

LEEDS CITY COUNCIL

**EXTRAORDINARY
MEETING OF THE COUNCIL**

Held on

Wednesday, 28 November 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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Sheffield, S1 2DX

VERBATIM REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS OF THE EXTRAORDINARY MEETING
OF LEEDS CITY COUNCIL HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 28th NOVEMBER 2012

THE LORD MAYOR: Good afternoon, everybody, and welcome to the second State of the City Council meeting. I will remind you first of all please to make sure all mobile phones are switched off. If there is a disturbance during the meeting I shall require £5 towards the Lord Mayor's charity, please. May I also remind you about the web cast this afternoon.

I understand that one or two members have a few words to say about David Marsh. Councillor Wakefield, first of all.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I think one or two of us have more than one or two words to say but we are only given a couple of minutes.

For those who do not know, this is Dave Marsh's last Council meeting. He tells me that 25 years ago he popped in for ten minutes to see what it was like and he has been here 25 years since.

One of the things I think many of us do when you are sat *that* side in particular, I always look at his body language and see if he shows any interest or emotion and anything. He ought to play poker because there has never been any flicker of emotion as Dave reports. I think one thing you can say about Dave is that even though over the years he has given Council Les Carter too much of a profile, outside of that he has been extremely fair and the important thing about people like Dave being a civic journalist, he is absolutely crucial in maintaining local democracy to the people of Leeds. (*hear, hear*)

I would like to thank you on behalf of our Group for that fairness, that coverage, that commitment which, as I say, helps us in our work and informs the people of Leeds about the life of democracy and the efforts we try to make to improve the lives of people in Leeds.

Best wishes to David. I am not supposed to say "retirement", it is voluntary severance! I am told from inside information in his office that actually his wife is a doctor and he will be applying for the receptionist's job (*laughter*) so best wishes with your application, best wishes in the future and I look forward to seeing you somewhere, some time in Leeds. I know you are a long-suffering Leeds United supporter so you never know, we might see each other there. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Les Carter.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I was rather surprised at the words of Councillor Wakefield about the great publicity that David has given me but, let's accept, it was deserved! (*laughter*)

It gives me pleasure, obviously, to second the vote of thanks to David that Councillor Wakefield has actually proposed. I think he has proposed it, but that is what it is and I am delighted.

I have known David a long time. I did not know it was 25 years. I did not realise it was 25 years. Before him we had John Thorpe, and was it Dennis we had before him? He doesn't know, he's not answering is David from the back there.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: I was at school, Les.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: You were at school and I was a very, very young Councillor and those were the days! *(laughter)*

Being serious for a second, I have always found David to be an extremely balanced and fair reporter. Sometimes you do not like it, sometimes you do like it, but that is the sign of a good reporter. That is the sign of a good reporter. You cannot expect them to like everything he prints, every story he writes, otherwise he would just be in our pockets and David is in nobody's pocket.

Let me just tell you this, if his standards were applied to journalism throughout this country there would have been no Leveson Inquiry *(hear, hear)* none whatsoever, because David has got the very highest standards.

One thing I do understand, the YEP are not replacing him. I am being serious here – that would be a real shame as far as this Council is concerned. David has told the people of Leeds what we are up to. Sometimes we may not have wanted him to tell them but he has always been fair and honest, he has told them and various important things, and the people of Leeds will be worse off without him being there.

He is leaving, and I am really disappointed in some ways, because he is leaving without doing what he has promised me. For 40 years when I have been elected to this Council never once did he give me a story in the YEP – “Councillor elected again.” Not once! I asked him why. He said, “It's not news” *(laughter)*.

COUNCILLOR ATHA: Bad news.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: It's not good news.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: Bernard says it's bad news! He promised me faithfully that he would stay around and one day he would give me some coverage on elections, but he is sneaking off before he can do that.

The other thing I am disappointed about, when we started on Little London and it was being reported, you might have seen some quite big headlines in the paper how bad I was, how evil I was doing all this. I said to him, “Look, do me a favour, Dave, come back in ten years' time – you are a reporter, you are young enough – and just see what has happened and see how much has been improved.” He has worked out that Peter will never get the thing done so he is having to go and retire, but not to worry, that is the way it happens.

May I just say to David, on behalf of the Conservative Group, and I think it would also be on behalf of the whole of Council – thank you for your time, thank you for the effort, thank you for what you have done for this Council and you have done for Leeds. Thank you very much indeed. Bye bye. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Golton.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I do not think David is going to particularly enjoy this because one of the things that does stand out is the fact that he is a quiet guy who conscientiously just gets on with the job that he has got. He has made the job what it is.

I have to say, a lot of provincial towns do have newspapers and newspapers can report the facts, but the Yorkshire Evening Post has never wanted to do that. It has always wanted actually to play an active role in the city and under David Marsh there have been several campaigns that have been launched by the newspaper and I hope that without David Marsh there to actually add the gravitas, that actually that still occurs.

Councillor Carter did steal one of my lines which is that it is the quality of the journalism that comes out of David Marsh which marks him out. Journalists have had a very bad press (if you will excuse the pun) recently, almost more than politicians have but I have always found that David is a conscientious journalist and there have been a couple of things that we have tried to get through this year to try and embarrass the administration that David would not sanction because there was not sufficient evidence there as far as he was concerned. *(Laughter and applause)*

That just shows, it would have made a great headline for the Yorkshire Evening Post but as a conscientious journalist he said, "I cannot do it, in all conscience." He was always approachable. Sometimes for a quiet guy you cannot shut him up on the phone but other than that he has played a very great part in this city and he will be missed by us here in this Council Chamber. I hope that his presence is not missed in the Yorkshire Evening Post and that it maintains the high standards that he has set. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Finnigan.

COUNCILLOR FINNIGAN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. We would like to pass on our best wishes to Dave in his semi-retirement, or whatever it might be. That comes from all of the Morley Borough Independents.

We have always seen Dave as a bit like Norman Hunter – firm but fair, prepared to get a tackle in as and when it is absolutely required. We do think there is evidence of the strong scepticism he has about what all of us actually say and he queries and questions and probes and makes sure that he gets to the facts. He cuts through the spin and gives an accurate picture of what is actually going on and that is often frustrating because clearly we want to make sure that we put our point of view across.

We would like to wish him all the best for the future and I will make an offer. As he knows, on Saturday there is a contest between the mighty Huddersfield Town and Leeds United and I have a spare ticket, which I am quite happy to offer Dave if he wishes to come along, the only issue being it will be in the Huddersfield Town end and I am not sure whether he will take that up as an offer.

