

LEEDS CITY COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

Held on

Wednesday, 16th January 2013

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, 16th JANUARY 2013

THE LORD MAYOR: Good afternoon everybody. Happy New Year and a special welcome to members of the public in the public galleries.

First of all, the usual announcement about mobile phones. Please make sure that yours is switched off. As usual, if I hear any annoying jingles during the Council meeting I shall demand £5 towards the Lord Mayor's Charity.

I have got a number of announcements. First of all it is with great sadness that I report the death of Sapper Richard Walker from Leeds, who was killed on 7th January 2013. Sapper Walker was with the 28th Engineer Regiment on his first deployment to Afghanistan. Can I please ask you to stand for a moment's silence.

(Silent tribute)

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Secondly, I would like to offer congratulations to the following, who were honoured in the Queen's New Year's Honours List:

Mrs Catherine Grace Turner – OBE;
Miss Nicola Adams – MBE;
Mr Malcolm Brown – MBE;
Mr Alistair Edward Brownlee – MBE;
Miss Hannah Cockcroft – MBE;
Mr Robert Emile Collins – MBE;
Mr Peter Grubb – MBE;
Mrs Inderjeet Hunjan – MBE;
Mrs Jillian Lesley Johnson – MBE;
Mr Michael Rossiter – MBE;
Mrs Joyce Fieldhouse – British Empire Medal;
Mrs Joan Villiers – British Empire Medal.

Congratulations to all of them. *(Applause)*

Can I also offer my congratulations to Councillor Thomas (Tom) Murray, who has been nominated by the Labour Group to be the next Lord Mayor of Leeds, the 120th.
(Applause)

Finally, I have agreed to the inclusion of a late item in respect of the Natural Resources and Waste Development Plan document which will be dealt with at Item 7.

ITEM 1 – MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS HELD ON 14th NOVEMBER (x2)
AND 28th NOVEMBER 2012

THE LORD MAYOR: Item 1, the Minutes of the previous meetings.
Councillor James Lewis.

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: I move, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR G LATTY: Seconded, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: All those in favour? *(A vote was taken)* That is CARRIED. Thank you very much.

ITEM 2 – DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

THE LORD MAYOR: 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? *(None)* Thank you. Please can Members, by a show of hands, confirm that they have read the list and agreed its contents so far as it relates to their own interests. *(Show of hands)* Thank you.

ITEM 3 – COMMUNICATIONS

THE LORD MAYOR: Item 3, Chief Executive.

THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Councillors should know that Nick Boles MP, the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Planning, has written in response to the resolution of Council at its November meeting regarding planning permissions. The response has been circulated to all Members of Council.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you.

ITEM 4 – DEPUTATIONS

THE LORD MAYOR: Item 4, Deputations. Chief Executive, please.

THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. There are two deputations: one, Leeds Children's Mayor regarding the winning manifesto – 'Leeds offers fun, free, fitness for the family'; and two, Friends of Woodhouse Moor regarding the route of NGT.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor James Lewis.

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: Move that they be received, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR G LATTY: Seconded, Lord Mayor.

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

DEPUTATION ONE – LEEDS CHILDREN'S MAYOR

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.

OLIVER LARKING: Good afternoon. I am Oliver Larking from Bardsey Primary School, aged ten. This is my friend, James.

If I was Children's Mayor of Leeds I would promote a scheme to encourage children and their families to get outside, get some fresh air and get fit and healthy. My manifesto is based on the wish - there are places and spaces to play and things to do that are open to all in all areas of Leeds.

My idea is called Open Aire Active Zone.

I was inspired by the London 2012 Olympics and how fit and healthy all the athletes that took part are.

We already have play parks in our towns and villages in Leeds and I think we should have an area for exercise joined on to these parks. This area will be "Open Aire" but have a roof cover like a sail on stilts around the zone to provide shelter from the rain and mean that people have not got the excuse of bad weather to get outside and exercise.

The zone will have a few pieces of gym equipment that will be mechanical - not electronic, because they are outside. The equipment will be like a rower, a stepper, and a cross trainer etc. It is basically like a small gym but it is outside and it is for free. The Council will provide the equipment to start with and they may be able to get some National Lottery money to help pay for it.

Each zone will be next to a playing field as well so that other activities can be organised by the zone manager. These can be things like family rounders matches or table tennis tournaments. These will be advertised with posters around the zone so that people will get to know about them and join in.

One idea I had was to have a notice board type box on each piece of equipment to use as advertising space. The box would have a locking lid and the advertising poster can be changed by the zone manager. A local business makes a poster advertising their business and when someone is on the equipment they can read about it. The local business will pay a small sum of money, say £10 per week, to have their poster on the equipment and it helps to provide some income and fund the active zone.

I think this idea will get whole families out and about together. (*Standing ovation*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor James Lewis.

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

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Graham Latty.

COUNCILLOR G LATTY: Seconded, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: All those in favour? (*A vote was taken*) I think that is unanimous. Thank you very much.

Thank you, Oliver, for attending this afternoon and for giving such an excellent speech. Thank you for what you have said. You will be kept informed of the consideration that your comments will receive. Good afternoon. (*Applause*)

DEPUTATION TWO – FRIENDS OF WOODHOUSE MOOR

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 W MCKINNON: Thank you, good afternoon. My name is Bill McKinnon. I am the chairman of the Friends of Woodhouse Moor, a group dedicated to the protection and enhancement of the city's most intensively used park, a park which provides a vital green lung for the inner city residents of the densely built-up surrounding area. My companions are Tony Paley-Smith, Dawn Carey Jones, Claire Randall and Beth Booton.

Whether they live in the countryside or the city centre, the outer suburbs or the inner city, human beings have the same fundamental need for green space. This is one of the reasons why recently Councillors worked so hard to provide the city centre with its own park-like area on Sovereign Street. It is also one of the reasons people are so concerned about changes taking place which could result in loss of the green belt.

Your concerns about the need for a city centre park and people's worries about loss of the green belt are understandable and shared by everyone who cares for the environment and the green space needs of their fellow human beings.

Sadly, in the past there has been less recognition of people's green space needs than there is now. This is why, in the second half of the 20th century, motorways were built across Holbeck and Hunslet Moors, degrading these ancient commons and dividing communities in two.

