

LEEDS CITY COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

Held on

Wednesday, 11th July 2012

At

THE COUNCIL CHAMBER,
CIVIC HALL,
LEEDS

In the Chair:

THE LORD MAYOR
(COUNCILLOR A CASTLE)

VERBATIM REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS

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VERBATIM REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS OF LEEDS CITY COUNCIL
MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 11th JULY 2012

THE LORD MAYOR: Welcome to today's Council meeting and a special welcome to the people in the public gallery. If you are still around at five o'clock I do hope that you will join us for tea in the Banqueting Hall.

Housekeeping first of all. Please could you all make sure that your mobile phones are switched off? They do play havoc with the systems in the Council Chamber and also it is rather disconcerting if you are in the middle of making a speech and an irritating little jingle goes off somewhere. If your phone should happen to go off during the course of the meeting, I would be delighted to see you either during the break or after the meeting clutching a £5 note in your hand towards my charity, Crohn's and Colitis.

I have got a few announcements to make. First of all, I regret to announce the death of Honorary Alderman Malcolm Bedford, who served as Lord Mayor in 1996-7. Malcolm dedicated his life to public service and worked tirelessly for residents in Wortley for over 22 years. As Lord Mayor, Malcolm raised over £100,000 for the Liz Dawn Breast Cancer Appeal. I attended Malcolm's funeral on 19th June. I would ask all present, please, to stand in silent tribute.

(Silent tribute)

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you.

Secondly, congratulations to the following who were honoured in the Queen's Birthday Honours List. Our own Councillor Judith Elliott with the MBE (*applause*); Mr Mohammed Azim, MBE; Miss Annette Dorsey, MBE; Miss Joan Ryecroft, (who I understand likes to be known as Pat Ryecroft) with the MBE; and Mrs Gillian Nobbs, with the BEM.

Finally, some of you may know that Brenda Knott will be retiring at the end of July. See the effect I have on some people! (*laughter*) Brenda has worked for the Council since 1985, starting as a primary school teacher before moving to the Education Department as a Policy Officer. Following that, Brenda worked as the Lord Mayor's Secretary from October 1992 to May 1993 with former Councillor Denise Atkinson before moving to the Leader's Office until last year. Brenda has since returned to working in the Lord Mayor's office.

I am sure you will all join me in sending her our very best wishes for a very long, healthy and happy retirement. (*applause*)

ITEM 1 - MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 21st MAY 2012

THE LORD MAYOR: Item 1, Minutes of the meeting on 21st May 2012. Councillor James Lewis.

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: Move, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR G LATTY: Second, Lord Mayor.

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

ITEM 2 - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

Are there any further individual declarations or corrections to those notified on the list? Councillor Grahame.

COUNCILLOR R GRAHAME: Correction to Item 8(a), non-pecuniary interest on both items.

THE LORD MAYOR: Please can members by a show of hands confirm that they have read the list as amended and agree its content insofar as it relates to their own interests. *(Show of hands)* Thanks.

ITEM 3 - COMMUNICATIONS

THE LORD MAYOR: Communications. I believe Councillor Judith Blake has an announcement to make.

COUNCILLOR J BLAKE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. It is with great sadness that I have report to Council the death of one of our looked-after children whilst in our care but living in Wakefield. I am sure you will join me in sending our heartfelt sympathies to the family.

I have to tell you that the Inquest opened on 11th June and was adjourned so that further information could be gathered. We are obviously looking closely at the circumstances, in liaison with the Leeds Safeguarding Board, the Wakefield Safeguarding Board and the provider of the home that Lee was living in. We obviously want to find out everything we can about the circumstances that led to this very sad occasion.

As you will be aware, this is a live investigation and therefore it would be completely inappropriate for me to comment further at this stage but just to reassure Council that this will be subject to the Coroner's decision and then the Leeds Safeguarding Board I have no doubt will conduct a serious case review and, once that is done, it will be appropriate for me to update members in the appropriate manner.

I just want to reassure Council that if they have any concerns about any situation in the city around the safeguarding of children that we are always happy to brief Members, to give them as much information as we are able to do at the time, and we will continue to operate in that way on behalf of the children and their families in the city. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Chief Executive, do you have any announcements?

THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE: No.

ITEM 4 - DEPUTATIONS

THE LORD MAYOR: Right, Item 4, Deputations.

THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE: To report that there are two Deputations, first Sparrow Park Action Group regarding taking over restoring of Sparrow Park for the use of the community; second, Leeds residents in respect of their concerns regarding ongoing events in China.

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I move that the deputations be received.

COUNCILLOR G LATTY: I second that, Lord Mayor.

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

DEPUTATION ONE

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

MR R PARK: My Lord Mayor and Fellow Councillors, my name is Richard Park, I am the Chairman of the Sparrow Park Action Group. That is a group constituted as a sub-group of the Cardigan Triangle Community Association. I am accompanied by Joan Brown, who is the Secretary of the CTCA.

We are here today to seek your help to regenerate Sparrow Park in Headingley. It is in the Headingley Conservation Area on Cardigan Road, not far from the stadium - I am sure most of you will know where it is. It is specifically referred to in our Neighbourhood Design Statement as being an important green space which, as you know, is a densely-populated part of Leeds.

The history of Sparrow Park is that it is one of the few undeveloped plots in Headingley and the last vestiges of the Zoological and Botanical Gardens that stood there in the mid-19th Century. When the zoo failed and the estate was sold off and divided into building plots, Cardigan Road was laid out and cut across Spring Road and Chapel Lane creating a separate triangle of land. Walls and rails were erected to create Sparrow Park.

Now, it is rapidly become derelict and urgently needs investment to secure its future. The original Victorian walls and railings need repair and maintenance. In places they have been smashed and deliberately knocked down. The undergrowth and the trees need to be managed. The park is used for littering and dumping rubbish and it is also used by groups who drink and take drugs. The dereliction sets the tone for the neighbourhood and the way visitors to the rugby ground and the like, the transient residents that come from the university and their landlords behave.

It is our aim to regenerate the park and to secure its future management and maintenance. We want to make it a safe and pleasant place for people to visit, to be

an outdoor classroom for Spring Bank Primary School across the road, and to manage the trees and undergrowth to increase the animal and plant diversity.

In an urgent attempt to slow the rate of dereliction and vandalism, local residents have raised funds to repair the most damaged part of the wall and erect a temporary wooden fence to plug the gap in the railings. We have also thinned some of the undergrowth.

However, we are prevented from developing a long-term solution because, despite extensive investigations at the Land Registry etc, we cannot trace an owner and this means we cannot access grants or get insurance and protect ourselves from any liabilities. Whenever we work on the land we are trespassing.

We have looked into taking adverse possession; however, this would take ten years and would require an individual to demonstrate factual possession of the park to the exclusion of all others. This is unreasonable, given the location of the park in a crowded urban environment next to a main road, as this individual would be responsible for maintaining the boundaries and any liabilities arising. Also, there is no guarantee that we could obtain the adverse possession after ten years. Adverse possession has become difficult and we cannot wait ten years.

We suggest the best option is for the Council to make a Compulsory Purchase Order on behalf of the community. This would resolve the issue of ownership. A trust arrangement would enable access to funds and grants so the residents of Headingley, with Council support, could maintain and manage the park. Small scale repairs could be undertaken via MICE money and some 106 funding which is available, and the recent sale of the adjacent Grove Villas by the Council will have generated some potential funds for local environmental improvements.

We understand the concerns of some Council officers that contesting a CPO could be expensive. Should someone successfully claim ownership, there will be no reason for the Council to contest it because we would have established ownership and responsibility for repair and maintenance. The chances of an owner making a claim are negligible. Extensive searches have already been made by residents and the Council. One indication is that the original Victorian railings survived the war, among the few to do so in Leeds, and this indicates that ownership may have been uncertain then, as a contribution to the war effort at that time required the owner's permission.

The land has very low value. The Council valuation is approximately £2,000. Due to it being green space it has never been built upon and permission would not be granted for building.

An earlier proposed plan of restoration and, it has got to be said, the extravagant development of Spring Road was drawn up by the Council in 2009/10. We are not asking for this, just a simple scheme of tidying and repair. As part of the earlier plan, £10,000 was allocated for the compulsory purchase of Sparrow Park and it is still unused. We are asking for this to be spent on the CPO of Sparrow Park and to consider incorporating the road area of Spring Road as detailed in the earlier permission.

THE LORD MAYOR: Just to remind you, you have got a minute left.

MR R PARK: Yes. I am nearly finished.

Just to reiterate, Sparrow Park needs action now, we cannot wait ten years so please support our request and enable us to regenerate this historic green space and community asset. (*applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Lewis.

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

COUNCILLOR G LATTY: I will second that, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: All those in favour? (*A vote was taken*) CARRIED. Thank you for attending and for what you have said. You will be kept informed of the consideration which your comments will receive. Good afternoon.

DEPUTATION TWO

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

MS M MAN: My Lord Mayor and fellow Councillors, my name is Mary Man and I live in Kirkstall. The other members of the reputation are Shen Jingmin, Li Qiong, Alex Rostron and Chris Sugden.

On 31st May this year Amnesty International released an urgent call for action for China to release the two Falun Gong practitioners who are at risk of torture. What is Falun Gong and why have they been tortured?

Started in China in 1992, Falun Gong is a traditional Chinese meditation exercise based on the principles of truthfulness, compassion and tolerance. The number of Falun Gong practitioners in China was estimated to be between 70 to 100 million and because it became the largest and fastest growing group in China, in 1999 the persecution started. Ten years later separate courts in Spain and Argentina indicted Jiang Zemin, the then head of China, and several other Communist Party officials on the charge of torture and genocide for persecuting Falun Gong.

According to the US State Department report in 2008, Falun Gong practitioners constitute at least half of the inmates in China's vast labour camp system.

The UN Special Rapporteur on Torture and Detention stated in 2006 that 66% of the victim reports of torture and ill-treatment from China were Falun Gong practitioners.

A number of sources have reported that since 1999 the Chinese Communist regime has been illegally harvesting and selling organs from Falun Gong practitioners for profit.

Mr Edward McMillan-Scott, the Yorkshire and Humber MEP, said in an open letter in 2009, "One particular concern is that only Falun Gong – who neither smoke nor drink – are routinely blood tested and blood-pressure tested in prison; this is not for their wellbeing. They become the prime source for the People's Liberation Army's

lucrative live organ transplant trade. More than 40,000 additional unexplained transplants have been recorded recently in China since 2001.”

The persecution is nationwide. The Minghui website, which has first hand information from China, has published several cases which have connections with our twin city, Hangzhou.

(a) It is reported that as Mr Yu Shaoqi changed trains in Hangzhou railway station he was arrested because he was searched and found to have Falon Gong materials.

(b) It is reported in Hangzhou city that Mrs Wang Yizhi was locked by the guards in solitary confinement. After seven years of torture and mistreatment, she passed away.

(c) As we know, Hangzhou is famous for silky umbrellas. It is reported that Ms Huang Zhijiao was forced to be an unpaid slave labourer in Hangzhou detention centre. She said the toxic chemicals from the umbrella made her hand skin become very thin, painful and extremely itchy when touched. She worked 15 hours per day without a break. On average she had to make an umbrella in 18 minutes. This is an example of one of the umbrellas made in Hangzhou. It is exactly same brand, Paradise. It refers to biggest umbrella factory in China. *(Demonstrated)*

With the tight control on information in China, what we know about the persecution in Hangzhou is only the tip of the iceberg.

Chinese Falun Gong practitioners now living in Leeds were dismissed from their jobs in China and their relatives were sentenced to forced labour camps. They cannot go back to China now because of the danger of being persecuted and their families cannot come here either because they were refused a passport by the Chinese government.

Not only Chinese British, native Leeds citizen was violently treated and deported when he tried to peacefully protest in China.

The Council has a responsibility to uphold civil liberties and human rights. Thirteen years of persecution and it is still going on today. We hope you can make a proclamation to call to stop the persecution and follow other cities' example in naming a "Falun Dafa Day" in recognition of the courage and sacrifices of practitioners in China and abroad.

Please make the right choice.

By the way, it is not easy to explain Falun Gong in five minutes. We have other information on outside desk, so help yourself during the break. We also have a Truthfulness, Compassion, Tolerance art exhibition at the Corn Exchange.

THE LORD MAYOR: Would you make your final point now, please? The red light has come on.

MS M MAN: Thanks for listening. *(applause)*

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: Thank you. I move that the matter be referred to the General Purposes Committee for consideration.

COUNCILLOR G LATTY: I second that, Lord Mayor.

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

ITEM 5 - REPORTS

THE LORD MAYOR: Item 5, Reports.

(a)

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: Item 5(a), move in terms of the notice.

COUNCILLOR G LATTY: Second, Lord Mayor.

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

(b)

THE LORD MAYOR: Item 5(b), Councillor Peter Gruen.

COUNCILLOR P GRUEN: Lord Mayor, I move in terms of the notice.

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: Second, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Paulene Grahame.

COUNCILLOR P GRAHAME: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Lord Mayor, I wish to speak in relation to the Annual Report of Scrutiny. Firstly, let me say 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. Our annual report highlights some very positive achievements and I really do believe that the parity of esteem with the Executive is starting to materialise.

I have said before, Scrutiny is sometimes wrongly perceived to be the opposition. This is wrong; there should be no conflict between the ambition of the administration to be the best Authority in the country, and the role of Scrutiny Committees in driving improvements in 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 Scrutiny and accountability matter at a time when the Council may not be the traditional provider of services. We as Members must quality control services. Scrutiny should be a critical friend that drives improvement. This means that members must focus on what matters, be engaged in the process, ask sensible questions and look to obtain good evidence, including looking at best practice elsewhere.

Our Annual Report highlights the excellent work undertaken, ranging from my own Boards work, for example on the contact centre, resulting in clear recommendations about its future funding, anticipating service failures and the

consequential increase in contact centre activity and also the development of better working relationships between directorates and the contact centre; the excellent work on fuel poverty undertaken by Councillor Anderson, to the innovative evidence-gathering techniques used by Councillor Procter's Board (*laughter*); also Judith Chapman, particularly her work with young people.

It gives me great pleasure to welcome Councillor John Illingworth to the Scrutiny Board Chair's team. (*applause*) He could not be chairing a more appropriate Board. Councillor Illingworth has been a member of the Health Board since 2000. I have chaired Health twice - 2004/5, what was the main topic? The Leeds Children's Hospital. I will quote from a BBC interview, July 2004:

"Thousands of children from across the region will be treated at the 370-bed facility at St James's Hospital. The new hospital, which is expected to open in 2012, will centralise services for children currently provided by sites across the city. Trust Chief Executive Neil Mackay hailed the announcement as 'Fantastic news'."

The hospital was to be at the St James's site; you may recall Carole Maddox was a very active campaigner for her daughter Alice, who needed specialist treatment. What happened? The scheme was stopped due to lack of funding. 2008/9, I could not believe that we were looking into a children's ward at the Infirmary to replace the proposed Children's Maternity Heart Hospital. Now that is proposed to be closed.

It is excellent news that the public health and NHS is now accountable to the Council and especially Scrutiny. I reminded Angela Brogden, my officer for one of the years, of the excuses they used to use not to come to the Board - the lift has broken, office is being refurbished and could only speak at a certain time. No more. Councillor Illingworth, I hope that you ask for all of the files and put in as many Freedom of Information requests as you can think of as to why in 2004 Leeds was an ideal site for the children's hospital and we all know what happened in this. Councillor Carter, you were the Chair then, you used to meet with them; Councillor Harrand, Executive, and why now, in 2014 it is not suitable. Thank you, Lord Mayor, for allowing me to speak on Scrutiny. (*applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Barry Anderson.

COUNCILLOR ANDERSON: Lord Mayor, can I echo part of what has just been said by thanking my Board for the excellent year that we had. We worked tremendously well together and we worked hard and anybody who has been on my Scrutiny Board knows that you do not come along to sit and do nothing when you are on my Scrutiny Board; you are expected to work, work hard and produce results to improve the Council.

I would also like to thank my support officer, Angela Brogden, who is probably hiding up there at the moment, because without her my job in Scrutiny would not be as easy. The two of us have some wonderful debates in the privacy of my office in terms of what reports will or will not be taken and which officers do and do not wish to come to Scrutiny, but the two of us together I think lead the Board well, even though I say so myself.

One of the other things that was true on this Board was the cross-party working. OK, politics raises its head occasionally but very rarely do we get into a political debate on the Scrutiny Board because we try and talk about things that are

of need for the citizens, not just political groups or ourselves. Examples, our report on fuel poverty this year and also our report on private sector housing, which showed the benefits of partnership working.

Also, the pre-decision enquiries. For those of you who have been on Council for a while, you may remember that the audit commission criticised the Council that their Scrutiny were not doing enough pre-decision enquiries and this year we have been given the honour by the Exec members concerned to look at the housing revenue account business plan and the dog control orders in advance of their being taken, so that they trust what Scrutiny is going to say and I think that is welcomed on all sides.

Food safety. I did have an enquiry into food safety this year. If you ever get a chance to go out with our food safety people do so - it will be a real eye opener to some of the things that they have got to see and some of the advice that they have got to give, and I would commend it to you. Some of you might not wish to eat in some restaurants after (*laughter*) but it is something of great importance.

We also had a watching brief over things like the grounds maintenance this year, the recycling and the budget. We kept a good view over that.

One thing I would ask Scrutiny that we need to look into is cross-cutting ones. The car park strategy is still not being properly scrutinised. It keeps falling in between two Scrutiny Boards and I think we have got to grasp the nettle and get Scrutiny to look into the car parking strategy both in terms of the cost and in terms of the impact it has on the city.

I would also like to thank, although they are not present today, all the local groups who were involved in our working groups which I think shows the benefits of what we are doing.

Finally I can confirm that we have challenged both the Exec Members who reported into the Scrutiny Board and hopefully they felt that the challenge given by me and by the members of the Scrutiny Board was fair and at the time, yes, we gave you a hard time but that is our role, to challenge, to make sure that you are doing the best for the city at all times.

To conclude, thank you to all members of my Scrutiny Board last year. I appreciated the work and effort you have put in and I look forward to working with you all in the future. Thank you. (*applause*)

COUNCILLOR CHAPMAN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. What I am going to say in a minute will probably seem somewhat inappropriate at this stage. It is to do with the Children's Hospital and I requested an extra two minutes when I speak this afternoon but I was told no, we could not have orders suspended. Fortunately the office managed to find a slot where I could talk about the Health Scrutiny Board.

I would just like to say that Councillor Mulherin, her Scrutiny officer and all the backroom officers that worked with her, I do not think that anybody realises how much time and effort they have put into the appeal in Government, and I just did not want the moment to go when we start debating this afternoon without saying thank you to her. (*applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Peter Gruen to sum up, please.

COUNCILLOR P GRUEN: I don't know where to start now! Seriously, I think Scrutiny does a fantastic job in holding the Executive to account but also, as Councillor Anderson says, when given the opportunity to engage in a free thinking spirit about decisions yet to be made. I certainly have always felt that the strength of that process of being cross-party is therefore all the more meaningful when it comes back before Executive Board and Executive Members to consider.

All three speakers - and there could have been more - emphasised the strengths of the Scrutiny process and some of the reports - and for me it is the outcomes that matter - that have come to Executive Board recently have been, frankly, excellent and very thought-provoking.

I said it at Exec Board and I say it again now, Barry, you are right but the authority is in your own hands. There should be more cross-cutting themes examined but as Chairs you, I think, have that within your own gift to get together and to decide to have cross-cutting themes either co-chaired or whichever way you want involving several Scrutiny Boards, and that certainly, I think, is something worthwhile.

The second point I made at Executive Board is I do ask you on the Scrutiny Boards to bear in mind what I said was the resource envelope within which we have to work. Sometimes you are rightly ambitious and you ask a lot of officers who are already very constrained in terms of what they can do within the resources available, but you are right to push and you are right to be ambitious and sometimes we are right to say we need to prioritise and we cannot do everything at the same time.

Thank you to everybody on Scrutiny Board for the work that you do undertake and good luck for the coming year, let's have more of it. Thank you very much.
(applause)

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

(c)

THE LORD MAYOR: Item 5(c), Councillor James Lewis.

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: Move in terms of the Notice, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR A LOWE: I second, my Lord Mayor.

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

(d)

THE LORD MAYOR: Item 5(d), Councillor Lewis.

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: Move in terms of the Notice, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR G LATTY: I second that, Lord Mayor.

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

ITEM 6 - RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

THE LORD MAYOR: Recommendations of the General Purposes Committee, Item 6. Councillor Wakefield.

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

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: Second, Lord Mayor.

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

ITEM 7 - QUESTIONS

THE LORD MAYOR: Item 7, Questions. Councillor Andrew Carter.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Thank you, my Lord Mayor. Would the Leader of Council care to explain why he did not consult with the Leaders of the other political groups before taking the decision to withdraw Council support for the Yorkshire International Business Convention, and would he accept that this decision has been seen as a snub to one of the world's most respected spiritual leaders?

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Actually, I am quite disappointed in this question on two grounds. One, I have always had an open door policy to all Leaders and all members and if people want to clarify issues then normally Leaders are invited to meet and share confidential information and I would have welcomed that opportunity.

The second disappointment was when a confidential meeting with the Consular General from China came, it was leaked and distorted in order to maximise publicity for the visit and I think that gave a very false impression of the Council's position.

To be absolutely clear to all members here, neither I nor senior officers were ever going to this International Business Convention. In fact I do not think we have been for some years. The Council was asked to support the event with two specific requests - one that we organise a Cultural Olympiad to entertain people while the event was going on. That was cancelled by the organisers at the last minute on grounds of a lack of interest.

The second request for support was actually whether we could organise a deputation of school children to visit the Dalai Lama while he was in Leeds and that was duly done.

I do not see this as a snub. I do not see where we withdrew support and, of course, like everybody else they are all entitled to come to Leeds, we are a democracy, we have seen that today and we allow exchange of idea, debates and differences as well and that will still be our position. *(applause)*

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

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Yes, my Lord Mayor. In view of Councillor Wakefield's answer, a supplementary in two parts. I do not dispute what Councillor

Wakefield says about the leaking of a confidential meeting. In view of the fact he has introduced that into the answer and in view of that fact that as nobody in any of the Opposition parties knew about that or what decision had been taken as a result of that, would he like to clarify that he is not implying that anyone in this Chamber leaked details of a meeting he had that we had no knowledge of even happening because the implication of what he said is that somebody here did and that is a physical impossibility.

Secondly, would he like to confirm why, in view of the fact that for at least two months prior to the event we knew who the principal guest was going to be and we had agreed support, we did not take the decision a long time before the eleventh hours for most members to hear about it on BBC television.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Wakefield.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Yes, I do not think I ever, in the first answer, implied that anybody here - there were only four people at the confidential briefing and no colleague here, no elected member was at that private confidential meeting, so I am absolutely clear there is no elected member. I think there are people who probably would gain out of maximising publicity and I think we saw the sensationalism and headlines that generated more interest.

I think, given there is no proof, there is no evidence, there is no enquiry, we will have to let our minds wander.

What I do know is that after the event no-one complained about the Council's position and one of the people who champions the Dalai Lama's role in life - and that is to draw attention to the treatment of Tibetan people there - is, of course, our MP, one of our MPS, Fabian Hamilton, and I think he realised that there was no fault to the Council, he has made no complaints to me about the Council and as far as I know the event went off successfully.

As for the support, I was never going to the International Business Convention so I really probably need to meet you after to see who was. I know that Leaders were briefed by James Rogers, one of our officers, on the day that this leaked and I thought that was sufficient in terms of the background to try and treat this with the kind of balance and discretion that it needed, so that is the answer, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Downes.

COUNCILLOR DOWNES: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Does the Executive member responsible for community safety think it a good idea for the police to consult regularly with local members?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Peter Gruen.

COUNCILLOR P GRUEN: Yes, I do.

THE LORD MAYOR: Supplementary?

COUNCILLOR DOWNES: Thank you, Councillor, Gruen, I was expecting that and hoping for that answer.

I would like to inform him that at the recent meeting to consult on helpdesk provision in the North West Leeds Division at Weetwood Police Station, a meeting which was called by the police and attended by the Divisional Commander and the Chief Superintendent, despite Lib Dems being accused of being soft on crime, there were eight of us at the meeting, as we regard it very important to consult with the police. However, not one of the 17 Labour Councillors invited attended and no apologies were recorded from them at the meeting. To be fair, one Councillor did give their apologies afterwards, having attended at Pudsey in error and I wondered, perhaps, if they should have asked a policeman for directions. *(laughter)*

It was left for Penny Ewens to come out of retirement to represent Hyde Park. Interestingly, the Green Party managed 100% attendance (they were both there).