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: Is that next to you, Robert?

COUNCILLOR FINNIGAN: Absolutely. It would be a pleasure and a delight for him, I am sure!

We would like to wish him all the best for the future. We have always found him fair and honest and straight and we do hope that any coverage in the future reaches similar high standards. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Ann Blackburn.

COUNCILLOR A BLACKBURN: Yes, thank you, Lord Mayor. I think I would like to endorse a lot of the things that have already been said about David Marsh. I know that I have been a Councillor now for ten years and whenever I come in not only into the Council Chamber but, of course, into Scrutiny meetings, many a time David is there, at the Exec meetings particularly David is there and so we get used to seeing him hidden round there in the corner somewhere, scribbling away.

I hope that we do get a replacement to come and cover Council issues; that the replacement is as good as David. I do endorse everything that has been said about him being a very fair reporter and I just wish him well for the future. Thank you. *(Applause)*

ITEM 1 – DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

THE LORD MAYOR: I now move to Item 1 on the Order Paper, Declarations of Interest. The list of written declarations submitted by members is attached to the Order Paper which has been circulated to each member's place in the Chamber and is available in the public galleries.

Are there any further individual declarations or corrections to those notified on the list, please? No.

Right, please can members by a show of hands confirm that they have read the list and agreed its contents insofar as it relates to their own interests? *(Show of hands)* Thank you, that is CARRIED.

ITEM 2 – PRESENTATION ON THE STATE OF THE CITY REPORT.

THE LORD MAYOR: Item 2, Presentation on the State of the City Report. Councillor Wakefield.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Lord Mayor, I think it is worth reminding ourselves that last May the people of Leeds and every Party in this Chamber rejected the proposal for an elected Mayor, and we did so (except for Alan Lamb) using the arguments, many of us, that the city was not only culturally diverse but geographically diverse and that no one person could fulfil that role with a city as big as ours, as diverse as ours and so on. We argued that the way that we wanted to work was more in partnership with organisations and more with people.

Today's document and today's debate and discussion will actually attest to that. I think there are two other good reasons for this kind of debate. Firstly, it gives 99 Councillors an opportunity to share the experiences of the partnership work in the city, to check the progress, check the achievements and check the failures, and that is something that is very rare because normally speaking there are about ten Councillors involved in the Leeds Initiative Partnership Arrangement.

The second good reason, I think, is that it shows to the people of Leeds that Councillors here are concerned with more than just the Council delivering. We are

concerned about the Health Service, we are concerned about the police and we are concerned about the voluntary sector and community.

I think if you have read the document you will see how much stronger a partnership is in terms of trying to achieve some of the things that we aspire to. I always think that we spend £1.8b gross, the Partnership locally spends £4.2b. Is it not better that local Councillors try to influence and direct some of that public money to our aspirations and concerns? I think you will see that in the document. I will try and run through, very quickly, some of the achievements that we have done in partnership this year and then some of the challenges we face over next year.

Given that we do have a speaker who managed to win the Olympic gold, I think the experience of the Olympics in this city was a remarkable proof that actually the city has got the enthusiasm, has got the capacity and actually has got the appetite and hunger to put on other big sporting occasions. Next year, the Rugby League World Cup will be hosted by Leeds and, as we all know, we are lobbying like crazy to bring the biggest sporting global event to Leeds in the name of the Tour de France.

I think that demonstrates ambition and I think it demonstrates the strength of the Partnership and we will wait to see the outcome of that.

Not too far over the road I could show you another good example of Partnership achievements with Civic Leadership – the Arena, which will be one of the top five arenas in the world, the Trinity Scheme, with £350m investment, 4,000 protected jobs it will create and, of course, the recent signing, which I think Councillor Lewis was involved in, of Hammersons, which will bring John Lewis to the city and move Leeds from the eighth best retail offer to the fourth best retail offer in the UK. I would not want to forget the Aire Valley, which has huge potential for 35,000 jobs and homes and so on and, indeed, one of the things that I think is dear to many people's hearts, the park in South Leeds, which has been long awaited, with some very imaginative and inspiring cultural projects as well as providing green space for that neglected part of Leeds which, hopefully, will begin to regenerate and transform people's lives there.

I could look also at the statistics for burglary, the 45% reduction in burglary over the last ten years, and even though times are getting harder, last year there was a further 13% reduction. I could look at children, the work that you are going to hear this afternoon about working with families and children not only to reduce antisocial behaviour but to begin to protect vulnerable children and to begin to reduce looked-after children. Not only that, the evidence is quite clear that there is better attendance, better performance and better achievement. None of that could have been achieved without partnership and the best example I can give at the moment – because I want to move on to what we need to do – our real true partnership between the voluntary community and the Council is, of course, our Neighbourhood Networks, which are now a national example of how to look after the elderly in our community.

Fantastic achievements, a real sign that we are moving on, a different agenda, and I would not want to forget one of the most important things facing this city in terms of fuel poverty, in terms of all the work that has been done with £15,000 houses in Wrap-Up, tackling fuel poverty that way with insulation, and the more recent proposal to bulk buy energy so that we can pass it on to communities that cannot afford the energy prices that are now operating. I think that is something to

be quite proud of. I could go into many more, but it is a sign that partnership is beginning to work.

I would not want to leave this Chamber without saying that is not enough, there are bigger challenges. The biggest challenges will really mean that our partnership needs to step up to another level. It really needs to get closer with each other in terms of resources. Again, the example I will show, you have heard this statistic before, the life expectancy of a man in the inner city and a man in the outer city of 12.4 years is totally unacceptable. It is like measuring two continents; the only difference is, this is within four miles of each other. I think that is a real challenge, not just because we are getting now to the Health and Wellbeing Board having real powers, but this is not just the Council here; it is actually the whole of the city that needs to mobilise to close that gap. It is actually a shadow hanging over this city, in my view.

The other one, again as a challenge for the partnership, will be looking after our elderly. Again, I have mentioned these statistics 44% increase in over 65s in the next 20 years; 200% increase in over 80s. That is going to require much closer working between the Health and, indeed, Social Services. It is beginning to happen, the good news is. Some parts of the city have Social Services and Health doing one integrated assessment form, targeting the elderly, reducing the amount of old people going into residential or in hospitals and beginning to show real signs of progress in making sure our elderly are protected. A long way to go, more to do.