Now, in recognition of the damage that would be caused to Woodhouse Moor by the trolleybus route that was proposed three years ago, the NGT team have come up with an alternative route which would have the trolleybuses keeping to the existing road and not encroaching at all on Woodhouse Moor, or the broad grass verges and York stone pavements which border Woodhouse Lane where it crosses the moor.

This alternative route would spare historic Monument Moor, which was the site of the city's first outdoor gymnasium and also the setting for the Festival of Britain Land Travelling Exhibition opened by the Princess Royal on 23rd June 1951. The paths on Monument Moor today are the same paths that were laid for the Exhibition. They are the same paths that photographs show the Princess walking along escorted by the Lord Mayor as she made her way to the Exhibition's entrance. These paths, a tangible reminder of the Moor's proud history, will be saved for posterity if you choose the second route option being presented to you by the NGT team.

Hyde Park and Woodhouse is home to many thousands of students. Woodhouse Moor is their local park. Its beauty gives them and their parents a very favourable impression of Leeds, but it can be made to look even better than it does now. With money from the Heritage Lottery Fund, the park on both sides of Woodhouse Lane can be enhanced, making the drive along Woodhouse Lane where it crosses the moor as pleasant as a drive across the Stray into Harrogate. However, should you choose the trolleybus route option put forward three years ago, the one that would see trolleybuses running across Monument Moor, it would rule out forever the possibility of a grant to improve the entire park. The extra trees on Monument Moor that the NGT team promised as part of the earlier option, trees intended to screen the trolleybuses, would be very poor compensation indeed.

When the original proposal to run trolleybuses across the moor was first put forward three years ago, there was incredulity. No-one could understand why it was necessary to widen what is already the widest stretch of the A660 between the town centre and Lawnswood. The outcry was so great that NGT project manager Dave Haskins said, and I quote: "People started to run at us with torches saying they were going to hang us from the trees". I am sure he was exaggerating but people do feel very protective of the moor. That is why seven years ago Council Leader Mark Harris scrapped a proposal to build a pay and display car park on the same part of the moor that is under threat from NGT. He said at the time that the Executive Board had never before received so many letters and emails on a single issue.

We were told in July that the trolleybus route could not be altered but now the NGT team has offered us an alternative route which would mean no road widening or running of trolleybuses across the park. This is the commonsense option, the option that preserves vital green space in an inner city area. We would much rather not have the scheme at all, but if you are determined to go ahead with it, against the expressed wishes of so many local people, then we urge you to adopt the second option being offered, the one that leaves Woodhouse Moor intact. If you do not choose this option, people might think it was put forward merely as a sop to public opinion, a clever ploy designed to make people think that their concerns were being listened to.

Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor James Lewis.

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: Thank you. I move that the matter be referred to the West Yorkshire Integrated Transport Authority for consideration.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Graham Latty.

COUNCILLOR G LATTY: Seconded, Lord Mayor.

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

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.

MR W MCKINNON: Good afternoon and thank you.

ITEM 5 – CALCULATION OF THE COUNCIL TAX AND BUSINESS RATES TAX BASES FOR 2013/14 AND DETERMINATIONS IN RELATION TO COUNCIL TAX PREMIUMS AND DISCOUNTS

THE LORD MAYOR: Item 5, Councillor Wakefield, please.

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

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor James Lewis.

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: I second, Lord Mayor.

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

ITEM 6 – RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE DECEMBER EXECUTIVE BOARD – CONSULTATION OUTCOMES ON LOCAL COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME

THE LORD MAYOR: Item 6, Councillor Wakefield.

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

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor James Lewis.

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: I second, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Finnigan.

COUNCILLOR FINNIGAN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am speaking very briefly on agenda item 6, which is the Local Council Tax Support Scheme which replaces Council Tax Benefit from this April.

I want to say a couple of things. One is, I think here in Leeds we have made a good fist of what is a very difficult and very complicated job in terms of introducing a new scheme that works on a localised basis. I think Steve Carey is to be commended for the work that he has done, I think we have got probably one of the better schemes that exist in the West Yorkshire area.

The other issue is to raise concerns about the whole idea of introducing a local Council Tax Support Scheme which leaves those who are presently getting a full rebate likely to face significant sums in terms of payments in the new scheme, and that really is, in many ways, in my view a return to the Poll Tax days. It is going to bring a lot of people into the CRT scheme that have not been near the CRT scheme for 20-odd years. It is an unwise move, in my view, even if we accept, as we do, that welfare reform is essential.

This particular element, in terms of what it is going to save, is small in comparison to other welfare reforms but it has a significant impact on a lot of people. It drags them into the CRT scheme, it starts them in through the Magistrates' process, it adds additional charges on to the initial Council Tax that they are going to have to pay and I think it is unfair and unreasonable. I would, even at this particular

late stage, suggest that we need a more cautious approach and we need to look seriously at central Government as to whether this scheme should continue on. It is unwise and is going to create all sorts of controversy and chaos, it is going to have an impact in terms of the revenue stream into the Council. It really does seriously need to be looked at again by Central Government but in terms of what we are trying to do locally I think we are to be commended, all of us, for introducing a scheme that is at least workable under the difficult circumstances we find ourselves in. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Wakefield.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I appreciate those comments made by Councillor Finnigan because I think Leeds, like many other Local Authorities, when they passported Council Tax up, were very concerned because they had a ten per cent cut and that meant that we could not passport it or we could not protect all the people, only the pensioners.

I think we were certainly, as a Council, in a dilemma because at the same time the same people that are going to pay Council Tax were being hit with Housing Benefits, with Tax Credits and other forms of social support.

I think we took a very long, hard look at this and for those members who want updating, we decided to protect all groups, people with war pensions, war widow pensions, carers, severely disabled and single parents with children under five. I think that was right and I think it was proper because they are extremely vulnerable groups.

It will cost about £1.4m at a time when we are making severe cuts but I think it is the right thing to do. Many Authorities passported the cuts straight on. We have been one of the unusual Authorities in West Yorkshire, as Robert points out, that actually tried to do something to intervene to protect vulnerable people.

I think the point that I would make on this issue is that we have now got £1.4m in the budget at a time, as I said, when we are making some real cuts. The real important thing is that not only does it hit us, as Robert says, it hits people who are already being hit by all the changes in the welfare benefits.