THE LORD MAYOR: Is there going to be a question at the end of this?

COUNCILLOR DOWNES: The question is now coming. Sadly, though, unfortunately your own party, Lord Mayor, only managed one out of ten in attendance. However, I would like to ask Councillor Gruen, bearing in mind his previous affirmative comment to say that you support the consultation, why none of his members were there.

COUNCILLOR P GRUEN: I am glad there was a question at the end of the rambling speech. I believe there were people representative from different political groups and Councillor Rafique was at the meeting.

COUNCILLOR DOWNES: No he was not.

COUNCILLOR P GRUEN: I think he just indicated to me that he was at the meeting. *(interruption)* Listen, I am willing to stand here and let you carry on as long as you want because it is your Question time.

The issue is, the police can only consult as well as its partners who consult with them as well. I think there are some very important issues the police consult us about. I know that Commander David Oldroyd, who has been newly appointed to the North-West Division, has made an enormous difference and impact in the results of that division and I think that is what is important and, frankly, if you do not think the consultation is sufficiently good, then I suggest you tell Commander Oldroyd or other people and if I can help then I will.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Cummins.

COUNCILLOR CUMMINS: Would the Executive Board Member for Leisure and Skills want to join me in celebrating the response of local communities to the arrival of the Olympic Torch in Leeds? *(applause)*

COUNCILLOR OGILVIE: Can I thank Councillor Cummins for her question and, yes, I am happy to join with her in celebrating the response of communities across Leeds to the arrival of the torch here.

I am sure we were all proud we were the only city outside of London to host the Olympic Torch on three separate occasions as part of its 70 day, 8,000 mile tour around the UK.

As we have seen elsewhere in the UK, there is something about the torch that really captured the imagination of communities across the city and we estimate there

were about 200,000 people in Leeds who got the opportunity to see the torch when it was here. That included thousands on the first day when it passed through Wetherby, Boston Spa and on to a celebration event at Harewood House; on the second day, on the Sunday, around 125,000 people lined the streets and had parties in parks and along the route as it passed through Headingley, Potter Newton, Harehills and Richmond Hill; then approximately 25,000 people gathered at Temple Newsam House in Councillor Cummins's ward to see a special cauldron being lit on stage. It was also fantastic at that event to see the showcasing of Leeds artistic talent, including amazing performances by local Leeds choirs, the award winning Leeds Young Authors from Chapeltown did a performance of poetry session on stage, and then a mass dance performance was led by some of our great dance companies.

The following day the torch left the Town Hall just after 7.00am on its route out to Beeston and Morley, stopping off at an event at John Charles Centre for Sport with over 2,000 local schoolchildren and teachers there and I am sure any Councillor who was there will agree that was an amazing spectacle and something that the kids will remember for the rest of their lives.

We are very proud of the 50 or so torchbearers who carried the torch in the city, including the two Council nominated torch bearers, Steven Tomlinson and Aidan Dixon, and I know from speaking to a number of the torch bearers it was a really moving experience for them.

If I can finally thank everyone who helped to make it happen from the 300 volunteers who worked as Leeds Ambassadors to liaise with the crowds, to the many officers within the Council who worked tirelessly to make it happen, especially officers within Leisure and Children's Services and, of course, the police.

I think for most people this really was a once in a lifetime experience and one that was enjoyed by many of our citizens and I think we should be really proud of that.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Cummins, do you have a supplementary?
No supplementary. Councillor Hardy.

COUNCILLOR HARDY: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Can the Chair of the West Yorkshire ITA inform the Council what steps are being taken to pursue bus Quality Contracts?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Lewis.

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I do not think we will have any problems with the microphone when Councillor Hardy is speaking!

I think the question of the behaviour of the bus services and bus operators in terms of routes and fares and changes and things have always been a concern to all Members round the Council Chamber; certainly I know from the communications I get.

Twelve months ago the ITA agreed to adopt a twin-track approach with the bus operators which is firstly to invite the bus operators to come to us with a partnership offer for improving services and increasing patronage and, secondly, to work towards a Quality Contract regime. We received the partnership offer from the bus companies in February this year and the view of myself and the ITA, I think it is a

cross-party view, all members around the table agreed that the bus companies' offer was inadequate and we have therefore instructed officers of Metro to pursue a Bus Quality Contract.

We are moving towards the publication of a public interest statement and public consultation in the autumn and I would encourage all members who have an interest in this, and I am sure it affects everybody's ward, to get involved at that stage. *(applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Do you have a supplementary, Councillor Hardy? No. Councillor Peter Harrand, please.

COUNCILLOR HARRAND: Thank you, Lord Mayor. You would not believe the lengths I have gone to to avoid having to put this question .

Will the Executive Member responsible for the development of new allotments (whoever it is this week) tell Council when the volunteers of Alwoodley Allotment Association will receive the information about possible sites that was to be provided last January, or would he prefer me to read out the whole miserable saga of delay, disappointment and despair?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Richard Lewis.

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Before I say anything else, can I just correct a misconception that there is not any Executive Board Member who is responsible for new development that sits with Alwoodley Parish Council. We do not even have a legal responsibility to help them. Having said that, before you jump in, I actually believe we should be supporting Parish Councils to create allotments and, Peter, please give me a chance because I am going to apologise to you in a fulsome way because I do not think you have been dealt with fairly on this one, I think this has taken far too long for you to get any response. I know from my experience I have asked for meetings on this that have not taken place. I can only apologise fully to you for the lengthy period it has taken to get anywhere on this and, as I say, I fully understand your frustration. I hope officers are listening. As far as I am concerned you should have the information by the end of the week. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Action this day.

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

COUNCILLOR HARRAND: I thought you were going to try and defend the indefensible but you had the sense not to. Thank you. There is only about 15 minutes of Question time left so I have not got time to read out this miserable saga *(laughter)* but I will take your advice, Richard, please, which is going to be quicker, waiting for you to supply the information or us going through the Freedom of Information route and asking for it officially.

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: Peter, as I say, I do understand this has been going on for far too long. You will get the information by the end of the week and I think that will be quicker than Freedom of Information which, in my experience, takes far longer.

COUNCILLOR HARRAND: It had better be.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Martin Hamilton.

COUNCILLOR M HAMILTON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Why were Members not informed of the decision to cancel bulky waste collections in May and early June?

COUNCILLOR DOBSON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I have to say, I am somewhat surprised by the nature of this question because, unlike most questions that come to Council and the supplementaries that follow, you have got a rough idea where the question is actually going and in this case I genuinely have not, in as much as we did not cancel the service in May and early June.

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

COUNCILLOR M HAMILTON: I think we have information to the contrary. We are happy to provide you with the information that that was the case. We have information that confirms that bulky wastes were cancelled in May and up to about 5th or 6th June, but perhaps Councillor Dobson would care to comment on another policy change, which is that the proposed roll-out of brown bins in Headingley Ward - this is also about a change in policy, Lord Mayor, the roll-out of brown bins in Headingley Ward that was promised pre-election to all houses that wanted them. In the end only three random streets are going to receive brown bin collections. Could he explain why this is the case, please?

COUNCILLOR DOBSON: Happy to take that forward, Lord Mayor. I think the first point to make is it shows how desperately out of touch Councillor Hamilton is with what is going on under his own nose in his own ward (*interruption*) and that is the best advice I can possibly offer, Councillor Lyons. You have now got two Councillors in Headingley who are proactive and understand what is going on in the piece. If you need information about the brown bin roll-out or any other part of the strategy, ask Councillor Walshaw or ask Councillor Walker, but let us be specific. A paper went to the Executive Board on 14th December last as part of the waste management strategy and it made it absolutely clear there was an ongoing commitment from this Council, Councillor Golton is in full agreement with it, that we would roll out and complete the brown bin service for the 28,000-30,000 with gardens who wanted it; they will get it. It is not some vague commitment, it is an absolute guarantee that they will do it.

However, everybody in this Chamber knows about the difficulties about rolling out of services and the pressure - and from over here, if we got it wrong. There has been a measured, phased roll-out. Councillor Hamilton is fully aware of this and this is nothing more than a desperate attempt to look like he is actually doing something in his ward.

COUNCILLOR M HAMILTON: Three streets.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: You wait till the leaflet goes out.

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: We never think that.

COUNCILLOR DOBSON: Then it brings into question the whole issue of transparency, I think. We have been absolutely clear on this side what we are doing on the issue and when we are doing it.

Wouldn't it have been wonderful for people who had to sit here in Opposition for four years, like I did, and have the same level of transparency and openness on

the incinerator? Wouldn't it? I am not in the mood for taking lectures on Environmental Services from an administration, when your two lads ran it you couldn't get us up to 40%. No you couldn't. The brown bins are a key part of our strategy on delivering environmental and recycling improvements on brown bins, and we will deliver it, something you never achieved. *(applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Charlwood, please.

COUNCILLOR CHARLWOOD: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Can the Executive Member for Neighbourhoods, Planning and Support Services tell Council what commitments the city will be asking for from the soon-to-be-elected Police and Crime Commissioner?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Peter Gruen.

COUNCILLOR P GRUEN: That is a much more intelligent question than the previous one. Thank you very much for that. I think all members of Council are very concerned about how the implementation of the Police and Crime Commissioner will work. Can I also take the opportunity to thank our three Members in the Police Authority, Councillor Carter, Councillor Lowe and Councillor Iqbal, for their support. I know the police themselves are very concerned to ensure that the kind of mature and very positive relationship with Leeds will continue and so we are drafting a business plan, there is a Leeds Steering Group to look at what our priorities going forward are and also I have asked, and Councillor Anderson - who is still in the Chamber, despite empty seats all round him - has taken up the challenge to bring forward what I call our Leeds manifesto for all the candidates, whoever they may be, so that we can put very clearly before them what we think our priorities should be going into the future.

THE LORD MAYOR: Do you have a supplementary, Councillor Charlwood.

COUNCILLOR CHARLWOOD: Yes, thank you, Lord Mayor. Given that there are key issues in Leeds around burglary, antisocial behaviour and the valuable role played by PCSOs, what is Councillor Gruen's view on how these issues will be taken up by the incoming Police Commissioner?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Gruen.

COUNCILLOR P GRUEN: Clearly those are, indeed, the three key priorities. Every ward member, we have seen in the past, will fight for their fair share of PCSOs and that is why we have been...

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: We gave you the fair share.

COUNCILLOR P GRUEN: That is why we have been totally non-political in terms of the distribution of PCSOs.

Other Councils, not just in this region but elsewhere, have dramatically reduced their level of PCSOs and I do not think that is the right way to go. We have put extra resources into burglary reduction because, frankly, as Council knows, we put our hand up and said we did not like the place we were at, we were the third worst in the country. We have now reduced burglary in some places by up to 40% and in general across the city by about 20% in one year, so that is worth doing, isn't it? Similarly with antisocial behaviour, the new multi-tasking, multi-purpose schemes consisting of police and the Council and ASB and Probation are making a fantastic

difference both to the length of time it takes - much shorter - and to the quality of service.

I think, Councillor Charlwood, Council will insist that those are key issues for the Police and Crime Commissioner to take forward. Thank you for your question.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Iqbal.

COUNCILLOR IQBAL: Can the Executive Member for Development and the Economy update Council on the progress of key city centre development projects, including Sovereign Street?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Richard Lewis.

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: Thank you, Lord Mayor. We all know the state of the economy nationally and the effect that this has had on some city centre development projects. I think that actually Leeds has bucked the trend in many ways and managed to kick-start a number of projects that had stalled for some time.

Firstly, Sovereign Street, which you mentioned. We brought forward this site for development in a phased way and this has stimulated interest. KPMG, a significant multi-national player, and their developers, have committed to the site and have presented initial designs to Plans Panel. When it is completed this will be the first new office development in Leeds since 2007 and breaks that duck.

The new green space proposed for this area is on track and will make the other two plots more attractive for developments.

Leeds Arena, the arena continues to progress on time and budget. The steel frame is complete. I think Councillor Wakefield abseiled down it the other day.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: I did.

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: I do the more prosaic jobs, I go and look and see the new seats being installed on Friday. External materials are being installed whilst the topping out ceremony will be taking place this month. The main construction is due to conclude in spring 2013, ahead of internal fit-out from the operator SMG. The effect the Arena development will have on the surrounding area is already being seen, with a new hotel having opened opposite in what used to be office space, and all landowners coming forward with proposals, including plans for a hotel on the Portland Crescent site and significant redevelopment of the part of the Merrion Centre which will face the Arena. Woodhouse Lane car park is in the middle of a major refurbishment so that it is ready for the Arena opening.

Confidence in the Leeds economy shows in Trinity Retail Scheme, which is due to open again in Spring next year. Trinity Leeds is currently more than two-thirds let and this is a really significant figure and it is the only major retail scheme which will open in the UK in 2013.

Plans continue to be worked on for the Eastgate Development and this scheme will see a new John Lewis store come to Leeds.

Taken collectively and on the back of the success of the NGT bid, the impact on the Leeds economy, jobs and what the city centre has to offer is incredible at a time when very little is happening elsewhere in the UK, so we have a real success

story happening. I have only outlined some of the projects, there are many other sitting behind but I think we can all take confidence that Leeds is bucking the trend. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Supplementary? No. Councillor Anderson, please

COUNCILLOR ANDERSON: Presuming that the Exec Board Member agrees with his administration's commitment to delivering front line services, when why is he in charge of a department that is inadequately resourcing the Parkswatch Team to the detriment of residents in the north of the city and causing extra work for the Parks and Countryside staff in trying to address the issues of anti-social behaviour in a number of Parks and Countryside assets?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Ogilvie.

COUNCILLOR OGILVIE: As Parkswatch now falls under Environment and Neighbourhoods I will refer this question to the Executive Member for Environment to respond.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Nice one! *(laughter)*

COUNCILLOR DOBSON: Rearrange this popular phrase or saying – potato and hot! He is quite right to do that because it does now fall under my portfolio.

Obviously the basic premise that we are totally committed to delivering front line services I think is absolutely clear and transparent in everything we do as an administration, and just to touch on some of the Parkswatch work, it is a round the clock service in terms of days, seven days a week, 365 days a year. They get, last year I think it was over 400 calls but more important than that every week over the 225 pieces of green space, parks we have, that equates to about 1500 visits. Yes, I would accept that due to the rationalisation and the fact that we have got an extremely difficult budget to tackle, I do not think that the charge can actually be made that we are not committed to those services, despite making that really rather modest reduction that was actually based on where can we actually rationalise the service, and it was decided between 8.00 and 10.00 in the evening in the winter months we would remove that part of the service.

Obviously it is something that we keep under review. If it was causing real detriment to residents in the north of the city, I absolutely know that they would be bringing those concerns forward to me.

THE LORD MAYOR: Do you have a supplementary?

COUNCILLOR ANDERSON: Do you agree that we need to look at the hours of working that they operate, because the criminals do not stop at nine o'clock at night, or half-past nine when the Parkswatch people have to go about locking up a number of the assets to make sure they are secure. A lot of the problems are occurring after that time and we need to make sure that we have got resource available at the time that the problems are occurring, not necessarily at the times when unfortunately there are not as many problems to face up to.

COUNCILLOR DOBSON: Yes, in terms of looking at times I think, Barry, that is what we have actually done and what this service has done is looked at the hours where we think we need to have people visible within the parks and green space and the evidence seemed to suggest to us that that was between the hours, the summer

hours extended till 10.00 but in the winter hours there was a definite drop-off in activity, hence the reduction to 8.00.

That said, if there were specific incidents of bad behaviour or inappropriate behaviour in any of our parks or green space after those hours in those winter months, of course it is something as a responsible department we would take forward and I am sure that if individual piece of casework were to come from you, you obviously know you can bring them to my door.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Downes.

COUNCILLOR DOWNES: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Can the Executive Member for Development and the Economy join me in welcoming the government's recent announcement of £15m worth of additional funding for cycling in British cities outside London and will he inform the Council of any plans he has to bid for this money?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Richard Lewis.

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: Thanks, Lord Mayor. You always have to be careful about saying thank you to Government announcements.

COUNCILLOR DOWNES: Oh, go on!

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: There is always the devil in the detail and, as Margaret Thatcher said, there is no such thing as a free lunch.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: She did not say that!

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: John, I know you know her quotes back to front and I will defer to you on that one.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: It was John Prescott!

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: I know it is your bedtime reading, John.

What came with this announcement was that phrase, it was not quite matched funding but it did say effectively that Councils will have to divvy up and put their own money into any schemes and I think that is always what worries us, is it not? Leeds is pretty successful at bidding for other money, whatever money comes out, but I think we need to know what the detail is and I think specifically Norman Baker talks about addressing cycle safety at junctions, and we have to work out where that is appropriate, so it is not no, we are not going to bid for it but I think we have to wait and know exactly what the detail it. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

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

COUNCILLOR DOWNES: Just a very brief supplementary. As Councillor Lewis may know obviously I have a very keen interest in cycling and there is an issue coming to Scrutiny Board tomorrow morning, a call-in that I have made, and it may be that something there could be useful and I just wonder whether he would be interested in having help and guidance from other Members who can come forward with projects that the Council might like to bid for, so if he would like some help on that I will be more than happy to work with him.

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: How could I have escaped seeing Ryk in his Lycra? I see he has got the go-faster haircut as well, so I am well aware of his interest in cycling. More than happy that we talk to interested groups about how we can access this money, if it is appropriate. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Urry, you jut got in in time.

COUNCILLOR URRY: Please could the Executive Member for Adult Social Care update Council on developments with the Residential Governance Quality Framework and fee structure?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Yeadon.

COUNCILLOR YEADON: Thank you, Councillor Urry, and welcome to your first full meeting of Council.

I am pleased to say that proposals for a brand new approach to Local Authority funded residential and nursing placements for older people were approved by Executive Board on 20th June. The new five year deal on offer will mean that all homes that are awarded City Council contracts in the future will be required to provide consistently high standards of quality of care.

These are standards that have been set by us and this will be rigorously monitored by our staff from Adult Social Care. This way we, at Leeds City Council, will be able to give older people who need residential and nursing care an assured standard of care when they can no longer live in their own homes.

At the same time a new fee structure has been designed to establish a long-term sustainable framework of payments for care provided by the independent sector. The fee structure has been calculated to ensure reward for quality and will encourage proprietors to look constantly to improve the care they offer in return for an enhanced level of payment. This will also ensure that there is greater clarity for the payment of third party top-ups within the independent sector.

Five year contracts are now out for tender and I would like to pay tribute to all the Members of the Advisory Board who have worked with us to develop a quality framework that will improve the care we provide for older people in Leeds.

I would also particularly like to thank representatives from across the political groups who contributed to this process and perhaps this should be an example to our colleagues in Westminster on how cross-party working can achieve some answers when dealing with the difficult issues of social care.

I hope Members of the Council will join me in celebrating the peace of mind we will now be able to offer residents of this city, care homes and their relatives.
(applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: Do you have a supplementary, Councillor Urry? No. We have now come to the end of Question time but written answers will be given to all Members to the questions that we have not had time to go through this afternoon.

ITEM 8 - MINUTES

THE LORD MAYOR: We are now moving on to page 10, Item 8, the Minutes. Councillor Keith Wakefield.

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

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: Second, Lord Mayor.

(a) Executive Board

(i) Environmental Services/Environment.

THE LORD MAYOR: We are now moving on to Minutes of the Executive Board, Environmental Services and the Environment. Councillor Nagle – this is Councillor Nagle's maiden speech so please listen attentively and do not interrupt.

COUNCILLOR NAGLE: Thank you very much. Dear Lord Mayor, I would like to speak on page 115 Minute 8 regarding the deputation which was made to Council concerning allotment provision in Leeds.

My Lord Mayor, we are very lucky in Leeds that there is a rich history of allotment provision in areas across the city. In regards to the ward which I represent, Rothwell, this is also the case and, as the deputation showed, there is a real passion for seeing our allotments in our community continue to grow and prosper in the future.

Two of the allotment sites in Rothwell have recently been sold to private owners, despite the efforts of Leeds City Council to buy the plots. Can I pay tribute at this point to the outstanding work that has been done by the officers to deal with this issue. We were able to build a working relationship with the new owner of the Victoria site but we have not had the same success with the owner of the Reservoir allotment site. This is in no way down to the efforts of the officers concerned, who continue to do sterling work on this issue.

I have been very impressed by the strength of feeling in the local community around this issue. I have attended allotment meetings as a candidate and as a Councillor and I am quite clear that the local community is determined to retain these allotments.

I am delighted, therefore, that a deal has now been agreed regarding the Victoria site, which will put in place a new ten year tenancy with a fixed term of five years to secure the future of this site.

The new owner, by the way, accepted an invitation to attend one of the public meetings earlier this year and came and spoke and attended at the meeting; he was a very pleasant chap.

Unfortunately while on the one hand we have received positive news on Victoria, we are continuing to face difficulties in securing an agreement regarding the Reservoir site. The owner of the Reservoir site, for whatever reason, has not been willing up to this point to enter into dialogue with the Council although a number of potential options are still being investigated. I know that the officers of the Council have been and are working extremely hard to achieve the goal and hopefully we can find a long-lasting solution at Reservoir. As I say, at the moment we do not have a result yet, though we continue to address the issue and we will continue to explore all our options. Thank you very much, Lord Mayor. *(applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Golton, please.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I have only got three minutes to cover two Minutes, but I will first of all welcome my new ward colleague to the Chamber and say that we are all working together as two different parties on the common goal of ensuring that we look after our allotment holders in Rothwell.

Being an allotment holder it feels like you have been subjected to several plagues this year. We have had rain, rain, slugs, caterpillars, I have got rabbits now. *(laughter)* The last thing we need is another one which is property developers. I would encourage every single Member of this Council to ensure that when they have their Area Committees, at one point they have an item on the agenda which talks about the Community Asset Register and ensuring that their local allotment sites are nominated to be on it at the very first instance.

As far as the owner of the Reservoir site is concerned that David mentioned earlier, the people are not going to go quietly, I can assure you. When you get an eviction notice and you have loved land for years, you do not give it up easily, so watch this space, David Marsh.

On to the incinerator issue, Councillor Dobson talks about transparency. Transparency obviously has a very funny effect on people because during the four years that this administration was taking a waste solution forward, Councillor Wakefield was getting briefings as a Member of the Executive Board which meant that your group was implacably against incineration at all. When you take over and you get the transparency you were after, apparently, it means you go quiet for a year and then after that you come out fully in support of it and not only that, you bring forward Executive Board papers which mean that you are actually expanding its capability in terms of the tonnage that it is going to take on board.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: No.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: What I am trying to ask you to take on board now is, the Liberal Democrats have appreciated that the environment has changed and that the market for waste solutions has also changed, and in this city we have BIFA putting forward a plan which could take the Council's wastage, but also we have other companies approaching us as local Members wanting to talk about anaerobic digestion and I know, for instance, that Councillor Grahame is very interested in that technology and I do believe that we should actually respond to that changing market and maybe have another look at the incinerator proposals that you are putting forward.

Secondly, of course, there is a concern that you are spending so much time concerning yourself with this one single project that it means your eyes are being taken off the ball. In terms of us not being able to deliver over 50% recycling, I would just like to remind Councillor Dobson that it was Liberal Democrat Councillors in Rothwell that achieved over 50% by taking the brave decision of introducing food waste in our ward. The problem for the rest of the city is that you have not got the gumption to get up and expand it into the rest of the city. Indeed, when you actually announced that there was going to be an extension locally, Councillor Wakefield was gagging for it in his ward because it is next door to Rothwell. You have actually delayed the implementation of that. You have also delayed the implementation of the expansion of the green recycling collections and also you put a submission in to Eric Pickles but you have waited twelve months before you even expressed an interest, and I hope you are not going to leave the fact that ---

THE LORD MAYOR: Please could you make your final point, Councillor Golton.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: (*inaudible*)... to explain why you have not actually done what you said you were doing in the original plan. Thank you. (*applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Harington, please. I do not know what to say, whether this is your maiden speech or not, seeing as you have been here before. I hope you are going to make it in poem.

COUNCILLOR HARINGTON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. A pretty ravelled old maiden, I think!

Item 9, page 115. Colleagues will be pretty aware of the problem. Landfill tax goes up year by year; carry on as we are and there will be a £16.3m bill in 2015. That is not very sensible economically and it is not very sensibly environmentally either because the methane will increase and if you keep burying stuff then you are burying muck that could be used for brass.

If we just think of the new facility as an incinerator it might look as if our waste strategy is a matter of burn, baby, burn. However, Leeds has a strong commitment to re-use and recycle waste so that by 2020 we recover 90% of the value of our waste.