Let me bring you on to what I think is probably one of the things we will hear later on in the wind up and that is about NEETS and young people unemployed. The good news is, we have reduced in the last ten months the amount of NEETS from 1,900 to 1,500. That is good progress, but we have got to do more because there is about 12,500 young people under 24 who are desperate to look for work and jobs or apprenticeship and training. Tomorrow we launch the first Partnership between the College and the Council to make sure that we have one door for smaller/medium employers so we will employ the apprenticeship and we will be able to tackle one of the greatest ambitions I think this city can have and that is to be a NEET free city. That again will take a lot of hard work with employers, with the college and with ourselves. I think all those themes that we have not tackled, we have not cracked, are things that the partnership is going to look for.

The one theme that runs through that for me, if there is something we can say that partnership can achieve it is narrowing the gap. Our city is beginning to get more unequal. The gaps between the rich and the gaps between the poor are too great and one of the things that should inspire us for the next few months, years, maybe even a decade, is to be able to say that we are doing everything possible to reduce those gaps, to reduce those inequalities and provide people with protection and opportunities and actually reinforce the evidence that a city that is less unequal is a city that is actually strong and successful and actually thriving, and that must be the partnership's aspiration in the future.

I move the State of the City Report, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor James Lewis.

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: I second, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor John Procter.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I would like to start by welcoming our visitors who are here today. I would like to issue them really with an invitation to come and see us again and not to wait a year for State of the City meetings but you can come and see this spectacle every six weeks or so if you so wish, and I would encourage you to do so because what you will see is elected members dealing with the real matters that affect this city and the citizens who live within it on a day to day basis, and you will not say, dare I say it, the somewhat sanitised approach that you are seeing today.

There is, contrary to what the Leader of Council said, no debate today whatsoever, much as many of us would like to debate what is contained in these documents. There is simply an opportunity for members and indeed those here to be addressed which, as the Leader of Council knows, is not in our view the right way or this is the right forum to go about this.

There are lots of different vehicles by which we could get together with our partners, share ideas and thoughts; bringing it to a full Council such as this, in our view, is not the right way at all.

I should thank the Leader of Council, though, perhaps on behalf of the Lib Dem Group and, at varying, different times, the Morley Borough Independents and the Greens and certainly ourselves for highlighting our list of achievements over the last six or seven years, because all of the projects that he quoted were ones that were indeed thought of and conceived under the last administration. You may groan – go and walk across the road. You heard what he said, it is what this administration delivered.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Childish.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: It is well and good to have cat calls from the Leader of Council but the facts are different.

The people of this city expect us, we, the elected Councillors, to deliver services for them, whether that be in our parks and open spaces, whether that be in housing, in libraries, refuse services, the care for the elderly and vulnerable or the outcomes that are delivered for the children within this city. This is what the people expect of us and I believe that is what we were elected to do and deliver.

As you probably can gather, we in this Group have some considerable unease at the congratulatory, back-slapping approach that has been taken to this particular meeting and, dare I say it, the expansive documents that we see before us. A year ago it was 73 pages that were written for this particular meeting; this year it is 126 pages that are written for this meeting. I just wonder how much any of that is benefiting the people out there in the real world. I do not believe it is benefiting them at all.

The former Mayor of New York, Ed Koch, had a single question – “How am I doing?” If anyone of us was to go outside this place into the real world and ask that question, “How are we doing? How is this Council doing?” I think there would be a simple answer that we would get from virtually every single one, including, I suspect, our partners, and I am sure that would be “Can do better.”

The city which I am proud of and, indeed, every member of our Group is immensely proud of and immensely proud at representing, has made some staggering achievements over the last ten years and we are very proud to have been

at the centre of many of those. We look, as we always do, to play our full part in moving forward but I appeal to the Leader of Council to think of a different way by which we can more fully engage with our partner organisations because this, for sure, is not it. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Golton.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: Thank you, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: You would like to second John's comments. *(laughter)*

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: Pantomime seasons comes early to Leeds City Council. I have to confess, Keith Wakefield was far less a Baron Hardup than I thought he was going to be in his speech, and I have to say he set the tone just about right, I think, in terms of giving a perspective of the issues facing us and him in particular as Leader of the Council. Widow Twankey from Councillor Procter *(laughter)*...

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Ugly sister? *(laughter)*

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: I was thinking more of Baldilocks, really! I think we need to set the scene just right.

Our partners are here by invitation and it is right that we should offer them a certain amount of respect but in so doing I think we need to give them a reason for coming, because it is not just a matter of saying "Hello" to people that we all know and networking and saying "How are you doing? How is your organisation? I know, it's hard, isn't it? There's less money going around."

People out there in the city need us to get together and talk to each other. We know that the budget that we have got is one of the most taxing that we have ever had to deal with and we know that we got it just at the time when people's expectations are getting greater. We also know that as a Council we are looking at the services that we deliver and we know that we are not going to be able to deliver them in that manner ever again. The public out there know that and our job is not merely to have a look at these problems and reach for the press office and say, "Can you do us a press release and tell people how we have got a really bad dilemma but it is not really our fault?" What they actually want us to do is to show some leadership and to do something about it – not just to tell them how bad it is but to say, "Yes, it is bad but we are trying really hard to get a solution that you will like and that you can actually get involved in" and that is where our partners come in.

It is only through that kind of partnership work where the gaps that we are finding in our own circumstances can be filled by those of our partners and by working together we can actually achieve a lot more.

I am a little bit less possessive of the Leeds Arena than Councillor Procter. Admittedly, yes, it was our idea and we said we are going to have an arena for the city and we are going to do it whichever way we like and to do so sometimes you have to do controversial things. In our case I did myself out of a job as Chair of the Board of Directors of Leeds Bradford Airport and we sold it and there were cat calls from that side saying, "Oh, it is terrible and all the money that you got should be put into each ward." Actually, no, we invested that money and it was a leap of faith and we said if Government is not listening we are going to do it ourselves and it is a really

good example of how we can achieve it. Thankfully, through the Leadership of Councillor Wakefield, it is a programme that has come in on time and it will be a success for the city just at the time when we need it most. 2013 will be the very bottom of the recession that we have got. I know people say it is a double dip and might be a triple dip, but if we ever needed jobs, now is the time for it to happen and that arena will be a really good beacon to show that Leeds is a city where we have the capacity to rise like a phoenix out of the ashes.

In terms of the Trinity Quarter, I do not think that is anything to do with the Council, to tell you the truth. I think that is another example of another leap of faith where the private sector has aid, "We have confidence in the city and we are willing to put our money where our mouth is" and we should be very glad that we have a private sector that works with us that way. Can it work even better? Yes, but do you know what, sometimes it will work even better with our help.