One of the things that we have got to do is think about how we can protect them, because I am pretty sure come the Council Tax bills go out to these people for the first time, they will be faced whether they feed their children, whether they buy fuel for their house or whether they pay the Council Tax and rent and I think that is a great tragedy and a shame. I know that we will do everything to make sure that next year where there are talks of even further cuts in that support, this administration will do everything it can to protect those groups. Thanks, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

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

ITEM 7 – RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE JANUARY EXECUTIVE BOARD – NATURAL RESOURCE AND WASTE DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT

THE LORD MAYOR: Item 7, Councillor Peter Gruen.

COUNCILLOR P GRUEN: I move in the terms of the Notice.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor James Lewis.

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: I second, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Leadley.

COUNCILLOR LEADLEY: My Lord Mayor, this document is the first major piece of the Local Development Framework jigsaw to be put in place, and it should be welcomed. The Development Department (Minerals, Waste, Recycling and Contaminated Land Section) – to give it what I think is its full title – works quietly and even obscurely but always seems efficient and is generally successful in dealing with some fairly colourful characters out there in the world of skip hire, landfill and waste recycling, for instance.

Some adjustments were made to the Development Plan document after it had been to public examination, but they were few and minor. Minerals officers are to be congratulated on this.

A procedural difficulty is mentioned in the additional information. Scrutiny Board (Economy and Culture) Members remarked that they were not asked to scrutinise the document until very late in the process – in fact not until after the Inspector's report had been received. This needs looking at. Perhaps the Development Plan Panel should be recognised within the Council constituted as a Scrutiny Board to avoid complaints that sections of the LDF have not been scrutinised in a way which satisfies legal requirements. Thank you, my Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Peter Gruen.

COUNCILLOR P GRUEN: Can I thank Councillor Leadley for his comments. I am sure Mr Farrington has listened to the thanks that you give and the Council gives and he will pass those on to the appropriate officers. I think you make a fair point in terms of Development Plan Panel and I will certainly look at it. Thank you.

THE LORD MAYOR: All those in favour? *(A vote was taken)* That is CARRIED. Thank you very much.

ITEM 8 – QUESTIONS

THE LORD MAYOR: We now move on to Questions. Councillor Carter.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Will the Exec Board Member for [Neighbourhoods, Planning and Support Services] tell Council whether the financial institutions supposedly backing the Beeston Hill and Holbeck and Little London PFI scheme have now obtained appropriate consents from their boards to back the scheme?

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: Councillor Peter Gruen.

COUNCILLOR P GRUEN: Can I thank Councillor Carter for his question, number one, in the afternoon and, unusually for me, I am actually going to read you the reply.

The Council has been working closely in recent weeks with a preferred bidder and its funders to confirm a revised programme towards financial close of the PFI project. Until very recently we were led to believe that the final due diligence arrangements were due to be resolved to enable the banks' boards to sign off formally their credit approvals and for financial close to take place during January.

Some details related to this have again taken longer for the preferred bidder to conclude than we hoped for, which has caused a further delay in the timetable for the banks to sign off the funding.

The preferred bidder and lenders have, however, confirmed this week that they are fully committed to the project and have agreed a revised timetable which they say should see credit approval secured by the middle of February and financial close shortly after.

Lord Mayor and Council, we will continue to work, as we have done for the last two and a half years, with all the relevant parties to bring this long-awaited, long overdue project to contractual close so that works can begin as soon as possible to improve existing homes and provide new homes in the Little London, Beeston Hill and Holbeck areas.

I would like to add my thanks to local Councillors and the local Member of Parliament who have been exceptionally patient in terms of what has been happening over the last two and a half years.

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

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Yes, my Lord Mayor. Councillor Gruen, in response, I do understand the delicate nature of the issue and just remind him, as I am sure he is aware, we have now had this whole series of reassurances from him giving different dates. We expected closure in September, then it was going to be before Christmas, then it was going to be January, now it is the middle of February.

Is he in a position to reassure Council that in view of what he has just said in terms of the discussion that is going on with the funding institutions, that we are not going to be requested for a further contribution from this Local Authority.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Gruen.

COUNCILLOR P GRUEN: That is a very difficult question to answer but I appreciate exactly where Councillor Carter is coming from and if I was in his position I would ask the same questions and hold the Executive to account. He is absolutely right.

It is a fine balance of what I can say at this moment in time. I think all those Members who know me well will know that I would like to say more than I am able to say. The fact is that if it were not for the Council, this project would have been dead months and months ago. The fact that we injected money, the fact that we have held together and brokered and done everything we can at the highest levels within the Authority, both officer and Member, shows our determination and our commitment.

We know that the people in this area of Leeds have been desperate for this scheme to go ahead for ten years and it has not happened. We have done everything possible and I can reassure Council we continue to do everything possible and, indeed, Opposition Leaders have helped along the way at certain times.

It is hugely frustrating that we are still in the position we are in but I do not think I am, in all honesty, able to give the reassurance that Councillor Carter has sought at the end of his question. What I am able to say is, as matters move ahead I will ensure that Group Leaders are fully informed and kept apprised. Thank you.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Chapman.

COUNCILLOR CHAPMAN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Can the Executive Member for Development and the Economy confirm that one of the options currently being considered for the West Park Centre is to carry out the required electrical work as soon as possible, so the temporary closure can be lifted and people can get back to using it again?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Richard Lewis.

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Following the temporary closure of the West Park Centre an independent report was commissioned and I believe that the Weetwood and Kirkstall Members were both consulted on the brief for that, which highlighted the minimum works required to facilitate the centre's reopening.

This report estimated that such works would cost £931,000, which includes carrying out the electrical installation works and a new hot and cold water system. However, it would not address the issues with the building's fabric and general condition such as you would expect with a 60-year old former school building, which would undoubtedly require further more significant investment to bring the building up to a satisfactory standard.

We cannot consider an option of spending nearly a million pounds without also considering the further works that would be required at some stage. Therefore, the options appraisal will consider carrying out the necessary works to bring the building up to a satisfactory standard. If this is the preferred option, then the works will be carried out as soon as possible.

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

COUNCILLOR CHAPMAN: Yes, Lord Mayor. Could you give us some indication of when, please?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Richard Lewis.

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: That is a very open question. The report should be coming to Exec Board in February, so we shall know shortly.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Bruce.

COUNCILLOR BRUCE: As a nominated member of the Fire Authority could Councillor Selby update colleagues on the outcome of the recent West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service consultation?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Selby.

