a course of action that the Council should undertake as a result. I can tell you that she has reviewed and looked at the situation in Leeds and she has concluded that the actions that the Council has taken in reorganising and restructuring Children's Services and, indeed, in bringing education back into the remit of Children's Services means that she is satisfied that steps are in place, the correct action has been taken and she is not recommending any further actions at this stage. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: I am led to believe that Councillor Gettings has withdrawn an earlier decision to comment and therefore, Councillor Wakefield, could you please sum up?

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Lord Mayor, I do it formally again. Thank you.

THE LORD MAYOR: I now call for a vote on item 7(b). *(A vote was taken)*
That is CARRIED.

(c)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Wakefield.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Move Item 7(c) in terms of the Notice, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: I second, Lord Mayor, reserving the right to speak.

THE LORD MAYOR: I call upon Councillor Harris.

COUNCILLOR HARRIS: Before I begin, Lord Mayor, can I just thank all Members of Council for their good wishes and, indeed, for the significant amount of sponsorship I received when I did the London Marathon recently. I am very grateful. It looks like we have raised over £4,000 and that will all go to the Bexley Wing at Jimmy's, so I am very grateful. Might I say, because I do not understand what it is to give in when one ought to, Bernard Atha asked me on the way in, I think somewhat tongue in cheek, when was my next marathon. I told him 18th March so I am afraid you are all going to get tapped up again in the not too distant future.

Anyway, to the point in hand. I wanted to comment on the item at the bottom of page 135 which refers to working with communities under the business plan. I want to preface my comments by saying I am genuinely not trying to make a political point here because I am bound to raise this in the context of Brenda Lancaster not being re-elected in May, and Rebecca Charlwood knows that I have already congratulated her in writing appropriately. There is no back-handed side-swipe intended here.

The issue I wish to raise is always a planning matter, a matter that Brenda Lancaster has sent to full Plans at which, in the course, a decision was made without reference or notice to any of the Moortown Councillors that that issue was going to be dealt with as a delegated matter for officers, and it was only after the event that members of Moortown were advised that that is what had happened.

The point here is that members of the public had been advised that this was going to full Plans and there would be a site visit. Whilst I understand the peculiarity of this system and because the sitting member had lost their seat it then made their recommendation null and void, nevertheless it begs the question that it is not conducive to a good working relationship with the public who are entitled to rely upon that assurance that the matter would go to full Plans and there would be a site visit.

The point I wish to raise is a wider one and I fully accept that as Leader of Council I should have addressed this, and I accept that perhaps, in the hubris of the moment when I was carried away with the fact that we were winning seats and Labour were losing, I apologise because that was wrong of me, because what I failed to recognise and I have only recognised properly with Brenda losing and before that

Richard Harker that when a Councillor loses their seat the axe drops immediately on the services they are providing to allow them to continue to address issues which are already in train with regard to case work. It applies to all members of Council.

I simply ask, can we introduce a formal method by which sitting Councillors who lose their seats are afforded the means, say perhaps for a month, to have Council facilities – not a paid allowance but Council facilities – to allow them to finish in an orderly manner those issues of case work which they have commenced on behalf of members of the public.

It is not the members of the public's fault that a person loses their seat *per se*, other than, of course, that they vote, but nevertheless they do not expect that the outcome is that an issue which is in hand is simply lost in the system. I just ask that the Leader looks at this and that we formalise a system in future for all members of Council.

Lord Mayor, that is the point I wish to ask. It is not an electoral point, it is not a political point. I ask on behalf of all 99 members. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Taggart.

COUNCILLOR TAGGART: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Perhaps I can help Councillor Harris on this one because I chaired the meeting of the Joint Officer Member Working Group in Planning that looked at this issue and it was subsequently looked at at a meeting of the Joint Plans Panel which I also chair.

The position that we eventually came to after a long discussion was that once a member of Council had made a request either for an item to go to Panel or for an item to be subject to a site visit, but that member then ceased to be a member for whatever reason – in this case we are talking about an election defeat and it could be a natural retirement from the Council – it would be treated with the same status as when the member was the member, if you see what I am saying. However, it still remains within the purview of the Chair of the relevant Plans Panel as to whether a request for an item to go on an agenda to Panel or to accede to a request to go on a site visit still lies with the Chair. In this particular case we looked at it and I have got full confidence in Councillor Congreve, who is the elected member involved, in terms of what he did in terms of reviewing the request.

We have given an undertaking that if this ever should happen in the future, if somebody make such a request, they are a member of Council, they cease to be a member of Council, it will retain that status, formal request, yes, but that does not take away from the Chair of the relevant Panel a decision as to whether something should go either on an agenda or on a site visit. For example, since I have been Chair of Plans West I have agreed to every single request for items to go on an agenda and to all site visits except last week. I got a request last week and I considered it with officers and my view was we did not need a site visit on a particular application, it would be enough just to put it on the agenda. Those discretions clearly lie with the Chairs but we had a really long, good discussion with officers and members from all parties and I am satisfied now that we have got a proper resolution on this kind of minor problem. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR MATTHEWS: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I think the point that you missed there, Councillor Taggart – and you are absolutely right to say it is the Chair's discretion but the point you missed – was that the resident in question was informed by the Council that the application was to come to the Plans Panel and

therefore, following the election, this was then changed. That is the point I think that Councillor Harris was trying to make. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Are you happy to sum up, Councillor Wakefield?

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Yes, I am, and I will try and be as quick as I can. Just on the last point, I think it is not right that that did not happen. I think that person carried out their duties to the last moment and did it with sincerity and commitment and I think it would be wrong for any of us to be ignored the day after with a request that was on behalf of the community. I think we will look at that and I am grateful for Councillor Taggart's very full answer to Councillor Mark Harris, who never fails to use different minutes to get over a point totally unconnected, but congratulations on using it.

Can I just say, Mark, I have not paid you for your last marathon yet and if you do the next one in under three hours I will double the amount that I promised you before! *(laughter)*

I thought we might get a comment on the Vision document, a pity we do not but the good news, as we know, that after the end of November we are having a Special Council meeting to discuss with partners their ambitions for this city over the next 20 years and their role and, indeed, their resources which hopefully are shaping the city over the next 20 years. If anybody has read it, I think this is a lot better document than the last one and the reason is, it is not rocket science but they actually consulted first before they wrote the document. Normally they write the document and consult and I think this way round produced a much more ambitious and better owned document that, as I say, we will discuss and debate at the end of November.

With that, Lord Mayor, I am happy to move the Minutes.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. I call for the vote on Item 7(c) *(A vote was taken)* CARRIED.

ITEM 8 – RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

THE LORD MAYOR : Can we move on to Item 8. Councillor Nash.

COUNCILLOR NASH: My Lord Mayor, I move the Annual Report of the Standards Committee as presented by the City Solicitor on page 155. I will be summing up as necessary.

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

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Leadley.

COUNCILLOR LEADLEY: Lord Mayor, I wish to comment on the Annual Report of the Standards Committee which is introduced on page 155. I always read Standards Committee reports and the Minutes of its meetings if only out of self-interest to see what pitfalls there might be out there. Unfortunately their wording is usually so obscure that it is almost impossible to learn anything. Even if real names

were withheld, it would be useful to know what accusations had been made, what evidence had been heard and what outcomes there had been.

The current Standards regime never seems to have many supporters, except, perhaps, amongst the certifiably insane, so few will regret its passing. *(laughter)* Any system which took seriously a man who appeared on the front page of the Yorkshire Evening Post wearing a pea-green mask and accusing a Councillor of stealing and maliciously destroying an artificial pumpkin does sound like something out of Alice in Wonderland, but the fact is that such a system actually existed in Leeds in our lifetimes.

One problem with irrational accusations is that there can seem to be no rational defence against them. Ludicrous as they may be, some of the least well-founded charges have been the most distressing for the accused, which may have been the accuser's main motivation. The Standards system did not really resolve Pumpkingate – instead of throwing it out as so much rubbish it evaded a decision on the grounds that the accused had not been acting in her capacity as a Councillor at the time – almost as if she had got off with a technicality.

Standards Committee looks like going out true to form by presenting an almost unfathomable account of its last full year. Thank you, my Lord Mayor.
(Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Feldman, do you wish to exercise your right?

COUNCILLOR R FELDMAN: No, thank you.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Nash, are you ready to sum up, please?

COUNCILLOR NASH: My Lord Mayor, the report really is to tell everyone that the Council has concurred with legislation but, as Councillor Leadley said, I am sure no-one regrets the passing of the Standards Board and the Standards Committee. *(hear, hear)*

There are 20,000-plus Councillors in this country and when the last Government set up the Standards Board, no doubt it did address some issues up and down the country, but I have been a Councillor in Leeds far longer than many of you sitting here and I can tell you that Leeds has always had a proud record of probity, honesty and there has been meeting after meeting when members have declared interests and so on.

Any small problem has been referred to the Party Whip and that is what we propose for the future, so that there will not be a long-winded investigation causing great expense to the Council and great stress for the member. It has, in short, been an enormous sledge hammer to crack a very small nut in Leeds. *(hear, hear)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. I now call for the vote on Item 8. *(A vote was taken)* CARRIED.

ITEM 9 – MINUTES

THE LORD MAYOR: Moving on to Item 9, Councillor Wakefield.

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

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

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: My Lord Mayor, on a point of clarification, members will see in the preamble to Item 9 a reference to myself and comments I made at the Executive Board meeting held on 22nd June. The point of clarification is this – what it says here does not address the point, the most important point that I made when speaking at the meeting, which was that we should not release Phase 2 and 3 sites until after the Scrutiny Board had concluded its enquiry. I believe that I had unanimity on that point around the Board table and yet the Minutes did not reflect that, nor did they reflect the fact that I indicated that I would not be in support of that happening if it did. I would like to know whether this means that we are in fact going to suspend the release of Phases 2 and 3 sites until after we have had the next Board meeting when we can clarify the Minutes.

THE LORD MAYOR: I am wondering if Councillor Wakefield needs to respond to that at this stage.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Yes, I am happy to do it later on but I was aware that the Minutes were alleged not to be an accurate record and I am happy to accept Councillor Carter's view about which way he voted and the comments he made. I think the other comments about releasing them we can talk about later in the debate.

THE LORD MAYOR: Can I then invite comments on the Minutes? Councillor Leadley.

- (a) Executive Board
- (i) Development and the Economy/Development and Regeneration

COUNCILLOR LEADLEY: My Lord Mayor, I would like to comment on three Development portfolio matters discussed at Executive Board. Firstly, NGT, the trolleybus project. Every member of Council should read the full report on this, not just the Minute on page 171. On close reading the report is little short of horrifying, showing the lengths to which supporters of this project will go to keep it alive. Metro and the City Council, in order to secure Government approval, have promised to underwrite a range of risks, shortfalls and losses to an extent which is quite alarming, especially as both organisations know that they will be cutting their existing services and commitments over the next few years.

Although I am reasonably convinced that NGT will not get Government approval, reasonable conviction falls short of absolute certainty and there is a risk, however remote, of NGT being approved. If it were, Metro and Leeds City Council would expose themselves to enormous risks which might cripple their finances for years and make it impossible for them to deliver essential services.

My second comments are on the revision of Affordable Housing Policy mentioned in Minute 221 on page 172. We are in the depths of a recession, especially in the construction industry. To keep that industry moving demands for affordable housing made against commercial development have been reduced tremendously. This must have been a hard choice for all members of Executive Board, plus it reflects reality so it must be supported. In Morley we supported three early test cases. All were carefully costed, though one had to be modified when some of its assumptions were shown to be unsound. At Parkfield Court, a part-finished project had its affordable liability reduced to allow it to be finished. At South Queen Street Mill all affordable housing was removed; work is now well under way at

converting a building to flats which has stood derelict for more than ten years. After modification, we supported a similar removal of liability at Park Mills where work has yet to begin.

Finally, within my five minutes and before Councillor Finnigan takes it up in more detail, I will mention the recent apparent collapse of policy of gradual housing land release which Leeds had surplus since UDP adoption in 2001 and effectively since at least the early 1990s. Developers were more than willing to benefit when Leeds faced reality and reduced its affordable housing demands, but nonetheless they have driven the rate of housing land release upwards into the realms of fantasy. The collapse of house building provoked a successful campaign progressed through a series of planning appeals to release all greenfield housing land allocations. If, as is likely, that has no early effect, there will be demands for the release of all the protected areas of search. If that fails, there will be pressure to make inroads into the green belt. None of this is likely to get anyone a new house though it might improve the capital assets on the balance sheets of land speculators. Thank you, my Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Finnigan.

COUNCILLOR FINNIGAN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am speaking on page 188 and 189, Minute 22, really going over similar ground to my colleague but quite specifically dealing with the Minute that looks at the withdrawal of the appeal on land at Whitehall Road, Drighlington. People will be aware, the first real site to fall as a result of what happened at Grimes Dyke was the one on Whitehall Road, which was already on appeal and subsequently we have agreed to withdraw on the basis that it cannot be won.

It is very difficult to explain to the community of Drighlington, when I was asked at the last Drighlington Parish Council meeting, how we had come to this particular state of affairs, and they will tell you quite clearly that there are two sites on Whitehall Road in Drighlington that they are interested in. One is an old factory site, a brownfield site which has planning permission and nobody has touched for years, and the other is this greenfield site just before you enter Drighlington on the Whitehall Road. They are puzzled and perplexed how we have got to a point where brownfield sites are now regarded as second class sites and that we already need to be looking at greenfield sites to sustain a development boom that does not actually exist.

They regard this very much as fantasy politics – fantasy planning – in as much as they understand and have a commitment towards sorting out the regeneration that needs to be done on brownfield sites and they see this particular decision and the lack of action from the Secretary of State at this particular point as most disappointing; indeed, the community see it as a potential to undermine development and regeneration opportunities on brownfield sites that require them across the Leeds City Council area.

They are also perplexed as to who to blame for this particular one. There is no doubt the previous Labour Government should take some responsibility for doubling the RSS figures overnight and coming up with ideas and proposals and suggestions that clearly were not sustainable and have no basis in reality.

They are also most disappointed in the performance of our good friend Mr Pickles who, despite certain assurances that were given, has ultimately not taken whatever action he needs to take to make things as clear as possible that we are

about regenerating brownfield sites that need regenerating as we are about defending greenfield sites.