When we are talking about the apprentices, the deal we have got with Leeds City College is that they will be the conduit through which we get more apprentices because not just the big companies do it but we get small and medium sized companies to do it as well. How do we get those small and medium sized businesses to know that this service is available? It is down to you and it is down to me as local leaders in our own communities to make sure that our companies know about it and get involved in it and therefore create more opportunities for the children we represent.

Today is about coming together and enjoying each other's company but more openly I want us to challenge each other, I want people to ask really hard questions and that may mean that all of us who are facing difficult decisions actually make the right one rather than the easy one. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Thank you, Tinkerbell!

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Finnigan.

COUNCILLOR FINNIGAN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I suspect if we were commenting on this report it would be very much like my school reports, which is satisfactory but could do better. Clearly our theme would be about localism, localisation, how you look to try and resolve some of these challenges on a local basis.

The Leeds Initiative does whatever the Leeds Initiative actually does. I am sure they are unaware of what we do; we are fairly unaware of what they do and they may feel that we are not that relevant. We do believe, like all of us, on a localised basis we are particularly relevant and in terms of working firmly for what is in the interests of our communities we would suggest and promote that that is the way forward in these challenging times.

Certainly in our area, if we are looking at partnerships with some of our partners, some of them are very good. Certainly with the local Policing team we work very closely, we look at local solutions to local problems, we make sure that we provide the finance that is necessary for them to achieve even better things and certainly we have seen crime levels in and around the Morley area drop as a result of that. That is about a partnership with the police, it is about a partnership with the Town Council, it is about a partnership with us as ward members.

We say the same in terms of our local primary and secondary schools, where we are there to provide that help and support and offer whatever opportunities and support they actually need to reach out to young people and offer them the opportunities and try and reduce the number of NEETS and the other challenges that young people actually face.

We do think that we need more of that localised approach, and certainly when we look at our NHS partners, whatever they are doing they do not talk to us about and we do not have that integrated, clear partnership that would allow us to be part and parcel of the solutions to problems that face our local communities. We have banged on about this for years and years and years, back to the jolly old days of the PCT where it was very difficult to promote an integrated approach. That is what we would welcome but we do feel that that needs to be at a specific localised level.

Certainly in Morley we have taken a very positive approach in terms of employment creation and we have looked to work with local employers to see what we can do to provide the help and support that they need to offer more training opportunities, more apprenticeships, more jobs to our local community. That is what we fundamentally believe our role is about.

We would also urge a certain amount of caution about Leeds LDF. Inevitably we were going to mention it this afternoon at this particular point. At the point where we are looking for jobs and we are looking for opportunities, we have to be very careful that that is a genuine sustainable future, because as the plan is written at this particular point, that is not a sustainable plan.

What we would say ultimately in conclusion is that we can and we must do better. As resources get tighter we have to look at better and more imaginative ways of facing those challenges, but that is only likely to happen if we have genuine partnership at a local level, it is only likely to lead to better services to our communities if there is a genuine opportunity to delegate the decision-making and a lot of that power down to a local level. If that is something that we reflect upon, that is something that we need to come out of any progress that we can make from here until next year. Local solutions to local problems. Thank you, Lord Mayor.
(Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Ann Blackburn.

COUNCILLOR A BLACKBURN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I welcome the State of the City Report. Obviously there are quite a lot of things happening in there and too short a time to comment on all of them but I would like to mention the insulation measures that have been carried out over time on Council homes and also particularly mention Wrap-Up Leeds, an initiative put forward by my Group and carried out with ourselves and, of course, the administration as well, which has provided free insulation to many private homes across Leeds, which will help the householder to keep their energy costs down and also reduce carbon emissions.

Talking about carbon emissions, of course, we want to get more cars off the road, we want to get more people on to public transport and also to get more people cycling, which brings me on to the subject that we need more cycle ways to promote this and this could be tied in, of course, with us lobbying to bring the Tour de France to Leeds. I hope that that is something that we can look to. Also, of course, on the health agenda that is walking which, again, is a healthy thing to do, and gets you from A to B.

I will just mention in that when I am talking about cars, I know a lot of people will say that, yes, the majority of Councillors have cars. Councillor David Blackburn and myself do not so we do use public transport, we do walk and unfortunately I do not cycle, I never got into the way of cycling, but I know it is a good form of exercise and a good way to get fit.

I go on to mention the challenges ahead and, of course, we know about the Council being chosen to be the leader, shall we say, in Universal Credit so that we can be trained to carry this out. It is not, of course – universal credit I think generally is a good idea but how it is to be administered, there are problems there. Again, in this report it mentions about the benefits that will be paid to new claimants from October next year and they will have to have bank accounts and also to apply for benefits people will have to go online, which is a problem because, of course, not everybody has access to computers and not everybody has IT skills and going on from there, of course, we have Housing Benefit which is to be paid into the tenant's rent account and we think that that could cause some problems as well because it is always easy when somebody is hard up to think "Yes, I can spend this money now and pay my rent later" and then the rent does not get paid and at the end of the day if that goes on, it ends up that they could be thrown out of the house. There are challenges there, particularly for the ALMOs. I know that they are being trained and getting their heads round how they can help with this but it will not be easy.

I know that there are lots of challenges there. As for partnership working, I think as Councillors we all do partnership working locally but yes, we would like to know more about what is going on regionally because, of course, it is true that there are only a few Councillors who are involved at that level.

I do look forward to the rest of what today holds and though last year was something new I am hoping that there will be an improvement today. Thank you.
(Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Wakefield.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I really did welcome all the comments bar the Acting Leader of the Opposition today and I have been listening very carefully like everybody else to what is turning people off politics. Why are people turning to technocrats in Europe? Why are people walking away from the main parties? Frankly, we have heard some of the reasons why.

There was a serious attempt today to engage partners in some of the challenges. I did not say we were doing brilliantly, I think Robert hit the nail on the head – there is more to do. We are OK but we have got a lot more to do. We have got to raise the level of partnership. When you have had two Whips' meetings, you have had your door open for deputations and the person does not come in and talk to you, you wonder what the motives are for his outburst today. That is a very sorry statement. I say it more in sorrow because I think...

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: You know our view.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: ...over the big issues, unlike on the LDF, then I think you have taken a very, very important stand, that is very helpful. You see, people want to hear have we got solutions. His Prime Minister is telling us that we are all in this together. Now suddenly John is prepared to cut the lines and just say no, we do not want to talk to people.