COUNCILLOR SELBY: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Can I first of all just thank Councillor Bruce for the question and giving me the opportunity to update Members on what has been going on.

It is important to have regard to the financial background which has led to the review that has taken place, the second review, bearing in mind the proposal that took place in 2011.

Mr Pickles agreed to cut public sector expenditure by 25% over four years and, unlike the rest of Local Government, cuts to the Fire Service are back loaded and for the first two years the cuts were six and a half per cent and then in the second two years it was supposed to be eighteen and a half per cent.

That was on the assumption, one works on the assumption that everybody is to be treated fairly but the Fire Authority certainly for the previous year received a substantial cut, more than, shall we say, some of the Shire counties, such as those represented by Mr Pickles, and this year we lost £5.4m and next year a further £3.3m will be lost in 2014/15. Again, that is within the context of the background to the proposals.

There was an excellent response to the consultation, 12,000 letters, emails, petitions, objections were received. Compare that with the year before when there were only 2,000. 45% of those responses came from Leeds in respect of the proposals and I will deal with them one by one.

So far as Stanningley was concerned there was the proposal to remove one pump. There was only one objection to that and that proposal is going ahead.

There were more objections so far as the merger of Moortown and Cookridge fire stations but, again, bearing in mind the financial situation and the cuts that are imposed upon us, the Fire Authority, having conducted a detailed analysis of fire risk in both areas, took the view that, very reluctantly – very reluctantly – they would proceed with that merger.

There were proposals to merge Hunslet and Morley and then Rothwell and Garforth. That resulted in many, many objections being received and officers have met with Councillors, community groups and Members of Parliament and the outcome of that was to retain all four fire stations. So far as Rothwell, Garforth and Morley, this will be on a day crewing system and the whole time shift system will remain at Hunslet, albeit with one pump less.

Can I thank all those who took part in the consultation. Can I congratulate all those who worked so very hard to assist the Fire Authority in coming to the decisions that it made. Certainly can I thank the Garforth Councillors and Councillor Nagle and Councillor Bruce who helped to produce a petition signed by 2,444 people. That certainly assisted us.

There was substantial opposition letters insofar as Hunslet and Morley were concerned and again the responses helped and guided the situation.

Significantly, when the proposals were put to the Fire Authority, two of the three Liberal Democrats who were present voted against the amended proposals. I would interpret that as the Liberal Democrats did not support the retention of Garforth, did not support the retention of Rothwell, did not support the retention of all fire stations, so that is my interpretation; others may have others.

One of the problems we do face is the fact that we have to bear in mind in terms of all these cuts the fact that last year three of our Members of Parliament voted to support them. It will be interesting to see if they support the cuts that are being imposed by Mr Pickles for 2013/14 which will dramatically affect the City of Leeds.

Can I take this opportunity again of thanking Councillor Bruce for her interest. *(Applause)*

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

COUNCILLOR BRUCE: No.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor David Blackburn.

COUNCILLOR D BLACKBURN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Can the Executive Member for Environment update Council on the current position regarding the proposed Bulk Fuel Purchasing Scheme?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Dobson.

COUNCILLOR DOBSON: Yes, I will just temper this answer, Lord Mayor, with "if the Executive Member can see" because I have sat on my varifocals!

Yes, this is a scheme that has been progressed with partners across the region and it is to access DECC funding, the Cheaper Energy Together Fund. Working with CO2Sense we have managed to secure £280,000. We will be using that money in the coming months to target up to £40,000 households across the region with a view to getting 15,700 signed up and hopefully 6,300 switched to new supplies by August of this year.

Collective Fuel Purchasing brings many benefits, of course. It will enable people on Bulk to access the lowest tariffs – that is on pre-payment, dual fuel, gas, electric or green energy.

In terms of actually getting the sign over completed, interestingly we are working with Which? Magazine and we will be finding the best tariffs out there for us.

All in all, yes, it is a piece of work that is extremely pleasing we are able to develop, the money is now in place and here's to finding people in fuel poverty cheaper tariffs going forward. *(Applause)*

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

COUNCILLOR D BLACKBURN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. By way of a supplemental, can the Exec Member assure Council that maximum effort will be made on those households that enter the scheme that measures for energy efficiency are brought in and basically then they get double help and we do something for planning.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Dobson.

COUNCILLOR DOBSON: Yes, thank you, Lord Mayor. Again, I have to emphasise that the thrust of this scheme for us is to tackle a very genuine, very real

issue of fuel poverty which is out there. Fuel poverty takes many forms. This is about some of the poorest people in the poorest communities, but actually everybody can be impacted by rising fuel bills and they see no signs of going in the other direction, so the thrust of this scheme has to be about addressing that.

However, there are longer term ambitions within the scheme. What we propose to do is, some of the money that is generated from the referral fees that we can actually generate from the deal switching, what we want to do is set up a local energy fund which all the time will enable us to access low carbon projects, renewable projects and Green Deal, to enable us to have a broader access to cheaper energy that of course will have then the double impact of addressing the fuel poverty issue and hopefully having a very positive impact on our very challenging environmental targets. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Truswell.

COUNCILLOR TRUSWELL: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Can the Executive Member confirm how the Council plans to boost opportunities to cycle in Leeds, particularly given the recent success of Yorkshire's bid for the Grand Depart section of the Tour de France?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Richard Lewis.

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: The Tour de France provides a unique opportunity to increase cycling in the city. Work is now taking place under the leadership of the City of York Council to prepare a Cycling Legacy Plan for the region which we will develop over the coming months as the plans for the great race are laid.

It is expected that the Highways Services present work to develop and roll out a core network of cycle routes across the city will continue with routes planned, including the Chapel Allerton and the A64 corridors as well as vital links in the city centre at Kirkgate and Cookridge Street.

This work is alongside a step change in provision of cycle parking in the city centre and the Council's commitment to cycle training for young people, associated with work being done with partners on the Local Sustainable Transport Fund, Go Cycling and Access to Education projects.

The Council partnerships with organisations such as Sustrans, local schools and universities will provide a firm foundation for further developments and initiatives to secure a strong legacy of cycling for the city. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

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

COUNCILLOR TRUSWELL: I do. I would like to thank Richard for that answer. Obviously Richard and various other colleagues face a huge challenge in getting people like me back on our bikes. I dream of being as youthful and sleek looking as intrepid cyclists like Councillor Harington, Councillor Illingworth.