We are left at this particular point in this rather bizarre position where developers clearly will look towards what they can do to rip up greenfield sites, obviously because they will get more profit out of them because they are easier to develop and that really does start to sound the death knell for a lot of our regeneration projects we want them to actually work on. One would hope that ultimately there will be a recognition that this problem exists and that it needs to be fixed and we go back to some sensible approach in terms of planning in the future that will look at supporting those brownfield sites that need redeveloping and making sure we protect those greenfield sites that really do need protecting. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Iqbal.

COUNCILLOR IQBAL: My Lord Mayor, I would like to comment on page 170, Minute 217, Provision for Public Hire Taxis at Leeds Bradford International Airport.

As someone who has driven taxis for a living, this issue is particularly important to me. Taxi drivers are proud of the public service they offer and aim to deliver high quality experience to people using taxis. There are over 1,000 taxi drivers and over 5,000 private hire drivers in the city earning a living within this important industry. At the same time, the people of this city also rely on taxi services for work and social activities as well as visiting family and friends. They rightly expect to be able to access a taxi service quickly and easily. When it comes to using the airport, people often see the taxi as their preferred means of transport. Taxis offer people the flexibility they need whatever time of day they are travelling and whatever luggage they are carrying.

When people land after what can be a long journey back from their holiday destination, they want to get home as quickly as possible. For many years taxis have provided this service and given people a chance to get home quickly, easily and at a reasonable cost. However, the actions of the airport have disrupted a tried and tested system by imposing a monopoly and preventing taxis from accessing the airport terminal. The airport is denying their customers a choice about which service to use.

Giving Arrow a contract to offer people a pre-paid service is not the issue. The issue is denying people the option of traditional black and white Hackney carriage taxis. Many customers would prefer to use this service and are surprised that it is no longer available. It is also confusing for international visitors who are familiar with traditional taxi services. At airports all over the country people are able to be dropped off and picked up by taxis. Why should Leeds be any different? The airport is putting our city at a disadvantage when it should be trying to find ways of offering a better service than is available in other areas of the country.

To make matters worse, the airport has imposed a £2 charge for all vehicles accessing the terminal. They did this without holding any discussions with the City Council, customers or the Taxi and Private Hire Trade Association. This is not the way to create the positive and co-operative relationship that we all want to see. The charge is ripping off customers and will simply put people off using the airport. This is not in anyone's interest.

Despite the airport's poor handling of the situation the Council is still holding discussions with them and trying to reach an agreement to resolve this issue. The airport is currently putting together a new access strategy. This is a great opportunity to work together and solve these problems so that the airport can offer their customers the service they deserve.

We need the airport to set aside space near the terminal for taxis to use so that customers can choose which service they prefer. If they are unwilling to do this then the Council will have to step in and find a solution, such as the taxi rank at Whitehouse Lane. Thankfully the Hackney Carriage Association has offered to contribute to the cost of this and the Council must continue to work with them to develop a scheme if the airport continues to be stubborn and refuse to act on this issue.

As someone who cares a great deal about the taxi service in Leeds, I hope a solution can be found and taxis can once again serve local residents using the airport. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Jim McKenna.

COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I also rise to speak on page 170, Minute 217.

A city the size of Leeds should have an international airport it can be proud of, one that provides an excellent service for local residents and international travellers. Local people want to use Leeds and Bradford Airport for their holidays; they do not want to have to travel to other airports like Manchester, East Midlands, Doncaster or Newcastle – in other words, there is a lot of competition out there, Lord Mayor.

That places a great responsibility on the airport and the management team to provide a good service for all users. Although the airport is now privately owned, its owners are still providing a public service and it is our job as elected members to voice the concerns of local residents if they fail to do this and, regretfully, at present, they are. Unfortunately, the airport is not currently meeting their public service responsibilities and, in some cases, pushing people to use other airports such as I have mentioned.

There are two major concerns about the airport. First, the lack of customer access to alternative traffic taxi provision. Second, the introduction of a £2 charge for drop offs and pick ups, and we have heard Councillor Dobson's comments regarding the city helping the airport with enforcements at the present time.

I know from personal experience that it is possible to provide the alternative. On a recent holiday I did use Leeds Bradford Airport. They also have a contract that is similar to Leeds and Bradford with Arrow. However, Manchester also has space for black and white taxis. They also have a free drop-off service and this gives customers a choice. If Manchester can do it then there is no reason why Leeds cannot.

As a Council we want to work with and support Leeds Bradford Airport, given its significance to the economy but by introducing a £2 charge with no warning or consultation, it is alienating potential customers and putting them off using it.

I hope the airport take note of the public response to this charge and withdraw it. I also hope that the airport will work with the Council in producing an access

strategy that includes spaces for Hackney Carriages near the terminal so we are able to provide a service for those customers who want to use it. Otherwise, as Councillor Iqbal has said, the Council will be forced to act unilaterally and install a taxi rank at Whitehouse Lane. I hope the airport sees sense and makes the changes necessary to resolve this issue so we can all work together in promoting the airport, the city, the Yorkshire region and have an airport that we can all be proud of. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Wakefield

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I think the previous speakers already stressed the importance of having a successful local airport. Not only is it good for the economy, it is good for local people. When you think that four million people cross the Pennines to Manchester, then clearly you want to support the airport's ambitions to grow, but for me it is not at any price.

They have a responsibility, which I think Jim has just stressed. We have an integrated transport strategy in this city and they have a key role to play across the city, so if there are any congestion problems, if there are any road safety problems, they cannot just deny and say it is all Leeds City Council.

We all know that we do not have good links in public transport to the airport; we do not have a good bus system and we certainly do not have a rail system but I think we should have that ambition. A lot of people do travel – including me – either by private car or taxis, whether it is a Hackney or private, to go to the airport.

I have to say, when it was in 2008 and they did this deal with one provider, I was a little bit puzzled. It is not something I support, by the way. I know I am told that Manchester, Heathrow, Gatwick and other airports are all doing it. For me you have to rely on the evidence. It is only anecdotal but they are people who I trust. There are people who say it is far more expensive to go by that taxi. I think it is. I personally feel it is. I feel I pay significantly more with that company than I would another private company. I also think there is a capacity issue at peak times. I know people who have had to wait some time before they can get a taxi when they have landed.

What I think is really bad public relations is the way that they met with Richard and myself to talk about this access strategy. A week after that, without any notice, without any warning, without any consultation, they introduced this rip-off £2 tax, which is actually £4 if you are going there and back. Nobody can understand the justification for that. It is just a money-spinner for the airport. I am not sure what we get for it because what you have got now is the worst of all worlds. You have got people who are trying to get out of cars and taxis well before they get in there and actually creating road safety problems. I have seen them do it. They get dropped off in Whitehall Road (sic) and they go out so they do not have to pay the £2.

The worst thing and one thing that has not been stressed enough for me today is I took a 92-year old woman to go to Rome to see her daughter. She was with her grandson and it was half-six Sunday morning. Have you see what disabled or elderly people have to do? They have to walk miles to get a wheelchair and frankly I was thoroughly ashamed of the Leeds Bradford airport's facilities for disabled and elderly people. It is an utter disgrace.

We are right to carry on with the Whitehall Road, we are right to actually put pressure but I do not think what we have got at the airport is something we should be

proud of. I hope, as we have done on an all-party basis, we continue to put pressure and, if we have to, put a taxi rank, but I can assure you, that meeting Richard and I had we would stress we do not particularly like the people of Leeds being ripped off and we do not particularly like our elderly and disabled being inconvenienced because of their greed to get extra money in for the airport. On that note, Lord Mayor, I move. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor James Lewis.

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I wish to speak on Minute 220 on page 171. I think I want to follow on some of the comments Tom made and people may accuse the Morley Borough Independents of many things but I think on this issue they have been nothing but consistent, even if we do not agree with them on that.

I do think there is something in the comments Councillor Leadley made about what has been placed on us by the current Government in order to - not only the length of time which it is taking them to come to a decision on New Generation Transport – and I know there was an all-party lobby to try and secure an earlier decision, but also the continued and additional requirements that were placed upon the Council from Metro for extra work and, of course, at extra cost, to try and move this scheme forward. The scheme – again I do not need to re-rehearse the arguments that Leeds is the largest city in Western Europe without any form of rapid transit system and clearly all governments have dragged their feet and had a pretty poor record on providing that for this city. I think we can all agree on that and all be very frustrated at the process. Certainly where we are the moment with the current incumbents, the current two parties, is far from satisfactory.

I think we also have to look at NGT, New Generation Transport, the Super Trolleybus, as part of a wider package of transport improvements we need as a city. We have all been very involved recently in the campaign for High Speed Rail 2 to come to Leeds, something we have been lobbying the Government on for a while to make sure that this happens. I think it is frightening, some of the evidence that is emerging now about the growth of a North-South gap in the economy and this is a piece of rail infrastructure that will go some way to closing that gap, to making Leeds an attractive destination for investors and improving the whole of West Yorkshire and the City Region. I think it is something, again, we have all agreed on on an all-party basis.

I think also there is a risk, as somebody reminded me and Councillor Wakefield in a Residents' Association in Methley, that we can talk about these big ticket schemes but we need to remember that the day-to-day public transport needs of people need addressing today. We have often discussed again the failures of the current bus regime and are working very hard with the ICA to try and tie that up and make sure we can bring some accountability to the bus companies and bring some planning to the network to try and make sure that people are receiving the bus service.

The NGT, it is important that we put in a best and final offer. We have all got our fingers crossed that the Government comes up with a decision and comes with a swift decision, and I think we also need to recognise that it is part of a wider package we need to bring together, both in terms of links across the region, across the North of England and across the country, but also improvements we need to bring to local transport in the area as it stands at the moment. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Peter Gruen.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Can I refer to page 172, Minute 221 and page 188, Minute 22.

I think in recent times because of the economic situation we have concentrated here in Council, rightly, on Children's Services and Adult Social Care. Today I want to concentrate on homeless people, the housing need and affordable housing.

In the last three years of the Labour Government this city benefited from £100m towards affordable housing and had an excellent scheme for affordable housing and lots of affordable houses were being built in different parts of the city. That list is coming to an end. We are still constructing some of those houses but it is coming to an end and yet the affordable housing situation remains dire.

As politicians we get lots of statistics across our desks. The one that I think is in my portfolio most worrying is that a first time buyer in Leeds now is aged 38 years. When I look across Council, many of us, particularly those who are slightly older than others now, will have bought into their first house in their early twenties and not when they are in their late thirties. That is a stain, I think, on this country, that young people are not able to get on to the housing ladder.

Anything and everything we can do as a Council, working with the private sector in terms of affordable housing, we should most definitely do. (*hear, hear*)

There are 27,000 people on the housing waiting list and around 41% of households are estimated to be unable to afford access to housing at market rates, indicating – and I know I am preaching to an open audience on this subject – the need for affordable housing.

It is believed that we need almost 1,200 dwellings per year over the next five years to both clear the existing waiting list backlog and meet future housing need, so therefore this interim policy is important, the planning system is vital that Plans Panels are vigilant in terms of assuring that applications come in and they meet our affordable housing standard.

Then I turn, if I may, to Minute 188 which is related, in a sense, but I want to talk about a lost appeal at Grimes Dyke, one of several appeal. Greenbelt land; many of you will know it, on the York Road. Literally less than half a mile down that road, across into Swarcliffe are the remainders of a PFI scheme started six years ago when the builder simply shut up shop overnight, put up barricades and said they could not afford to build any more, yet the same builders come along and say, "We can afford to build four-bed houses and, by the way, although we told the Planning Inspector we agree to 30% affordable housing, now we do not want to do any affordable housing. We will give you a commuted sum." I hope Plans Panel will have the right response to that and, of course, my mind is entirely open at this stage! (*laughter*)

Therefore, I think there is an issue how we develop alongside with the private sector and there is an issue also – and I can detect on all sides of this Chamber a growing frustration about people taking long and hard looks and good judgments about local planning decisions only to see them overridden by Government appointed Planning Inspectors who have very little interest in this city, who come and do their

damage and then go off again and I am sure there is a moral in that that Mr Pickles ought to be made aware of.

On behalf of my two ward colleagues and myself, we deeply regret the decision about Grimes Dyke. It is a retrograde decision and yet Councillor Richard Lewis is absolutely right to ask Council to address the issues in terms of how we go forward on affordable housing and how we go forward in terms of housing policy for more housing. Thank you.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Graham Hyde.

COUNCILLOR G HYDE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am also rising on Minute 221 and Minute 188, with real reference to localism.

As we are all aware in this Chamber, localism means many things to many people. The Localism Bill is going through the House of Commons at the moment. It is over 500 pages long at the moment, hundreds of text and clauses that are in it. The Bill is actually intended, particularly in planning terms, to give communities local say but, in reality, is that really happening? Mr Pickles sounded the death knell, as has previously been said by many speakers, about the Regional Spatial Strategy and all sides of this Chamber expressed views about that.

In reality, that has not happened as Council has not been allowed to set the targets that were wanted. In reality, planning decisions have been made by Appeals Panels and local communities have been overturned in those decisions. Councillor Gruen has just spoken about Grimes Dyke and the other interesting thing is, Mr Pickles conceded that he considered that the RSS would not be included in the Localism Bill has not been given much weight.

The real interesting thing for Members in this Chamber is, do you know that Mr Pickles actually in the Bill has given himself 142 new powers of actually redirection? Just an example of those, Plans and Strategies; Projects for National Significance; Homelessness; Transfer of Property from ACA; General Powers of Competence; Housing Finance (additional powers). Not many of these are actually known to Members of this Chamber because they are hidden in the myriad of clauses that are in this Bill.

If we are going to have localism, then let us have localism. Let us have it meaningful, not have it a woolly idea that is flying round the House at the moment.

This Council over the years has had many challenges but has also met them with great sincerity and actually delivered these challenges to improve this city. As we are aware, Leeds is going to expand substantially by 2026 and it is imperative that this Authority and its communities actually have a say in how the city is directed, not paid lip service to at the moment.

The other interesting thing is also that our local community is very diverse and our diverse communities must be kept and that can only be achieved by localism, by local people and communities being involved in those decisions, particularly around planning development. Councillor Finnigan raised issues about brownfield sites but actually he is quite right in a way, because developers want to actually develop greenfield sites and not look at brownfield. We have lots of brownfield sites. There has been a lot of debate about those but localism is about localism and if we want to ensure that localism works, then it is actually making it work within this Council. Guidance or regulation has to work for Leeds and not be paid lip service to.