Let me just say what the real world is. The real world is that public expenditure has been brutally cut to the point where we alone cannot help to solve people's problems. We are now financially, like many other Authorities, straining the seams to survive. If we do not get in to partnership with the big organisations – and I mean public, private and voluntary – then how are we going to provide homes for our people who are struggling to find first time homes? How are we going to say to young people “We will do everything we can to provide you with a job or an apprenticeship or something that gives you hope for the future”? How can we say to our elderly people “We are doing everything we can to look after you with the Health Service, we have never worked so close”?

In fact, if you take John's logic we might as well all go home and do nothing and allow this city to fall into decline. I say to people, I am glad the partners are here today...

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: You were not listening.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: They are not listening.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: You wrote this speech before you came here, didn't you?

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: I didn't know you were going to be as bad as that. *(laughter)* I really did not.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: This is a grown up response, is it, to show to partners?

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: I am not going to do a tit for tat – we started this, you started that.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Do not claim credit for it then.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Honestly, that is not what people who are going through the hardest times of their lives expect us to say. I am glad the partnership are here today. If you want to discuss and debate, and I hope you do, then you will go to the workshops, which is precisely what they are there for, to see whether we can challenge each other to do better. That is what the afternoon is about.

I am sorry if you think this is not up to what your expectations were but frankly if we do not do this we are not going to be able to look people in the eyes and say “We understand your concerns about the Health Service, we understand your concerns about transport, we understand your concerns about fuel poverty, we understand why young people are struggling today because you just want to bury your head in the sand here and not talk to partners in a meaningful way.

That is why, Lord Mayor, I am pleased we are having this debate. I think we are committed to this for the future because without this, there is no reason why we should be here. You just say we are running the Council services, then the obvious thing is what services are you running. By the end of this public expenditure we will be cut by a further third. Our role should be trying to influence other partners in our aspirations and our vision for the future.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: We agree.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: I move the debate, Lord Mayor, thank you.
(*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: May I call for a vote on the receipt of the State of the City Report, please? (*A vote was taken*) That is CARRIED.

Council will now adjourn to allow a number of seminars, based on the key issues to emerge from the State of the City Report, to take place outside the Chamber. Details of the seminars are appended to the Order Paper. There are lists outside giving details of where each workshop is being held, and also reminding you which seminars you have been booked into. If you could return to the Council Chamber just before four o'clock so that we can start the second part promptly I should be grateful. Thank you.

(Council adjourned for a short time)

THE LORD MAYOR: Welcome back to this final session. I managed to get round all six workshops, even though I only managed about ten minutes at each one. I would like to thank all the speakers and all the Chairs.

Now we have the opportunity to hear from three speakers, each of whom can give us a unique perspective on the state of the city, its prospects and the opportunities and challenges.

We will hear from Nicole Thomas, the Deputy Member of the Youth Parliament representing the young people of Leeds. All the young people involved in the Youth Parliament are serious about representing the views of young people. Nicole is 14 and is a student at the E-ACT East Leeds Academy. We will be interested to hear what she says about the state of the city.

Mike Campbell is an international, national and local skills and labour market expert with extensive experience in research, policy analysis and strategy and lives in Leeds. He will seek to connect discussion about the state of the city to the wider policy agenda, in particular on issues of skills and employment.

Finally (hopefully) Alistair Brownlee is the 2012 Olympic Triathlon Champion and we are delighted to welcome him back to the Civic Hall. Alistair who, of course, lives and trains in Leeds, brings a unique perspective on the idea that the Olympic and Paralympic Games can inspire a generation.

I welcome all of you and the insight which we will be able to give us about our thinking today about the future of the city.

First, a warm welcome to Nicole Thomas. The floor is yours. (*Applause*)

MISS N THOMAS (Deputy Member Youth Parliament): Hello everybody and thank you for inviting me to speak to you today.

In preparation for this event I have read the 2011 State of the City Report. Having read it, I can see that it is vital to the citizens of Leeds. One of the obvious benefits is that people who read it can see the achievements and developments that are being made in Leeds. I hope with the publication of the 2012 Report the people of Leeds will see massive improvements in the state of their city.

As well as showcasing our achievements it is also important that this report is honest in highlighting the key issues that need to be addressed in Leeds. In the 2011 Report it states that the number of young people leaving school with at least five GCSEs including English and maths at grade A-C has risen from 40% in 2006 to 51% in 2010. However, this is still below the national average. This shows us that as a city we need to work together to continue improving the educational outcomes for all young people in Leeds.

That said, it would be a mistake to believe that improved GCSE results will solve all the problems facing our young people. In my role as a Deputy Member of the Youth Parliament I have spoken to thousands of young people. The message that they give me is that it is not about education, education, education. What happens outside of school is important.

In Leeds as well as across the country we need relevant work experience, apprenticeships and job opportunities. We need opportunities to build the skills we need in the adult world. This is why the UK Youth Parliament voted last Friday in the House of Commons to make a Curriculum for Life their top priority. I see no reason why Leeds cannot lead the way and provide opportunities our young people will not find anywhere else.

The last State of the City Report stated, "Our vision is for Leeds to be a truly child friendly city." The child friendly city concept is based on the belief that every child has the right to the best possible start in life, to have the highest standards of health and education and to be heard and influence the quality of their lives and their environment.

There is a lot of work being done to make the vision of having a child friendly city achievable. Just one example is the creation of the Voice and Influence team in Leeds City Council, who encourage the input of young people's ideas and priorities across Children's Services. There are many organisations working throughout Leeds to support young people to be safe, to achieve their best, to have influence, to have their voices heard. The combined work is essential to improving Leeds for young people.

I believe that Leeds is a place that encourages its young people to be the best that they can. I believe that by young people getting the chance to be great, no matter what their background or situation, Leeds will be truly a child friendly city and that would be pretty special.

Former US First Lady Ladybird Johnson once said, "Children are likely to live up to what you believe in them" so if you believe in us, give us the education, give us the opportunity, give us the skills we need and we will not only live up to your expectations, we will exceed them. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, Nicole. The quality of the content of your presentation and the delivery were exceptional. (*hear, hear*) Thank you very much indeed, and I think you have got a very bright future ahead of you.

Next, Professor Mike Campbell. I invite you to speak about skills and employment policy and its role in successful cities.

PROFESSOR M CAMPBELL: Thanks very much for inviting me. It is real pleasure to be here, Lord Mayor, colleagues, Councillors, staff of the City Council and, of course, partners.