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

COUNCILLOR TRUSWELL: There is going to be a question at the end of this. The issue is, can we use this event as a catalyst for encouraging not only cycling but greater physical activity, and I know there has been feverish lobbying

about which route the event might take, so I wanted to use this opportunity to just get a shout in for South Leeds in general and Middleton and Belle Isle in particular. To use language that Richard himself frequently employs, what about the workers?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Richard Lewis.

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: I was not expecting a supplementary, I will be honest. *(laughter)*

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: He has gone off script!

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: He has just gone off.

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: What has happened over the past year I think presents a unique opportunity for every city to change the way people behave. I know that, because I circulated an email offering people a trial of a bike a few months ago, which has not happened, I am ashamed to say, for reasons beyond my control. I do know that there are a number of people in this Chamber who are very keen to get on their bikes. I have to say I am not one of them! We all should do, and I think we all have an awareness.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: I can give you a list of names if you want, Richard.

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: I think it will change the way people behave and I am particularly interested in what is happening in schools where we are seeing cycle training for the first time almost in living memory.

If I can just touch on the issue of South Leeds, not just on cycling but one of the things I do deal with is the requests we have from various organisations for sporting events. They will be on the A660, round Roundhay Park. One concern that I have raised and officers have raised is, we do not seem to have anybody proposing major sporting events in South Leeds. There are parts of South Leeds where you can do things and we are very keen to come up with a framework so when people do come to us they are taking those big events out of places like Middleton, out of places like Morley so that everybody gets a share of what is going on, and everywhere else that I have not mentioned. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Graham Latty.

COUNCILLOR G LATTY: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Was the Executive Member for Environmental Services satisfied with the amount of notice given to residents about the changes to bin collections days over the Christmas period?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Dobson.

COUNCILLOR DOBSON: Thanks, Lord Mayor. Well, Graham, define "satisfied." I am satisfied with the improvements that have been made in terms of the notifications this year but I still remain to be completely satisfied that we are where we need to be on this. Organising Christmas arrangements around the collection service is logistically extremely complex. We have to access by one means or another 330,000 households across the city. In 2010 we did this by Royal Mail with limited success. In 2011 we used a leaflet through the door system which again presented issues. This year it has been done through a whole range of methods. About Leeds, the magazine, carried a slip inside and that went out to 330,000

households, as I say, but I am aware that 7,500 of those were delivered very late in the day.

There were also other methods for promoting the service this year. Our bin collection page on our website in the month of December had 7,500 hits and the Council website in total on this had 75,000 hits, which I find a remarkable figure, but there you go. That said, I am aware that – and your particular patch was one of these – the distribution of the About Leeds was very, very late in the day indeed.

Whilst I am not complacent about this issue, I would say in defence of the service that in terms of bins collected on time, on the right day over the Christmas period we have had the best year for many a year. Complaints were down significantly and calls to the Call Centre were halved. That said, I am aware of the challenges that still remain around this issue, I am aware of the issues that happened in your particular neck of the woods. I am grateful for the very measured correspondence that took place on the issue but, yes, satisfied, no; satisfied with the improvements, yes; and certainly satisfied that I have got a very hard working team of officers, managers and front line staff actually making big improvements in this area. *(Applause)*

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

COUNCILLOR G LATTY: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am not sure you have left me very much option for a supplementary there. Certainly I would be interested to know in view of that, one, are we able to get recompensed in any way for the lack of the service, but, two and most importantly, speaking in terms of my ward where collections have by and large been good, satisfactory – Christmas was the blot on the landscape and that was not the collections because the chaps did a very good job, there must be a case for actually using our own staff to deliver these notices because they are the ones who do go to every house. I just wonder whether you might think about that in future.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Dobson.

COUNCILLOR DOBSON: What I will say, Lord Mayor, as I say, for me this is very much a work in process to make sure that all these households have access to the information required on time and certainly in terms of collections going forward to this Christmas – which we are already thinking about, believe it or not, in early January – it is something that we will certainly be considering again to get that mix right to make sure the message gets out on time.

In terms of the distribution, a difficult one in as much as the About Leeds was distributed. It was late in the day. I also asked the questions regarding recompense but for me on this particular issue it is about moving forward, learning the lessons. I think we are moving forward in leaps and bounds in terms of this service and, again, as far as Christmas is concerned I would just like to thank the staff, who have done a very difficult job in very trying circumstances. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Golton.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON : Thank you, Lord Mayor. Can the Executive Member for Environmental Services reiterate the aims of the Feed Leeds Policy?

COUNCILLOR DOBSON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. The Feed Leeds has a series of aims. It is around increasing food production and food growth in Leeds. It

is actually about increasing people consuming food that has been grown in the city, and hopefully by themselves. It is about promoting edible beds in community parks. We are offering starter packs for beginners who are just getting into the whole business of vegetable and food production. It is also about encouraging community groups to have a bigger say in how community land is actually accessed and used and actually, of course, as part of our bigger agenda that we are all signed up to, it is about supporting and promoting good public health. Thank you.

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

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Given the aims of the Feed Leeds Policy and the need for engaged and enthusiastic individuals to share their knowledge, does he not think he is sending the wrong message by asking our allotment holders to potentially have a 300% increase in their allotment rents, according to your budget proposals this year?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Dobson.

COUNCILLOR DOBSON: I think it is important that we put this into context. In an ideal world, if we were looking at an incremental increase in our budget this year, I think you have got a very fair point, you would not want to do that, but meanwhile back on planet earth and some of the real significant issues that we are dealing with, what we are looking to do through the consultation exercise that is currently taking place is trying to establish a way of delivering services that are equal and equitable to people and that may mean charging increases. It may also mean, actually, engaging with the key community groups and the user groups, such as the Leeds District Gardeners' Federation, and saying to them, "How can you help and assist us in delivering these services going forward?" Actually, Stewart, that is what consultation at its best should be about and that is exactly what we were doing.

In terms of some of the comments that have been attributed to you on this issue, there is one here I find quite an interesting one on 7 December last when you said in terms of potential increases up to 300%, "If you were a cynic you might wonder whether this move is intended to price people off allotments and eliminating the waiting list." Well, of course it is not, but if I was a cynic I would actually say for me this seems like very, very crass sleight of hand to deflect from the real facts of the matter that our budget settlement will not continue to keep funding gaps right across the whole range of services we deliver, and it seems to me this is just a cheap detraction from the real matters in hand. We are doing our best to manage our situation in the most trying of circumstances.