I have personal concerns about communities and how little control they have at the moment, as previous judgments have been made by Planning Inspectors. I think we are being offered at the moment, the way it is going through the Houses of Parliament, is a damp squib. On one hand it is an image of localism that has been said in the Bill but in reality it is centralisation, just by the simple premise of 142 powers. Why does a Minister want 142 powers to direct localism in local communities, particularly around planning? Dozens of those are already in the planning process. It seems very strange to me.

In Leeds this administration at the moment is working through the Locality Wedge Management systems and Area Committees and area structures, and also bringing delegated services. That is about localism, that is about communities actually working within communities and delivering local priorities around planning, around education or various other things.

I would actually urge Members in this Chamber to participate in this agenda about actually making localism work, particularly about the planning process where the local communities can actually get involved in determining those decisions based within the Bill if it is really written as it is said. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Gabriel.

COUNCILLOR GABRIEL: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I would like to speak on Minute 24 on page 190, about the master plan for Elland Road. First of all, can I wish Leeds United all success for next year and maybe they might get out of what I used to class as Division Two into Division One. I do not know what it is called now – Championship League – that is how long ago it was since I went to matches.

Just to talk about this issue that Leeds United are planning as well as the football ground and to expand that, to have two hotels, a nightclub, a new club shop and other facilities, and they are also talking about having a new police station on the old dog track and we are also having an ice skating rink at the far end of Elland Road.

Why I am speaking today is because I am talking about the lack of amenities for the local community. Recently I went to a Licensing Committee where the Licensing Committee talked about Leeds United being good neighbours. I have to say, I have given this a lot of thought and if Leeds United was on a housing estate I would be trying to get an antisocial behaviour order (*laughter*) because their visitors cause a lot of problems in the local community. James in particular parks not far from my house – I watch him regularly.

They also park everywhere, they leave litter in all our neighbourhoods. A lot of the supporters actually do far worse; they go into gardens and they urinate and there is lots of bad behaviour. No, that is not James! They are actually not good neighbours to our local community and I am very worried that this new development will have an even bigger impact.

We actually have at the moment 4,500 car park spaces. That is going to be reduced to 2,700. Where are all these people going to park? They are going to park on our streets and with this new development, it is going to actually mean that they will not be there on Saturday, they will be there every day of the week.

I am also concerned about air pollution. In Holbeck in particular, it has got one of the highest air pollution problems of the city – not just of anywhere but of our city. It is on the top three.

I also am worried about the Park and Ride. I am a great user of Park and Ride, I am not a good bus user but when I go to York I always go on the Park and Ride and I park my car five miles out of York and get a nice bus in. They are talking about having a Park and Ride within half a mile of Leeds city centre, so all the traffic is going to come into our area and then get shipped to the town centre – highly inappropriate. If they are doing a Park and Ride it should be well out of the city and then we have buses driving through our area.

As the Area Chair I am always having a go at Councillor Finnigan and Councillor Parker about charging their residents a levy to drive through my ward, because if all their residents who go through my ward paid £1, we could have regeneration and Beeston would be fantastic. It is all that traffic and also we need a full impact travel assessment because of all the traffic that is not only going to go to Elland Road but with the new White Rose due we were promised a travel impact assessment then – we never got one. Now we are going to have a bigger Elland Road development and are hoping to make a bigger White Rose, the Council has to commit to a travel impact assessment.

I am also requesting that we have full residents' involvement, that the Council facilitates a residents' involvement group that would include residents from Beeston, from Holbeck and from Cottingley, because all of this impacts on the wider area.

As I said, I do wish Leeds United all the success but the Council and the Development Department must take note of local ward Members and of the local community. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Ogilvie.

COUNCILLOR OGILVIE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am commenting on Minute 25, page 190, about the Rugby League World Cup bid for 2013. I am really pleased that we as a city have agreed to bid to be a host city for the tournament which will, if successful, bring many benefits to our city. It will not only benefit rugby league in the city, building on the great tradition and passion for the sport in Leeds, but also provide opportunities for the local economy and the wider community.

The competition will be broadcast in over 120 countries, attracting around 20 million viewers worldwide, and this means we have a fantastic opportunity to demonstrate to the world the top sporting facilities, the rich culture and showcase all that Leeds has to offer.

I am proud of the lead role that the Council has taken in organising a strong bid on behalf of the city through partnerships with Leeds Rhinos, Leeds United marketing Leeds and I hope we can build on this by working with some other smaller rugby league clubs in the city.

The economic benefits that each match held in Leeds would bring would be a timely boost for the Council at this time. The tournament is expected to bring between £30m and £50m into the UK and we need to see if we can get a significant piece of that.

We feel the increased publicity of the sport during the tournament is set to bring added vitality to the teams, schools and communities that are already passionate about the sport in Leeds, as well as bringing in new audiences to rugby league. The Council already has a successful rugby league development programme, but this could be built upon and we are planning further initiatives to ensure the rugby community gets the most of this fantastic opportunity.

These include plans for touch rugby festivals, national disability tag rugby festivals and, importantly, girls' and women's rugby fairs to allow for the continued success of rugby league development in our city.

To complement this I am delighted that our cultural partners are set to put on events that further broaden the appeal of the events. Northern Ballet and Phoenix Dance are two of the organisations hoping to be part of a cultural festival showing off our city's all round excellence.

The festival environment will be ensured by the two proposed live sites at Millennium Square and City Square. They have proved to be successful at other major events, such as the 2006 Football World Cup, and we are confident that these venues will contribute to the festival spirit by providing the public with places to meet, relax and soak up the atmosphere.

I am confident that the huge enthusiasm and willingness to work together for many different organisations in this city will ensure that the 2013 Rugby League World Cup is a city-wide festival that incorporates sport, culture, local business and our communities. The stage is set for an amazing festival to be shared by all in the city and I hope the bid is something that the whole Council can unite behind.
(Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Blake.

COUNCILLOR BLAKE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I, too, want to speak to Minute 25 on page 190. I am sure I am speaking on behalf of all Councillors in their desire to see this bid being successful but particularly, I think, on behalf of our colleagues in South Leeds who fully recognise the enormous contribution that rugby league has made over the years to the wellbeing of so many of our young people in the city. I really want to put on record my appreciation for the completely selfless effort that so many people in our communities put in week in, week out, going on to the pitch, training kids and in some cases, as we know, we have got some very high profile cases – for example, Jason Robinson – transforming the lives and the life chances, spotting the kids who might be at risk of getting into some difficulties and really bringing them on and giving them a real sense of drive and purpose.

The whole spirit of the bid and one of the reasons I am really hopeful that it is going to be successful is the emphasis that has been put on involving young people going forward. It is no mean ambition going forward that the idea is really to create a long-lasting legacy both for the city and for rugby league itself with the ambition to create the best rugby league festival the city has ever seen. As Councillor Ogilvie has said, there is going to be a whole programme of events and activities both in the run-up, if we are successful, and during the course of the competition.

Obviously there will be enormous enthusiasm from the current fans but the whole objective is to reach out and encourage new ones and particularly to encourage young people to take part in the sport and also to think about health lifestyles.

Just to highlight this, I think it is the year 7 rugby team at South Leeds Academy, because it won the Schools' Competition, is actually going to be on the pitch at half-time at the Challenge Cup World Final – I am sorry, I am getting carried away here! *(laughter)* Where is it going to be? Somewhere down south!

What Councillor Ogilvie says is really important, about using the competition to really reach out along the lines really of the Olympics, to reach out to other cultural activities, building up through working with schools, libraries and clubs and actually really bringing life into our leisure centres and community centres and working with community groups.

One of the things that has been mentioned is the work with Phoenix Dance and this is going to focus on work with young people and the whole idea is that the dance event will be passed across the city from one community to the next and then, I think, the idea is then to extend it from Leeds out to other of the participating cities around the world.

One thing I have been told is that a Leeds-based dance company, which has not been named yet – I think we might be still commissioning it – is being commissioned to create a replacement to the Mexican wave. If we can achieve that, then I think that would be a real success in its own right. Music, of course, will play a major part with the Leeds College of Music having a competition to create a World Cup theme.

This is a great opportunity for Leeds, a great opportunity for children and young people to participate and a real celebration that I know if we are successful will take place in all of our communities across the city of Leeds. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Can I remind Members that Christine MacNiven is now going to give her maiden speech and I hope that we will be attentive in our listening. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR MacNIVEN: Lord Mayor, I would like to speak on page 191, Minute 26, the proposed Aire Valley Leeds Enterprise Zone.

Like all Members, I am delighted that the Aire Valley has been recommended as the location for the Leeds City Region Enterprise Zone. I know this was not an easy decision for the local Enterprise Partnership to make. Our colleagues in Bradford fought extremely hard to take the Enterprise Zone to their city and, whilst they lost out on this occasion, I sincerely hope that they find the right vehicle for their regeneration project very soon.

However, the Aire Valley is the ideal location for the Enterprise Zone. It has exemplary transport links, is prime development land and has the potential to provide a massive boost to the area's economy. £70m of investment is already in place to provide the basic infrastructure it needs to create thousands of jobs over the next three to five years.

The potential benefits of the Enterprise Zone to business have been made clear by the LEP – superfast broadband will be rolled out across the area and businesses moving into the area will get 100% relief on their business rates, saving them up to £275,000 over five years. There will also be more flexibility in the planning system to encourage development in the area.

The benefits to the Council are huge. All growth in business rates in the next 25 years will be retained in the city region and it is estimated that the Enterprise Zone could boost the city's economy by as much as £550m, creating 9,500 jobs. There will be fantastic training and employment opportunities on offer as a result of this development. It is our responsibility as a Council to ensure that the people of Leeds and particularly our young people have the right skills to make the best possible use of this opportunity. We must do all we can to ensure that as many of these jobs as possible are available to local people and we must help our young people make the most of the employment and training opportunities on offer.

The current employment situation in Leeds, as in many other places, is clearly difficult. Presently there are around 22,234 Job Seekers' Allowance claimants in Leeds – around 4.1% of the working age population. Most concerning is the fact that 27% of these claimants are aged 18 to 24. Opportunities are few and far between for this group at the moment and clearly there is much at stake to ensure that young people can look forward to a brighter future.

Much good work is already being done to support this cohort and ensure that they are ready to exploit any employment and training opportunities that may come their way. Leeds now has the second lowest JSA claimant rate of all core cities, trailing only Bristol, and over the past year the JSA claimant rate has fallen at a faster rate in Leeds than in any other core city. This is thanks in no small part to the efforts being made by the Council and its partners. There are some fantastic initiatives already under way to provide our young people with training and skills to take advantage of the employment opportunities the Enterprise Zone can offer.

In February Leeds launched the Apprenticeship Challenge with the aim of generating 100 apprenticeship opportunities in 100 days. This was a bold and ambitious target but when the challenge ended on May 20th, 262 employers had created 297 apprenticeship opportunities. This is a tremendous achievement and well done to everybody involved. It will provide many young people with work experience and the essential skills to find future employment, but with so many young people unable to find work, we undoubtedly have to do more.

That is why the Council is investing £1m in the YOUNG Inspire Scheme to provide work experience and skills training to equip 600 more young people. These youngsters, many of whom are currently not in employment, education or training – that is NEET – will receive tailored support and training to equip them with the skills they need to get into work. A further 807 people have been helped through the Future Jobs Fund; 272 people are still on the programme but of the 535 that have completed it to date, 307 are now in employment or training. This shows that these schemes can make a real difference to the lives of young people. What a pity that the Government were so quick to cut the Future Jobs Fund on gaining power.

We have also launched Employment Leeds, which works with any company who are looking to expand, develop or invest in Leeds. It can help employers recruit and retain staff and hopefully grow their business in Leeds, which can only be good for the local economy. Despite the current difficult financial climate, I am confident that there will be employment opportunities in Leeds in the coming years. With developments such as Trinity and Eastgate, the Arena and now the Enterprise Zone in the pipeline, there will be jobs available in the future. These initiatives will ensure that our young people are well placed to make the most of them. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: I was being very generous on that occasion! *(laughter)*
Neil, it is also your maiden speech. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR WALSHAW: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I would like to speak on Minute 26, page 191, regarding Enterprise Zones and I assure Members that I am actually older than the twelve years I am going to sound for the next four minutes.

This is my maiden speech. I would like to take this opportunity to speak also on Minute 21, page 188, as this is an issue that has a particular impact on Headingley, the ward that I have the pleasure of representing.

I would also like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to James Monaghan, my predecessor, who was a popular and effective local Councillor and, although I am a very, very different political hue from James, I appreciate his activist legacy.

I welcome the decision to introduce an Article 4 direction that requires landlords to seek permission if they wish to convert a property into a house of multiple occupancy. This is a vital tool in seeking to create a more sustainable and more balanced community. The policy recognises that whilst HMOs – or student houses, as we often call them – have an important function in providing houses for those wanting to live in shared accommodation, an over-concentration in one area can lead to communities becoming, frankly, unbalanced, with lots of problems.

This can be demonstrated clearly in Headingley, where we have high crime levels, antisocial behaviour, noise-nuisance, environmental conditions and a lack of community facilities.

This Article 4 measure means that these implications have to be considered before a property becomes an HMO. It does not constitute, however, a blanket ban and there will be no actual cap on the number of HMOs in the city. It is unfortunate, however, that the Council, at a time of such significant budgetary pressures, have to spend time and money implementing this policy. This would not be needed if the Conservative Government, supported nationally if not locally by the Liberal Democrats, had not abolished the regulations introduced by the previous Labour Government. An Article 4 direction will help stop communities like Headingley from becoming more and more unbalanced. However, that is only the start of the process. We need to do much more if we are to make Headingley a more sustainable and balanced community. That is why I look forward to working hard with my colleagues Councillor Lewis and Councillor Gruen to look at ways in which family housing, preferably with gardens, can be encouraged to return to Headingley and that we can improve the environmental quality of the area.

Turning to the Enterprise Zones, this is where I don my planning anorak. I would like to share my delight, which I am sure is reflected right across the Chamber, that we were picked by the local Enterprise Partnership as a site for the Leeds City Region Enterprise Zone, and I appreciate there was quite a lot of regional competition. This undoubtedly is fantastic news. I would like to congratulate and thank those officers in the Council who have put together such a professional, excellent bid and, having been on their side of the fence a few times in the past, I appreciate the work that goes in.

Of course, though, while the focus of the Enterprise Zones will be to encourage and build local businesses, at the same time creating sustainable, long-lasting jobs, it is also an opportunity to promote the low carbon agenda. I understand that details are currently being worked out by the Government with respect to

Enterprise Zones and I hope that they will be putting this low carbon agenda at the forefront of this process.