Jobs and skills. I think nothing can be more important, actually, than this agenda. It is right at the heart of building prosperity for us all and it is what I have been involved in these last 30 years. I am going to try and draw on the experience of the times when I have been working on this in the 1990s in Leeds and in this region, but since then I have moved on to advise Government on employment and skills policy for ten years or so and I have worked an awful lot internationally in most of the big international organisations, including at the moment I am writing a guide for cities on how to generate more jobs in the recovery

I hope to draw on all that in just a few minutes and see if any of it is of relevance to you in the future and help your thinking about how to make Leeds the best city for jobs and skills in this country.

I start with the really big picture. The world, as you know, is changing extremely fast; patterns of opportunity and competitive advantage shifting right under our feet. As you may know in just six years' time China will be bigger than every country (economically speaking) in the European Union, all 27, put together and bigger than the United States of America. That is just an indication of the fundamental rebalancing of the world economy that is going on which is, frankly, a much more durable and much more challenging as well as full of opportunities for change than either the recession that we have just been through or the austerity conditions that we are going through now

Coming out of that, business as usual is certainly not an option. There is an excellent business thinker in the United States, Rosabeth Kanter, once said recently, what we have got to do about this is not just think outside the box, that is too small thinking - we have got to think outside the building.

This interdependence, this globalisation of the world bringing cities and countries closer together is probably the defining characteristic of our times. In 20 years' time the rich countries of the world which now account for two-thirds of the world economy, will only account for less than a half.

That is not the only challenge we must meet when thinking about jobs and skills. Demography is changing, we have an ageing workforce, we have a declining number of young people, increasing dependency ratios, increasing migration. You probably do not know but the proportion of the workforce born overseas in the last 15 years has increased by a half in this country, and that is an indication of these shifting global patterns.

Technological change, deep integration of information and communication technologies, increasing mobile ICT, social media orientation, and then there is all the big policy shifts, not just at national level but at international level and much more.

However you refer to these huge changes – some people have called it the great reset or the third industrial revolution or capitalism 3.0 – I just call it new times because I am not good with big words – whatever you call it, this is a fundamental change and the point is that these changes, these forces are changing our economy, changing the jobs that are available, destroying jobs, creating jobs and changing the skills we need to do them for good.

As the Prime Minister says, we are in a global race, but what I say is that if we do not want it to be a race to the bottom, we need to act now and act fast, so a few

words about the economy first, which reminds me of a time recently – I will not give you the exact date because it will give the game away – when a Government Minister said to me, “You know, when this Government came to power we were standing on the edge of an economic precipice but since then we have taken a giant step forward.” *(laughter)* No longer a Minister and you can all laugh because I am not going to tell you which political party he was from, just that he is no longer a Minister.

Why do I start with the economy rather than jobs and skills? Because jobs and skills are what economists call a derived demand. They depend on the state of the economy, they depend on the structure and performance of, in our case, the Leeds economy and that fundamentally means how do you get growth in a local economy? It is just, at one level, very simple – more businesses selling more goods and services to more people and to more businesses in Leeds, the UK and overseas, and stated like that it is quite simple, but it is very hard to keep your eye exactly on that ball.

It is those business decisions, the hiring, the firing, the management, the business strategies, the competitiveness of those companies in Leeds which decides whether we sink or swim and, if you like figures like I do, just think of this. Just one per cent improvement in Leeds’ economic growth is worth £200m a year, every year, for ever. In its turn it would create around 4,000 new jobs.

How do we achieve economic success? How do we get that growth? In headline terms, the following.

First of all, it ultimately depends on demand and there are a number of ways into this. Firstly, yes, we can buy local; yes, we can help integrate the local economy better; more intra-city trading between businesses; improving supply chains within the city. All of those will help reduce leakages from the Leeds economy and spread success. It also ought to be pointed out that better paid and better off citizens also increase demand, especially on locally consumed services.

That does not make a huge difference. Leeds is less than one-and-a-half per cent of the national economy and the national economy is less than three per cent of the global economy so actually, at the end of the day, success depends almost entirely on exporting to the rest of the country and the rest of the world.

Global trade is growing by 50% faster than the global economy and the global economy itself is growing twice as fast as the UK economy. We have got to think global, act local. We need to be an international city, deeply connected to and integrated into the wider economy and if you do not believe me you can believe the Brookings Institution Report that came out last week showing that the most export orientated cities in the world, the biggest trading cities in the world, are both the most productive and the most wealthy.

Yes, we can do lots of stuff on the demand side but what about the supply side? How good are our businesses? How competitive are they? How innovative are they? Do we have the best managers? Do we have the best technologies? The best ideas? Do we have the most creative people?

We have to generate the conditions for success by improving those supply side conditions, and what can we do? We can improve the competitiveness of existing businesses and help them move up the value chain, help them raise productivity, help them raise margins and value-added. Secondly, we can attract new and additional businesses who are productive, competitive and preferably world

class – an Apple or a Google would be quite nice, wouldn't it? Thirdly, we can build our own, develop sustainable new start-up businesses generated through a deep entrepreneurial culture.

I have also learned over these years that economic success depends on being different and distinctive, differentiated, as we economists like to say, to create and maintain a competitive edge. We should always ask ourselves, what do we want to be famous for? Perhaps most of all we must share the benefits of success geographically across our communities and across social groups. It is easier to share gain than share pain, of course and, as the spirit level has shown us, more equality is not just good for the poor but it is good for all of us.

What else can I say about jobs? If I am saying it is the economy, stupid, that creates jobs, is that all we can do? If we increase the employment rate by just one per cent in Leeds it would add £125m a year to our economy. We do desperately need more jobs. We have 41,000 people unemployed, double what it was just ten years ago. Beyond improving the economy, as I have talked about, is there anything else we can do in relation to jobs?

Yes, there are three things we can do. First, we need to create more jobs for Leeds citizens. As you probably know, there are 85,000 people from outside Leeds who work in Leeds and our labour force in Leeds has grown by a quite staggering 80,000 in just the last ten years. We have created, or business has created as well as public and third sector organisations have created, many, many more jobs than the unemployment figures suggest.

Of course, I am not suggesting erecting the equivalent of a Berlin Wall around Leeds to prevent commuting or to prevent migration at all, obviously not, but it is possible to ensure that Leeds citizens have better access to the job opportunities that do arise.