Colleagues will be familiar with many of the initiatives that are already taking place. They will not be easy to bring about but they are being started: one, the brown bin collection is being rolled out across the city; two, household waste sorting sites continue their recycling targets; three, there has been an increasing demand for green bins to be done fortnightly and studies have been taken to show that if that happens there will be a much more discerning use of black bins, so during the course of the year there will be a pilot in selected parts of the city for a fortnightly collection of the green and black bins and, if that works, that will continue round the rest of the city.

Four, there will also be tests to see what else could go in the green bins especially, for example, glass. Although there are over 400 collections for glass all round the city, Leeds still recycles less glass than other core cities. Five, following the successful food waste collection in Rothwell, that should be also rolled out round the rest of the city in due course. Food waste obviously can be used for fertiliser and also for biogas for vehicles. That will need anaerobic digestion and studies to appraise what the options are will be carried out this year.

In 2006/7 Leeds recycled 22.3% of its waste and last year it was 40%. The target is now 55% for 2016 and with the new facility in place which will recycle 10% of its waste, the target then goes up to 60%.

The new facility in addition, as you will now can, we hope, be able to provide electricity for 20,000 dwellings and provide heat for local buildings. As a member of Friends of the Earth I realise that the new facility may seem to someone simply a big, dirty, bad incinerator, a monster that should be now be extinct, but I do not see why it should not do exactly what it says on the tin, namely be a recycling and energy recovering facility, or a RERF. A RERF is not the noise that a monster makes; a RERF is a very well-meaning dog and if we train it will I don't see why it shouldn't do the job that we want it to do.

You say incinerator, I say RERF, but don't let's call the whole thing "erf".
(laughter) (Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor David Blackburn.

COUNCILLOR D BLACKBURN: Thanks, Lord Mayor. I speak on Minute 9 page 115 and for the Exec Member, I am not going to go on about this because he knows my opinion over the waste solution.

All I want to do is to get up here and remind Council that we are opposed to any idea of this incinerator. We remain that. We were yesterday, we are today and we will be tomorrow. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Anderson.

COUNCILLOR ANDERSON: Lord Mayor, I refer to Minute 9 page 115 and Minute 241 page 98.

Can I start with the Minute about the investment in new machinery. Can I say it is welcome. If you had listened to what you were told a number of years ago when you took over that your decision was short-term at the time and you have reaped what you sowed in that the performance of the refuse collection service was adversely affected because of the level of breakdown that you had and hopefully your colleagues will learn from what has happened that in order to save money sometimes you have got to invest to make sure that you deliver the services, so hopefully they have learned from that.

In respect of Minute 9 page 115, hopefully you within Cabinet will be able to argue for more resources, because I do think if we can get some more money to invest in these things, I think the people of Leeds are willing to recycle more and I would thank you for the recent introduction of more plastics that can now be put in to the recycling. It is long overdue and something that I think is welcomed throughout the city. Also the work that you are doing in trying to get brown bins further out as well.

What we do have to look at is some of the Council estates where the layout of the estates do not make it conducive to getting brown bins and so if there is anything you can say or suggest on that today, that would be welcome because it will not just affect my ward, it is going to affect other people's wards as well as to how you get in and give them the same level of service as everybody else does.

What I would like to see you do is – not you personally because you do try and improve communication but I do think officers could improve the way they communicate with the public when they are trying to put messages out there in terms of what they are doing. You do try and get in the paper; you do try and explain what is happening. Is it the Dobson Evening Post?

We also need to look at emptying of glass bottle banks because that is often leading to people leaving rubbish and that around them and that leads to a problem within the city, and you also need to improve the bin collection still. Not you personally but again other people throw back at me that you are only missing so many per cent – well, unfortunately for that per cent and unfortunately it always seems to be the same areas time and time again that are missing out, we need to get something done about it.

The final thing I would say, because I notice the time is running out, is, can we try and get some work done on the heating that is going to be coming from the incinerator and try and get the district heating system up and running and working with some other investors who are willing to take it forward so that the residents in the area can benefit from some of the heat that is being produced.

Thanks very much, Lord Mayor.

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

COUNCILLOR DOBSON: Certainly welcome, Councillor Nagle, to this first Council proper, as it were, and thank you for the positive comments regarding the solution that has been established for Victoria allotment. There are still difficulties around Reservoir, we will try and iron out those difficulties. We have had problems dealing with the landowner but it is something that I am perfectly happy to take forward with all Rothwell Ward Members to try and seek a solution for that vital resource.

Stewart - Stewart, Stewart, Stewart - we had to raise the in incinerator just as everything was going so well! I am delighted that you are a convert to the idea of recycling, genuinely, but it has to be said, the first time that the figures from 2006, the target - it was not 50, it was 40% that was set by the previous administration, the first time that was set and hit was last year under our administration.

I think you cannot take away the fact that we have got a waste management strategy and as part of that waste management strategy of course we are looking at things like anaerobic digestion, of course we are looking at a roll out of the food waste programme, of course we are going to deliver the brown bins as specified earlier. It is a strategy; it will be delivered.

I have got to come on to the elephant in the room, the incinerator, and again, the Lib Dems, you are all over the place on it - you are all over the place. You spent six years in administration with two Executive Board members in my shoes now actively progressing a scheme that you now want to wash your hands of, and it will not wash.

I am quoting Andrew Carter here from the incinerator reference back debate that we had on 16th November last, and I think this pretty accurately sums it up:

“I regret to say, however, that colleagues over there”

(pointing to you in his own inimitable style)

“I need to remind then that we spent six years in office, hour upon hour upon hour of debating. Nobody wants incineration, particularly. We went through a process. Let me tell you that portfolio holders and for the benefit of people in the gallery were all Liberal Democrat portfolio holders, we went through it from the thread to the needle, so somehow to try and distance yourself from it now is a little bit disingenuous, to say the least.”

Moving on to Councillor Harington, I think that is a valid contribution in as much as we talk about incineration like it is an argument for the devil. If handled properly it has huge opportunities for this city around not just the electric generation it

will do but to deliver a district heating scheme that actually puts us on an equal footing with some of the other core cities that have done this. Look at Sheffield, third generation incineration with a district heating scheme that is up and running and it works and it will effectively, if done properly, ring fence our energy position for

I also thank Roger for his comments around the fact that we have got a strategy and as part of that strategy we decided - 14th December last - to up our recycling aspirations from 50% by 2020 to 55% by 2016, and I have to say, Stewart, that won't happen despite incineration and the energy from waste, it will happen potentially because of it.

David, your position has always been clear, I totally respect it. Barry, thank you again for another positive and challenging and critical contribution; I would expect no less.

I would take issue with one thing, about we reap what we sow in terms of under investment. We are investing now, we are investing in new fleet, we are also investing in new technologies that we think are required. However, you did give me a bit of a challenge. I was going to throw statistics at you, as you know I always do, so I am going to anyway.

We are now hitting 90 bin fails per 100,000 that we should collect and I completely agree, Barry, that a bin fail is a bin fail is a bin fail and it does not make it right for the people who have failures, but let us just take a little bit of time to put this in some perspective. Between 2002 and 2009 per 100,000 we were missing about 190 bins on average, per year. The high spike was 2004/5 when it was in excess of 600. The aspirational target is 50; we are now bobbing around May and June, 90. There has been a vast improvement in the service. I think part of the disappearance is since the dispute in 2009 and some of the changes in the roll out and the difficulties in 2010, it is a department and a service that is and will remain under the spotlight, but you know I take it seriously and you do know I will be doing all within my power to address your concerns as I always do, and the concerns of colleagues in this room across all the parties when they are put to me in a sensible fashion, which you always do, I hasten to add.

In terms of maximising the benefits through incineration, you are absolutely right, we are doing it in tandem with building the thing. We have got to have a clear strategy for delivering the benefits from district heating and that is something we will be taking forward very actively very soon indeed.

Glass bottles is something - if there are individual issues I am more than happy to pick up with you individually. I will leave it there, Lord Mayor, thank you.

(ii) Neighbourhoods Housing and Regeneration/Neighbourhoods, Planning and Support Services

THE LORD MAYOR: We are moving on page 11 and moving on to Neighbourhoods, Housing and Regeneration, Neighbourhoods, Planning and Sports Services. Councillor Jim McKenna, please.

COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am speaking on Minute 14, page 119. At present the size of a property a social housing tenant lives in does not affect the amount of housing benefit they receive. However, from April

2013 the Government are introducing social size criteria, or SSSCs, for social tenants claiming housing benefit.

This will have the effect of reducing benefits to tenants of working age who have spare rooms in their property. Let us be clear, this is all about reducing housing benefit to save money and is not to improve the financial lot of our tenants. It is estimated that this move will save the Government £490m by 2014.

The calculation used to assess the bedroom requirement is similar to the Council's Letting Policy. However, unlike the Council's policy of certain exceptions being available, largely to support vulnerable groups, under the Government's SSSC these groups will no longer qualify to claim for additional benefit.

It has been shown that 7,334 of our tenants will be affected by the change in Leeds. If these tenants have one extra bedroom they will suffer a reduction of 14% off their benefit. Those with two extra bedrooms will have a shortfall of 25% of their rent to make up themselves from their own scarce resources.

Lord Mayor, this will be a very great additional financial burden on already hard-pressed families' incomes, which will result in further hardships in inner city areas like New Wortley and many parts of Armley that I represent.

The Council has over 3000 people on the Council waiting list in Leeds so there is little scope for us to rehouse tenants according to the Government's SSSC criteria, therefore financial hardship is inevitable.

One major concern is that families with children will be forced into high rise flats. So far our pragmatic approach has been to allocate multi-storey flats to older tenants and whenever possible not allocate families with young children into high rise flats because of the potential safety risk and a lack of garden play space. Lord Mayor, these changes will impact on children before they are even born. Adoptions that allow tenants with disabilities to remain in their own homes will no longer be permitted. Families will be forced into unsuitable multi-storey blocks. Single people under the ages of 35 will not be entitled to self-contained accommodation, which raises safety concerns where a person has access to children.

To conclude, Lord Mayor, I see only further financial hardship in store for our tenants because of the Government's housing benefit changes. I therefore fully support the proposal that correspondence highlighting the effects of the changes be sent on behalf of all political groups...

THE LORD MAYOR: Last sentence, please.

COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: ... in the Council to the relevant Government Minister and Leeds MPs. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Atha.

COUNCILLOR ATHA: Lord Mayor, I thought I was going to make that speech; I will do another one! First, I would say for those who remember (and not many of us will) the ward, almost everything was rationed – fuel, sweets, bread, potatoes, the whole things were rationed. The only thing that was not rationed amongst the essentials of life were bedrooms. You have got to go back into medieval time to have a tax on bedroom windows.

Quite frankly I, like everybody else here, hate spongers. We have no time for spongers. The ones I revile most are people like those fat cats who take away from the central resources enormous sums of money in bonuses and in all things. Fancy Bob Diamond saying, "Look, I have been a naughty boy so I will not take my bonus of £20m, I will just take £2m instead." They are the spongers that we should be attacking (*applause*) just as we should be attacking anyone who makes a benefit out of the benefit system. We do not want spongers at that level or that level – they are both fundamentally wrong and the system that we brought in of welfare payments was designed to help those who genuinely needed it who are decent citizens.

There is an old fashioned Labour saying, a fair day's pay for a fair day's work, and that is something that we go by, certain integrity, but the Government's implication or scheme such as Jim has just mentioned, it is quite scandalous that there are no exceptions, for instance, for someone who has been told, "You have got one bedroom too many" when she is pregnant, approaching the end of her term, and still has to be treated as a non-exception to the rule. It is an absolute scandal.

You know, 2.61m people, 1.6m people looking for jobs in Job Seekers' Allowance. These are not scroungers, they should not be punished. If they are in a flat now where there are two bedrooms and they decided that they are over provided, what do they do? They have got to actually take, if they are unemployed, a cut, which they cannot afford, or they have to move out and the lunacy of this system is if they do move out into the private sector, the rents there are likely to be higher and therefore the cost to the nation is increased. In other words, you are moving them out at great inconvenience, great dislocation, and it is costing us all more. How can you think of anything more stupid than that?

It is easy to fire bricks or throw stones at the other parties. It is much better if we can simply say logically, let us look at the system, say it is wrong, go to Ministers and say, "Look, think again because there is no sense in doing something so damn stupid, so absolutely economically stupid and so unfair to individuals who are going to be moved from homes which they have possibly lived in all their lives."

It is monstrous, it is immoral, it is wrong and if we cannot disclaim moral indignation in a case like this, we are failing in our duty. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Bruce, please.

COUNCILLOR BRUCE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. It is great to see that communities are setting up forums to take control and have a say in planning their areas, like in Carlton and Woodlesford and Oulton in my ward, and forums can have a much wider use than just planning.

I was elected last year as a Rothwell Councillor and it was obvious to me that the town of Rothwell, like a lot of other areas, is crying out for new life. Some of our shops are struggling and we need more footfall down Commercial Street. I am passionate about helping to do this and that is why I called a public meeting to start Rothwell Town Forum.

We have a fantastic asset in our town centre with some great individual shops, which I totally support. God forbid we should end up with our high streets being full of nothing but identical chain shops replacing our much loved individual local shops, and no Olwyn Fox providing true local service but instead only Currys

with its know-nothing assistants and no Brew Tea Rooms but only Starbucks on every street.

We have to make the most of what we have in Rothwell and not only fight to keep our individuality but help our centre to realise its full potential and draw people here. I want us to build on the unique character that Rothwell has whilst at the same time bringing it into the 21st Century. We need to offer people something that they cannot get from out of town shopping centres or on the internet, for that matter.

We also have other pockets throughout the ward such as Oulton, Woodlesford, Cowthorpe, which have fantastic shops with so much potential and they also need our support.

There was a huge amount of enthusiasm at the first meeting in spite of for some of the traders, some of the set-backs and challenges that they have endured in the past, but with the community coming together to help themselves I am sure that we can do it.

Some great ideas came out of the meeting, like the need for improved signage; a directory and newsletter promoting local businesses that could go to every home in the area; experimenting with things like late night opening; looking at the pedestrianisation of Commercial Street and what can be done with that; how businesses can work together with joint promotions; perhaps creating a Rothwell pound, even, where we have a special currency in Rothwell that can only be spent within the ward; a community notice board; better business support and advice – the ideas go on, really.

There is just a wealth of opportunity there and we have got our role to play. Keith did a great job chairing the Commission on the Future of Local Government but we have got to ensure that it is more than just words and truly embrace entrepreneurship. Too often our local traders face petty bureaucratic ---

THE LORD MAYOR: Please will you make your final point, Councillor Bruce?

COUNCILLOR BRUCE: OK, and as a Council we are not flexible enough to meet the real needs of people and that has to change and we here should be that change. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Martin Hamilton.

COUNCILLOR M HAMILTON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. The same Minute, page 120 Minute 15. Lord Mayor, I welcome the general thrust of this Minute and the approach that is being proposed on Neighbourhood Planning and, in particular, I think the reference to the use of Area Committees to take this forward is important.

I think my plea would be that this should be seen as a bottom-up process rather than a top-down process, something led from the centre. I think there was some concern, certainly in my Ward, when the pilot areas were announced and Headingley put in an expression of interest but was not selected whereas, I think, City and Hunslet was selected, even though, as I understand it, an expression of interest was not actually submitted in the first place.

As you have heard and seen earlier on from the Deputation from residents in the Cardigan Triangle, we have a number of very active residents in Headingley Ward who, given the opportunity, could really run with this. Over the years we have

developed various planning documents – conservation area appraisals, design statements, the Headingley Renaissance Document was produced several years ago which I think has been quite effective in starting to turn round Headingley town centre and make it into a place that everyone would want to visit.

I think we need to look at what is already there, what activities are already taking place and encourage those rather than simply assuming that nothing is happening. My plea would be to look at what is going on within the communities and to encourage activity where it is already taking place. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: After Councillor Campbell, before I ask Councillor Gruen to sum up, I have just got Councillor Finnigan to speak. Councillor Campbell, please.

COUNCILLOR CAMPBELL: Thank you, Lord Mayor, same Minute. I would really like to support much of what Councillor Bruce and Councillor Hamilton have said because I do feel that the Government's proposals for neighbourhood planning does something that in all my 30-odd years as a member of the Plans Committee I have never really seen, and that is give communities the ability to shape their future, and certainly shape the place they live, and I think Councillor Bruce has well indicated how that might affect Rothwell and I think we all represent very distinct communities. That is the strength of Leeds, but those communities need to be able to assist in this process. I am sure the enthusiasm is out there. I think it needs the support of the Council to do that.

I regard this Minute as a very positive Minute and I think it is without a doubt the first stage in a long process, but I think we do have to reiterate our commitment to the idea of empowering local groups and certainly through that empowerment there is an implication on this Council that we must resource and support those groups as much as possible.

As I say, I regard this as a very positive first step and look forward to reading in future further support for community groups because I believe this is perhaps the most important change in the planning legislation and will have, in the long term, a dramatic impact on the individual communities that make up Leeds. *(applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Finnigan, please.

COUNCILLOR FINNIGAN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am speaking on Minute 40 on page 119, which is the introduction of the housing benefit size criteria in the social rented sector.

The housing benefit bill has soared, of that there is absolutely no argument. What is the analysis for that? We exercised the right to buy and that meant we lost a load of Council homes. The Housing Associations did not get the finance that they actually needed to provide alternatives; that meant that the private sector soared as people looked for housing. Previous Governments have decided to get rid of the fair rent allocation that they used to have at one particular point that kept rents at a reasonable level in the private sector, the result being a hell of a lot of demand and very little supply, the housing benefit bill soared.

This is not the way to try and tackle housing benefit. This is part of the welfare reform process that is fundamentally flawed.

At this particular point in the private rented sector the Local Housing Allowance already implements this size criteria and basically says your housing benefit will be restricted on those particular sizes. As we know, most social rented accommodation is given to people on the basis of size and they tend to be longer term tenants in that particular area. You are in a situation where the implementation of this particular legislation will have a detrimental impact on cohesive communities, because you will have communities where people have been there for a long time, families have grown up and they have actually left and then there is a very strong push financially to try and remove whoever is left in that particular tenancy as a result of these housing benefit changes. That undermines community cohesion, it actually means you introduce transient populations which create all sorts of problems and difficulties.

The other issue is it does not fundamentally make any financial sense. If you were to take a widow with a 14 year old daughter, 18 year old son, the 18 year old son goes and joins the Army, she is over-accommodated in the Council sector, her housing benefit of somewhere in the region of £65 a week is therefore reduced. If she exercises her right to go into the private sector, the Local Housing Allowance kicks in, that pays out for a two-bedroom property that she is entitled to £110 a week. It does not save you any money, it disincentivises the whole particular process. It is fundamentally flawed.

What can we do about that? We have the Discretionary Housing Payment Scheme that presently is spent by and large supporting the private sector. We need to see if we can use that in a more imaginative way to deal with the socially rented sector. Fundamentally we support this, it is a situation where this needs to be re-looked at and re-thought. There are things that we can do locally to try and ameliorate the worst of this particular legislation but we do need to go back to incentivise, to persuade people to move by looking at what we can do by offering them grants and other things to move to other Council accommodation if we are going to resolve this problem. This is not the way of resolving it. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Les Carter has indicated he wishes to speak.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Lord Mayor, I was interested in Councillor Atha's comments regarding what is going to happen to people, they are going to leave and go into more expensive property. I do not think that will be the case, personally. I think what will happen is they will find some other way of paying it, something else will be given up. I do not know what that will be yet, Bernard, but it will be something else that they are giving up to continue paying because they are not stupid. You do not go leaving a house which is usually 70% of what the private sector costs to be in and go and pay another 30% on top of that, so you would not do it. That is something that worries you and something that we should look at.

I also think that when you do make changes like that it should be gradual changes. I do not believe in fast, hard changes which can make such an effect on people's lives. People who have not got spare, surplus income cannot suddenly change overnight. They cannot suddenly deal with a 20% drop of this or £20 drop of this or something, so that has got to be sorted out and I think they go too fast when they do these things. The Government says, "We are going to do it, let's knock it off next week or sometime in the future." I think we have got to do it.

I think one point I would go back to Peter on and that is this bedroom scheme which we introduced where we were buying bedrooms off people to get them to go into smaller properties. I think you might still need it, Peter, because I am not certain that everyone is going to move out in the way you think. I think people are going to be living a harder life but I am not certain they are going to move out and it was very useful, you have got over 400 properties there for families who definitely needed to go into houses with their families. I think you need to be very careful on this.

Just one point. It is easy to sit here and all laugh at the banks. It is easy to just goad them, great fun, it is wonderful. Do not forget this, the City pays £50b in tax. It might be they should be 80, it might be they should pay 100, but they pay £50b in tax and if that £50b went we would all be in serious trouble. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

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

COUNCILLOR P GRUEN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Under the new rules I now have the generous allowance of six minutes to sum up a debate that has been...

COUNCILLOR: We will pull it back to three, Peter.

COUNCILLOR P GRUEN: Pull it back to three, that is even better!

Let me start on the neighbourhood planning contributions. I think Councillor Bruce's speech was full of interesting examples of optimism which is, I think, the kind of local leadership that is required to take communities through difficult times and say that, actually, better times are there for the taking if we want to give that kind of leadership. I think as Chair of the Area Committee she now has a fantastic opportunity to drive forward the kind of issues she has raised today, but I take seriously the whole issue around civic enterprise and leadership.

I was hoping that the contributions from Councillors Hamilton and Campbell might indicate that they are going to withdraw their amendment to the White Paper later on, seeing as they have had a go at neighbourhood planning at this stage. I think the whole issue of neighbourhood planning is exceptionally serious and needs to be taken forward, as the paper suggests, and I think there need to be proper discussions and no doubt we will have to come back to that later today.

I want to really spend the rest of my allocated time to talk about the housing benefit changes that Councillors McKenna, Atha, Finnigan and Carter talked about.

There is a great difference in approach, let us just be quite honest about that, between the Labour Group and the Labour Party, the Opposition Parties, and the Conservative Party and to some extent, I think, the Lib Dems who will go along with most things that the Conservatives want them to do, apart from constitutional reform, of course.

I think our approach is that the Council housing is not a safety net for people. It is an alternative provision of homes that people have every right to choose and want to live there and have stability, as Councillor Finnigan says, that is sustainable now and into future generations.

The whole approach of the Government is to undermine that kind of social cohesion, to talk about people having to move, not long-term tenancies and to undermine the principle of family life and cohesion.

The statistics which are drawn up not by us but by Shelter and other responsible organisations, and by officers here, tell us that we already are having to invest more resources, rightly, in terms of homelessness and in terms of people who are anxious about whether or not they can be next on the list of homelessness.

You have heard me say before in Council that we have had 40% more people presenting themselves to housing options in the last two years - 40% - and we are increasing the front line staff to cope with that.

Councillor Carter, yes, we are going to monitor very carefully these increases because it is not for you or for me to say how those families who are suddenly having less income in terms of housing benefit, how they will manage. All I can tell you, there will not be a single person in this Chamber who has not recognised that utility charges are going through the roof, that there are other price increases which are hitting families, and then there is your rent and then there is your loss of housing benefit. I will take a bet with any single person in here who will tell me that we are going to collect the same amount of rental income as we always have done into the future. If any such brave person – Councillor Lamb – who wants to put their hand in their pocket and say, “I am going to bet you that we will collect the same amount of money”, then you are on, because we will not. There is absolutely no earthly chance that we will collect 100% of money when that goes, the universal benefits, to the individual rather than the landlord.

That means less investment in how we deal with our houses and properties in the future, as will right to buy because that is siphoning money off the top and it is not giving us one-to-one back at all. All of this undermines the principle of social housing provided through housing associations and through the Council, not to mention the quite disastrous loss of exemptions that people have through the housing benefit; the fact that foster caring is not taken into account; the fact that adaptations for ill people is not taken into account; the fact that pregnant women cannot say they need an extra bedroom until their child has been born. It is taking us back into Dickensian times. It is unbelievable that a Government can actually bring forward such a point and that is the basis.

The Tories have chosen the weakest people who they know will not vote for them, so let's attack them. We are here to defend them. *(applause)*

(iii) Children's Services

THE LORD MAYOR: We are now moving on to Children's Services on page 11 of the Order Paper. Councillor Dowson, please.

COUNCILLOR DOWSON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I would like to comment on page 121 Minute 17 and that is the deputation by Mark Sowards of Leeds University on widening participation in higher education.

The introduction of legislation which will cut the higher education budget by 40% and increase tuition fees by £9,000 has already seen the number of young people applying for universities drop by nearly ten per cent. We can only fear what the full impact of these cuts will be over the years. While higher education may not be for everyone, and that is OK, it is shameful that we find ourselves in a situation where the financial backgrounds of students may determine their future potential for learning and for employment.