I also hope that as a Council we will be pushing the case for the creation of low carbon-based jobs and for high levels of energy efficiency in buildings and whatever infrastructure the project entails. This is a great opportunity, it is a new high frontier and I hope the Government grasps the nettle and provides us as a Local Authority with the tools with which we can develop and promote the low carbon green agenda throughout this project. Thank you very much. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Andrew Carter.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Thank you, my Lord Mayor. It would appear the Labour Chief Whip cannot tell the time because at least one member of the Opposition is going to get the chance to say something.

My Lord Mayor, can I start with Leeds Bradford Airport. Sorry, Keith – not good enough. The day before we received assurances from Councillor Lewis and Councillor Wakefield that there were ongoing talks with the management of Leeds Bradford Airport, the day before they had already put in place charges of £2 to drop off and collect. We read that in the paper, I think, the following day. So much for the good faith with which the management at Leeds Bradford Airport were discussing the situation with the leadership of this Council.

I take it it was a slip of the tongue but it is not much good putting a taxi rank in Whitehall Road, Keith – it is Whitehouse Lane. It is one hell of a long way from Whitehall Road to Leeds Bradford Airport!

In the words of the President of the United States, “Yes, we can” and we should be instructing our planning officers and our highways officers now to begin work on a drop off point and/or a taxi rank on Whitehouse Lane, and make the management of Leeds Bradford Airport be reasonable. There is nothing we can do, quite frankly, about their decision to have one company operating taxis from the airport. As has been pointed out, I think, by Councillor McKenna, it is happening in airports all over the country, but what they are doing, and the difference is simply this, that at least Bradford there is no taxi rank for Hackney cabs and, as far as I am aware, at all the other airports there are, so what Leeds Bradford are doing is, in point of fact, using restrictive practices and an anti-competitive regime which really should not be acceptable and we cannot have the mickey taken out of the people of Leeds and the other people who are coming as passengers there any longer.

Now if I can turn to the Grimes Dyke situation, as you are probably aware Alec Shelbrooke questioned the Planning Minister recently in the House of Commons and Greg Clark agreed to visit the city. I actually met briefly, I have to say, with Greg Clark the week before last and he did confirm he would be coming to the city to listen to our concerns as well as to visit some of the areas concerned.

I think we have to be extremely robust and up to pres we have had an all-party agreement on how this should be progressed, and I do not apologise for one minute for the fact that our planning committees were so robust in defending greenfield sites when we all know we have so many brownfield sites available for development.

What this Government needs to understand, and I regret to say the previous Government did not understand, is that we have 21,000 residential housing consents

in this city unbuilt – unbuilt. A lot of those, the majority of those, are on brownfield sites in areas that we all want to see regenerated. I think we had a vote in this Council not long ago about the defence of the greenbelt and I recall only one Member of the Council demurring from that, Councillor Hanley. Everybody else, I think, was in agreement and understood the fact that if we allow these greenfields to go, first of all they are gone for ever and so is part of the environment of Leeds. Most of the areas around the city have greenfield areas and green belt areas and we have derelict areas all over the city which require developing to support the communities who live adjacent to them.

What we are doing here, or what the Government is doing, is doing what the last Government did and helping in this case the house builders rather than the banks revive a broken business model. Their balance sheets are improving all the time and they are not building any houses, but they are landbanking valuable green field sites. House builders should build houses – that is how they should be making money and because they cannot make as much as they want should not stop them from building houses, if they are making anything at all. As long as they go on improving the balance sheets by landbanking, they will do so and we have got to get that message across to the Government.

I hope that when Greg Clark comes to visit, we can explain to him the importance of the Planning Inspectorate taking on board the fact that there are 21,000 valid housing application in this city, all of which we want building. We are not anti-housebuilding and many of them would be affordable houses. What we do not want to see is the green belt and greenfield sites pillaged when it is totally unnecessary.

I hope that we will continue to stand together on this and when the Minister comes, make those views very, very plainly known. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Wilkinson.

COUNCILLOR LOBLEY: My Lord Mayor, can I just cut in, please? I think there is a very important matter here this afternoon which I am very disturbed that we have to raise. There has been a breach of the Whips' agreement that was made last night about the order in which Minutes should be discussed on the paper in order to allow a fair go in what is essentially a day for Opposition parties and members of the Labour Group who are not in the administration basically to put questions to the administration of this Council, and so far we have managed to achieve, if we exclude the two Councillors who are in effect in the pockets of the Labour Group, we have so far in this entire period had one member of the Opposition – one member – able to speak.

We agreed that these Minutes would be re-ordered last night at the Whips' meeting and I was told this morning that Councillor James Lewis went back to his Group and then said, "Actually, we are not doing it after all." It is not good enough and you may think this is a smart move but I am afraid that we will be calling a special meeting to discuss the Minutes so that we get a chance to actually debate the important matters on these Minutes rather than have it all talked out by the ruling party in this Council.

I am absolutely appalled by how this has worked out. I am appalled that the Whips' agreement was changed, because if we cannot make agreements at the Whips' meeting and then have them followed through, then I am afraid we are just

not going to take part in this and we are going to have chaos at every single Council meeting.

I am not happy with this at all and can I---

COUNCILLOR ATHA: Can I be impolite, Lord Mayor, and ask, which Standing Order he is speaking to?

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: Sit down, Bernard.

COUNCILLOR LOBLEY: Can I suggest either the time allowed for Minutes be extended or we will be calling for a special meeting. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: Well said.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Seconded, Lord Mayor. There is a formal proposal. I second it, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: If that was a formal proposal could you repeat it, please?

COUNCILLOR LOBLEY: I propose that the time allowed for commenting on these Minutes is extended...

COUNCILLOR ATHA: Can they alter the Standing Orders...

COUNCILLOR LOBLEY: ...so that members...

THE LORD MAYOR: Could you just sit down, Bernard, please?

COUNCILLOR LOBLEY: My proposal to avoid us calling a special meeting to discuss these is to allow extra time to allow the speakers of Opposition parties to get their say on the Minute Book because the Whips' agreement was broken. Thank you.

THE LORD MAYOR: I am going to ask for guidance on this matter before we proceed.

THE CITY SOLICITOR: If I understand correctly you have asked for an extended period of time to address questions beyond the – presumably the thing to do now is – is there a length of time that you are asking for to deal with questions?

COUNCILLOR LOBLEY: For all of the comments on the Minutes to be heard.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Lord Mayor, they are making it up as they go along.

COUNCILLOR LOBLEY: Peter, we are not making it up as we go along. Your behaviour, your Group, has been appalling.

THE LORD MAYOR: Can you just wait a minute and can you please just stop shouting one at another and just be quiet for a moment so that we get some advice as to the best way to proceed.

THE CITY SOLICITOR: My understanding, Lord Mayor, is that there has been an application to suspend the Procedure Rule to allow Minutes to be discussed, which was actually done in time, so I think that should be voted on, in my view.

THE LORD MAYOR: That, therefore, has been proposed and it has been seconded. All those in favour of extending the time.

COUNCILLOR: By how long?

THE LORD MAYOR: Until the end of this first session; to the bottom of the page 14.

COUNCILLOR LOBLEY: To the end of the Minutes.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: You have managed to unite the Opposition; that is a thing in itself.

THE LORD MAYOR: Can we go to the end of page 14, otherwise you are going to be here all day. All those against? Thank you. It seems as if that is LOST.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: Is that your alternative to a Mexican wave, Councillor Blake? *(laughter)*

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Lord Mayor, can I request a recorded vote, please.

COUNCILLOR LOBLEY: I second that, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Recorded vote. Has that been seconded?

COUNCILLOR LOBLEY: Yes I second, my Lord Mayor.

(A recorded vote was taken)

THE LORD MAYOR: There are 93 present, in favour 40, there was one abstention and 52 Members voted against. LOST.

Therefore I will call upon Councillor Wakefield to deal with the winding up of business on Item 9.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Firstly, it is interesting how our new Whip was tried to be outflanked by Councillor Lobley. Actually I think if we want to change it to make logical sense, i.e. it comes in the order of pages, then we should have sat down together and discussed it.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: We did. That is what we did last night. That was the agreement.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Listen, it is not good enough, to catch your phrase, to suddenly blame what happened last night.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: That was the Whips' agreement last night.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Leaders should take some responsibility for the way this debate takes place. I would more than happily sit down in the future and sit

down and talk about the best and the fairest way forward in Executive Board. What you tried to do last night is bounce our Whip into a change of practice that has been here for years and years and years. I have asked our former Chief Whip...

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: He was not there though.

COUNCILLOR MATTHEWS: He was not there.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Wakefield, we are meant to be summing up, please. Can you kindly sum up...

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: I am summing up.

THE LORD MAYOR: ... on the Minutes.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: I am summing up.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: The Lord Mayor has told you you are not.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Let me just go quickly to the big issues where I think I need to get to in, as you say, seven or eight minutes.

Firstly, on the taxis. I think, Andrew, it is quite unnecessary to talk about "not good enough". I could easily look at the plans, I think, in 2008 when there was a rank being put down and nothing happened in two years of that administration. That would be point scoring pointlessly. The important thing is on the taxis, as you rightly say, that we hold consensus about the way this airport is beginning to put us into disgrace and disrepute with their practices. That is the important point. We want better access, particularly for the elderly and disabled, and we want a fairer system of getting taxis. I do not think it is any point about "not good enough". Believe you me, they did not mention anything while we were in discussions with them about an access strategy. They did it a week later. That is bound to make us extremely angry and frustrated.

I want to come back to this afternoon's debate because I am not surprised there are so many people who wanted to speak on this Minute, because there are some really big issues that face this city over the next 20, 30 years.

If you look at the Vision and the prediction, the population is predicted to grow to one million in 20 years' time. That raises all sorts of big issues about how we provide jobs, homes, schools, skills and all the rest of the stuff that a city needs in the future, and affordable homes.

It does so against what is now becoming an obvious decline in public finance. We do not have the money for regeneration, we do not have money for a number of things and we will not have, I believe, for the next ten or 15 years, so it begs the question, how does the Council help to shape the future of this city and try to deal with all the aspirations and ambitions in Leeds that we have?

One of the tools has been Planning. I have to say, national planning policy has really lost all credibility in everybody's eyes. I think as the previous speaker said, the Regional Spatial Strategy which we all condemned was far too rigid. It is far too rigid and left us with a ridiculous figure of 4,300 every year when the market was flat, when we could never achieve that. I think we got near it one year.

I am glad that we condemned the Regional Spatial Strategy together because it was not a very flexible tool. It did not match reality. The trouble is – and we have not really got on to this yet – Eric Pickles spent six months promising us that he would help local Government to shape the future and not have rigid figures in post. We in this Council have lost over £1m in appeals based on – we did it all-party so this is not point-scoring because this is a really important debate. We lost every appeal that we launched, which cost us £1m, so, frankly, I was relieved that the RSS had gone and I was looking forward to a more flexible arrangement so that we can evolve the city to retain its character, its identity and meet the needs of future generations.

Where are we now? I will tell you where we are – we are in exactly the same position we were under the Labour Government and the RSS. That is how bad it is, and I think if there is a genuine feel – and I take it as genuine – then we need to get our act together all-party-wise immediately, straightaway and instead of trying generally to score points, which is always a bit of fun, we need to make sure that we do our best for the city.

At the last Executive Board we were told that the interim number was no longer sustainable and that we had to drop our lesser figures because planners and developers – or developers in particular – could cherry pick anywhere they wanted to go to pick up our greenbelt and our green sites without any defence from us. We are absolutely defenceless, as I speak now. Any developer can go up and choose it and say that we are not meeting the supply of houses needed, 4,300.

The idea was this. Andrew, I heard what you said at Executive Board and you are right, you did quibble about Phase 2 and 3 and, as I say, I believe you, but the important thing is we have no defence, so what do you try to do? The idea at the Executive Board was a prospectus to work with the developers about the kind of things that we need to have.

Firstly, as we have all agreed, we want to protect the character of this city. Our towns, our villages and our settlements make Leeds a great city to live in and there is not one person in this room that wants to see it a concrete jungle like other places in this country. That is the first thing we want to do.

The second thing we have got to do is, we have got to have affordable homes. We have to have affordable homes. We built 14 out of 106 last year. Look at the queue. People talked about 37 year old averages waiting for a house. We are not building them. At the moment a developer can build four or five bedroom houses, that is what they favour because they know it is second and third time people. We have to stress how important it is and we have to stress that some of our cities desperately need regeneration. That is why I agreed with the previous policy, because we wanted in a sequential way to focus on places like EASEL and Seacroft. We have to stress that and we also have to stress the importance of building schools, jobs and skills for our younger generation. If we are growing a million we cannot say any more – we have to develop.

I think there are two issues. I am trying to get through it, John, so do not shake your head.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: We are not growing by a million, that is the point.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: The first thing I think is the point that Councillor Carter makes about £21,000 in speculators' and developers' banks is totally and

utterly unacceptable. That surely is one thing we can lobby together, as you say, when Greg Clark comes up.

The second point I think, because it does irritate you when you see the amount of houses in windfall and I think that we get hundreds if not thousands through windfall never included, so we have over five years' supply.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Mainly on brownfield sites.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: On brownfield sites that we can develop. That, surely, would make a much better policy and debate here.

I look forward to Scrutiny looking at the figures and the projection of those figures because they really are important, but one of the things we should all be determined is to make sure that our city is protected from ruthless developers, some of them are, and we get the kind of things that our future generations need and then we can actually say this Council is really trying to be ambitious and talk constructively about the future of this city and the people we want here. Thank you, Lord Mayor.
(Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: I am now calling for the vote on the motion to receive the Minutes. *(A vote was taken)* CARRIED.

Thank you. It is now time for tea. Can I repeat what I said earlier, that the members who are sitting in the gallery will be most welcome to join us for tea and we will meet back here at 20-past five. Thank you.

(Council adjourned for a short time)

ITEM 10 – WHITE PAPER MOTION –TRADE UNION FACILITIES

THE LORD MAYOR: Can we move on to Item 10 and can I call on Councillor Lamb.

COUNCILLOR LAMB: Thank you, Lord Mayor. In moving this White Paper...

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: Lord Mayor, in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 13.2g, I move that this debate is adjourned to allow Members to take further legal advice relating to the White Paper in the name of Alan Lamb.

COUNCILLOR NASH: My Lord Mayor, I second.

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

ITEM 11 – WHITE PAPER MOTION - WELFARE REFORMS

THE LORD MAYOR: Therefore can we move on now to Item 11, and I call upon Councillor Atha. Councillor Selby?