On the demand side cities can work with employers, recruitment agencies and Job Centre Plus and work programme providers to make it easier for employers to hire more local people and to hire more unemployed people and more people who are not in education, employment or training. On the supply side we can work and do work with schools, colleges and communities and use excellent labour market intelligence and careers advice. That can also help, but skilling people up is the central issue, and I will come to that in just a moment.

There is more we can do on the labour market side. We can try to get more job rich growth, developing and attracting businesses that are more job intensive than some of our economically important but low employment intensity businesses. For example, adult social care, child development, health care, household services and cities can help enable markets to develop in some of these areas.

Thirdly, we do not just need more jobs, we need better jobs. One in five people in work in the UK, more than six million people, are still in poverty although they are in jobs, and the so-called squeezed middle, unlike many people in this room, have barely seen and are unlikely to see any increase in their living standards in recent years or in near future years, as the Resolution Foundation has recently so clearly shown.

We have too many precarious jobs, insecure jobs, temporary jobs, part-time jobs. There are 1.4m people in the UK in part-time jobs who want full-time jobs. Too many low skilled jobs, too many low paid jobs with poor working conditions and this,

of course, creates the working poor. The labour market is hollowing out with many middle levels disappearing altogether and you get the creation of what some people call an hour glass economy, an hour glass labour market. This has the disastrous effect, of course, not only of trapping people in low paid jobs because they cannot move up the hour glass very easily, but it reduces social mobility and increases income inequality as well.

We need more better paid, higher skilled jobs and we could work with employers, for example, to introduce the living wage; we could use public procurement creatively; we could encourage the best employers to work with their supply chains as we did at the UK Commission all the time.

In the end, we do get the jobs that our economy deserves and so in the end what we need, again, is more companies to move up the value chain, improve the quality of their goods, develop more sophisticated products and services and that would raise productivity, raise earnings, raise profits and give you better jobs. In short, as in many cities, we need more businesses to raise their game to the standards of the best.

Skills, then. What do I have to say about skills in relation to all this? Of course, it is absolutely crucial because at the end of the day people have to have the skills that employers need if they are to be successfully employed. A city's skills are also a powerful force in attracting new businesses and developing new businesses. As Ed Glaeser, probably the prominent urbanist in the whole world, has said, the real heart of the city is its people, the real heart is its human capital.

Indeed, skills are probably the single most important determinant of economic success for people, for businesses and for cities. Skill, some people say, are the new global currency.

For example, if we raise the skill levels in this city to those of, shall we say, Helsinki, we could add £250m a year to the Leeds economy, every year, for ever, in perpetuity. High skill cities, like high skill countries, are successful cities.

A fifth of all Britain's economic growth in the last 20 years has been associated with an increase in the skills of the workforce and you may or may not know but businesses who do not train their staff are more than twice as likely to go out of businesses than people who do train their staff. Skills pay, learning pays – and yet. Yet the UK is not great in terms of the international skills premier league. We are ranked 20th in the world in terms of low and intermediate level skills, and 12th on high skills. As for our young people, maths, science and reading skills are respectively ranked as 28th, 16th and 25th in the world, a position that has significantly declined, actually, in the last ten years. Leeds skills are, I am afraid, to say, no better than that average.

The key to people getting jobs and progressing up the labour market is skills and qualifications. The key thing is to skill people up; if not, we will surely let them down. A half of all new jobs are high skill jobs and we have at the moment only a third of our workforce in this city at high level skill level, if you will.

Worse still, it is the already poor who are skill poor and this is transmitted through the generations. For example, and we heard from Nicole around this, if you take the poorest ten per cent of households in the city, they achieve, roughly speaking, 39% of people from the most deprived households achieve five GCSEs A*-C. In the ten per cent least deprived households in Leeds – that is, if you like, the

richest – then the proportion of children who achieve five GCSEs A-C is more than 75%. This is how people are excluded from jobs and prosperity.

What we have to do is convince more people and more businesses of the benefits of skills and qualifications, focusing on job specific skills, transferable skills, as well as academic qualifications. You may like to know, if you do not already, that in countries like Germany, Austria and Switzerland, fully 40% of school leavers undertake apprenticeship programmes of three years' duration or more. I invite you to consider how many do that in the United Kingdom or in Leeds.

I absolutely congratulate the city on the establishment, of course, of the Apprenticeship Training Agency tomorrow. This is surely a key to the future. I remember in one city in the United States, Gary Indiana – if any of you have been to Gary in Indiana you will know why I am saying this – they used to have a huge banner over the City Hall in Gary, Indiana, which just said, "Beat poverty – get educated."

In addition to raising people's skills we have to reduce the skill mismatches that are prevalent in our economy, where unemployment exists with unfilled vacancies. Yes, there are 41,000 people unemployed but depending how you calculate it, there is anywhere between five and 15,000 vacancies currently available. Getting that match right between what employers need and the skills that people have is very, very important and I think we need a permanent dialogue between schools, further and higher education and employers to make Leeds the skills capital, the human capital, if you like, of England.

I hope you think that some of that is common sense. As Voltaire once said, common sense is not so common. *(laughter)* Think about it.

Finally, let me say this in my last minute or so. I have talked a lot – or a little anyway – about skills and jobs and what can be done to try and improve skills and jobs in cities in general and in Leeds in particular, but I have learned something else in working on this agenda, particularly working these last ten years with Government. It is this, that success depends not just on what you do but how you do it. Governance, governance at the local level, is especially important.

I finish with five headline points. How do we have a well-governed city in relation to jobs and skills?

First, leadership. Ambition and vision are absolutely key.

Second, the policies and actions that we take need to be joined up, need to be co-ordinated. We need to develop what I call a whole system approach, creating, if you like, an eco-system of all the actions and activities to make sure they join up and create what some people call a virtuous circle where they all reinforce each other rather than hurt each other.

Thirdly, we need a sense of common purpose, a sense of consensus and reciprocity amongst all the major players – employers, providers, people of the city and so on. If you do that you do create an unstoppable force.

Fourthly, as you know very well and you are increasingly good at, it is all about relationships. It is about your partners it is about connections, it is about networks, it is about collaboration. It is about what Robert Putnam called social capital.

Finally, it is about creativity, innovation and ideas – ideas above all else. As Keynes once said, “Ideas are more powerful than is commonly supposed; indeed the world is ruled by little else.”

In all of these five areas of governance as well as many of the specific actions that I have talked about, the role of Leeds City Council is, of course, pivotal.