I understand that you are committed to allotments and I get that, you are an allotment holder yourself, but really rather than this sort of nonsensical trying to detract the blame from the situation we are in, why not engage with us, why not help us put the matter right? I think that would be far more welcome, certainly from this side and certainly from the people who are really involved with us like the Federation themselves. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Mitchell.

COUNCILLOR MITCHELL: What does the Executive Member for Learning, Jobs and Skills feel the main benefits of an apprenticeship are for employers and can he update colleagues on the work of the Council is doing with businesses in relation to apprenticeships?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Ogilvie.

COUNCILLOR OGILVIE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Can I thank Councillor Mitchell for her question.

I think one of the most interesting features of the recent launch of the Apprenticeship Training Agency was actually hearing from businesses themselves talk about the benefits of having apprentices as part of their organisations. Some of the things that they said at the event were that apprenticeships deliver real returns to the bottom line of their businesses; apprenticeships deliver skills designed specifically around the needs of businesses providing these skilled workers for the future; and apprentices tend to be more motivated, flexible and loyal to the company that invested in them.

What are we doing here in Leeds? Under the leadership of Councillor Wakefield, the Council has secured an additional £1.2m through the City Deal. Some of that is being used to set up the Apprenticeship Training Agency that I have just mentioned. That will support the creation of up to 700 new apprenticeships involving small and medium sized employers in the city. It in effect acts as an employment agency, taking away all the burdens that businesses would otherwise face.

The other part of the City Deal is, of course, the Leeds Apprenticeship Hub, which is in simple terms a one-stop shop bringing together all the different initiatives around apprenticeships in the city, making it simple and straightforward for learners and businesses to take on apprentices.

This all builds on the momentum in the city. In Leeds the apprenticeship starts for 2010/11 doubled from 3,500 to nearly 7,000. In the current year the Employment and Skills Services has supported 70 local businesses from April to November to create and recruit 129 apprentices. The Council has also increased the number of apprentices within the Council by 125 during the same six month period.

THE LORD MAYOR: Do you have a supplementary? No. We now have come to the end of Question time. Written replies will be given to the rest of the questions.

ITEM 9 - MINUTES

THE LORD MAYOR: We now move on to page 9, item 9, Minutes.
Councillor Wakefield.

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

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: I second, Lord Mayor.

- (a) **Executive Board**
- (i) **Health and Wellbeing**

THE LORD MAYOR: Item (a), Executive Board, Health and Wellbeing.
Councillor Walshaw, please.

COUNCILLOR WALSHAW: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I rise to comment very briefly on the Minutes regarding health and wellbeing for people in Hyde Park and Headingley and the need to maintain sports facilities and schools and community access for these facilities. I was rather surprised, I did not realise we were on to this point now but I am up to speed now.

This report responds to the recent delegation regarding our action here which is the Hyde Park Olympic Legacy Group and they raised the issue of the community absolutely must have access to good sports facilities and good leisure facilities, and that is one of the things that in Hyde Park and Headingley is sorely lacking.

I would just like to take this opportunity to thank Councillor Mulherin and the Executive Board for bringing this report and I know that the revised edition is going to be considered in full at a later date and I am hoping that is going to be February.

We must, as a Council, understand that addressing health inequalities and leisure inequalities must be front and centre of how we confront development, and particularly when that development focuses on the facilities like the Victoria Road one where there really are not very many in the ward and these community facilities are absolutely vital.

This is a controversial planning case and I really do not want to go into detail at the moment because this is ongoing and I do not want to prejudice matters. I spoke at some length at September's full Council regarding this. Suffice to say the situation is still the case that Hyde Park Olympic Legacy, we are working hard to fend off the developers from these facilities and it must absolutely be in everyone's mind that this community really does need these facilities.

A lot of facilities in the north-west are often dominated by our universities which are fantastic institutions but we really need these facilities there that ordinary local people can access at the time they want. For instance, for the South Asian community it is important that they can access facilities that they are comfortable with accessing. You can see we are really trying to use these facilities, we have a vision for them, revitalise them, in use for everybody.

We do need these facilities, no ifs, no buts. I just want to finish up by using this position to appeal to the Grammar School who own the site to come and work with us, look at our business case for these sports facilities, come and talk to us, this will work, and look to the better angels of your nature and do the right thing by the people of Headingley and Hyde Park. Thanks very much. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Martin Hamilton – not here. Councillor Neil Buckley.

COUNCILLOR BUCKLEY: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Can I refer to page 134 Minute 125, please? Like the people of Hyde Park, Alwoodley residents also require modern, up-to-date facilities. My ward colleagues and I make no apology for returning to this ongoing subject of the proposed new Alwoodley Medical Centre.

As Councillor Mulherin is aware, there have been issues surrounding this particular project, including land ownership, planning consent, the PCT, the NHS and issues concerning the Council itself. Also the crux of the matter is one of the funding sum which is to be made available can be made available.

All these issues and possible pitfalls must be addressed before the end of March, otherwise there is a danger that this stream of funding will be lost.

In the nature of these things what has now happened is that because the issue has been made public, it is in the public domain, the rumour mill is now in full swing and people in the poorer areas of the ward which will be particularly benefited by this proposed centre – for instance the Cranmer Banks, the Fir Trees, the Aldertons, these people who are in the bottom 20% of the deprivation statistics and also suffer from quite substantial health inequalities - these people are now asking when this badly needed facility will be built and not whether it will be built, so expectations are rising.

The Executive Member has been supportive of this project and has been very helpful. Can I call on her to continue her efforts to ensure that there are no avoidable delays and no nasty surprises in order to make this a reality, and will she undertake to write to me and my colleagues within four weeks in this regard? I think she will agree and everyone will agree that spades need to be put into the ground sometime this year. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Cohen.

COUNCILLOR COHEN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I speak on the exact same Minute, albeit from a slightly different angle, so there is lots going on within Alwoodley, as you can see.

I read with interest a report by the Director of Public Health, particularly in relation to the role of this Council as the lead organisation to improve health and to reduce local health inequalities.