COUNCILLOR SELBY: Lord Mayor, a minor point. I have a personal interest in this item. It is referred to because I am a Panel Chair of the Tribunal Service. It is recorded on the Register of Interests as a personal interest and on the Item 12,

Trade Union Facilities, together with my membership of the GMB. For some reason it has been put down twice, in the wrong place.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Councillor Akhtar, similar?

COUNCILLOR AKHTAR: Yes, thank you, Lord Mayor. Can I also declare a personal interest with regards to White Paper 11.

THE LORD MAYOR: Any others, while we are at it? Councillor Atha.

COUNCILLOR ATHA: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Basically the background to this White Paper is the cataclysmic collapse of the world banking system caused not by Brown but by the world's bankers, who were activated by greed and led to very nearly a total world recession. This affected this country, of course, like anybody else.

There are no disagreements on our part on what has to be done. Cuts were obviously going to be essential and inevitable. Our complaint is the stupidity, and gross stupidity, of the Government in frontloading the cuts as they have done which, in fact, forces Leeds to make cuts of about £90m in the first year and further cuts in the second, third and fourth. That frontloading is, I think, by many economists seen as being a gross mistake and risks, in fact, triggering a real recession.

Worse than that, the Government policy is an open attack on the poorest people in our society, making a myth of the Big Society which we are all in together. It is a total sham, a cynical device. The rich few got 18% richer in the last few years and the poor 20% poorer, according to an independent report by Shelter.

I personally would attack the bankers with their indecent bonuses and the rich, who often pay less income tax than many of us here do. The Government is introducing a host of changes to the welfare system. We have no problem with rooting out the scroungers. It is the scroungers who want rooting out and dealing with, but I would start with the fat cats who abuse the system, who get millions of pounds when they retire from the bank after bringing the bank into near bankruptcy. Let us start with those as well as any others before we start looking for scroungers.

The Government calls these changes they are introducing reforms. I do not believe that the word "reform" is appropriate the word. They are changes. "Reform implies" and I think we would all agree – that you would change to make things better. If, in fact you are changing, reforming the criminal law, you might get rid of the cat o' nine tails and the birch, as we did in the past. If you are changing the voting system then in fact you give people one person, one vote. That is reform – a change for the better.

Change that make it worse is not a reform and it is a Government mis-use of the term. The changes - I refuse to call them – constitute a direct attack on the poorest in society, and will increase by vast numbers the people rendered homeless by these changes.

Boris in London – a strange person but he identified something like 40,000 people who would be made homeless in London alone as a result of these changes. God knows what the impact will be here, but if any of us who now live in a comfortable home imagine what it is like to be homeless, not one of us would take a step in that direction.

Just to list a few of these changes. The maximum local Housing Benefit will be capped at the four bed rather than the current five bed rate, which means that a large number of people who live in this city who are entitled to the higher rate will now lose it and be up to £80 a week worse off. Where a tenant has found a property at a lower rate than that which is available in the public sector, he or she was allowed to keep the difference; by finding somewhere cheaper they are actually assisting us to save and they were given an allowance of up to £15 to keep. That has been withdrawn, and people who had come to rely on it, having taken the poorer premises rather than the more expensive, are going to be something like £11 or £12 worse off.

The local housing allowance is set at the 50th percentile per rent of rents charged in the private sector – that is 50%. That has now been moved to the 30th percentile. That is going to save £1.2b. Who are they saving the money from? It is from these poor souls that we will be see made homeless, reduced to even deeper poverty levels.

Single people up to the age of 35 now – previously 25 – will have their rate cut from £109 to £60 a week, affecting something like 1,800 single people in Leeds. Most lone parents with a young child of five or six of that age will be transferred from Income Support to Job Seekers' Allowance and they are expected to make attempts to get employment. This is for everyone with children as young as six or seven, maybe a single parent family – Job Seekers' rather than Income Support. A £50 civil penalty is to be introduced for those people who, when they make an application for an award, do it mistakenly. I have no problem with rooting out the people who are the fraudsters, let us treat them severely, but this £50 civil penalty is going to be imposed and then it is up to the Council to get it. The Council cannot take that £50 back from the money, the benefits that have been paid, they are going to have to go separately, and we all know from our own experience, that is no way to ever get that money back. It is a penalty that will be impossible but we will not be able to afford to impose it, the reason being the cost of getting all that money back, £50, is simply not worth it for each individual.

It is grossly stupid and people know it is stupid, and yet the Minister – I will not say he is necessarily stupid but he is in fact persisting with this stupidity.

The research produced by Shelter has shown that Leeds would be the first city outside London to become unaffordable to people on Housing Benefit. You cannot believe that we are going to be in the same hole as now is predicted in London. The Housing Benefit will be reduced if a property is too large for a tenant who is of working age. This will save £770m. Imagine, for instance, a man, middle aged, made redundant, living with his mother for whom he is now a carer. She dies and the he suddenly finds he is in a property too large for a single person and so his Housing Benefit will be reduced. It really is quite a monstrous attack on people who are at the most vulnerable stage of their lives.

The department estimates that 33% of people in Yorkshire and Humberside who receive Housing Benefit will be affected by this reduction in large property grants and benefits. A cap to the benefit is to be imposed which means that local Councils can cap the Housing Benefit element of benefit saving, £400m. What Council worth its salt will impose such a cap unless they are forced on the people who we are there to represent?

The Child Benefit is being frozen for three years and that is a £2.6b saving – saving, again, at whose expense? Those who are the richest, those who can afford to go out to the expensive restaurants in London, can afford to fly first class in an

aircraft, or are they the poor people who are scratching a living and are now scratching a living – why? Because of the stupidity and greed of the bankers who have led us all, all of us, into the condition we are in.

The Council Tax benefit is to be abolished and replaced by a localised support for Council Tax funded from a source which the Government has already taken 10% from. That will save it £975m by making a 20% cut in benefits. Again, £975m saved at the expense of the people who are the poorest in our community.

The recovery of rents by Councils will be made difficult and, I think, impossible in some cases if the intention to pay the benefit directly to the individuals is implemented. It is much better if the rents are paid out of the benefit direct to the Council. That saves an awful lot of money. When it is not, pursuing arrears is virtually impossible and every year we write off a very substantial sum – I reckon it is getting on for £1m – in rents that are not actually collected because of this problem.

The Disability Living Allowance is to be replaced by a Personal Independence Payment and that will save £1.3b. Again, in this case it is not just the poor, it is the disabled poor that that saving is being made from. It is unconscionable. If you are Christians – and looking round I can only see myself as being one of those that qualify – you would say this is unchristian, but if you have any belief in honesty and fairness you will agree, I hope, that these cuts and penalties being imposed on the most vulnerable are, in fact, unconscionable and something we cannot support.

Of course, the universal credit is going to come in in 2013 and I think we will all welcome that if it is a clear and effective and well-ordered benefit. It is going to replace Income Support, Job Seekers' Allowance, Employment Support Allowance, Tax Credits and Housing Benefit. The complexity of putting all those together and coming up with a figure and a benefit that is reasonable is, in fact, mind-blowing and I can see all kinds of enormous problems arising. When those problems arise they will not affect me, because I am comfortably off, they will not affect some of us because we are comfortably off, but it will affect the people who are below our level of income and of wealth and you do not have to go very far to get there.

Again, when this universal credit is to be paid, it is going to be paid direct to the person and that is going to be extremely difficult to get that money back. I appeal to the Lib Dems, who do have the same feelings we have about these issues, to join us on this particular little crusade. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: I call upon Councillor Driver.

COUNCILLOR DRIVER: Second and reserve the right to speak, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Golton.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Yes, benefits. I think it is one of those issues that has lingered for administration after administration in Westminster and they all say they want to tackle it and they are going to put somebody in to study it and then they are going to make some recommendations and then they are going to act on it but, of course, when it happens and the recommendations come forward, what tends to happen is they get sidelined. Poor old Frank Field, one of the biggest brains we have got in the country, tends to be one of those who is most overlooked, as well.

I think one thing that I would like to say as the Leader of the Lib Dems here in Leeds is, I appreciate it is an issue that is far bigger than my mental capacity to provide a solution to.

What I would say, though, Lord Mayor, is that too often this subject matter has been used to appeal to certain sectors of the population and too often this debate suffers from the old problem of the terms “the deserving poor” and “the undeserving poor”, and I think we need to be very careful how we debate that according to the changes that are being put forward at the moment. That is one of the reasons why, Bernard, I did find it difficult to support your motion because it does resist any change to the *status quo* because of the danger that actually you might have somebody who loses out along the way, and that is going to have to happen.

Unfortunately, the Conservative amendment for us had a certain Luddite zeal in wanting to take a hammer to the machinery of the Welfare State...

COUNCILLOR TAGGART: Is the marriage over then, Stewart?

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: ...before the brand new model had been tested. That is why, of course, like Goldilocks, I wanted the amendment to be just right and so that is why the Liberal Democrats have put something together which we hope you can all support.

My Lord Mayor, the present system is labyrinthine and it is open to abuse by those who are minded, but it is also very difficult for the less cynical to get their due. Councillor Anderson referred earlier to the Narrowing the Gap Group and how that had fallen to one side, and Councillor Wakefield referred earlier to the North-South divide. One of the things that we have to be mindful of in this Chamber is that our real concern should be that gap that did widen in our city. Even during the last Government, which talked about reducing the gap between poorer and richer, we still have communities, actually, who are wider apart from some of our richer communities as they ever have been.

One of the things that is consistent about that gap is that these communities are subsisting rather than thriving in the midst of being in a boom economy that Leeds was over the past 15 years. The stronger emphasis in these changes that are being proposed is that benefit should be an aid into work rather than a hindrance that means that you cannot work and still achieve the same for your family, and it puts you off being a breadwinner. I think that is the most important improvement in the system that is coming forward and I think we should embrace it in Leeds because, as has been said, we are one of the Authorities best placed to benefit from that growth in private sector employment to counter some of that which might be lost from the public sector and we can effectively move some of these people from benefits into work more practically than some of our authorities elsewhere.

However, we do have to be mindful of the inevitable gaps that will occur in any implementation of a new system. There will be gaps and we should act as soon as possible to plug them and keep unintended disadvantage to an absolute minimum and that is why we are putting our amendment forward as a half-way house. Thank you, Lord Mayor (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Martin Hamilton.

COUNCILLOR M HAMILTON: Second, Lord Mayor, and reserve the right to speak.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Marjoram.

COUNCILLOR MARJORAM: Thank you, Lord Mayor. As both speakers have alluded to, the subject of welfare reform and the Welfare Reform Bill is quite a significant subject and I think both speakers did well to draw out some of the finer detail in a short period of time.

Councillor Atha talks about the £90m of cuts that have been required by the Labour administration. I would just like to set the record straight that actually that is around £48m to £50m that have been required by the Government and the rest is an overspend because the Labour Party are unable actually to sensibly manage their departments so that the amount of money coming in matches the amount of money going out and that is what has created the additional pressure. I wish the Chamber to know that this is exactly what happened in Government. For all Councillor Atha can blame the bankers, Gordon Brown overspent between 2001 and 2007 every year and we were building up a structural deficit long before the recession came. This is a matter of fact, this is a matter of record. Frankly, for you now to oppose everything that is necessary to put right some of the legacy of mismanagement in this country shows just how far removed you are from being a party of Government again.

Specifically with regard to the Welfare Reform Bill, I think it is worth considering that in 1997 there were 5.7 million working age benefit claimants; in 1997 to 2010 there were around three million new jobs created, two-thirds of which were in the private sector, and yet when we went back to the polls last year in 2010, there were still over five million working age claimants claiming benefits. The reason for that is very clear and this again is a matter of fact established by the House of Commons during Labour's time in office, that the many millions of migrants that came to this country took the majority of jobs and in doing so there not only was, which Councillor Atha said, an attack on the poor, migration has been the attack on the poor, Councillor Atha, because it has suppressed wages, increased demand for housing and public services and left a generation of people in this country at your Government's behest trapped in benefits.

The depressing statistics, really, from your time in office, are that one-third of working people are now claiming tax credits even though they still work, and that becomes an issue of wage deflation. The gap between the rich and poor is widening; it has been since the 1930s. In the last five years Housing Benefit claims have increased by 50% and youth unemployment has gone up by 40% during your time in office. These are all problems which need addressing. I am staggered that none of you recognises a failure on such a scale when it stares you in the face.

I would just like to put the proposal from the Coalition Government in an international context. There was a President of the United States quite recently who, when confronted with endemic welfarism and a budget which was spiralling out of control, with popular public support and cross-party support in the United States, introduced a time limit on benefit claimants such that you could not claim benefits all your life. That President was your darling of the left, Bill Clinton. Nothing on that scale is being proposed here – nothing on that scale is being proposed by the Coalition Government. What we are talking about is some sensible reductions in spending so that we can actually bring the economy back to a situation where the money we spend matches the money we bring in.

It is with that in mind that the Coalition is in fact increasing some of the money available, to make work pay, and there is an extra £3b of public money going into the

Welfare to Work Programmes – that is a Labour term but I am sure it is one you would understand – over the next few years.

The specific issue of Housing Benefit, I think, is worth considering, because nationally around 40,000 households will be affected by changes in Housing Benefit. This is the information from the Department. Around 20,000 of those will be affected by less than £50 a week and I can give you one example of people in of what I might call the real world – not the narrow prism of the Labour Party of dependents and claimants and victims, but the real world. Our neighbour, who works in recruitment, had to take a 50% pay cut, so he moved house, he sold his car and bought a cheaper one, he started taking the bus to work – he made some changes to his lifestyle so that the amount of money coming in matched the amount of money going out. It is fairly simple. It is quite wrong that people who, however vulnerable, depend on welfare should be immune from the financial pressures that so many millions of ordinary people have experienced over the last few years and for all the talk of fairness that we sometimes hear, particularly from the Labour Party and Ed Miliband - fairness, fairness, fairness – I tell you this, it is manifestly unfair that people who work and live independently and provide for themselves are subsidising the lives of people who do not work and who rely on the State to support them when there are opportunities that exist for them.

In fact, I have a quote here from someone who you will all know. It says:

“What of those lads barely able to read or write who tell me they would not dream of taking a job that does not pay three times the rate they gain on benefits and who refuse those jobs available on the grounds that such work is only fit for immigrants? This group of recidivist, workless claimants know from past experience that Governments leave them alone. Voters have other views. Three-quarters of the public”

- take note, Labour, three-quarters of the public –

“including benefit claimants themselves believe that those who willingly refuse to seek work should lose all or a very large proportion of their benefits.”