Recent figures show that it is not just students from disadvantaged backgrounds that are deciding against university. The double-dip recession has seen a sharper drop in the number of applicants from wealthier background as the cuts start to bite and it saddens me that so many of our young people may never fulfil their academic potential.

It is not just our young people who will be affected. Leeds Metropolitan University has seen a reduction in applications of 5.9%. The knock-on effect could well be a downturn in student spending in the city, which has the potential to damage the local economy. Universities specialising in creative arts have seen the biggest drop in numbers of students as they start to think about what degree will give them the best chance of a future job rather than a degree they may be more interested in.

The long-term impact of these changes is still to be realised. I still believe that many families and young people will be put off by the rise in tuition fees – fees which universities were forced to change due to the hypocrisy of this Government and to the high cost of living that the double-dip recession has brought us.

In January the BBC reported that the number of mature students has dropped by 15-20% - that is more than any other group. We need to work with our universities here in Leeds to ensure that this group is not prevented from accessing a higher education they missed out on earlier in life.

While all evidence has yet to be compiled and fully understood, as a city we must pull together to encourage our brightest students to attend the best universities, to offer them a full opportunity to increase their knowledge, skills and experience regardless of financial situation or background. This can only be achieved by working with our universities and schools, because let's be honest, this Government has not listened and, to be fair, I do not think they really understand the impact these policies have had and are continuing to have.

This is a betrayal of a generation of young people...

THE LORD MAYOR: Could you make your final point now, Councillor Dowson.

COUNCILLOR DOWSON: ...while we need a university system that works for people regardless of background and the financial situations of their parents to encourage the brightest, not just the wealthiest. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Sue Bentley, please.

COUNCILLOR BENTLEY: I am speaking on Minute 17, page 121. Firstly, I would like to welcome Nick Clegg's City Deals where Leeds has pledged to eliminate all the young people not in education, employment or training and guarantee that young people in Leeds will receive training or work in return for devolution of some spending powers in important areas such as infrastructure.

Another Government initiative, the Guarantee for the Young, will increase the number of apprenticeships which, along with vocational qualifications, are important stepping stones for our young people to enter into higher education.

For this to happen there must be clear progression routes that will support our young people in moving through the education system. I was pleased to note in the UCAS 2020 (*sic*) admissions summary, which came out yesterday, that despite a

decline in applications, there are still more applications than places available and that wider participation in higher education continues to be a goal for our young disadvantaged people.

We need to be careful not to scaremonger, which has been happening in certain quarters, certainly about tuition fees, and not put off our most disadvantaged from applying to university, and that was something that you mentioned in the actual paper yourselves.

In fact this year the application rates for young people from our more advantaged background fell by 2-3% compared to those from disadvantaged backgrounds, which only fell by 0.1-0.2%. However, that gap between these two groups needs to reduce more and we need to help people with that.

Let us remember there are other routes to higher education – the Open University, for instance, where 70% of students work full or part-time and where four out of five of our FTSE 100 top companies have sponsored staff on course and, believe it or not, we are nearly 20% of their undergraduates live in the 25% most deprived areas of this country.

To ensure that there is wider participation in education, we should be encouraging from an early age that learning is for life so that learning becomes embedded in all that we do and young people will be supported in their aspirations to fulfil their full potential. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Walshaw, please.

COUNCILLOR WALSHAW: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I would like to comment on page 123, Minute 20, this is the Annual Fostering Report, and I think this report has been given an added poignancy with the tragic news that Councillor Blake brought us.

It is really a sad fact of life that children can sometimes no longer be brought up in their own homes and then at that point they become our responsibility as a City Council and they are usually placed within a foster or adoptive family. I know that all Members in this Chamber take those responsibilities enormously seriously.

It is interesting to note that since 2009/10, in line with a lot of other Local Authorities, Leeds experienced a rapid rise in the number of looked after children. Those numbers have stabilised and we are starting to see a wee bit of a decline but it is too early to tell whether that is a trend or not.

I think there are three things to note about this that are noted in the report, our response to these factors. The first thing is that there is a serious drive to reduce the number of children actually going into care in the first place, and that is through a lot of early interventional work and a lot of closer working with families and those responses have proven to work.

The second thing is there has been an increase in the number of in-house foster carers and that is important because we do not have to rely so much on expensive outside placement. It is important to note that as a city we have met that target already and long may that continue for that recruitment.

The third thing to note is there has been great strides made in working with the wider community and bringing in perhaps different acts than have previously

been used, and that actually includes Leeds Rhinos in my own ward of Headingley. They have been providing tickets and advertising space for potential fosterers. I think that is all to the good and it shows the working that can be done by the Council.

The result of all of that is we have actually seen a very significant increase in expressions of interest from people who want to foster, and that is all to the good. The challenge for the city, of course, is then to take that forward and make sure that these people do become foster parents.

However – and there is a bit “but” coming here really – what is not really helping all this work are the serious mixed messages coming from this Government, who claim to be a family-friendly Government but we can see that their policies are far from that. The latest example, of course, are the changes to the welfare benefit system and this has been a trend throughout this Council meeting and I think that is going to continue, is it not?

If I can quote from the Department of Work and Pensions website: “Foster children are not considered part of the customer’s household and so are not included in the bedroom rate.” Effectively that means people on housing benefit are going to find it harder to become fosterers and that is deeply unfair on those people who are working hard, because seven out of eight housing benefit recipients are working, these are people who are striving and doing the right thing and they want to go the extra mile for the vulnerable children in this city.

I think for the Government to be doing this and focusing on those people is actually very, very shameful and I think that it is something that we need to fight as a Labour Group and as a City Council as a whole. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Lamb, please.

COUNCILLOR LAMB: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I want to speak on Minute 20 page 123, but before I come to that I just wanted to pick up on something that Councillor Dowson said around tuition fees. One of the reasons that some young people are being put off going to university is because of the scaremongering and misrepresenting of the new Government policy, of which that was a good example. In spite of that, actually, just to correct it factually, the long-term trend is for more young people going to university, not less, if you check the facts.

That is not what I want to talk about. Lord Mayor, I wanted to raise the issue once again of private fostering and independent fostering. I am delighted that following my request that there will be a major Scrutiny enquiry into both private fostering and independent fostering and that the issue is starting to gain a much bigger profile in the city.

There is a lot of work to do and a lot of concerns that people of all parties have. There has been some really good discussion in corporate carers about this issue and there are a lot of things that need to be looked at.

There are serious concerns – it is an outrage, in my view – that where an independent care home opens in our city there is no requirement for either the care home operator or for Ofsted to inform our Director of Children’s Services or our Authority in any way that they are opening. We have no idea how many independent care homes there are in Leeds or how many children there are placed in them and that cannot be right and it has to be fixed. It is a national issue which needs to be

dealt with and I hope the Scrutiny enquiry can really bring some pressure to bear on that.

I also want to make sure that the issue of private fostering is not forgotten and overlooked in all of this, because I think again it is a real concern that there can be cases where a child can move out of our care in our Authority, the requirement is on the parent to inform us that they have left and to inform the Authority that they have gone to, but I think too often the parents do not know that they need to do that and I think, again, we have no idea how many young people are being cared for in private fostering arrangements. It could well be it is the best thing for them but at the same time when the Director of Children's Services and the Executive Member, who have a statutory responsibility for that child, do not know where they are more, that can lead to children falling through the cracks. I think this is something we need to keep right at the top of our agenda and make sure that we get some action on it both locally and nationally. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Elliott, please.

COUNCILLOR ELLIOTT: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I wish to speak on Item 255, page 108. We Morley Borough Independents have campaigned long and hard with the previous administration and this administration to get a fair deal for all our children at Newlands Primary School. We are delighted that the decision has been made to provide a completely new primary school which pupils, teachers, local residents have long deserved.

May I also say that the Morley Newlands School was one of the 17 Morley family of schools welcoming the Olympic Torch to Morley, lining the route with citizens beginning at St George's Avenue and going via the Morley Academy where children were gathered from all the 17 family of schools, up to Fountain Street. For this historic event Morleans gave their full support. Morleans were so, so appreciative of the torch being routed through our Morley streets and thank you to those who made that possible. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Dawson, please.

COUNCILLOR DAWSON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am speaking on Minute 255, page 108, on the proposed new school at Morley Newlands in my Ward. Can I warmly welcome the decision to invest £10m in Morley. I believe this will bring enormous benefit to future generations of Morleans.

I applaud that this Council is building schools for the future, something that Michael Gove took away from many communities up and down the country when he halted work on over 700 schools back in July 2010. *(applause)* Gove said there was no firm evidence of improved results from school renovation, but a recent report disclosed under Freedom of Information says that schools rebuilt under BSF showed significant improvement in exam results and declining truancy. The truth is, new schools give our children a better chance in life. In Morley we welcome the building of new schools; our people deserve it.

The current Morley Newlands School has an outstanding tradition of inclusion. Pupils have been taught within the school who have the most challenging needs seen in mainstream schools. The headteachers of Morley schools – not politicians or Councillors but the headteachers – consider the specialist and additional needs provisions in the Morley, Tingley and Rothwell area to be inadequate.

Currently almost all the children with needs that cannot be met within mainstream settings have to travel across the city. This new school will be in the heart of Morley and it will probably be the only major building opportunity for many years. Therefore, we have an opportunity – a real opportunity – to make a difference, to help children with additional and specialist needs by building an intensive family nurture centre within this new building. It may cost an additional £70,000 but it could save this city significant sums of money in the future and it will improve the outcomes and life chances of vulnerable children and families in Morley and South Leeds.

It is early days and the schools and partners in the Morley Cluster have significant interest in this project. We have the opportunity to help the most vulnerable families at an age when intervention and support is most effective. An early Socialist pioneer, John Ruskin, famously said, “When we build let us think that we build for ever.” When we build at Morley Newlands, let us have a facility that meets the needs of all our children and where future generations will say to us, “Thank you for having the vision to build what we needed.” (*applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Golton, please.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I wish to speak on the issue of foster care recruitment. First of all I would like to say I think it is unfortunate that foster carers cannot include the children that they foster within their allocation in terms of how their housing benefit is calculated. I have to say though, Lord Mayor, it is only because the allocation has been reduced in terms of what you are entitled to in terms of room sizes that this has become an issue, because historically foster children have not been recognised within the benefit system under any Government, so this is an anomaly which is fresh, has come to light and it is right we should address it through the right channels.

However, Lord Mayor, instead of being a little bit self-congratulatory about the fact that there has been a miniscule improvement in terms of how many in-house foster carers we have, we should be having a look at the fact that our foster carers should be rewarded to a degree that perhaps they should not need to have to apply for benefits because the role that they fulfil is actually recognised monetarily.

That is one of the things that this administration in front of us has not addressed over the past two years and in so doing has sleepwalked into the situation where the children’s fostering arrangement has very quietly become almost privatised. The creeping that started off has now become a wave.

When you have a budget where you are spending £5.8m one year on private fostering agencies and the following year you are spending £12m on private fostering agencies, you are not really on very good grounds to criticise the government about their financial management and their rewards in terms of foster carers. If we had actually given our foster carers a decent package two years ago, you would not have had the avalanche of them leaving our service and joining private fostering agencies that are offering them the benefits that they have been asking this Council to provide for many a year, including the time that I was there, I have to put my hand up to that one.

Lord Mayor, I just wanted to get that point across and it can be done, each department needs to juggle quite a few agenda and I have to say when it comes to Adult Social Care, they have had the same issues with safeguarding, they have had

the same issues in terms of personalisation, they have had the same issues in terms of provision.

I have to say, the degree with which they have tackled the agenda in front of them has been far quicker than Children's Services has addressed their own and we need to have a serious look at whether the transformation within Children's Services needs to actually have a step change to transform their delivery. *(applause)*

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

COUNCILLOR BLAKE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Can I just start my comments by saying a real thank you to everyone in this Chamber who has actually now put fostering and adoption at the top of their agenda. I do not think we have ever talked as much about fostering and adoption in this Council as we have in the last few months and I think it is real tribute to everyone who works as a corporate carer as we all are to have taken that forward.

We are particularly looking forward to enhancing the role of Area Committees, giving a much more local drive to the work that we need to do. Based on this we have restructured our social work teams too around localities and I think that is starting to pay real benefit in the support that our foster carers and prospective adoptive parents actually feel.

I am really disappointed to hear Councillor Golton denigrate the efforts that have been made from the service. I just want to say, there has been a three-fold interest in the last year in the expressions of interest of foster carers to a peak of 109 expressions in March this year. He repeatedly makes the point that if we gave foster carers more money, that would immediately transform the situation. We know, because we talk to our foster carers regularly that whilst, of course, the monetary reward is an issue in terms of their survival, what they are really interested in is having more support on hand, so we are looking at having a 24 hour service, a telephone service to support them and also issues around making sure they get respite breaks, short breaks which we have enhanced and particularly that we give support around education and leisure, that we work with all our colleagues across the city to improve the overall package of support that we give to our foster carers.

This is a very, very difficult time. We are seeing a different pattern of foster carers requirements. We are seeing less older children coming forward and more babies, more sibling groups, for example, so we are continually looking to refresh the number of foster carers and the work that they will do on our behalf. They do a tremendous amount of work and I hope all of you will take the offer to have events to support them in your areas seriously.

Adoption as well, I think if you all have chance to read the reports you will see the enormous amount of work that we are doing in Leeds and I am pleased that with the new adoption score cards that we have, that Leeds meets the threshold of all the three headline indicators.

We actually welcome the approach to encourage potential adoptive parents to foster their children first. The more we can do to minimise the disruption to children's placements and their lives the better. I would urge you all to look at the reports that are before Council today.

Just picking up on our obsession, it is simply not good enough just to look at the numbers. What we are trying to do is reduce the need of children coming forward

into our care. I am very pleased to see that, against the trend - other authorities are still seeing the number rising steeply - we are actually levelled off and last month we have had the lowest number of children in our care for over a year, and I think all of the work we are doing around family intervention, around CAF, around clusters, is going to help us in that. It is a very, very difficult climate with the economy, with recession, we know that more and more families are coming under stress and that the difficult family situations are going to add to the problems for some parents being able to look after their own children.

Can I just refer to Morley, to Councillor Elliott and Councillor Dawson. I went to visit Morley Newlands and can I just say, I pay enormous tribute to the work they do in the existing buildings that they have got, which I think must be amongst the worst in the city and I personally welcome your comments and I am delighted that the investment is going in and I look forward to seeing that going forward.

Tuition fees and Councillor Bentley. I have to say, where did the scaremongering start about tuition fees if it was not with the Liberal Democrat Party and their commitment that they would never introduce tuition fees? *(applause)*

What can I say but what a massive betrayal to the young people of our city and they will never, ever forgive you. I have to say, I do not know if she was talking about eliminating young people - I am sure she did not really mean that - I would like to tell you it was our ambition through Child Friendly City to make Leeds a NEET-free city that enabled the Government to support the City Deal and the work that we have put together.

I am proud of our ambition. It is going to be extraordinarily difficult but I think all of us have got a duty to invest in our young people, to counter the disproportionate impact that Government policy is having on our young people, to increase the jobs, increase the training and do everything we can to put them at the centre of all the work that we do in this city. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(applause)*

(iv) Leisure/Leisure and Skills

THE LORD MAYOR: We are now moving on to Leisure/Leisure and Skills, bottom of page 11. Councillor Ann Blackburn.

COUNCILLOR A BLACKBURN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I would like to speak to Minute 22 page 124 and Minute 258 page 110. This is to do with Cow Close Library. The Green Group were disappointed that the Executive took the decision to close Cow Close Library in my ward of Farnley and Wortley. The library, for those of you who do not know, is a shop unit on a parade of Council shops which only opens two and a half days a week. It is in an area where many elderly people use the library but children are being encouraged to use it also as many of the local children probably do not have books at home.

After the decision to close the library was made a lady from the local Children's Centre contacted me saying that they were taking part in Book Start, the Government's reading programme, and they were working with 50 difficult families a year. At the end of the programme the families are taken to join the local library. There were nine people to sign up this month and whilst they can at the moment join Cow Close Library, she asked where the others would go as she doubted that these families would go to Armley Library or make a point of being there when a mobile library visited.

I have spoken to Councillor Ogilvie on numerous occasions, as well as Councillor Wakefield, and they both know how passionate I feel about this area retaining its library. They have agreed with me that to have a boarded up shop unit on a parade of shops could lead to vandalism so they have agreed that the library will stay open until an alternative use for the building can be found.

Before the decision was made to close the library there was a Job Club that was interested in operating from there. We had also spoken to West North West Homes about doing a weekly session there and there was a person who was interested in giving debt advice. Our idea was that if we got more people involved, then that would save it as a library. Now this has been put on hold until we know the future of the building.

The report states that the Cow Close area will now be covered by a mobile library. However, we will only accept this as a last resort as a group are interested in trying to save the building for community use and we would want the library ---

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Blackburn, could you make your final point.

COUNCILLOR A BLACKBURN: Yes. All the Ward Councillors are now going to meet this organisation to see if we can work out the way forward. Hopefully through working with this group and people in the local community the library will be able to be saved. Thank you. *(applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Caroline Gruen. This is Councillor Gruen's maiden speech.

COUNCILLOR C GRUEN: My Lord Mayor, I wish to speak on Minute 256 on page 108 of the Executive Board Minutes.

The Council's decision to transfer Bramley Baths to an extraordinarily talented community group so that it can continue to provide a much loved service to the people of Bramley marks a significant achievement in Bramley's history. Not only will this ensure the preservation of this iconic 1904 Grade II listed building with all its local history, but it will safeguard the strong sense of identity and belonging which people in Bramley value so highly.

Bramley Baths is one of the very few surviving reminders of the old pre-1970s Bramley before it was largely demolished and reconstructed into the place we recognise now, and the activities planned to begin later this year when the community asset officially opens will engage people across the generations.

As well as pre-school babies' and toddlers' activities, swimming lessons will continue to be available for the eleven Primary Schools already using the baths and Leeds West Academy is looking to be a partner in both providing the service and in using it.

Right at the other end of the spectrum older people regularly meet together to swim, some of whom have been using the baths for up to 70 years.

Members may recall in the recent past that the I Love Leeds West Arts Festival brought a 40 piece orchestra on a floating platform to the pool playing classical music to a packed house of local families and residents.

The Friends of Bramley Baths are to be congratulated on their meticulous dedication in producing a robust and well-researched business plan in order to make this work and the support of my colleagues, Councillors Hanley and Taggart, as well as that of Rachel Reeves MP and the Right Honourable John Battle, has been invaluable to its success.

Bramley Baths has had a chequered history in terms of sustainability and has at several times over the years been under threat of closure. I want particularly in this forum to acknowledge the forceful and well targeted interventions made by Councillor Denise Atkinson on all of those occasions. Had it not been for those, Bramley Baths would not be where it is today.

Having said all of that, there are still risks in ensuring the continued sustainability of the baths, most crucially around increasing its usage and I would encourage the Council to help all it can to that effect.

My Lord Mayor, I welcome the Community Asset Transfer of Bramley Baths. It has belonged to the people of Bramley for 107 years and I hope they will be using it in another 107. *(applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Finnigan.

COUNCILLOR FINNIGAN: Thank you, Lord Mayor, speaking to Minute 257 page 109, specifically the issue about the transfer of Drighlington Library Services to the Friends of Drighlington Library.

I just pass on our thanks and admiration for the work that the Friends of Drighlington Library have undertaken to make sure that the service is still provided there. They are doing an excellent job of encouraging people to use the service a lot more. It does have that local element that does mean that it is likely to be a very successful outcome.

The other issue and part of that particular minute is the fact that the building comes across to Environment and Neighbourhoods and theoretically comes across to Area Committee for their influence and their control. This is a theoretical delegation and that is one of the things that concerns us quite significantly. We do have several community buildings that are theoretically delegated to Area Committee; what we do not have is the revenue stream that comes along with those particular buildings and if we are to commit ourselves to a localism approach that puts local communities directly in charge, then that finance needs to follow these particular buildings. We do not need to be in situations where we get all the bad news to do with community building but not the revenue stream which would offer opportunities for communities and neighbourhoods to actually take over these buildings and probably run them better than they are run at this particular point. I think it is something that we do need to reflect upon. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Hardy.

COUNCILLOR HARDY: Thank you, my Lord Mayor. I would like to comment on page 109 Minute 257 regarding Cow Close Library.

While the importance of library services across the city should be apparent to all, this Council needs to reorganise that in some cases. The Council has to look at other options for delivering a service in some communities while it is simply not

connecting with as many people as it should; Cow Close Library is one such example.

The Executive Board has now agreed that the library should be closed and that other uses for the building need to be explored. Unfortunately the library facility at Cow Close was not well used and sadly continues to decline, despite pleas for residents – my words – to use it or lose it, the library is only currently open for 15 hours a week, an average of nine items per hour. This is clearly not an ideal use of Council resources.

Efforts to make the library available for a Community Asset Transfer were unfortunately not met with any interest from any community groups. However, there is interest from a number of groups and organisations wanting to make sure of this building for other community-based schemes. Ann has already mentioned some of them.

In terms of the gap left by closing the library, our aim now should be to utilise the mobile library service in order to ensure that it reaches as many people in the area as possible. Indeed, we have already seen some very promising results with some of the mobile library stops in New Farnley and I am keen for this work to continue to further tap into the local community. This is a case of bringing books to people, not people to books.

I think we are all in agreement that we should be looking into ways of working with local groups to utilise the space for the good of our local community. Of the groups that have already expressed interest, there are many but none wanted to take it on.

One group want to do IT stuff for children. There are interesting propositions and there are many of them – and I will not go into them because I am limited. I hope to meet with the Executive Board Member, my Ward colleagues and officers along with representatives from these groups as soon as possible in order to find a way forward in an area that has very few community facilities. I think one thing we are all in agreement on, despite the closure of the library, is the building's future lies with providing a service to the local community. I very much hope we are all able to accomplish this. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Dunn, please.

COUNCILLOR DUNN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I wish to speak on Minute 258 on page 110. I would like to comment on the Minute regarding Community Food Growing and in particular the Feed Leeds Project. I am sure that, like myself, Members of the Council will welcome the launch of this project hopefully in September, which will incorporate all areas of the city.

As part of the Feed Leeds Project, people will be encouraged to get involved with producing their own food, taking care of their own patch of land, making jams and preserves and in some cases selling their produce within the local community.

An important part of this project will be to help local volunteer organisations that are currently working with communities to grow and produce food by opening up areas of Council land, creating links with local businesses and areas of investment that have previously been unavailable to them.

As the Feed Leeds Scheme develops it presents an opportunity for enterprise and entrepreneurship within our communities with the chance for people to sell on their produce around the city and create a revenue from the hard work that they put in. By getting people out of the house and working with neighbours and friends on a shared piece of land, the project aims to create a sense of shared responsibility and community making the most of the lands in the areas.

Feed Leeds will create a shared skills base that offers people an opportunity to learn how to tend land and develop their talents. I am also pleased that we will be working in partnership with organisations such as NHS, Leeds Metropolitan and Leeds University, community groups and our schools to promote healthy eating as well as physical and mental wellbeing across the city. With rates of obesity on the rise we must act now to prevent health-related problems that poor diet can lead to. Feed Leeds will play an important part in helping to achieve this growth. I hope that all Members of Council will get behind the Feed Leeds project and give it the support it deserves. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Gabriel.

COUNCILLOR GABRIEL: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I would like to comment on page 110 Minute 258 regarding Community Food Growing and particularly about what is happening in my own ward.

I do want to support this but I would add a note of caution and say that I do not want Council officers to stop this young growth because what happens is officers tend to do a thing, the National Health and us all Monday to Friday, 9.00 till 5.00, and most of us who want to do gardening want to do it on an evening or on a weekend but officers like to have control of these things and if we are going to totally let the community have control of this, then we have to say, "When is it good for you?"

Lots of different ways we can do this, especially on Council properties and ALMOs. We have lots of people that have very big gardens who cannot maintain the gardens and we have people also that live in back-to-back houses who do not have gardens and with Hugh Whittingstall Whatever-his-name-is, they do land swaps that somebody will come in, do the garden for you and then have half the crop and share it between you, so that is something to look into.

The other projects that we have actually done in Beeston and Holbeck are we have done an Edible City Project outside Cross Flatts Primary School where, with the Council in partnership, we took over an area and we have put in apple trees, pear trees and then you do an under layer of gooseberry bushes and raspberry bushes and then the bottom layer is all strawberries, and that is kids in our area think that strawberries and plums and apples come in plastic containers. They actually think that is where fruit comes from and for them to be able to go out and do lessons to say an apple actually comes on a tree and you go and pick it. We have done all this work and then the community can then come and eat it free.