In Alwoodley we are working with officers from Sport and Active Lifestyles to develop a programme that seeks to improve sport and active lifestyle opportunities, to try to provide a varied menu of sport and physical activity sessions as well as classroom based programmes such as anger management, self harming, leadership, drug and alcohol abuse, sexual health and bullying sessions for children and young people, young adults, families, parents and guardians within the Moor Allerton area of the Alwoodley ward, which will be Cranmer Banks, Fir Trees and Lingfields, areas of high deprivation, as Councillor Buckley has just alluded to.

The aim of this is to engage these children and young people – our children and young people – into taking part in some form of physical activity with additional classroom based sessions which will support them to gain more knowledge and experience of a wide range of issues that they are facing on a daily basis, to get motivation levels up, to get them on the right pathways for employment and to deal with some of the lack of self belief that we come across and, bluntly, just to get people joining in with meaningful physical activity in the local area.

We all know, every one of us in this Chamber, the importance of young people engaging in some form of physical activity. We know that young people's health is substantially enhanced by frequent physical activity. The aims of this scheme are to promote the aims of that physical activity and wellbeing and health within schools and local communities, and I stress schools because particularly where children are younger within schools they are something of a captive audience. We want clearly to reduce health inequalities, reduce obesity and the risk later on in life particularly of heart attack and diabetes, those really dangerous long-term illnesses.

Every one of us in this Council knows that these types of activities can and will make a huge difference and improve the health outcomes and indeed life outcomes, particularly in more deprived areas of our city.

As ward Members Councillor Harrand, Councillor Buckley and I will do all that we can to make sure these projects come to fruition and what we are calling on is your support to make sure that there is not just ward members support but support from the Council too. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Mulherin.

COUNCILLOR MULHERIN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I thank Councillor Walshaw first for his constructive approach to address the identified public health needs in the Hyde Park area in the BME community in particular and the need for access to opportunities for increasing physical activity in an area which is densely populated, has terraces and back-to-backs, most of which have very little garden space, if any at all.

I am happy to continue to support Councillor Buckley in pursuing delivery of the Alwoodley Health Centre. I have been seeking updates on this. The proposal to purchase the identified piece of land for that health centre from the Council is being considered by the Airedale, Bradford and Leeds Cluster Executive Team at the end of this month and the developers have been notified that, if the plans get the go ahead, then the expectation is that the new premises have to be built by March 2014, so that is progressing and I will continue to work with you on that. If there are any issues, please do feel free to come and see me outside the Council meeting and we will take that up on your behalf working with you.

In terms of general sports and active recreation and school activity in particular, clearly the cuts to the Schools Sports Partnership have been very damaging to this ambition across the country and in the city of Leeds as well. We are very happy to work with Councillors across the board to increase the physical activity of young people in particular and their families as well, and where we can do this we are working across departments with Councillor Ogilvie, with Leisure and we are engaged in a number of projects at the moment to see how we can actually increase physical activity both indoor and outdoor across the city, working on a number of schemes including a funding bid which we hope to make some progress with in the next month; we are through the first hurdle and we should have some good news to report later in the year. Thank you.

(ii) Resources and Corporate Functions

THE LORD MAYOR: For the benefit of the people in the public gallery, we are now moving on to comments on Resources and Corporate Functions. Councillor Walker.

COUNCILLOR WALKER: Lord Mayor, I am commenting on page 134, Minute 126, the Strategic and Financial Plan.

As we all know we are facing an extremely difficult financial situation which seems to get worse every time you listen to the news. We as an Authority have always made clear an unwavering commitment to helping the most vulnerable in our city, yet time and time again this commitment is tested by unhelpful and at times downright vindictive Government policy.

We spoke at the last Council about the Early Intervention Grant and it is to that subject that I wish to return. I think it speaks volumes about the potentially devastating impact of this cut that a cross-party letter was sent to Michael Gove outlining the Authority's concerns and asking for a review of the decision. However, what we know is that the cuts we are facing are bigger than even our worst case scenario planning anticipated. When the letter was sent we were facing a shortfall of £8.8m which was going to leave us with a real problem in times when money is scarce. However, following the grant settlement from Government we are now facing a shortfall of £9.7m. This cut of £9.7m is to the money used to fund some of the most vital services to families and children, services that include intensive family support, family workers, children's centres, services for disabled children, school attendance and targeted mental health in schools.

I simply do not understand how the Government can agree with the importance of early intervention work and family support and then continue to operate a slash and burn policy when it comes to stumping up the funding. Why can't they see that investment now will lead to long term saving and, more importantly, better outcomes for vulnerable children and families?

It seems to me that unless you are a millionaire seeking a tax break, they are not interested. We need to pull together on this, we need to keep a united front and keep up the pressure. The simple fact is, we cannot afford to lose the services this grant pays for but we cannot afford the £9.7m shortfall either.

I appeal to you to continue to lobby your party's MPs for the reinstatement of the full Early Intervention Grant. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Mitchell.

COUNCILLOR MITCHELL: Lord Mayor, I would like to speak on Minute 126 on page 134 in relation to the Strategic Financial Plan, including the initial budget proposals. In particular I wish to speak about how the Coalition Government's swingeing cuts to support for disabled people will affect our financial planning in the coming years.

I will start by quoting the Prime Minister from Prime Minister's Question Time on 12th September last year. "The fact is, we are not cutting the money that is going into disability benefits." Even from a Prime Minister with a long history of mis-speaking to the house, this is a particularly difficult untruth to stomach.

Since the emergency budget in 2010 the Chancellor has cut £500m from Disability Support; through introducing Personal Independence Payments the Government is expecting to shave off £2b from the benefits bill while under Universal Credit there will be cuts to disability elements of child working tax credit. Make no mistake, this Coalition Government is cutting money going to disability benefit.

As a Council I am pleased that we are doing what we can, despite the horrific settlement from Government, to minimise this impact. By allocating additional resources to the customer services to help, advise and support people hit by these changes, we are doing what we can to help them through the changes, despite the Coalition Government's insistence that people on these benefits that are being cut do not need to speak to somebody on the telephone or face to face and can get all the answers on line.

These changes and cuts to the welfare system are so drastic that they present a very real risk to the Council's future ability to deliver services. As the full force of the welfare reforms come into effect, we will see increased pressure on front line customers services staff helping people to understand and navigate the system, the reality that rent arrears will unfortunately increase and collecting that money will become more and more difficult and the harmful effect of this on the health and wellbeing of people and their families, and that will inevitably have a knock-on effect on a whole range of Council and public services.