Who wrote that? One of your own, Frank Field.

Let us not pretend that the issue of welfare reform is one that we are inflicting on the population at large. It is one that is necessary because of your calamitous mismanagement of the economy and your wilful desire to trap people in poverty because you knew that the alternative was too difficult to deal with.

I would just suggest that, since the Labour Party, I think, in this Chamber, owns about twice as many houses as the rest of us put together, that when the changes to Housing Benefit come in you might like to cast a little survey of your own landlords to see if they will perhaps take a little haircut to make sure that the people in their houses do not have to move. I am sure that such a gesture would spread far and wide in this city.

I would just like to, perhaps, sum up briefly by saying that the savings to Housing Benefit alone will amount to many hundreds of millions of pounds a year and it may be necessary in the first few years while the transition is being undertaken to support some people who are required to change their accommodation, but this is no

different to what many, many, many millions of families will have done in the last few years. Really, the prism of the Labour Party of claimants, dependents and victims, is not one that the public recognises...

COUNCILLOR LYONS: That is why we are in power here.

COUNCILLOR MARJORAM: ... and I would urge you to read what Frank Field has said, and it is here in a survey in the work that he has done, that three-quarters of the public think that people who refuse to work should lose their benefits. The fact that we are only really proposing a trim, a barbershop trim of the welfare budget, would indicate that these are not only sensible reforms but necessary.

COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: That is double standards.

COUNCILLOR MARJORAM: Double standards? I say again, speak to the landlords on your Bench. This really is a legacy of Labour's time in office that such steps are necessary and I rather resent the neat and cosy view you have that people who depend on the State should depend on people who do not depend on the State. Some of that is undoubtedly necessary but there are plenty of people who have made changes in their own lives and in their own lifestyles over the last few years and it is quite wrong that they should, having done that, have to support people who steadfastly refuse to do so. Thank you, my Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Robinson.

COUNCILLOR ROBINSON: Second, Lord Mayor, and reserve the right to speak.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Can I invite Councillor Blake to speak, please.

COUNCILLOR BLAKE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I think we have just had a clear example of why Labour is back in power in this city. *(Applause)*

I want to look at this debate through the prism, if you like, of the impact it is going to have on families. Actually, Stewart, I think Councillor Atha has framed the motion very moderately. What he is talking about is the scale, the severity and speed and asking for a pause so that we can have a real close look at impact.

The Children's Services working through the Children's Trust Board has come up with three clear priorities: that is reducing the number of referrals, therefore the number of looked-after children in the city; reducing the number of young people who are NEET; and improving attendance and behaviour at schools. Those are the three things - if we look at them, if we address them, then we can really start talking about improving the life chances of the children and families in our city and it is these areas that these proposals and changes to welfare reform are going to have a significant hit.

I want to know who and where an impact assessment has been done from Government on to the effect of the changes on families in Leeds. We have highlighted over the last year the risks to children and families from the Government's agenda, the frontloading of the cuts, the area-based grants that have reduced money going into our most vulnerable families. George Osborne himself actually stated when he was criticised for this and gave an assurance that his budget would not

increase child poverty. This is incredible when his officials had to admit that he did not take into account the cuts in Housing Benefit and Disability Living Allowance.

Eric Pickles himself sent a warning to Cameron of the benefit cap on the family will increase the burden on taxpayers, thousands of families will be unable to pay their rent. He was talking about mass homelessness and the disproportionate effect that this will have on families – that is one of Cameron's own Ministers.

Let us talk about the scale of what we are facing in Leeds. We know, as Councillor Atha has highlighted, the four bedroom rule, which is going to directly affect 77 families in Leeds, cutting their income by £165 a week. There are 6,700 lone parents in Leeds with their youngest child between the age of five and eleven. These are the ones, over six-and-a-half thousand, who are going to be moved from Income Support to Job Seekers' Allowance. No assessment of the impact of that.

We have just over 69,000 families in receipt of tax credits, 18,000 plus families, including 35,000 children in households claiming out of work benefit and when it comes to Council tax and Housing Benefit, we have nearly 19,000 families and approximately 35,000 children who could be affected by these changes. This is on a massive scale and we have no analysis of the impact this is going to have.

I think we can stand up and be proud in Leeds. We have some of the best financial inclusion work in the country and how appalling at this time of great change that one of the acts that the Coalition Government brought in was to remove debt advisers. Thankfully, the outcry about that has led to a six month stay of execution on that, but surely if we are going into a time of unprecedented change, the thing we need most are people out there in our communities who can support people and work with the Credit Union. *(Applause)*

We know that the impact of welfare reform is going to be disproportionately high on women. The issue about the single person allowance is it does not provide for lone parents, fathers who have left their family for whatever reason under the age of 35 will not be able to live on their own. Just think about the child protection issues of expecting children to go and stay in houses of multiple occupation. It absolutely beggars belief.

We know the links between poverty and poor health, between poor health and poor educational attainment and between poor educational attainment and NEETS. This is where we need to be focusing all of our attention to improve the life of children in our city and I have to say, Lord Mayor, that the proposals for benefit changes in this city have not paid due regard to vulnerable children and their families. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Gruen.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Lord Mayor, Councillor Atha is quite right that this is not a welfare reform; it is welfare annihilation. One of the most endearing qualities about Joe Marjoram, who is a very nice chap when you talk to him outside of the Chamber, is that he reminds us, we on this side, why we uphold a social conscience and why we are proud to represent and to care about people who are badly off, who are not as well off as they are in Farsley and Calverley, who do not have the privileges that other people have and who find themselves in hard times.

I tell you this, all the evidence available to us is the Housing Options Team and the ALMOs and the Contact Centre will take more not less calls from desperate

people about to be homeless with nowhere to go and as long as we are the administration here we will have a social conscience. We will not just turn people away. We recognise we have a financial duty but that financial duty has to be exercised in a way that it does not add to the problem that national Government is handing down to us.

I have gone to many lunchtime seminars in my time here but the most worrying and the most frightening was the one from Mr Carey on welfare annihilation very recently in this hall. It was an eye-opener. I will not go through all the statistics that Bernard went through but they are extremely worrying.

You used to say that Gordon Brown did things by sleight of hand. Well, he has got a lot to learn, I tell you, from Osborne and other people. By God! You changed overnight RPI to CPI and that has had a major effect, not just on inflation, not just on pensions but also on Housing Benefit.

Shelter predicts that Leeds will be amongst the hardest hit cities with the area becoming very unaffordable by 2019 compared to Manchester in 2028, Sheffield in 2023. The move about the cuts in Local Housing Allowance. A survey was taken out for Shelter. 86% of Labour Councillors criticised this. You would expect that of Labour Councillors because we care about these things, but even 80% of Lib Dem Councillors – clearly they did not survey the ones in Leeds – agreed with this, that Local Housing Allowance should be fixed locally and not on national inflation. Even 68% of Conservative Councillors – the Ann Castles and the Feldmans and the Hydes – he cannot even stand being in here while you lot are speaking – they care about those things but the new faces in the second row – we have not yet heard from Mr Robinson, wait until he gets up and speaks to us, he will try and better Marjoram by at least a couple of aces.

There is clear blue water between how we would deal with this and how you would deal with it.

The welfare agenda assumes, as Joe told us, that nearly everybody is a scrounger and if you treat them all like that and therefore if a few people actually are not scroungers and they get caught up by this, that is a price worth paying, isn't it.

COUNCILLOR TAGGART: You hard-hearted man.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Yes. That is not the agenda that we have. The social changes that are being made have to be seen in the context of hitting some people very hard indeed. They do not hit Mr Cameron and they do not hit Mr Clegg and even Mr Pickles who, every now and again there must be a ray of light shining down but even he has acknowledged in a letter, has he not, which has been widely leaked, that there might be as many as 20,000 people who have to go on to benefit and all the supposed savings that this reform is supposed to make will be wiped out overnight on additional welfare payments.

This resolution I think is the right resolution for the right time and this Council has to make a stand and show that it is not prepared to be bullied and go along without a proper campaign against some of these issues. We will not be bullied by this Government. We will do all we can to help those vulnerable people who face the hardest possible times - no job, no benefit, no home and no care from you.
(Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Richard Lewis, please.

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Joe, I do not think you would have put this White Paper down if you had been in this Council Chamber when the Poll Tax went through and if you had experienced the misery that a Conservative Government was happy to inflict on the people of this city. I think if you had had that experience, if you had had all those phone calls that the older gits here can remember (*laughter*) including myself, people on fixed incomes phoning up in absolute desperation, I think you would have had a different perspective on this, because I see these changes as being very much on a par with what the Poll Tax managed to achieve, only I think it is probably more damaging in the long run than the Poll Tax was.

I think Bernard gave you the framework of how it works, but just perhaps look at it in a little more detail. It is perhaps worth considering that in terms of Housing Benefit, Local Housing Allowance, we have two different systems in operation. We have the system for Council housing and social housing where we are forcing rents up, or the Government is forcing rents up to 80% of the market level – you are doing that – and at the same time depressing the benefits of people in those properties, so I think it is not difficult to see what is going to happen there. Particularly, and I think somebody alluded to it, you will be taking money away from people for under-occupying if they are of working age. They say a third of our properties in Yorkshire and Humberside have people under-occupying.

Les, actually, introduced an initiative over under-occupation but he was not daft enough to do something that was not about incentives and trying to persuade people. What we have from the Government is something that is the opposite, that is actually putting a huge amount of financial pressure on people who are under-occupying their homes. I know plenty of people in that position. They are ordinary people, they have probably lived in those homes for years and years and years, it is the family home, perhaps they have been divorced, perhaps the kids have left home but we are actually going to see them in a position where they are penalised and they do not get their full Housing Benefits.

In the private sector we have a different system where the intention is to push rents downwards but the idea is you actually put the pressure on the tenant, so that the rent level is going to be, say, £10 less than it is at the moment and you hope that the landlord is going to say, “All right, I will go along with that as long as I get a direct payment instead of having to collect it off the tenant.” Unfortunately, there are plenty of places in this city where the market rent is actually higher than the LHA rent, so you can see landlords thinking, “Well, I could leave this tenant in, I could accept a lower rent or I could get rid of them and get a new tenant in because that is better for me” and that is what is going to happen and you are going to see it happening in places like Otley, in places like Wetherby – you are going to see people forced out of their homes.

Reading all the background on this, you realise the difference between the way civil servants see a problem and the way it really happens out there. In civil servant talk, people have a rational consideration – “I am not going to get as much money from the Government – well, I will have to downsize, won’t I? Yes, I will move from where I have got all my family support, I will move from Wetherby, I will move into Beeston”. That will be easy, won’t it? That is what people will do. No, it does not work like that. It is desperately, desperately messy. People will get into all sorts of bother because what they will do is they will not have enough money to pay their rent and there will be a lot of people in Council accommodation who will not have enough money to pay their rent and slowly, bit by bit, the Council will look and say,

"We have got to get our rent in" and we will have one of those fascinating dilemmas of what on earth do we do as a Council about those people, because we have to collect our rent, the ALMOs have to collect the rents but what on earth are we going to do? We are going to see people, one way or another, forced down the homelessness route and it is going to be large numbers of people who are going to be in that position. It is going to be desperate, it is going to cost this city millions but it is going to cost millions in terms of the misery that people are going to experience.

As I say, it is every ward in the city we are going to see people going through months and months and months of uncertainty, inability to pay – "What do I do?" – we will all be getting all the phone calls from people, don't you worry about that, you will be getting them, Joe, as well, Matthew will be getting them, probably not as many as we get but those people will be phoning so they will be desperate – "What do we do?"

Supporting this does not help. There is a debate to be had on welfare reform, absolutely. Certainly during the election I had a lot of conversations with people on our estates who feel that we have a serious issue with welfare reform, but it is not some grubby deal like this. It is not attacking the people on the lowest incomes. Those people on their lowest incomes cannot downsize, they cannot sell the car...

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Lewis, red light.

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: ... because they have not got a car. They cannot save money by doing things that you suggest because they have not got the money already. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: I am quite happy to be flexible with new Members when it comes to red lights but I would have thought that more seasoned Members ought to be a little more cautious and aware of it. Councillor Illingworth.

COUNCILLOR ILLINGWORTH: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I speak in support of Councillor Atha's motion and I would like to focus on the extent of deprivation in Leeds.

Members might be aware that in March 2011 the Government published a new edition of the English Indices of Multiple Deprivation, nominally for 2010 but based in practice on statistics from 2008. I have some of them here.

Since 2004 these indices have been based on the same seven indicator domains – that is to say income; employment; health; education; housing; environment; and crime. Although we might argue with the weighting attached to individual measures, few would quarrel with the overall approach.

At the same time, Lord Mayor, the NHS has started to release increasingly detailed information about health outcomes in Leeds and for many months I have immersed myself in this data trying to understand more precisely what is going wrong.

Lord Mayor, nobody who studies these statistics can be complacent about the situation. They reveal the most appalling patterns of inequality in terms of life-expectancy, educational achievement, overall quality of life.

Who would imagine, Lord Mayor, that age-standardised all-cause mortality rates in City and Hunslet Ward would be four times higher than they are in Adel and

Wharfedale - four times higher death rates, Lord Mayor. This reflects the fact that the average person in City and Hunslet dies perhaps at dozen years before their fellow citizens in Adel and Wharfedale. It is not a situation which any Councillor can cheerfully accept.

Careful study reveals other forms of inequality – vast areas of Leeds where scarcely any children have access to higher education. Other groups are affected by obesity, by diabetes or rotten teeth.

At the same time, Lord Mayor, statistics also show what complex matter this all is. People living in particular areas tend to suffer similar problems and in general terms people deprived on one indicator are often deprived for others as well. In detail, there are exceptions. Even in the poorest area a few people are well-off. In the richer, more comfortable parts of Leeds, there is a submerged, often invisible minority who suffer extreme deprivation.

All this makes it fiendishly difficult to target resources on those in greatest need. No matter how carefully we try to design the benefit system, it is necessarily a very blunt instrument; a clumsy and imprecise solution to an extremely complex problem.

No matter what system is adopted, it will inevitably miss some of its targets, paying out to some who do not need it and ignoring many who do. Over time these systems should evolve, gradually identifying more effective interventions and discarding those with limited effects. The essence, Lord Mayor, is gradually – it takes time to understand these problems. It takes knowledge and sensitivity to solve them. What does not work is a blunderbuss approach – wholesale draconian changes to the benefit system of the kind envisaged by the Government are likely to cause serious hardship to particularly vulnerable groups – groups that the Government may never have intended to hit but has inevitably caught in the crossfire.