Another project we have done is two very large planters outside St Matthew's Community Centre, again planted fruit and veg there with a sign saying, "This is your project, please eat all the fruit and veg" and they do. *(laughter)* Again, kids not seeing fruit and veg before.

Also very involved in a group called Suburban Foragings. This is on Facebook where you find an apple tree that is on common land and you say that the fruit is ready to pick and we all go along and pick the fruit. There is lots of areas

where the Council planted cherry trees and then they all drop on the floor and nobody picks them up, so this is where communities like us go along and pick them up.

Can I then advertise not only Brew's Tea Room, which is a part of me, but my jams and chutney is outside for sale (*laughter*) which I have always got my fruit and veg from the allotment people as well as growing them myself. Just place an order outside and I will always deliver. Thank you very much. (*applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Martin Hamilton, please.

COUNCILLOR M HAMILTON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I could not resist just speaking on Minute 256 on page 108, the same one that Councillor Caroline Gruen spoke on. I think this mystery that Bramley Baths is a great example of how Community Asset Transfer can work really effectively. Of course we have a good example in Headingley in the HEART Centre. I think often what you find is that Community Asset Transfer, community run initiatives, fill the gap that the private business and public Council run initiatives cannot provide. The latest thing that they are looking at at the HEART Centre is setting up a film club and I am sure that many of you will know that the Lounge Cinema in Headingley closed some years ago and it is interesting that the community is now stepping in to provide a facility that was ran privately some years ago.

On the issue of Bramley Baths, I actually learned to swim at Bramley Baths many years ago and I have not been back for a long time. I do not think I have been there for probably 25 years, but I have to say as a result really of the publicity around this whole issue and around the Community Asset Transfer, I did go back a few weeks ago to have a swim one Saturday morning and it reminded me what a super place it is and now I am going every Saturday morning, having a swim for an hour, getting a bit fitter, and so I wish it every success. (*applause*)

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

COUNCILLOR OGILVIE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am glad to hear Councillor Hamilton is using Bramley Baths now. Can I congratulate Councillor Caroline Gruen for her maiden speech. (*applause*) A very good speech it was indeed. She spoke rightly about the importance of Bramley Baths to the people of Bramley but also to the people of Leeds, a very historic building. Obviously we took the decision back in 2011 to reduce the hours at Bramley Baths as part of the budget that we faced as a result of Government cuts to our funding, but at the same time we agreed to explore interest in a Community Asset Transfer of the Baths and the Friends of Bramley Baths came forward with their expression of interest.

We have been working with them over the last year to have them develop their business plan, and if I can just reiterate what Caroline said and what I said at Executive Board, paying tribute to the work of the Friends of Bramley Baths. The business plan was very rigorous, very detailed and they have worked very hard indeed on that. If I can also pay tribute to Ward Members, including former Councillor Denise Atkinson, for their support and advice and to the local Area Committee who have provided funding in the interim period.

I think we are all probably learning as we go through this economic period and look at Community Asset Transfer. It is not necessarily straightforward, it is something that takes time – probably longer than we thought it would. The other

thing to learn is that the Council has got to work very closely with those groups, you cannot just hand over a building and expect them to take it on.

I am also delighted, Caroline, that you are going to be on the Board of the Friends of Bramley Baths and bring your knowledge and experience to that.

Moving on to libraries, again, last year we had to make some difficult decisions on libraries as a result of the budget in order to stabilise our library service and attempt to put it on a more sure footing, so we had to close a number of libraries where usage figures were low or where the buildings were in a poor state of repair. We would have needed over £3m to bring these libraries up to date which, of course, we did not have.

What we have done, however, is extend our mobile library service with a range of children and family mobiles, community mobiles and mobiles particularly for older people. I know Councillor Blackburn is sceptical about mobile libraries but I have to say where we have put them in place – and I know from my own ward in Holbeck it is actually getting out into the community and people who have never used a library service before are now using the library service, particularly young people and particularly older people.

We know that the key thing to getting mobiles right is working closely with Ward Members and also with local residents, and we will do that in the Cow Close Area.

I will be working closely with all the Ward Members and Armley Juniors and hopefully we will be having a meeting in the next couple of weeks to see if we can retain the building as a community hub, including IT provision, a Job Shop possibly, debt advice and other facilities and also the possibility of a self-service library as we have been piloting elsewhere in the city as well. I hope that we will be able to move forward.

Finally, the Feed Leeds Initiative. I agree wholeheartedly with Councillor Dunn on his comments about Feed Leeds, which is the new community food growing network that we have established in the city. As Councillor Dunn noted, there are many groups across the city who are involved in food growing, not only on the 96 Council-run allotment sites but increasingly in parks, on spare bits of land, on the highway. Feed Leeds is about supporting this activity as well as co-ordinating and promoting it across the city.

We all know you do not get a more passionate supporter of food growing than Councillor Gabriel – I see one of her jams over there. I know from personal experience of being directed up trees, through hedges, over walls to collect fruit at various locations around the city how passionate she is on that, but she makes some very serious points and indeed leads in Beeston and Holbeck as Chair of the In Bloom Groups there who, as Councillor Gabriel mentioned, are doing some quite innovative work in this area.

Feed Leeds is actually being passed over to the Environment portfolio but I know both Councillor Dunn and Councillor Dobson will help to drive the project forward in the future and I look forward to seeing how it progresses. Thank you.
(applause)

(v) Adult Social Care

THE LORD MAYOR: We are now moving on to Adult Social Care on page 12. Councillor Wilkinson, please.

COUNCILLOR WILKINSON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I wish to speak on Minute 26, pages 126. This is the Blue Badge Reform scheme.

First of all let me say that I have no concerns whatsoever relating to the legitimate use of the blue badge by genuinely disabled drivers. Where I do have concerns is the widespread illegal use of the scheme which, in my view, deprives this Council of many tens of thousands of pounds per year in lost revenue from car parking charges. I might say that parking charges are extortionate, but that is another debate.

My first wife was diagnosed with a blue badge when she was diagnosed with a terminal illness and we were very grateful for it. My second wife was also issued with one in December 2009 but was only able to use it for eleven days before she was admitted to hospital where she died.

Had I not been a law abiding citizen I could have had three years' use of a blue badge and had free parking for three years, but I did not. I still have the badge. What I want to know is, why was it not recalled? There must be hundreds or even thousands in this city in the same position.

A friend of mine bought one with two years still to run at a car boot sale for £25. He boasts that it saves him a fortune in parking charges. I have to say that he was a friend; he is now an acquaintance since he told me that.

Whilst waiting in Room 4 a couple of weeks ago for a meeting to start I saw a young man park his car in the disabled bay outside the Civic, display a blue badge and then sprint off, and I witness such similar incidents almost on a daily basis.

What can be done? Our parking attendants, PCSOs and the police should be more vigilant and make regular checks; also the photograph on the badge should be face-up so that it can be seen.

I realise that Councillor Yeadon is due to sum up but as PCSOs, police and parking attendants do not come within her portfolio, perhaps she could pass my comments on. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Yeadon, please.

COUNCILLOR YEADON: Thank you very much. On the day that the White Paper for Social Care is being published we have not got much to say about Adult Social Care this afternoon.

I do thank Councillor Wilkinson for his contribution, which was very constructive. I share the concerns about how blue badges are abused and I think it is incredible sometimes what lengths some people go to avoid paying some parking charges.

You are right, not only does it take income stream away from the Local Authority, it also deprives people with disabilities from being able to access disabled parking spaces. I know that several disability groups are also taking action by inventing their own tickets which they put on cars which are illegally parked without the use of a badge in disabled car parking spaces.

You are right, I am not responsible for the people who enforce the badges but I do think it is something that we should take forward, so I have just had a bit of a conflagration with Councillor Dobson after his speech and we are going to take this forward and do it as a cross-department piece of work to ensure that the people who have got the badges are the legitimate people and that people are not going to abuse the spaces which actually give many people in our city a proper lease of life, so thank you for your contribution. *(applause)*

(vi) Health and Wellbeing

THE LORD MAYOR: We are now on Health and Wellbeing. Councillor Maqsood, please.

COUNCILLOR MAQSOOD: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I would like to comment on Minute 23 page 126 regarding the Scrutiny Board Report into fuel poverty. This is a huge problem affecting 5.5m households in the UK and many thousands here in Leeds. Living in fuel poverty can lead to multiple health problems from increased risk of mental health issues to respiratory and cardiovascular disease. In the most extreme cases some households are having to choose between feeding themselves or heating their homes. Low income households in all the poorly insulated or fuel inefficient buildings are particularly at risk.

While the dangers to individuals are well documented, costs to public services and the wider social effects are less often considered. In 2009 the annual cost to the NHS for treating winter-related diseases due to cold private housing was estimated at £859m. It is really important that we do everything we can to address these problems.

Good work is already happening in this area with the great Wrap Up Leeds scheme. The Council has partnered with Yorkshire Energy Services and is providing insulation for up to 15,000 homes. Based on recommendations from the Scrutiny Board for Safer and Stronger Communities, in future we will work closer together to identify vulnerable individuals. This will mean all the agencies involved working together using a single referral system. Such a service, already approved by the Executive Board, would speed up considerably the ability of staff on the front line to refer and support those in the greatest need and at the greatest risk.

With responsibility for public health being transferred into the Council from April 2013, we will have even more opportunities to address fuel poverty. The Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy which we are in the process of developing will improve fuel poverty. Through the new Health and Wellbeing Board we will work closely with partners in the health sector to implement this strategy.

Fuel poverty is a problem that cannot be ignored. Tackling it at its source, not in the hospitals but in the home, should be a priority for this city and we must all work hard together to do everything we can to address it. Thank you, Lord Mayor.
(applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Mulherin, please.

COUNCILLOR MULHERIN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Thank you, Councillor Maqsood. The transfer of public health into Local Authorities is both a challenge and a huge opportunity which we must all grasp. We all know, as the Marmot Report showed, that there are a huge range of factors which greatly influence people's

health in addition to the quality of clinical care that they received. These factors include the environment in which they live, the food they have access to, their household incomes, their ability to heat their homes, the lifestyle they lead and whether they are employed.

As a Council we have an impact in all of these areas, whether it is through housing, planning, debt advice, leisure or parks and countryside, to name but a few. Health really is everyone's business and that is why we have taken the decision to adopt the hub and spoke model for the public health service role that we are taking responsibility for. This will see public health staff working across all Council services, embedded in existing Council departments and, as Councillor Gabriel will be glad to know, in local communities too.

To really maximise the benefits of this model we will need a culture shift so that officers are working beyond the traditional departmental silos to maximise what we can achieve with the limited resources we will receive.

We will also need to work hard to support the staff transferring from the NHS and help them to integrate effectively into our structures. The prize, if we can achieve it, is great, with the prospect of real improvement in public health for people in this city and reductions in the huge health inequalities that the city faces.

It is absolutely unacceptable that people in the most deprived parts of the city die on average twelve years earlier than those in the best off areas, and we must make sure we use the powers that we are receiving to achieve the city's ambitions to be the best city for health.

One of the areas where we can have a real impact is in tackling fuel poverty which affects thousands of our residents, which is why I was happy to support the recommendations that Councillor Anderson's Scrutiny Board referred to me as the new Executive Board Member for Health, to make it a priority for the Joint Health Wellbeing Strategy that we are developing and to adopt a twin track referral system so that residents do not fall between the gaps.

As Councillor Maqsood rightly explained, we must work harder to make sure all the relevant organisations across the city are working together to tackle this problem and identify those who are most at risk because the strategic decisions we make about how services will be delivered are only important if they improve things on the ground for real people, and I am determined that we as a Council will do everything we can to make this happen. Thank you. (*applause*)

(vii) Resources and Corporate Functions

THE LORD MAYOR: We are now on to Resources and Corporate Functions. Councillor Finnigan, please.

COUNCILLOR FINNIGAN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am speaking pages 1229, 31, Localised Council Tax Support Scheme, which is a new name for Council Tax Benefit.

It seems to me that there are only three options available to the City Council in terms of making the savings that are imposed upon us with the introduction of this new scheme, this localisation, and that is to look at discounts and see if we can reduce the discounts to try and make that ten per cent saving; ask for those who are

actually in work to pay more, that is increase the actual claw-back; or to find those sums ourselves.

I am interested in whatever debate is going on at this particular point about which of those paths is the best way forward and I wish to understand a little bit more. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Groves.

COUNCILLOR GROVES: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I would like to comment on Minute 31 page 129.

Councillor Tax Benefit provides vital financial support to some of the most vulnerable people in our society, including pensioners and low paid earners. As people face an ever tighter squeeze on their living standards, this helps make ends meet for thousands of people across Leeds.

The Government has decided to cut the funding for this benefit by ten per cent but they have devolved power for implementing the cuts down to us at Local Government. It is just another attack on Local Government and in particular I single out Eric Pickles, who is using localism as a smokescreen for the cuts on some of the most vulnerable people in society.

We all know as a culture we face a huge economic challenge, but we do have a choice about how we address it. This Government has chosen to give millionaires a £40,000 tax cut while hurting some of the poorest people in this country and they still have the cheek to claim that we are all in it together. (*hear, hear*)

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: Taking millions out of tax altogether.

COUNCILLOR GROVES: With pensioners exempt from any cuts, everyone else faces even bigger cuts, including Councillor Golton, of up to 20%. This administration is not prepared to stand by and blindly implement these cuts which would push thousands of people further into poverty.

We have good news. Instead, we have come up with an innovative scheme which will reduce the length of time empty properties can remain free from Council tax. We will use the money raised from this to stop cuts affecting the most vulnerable groups in this city, because we care. We care about single parents with young children and those with severe disabilities and we want to make sure nobody suffers.

People are suffering. One of my constituents has asked me to share this message with you:

"We received a letter today, 7th of the 7th, stating that our housing benefit is to be reduced by £13.24 per week. Unfortunately both my husband and myself are disabled and both in receive of incapacity benefit, severe disablement premium and disability living allowance. I am at a loss at where we are supposed to get this extra money for the rent as we are unable to work. We are both on numerous medications, including morphine. This extra money we will have to pay out will just cause more hardship. It is not that we do not want to work; we are just unable to do so."

This is the pain that people are already feeling and worrying about.

We think this sensible local resolution will offer some protection from these Government cuts to people in Leeds.

THE LORD MAYOR: Could you make your final point, please, Councillor Groves?

COUNCILLOR GROVES: I will do. I would like to say that people in Leeds can rest assured while this Labour controlled administration is in place we will support the most vulnerable people in our city and try and protect them from the attacks of this ruthless Government. Thank you. *(applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Before I invite Councillor Rafique to speak, I am informed that we have got some people from Kashmir in the public gallery, including the prominent political leader Mr Syed Zulfiqar Ahmed, so I hope they will join us for tea later on, including the other people who are in the public gallery. *(applause)*

Councillor Rafique.

COUNCILLOR RAFIQUE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Lord Mayor, I would like to comment on Minute 233 page 93 regarding unlocking growth in cities. I am sure you would all agree that one of the biggest challenges facing this city is about creating jobs and opportunities for the people of Leeds. Since the start of the recession we have lost 60,000 jobs and so we must do everything in our power to create new jobs for local residents. By giving us more powers locally, the City Deal will help us to do this.

The recession has affected young people more than anyone else, with youth unemployment rising above a million and too many young people not in employment, education or training. We are in danger of having a lost generation whose prospects are permanently scarred by the experience of long-term unemployment. Whilst the city has hugely exciting developments taking place, such as the Arena and Trinity Leeds, with much more to come, we need to make sure that local residents are able to take advantage of these new opportunities.

The Scrutiny Board I chair, Lord Mayor, has looked into ways we as a Council can fully use our powers to boost employment and skills for local residents. Through the millions of pounds we spend each year in procuring services and goods and our role as a planning authority, we can achieve a huge impact.

What our enquiries sought to look at was how we could use our powers and influence to secure that we all want to see in terms of improved jobs and skills for local residents. We came up with a number of ideas and recommendations including producing our policy framework and a charter for employment and skills and opportunities; put employment skills requirement on contract which are more than £100,000; make sure Employment Leeds is alerted by procurement and planning services at each and every opportunity at the earliest possible stage; develop a tool kit for officers and promote best practice; ensure employment skills plans are included in planning applications where appropriate.

Given the tough economic times we are facing, it is more important than ever that we leave no stone unturned in finding ways to provide jobs and skills for local residents. This is something we can all work together to achieve and make sure we are using all our spending power and influence. We have to make a real difference to the lives of people in Leeds, Lord Mayor. Thank you. *(applause)*

COUNCILLOR MITCHELL: Lord Mayor, I would like to comment on Minute 233 page 93, regarding unlocking growth in cities.

As local Councillors, lack of jobs and high levels of residents who are out of work should be of great concern to all of us. It is a huge waste of human potential and has a severe impact on the communities we represent. Our Employment Leeds service is doing some really excellent work making sure that jobs are accessible to local people. While only a relatively small team, they achieve a tremendous amount. They are working with and supporting employers to reach out to our local communities whilst also partnering the Children's Services and our local colleges to make sure our young people are developing the right skills for the emerging opportunities.

We have also launched an exciting apprenticeship challenge which saw more than 150 employers pledge to take on a total of 300 apprentices. This helped Leeds 93% increase in the number of apprenticeships started across Leeds between 2010 and 2011, an incredible achievement in the current economic climate.

We still have a huge amount to do. The latest figures show that 8.1% of young people are NEET – not in employment, education or training. We must make sure tackling this issue cuts across all of our work in the Council with the Employment and Skills Team working closely with Children's Services and our partners across the city.

The money we have secure through the Youth Contract, over £800,000 for Leeds this year, we will use this wisely to create tailored and personalised support to help those young people, particularly those furthest away from the job market.

I welcome the recent City Deal which has recognised the strong progress we are making and will allow us to open up new opportunities, including new exciting apprenticeship hubs which will help us in our long-term ambition to make Leeds a NEET-free city. We are doing what we can to deliver our side of the bargain but I am afraid the Tory-Lib Dem Government is failing to deliver theirs to implement a strategy to produce a growing economy where good quality jobs are being created and invest in the future of our young people. Without that we will always struggle to achieve the full potential for our young people across Leeds and the wider city region. *(applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: We are now going on to Councillor Golton.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am having difficulty again understanding exactly what the Labour administration's line is on City Deals.

City Deals, on the one hand I have got Councillor Groves talking about how localism is a smokescreen for the latest attack on Local Government – ggrrrr! Bad old Eric Pickles. Then we have the next Councillor talking about well, it is up to the Government to show they can actually deliver.

City Deals is the first time we have actually had any Government of any colour actually give powers back to Local Authorities. It is the first time they have actually ever recognised the potential of Local Government to provide bespoke solutions for themselves. It is the kind of response from Government that the Commission for Local Government, which was the bullet point before this – and I am disappointed that no-one from the Labour administration has chosen to actually talk

about that – there was some really good work done with the Commission for Local Government and part of the civic entrepreneurship and stuff that was mentioned in there is precisely what the City Deal is delivering for this city.

Instead of talking about the lost generation of young people, yes, it is very hard out there for them but do you know what? The Government is actually allowing this city and this city region to provide a bespoke model of how we actually introduce apprenticeships, try them in different ways to make sure that smaller and medium sized firms are encouraged to provide them as well as the bigger firms. It is all about us being able to do things for ourselves, so let us stop going on, banging on about the same old rhetoric and say, do you know what, City Deals are good, it is a real opportunity because we are in charge and we have got real ambition and we are going to grasp it and we are going to go for it, instead of saying “Do you know what, that Government over there, they are probably going to let us down again.” They have said “We are actually going to give you a City Deal.” They have actually said you have got NGT – thirteen years of a Labour Government we did not get NGT. We have actually delivered it to you – just say thanks for a change instead of having a whinge. *(applause)*

In terms of the family that Councillor Groves mentioned, do you know that was a really heart-rending example there and I do not have a glib response for those people, I do not, and I would hate to be in their position, but do you know what, it is also very glib to say, “Don’t worry, the Labour Party are here and they are going to come to the rescue”, because the package that we have been able to put together in the city, it is as much as we can do in the city. You would like to do more, I know you would, but do you know what, so would every Local Authority, whether it is Tory run or whether it is Liberal run (what’s left of them). They are all trying to do the same kind of solution on a local level.

Let us remember about these benefit reforms, the Labour Party in Opposition have not offered any single alternative to what we are doing with benefits and they have said themselves we need to tackle the benefit question. We need to make it pay to go to work, so do not try and make out that all that has happened with benefits...

THE LORD MAYOR: Please would you make your final point Councillor Golton.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: ...is only down to Liberals and Conservatives. It is an issue that faces us all. *(applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Andrew Carter.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Thank you, my Lord Mayor. I had made my mind up I was not going to agree with the Liberal Democrats today but I have got to agree with everything he has just said.

My Lord Mayor, look, the City Deal is about a completely new way of working and you really are, if you want it to work it is a deal, a deal between two parties. It is a deal between the Government on the one hand and the Local Authorities that make up the Leeds City Region on the other.

You have got two choices – you can make it work or you can walk away. Let me tell you, if you walk away you are making the biggest mistake for the future of Local Government in this area that has been made in a generation.

To be fair, what Stewart did not say and he ought to have said is that this journey did not start two years ago with the present Government. This journey and these discussions started five years ago under the last Government when the City Region concept really started to take off, when we had a series of meetings, you have heard me say this before, discussions with civil servants who were less enthusiastic in some departments than others and less enthusiastic than politicians. It is to the absolute credit of this current Government that they have made this move forward at a pace and with some real meat on the bone and given some real opportunities to Local Government. It is the City Region Local Authorities that went forward with the proposals; it is the Government that accepted those proposals and, in some cases, modified them.

We will be expected to deliver on them. We should expect to make the Government do what they said as part of this deal, we absolutely should, but they quite rightly will expect us to deliver and we must, because the prize is far too great. I will take simply one aspect. To transform the City Region's trade deficit, which is currently over £1b a year, to a surplus of £600m within three years and within six years to a surplus of £1.7b. That is a massive ask. If we achieve it, the jobs created will be phenomenal and hopefully they will be for the young people of the City Region.

Let us make sure our young people in Leeds get a fair share of them and I will tell you what the biggest challenge is – to make sure our schools, Judith, actually start getting results from young people at GCSE that equip those young people to take these jobs we are going to be fighting to create, and that is one of the biggest challenges that will face this Local Authority and it is a challenge we cannot afford to lose and the young people of this city will not forgive us if we do fail to live up to that challenge.

Finally, the streamlining of governance has big implications for all of us; a combined authority which I think is very important, the Government are finally looking at ways of governance which will work across more authorities than one and a far better solution than elected Mayors. (*applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: We are now going to Councillor Jarosz, please.

COUNCILLOR JAROSZ: Lord Mayor, I would like to speak on page 94, Minute 234 regarding the Armed Forces Covenant.

I would like to welcome the Council's decision to support those people in the armed forces who selflessly volunteered to serve this country. The Armed Forces Community Covenant will see Leeds become a shining example of respect towards our brave servicemen and women, especially as we welcome the First Battalion of the Yorkshire Regiment to the city tomorrow for their homecoming parade.

Of course, this all comes in the light of disappointing announcement last week that the armed forces budget is to be slashed and troop numbers are to be reduced by 20,000, which includes the loss of the historic Green Howards. It would appear that now there is more than ever the need for a Community Covenant to support the service personnel as they feel the impact of these Government cuts.

It is our responsibility as a Council to encourage activities that help to integrate members of our armed forces into the wider community. The Armed Forces Community Covenant will demonstrate our appreciation as a city for the sacrifice that

these brave people make and our promise is to show just as much dedication as they have shown to our country. We can also help our armed forces by making our communities aware of the challenge that people in the services face and how local people can support their local troops. For many service personnel leaving the forces is a daunting prospect and it is our responsibility to make this transition as easy as possible. It is right that we should be working with employers, housing organisations and community groups to help those leaving the services to adapt to civilian life and build a new life outside of the military.

I hope we can all agree that the Armed Forces Community Covenant is a positive step towards showing our appreciation for our armed forces and that as a Council we will continue to support this worthwhile initiative. Thank you. (*applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: As it is now 4.45, I will invite Councillor Wakefield to exercise his final right of reply.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Can I preface the summary of the Minutes with congratulations and appreciation for all the parties, for all the partners and for all the organisations who successfully lobbied for the NGT. I have to say, it took me by huge surprise last Thursday when it was announced because I think some of us have been lobbying for over 20 years for this and I have to say I was caught on the back foot and I put it down to a number. I think Councillor Mick Lyons was there at the start of this lobby (*applause*) and I am sure it was his charisma and his leadership that led to that decision.