Better lives, a better city, better businesses, better communities. All of these depend on skills, jobs and the economy and I hope that some of my remarks you found interesting enough to help us better make Leeds the best city for schools and jobs in the UK. The challenge is really great, I know, but the prize is also enormous. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: First of all can I give thanks to Professor Campbell for an extremely interesting and thought provoking speech. Thank you very much. *(Applause)*

Alistair, I did give you a build-up before you arrived but I do not think I really needed to. Colleagues, friends, let me introduce Alistair Brownlee, Olympic Triathlon Champion. Over to you, Alistair. *(Applause)*

MR A BROWNLEE: Thanks for having me. I probably will not be anywhere near as long or academic as the last talk but I will try my best.

It is fantastic to be here. I am a life-long Leeds resident – well not quite, actually, I was born in Dewsbury which is a severe disappointment to me ever since but I moved to Leeds very early on so it is probably not too bad. Leeds really has played a massive part in my career. I tell everyone why it is so good – it is because it is a big city and for triathlon you need a big city for its facilities. You need a couple of pools, a 50m pool, a 25m pool, you need gyms, you need tracks, you need people to train with, you need bike routes, you need good coaches, you need access to almost everything that you do not get in small towns but you also need fantastic access to countryside, you need to be able to get out of the city very quickly into open countryside and run in forests and cycle through lanes and on moors and that is why Leeds is fantastic. It has obviously played a massive success in my career and also the five, ten athletes who have moved to Leeds to train because it is an absolute world triathlon super power at the moment.

I was counting up today, in the last three or four years at World Championships and the Olympics, Leeds would not have only been the best training centre in the world but we would either have been the best or the second best country in the world, so when we talk about Yorkshire and the Olympics doing very well, Leeds has absolutely eclipsed that in the last few years in triathlon. There is not a training centre that comes anywhere close to us as far as getting results at World Championship and Olympic level and I do not think that is recognised anywhere near enough. Obviously Johnny and me do quite well but this year we had an World Under 23 female champion, a bronze medallist as well in the boys’, a Junior European Champion, so right across the age groups there is really no-one who can compete with that.

I think, moving on to that, we talk so much about inspiration and legacy after the Olympics and some people say we are doing a good job of it, some people say we are doing a bad job of it. I try and talk a lot about really we are not trying to inspire necessarily the kids to go out and do sport and try a sport or be active; I think

it is so much about inspiring the people. You can inspire the kids all you want but if they have not got a swimming club to go to or a running club to go to or a football club or a field to go and play football on, you are wasting your time. You need the people to be there to allow them to give them their chance.

The one question that I have always hated being asked, and I have done a few interviews over the last months, I always get, "Who was your inspiration when you were a kid?" I have to give the normal answer, Haile Gebrselassie - it was Lance Armstrong but that has changed quite quickly (*laughter*) and so on and so forth, but I was never particularly happy with that answer. It hit me a couple of weeks ago when I got asked this and I actually thought, no, they are not my inspiration. It is the people I have met along the way, the people when I went down to Aireborough Swimming Club when I was an eight year old kid and there was a shouting man at the end of the lane, it was him who made me go on. When I went to school and Leeds Schools Cross Country when someone introduced me to that as a seven year old kid, that had a bigger effect on my career than almost anyone else, and it really is the people all along. It is inspiring those people that makes the biggest difference, I think.

Moving on to that, I think the support in Leeds, I think it is a fantastic city but I do not think the Council is being particularly proactive at all at supporting athletes. I have been a massive proponent of Leeds, I have been out there selling it very well and saying how great it is, but actually my sport has cost me – me, through grants I have paid for it - we pay about £13,000 a year on lane space, we do not actually get necessarily the pool time we want to get day in, day out. Facilities are fantastic in South Leeds but not necessarily great in North Leeds. They are very well used as well, which is fantastic to see. I was down at the John Charles Centre this morning like I am a few times a week and the lanes are absolutely crammed, which is wonderful to see but I want a nice clean lane with some space to swim in and not jostling with all the crowds all the time. It is good sometimes but not all the time. I think that is one thing definitely to think of. Facilities are very important.

Going on from that if I can get across three big points today, the first one would be attitude towards sport. I think, yes, fantastic, there is obviously the legacy side of things but it is selling what we have got in Leeds already. I think there is a fantastic - obviously triathlon is fantastic, I know a lot of the diving, we have got a fantastic heritage for cycling as well that probably almost goes unnoticed apart from Lizzie from Otley, she has done very well, also another young guy, Josh Edmondson, who is just about to sign for a big team. There is a lot of sport that goes on unknown and I think Leeds can really sell on that.

Going on to say, the attitude to allow elite sport, allow priorities and lane time is really important so the athletes can swim or use the track when they want to use it and as far as going out cycling, I think that is just an attitude.

I think the second thing is facilities, usage of the facilities and making them available for elite sport throughout the day. I was in Stirling last week and they came to me and said to me, "When do you want a lane?" I know it's Scotland and there are not many people there which probably helps a little bit (*laughter*) but they said, "When do you want a lane?" I said, "Oh, this is a novelty, I normally have to swim when I get told at home" and they were, "Come to Scotland, you can swim whenever you want" and I was like, "No, I am all right, but thank you very much anyway."

I think participation, going back to that first point, is a really big thing. Triathlon especially, which obviously I now more about than any other sport, there is

a massive window for anyone to have a go. It is no longer the sport that is reserved for mad, elite psychopaths. Literally anyone can do it. If you want to do it to get fit, do it for charity, do it for a bit of fun, if you want to do a race that only takes half an hour, there is something for everyone and Leeds has got a big chance to put on fantastic events at the moment. We have got some brilliant venues like Roundhay Park but there is an absolute headache trying to put on events and I think it is an attitude that needs to change and I think it has to come from the top, it has to come from the Council. We can talk all we want about legacy but then if I go on and say I want to put on an event and someone goes, "No, sorry, we cannot close that road", we are not going to get very far, are we? I think that is very, very important.

To get across again, the attitude. It is the people that you are going to encourage to go down to the club on a Friday night in the cold and the wet and it is making it as easy as you can for them, I think, week in, week out. Leeds is good, it has got a fantastic structure but I think there is a long way to go.

Thank you very much for listening to me. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Alistair, thank you very much for taking time out of your very busy schedule and coming here today and for your inspirational words. We are very grateful to you.

That brings us to the end of this meeting. May I thank members and partners for their involvement this afternoon. There is tea in the Banquet Hall and everybody is welcome to come to the Banquet Hall, so thank you very much.

(The meeting closed at 4.40 pm)