Lord Mayor, the fundamental cause of these problems is the excessive gap between rich and poor. Rewards in this country are spread over much too wide a range and bear little relationship to individual effort. Instead of seriously damaging the benefit system by ill-considered wholesale cuts, it will be better – far better, Lord Mayor – for the very richest members of society to simply pay more tax. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Yeadon.

COUNCILLOR YEADON: Lord Mayor, I wish to speak in support of Councillor Atha's White Paper and the potential effects these reforms may have on people with disabilities.

You might recall in April of this year this Council passed a White Paper regarding the mobility component of DLA. That was not the only concerns that we have regarding the welfare reform. The Government wants to reduce the amount of DLA payments paid to fraudulent claimants and I think everybody on all sides of the Chamber would agree that if you do not have the need to be eligible for DLA then you should not be receiving DLA. However, the sums do not add up.

According to the DWP, £220m was paid out to fraudulent claimants in 2009 and 2010. However, the Government admits itself that it should save £1b a year, or some commentators put it nearer to £2b or 20% of the current expenditure on DLA –

by the changes that have been proposed to make. I am not very good at maths but I can see the difference and it is clear to me that the difference between the £220m and the £1b being proposed by the Government will be made up by payments to eligible DLA receivers.

Many, many disability charities are extremely concerned about the changes to DLA. Charities are concerned about the new test and that it will not take into account the extra costs of people with disabilities that they face in daily lives, like higher electrical bills and transport costs, and there are also major concerns about how it will affect those with less severe disabilities, so those who still need support but who may not need as much support as others.

The RNIB is concerned that the proposal to change the assessment process for DLA replacement, which would remove the link between someone's medical record and their disability, which would automatically remove the entitlement to the benefit for registered blind people and this would be to the detriment of around 26,000 people.

We believe that the welfare reforms go too far and too fast but at the same time we must also recognise that people with disabilities are more likely to be unemployed than somebody without a disability.

It was only a few weeks ago that Phillip Davies, MP, said that vulnerable job seekers should offer to work for less. That is that those people with disabilities should not necessarily be entitled to the minimum wage. I am sure most people around this Chamber would want to disassociate themselves from those remarks. What we cannot do is stop people claiming benefits who aren't able to work and then expect them to work for less. It is cruel, it is barbaric and it does not help us to achieve a true equality in this city or our country. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Ann Blackburn.

COUNCILLOR A BLACKBURN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I too was at this seminar and certainly the proposed welfare reforms are quite extensive and I hope that the Government might have a rethink on some of them that have not come in yet.

Just to touch on one of them that has, to touch on a couple of points but one that did come in in April this year was Local Housing Allowance on five bedroom accommodation, which will reduce to the four bedroom rate for all new claimants. As for existing claimants, that will alter from January 2012.

We were told in this seminar that presently 77 cases could have losses up to £165 per week. I have to ask, is that fair? If these families cannot afford the difference, what happens to them?

I think more worrying is some of the other ideas that were on these sheets of paper that are going to come in in years to come, like we were told that in 2013/14 from April that year the Local Housing Allowance rates will no longer be uprated in line with actual rents in the private sector and instead will be uprated using the Consumer Price Index. This means that tenants in private accommodation who are on Housing Benefit are likely to receive a cut in their benefit and they will more like as not be unable to pay the difference, so unless private landlords bring their rents down, the likelihood is that these tenants will have to find other accommodation.

What worries me is that landlords who let premises that are substandard could thrive by this and also I have to ask, how will the Council which has been signposting people to the private sector to look for accommodation, cope with the new legislation? We know we have not got enough Council accommodation to cope with all the people who need it at the moment, so bearing in mind that people who are accepting private accommodation as an alternative now will be thinking twice about it. Where will all these people go?

The fact is that if the decent private landlords out there do not work with the Council on this, then the likelihood is that we are going to see people accepting less fit accommodation and that housing-wise we are going to go back to a time similar to the 1930s. Unscrupulous landlords will rub their hands with glee as there will be no shortage of people wanting their lets and they will be laughing all the way to the bank.

Is this acceptable in this day and age? I say definitely it is not. Thank you.
(Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. So far three other Members have indicated that they wish to speak – Councillor Carter, Councillor Pryke and Councillor Harris, and I will call them in that order.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: Cross me off, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Pryke.

COUNCILLOR PRYKE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I support a lot of what Bernard said in support of his motion but I am not going to vote for it. We have heard a lot from Labour this afternoon but what we have not heard is an apology. Can I remind you that Caroline Flint as a Minister was proposing that the rights to Council housing should be linked to looking for work. Can I remind you that James Purnell imposed very savage cuts in benefits, particularly on the disabled. Can I remind you that Gordon Brown abolished the 10p tax rate at the behest of Rupert Murdoch (interruption) which resulted (that is quite well-known) in poorer people paying much more tax.

Can I remind you that your Government introduced the Social Fund loans for necessities – you did not give money to deprived people for necessities, you would only loan money to them. That was part of your work. You introduced the Northern Way Housing Pathfinder which meant demolition of houses, reduced the supply of houses for people without that much money.

Richard Lewis had the arrogance to talk about “our estates”. How dare you say they are your estates?

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: I have no shame to say they are the estates I represent, Ralph, any time.

COUNCILLOR PRYKE: No, you were referring to it politically. You were referring to it politically. (Interruption)

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Typical.

THE LORD MAYOR: Order, please.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Your estates, your tenants.

COUNCILLOR PRYKE: People who live in Council estates live in houses which belong to the people of Leeds, not the Labour Party. (*Applause*)

John Illingworth referred to extreme deprivation. I agree with him, some parts of the city do suffer from extreme deprivation. Councillor Campbell suggested to me there is a solution to his immediate problem – move the people from City and Hunslet Ward into Adel and Wharfedale and vice-versa and then the health results would even out. That is a bit flippant.

When talking about rent increases you talked about 80%. Remind me which Government supported Housing Rent Convergence. It was the Labour Government, of course.

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: That is housing association (*inaudible*).

THE LORD MAYOR: Could we stop this sort of game of table tennis and respect each other. Carry on.

COUNCILLOR PRYKE: I am sorry but I am refusing to accept your statements as facts because they are not, they are biased.

Talking about redistribution, of course the Labour Party was interested in redistribution because you redistributed wealth from the poor to the wealthy, so you really need to hang your heads in shame and, before you apologise for the mistakes you made in Government, you are not in a position to criticise the attempts by the current Government to remedy the situation. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Harris.

COUNCILLOR HARRIS: Thank you, Lord Mayor. As ever, I was not intending to speak. I have not come with a prepared speech and I have listened – I have genuinely listened – to this debate and my starting point is that I am one of those on this side that has huge sympathy for what is being said by, in some ways, Members of the Labour Group and I am one of those who has considerable disquiet about some of the aspects of the changes to the welfare payments. However, and I am on instructions not to disclose what I may do when it comes to voting, the problem, as I have listened to the debate, I have to say I have not too much sympathy with what the Conservatives have been saying, save for the fact that it is correct that we cannot just carry on as we were. There is not the money just to carry on as we were and something somewhere is going to have to give.

It sits badly with me that the give should be from those least able to afford it but it is not quite that clear cut.

In any event, I wish to comment on some of the things that have been said and I want to remind everybody of what has been said about the old hands in here. I am the longest sitting Councillor in this Chamber and I want to say to Peter Gruen, when he talks about the red hot socialist there and defending the poor, I actually remember him sat there when we had the Poll Tax debate. I just want to say that we should all remember that there is nothing like a sinner who has been found out for his sins. The trouble is, Peter Gruen somehow forgets that once upon a time he spoke fervently in favour of what Margaret Thatcher used to do. Let me just remind everybody of that.

John Illingworth, everything you have said was correct about the gap between rich and poor and about the levels of deprivation in this city. The problem is, that did not happen in the last twelve months. Your Government actually had 13 years of staggering boom in which it completely failed to address the issue and allowed that situation to be exacerbated. It allowed the gap to widen. It allowed these terrible differences in life expectancy to arise. It has not happened in the last twelve months and it is not right that you use language and statistics like this in this debate.

The problem I have is that the motion in Bernard's name does not match some of the words of this debate. I find it hard to disagree with anything Bernard said, but there is nothing in his motion about a pause, about reconsidering in that respect. As Judith Blake suggested, it is about condemning and writing to central Government to tell them that we condemn them and about finding a sustainable solution. Actually, whichever way we come at it we all want a sustainable to a situation that cannot continue. Stewart Golton's motion tried to deal with the issues of conscience that I think many of us have got and a way in which to bring us all together so that we could say, with a single voice, let us pause, let us consider some of these issues that sit badly with many of us, but that is not what has come out of the mouths of the Labour Group today. That is what undermines the attempt that could have been reasonably attempted to get us all to say to central Government, "Just a minute, there are issues here which badly affect our city and we, all 99 of us, ask you to consider a different way of dealing with some of the issues of the welfare benefit." Nobody is proposing welfare annihilation and every time language of that nature is used it just reduces a sensible, reasonable debate to nothing. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Driver, do you wish to exercise your right to speak?

COUNCILLOR DRIVER: Yes, Lord Mayor. I think one of the things that struck me about this debate and I am glad I did allow time to elapse so that I could listen to what other people said, is that there is a massive urgency on the one hand, which is understandable, but a belief that because there is an urgent problem there is an instant solution.

I challenge anybody of any political persuasion to say that some of the problems we are facing with regard to the needs of the very poorest and most challenging people in our communities are instantly soluble and I think any of us who have lived through the last 30 years and been on this Council have seen that every time there has been an instant solution it has ended in tears. I do not see why on this occasion it should be any different as far as this Coalition Government is concerned.

Cycles of poverty are cycles of poverty. They affect families over generations. They create poor educational aspirations. They create under achievement which leads to unemployment or crime or poor health or many other things that we know exist in spades, if you like, in parts of our city. I have looked at a list of the areas where Housing Benefits are most prevalent in the wards across the city. In six of them they are four times greater than they are in the six most affluent. I think that says in itself a great deal, Lord Mayor, about how we have to approach this problem.

The kernel of the Labour proposal tonight is about not what we are facing but how we go about dealing with it. It is about is speed the answer? If these things are as long term as we know they have been, it does seem to me that we would do well

not to be hasty in seeming to know that because there is a Daily Mail-type solution of the type that Councillor Marjoram referred to, that if we hammer the people who are the benefit claimants they will find jobs.

We know that there are lots of people in this city who will not find jobs under those circumstances. They will continue to be as they always have been and if we are going to get NEETs, young people who are refusing to be involved with education and training into those things, it will take time and they will not respond simply because they are punished financially.

I think we do need to look, Lord Mayor, at these terms, speed, scale and severity. Leeds could become a very divided city if some of these things happen. Leeds could become a city where there are clearly the ghettos of the poor which, for all the criticisms that are made by people opposite like Councillor Pryke, of all their criticisms the fact is that the last ten years have been a time in which we have invested in the poor, we have got new schools, we have got new hospitals and I am proud of that and I believe that everybody around here is proud of that. *(Applause)*

It may have cost money and I believe that we are one of those nations that can well afford to pay for these things and we should have done. That is why I believe that tackling the scale of the problem does require investment and we need to think as a City Council about how we are going to invest and, indeed, the same thing applies to the issues of severity. There are parts of this city which have got extreme problems, as I mentioned before. Anybody who has sat on the Children's Service Scrutiny Board knows that we have investigated and seen just how that is and how, despite all our efforts and all the good will of dedicated professionals, we have still got a long way to go.

Lord Mayor, I do believe that what we have to do as a Council is not score cheap points off one another but to recognise that we are in this for the long term and in doing so we will indeed begin to work together for the benefit of everyone.

Lord Mayor, I support the resolution. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Martin Hamilton, do you wish to – you do not. Councillor Robinson.

COUNCILLOR ROBINSON: Lord Mayor, I know the Labour Party would love to portray me as heartless and the Darth Vader of this Council and they want to say that I do not have a social conscience and I suggest we proceed to the vote as quick as possible rather than engaging in name calling. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Can I now call on Councillor Atha to sum up, please.

COUNCILLOR ATHA: Just to compliment the last speaker for his brevity, clarity and the content of his message, I agree entirely.

If I just comment, briefly, about Mr Marjoram, Councillor Marjoram. He referred to the £45 cut in grant but ignored to mention the fact that his administration in the year before left us with a £16 to £17m hole in the budget that we inherited from your administration in two areas – one for Children and one for Adults. That is where the cost came from, the £90m, and if you do not understand that, then sadly you have been misguiding your time in the time you have been on the Council. That is a bit of an own goal.

I remember, when I was listening to what you were saying I was really quite horrified because almost everyone outside finds you quite a nice, affable, warm person but yet you sound like a hard, old-fashioned Tory which I am old enough to remember in the first place. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: You are right there.

COUNCILLOR ATHA: Let us be calm about this because we do not want to be calling each other names.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: As opposed to just sounding old, Bernard.
(laughter)

COUNCILLOR ATHA: I just find it incredible that someone as young, good looking, well placed, can have the old-fashioned right-wing Tory things, Mr Gradgrind in person, and there he sits, smiling.

I also found that over that side you are just a bit disgusting when John Illingworth is talking about the mortality rates and the difference – some of you seemed to find that funny. I did not. I thought it was bad form.

The third point I would make about when you referred to Mr Brown and why he left us in the hole we are in. In fact he by his actions saved the world from recession *(interruption) (Applause)*

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: He is delusional! Take him away!

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: The men in white coats are on their way, Bernard!

COUNCILLOR ATHA: Let me tell you, who said that what his actions were were right? Mr Campbell himself said it. He said it.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Mr Campbell? Alistair Campbell? Well he would say it, wouldn't he?

COUNCILLOR ATHA: No, he had gone by then. The present Prime Minister who, from time to time, says unkind things but not too many about Brown did, in fact, say he would have done the same thing and the world recognised Brown's achievements by making him Statesman of the World, so you cannot have it both ways. You talk about throwing stones and character assassination – let us not do it.