The second congratulations is to all those parties and organisations that campaigned against the elected Mayor. We have not had a meeting since then but I think you all know we had the third highest majority in this country against that proposal. There is a very clear message to the Government (*applause*) that we do not want this form of anti-democratic device and clearly the people of Leeds have said that. We are not perfect, we have got a lot to do to connect better with our community, but I think we prefer this as a model rather than the elected Mayor.

There are only two people who campaigned, as I know, vigorously for the elected Mayor – Councillor Alan Lamb – but he has compensation. He has been made Mayor of Wetherby! (*applause*) I cannot see Councillor Marjoram but we will get him a bike so he can occupy himself on that. I am sure, Alan, that is a great compensation for your vigorous campaign for that elected Mayor.

Actually, to be serious, it was an absolute distraction to some of the biggest news that we have heard today. We have heard today about the benefits impact and I think colleagues have articulated very well what we face in this city and the evidence, Councillor Les Carter, is clear in other authorities – we are creating social ghettos. We are moving people away from their communities, from their family support and actually from their schools because of the impact of the housing benefit.

We are urging foster carers to take responsibility yet we are not giving them any exemption. The Government is imploring us to do more on foster care and this is what they have done.

Of course, to say to people, disabled people, we want you to be more independent, living at home and so on and not to make their room they use for their facilities is either very stupid, as Councillor Atha said, or very wicked.

Let me say this, I hope that Cameron's rhetoric last week was just rhetoric, because if he does take housing benefit away from under 25s, you will see youth unemployment shoot up further. Those people who are living away from their homes are usually studying or looking for work in cities where they provide it. If you take that away, you have a prospect of actually moving them back into areas with high unemployment or move them back to their families where they may not be wanted.

I think it is rhetoric, I hope it is because it is a very cruel blow. It is all right Councillor Golton standing up and saying – I do not mind him saying heartbreaking things but what I have never heard him say that he condemns bankers' bonuses, he condemns millionaire fat cats or anything. He sits there. Let us be balanced about this debate. There are 20 times worth more in tax avoidance than in benefit avoidance and one of the things I think this is becoming is a very distorted and cruel debate. Many of us in this room – and Councillor Atha has said it – welcome benefit reform, welcome the Universal Credit – about time, putting them all together, making it easier to administer and so on. Many of us actually welcome the tightening up between welfare and work and I think the work of those groups by the Labour Party nationally to do so, Councillor Golton, but I do not expect you to know that.

Actually, all these benefit reforms have become a vehicle when the Government is in trouble to whip up political hysteria, and they whip up political hysteria in order to demonise those people on benefits. If you listen to the Commission they set up chaired by Smith and often said by Osborne and Cameron their view of people on benefits, about people who have lifestyles who are either drug dependent, alcoholic or, indeed have highly sexual active lives and are violent, that is their view of why the welfare state is being drained. There is some truth in it. Four per cent of claimants come into that category; 62% of people claiming benefits are actually working and do you know who they are? They are our carers, they are our caterers, they are our cleaners that work in this city, they are our public sector workers and instead of actually trying to help them get better income, they get abused and demonised in the press in order to satisfy the right-wing part of the Tory Party. That is an absolute disgrace.

I think when I was asked last week what else would you like to devolve down to you by the Deputy Prime Minister I immediately said benefits because I actually think we could tailor schemes with work that would make it a far fairer, more constructive and more positive relationship between work and benefits. I hope we can actually campaign for that because it makes a lot of sense. We have got the experience, we have got a very good welfare department and I believe we could deliver a much fairer system than the one we have got now.

I went to talk about the devolution because it was a fairly momentous day last Thursday because, as has already been said by Councillor Carter, what the Government announced is the biggest shift in power between central Government and Local Government for over a hundred years, and to get the powers of transport, investment and, indeed, apprenticeship is a real big challenge to local Government and frankly I think all of us in this Chamber have got to raise our ambitions and raise our aspirations to prove that local Government can actually deliver prosperity that we all want. In many ways it is back to the old history, and I have often said it and so have colleagues. Local Government built our big cities in this country. It was local Government that actually built the Birminghams, the Manchesters, the Liverpools, the Bradfords and Leeds and it did it through civic enterprise and one of the strengths of sitting on the Commission, or chairing it, was listening to people like John Cridland, who is the head of the CBI, Brendan Barber, actually believing, along with other

figures, that local Government should lead the way of transforming the economy in their own way. There is a real passionate belief.

I feel, as is said, a huge responsibility about how we tackle these big challenges and I know all of us here share that huge challenge but I am positive we can do it. Let me give you an example. One of the things that we talked about throughout the afternoon has been about youth unemployment – 47,000 under 24 who are unemployed and although we are making great success on NEETs, there are still too many young people. If we get this deal together, and we are working now in partnership with the college, we can create 17,000 extra apprenticeships; we can create in the next four years another 20,000 jobs; we can actually, instead of being really ambitious and tackle the NEETs in this city and unemployment in this city.

We have got a great city. I think Councillor Richard Lewis has already mentioned the kind of jobs that are being created, 9,000 jobs, we have got a City Region that is more powerful economically than eight European states and we have got a passion and a commitment to tackle one of the biggest blights of our city and that is youth unemployment.

I am positive that we as a Council, we as elected Members, will be able to do it and bring prosperity into this city, into this City Region, which is clearly deserved. I move the Minutes, Lord Mayor. *(applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Can I call for a vote on the motion to receive the Minutes, please? *(A vote was taken)*

The meeting is now suspended for tea. If you could please be back at 5.20 and I repeat my invitation to people in the public gallery, please come and join us in the Banquet Hall.

(Council adjourned for a short time)

THE LORD MAYOR: During the first part of the meeting I noticed an envelope being passed round – I thought it was chocolates but apparently it was a collection for Councillor Hardy's visit to Romania and the Children's Centre, and so far he has raised £241.39 and I gather that some more is promised, so thank you very much on behalf of Councillor Hardy.

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: One way ticket, Lord Mayor!

ITEM 9 – BACK BENCH COMMUNITY CONCERNS

THE LORD MAYOR: We now move on to the experimental part of the agenda. Can I call upon Councillor Lay, and I gather it is his maiden speech.

COUNCILLOR LAY: Thank you. Lord Mayor and fellow Councillors, may I initially be offered a moment to thank my predecessor, Councillor Dr Graham Kirkland. Graham served Otley and Yeadon and this city with distinction for 45 years and in 1998 became Otley's first and only Lord Mayor of Leeds. Graham has spent my lifetime as a Councillor and I can only hope to emulate at least some of what he has achieved.

Today I am calling on Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust to allow the community to shape its healthcare by relinquishing control of Wharfedale Hospital and handing it over to community control in the form of a social enterprise.

Wharfedale Hospital was reopened in 2005 following a strong community campaign. At this time it was evident that its role was no longer to function as a general hospital but much more as a community facility. Its owners, Leeds Teaching Hospitals, have worked hard to find services suitable for this changed role and service activity is increasing, but it is fair to say that they have also made some contentious decisions, the most recent being the closure of the last remaining inpatient ward last summer.

As a community we watched helplessly as LTH asked for and sought the support of the PCT, who appeared to turn their backs on our old, infirm and vulnerable whilst LTH is allowed to centralise inpatient older people's services at St James's.

It is also fair to say that these decisions have had a profound effect on my community and it has become evident that they feel betrayed by the Leeds Health and Social Care sector. The people of Leeds North West have been let down and they know it – let down by vested interests that chose not to work together in the interests of our communities and who instead appear to believe that “local” means services based ten miles and two bus trips away. For most Leeds' citizens, “local” does not mean a three mile radius from central Leeds.

“Local”, however, is about the right of people to take control of their community asset. It is about localism, decentralisation and self-determination and is driven by a vision and a desire to be cared for closer to home. For me, it remains a disgrace that a hospital with a population of over 100,000 within a seven mile radius and with an elderly population of 20-25,000 could not rely on its PCT, its GPs or its City Council to work with LTH to keep its one last remaining older people's ward open.

We are fed up with worrying about the next cut or axe to fall upon the hospital so I am therefore challenging my community to run the hospital themselves and asking the wider health and social care sector to support whilst we explore this.

I know many people worry about social enterprises, but they should not. The Co-op, John Lewis, the Big Issue, Welsh Water have shown how it can be done. Indeed, the NHS has a long history of social enterprise which includes GPs, dentists, pharmacists, hospices to name a few. More recently we have seen community services being delivered in places as diverse as Hull, Swindon, Essex, Lancashire, all as mutuals and community interest companies. Social enterprises should not be something we fear. After all, we cast what we mould.

The benefits will be many, firstly allowing local decision making through a Board of Trustees with streamlined management and governance of the hospital with freedom to develop services who will work with the real stakeholders in the form of the community, its patients and staff and they will feel real ownership. It supports Department of Health aims with local community services being delivered closer to home and it breaks down artificial boundaries and allows these to be crossed as Wharfedale is ideally placed between the large populations of Leeds, Bradford, Harrogate and Keighley. Finally, it allows Leeds Teaching Hospitals to concentrate on delivering specialist acute services in their large hospitals based here in Leeds.

Of course there are a number of challenges but at this time the single biggest challenge is gaining the consent and support of the health and social care sector, so that we can begin consultations with our patients, staff and communities.

As an NHS nurse of 25 years, let me reassure you that I have no intention of selling out the NHS but it is only by removing the shackles of a centrally led bureaucracy that the hospital will be able to compete and sustain its long-term future, thus allowing Wharfedale to compete on a level playing field. I think the fabulous team at Wharfedale, wonderfully led by Matron Zoe Kirk, can do it better than anyone.

I hope you will all agree that social enterprise status at least deserves to be considered seriously for Wharfedale and that the Council will work with its partners to explore this. Thank you. (*applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Mulherin to respond, please.

COUNCILLOR MULHERIN: Thank you, Lord Mayor, if I can take your invitation to respond.

I would like to thank Councillor Lay for raising these issues, which he is clearly very passionate about on behalf of the community he represents. My role as Executive Board Member for Health and Wellbeing and Chair of the Health and Wellbeing Board is to make sure our priorities are reflected in the plans of Healthcare Commissioners and providers. However, the ultimate operational decision-making lies with them and we are still in the very early stages of developing our partnership structures.

This makes it difficult for me to respond on decisions taken by Leeds Teaching Hospitals Trust or the NHS Airedale Bradford and Leeds, the former Primary Care Trust for the city. My priority for the future is to make sure that elected Members and the public are able to influence decisions being made about health services and I am happy to have further dialogue with Councillor Lay outside this meeting on the detail of the issues he raises.

In terms of Wharfedale Hospital, Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust has recently published their strategy for the next five years which sets out its importance within the wider Trust estates. It also looks at additional services which could be provided at the hospital in the future with the relocation of the Otley Clinic, an additional ENT clinic, two additional general surgery theatre lists and others currently being explored.

Councillor Lay makes some interesting suggestions for community involvement in the running of the hospital. I do not know whether he is aware of the Wharfedale Forum which was re-established after the Scrutiny Board I chaired last year called in the Chief Executive of Leeds Teaching Hospitals Trust to answer our questions about the future of the Wharfedale Hospital when Ward One was closed without warning to us.

It meets three times a year and its membership has been expanded and I would strongly encourage people in Otley to participate in that forum. It is a public open meeting and all the dates are published in advance. It is another way to engage with the Trust on the future of Wharfedale Hospital.

I was going to talk about some of the other issues that Councillor Lay is going to raise with my colleague earlier but as we are concentrating specifically around the future of the hospital in the way that you have outlined now I will leave it at that, but welcome, you have an invitation to meet with me outside and to discuss the details in the future. Thank you. *(applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Ann Blackburn, please.

COUNCILLOR A BLACKBURN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am going to speak about vandalism in public playgrounds.

The city currently manages 153 children's play areas and 22 skate parks. These undergo regular inspections by both park staff and an independent qualified inspector. These inspections regularly bring to the attention of park staff the damage that has been caused by wilful and sustained vandalism. Approximately 80% of maintenance work is unfortunately attributable to vandalism of one sort or another – either swing seats burned or chewed, as in some areas of Leeds I understand people train fighting dogs on the moving seat, or more prominently damage is done to the rubberised wet pour safety surfaces. This is usually caused by tipping a wheelie bin on its side then setting it alight or it just gets ripped up with a sharp instrument, a hole will appear and becomes larger within hours. The cost to replace this safety surfacing is in the region of £55 per square metre. Though there are different forms of safety surfacing that can be used like grass matting, woodchip, etc, not all of these are accessible for children with disabilities.

In my ward there are two parks that particularly suffer from vandalism. These are Western Flatts Park and Wortley Recreation Ground, though Wortley Recreation Ground is by far the worst. The last time the damaged safety surfacing was repaired the total costs were £4,500 and to repair the damaged ramps on the nearby stake park, that cost a further £3,750.

The problem is that the safety surfacing is regularly vandalised and every few months it is repaired and it eats into the limited budget that parks have for maintaining these facilities, which I am told is £14,400.

The problem is that it is difficult to catch the perpetrators in the act. I am therefore asking if cameras can be provided in playgrounds that are regularly vandalised, like Wortley Recreation Ground. I know that there are national protocols for filming in children's play areas but I understand that some of the Parish Councils within the city have permanent cameras that were fitted and managed by the authority's City Watch team, so it is obviously possible.

When you think of the money that it costs to repair the play areas that are vandalised, surely getting cameras would soon pay for itself, as the camera should act as a deterrent and if they do not, then it will give evidence so that some of these vandals can be found and prosecuted.

Will the Executive Member please look into my suggestion? Thank you.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Dobson, please.

COUNCILLOR DOBSON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I have to say, Ann, being very, very new to the department I am finding my way across the whole spectrum of parks and playgrounds that we do provide. Clearly it is a bit of a mixed picture. You

have presented a case around New Wortley Recreation Ground that obviously needs attention, and we will do so.

There are measures in place already around controlling parks and making sure they are used properly and correctly by users. In Questions I touched on the work of Park Watch and the fact that we do 225 visits per week and that is a service in the summer months that is available until 10.00 pm in the evening.

I have to say so far in the very early finding my way through the department, clearly our parks and playgrounds are extremely well managed and supported by the staff. There is a massive footfall. What I have found already in the very early days is that it is a very, very “can do”, a very positive department and certainly everything I have asked of them so far in my very limited time in the job has been, “Yes, what can we do to assist and help?” and I suggest it will be no different in this particular case.

Interestingly, I believe the skateboard element was opened in 2005, around the same time that in Garforth and Swillington Councillor Murray, Councillor McKenna and I think it was actually Councillor Bruce instigated a skateboard park and initially there were those very self-same issues around vandalism, a bit of antisocial behaviour but quite quickly that was stamped out. The way it was done in that particular area was by a lot of engagement with multi-agency, working with the MPT, working the Youth Service and the local schools. I am not suggesting you have not done that for a minute, I am sure you, have, but again it is something that if we wanted a more holistic approach to it I would be more than happy to come out to the ward, see the facility in question, work with all Ward Members – David, yourself, John behind me – and try and work up some solutions.

I do not actually know what the laws are regarding CCTV in terms of where there is youth provision but I will look into it. I will say that Parks and Countryside does indeed have a limited budget and a lot of the quite innovative work they are doing has been doing by grants and accessing grants and it may well be that if we could go down that road it would be something that we would perhaps want the Area Committee to take up.

It is a genuine offer. I am finding my feet and as part of that process I think it is incumbent upon me to come out, have a look at the facility, perhaps work across the piece with the MPT, with the Youth Service, see what the potential short-term solutions are and perhaps if things do not improve, look at some longer term measures.

Thank you for bringing it to my attention, it is certainly something that I will facilitate through the office so we can get together and work something up and thanks for bringing it forward. *(applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: I understand that Councillor John Procter is going to speak to Item 3.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: I'd rather have Rachel.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am sorry, Councillor Wakefield, I missed that gibe but never mind.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: I said I would rather have Rachel.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: For the more observant ones you will have noticed that I am indeed not Councillor R Procter but Councillor J Procter. Despite our best laid efforts to deal with childcare arrangements today they went horribly wrong, hence me trying to be a poor stand in on this particular matter.

The wording that is there, Lord Mayor, really does most of the work for me. The bit of explanation, I guess, is in relation to Ward Councillors and when I read it – not my wording – I am scratching my head thinking which Ward Councillors? I certainly know those sentiments apply to the Harewood and Wetherby Ward Members. However, from discussions with colleagues across the Council I am quite sure that those sentiments are shared by Crossgates and Whinmoor Ward Members, Garforth Ward Members and also Members of Council whose wards will also be affected if, indeed, the East Leeds Orbital Road – ELOR – is not actually delivered up-front and first.

Quite how developers can ignore successive comments from elected Members across the piece that have been going on for years – not just a few weeks, not just a few months, not just a few years even but for years and years and years – and suddenly pretend they have not heard it and go to consultation, effectively, on their individual schemes and scratch their heads when elected Members and their constituents get hot under the collar about this proposal is, frankly, beyond me.

I have not heard one single elected Member speak contrary to the wording that is here. If elected Members are agreed, then presumably the Council is agreed and if that is the position again, then, surely, officers of the Council should be going into bat on behalf of elected Members and the people of this city and ensuring this orbital road is delivered, as I think all of us believe it should be. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Peter Gruen, please.

COUNCILLOR P GRUEN: Lord Mayor, I have great pleasure to respond to the back bencher Councillor Procter (*laughter*) having this major concern which I think all of us in East Leeds share.

As I understand it there was a brief planning presentation to the Plans East Committee recently and, as Councillor Procter says, the presentation included, I believe, the idea by the developers – and for those of you uninitiated in this part of the city, this could lead to the building of up to 2,000 plus new houses over the next ten years along the area of Redhall Lane etc between Wetherby Road and York Road, so probably the most significant house building project, certainly in recent times. The developers are still saying that they think they can build 1,500 of those homes first before they even contemplate building any road infrastructure.

I am interested, as with all these meetings, they send somebody to come here and carefully take note of everything we say and, of course, in this democracy we have nothing to hide but I will wait for the invitation to their first meeting when they secretly meet somewhere and whether they invite us to come along to their meeting.

I think it is personally very difficult to envisage that you are going to have 1,500 houses built and, as Rachel puts in her statement, that they should use existing roads, inconvenience residents who are there now with all of the kind of dust and fumes and extra traffic along existing roads. I think that is an imposition which no doubt the proper planning Panel will consider in due course.

Where Councillor Procter is right, if you are an intelligent developer and you are carrying out consultation with local people, including the Consultative Forum chaired by Councillor Paulene Grahame which has representation from all the wards and all the public groups there, unless you are just going through the motions of consultation, if you do not listen to what these people say, then it is a sorry day and it does not do much for the city's trust in future development with honourable people, because unless we have that trust and the confidence that people will listen, where do we go next?

Of course, although this resolution refers rightly to infrastructure in terms of roads, which is so important, I know people think about schools and about public transport and about their green space and all sorts of other considerations as well.

The differences between the East Leeds Regeneration Board, which has set out clearly now a strategy in terms of infrastructure it wants to see happen in East Leeds – and it is long due that we do that in major developments, that we have an ask of developers rather than them telling us and us running after them of what they might and might not do – and then for the Planning colleagues to look at that much more closely in detail in terms of planning applications.

I wholeheartedly endorse the statement in this resolution and I think we need to continue to work hard and get the developers to understand the way forward is through consultation and through agreement wherever possible. Thank you for putting it forward. *(applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: May I invite Councillor Truswell to take the second bite of the cherry in making a maiden speech in this Council Chamber.

COUNCILLOR TRUSWELL: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I did not know what to call this - it is 30 years since I made my previous maiden speech and I thought about consulting the father of the Council, Councillor Atha, about what I might call it but I knew it would be far too vulgar to be used in the Chamber!

Lord Mayor, I have been asked to speak about smoking in Middleton Park Ward, and as we know, smoking is the single greatest public health challenge facing the UK, facing this city and certainly facing my constituents. Statistics show that Belle Isle North is the smoking capital of Leeds. At 42% the smoking rate is almost twice the city average of 23%. The Middleton and Westwood estates are not far behind at 39%. It is hardly surprising, for example, that the level of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease in Belle Isle North is the highest in Leeds and that Middleton and Westwood estates are at least twice the average for Leeds.

I am not going to bombard everybody with statistics; you have heard them all before. The question is, what do we do about this scourge? It is not just an issues for smokers themselves. We all pay a price in terms of lost productivity and taxes and demands on the NHS, which we all know is under such pressure at the moment. We have had the tax measures that drive up the cost, we have got the bans on smoking in public places, we have got the public education measures and we have got the cessation services, but smoking levels in this city, and certainly in my ward, remain stubbornly static yet almost 70% of smokers really do want to give up.

Some people have suggested that we need to get the message across better but people do get the message, they know that smoking is bad for them, they know that it literally burns a hole in their pockets and yet they still do it, so we ask ourselves, why? It is impossible to escape the conclusion, Lord Mayor, that smoking

is a major class issue. It is too easy to blame people on low incomes for their lack of willpower and we are misguided, I think, if we believe we can simply plaster over the problems with nicotine patches or suggest in a kind of Marie Antoinette style that they should chew gum.

These therapies do have their place, clearly, I am not trying to diminish their importance, they have achieved a great measure of success, but let us not kid ourselves that they are a panacea. Study after study has shown that people in places like Middleton and Belle Isle and other communities in cities like Leeds find it much harder to give up smoking, and this is not because they do not try any harder; it is not because they do not have the wish to give up; it is just that they tend to be more dependent, they tend to take in larger amounts of nicotine from each cigarette, they smoke more cigarettes and they start smoking earlier in the day.

I think it is also fair to say that people in that sort of situation assess risk differently, because if you have got an optimistic view of the future you are more likely to stay the difficult course of giving up smoking and kicking that habit, but if your day to day life is a struggle, when the priority is putting food on the table rather than living to a ripe old age, then the immediate gratification that smoking provides often offers a greater attraction.

When you consider the pressures, Lord Mayor, and stresses working against people's attempts to give up smoking, working against my constituents, it is hard to escape – and I make no bones about this – how far this Coalition Government is the tobacco barons' friend. You have to ask yourself, how do you reduce these stresses by throwing people out of work and cutting their pay and making it easier to sack them? How do you reduce these stresses by slashing people's benefits and tax credits? How do you reduce these stresses by forcing people out of their homes or into paying more rent to stay put? How do you reduce these stresses by reducing the quality and availability of affordable housing? How do you reduce these stresses when fuel costs are going through the roof? How do you reduce these stresses when the cost of child care is escalating? How do you reduce these stresses when waiting times for NHS care is going up? How do you reduce these stresses when the local bus service has either disappeared or it is frequently missing or late or it costs a fortune, £2.50 or more, just to go a few stops?

I would like to finish, Lord Mayor, by wishing Councillor Mulherin every success with her new portfolio. I wish her well in her efforts to reduce the rate of smoking in our city, particularly in the community that I represent but, above all, I wish her even greater success of working with colleagues within this Council and across the city in other organisations to tackle the increasing range of public health challenges and inequalities that impact on so many of our constituents and cause them to reach for yet another cigarette. *(applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Mulherin, please.

COUNCILLOR MULHERIN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. When I said that public health responsibility was going to be a challenge I was not joking.

I would like to thank Paul for raising this important issue today. He highlights a prime example of the health inequalities which affect the city. While smoking rates across the city have declined over the last few decades, progress has now stalled and, as Paul quite rightly highlights, in some parts of the city the smoking rates are epidemic.

The NHS has invested significantly in a range of programmes supporting people trying to stop smoking but we still face a situation where smoking rates in places like Belle Isle North are significantly higher than others, inevitably leading to poorer health outcomes.

Our challenge is to use the funding, powers and influence at our disposal to make a real difference in this area. Smoking reduction will be a key part of the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy that we are in the process of developing. It will be a priority for the public health staff who are coming across to the Council from April next year and a priority for cross-departmental working and for working with other agencies such as Trading Standards in the city.

The environment people live in has a real impact on how likely people are to smoke, as Paul quite rightly says. That is why the Council and our public health partners need to find ways of supporting people trying to give up smoking through a range of services. A key part of that will be working with local people in their local communities, working with them to resolve the problem rather than telling them what to do.

Through the Health and Wellbeing Board we will be working more closely than ever with Commissioners and providers in the Health Service to address these issues in a co-ordinated way which maximises the impact of our limited resources. This will mean the Council acting in a way that is different to the way it has traditionally done things. Instead of delivering services directly, we will be building relationships with our colleagues in the health sector to exert our influence on the Commissioning decisions that they are making and encouraging closer working between GPs and the local Councillors in the communities that they represent.

More than anything else it is important that we see the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy tackling the shocking health inequalities in the city. Smoking is just one of the many factors which influence health outcomes. It simply cannot be right and is not right that there is a shocking life expectancy gap in the city of twelve years between the best off and worst off parts of the city. As we said earlier, there are a whole range of factors that have an effect on that. Despite the best efforts of our health colleagues over the last decade we have not seen these health inequalities narrow and if anything they have widened, but with public health transferring to Local Authorities we, collectively, have a real opportunity to address these wider determinants of health and to make real inroads into improving the health of the population we serve, with a particular focus on improving the health of the worst off in areas like Middleton and Belle Isle North, the fastest to narrow that health gap. Thank you. *(applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: We now move on to Item 5 and can I remind Councillor Khan and Councillor Maqsood that they have a combined speaking time of no more than six minutes, not six minutes each. Councillor Khan, please.

COUNCILLOR KHAN: Thank you, my Lord Mayor. I am pleased that we have the opportunity to discuss the issue of welfare reform today. This is a massive issue, a huge concern to many people in Leeds, not least in my ward, which will be amongst the hardest hit by the full range of benefit cuts. One of the biggest worries in my ward is the plan to slash the housing benefit payment to tenants with a spare bedroom in their home. People are being forced into very difficult choices. Either they can struggle to find additional money from their already stretched budget to help them remain in their home, or they face uprooting and destabilising their family as they search for smaller accommodation.

I am deeply concerned about the impact that this will have on honest, hard working people in my ward. In Burmantofts and Richmond Hill alone there will be 704 cases of Council tenants losing out as a result of this Government cut and together with households living in housing association or privately rented properties, at least ten per cent of households in Burmantofts and Richmond will be affected than any other ward in the city.

They will lose an average of £490 a year. That is a huge chunk out of a budget of a family who are in all likelihood already struggling to make ends meet. Equally concerning is the wide impact that this change will have on the communities concerned. A very significant proportion of the local population face being uprooted from their neighbourhood, which will be hugely destabilising for the communities. Where exactly are all these families expected to go? Many residents in Burmantofts and Richmond will be affected by cuts of housing benefits, local housing allowance, Council Tax benefit; Unemployment and Incapacity benefits are all being cut. Many people are going to be hit again and again by these cuts and eventually they may have nowhere left to turn.

The impact on our communities in Leeds will be devastating and the police are concerned that it may lead to crime and antisocial behaviour which will impact in Burmantofts and Richmond ward. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Maqsood.

COUNCILLOR MAQSOOD: My Lord Mayor, like Councillor Khan I am becoming increasingly concerned about the devastating effect of the Government's relentless Welfare Reform Agenda on some of the most hard pressed communities in our city. In my ward the Government's drive to eliminate under-occupation will hit hundreds of families – to be precise, 425 households in Gipton and Harehills will see their housing benefit cut by between 14% and 25%, an average loss of £535 a year.

For any family on a low income, a financial hit on that scale can be catastrophic and will undoubtedly lead to families being forced to move home. On top of that, many of the people affected by this cut will be amongst the most vulnerable in our society. The Government's actions will destabilise entire neighbourhoods in the race to push people into cheaper accommodation.

These reforms will undoubtedly be felt most acutely in the most disadvantaged areas. In Gipton and Harehill, 49% of households are in receipt of some form of Council administered benefit. The cuts to welfare are so widespread and so deep that almost all of these people will lost out in some way. The financial impact the cuts will have on these people is deeply troubling but the wider social and human effects will run much deeper. I am particularly concerned about the impact on young people, especially those who have already gone through the trauma of seeing their parents separate. Over 11% of households in my ward are home to lone parents. I think we would want all the children in these households to be able to spend time with both their parents if they want to and it is safe for them to do so, but the Welfare Reforms deny children this opportunity by denying separated parents additional space for visiting children. This could be hugely damaging to the upbringing of these children, and many families are rightly deeply worried.

The Government is cutting benefits left, right and centre and is not paying any attention to the cumulative impact that these changes will have on society's most vulnerable people. I desperately hope the Government change their course and, at

the very least, introduce some new measures to mitigate the impact on those who will be hit the hardest. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Hyde, please.

COUNCILLOR G HYDE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Can I just thank my two colleagues, Councillor Maqsood and Councillor Khan, and I would also like to thank the colleagues who have raised this issue this afternoon. The reason why I am saying that, actually my Area Committee is the hardest hit in the city. Over 2,000 families – not individuals, families – will be hurt by the benefit changes. That is just the tip of the iceberg. They are the ones that we have done a piece of work with with Mr Carey and actually with the ALMO. They are actually Council tenancies. There is also, on top of that, the private sector which has not been formally calculated yet and there is a co-ordination group in the city actually doing that and trying to find out the details.

I want to put a local perspective on to it just to answer my two colleagues, because we had a very lengthy debate at the last Area Committee because of these impacts, and what we have decided to do is actually try and get out and explain and assist these families with advice. We cannot affect the benefit but we can give them the right advice. We have found, as we were having our discussions, that lots of people were getting the wrong advice by various people. We have been working with the CAB, the local ALMO, actually with the Co-ordination Committee in the Council and the other two chairs, which is Councillor Hussain and Councillor Wilkinson have been working together to actually create an information system where we are going to put out the bus and we have got the ALMO to pay for the information bus and provide the right information. We have got to do practical things.

I was going to speak earlier about loan sharks. I can tell you in my ward, those loan sharks are going to get more than we already have now. We have actually had two put away for illegal trading but actually we are going to get more, and because of these benefit changes, in the inner city wards we are going to get more and more and more pressures.

I also want to talk about, because we discussed at the Area Committee about DLA and ESA payments. I have to say, the Government has affected those payments and I could cite lots of cases in our wards where they have actually been hurt by the benefit changes. We have to do something about it and we have got to do something practical and we have got to do something about how we can actually get this information. The big debate we have been having and that is why Councillor Khan, I think, has raised it because his ward is actually the highest number, I think it is 704, Councillor Khan, mine is 658 and I think yours is nearly 600 or 700 as well, who are actually affected by these changes. That is round one. There are other rounds to come along and it is very depressing when you are having these discussions with the public in the room, because the public are also raising these concerns with Area Committees, and we have to genuinely do something about it.

I think our approach, and I hope my colleagues on the Area Committee accept that the approach in giving this advice and moving forward is the right way of trying to help people. We have got to help them because if we do not I will see what I had in the 1980s, in the 1990s when I worked in my community, the deprivation and the actual on the ground factors of high unemployment but also, I have to say, people that are working are actually getting affected by the benefit changes.

I can give you a private and personal example. My daughter has had her benefit cut and she is working, she works 60 hours a week and she works as a care worker and she has had her benefit cut, which makes it extremely difficult. She owns her own house and she is having difficulties. That is not just going to be here, that is everybody in middle class homes as well will be affected by these changes. The Government has not thought about the impact of these social changes in the communities, and we have to get it right and give them the right advice, Lord Mayor.

If we do not, then I can see lots of other problems coming along – loan sharks is one, particularly in my ward, which has been very prevalent since the 1980s and fortunately we have had some success, as I have said, and our Area Committee is determined to try and help local people.

Lord Mayor, I would just like to finish there, Councillor Khan, I can assure you that my other two Chairs and our Area Committee and Councillor Maqsood, we will try and help those people that are desperately affected in our communities. Thank you very much. *(applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Graham Latty, please.

COUNCILLOR G LATTY: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I seek the leave of Council to introduce a sixth community concern in the name of Councillor Matthew Robinson.

COUNCILLOR LAMB: I second that, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: All those in favour? *(A vote was taken)* That is CARRIED. Councillor Robinson.

COUNCILLOR M ROBINSON: Thank you, very much, Lord Mayor and thank you, Council, for granting me the opportunity to speak on this community concern.

Very recently in the village of Barwick in Elmet, a cul-de-sac with only nine homes on it containing many elderly residents was informed that a private independent children's home was to be set up on their street. They approached their local ward Member expecting us to have a wealth of knowledge on this topic and we knew absolutely nothing about it, so we went to our MP and said, "Have you heard anything about this?" and, again, absolutely nothing. We went to the Parish Council, asked them if they had had any information – no, nothing on that one. We spoke to the Local Authority more generally – again, absolutely no information. The reason is because when it comes to the establishment of these independent children's homes, nobody needs to be informed in the Local Authority. One of these children's homes can be set up for any number of children – in this case less than six – but can be set up without consulting anyone in the local community.

I approached Children's Services and had many discussions with them and went through their procedures that they use for consulting the community and they were absolutely adamant, if they were to set up a children's home in an area, the first thing they would do was consult ward Members and the local community. It seems absolutely absurd that you would not do something like that, whether you were a private concern or whether you are the Local Authority.

In fact, the only group or organisation that does need to be informed is Ofsted. Ofsted will go and conduct building checks and undertake regulation of the management and analyse and monitor the staffing structure, but, again, Ofsted are

under no compulsion to inform the Local Authority that something like this will be set up.

This is a massive concern in this case because the children that are coming to this home are not going to be from Leeds. They are children that are going to be moved from Barnsley, Wakefield or Doncaster or possibly even Liverpool across to Leeds to occupy this home, and the organisation is talking about assimilating these children into the local community, which I would fully agree with if this particular independent care home and, I am told, others, were not bussing them back to schools and to their own community to go for their education there. It seems absolutely mad that you are talking about assimilation yet also using a positive policy of division to try and educate these children.

Children's Services, I know, have a lot of concerns about this themselves. Again, the local community asked some questions of this body and asked what sort of children would be occupying the children's home. It is children between 12 and 17 with challenging behaviour. When asked what does "challenging behaviour" mean, the organisation said it could be anything from a child that is silent and does not want to partake in class and does not have a home, or it could be children with far, far more serious challenges not only educationally but socially, and they would all be homed together in one single home. Again, you can imagine the concern of the community when you are talking about assimilation yet there seems to be no co-ordination over the children within the home.

Importantly Children's Services are already working with families in the area. Children's Services do some absolutely fantastic work with one particular family who have adopted and a number of other families who are fostering in the area. These families have changed their lives around, these children, and they are making a massive, massive impact on these children's lives.

However, there are some grave concerns that if you are setting up a children's home about the other children that are moving into the area. For example, some of the children do not see their own families whereas this organisation is making occasion for the children in care to be returned to their own families on weekends, sometimes through the mid-week, which is fantastic; however, it begs the question how will one group of children fit and work and assimilate alongside this other group of children, especially when you are not informing the Local Authority or the community that you intend to set up a care home.

Furthermore, there are serious concerns about planning. The permitted development rights mean that with the planning currently not sure whether this is a C2 or a C3 development where the fire, health and safety standards need to be taken into account and really need to establish this so that we can avoid any confusion in the future not only in my ward but in every single ward in the city.

Planning has produced some documentation which seems to suggest yes, planning permission is required. However, because they do not need to inform the Local Authority this organisation intends to press ahead and just go to Ofsted and disregard the Local Authority, disregard any planning concerns and say, "Well, if we need it we will apply for it retrospectively." That is great but when you have already homed these kids there, what are you going to tell them then?

We have got some really serious concerns about this, not only in Barwick but as Harewood Ward Members. I know the Government is thinking again about some of its policies when it comes to adoption and fostering; however Barwick has very,

very limited resources for young people and things for them to do in the area and this sets a very, very difficult precedent. I am going to try and squeeze this last part in – I hope that the Exec Board Member, the Chief Exec, will meet with me and Councillor Lamb to develop a way forward and produce a briefing to inform our MPs.

You have got 20 seconds, Alan! Go!

THE LORD MAYOR: Get up quick, Councillor Lamb!

COUNCILLOR LAMB: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I think I just about have time to endorse everything that Councillor Robinson said. I would like to make a very brief comment on that. I think there is a very real chance for this to be an excellent addition to the Council meeting; however, I would really urge the administration to think carefully about what they are putting in. The issues they have raised were perfectly legitimate to be raised but they should have been raised as a White Paper or in the Minutes because there is no opportunity for a wider debate and discussion among the rest of Council. I hope you will take that on board for next time, if we give it another go. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Blake, please.

COUNCILLOR BLAKE: Yes, actually, Alan, you did raise this issue under the Minutes and I did not respond to it then because I knew we would be coming on to talk about it later.

Can I just reassure Council that I think the concerns that have been raised are felt by all of us in this Chamber. We are talking about national regulations where Local Authorities have no influence and if this is not an issue about devolving powers down to Local Authorities, I do not know what is.

What I can say about the approach we are taking is that alongside your private fostering issue, it is actually going to be an enquiry at Scrutiny and I do not think it is up to us to pre-empt the Scrutiny enquiry, so I think we need to wait and see what Scrutiny come up with and then we can take it forward and deal with it properly.

Just to emphasise what Councillor Robinson and Councillor Lamb have been saying, this issue came to Corporate Carers yesterday so some of you have already been aware of this, but there is no legal requirement for an independent children's provider to inform the host Local Authority of the intention to open a home. It is extremely difficult if we are trying to plan local services, support local communities and make sure that we choose the appropriate location for such a position.

It is even more extraordinary because all of the homes are inspected and registered by Ofsted but Ofsted are not required to share the information with Local Authorities, so each of the homes are subject to a full inspection and they actually publish a list of these homes but under confidentiality criteria they are not allowed to give us, the Local Authority, the addresses or the names of the homes. It is quite extraordinary.

The other thing, they do not have to apply for planning permission unless there are more than six residents, so usually there are typically four children and two carers and they can come in without having to notify the Authority. This has received very high profile in the last week or so – you might all be familiar with this – because of the enquiry into the Rochdale sexual exploitation case. Rochdale, a small

borough, has 41 independent homes in some of the most vulnerable communities you can imagine. I think that is one of the things that has come out and the Government has already expressed an intention to instruct Ofsted to share information.

Interestingly enough, they are saying they are going to share the information with the police, not with the Local Authority, so there seems to be a suggestion that some of these providers are actually big companies and they have been exercising some influence through lobbying, which I think is completely inappropriate, as you can imagine.

I really do welcome this being raised here, I welcome the fact that we have got a Scrutiny enquiry and I am really happy that that is the case and will be very happy to co-operate. It is an extremely serious issue. We are talking about some of our most vulnerable children and I look forward to hearing the results of the further enquiries we make. We are lobbying Government at the moment. If we could get all-party agreement to lobby together then that would strengthen this as we go forward.

I think it has been a good issue to raise today, thank you. (*applause*)

ITEM 10 – WHITE PAPER MOTION – Planning Applications for PAS Land.

THE LORD MAYOR: We are now moving on to the White Papers. First of all, White Paper Motion – Planning Applications for PAS land in the name of Councillor Carter. Councillor Carter, please.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Thank you, my Lord Mayor. Can I begin by saying that I worded the White Paper before Council extremely carefully for a very particular reason – two particular reasons, actually. One was to word it in such a way that it would not mean that Members who serve on planning committees were prohibited from voting and, secondly, and perhaps most importantly, to generate all-party support, so I am delighted that the White Paper is to be seconded by Councillor Gruen.

I am less happy with the fact that the Liberal Democrats have chosen to amend it and to introduce a separate subject and I would ask them to withdraw their amendment, and I will tell you why.

If they were to table their amendment as a separate White Paper, I personally would want to vote with it, I will be quite frank about it, because I do think that Council should provide funding for Neighbourhood Plans. However, Neighbourhood Plans and the current position we find ourselves in with PAS land are separate issues and it is in my view desperately important that we present to the Government a united front as to where we stand on PAS allocation.

Had we been in administration and there had been a White Paper amended by any political party that then committed us to some sort of expenditure, I would have personally taken the view that I suspect the controlling group would take now, that it is not the right time to do it, debate it as a separate issue and we will see where the cards fall.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Correct.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: I regret the fact that Councillor Campbell has chosen to put an amendment in and I would ask him, in the interests of us having a united front, to withdraw his amendment.

For the benefit of those people who do not know what PAS land is, PAS land is land designated Protected Area of Search. It was incorporated in the current Local Development Plan that we are operating under (until we have another one) by this Council 17 years ago. It is Protected Area of Search and these are the crucial words, "Land that might be brought forward for housing development in the next Local Plan", which is the one we are now embarking upon consultation on. Not must, not will, but might be.

Because of the passage of time, in this case nearly 17 years, all sorts of things could have happened that have made that piece of land that looked as though it was ideal for development, developable, it might not any longer be the case. All sorts of things could have happened – all sorts has happened, we have built thousands of houses over those number of years. The highest number was whilst I was Leader of Council, nearly 4,000 houses in 2008/09, which is why I take a very dim view of people saying my comments about preserving green land is about not building houses. Not at all – it is about building houses in the right place at the right time for the right people and that is what this Authority under your control and our control did.

If you think it is just about land in the leafy suburbs you would be wrong again. Twelve wards are affected. There are 352 hectares of PAS land. The two wards that would be most badly affected are in fact Ardsley and Robin Hood and Kippax and Methley. The effect of releasing all this land for building is that the other wards in the city where they are desperate for regeneration, where there are outstanding planning consents that builders simply won't develop because they say they have no money – funny, isn't it, they have got money to take options out on green field land but they have not got the money to develop the much-needed housing in regeneration areas in this city.

We are all in this together and the key to the whole thing will be that we get the Government to accept that this, what is happening in Leeds – and it is a deliberate ploy by the developers and by certain landowners to drive a coach and horses through localism and to stop us having our say and our constituents having their say as to where the houses go. They want to get in ahead of the game and build on all the PAS land and the only way we can stop that happening is by saying to Government, "Look, you have to stick to one of the lines in the National Policy Planning Framework which says 'PAS land should not be brought forward for development outwith the Core Strategy'."

Eighty per cent of English Local Authorities have not yet completed their Core Strategy. We are not bad boys all on our own who have not done the job; 80% of Local Authorities are in the process of putting together their Core Strategies and the Government needs to make sure that one sentence has primacy over the five year land supply and if they do that, then we are exactly where we want to be. We can say to our constituents, "You and us together will have to take some hard decisions here. We will have to decide what land goes for housing." It is going (*inaudible*)...

THE LORD MAYOR: Please can you make your final point, Councillor .

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: ...and not after the house builders. (*applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Gruen.

COUNCILLOR P GRUEN: Well, Council, it has finally happened! White Paper Motion proposed by Councillor A Carter, seconded by Councillor P Gruen.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: I remember you doing this before, Peter!
(laughter)

COUNCILLOR P GRUEN: You never thought it would happen!

COUNCILLOR: Welcome back, Peter!

COUNCILLOR P GRUEN: Lord Mayor, I am very happy to second this White Paper and I think in the spirit of the new way Council works, it is quite right for us to decide that the wording actually is spot on and why amend wording when actually the resolution hits all the right buttons?

I need to comment in my three minutes on the amendment before I have heard the amendment because I am unable to speak later. I would make this offer to Councillor Campbell. I am perfectly happy to arrange a Members' seminar to separately discuss the whole issue of Neighbourhood Planning and everything around that rather than discuss it today and dilute the sentiment of the White Paper, which I hope will be approved by all sides of the Council. On that basis I hope you will consider withdrawing.

In terms of the White Paper itself, Council knows that starting with the last administration and coming over to ours, we tried desperately hard and we lost, I think it is ten appeals, and the situation became untenable and it left us with the costs and actually no better off in terms of planning.

We are now in the midst of preparing a new Core Strategy and it is my intention, Council, to ask officers to speed up the delivery of that Core Strategy. There is a lot of work going on, it is very thorough, it is very detailed, it is complicated but it is one of the key instruments for the Council as a whole and therefore I think we should dedicate our work for that and ensure that it comes back to Executive Board as soon as possible.

I agree with the sentiments that Andrew has expressed so I do not need to add anything to that. I am very happy for all of us to join together in a deputation and express the seriousness of the situation in Leeds to the Secretary of State and I am happy to second. (applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Campbell.

COUNCILLOR CAMPBELL: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Like Councillor Carter I can remember an occasion when Councillor Carter and Councillor Gruen proposed and seconded resolutions. It may be about the time we first started talking about PAS land, quite frankly.

I think it is fair to say, Lord Mayor, that Government Ministers of all persuasions and their Civil Servants do not understand the housing market and are in the thrall, if that is the best way to describe it, of the house building companies. I think we have seen that in particular with the muddled response from Mr Pickles in relation to the housing targets, the applications that came in, the appeals that were held including the one that he called in himself. It seems to be quite clear to all of us

here in Leeds, anyway, that the market is not working because the house builders themselves have an advantage, they can use this loophole that has been run through the system, I suppose is the best way to describe it, which allows them to pick on these PAS sites and effectively land bank them.

The house building companies will tell you that they are in dire straits, they do not know where their next crust is coming from and they are desperate to build houses. Interestingly enough, Barratts this morning announced their results and I think their house building has gone up by something like 14% over the year.

I do not actually think the house building companies are in that bad a state but one thing I do know, as Councillor Carter did say...

COUNCILLOR HANLEY: You want to talk to the bricklayers. There are 10,000 of them walking about in Leeds.

COUNCILLOR CAMPBELL: When Councillor Hanley wakes up it is such a shock! *(laughter)* As Councillor Carter said, the ability of these companies to find money to bank land has startled all of us and really, as he says, there is no ward in the city that is not going to be affected by this. In fact, I am surprised that we have not actually had more applications from house building companies.

Our response – two quick points, then. Councillor Carter said at the beginning if we put our amendment in as a separate White Paper resolution he would have happily supported it. I have to say to you, under the new regime we are not allowed to do that. We are not allowed to put a White Paper Motion in. If you are happy to support the principle that we should get a go, then I am happy, in the spirit that Councillor Gruen, and in the spirit of harmony between you two, and Councillor Gruen's point in relation to promising us a seminar in particular, at which we might actually be able to put forward some points, with that I will ask leave of Council to withdraw my amendment. *(applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Townsley, do you agree?

COUNCILLOR TOWNSLEY: Second, Lord Mayor.

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

Councillor Leadley, do you wish to comment?

COUNCILLOR LEADLEY: My Lord Mayor, Councillor Carter will not be surprised to hear that our party will be happy to support the delegation called for in his motion; if it is to be genuinely all party then I would be pleased to joint in.

Councillor Campbell's amendment was acceptable in itself, though I do not think it was well matched to the purpose of the White Paper which presumably seeks to do something fairly quickly to defend PAS land throughout Leeds. Even with the maximum resources it would take some time for any substantial part of Leeds to be covered by Neighbourhood Plans, though I know Otley has one of the four pilot projects.

When we are in London or if someone from London comes up to see us in Leeds, we will need to be careful about what we say and how we say it. The assault on Protected Areas of Search which may be about to take place is a symptom rather than an affliction; it is a symptom of circumstances which allow landowners and

developers to demand the release of green field land to satisfy house building targets which are based on aspiration and theoretical projection and not upon the practicalities of building, renting out or selling new dwellings.

We must not forget that the Leeds Local Development Framework Core Strategy, by being put out to consultation rather hastily, was not able to take advantage of the final version of the National Planning Policy Framework which made substantial concessions by allowing windfall and therefore brown field land to be taken into account when calculating land supply, and no doubt we would be reminded of that by any Minister or senior Whitehall official who agreed to meet us.

Clearly something must be done to stop irreparable harm being done to our communities which in the medium to long term would deter inward investment by making them less attractive places in which to live and work if those Protected Areas of Search were released to house builders and land speculators in an unseemly fashion.

There must be an assured period of grace so that we can straighten out the LDF before it strangles us all and we must act decisively to stop Leeds becoming the Birmingham of the north.

I think it is worth pointing out that the PAS land was not strictly earmarked for housing it was earmarked for any use although in practice we could all see that most of it was intended to be for housing. The biggest one of all which is the one near Tingley Roundabout, which is in Ardsley and Robin Hood, was actually probably an industrial one and most of those PAS sites were actually allocated by the Inspector on his own initiative, partly because he was calculating the need for house building on densities of 25 to the hectare or ten to the acre, which were actually far too low even in the 1990s – they are densities which have not really been seen since the early 1970s.

We do need to do something quickly and I am glad to see that Councillor Campbell has withdrawn his amendment because really that is a completely separate topic. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Congreve.

COUNCILLOR CONGREVE: Lord Mayor, the recent position from developers with regard to Protected Areas of Search land in Leeds is indeed cause for concern. The Council is committed to developing its Core Strategy as swiftly as possible and I think it is clear from the process today that the Council is not anti-development – indeed, the Draft Core Strategy acknowledges the need for a significant housing growth in our city with a requirement for a net gain of new dwellings of 70,000 dwellings by 2028. That is an average of almost 4,400 new homes a year which is well above the number delivered even during the pre-recession peak.