Councillor Pryke, you said you would not vote for or support the report because of certain things that Labour Ministers or others had said in the past. You quoted them and, quite frankly, I agree with you about them. Some of those phrases and words and ideas are ones with which I strongly disagree, but I think like most of my colleagues in the Party, we are Party people but it does not mean to say we follow blindly like donkeys because the Leader leads. *(interruption)* This is the problem with you lot. If I disagreed with the Ministers, I wrote and told the Ministers and when I was concerned about children's safety in Leeds, I wrote to the Minister and said, "I am concerned about the safety of children in Leeds" and that triggered an interruption to the proceedings here and led to in fact the consequences to the then Executive Member of this Council. It was because we do not accept blindly our Leader's views because we do not believe in a fuehrer. We have our own views and this resolution I put to you and ask for your support because it not meant to be

contentious, it is not contentious. It asks the person concerned, the man who has got a reputation of being a goody, to simply look again at this because the consequences of these actions are going to be so severe that they will be met by an awful lot of people who will have nowhere to go. I outline a brief summary of those steps. None of them were really challenged.

I just think, Councillor Pryke, change your mind and vote for this because if you disagreed with what people said in the past, that is not it. We are looking at this day now and you should look at the words and say, "Is there anything I honestly can disagree with?" and there is not there, I am sure.

Someone said – Councillor Harris – he was not going to speak but he always says that when he does and we always look forward to hearing his speech and I appreciate, really what you say because he is often very much a wild card he plays, but you did say one thing. We just cannot carry on as we are. That is the statement of the absolute bloody obvious, as someone said when the car ran over his foot. It is absolutely obvious we cannot go on as we are but because we cannot go on as we are we do not need to do something damn stupid like drive these three-and-a-half million people who, according to Councillor Marjoram, are scroungers. Does that mean that all those three point something million people who are unemployed, are they scroungers? Are they the people who are living? No, they are the people who have been made redundant. What about the poor souls in Derby who are going to be made redundant because a contract has been given to a foreign country rather than our own, the Bombardiers? They are going to be going on it – maybe they have been made redundant already. Are they going to be the people that you are talking about, the people who are living on benefits and we have got to do something about them? We can do something better with them giving them a job. We should have given them the contract and then the jobs would not have been exported, nor would the employment.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: Let's come out of Europe.

COUNCILLOR ATHA: There are ways of doing it. If they do not know, follow the French and German tactics because they will show you how to do it because we have got a spineless Government, a Government that is at the moment mired in awful problems about the press...

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: Where is that man in the white coat?

COUNCILLOR ATHA: ...where the Prime Minister brings into his office a man so corrupted, as we now know, it is time for us all to have second thoughts.

I digress. What I would finish with is simply asking this. I would ask the Lib Dems and the Morley Borough Independents to look objectively at the resolution I am proposing, look at the words, look at what they mean and join us in saying to the person who may be most concerned, the Prime Minister himself, let us look again at these changes...

COUNCILLOR M HAMILTON: Support our amendment.

COUNCILLOR ATHA: ...because they are too severe, they are too soon, they need revising. I think we all agree on that, we have not said so; let us do it.
(Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: I am now going to call on the vote on the amendment.

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: Lord Mayor, move a recorded vote.

THE LORD MAYOR: Is that seconded? I am calling for a vote on the amendment in the name of Councillor Golton. It is on page 18.

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

THE LORD MAYOR: There are 95 Members present. Those voting "Yes" are 19, those abstaining are nil and those voting "No" are 76. LOST.

I am now moving for a vote on the second amendment.

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: Move a recorded vote, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR NASH: Second, Lord Mayor.

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

THE LORD MAYOR: There are 95 people present. Those in favour 20, those abstaining 18, those voting "No" 57. LOST.

I am now coming on to the motion as it stands.

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: Recorded vote, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Seconded.

(A recorded vote was taken on the motion)

THE LORD MAYOR: There are 95 Members present, those who voted "Yes" 56, six abstentions and 33 people voted "No". *(Applause)* The motion is therefore CARRIED.

Can we now move to Item 12?

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: Lord Mayor, I wish to make a statement of clarification regarding Council Procedure Rule 13.2g that I moved in relation to Item 10, the Procedure Rule to adjourn the debate. As I stated, the adjournment was moved to allow Members to take further legal advice on the range of complexity underlined by the level of communication and the matters raised within these received. Clearly this cannot be done in the course of an evening and an afternoon so we have got a commitment in the future that this matter will be debated again and I move again that the item be adjourned.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Lord Mayor, in terms of a response to that, we welcome the apology (interruption).

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: It ought to have been.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Before certain Members chuckle, that is how the Leader of your Group described it. In terms of being clear about these matters, Lord Mayor, without proper Whips' agreements and matters being dealt with by the

usual channels in the usual way, this Council descends into farce and that is not in the interests of any of us.

In terms of this matter being voted upon now, the issue that is at hand before us clearly is, are those people who may well have a prejudicial interest able to participate in this vote.

It is OK those moaning but those who are in receipt of substantial sums of money to their election expenses from trade unions clearly, clearly have an interest. With that in mind, Lord Mayor, these matters are far from clear and you will understand why we are very, very less than happy. All of these matters were raised in advance of this meeting today. All of these matters could have been dealt with accordingly – the Leader of the Labour Group says they were not – they were. You have heard that there was a solicitor's letter received by the City Solicitor on behalf of our Group earlier in the week and it was left to drag on, frankly, and that is what is ridiculous.

We came here today with a Whips' agreement that the entitlement was for this Group to have the first White Paper and subsequently that has not happened, and that is simply not appropriate, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Stop using legal challenges.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: I am conscious of the time, I am conscious that many people will think they are going home at seven o'clock or twenty-past seven after wind-up, indeed that may be the course of action, but you can hardly be surprised that we shall want a Special Council Meeting to deal with this White Paper. It has not even been proposed that it should be adjourned to a future point in time. Again, simply inappropriate, Lord Mayor. It should have been an agreement that it was adjourned to an appropriate point in time rather than left in the air. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR MATTHEWS: Lord Mayor, can I just add to what Councillor Procter has just said? The definition of the word "adjourned" suggests it is adjourned to a set period of time for discussions to be had and that was what the Whips' agreement was this morning with Councillor Lobley, myself and Councillor Lewis. We said we understand it is a complex issue, if you want to seek legal advice, fine, we are happy to do that. As it was, we were bounced out of it, I am afraid.

Lord Mayor, one last point. Two Whips' agreements were broken here today. On the Minutes it was almost entirely Labour speakers and the Opposition White Paper was killed, so effectively it was a one-party Council, Lord Mayor, which is totally unacceptable, and at the April Council meeting only 50% of the speakers on the Minutes were Labour. That was a fair debate, we had an interesting discussion. This time it was almost entirely Labour speakers, Lord Mayor, and that is unacceptable.

THE LORD MAYOR: Can I suggest, therefore, as the way forward that the Whips get their heads together and they sort something out and they present something which is going to be acceptable to us in the right form.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Move on.

THE LORD MAYOR: We really should not be in this state of affairs.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Move the vote, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: With that in mind, can we move on?

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Yes, please, move the vote.

THE LORD MAYOR: Can we move on to the vote? We have already – we have had legal advice – we have had legal advice. I hope we have all heard that legal advice and we now need to act in the light of that advice, bearing in mind the consequences of how we vote and, as has been said by the legal officer, it is a very narrow margin of – did you use the word reasonableness? Borderline was the word.

COUNCILLOR NASH: Lord Mayor, I am one of the Whips. I was at that Whips' meeting. Our side were quite happy that this motion on the trade unions be the first motion to be debated. We went into that meeting quite happy with that, we take our positions and then Councillor Lobley drops a bombshell and says, "A personal interest is not enough, we will be demanding a prejudicial interest." Yes, you did. I said it is unfortunate that this has been raised at this time.

My Lord Mayor, I as an individual Councillor went home and I was extremely concerned about it and I slept on it, obviously, and this morning I decided that the advice which the City Solicitor gave us was ambiguous and that was not good enough for me. We have a right as individuals to seek our own legal advice.
(Applause)

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Lord Mayor, I am sorry, I have moved the vote.

THE LORD MAYOR: I am very sorry.

COUNCILLOR NASH: I second that.

THE LORD MAYOR: We do not want to have another Whips' meeting in this Chamber at the moment. I can see that that is happening now and we do not want another Whips' meeting.

A vote has been moved and it has been properly moved and we have to deal with it. Could you remind us, please?

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: I moved the vote.

THE LORD MAYOR: Could you remind us...

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: It was on the resolution put by Councillor James Lewis.

THE LORD MAYOR: Can you remind us of the – I am asking Councillor James Lewis to remind us what we are voting on.

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: Lord Mayor, we are voting on Council Procedure Rule 31.2g, that the debate on Item 10 be adjourned to allow Members to take further legal advice.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Until when?

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: To a further meeting. I think I made that clear in that commitment.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: We cannot say when. It is a future meeting. It is a promise to come back. We cannot say when. It is a promise to come back.

COUNCILLOR MATTHEWS: Can we adjourn for ten minutes to discuss this?

THE LORD MAYOR: Does anybody want to amend that?

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: My Lord Mayor, I would very much like a recorded vote.

THE LORD MAYOR: Right and that has been seconded. Can we, therefore, vote on the motion that has been put.

THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE: Would all Members please ensure they are in their allocated seats. Members have requested a recorded vote on the proposal to adjourn the debate under Standing Order 13.2g to a future meeting to allow individual Members to take independent advice, this in the name of Councillor James Lewis.

All Members should refer to their desk units---

COUNCILLOR HARRIS: I wish to put an amendment.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Too late.

COUNCILLOR HARRIS: I am entitled to put an amendment.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: This is ridiculous

THE LORD MAYOR: I think that in view of the Chief Executive having started this process that we cannot turn back. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR HARRIS: The vote has not been taken. I am entitled.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Sit down, Mark

THE CITY SOLICITOR: The view is in order to achieve your amendment we need to vote to suspend the Procedure rules. If you wanted to propose that and to allow the ---

COUNCILLOR ATHA: With respect, my Lord Mayor, I find this bizarre. I move the vote be taken and that has to be something that has to be taken immediately and that would have meant that this one went next. What is happening now is the whole thing is being obfuscated. The Standing Orders are quite clear. There are certain motions that can be moved without notice and this, the vote be taken, is one. I move that and I understood that was agreed (interruption)

THE LORD MAYOR: We are now...

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: Councillor Atha has a voice; Councillor Harris does not – that is a vote against the disabled. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR: Discrimination.

COUNCILLOR: Disgraceful.

COUNCILLOR ATHA: This whole business is turning it into a farce.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Harris.

COUNCILLOR HARRIS: Right, Lord Mayor. I asked for suspension of Standing Orders in order that I put an amendment to the motion to insert a date in to which this is being adjourned. That is what I ask, for suspension of Standing Orders to allow me to put such a motion to insert a date.

THE LORD MAYOR: Is that seconded?

COUNCILLOR MATTHEWS: Seconded, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR ATHA: This is so unconstitutional, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Will you sit down, please, Councillor Atha? Will you sit down, please? We now have an amendment and I am happy to put that amendment and then I am going to the main motion. You wanted a date.

COUNCILLOR ATHA: Any date? 1066?

THE LORD MAYOR: I do not think – it is quite impractical to give a date now, quite honestly, but if we were to say a date within the next two months or something of that nature, or even to the next meeting.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: We will call a Special Meeting and the parameters set (inaudible) (interruption). End of story.

THE LORD MAYOR: There is a procedure ---

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: There is a procedure.

THE LORD MAYOR: There is a procedure. If anyone wants to call a Special Meeting they can call the Special Meeting. We now have a motion in front of us. It has been properly put, it has been properly seconded and I think we need to put it.

*(A recorded vote was taken on the motion
in the name of Councillor J Lewis)*

THE LORD MAYOR: There are 93 people present. Those in favour 60, no abstentions, those against 33. CARRIED.

ITEM 12 – WHITE PAPER MOTION – RESIDENTIAL CARE HOMES

THE LORD MAYOR: Can we now please move on to Item 12, which is the White Paper motion in the name of Councillor Finnigan.

COUNCILLOR FINNIGAN: I am happy to do a speech but I am assuming that we are blown on that particular one, regrettably.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Time's up.

COUNCILLOR FINNIGAN: I will formally move.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Hold on.

THE LORD MAYOR: It is after seven o'clock.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Lord Mayor, we have a proposal.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: They are too late, Lord Mayor. What they are seeking to do, Lord Mayor, is not to invoke wind-up. Wind-up is already invoked.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: No it is not invoked. Don't be silly.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: It automatically comes at seven o'clock. Read the paper.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Read the paper.

THE LORD MAYOR: Can I draw people's attention to page 16:

"Council Procedure Rule 4 providing for the winding up of business shall be applied at the conclusion of the speech being delivered at 7.00pm.)

I am sorry, no, we are now taking the papers 12 and 13 as not for debate.

COUNCILLOR FINNIGAN: Formally moved, White Paper Motion 12 in my name, Lord Mayor. Recorded vote.

THE LORD MAYOR: Is that seconded?

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: I second, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Latty?

COUNCILLOR G LATTY: I move an amendment.

COUNCILLOR LOBLEY: I second, my Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Yeadon.

COUNCILLOR YEADON: In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 14.11, I move to withdraw the amendment in my name.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Can we vote then, first of all, for the amendment, with Councillor Latty? Recorded vote, sorry. Is that seconded?

COUNCILLOR M HAMILTON: I second, Lord Mayor.

(A recorded vote was taken on the amendment)

THE LORD MAYOR: There are 91 Members present, 72 have voted "Yes", no-one has abstained and 19 have voted "No". CARRIED.

The substantive motion, please.

COUNCILLOR FINNIGAN: Recorded vote, please, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR LEADLEY: Seconded.

(A recorded vote was taken on the substantive motion)

THE LORD MAYOR: There are 91 Members present, 72 have voted "Yes", no-one has abstained and the "No" vote is 19. CARRIED.

ITEM 13 – WHITE PAPER MOTION – CITY OF SANCTUARY

THE LORD MAYOR: Can we now move on to the White Paper number 13 in the name of Councillor Matthews?

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

COUNCILLOR DOWNES: I second, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Gruen moving an amendment.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: I move the amendment, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR MURRAY: I formally second, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Can we, therefore, have a vote on the amendment in the name of Councillor Gruen? *(A vote was taken)* That is CARRIED.

The substantive motion, please. *(A vote was taken)* That is CARRIED.

Can I, before we leave, just say that I do hope that we are not going to have a repeat of today's meeting and I really do not know what people in the public gallery think of it but we really ought to be sorting out some of the domestic details beforehand and I do hope that they will be dealt with next time we meet.

In the meantime, have a safe journey home and thank you for your attendance.

(The meeting closed at 7.15 pm)