Last year under 2,000 new homes were delivered, so the Council is clearly setting out plans for growth which would presently be well beyond the capacity of developers to deliver. However, it is not unreasonable to expect the vast majority of this development to take place on brown field sites. Despite the recession the Council still has ambitious regeneration plans for large areas of the city and it is the development of these areas in a considered and responsible manner that we must prioritise. Undoubtedly the economic downturn makes large scale regeneration projects much more difficult but the recently completed schemes of the Tower Works

in Holbeck to an exceptionally high standard shows that regeneration of brown field land can be done and done well, even in difficult economic times.

It cannot be said that there is not attractive brown field land available in Leeds or that the Council is blocking development at every turn. At the moment, however, it seems developers are unsatisfied with this position. They seem to think we should be making green belt and PAS land available for development even whilst brown field land remains available and viable. As a result, some developers appear to be looking to take advantage of the fact that the Core Strategy is not yet in place and are bringing forward applications on PAS land before the status of these sites is considered through the Local Planning Framework process.

This does seem to fly in the face of localism that the Government holds so dear, so I hope they will consider the issue carefully and do what is necessary to ensure that the voices of communities are heard when it comes to the development of their green fields. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Ann Blackburn.

COUNCILLOR A BLACKBURN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I agree with everything that has been said really. I know that we have spoken about PAS land previously as far as our Area Committee is concerned and, as has been said, at the moment the loophole is there and clearly developers prefer to use green land rather than brown field land and we have got to do something about it. It is imperative that we have. We have lost ten appeals already so the Council are not going to lose any more money by paying out for appeals we might lose, so we have got to get on with the Core Strategy to sort it out but, of course, we would also like to be part of the all-party delegation to visit the Secretary of State and to seek his intervention. Thank you.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor John Procter, please.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Thank you, Lord Mayor. What is clear in planning terms is that there are certain Members on the Council who are, I guess, planning geeks – I am one of them – and there are some Members of Council who run a mile away from planning. I know the Leader of Council is one of those people.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: They won't let me on it! *(laughter)*

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Nothing wrong with that!

COUNCILLOR CONGREVE: I won't have him on mine!

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: What I say to all colleagues is, this issue is so important to all areas that everybody, those who traditionally do not take an interest in planning, should because it will truly change the face of the city and have a most devastating impact on any thought of regenerating some key areas of our city.

In the Wetherby and Harewood ward alone – and this has only become apparent over the last month or so – there is something like 2,000 new units being proposed on PAS land and that is just the start of it. Many of those sites and much of that land, the applicants have rushed to their local community to have a supposed consultation – they have not even spoken to Planning Officers. They are not interested in what Planning Officers think or say because they think they can use the

system in their favour, and clearly that is going to be against all of our communities. Do take an interest, find out where those PAS sites are near you.

Just a comment on Neighbourhood Planning. I have said this time and time again but perhaps I have only said it in certain circles, principally the Executive Board. If anybody is interested in Neighbourhood Planning and wants to get groups going in their area but they do not know how to do it or they have not got people available to do it or they want to find out more, come and ask the Wetherby and Harewood Members. We have got a Localism Officer we employed a year ago who is piloting Neighbourhood Plans through most of our parishes and towns. Some of those people have been out to different communities right across the city to give some advice and some help.

Just finally, some comment has been made about the appeals that we lost. That was run by, in the main most of that legal advice was run by Walker Morris, the law firm in the city. I was Chairing a Neighbourhood Planning Forum meeting in Wetherby the other day and a gentleman introduced himself to me, he said that he was a former lawyer who is now chairing the Neighbourhood Plan working group in Thorpe Arch and was finding it all very confusing, very difficult and he was very, very worried about all of this development that was coming near his home and how terrible it all was. I could not help but say, "Which law firm did you used to be the senior partner of?" "Walker Morris", he said. *(laughter) (applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Andrew Carter to sum up, please.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am quite overcome with emotion. All this support for this White Paper! *(laughter)*

Seriously, if the house builders get away with this, they have made a mockery of the plan led system, they have made a mockery of localism, they have made a mockery of community engagement, they have made a mockery of Local Authority elected Councillors having an input and being part of taking very difficult decisions, where housing goes and where it does not and we all know there are 75,000 net in the Core Strategy. If all that has been made a mockery of, we may as well forget it.

I am not prepared to stand by and let that happen and I get the very distinct impression you all feel exactly the same because within the new proposals and within the National Planning Policy Framework there are those safeguards that if they have primary ensure that it will be local communities that can take the decision and face up to the difficult decisions, and that is all we are asking.

We have accepted in the Core Strategy – Councillor Congreve mentioned it – a very ambitious, very sizeable number of dwellings over the next plan period. That is not what is at issue. We must not let the house builders paint this Council as being anti-housing development. We achieved in every year bar one of the present Local Plan the housing numbers we were supposed to achieve. We have not been an Authority which has not delivered housing. We have not been. We should not allow them to pretend that we are but when I hear a consultant for a developer say – and I paraphrase slightly – "you must realise that we are all getting together to put applications in on all the PAS land", it tells me it is time we called a halt and we did whatever we have to do to make sure these people are brought to account. They are behaving no better than the worst practices of the bankers. *(hear, hear)*

This is nothing to do with jobs, houses that people need in places they need them. It is about sheer opportunism and trying to make a fast buck as fast as

possible in a small window of opportunity and we must stop it, ladies and gentlemen.
(applause)

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: My Lord Mayor, purely for the purposes of demonstrating the Council's feeling on this matter, can I request a recorded vote.

THE LORD MAYOR: Is there a seconder please? Yes. I hand over to the Chief Executive.

(A recorded vote was taken on the White Paper)

THE LORD MAYOR: There are 93 Members present in the Council Chamber. 93 Members have voted "Yes", so it has been passed unanimously.
CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY. (applause)

COUNCILLOR: The Dynamic Duo!

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Got him!

ITEM 11a – WHITE PAPER MOTION – CHILD FRIENDLY CITY

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Blake, please.

COUNCILLOR BLAKE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Under the provisions of Council Procedure Rule 14.11, and with the consent of the seconder of the motion, I seek leave of Council to withdraw the motion in my name.

THE LORD MAYOR: *(A vote was taken)* That is CARRIED.

REPLACEMENT WHITE PAPER

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor James Lewis, please.

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I move that under the provisions of Council Procedure Rule 22.1, that Council Procedure Rule 12.1, 13.1 be suspended to allow the introduction of the Emergency Motion in the name of Councillor Mulherin detailed in the Order Paper.

COUNCILLOR G LATTY: I second that, Lord Mayor.

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

Councillor Mulherin, please.

COUNCILLOR MULHERIN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I very much doubt that there is anyone in this Chamber who does not condemn the outrageous decision made last week to close the Leeds Children's Heart Surgery Unit. The lengthy national review of children's congenital heart surgery has been debated in this Chamber before. We all united around the need to retain the Leeds unit for the children and families we represent, for the five-and-a-half million people across the Yorkshire and Humber region and the 14 million people within a two hour drive of Leeds who currently are served by the Leeds Children's Heart Surgery Unit.

Let us be clear, all of the surgical units across the country currently providing this service are considered safe. The Leeds unit is already delivering well over 300 surgical procedures for children alone a year with only three surgeons in place. The target they are required to achieve is 400-500 hundred procedures with four surgeons, and Leeds clearly has the capacity to do that. Furthermore, Leeds Teaching Hospitals have been trying to recruit a fourth surgeon for some time and were on the brink of doing that last autumn but because of the uncertainty over the unit's future as a result of the way this review has been carried out, they were unable to do so.

The future of the Leeds unit should have been secure because it offers the gold standard in terms of co-location of services, with all of children's acute secondary care and also maternity services and antenatal services under one roof. Most congenital heart defects are now identified in the womb and in Leeds parents can be confident that all of the vital services and specialist expertise they might need are under one roof at the LGI. Only one other unit in the country has all of these services on one site and none of the others in the north do so.

Leeds already has an effective, well-developed cardiology network supporting care closer to home both before and after surgery for children and families across the region. Closing Leeds will mean fracturing that existing network and having to recreate new networks around patient choice.

The decision made last week takes no account of geography or demographics. Population density was taken into account for other large urban areas, but not for our region. A far greater number of children and families will be disadvantaged by locating the unit in Newcastle than by locating it in Leeds. There are 14 million people within a two hour drive of our city; there are three million within a two hour drive of the Freeman Hospital in Newcastle.

The decision takes no account of the fact that Leeds has far better transport links by road and rail, with east and west connections as well as north-south ones. We also know that we have a greater concentration of vulnerable people in our region, like the south-east Asian population who are more susceptible to congenital heart problems. In Leeds, people with congenital heart problems have a continuity of care that is available in few other centres.

There is an ongoing review of adult congenital heart surgery. We argued strongly that the two should have been conducted together and that, failing that, there should be a moratorium on one until the conclusion of the other. Last week's decision effectively predetermined the outcome of the adult congenital heart unit in Leeds as expertise will move to other centres.

How have the decision-makers got this decision so badly wrong? The criteria set from the outset to give the advantages of the Leeds unit a lower weighting than, for instance, the historical location of nationally commissioned services such as transplant surgery. Transplant surgery takes place in Newcastle because the surgeons who pioneered it many years ago were based there but, if you were commissioning that service afresh now, would you really say that the patients and their families should be made to travel to the doctor or that the doctor should be located where the people are?

At last week's meeting an assumption was made that three-quarters of the children and families needing congenital heart surgery in our region would travel up the A1 in all weathers to get to Newcastle. All of the evidence we received in our

Regional Scrutiny Inquiry suggested otherwise. From South Yorkshire families said they would go to Birmingham; from most of West Yorkshire and the Humber families advised that they would travel to Liverpool if Leeds were to close. This is not just because of the convenience, as the decision-making body dismissively described it; it is because of the real world impact on children and families that I know others will be addressing in more detail in this debate. Patient choice and the evidence we received was submitted to the decision makers calls into question the sustainability of the configuration they chose.

For the flawed decision that disproportionately disadvantages the healthcare of children and families in our region, we are left with no choice but to call upon Andrew Lansley, the Secretary of State for Health, to intervene and to demand that the very real concerns that have been raised in every possible way throughout the review across this region are now heard. He has the power to overturn this decision on behalf of the children and families...

THE LORD MAYOR: Is this your last point?

COUNCILLOR MULHERIN: ... in our region who use this service and I urge you to join me in calling upon him to do exactly that. Thank you. (*applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Graham Latty, please.

COUNCILLOR G LATTY: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Lord Mayor, I think the very nature of this problem means that there is going to be some repetition because there are a limited number of things that we can say. However, in seconding and speaking on this White Paper I am expressing the total support of this Group for the principle of keeping children's heart surgery firmly and permanently at Leeds Royal Infirmary.

I have found nobody who disagrees with the need to reduce the number of centres but neither have I found anybody who believes that children and their families will be better served by moving the service to Newcastle.

You only have to look at the population map of the UK to see that the concentration of population across West Yorkshire alone makes Newcastle look like a village. You need only to look at the map to see that families from North Lincolnshire, who face a bad enough journey to get to Leeds, would have a much worse trail up to the north-east, and imagine a family with small children having to take the whole family to and from Newcastle – it would be an absolute nightmare.

Practicalities aside, can you understand how on earth a committee of apparently intelligent people tasked with making a decision reached that decision without considering the four basic tests that the Secretary of State had considered essential in order for that change to happen.

There was patient choice – this was totally ignored and an analysis of public opinion showed that members of the public were reluctant to consider travelling to Newcastle. It was stated that Newcastle could reach a sustainable number of surgical procedures if patients were managed – in other words, if patients were told where to go. This completely flies in the face of patient choice as is enshrined in the NHS Constitution.

Then we have clinical support. All I can say is there is no evidence of clinical support for a move.

Public views. 600,000 people signed a petition against closing Leeds and MPs, patients and public have consistently made it clear that they want Leeds to remain open. The Chair of the JCPCT – I forget what it means – dismissed this saying, “We do not count heads”. We do not count heads – what the heck are they about if they are not finding out how many people agree with them?

Clinical benefits should be available. Option G, which is Leeds, had the least negative impact. I am not going to get there, am I? In terms of co-location of services, all other clinical and surgical services should be available on site. In Leeds they are; in Newcastle they are a couple of miles apart. The review argues that under Option B if only 25% of the forecast caseload for Leeds, Wakefield, Doncaster and Sheffield chooses to go to Newcastle, the unit there would achieve 403 procedures a year and therefore pass the 400 minimum threshold. Leeds, by comparison, suffers, because we have three surgeons – we could employ a fourth if we had the certainty of this service staying here. The more operations a surgeon does the better he does the job, that is why numbers are important and why the optimum 500 is, again, important. With another surgeon, which would be practical in Leeds, then that target would be within sight.

Going back to sheer distances, small children invariably have siblings and when a child is undergoing heart surgery, its parents want...

THE LORD MAYOR: From here it looks as if you are on your last three lines. Is that right?

COUNCILLOR G LATTY: Lord Mayor, talking about siblings with kids, all I want to say is that a family having to trail those children and possibly have to go back home because they cannot take children away from school, this to me underlines the reason why Newcastle would be the very, very worst choice.

Go on the e-petition and vote against it. One hundred people on the e-petition will get it heard in the Commons. *(applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Varley.

COUNCILLOR VARLEY: Thank you, Lord Mayor. It is so obvious that the decision not to retain Leeds as a designated surgical centre for children's congenital heart surgery services is of great concern to this Council. Last Thursday, as the day went on, it was obvious from notes that we were getting that the decision seemed to have been made and they seemed to spend most of the day deciding how to make the good, the sound decision of not accepting Option G.

Firstly, the decision has not taken into account the current procedures undertaken in Leeds. With three surgeons in post and the co-location of services, Leeds, as Councillor Mulherin has already said, has offered gold standard provision to patients and families in Yorkshire and Humber. The speed with which the decision was taken disregarding a request from this Council to consider the holistic approach and look at the future of both children's and adult cardiac services together was not taken into account. The HOCS recommended that the overall number of procedures should be considered and at least there should be a moratorium on any decision so that the two areas can be considered together. That was recommendation 5.

By deciding that the services at Leeds and Leicester be discontinued, this is a democratic deficit for the heart and – no pun intended – for the country. We know

that there are 5.5m people in Yorkshire and Humber, plus the 14m living within two hours' drive from Leeds. Surely this is not acceptable.

We have been informed that there were caveats in place because it did not seem certain that the services at Newcastle could deliver the considered target of 500 procedures a year. They just skimmed over the 400. There are questions that need to be resolved as to the criteria on which the final outcome was reached. Indeed, the whole process appears to have been flawed.

I cannot actually sit down without reminding you that last Thursday, 4th July 2012, the day the evidence of the existence of the Higgs Boson Particle was announced, these particles are thought to be the vital fundamental force that formed the building blocks of the universe.

THE LORD MAYOR: Please will you make your final point.

COUNCILLOR VARLEY: Two lines. Their presence makes sense of our world. Sadly, I can only assume that there were no Higgs Boson Particles present at the meeting last week. (*applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Blake.

COUNCILLOR BLAKE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I would like to start by paying tribute to all the Members of Council who have been active in this campaign so far, and particularly Health Scrutiny, as we have heard. The origins of this go back several years and several members have been involved on Scrutiny as Chairs. I think I particularly really want to thank the Scrutiny Committee under Councillor Mulherin last year and I think all of us would acknowledge that it would have been impossible for them to have done more than they did last year.

I think the thing that strikes us all when we hear people talking about the children's heart unit is the passion and eloquence that they have, and the most extraordinary thing for me is that it does not matter where you are in the region to get that level of response; people are as passionate in Rotherham, in Huddersfield or Hull as we are in Leeds and that has been an enormous strength to the campaign so far.

I think all of us have heard extraordinary stories about the unit from our constituents and I know that members here in the Chamber have first hand personal experience as well through members of their families. My focus today is the impact on the families of the young children who are patients and our responsibility as a Council for the wellbeing of all children in the city.

We need to look at this as parents ourselves and as grandparents. Sick children do not exist in isolation, they are part of families and often, as we know, have brothers and sisters that their parents have to care for. Imagine the stress of caring for a very, very sick child with weeks of stays in a different city, in Newcastle or Liverpool, as has been suggested. The impact on family life at home is unimaginable. We are not talking about quick visits here, we are talking about weeks and weeks of treatment in some cases.

I had a letter from one constituent who talked about struggling with their child who was diagnosed. He was in hospital for twelve weeks and during that time they lost all his disability living allowance and carer's allowance as it was deemed they were not caring for him any more. Can you imagine the impact of the loss of that

money when they have to pay additional costs for travel, for child care for their children living at home?

We have to give support for the campaign to continue. I am delighted to hear of the approach that we are taking. The basic principle, I believe, and where this has gone wrong is the design of the services, to take the services to the doctors in Newcastle because of their particular specialism. That cannot be right. We have to get back to the principle of bringing doctors to the patients and not the other way round.

I urge all of us to do everything we possibly can in our power to support the ongoing campaign and to convince the Secretary of State to change his mind. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Illingworth.

COUNCILLOR ILLINGWORTH: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I would like to start by thanking my predecessor, Councillor Mulherin, who actually did much of the spadework on children's cardiac surgery. It was Councillor Mulherin who chaired the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee – or JOSC – which produced this very important report given in evidence to the JCPCT.

The JOSC is a statutory consultee on cardiac surgery review and it is the only body which can legally refer the recent decision by the Joint Committee of the Primary Care Trust (or JCPCT) to the Secretary of State.

We must not anticipate decisions that might be taken by the JOSC on 24th July. Members of other Local Authorities have emphasised that they will make up their own minds having heard all the relevant facts. Getting hold of those facts is proving difficult. We have asked the JCPCT officials for a detailed breakdown of the evidence considered by their committee with an analysis of the complex scoring system and the justification for any of the assumptions made. So far very little of the requested information has been provided.

Despite the Health Service guidance on disclosure, none of the reports for the meeting in London on 4th July were circulated in advance. At the start of the meeting we were asked without notice to make an oral submission to the JCPCT. Eight hours later, after the decision had been taken, the JCPCT released its written report to the public – here they are. It became apparent that the real decision had been taken not by doctors but by Health Service managers long before the public session and that none of the arguments in our oral presentations could have made the slightest difference to the result.

The JCPCT documents released after the meeting include some reasonable guiding principles that were agreed during the public consultation. Unfortunately, it appears that the internal process of the JCPCT, which took place largely behind closed doors, involved a systematic distortion and twisting of the facts to make them accord with previous administrative decisions taken in private by Health Service managers.

The scoring system used to assess the options was bizarre. It trivialised important issues affecting patient safety and patient choice but it amplified largely irrelevant factors so that they dominated the overall results. It is difficult, Lord Mayor, to avoid the conclusion that the decision on 4th July was designed to spare the blushes of Health Service managers who have very foolishly allocated about ten per

cent of the national transplant service to Newcastle while displaying a serious contempt for the welfare of cardiac patients throughout Yorkshire and in the Leeds City Region. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Ann Blackburn.

COUNCILLOR A BLACKBURN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I agree with everything that has been said on this matter. This decision will mean that people in Yorkshire and Humber with children with heart problems will have to travel to Newcastle to be treated. This is too far to expect people to travel, as many people do not have a car. This poses the question how can parents and family visit regularly if they cannot afford to travel to Newcastle?

Whilst there was a so-called consultation on this matter, it seems obvious to me that this was just a sham. This decision is unfair and we need to obviously not just sit down and accept it. The Green Group supports the decision in the White Paper. We will be with you all the way on this one. (*applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Chapman.

COUNCILLOR CHAPMAN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. It is a sad day when we have to debate the closure of such a valuable unit in Leeds. Even if it had been clear as to how the scoring worked, had it been clear from debate as to their reasonings behind things, we still would not have agreed with the outcome. It is unclear to me how the fight to close the children's heart unit at the LGI could ignore tens of thousands of ordinary people appealing against its closure.

Having had a heart attack two years ago, I would not have been here today without the special cardiac unit at the LGI. Time is of the essence and if I had had to travel to Newcastle, I would have died. The same applies to children; in fact, it is more dangerous as children can deteriorate very quickly. A child will be diagnosed here in Leeds of having a problem and if it is serious, we have to hope that that child gets to Newcastle in time.

What can we do? First of all I am very pleased to hear that Greg Mulholland MP raised the issue in Prime Minister's Question Time this morning, so we are on our way with that, but what else can we do? We all have to fight. We need to get behind Councillor Mulherin and Councillor Illingworth and fight yet again to keep the Leeds heart unit open. (*applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Andrew Carter.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Thank you, my Lord Mayor. I will speak very briefly, endorsing really everything that has already been said, and Councillor Latty has already indicated that the Conservative Group is entirely in support of any and every effort to keep the children's cardiac unit open at the LGI.

It just seems to me to be completely illogical. In the report it refers to the Birmingham Centre being kept open because it is the centre of such a large population and yet then recommends that Newcastle should be preferred over Leeds, although Leeds has a catchment area of 5.3m as opposed to 2.6m for Newcastle and the north-east, a complete and utter contradiction within the very body of the report.

It seems to me we have to apply the maximum pressure to the Secretary of State to ensure that he does not accept the recommendation of the JCPCT which

Councillor Illingworth so eloquently got his tongue round over and over again a few moments ago. It also seems to me that unless patients are directed to go to Newcastle, then they will not have the necessary numbers that the whole matter was about to start with, it seems to me and yet, in the constitution of the NHS, it says, referring to the patients, "You have the right to make choices about your NHS care and to information to support these choices" so it seems to me that the recommendation of the JCPCT flies directly in the face of the constitution of the NHS.

I hope the Secretary of State will uphold the constitution of the NHS and turn down the recommendation insofar as it affects Newcastle and re-examine the Leeds proposals with a view to that being the one that is selected. *(applause)*

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

COUNCILLOR MULHERIN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Can I thank all Members of Council for their contributions today in what I think has been a very constructive debate. I think it is brilliant that we have cross-party support and I am hoping to have unanimous support of all Members of Council for the motion today because I think it will send a very clear message to the JCPCT who made the wrong decision but, more importantly, to Andrew Lansley about the strength of feeling in this city and across this region for the need to keep the Leeds unit open.

Issues around patient choice, there were suggestions last week in the decision making meeting, Councillor Latty, that if patients exercised their choice as opposed to were managed to go where they were told to do, that they would actually not just only have the surgery in another unit but also that they would be expected to have their follow-up care within the network for that other unit, so incentives are being put in for people not to exercise that patient choice.

Can I thank Councillor Ann Blackburn, Councillor Chapman, Councillor Blake for talking about the impact on real families' lives. I have a couple of examples I was going to make reference to here. John Arnold, whose daughter Zoe had congenital heart surgery at eight weeks, she stopped breathing on the way from the GP to the hospital and he said if she had collapsed anywhere other than at the back of the hospital she would not have made it. He said last week to the national press, "You put the doctors where the people are, you do not shunt the people to where the doctors are."

We have other examples, people sending in their own stories. Members of staff here, one whose son, Toby, has Down's Syndrome, complex heart defects and other medical complexities who underwent life saving heart surgery and says that, Dr Watterson at Leeds has saved her son Toby's life on at least two occasions.

We know the impact on real families' lives. If you have got other children at home you are not just looking at being away from home for a couple of days, couple of weeks. One example I could give you of a child who is at nursery with my son whose mum was at the bedside for four months away from the rest of her family, and that is the sort of thing we are talking about. If you are going to Newcastle you would not have the respite you would get from grandparents coming to give you a break, from friends, from other family members to give you a bit of respite from being in that very stressful situation and the other parent at home struggling to keep the roof above the family's head and looking after the other siblings.

Neil Mackay last week said that the needs of children not the vested interest of hospitals would be at the heart of this review. He is the Chair, by the way, of the

decision making body. He said that they had carefully considered the responses to public consultation and all the available evidence and advice. Clearly they have not. They have not taken on board the 600,000 name petition from this region; they have not taken on board the detailed Scrutiny report undertaken by the 15 top tier Local Authorities in this region. The lack of transparency, openness and accountability of the JCPCT's process that Councillor Illingworth has referred to from start to finish is quite frankly appalling.

I will send an email round to Members in terms of what the next steps might be for this campaign to keep the unit in Leeds tomorrow, because I am out of time, but can I urge you, please, to all support the motion and we need to work together cross-party, as we have done till now, to bring that pressure to bear on the Secretary of State to overturn this decision. Thank you. *(applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: I understand Councillor Lewis would like a recorded vote.

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: Lord Mayor, move the recorded vote, please.

THE LORD MAYOR: Is there a seconder, please? *(Seconded)*

(A recorded vote was taken)

THE LORD MAYOR: There are 93 Members present in the Council Chamber and 93 have voted "Yes", so again the motion is CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY. *(applause)*

That brings us to the end of the Council meeting so thank you very much all of you for your co-operation, may it continue for the rest of my year and have a safe journey home.

(The meeting closed at 7.20pm)