We are acutely aware of the findings of a survey of 4,500 disabled people carried out by the Hardest Hit Coalition, that three-quarters think the changes will mean they will need more support from their local Councils and our budget proposals will make sure we are doing what we can to support them and their families.

Unlike the Government we will not look to make an easy target of people who are twice as likely to live in poverty as those without disability. Rather than helping people live decent independent lives, this callous Coalition Government, supported by the Conservative/Lib Dem Members opposite, are pulling away on the very support they rely on. They should be ashamed of themselves. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Towler – this is Councillor Towler's maiden speech.

COUNCILLOR TOWLER: Lord Mayor, I would like to speak with regard to Minute 126 on page 134. When we reflect upon poverty during these difficult financial times for our city, the poverty of opportunity should not be overlooked. It is an issue that I am certainly aware of within my ward of Hyde Park and Woodhouse.

Our city is a great and resilient one; however, it is also a city of inequalities in relation to opportunities for our young people. Youth unemployment in Leeds is 23.7% - a shocking figure of almost one quarter of our young population. Most worryingly there are currently 1,714 young people classed as not in education, employment or training in Leeds. I hope that everyone in this Chamber would agree that the Council has a vital role to play in improving the chances of these young people.

It is hugely encouraging that the city has an aspiration to become a NEET-free city through the work being completed under the City Deal and I welcome the work that has been undertaken, but we should be continuing to work to increase the job prospects of the young. This includes ensuring that they are equipped with the employability skills they require to get a job after leaving school or training. We need to make sure that there is an appropriate focus on employability in our schools and in training provided by other agencies in the city through close partnership working.

We need to increase the number of apprenticeships available across a range of industry areas. I have no doubt that the recent launch of the Leeds Apprenticeship Training Agency will have a huge impact on the number offered, but we need to continue to exploit other methods of increasing practical and beneficial training opportunities. For example, it is absolutely right that we work to establish firm commitments from developers which will guarantee opportunities for young people following the completion of any major developments. Development is bringing regeneration and job creation to Leeds with the Arena being an excellent example of this. I welcome the Executive Board's approval in November last year for employment and skills obligations within Council procurement contracts, but I hope

we can continue to work with developers to insist that any major development presents employment opportunities each and every time.

We should also be looking at how we can improve and influence public transport systems for use by the young. When we talk to young people in Leeds they continue to highlight transport as a major concern of theirs. In the Child Friendly City Leeds consultation with young people, the top wish was for children and young people to make safe journeys and easily travel around the city. In addition to this, members of the Youth Parliament for Leeds wrote a study in November last year entitled Cheaper Buses for Leeds. Once again the concerns of our young in relation to public transport were highlighted. This is supported by evidence from the Work Foundation, which has highlighted transport barriers to youth employment that are present across the UK. It emphasises the need to improve transport provision to improve the prospects of young people and I feel that in Leeds there is more we can be doing to assist young people in finding employment or training by improving their access to public transport.

I hope that as a Council we can continue to place the poverty of opportunities faced by young people in our city at the top of agenda. The situation may be difficult...

THE LORD MAYOR: Could you sum up, please?

COUNCILLOR TOWLER: ...but the action we are already taking such as through the Apprenticeship Training Agency and the delivery of the Devolved Youth Contract in relation to NEETS is having a hugely positive effect on the lives of our young people and I believe their chances can be improved even more with continued commitment to them and their personal aspirations. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Groves.

COUNCILLOR GROVES: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I would like to speak on Minute 126, page 134, on the pressures on the Fire Services.

The combination of budget cuts and welfare reform are twofold. The Tory-led Government continues to try and dismantle Local Government and public sector services. At the same time the welfare reform changes attack the most vulnerable people in society. Rich families, including those who are working, will lose £9.4m in income. Most of the administration is passing out of Whitehall to Local Government and Leeds City Council and advice agencies are working under challenging circumstances. We are doing everything we can to help our citizens whilst also managing the budget to protect public sector jobs.

We are helping people with illnesses managed off incapacity benefit left helpless with no source of financial help. Requests for help and appeals can be more than 98 per month. Our Welfare Rights Team are in high demand.

Partners across the city, like Credit Union, Citizens Advice Bureau and Advice Leeds are providing vital support. When you think about the cuts and impending welfare reform changes, it feels like a tsunami is heading towards us in April. Front line services and Councillors in every ward will need to be prepared to deal with complex issues when families who are hit by the Government's Council Tax Benefit cut and bedroom tax are implemented. We know there will be a shortfall in money, especially for those on welfare benefits and low incomes. They may turn to loan sharks and pay day loan companies. We must signpost them to responsible lenders.

Leeds Credit Union lent over £1m to 200,000 people in the run-up to Christmas, saving people an estimated £700,000 had they gone to the loan company. If Government are removing crisis loans, emergency payments will just disappear from our city. The Government passed over the Social Fund to Local Government. While there has been no cut in this funding the number of people needing help will be far greater.

Leeds City Council is working hard to shoulder the burdens imposed by this callous and irresponsible Government. We have had to work on the administration of a local tax scheme, housing officers have had to visit everyone affected by bedroom tax, benefits and Revenue Officers are having to devise a Social Fund, and a Social Fund where Local Government will have to distribute food supermarket vouchers, household goods and emergency provision. We are being turned into retailers.

Our Communications Team are holding Welfare Roadshows across the city in every ward because every ward will be affected. We are organising Welfare Partnerships working in our communities by our Area Management Team. Faith leaders are setting up food banks, something that should not be happening in the 21st Century.

Our contact teams and customer teams are ready and staff will be drafted in to one-stop centres to meet the demand.

THE LORD MAYOR: Would you make your final point, please.

COUNCILLOR GROVES: I will do. We are doing everything we can, unlike Central Government. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Nash.

COUNCILLOR NASH: My Lord Mayor, Minute 126 page 134. Last summer our Prime Minister and his Deputy were basking in the glory of the Olympic Games and trumpeted on about the Olympic legacy. What Olympic legacy?

Hyde Park is now not alone in not having sporting facilities. Large areas of deprived inner city areas have none. The first thing the posh boys did on gaining office was to stop free swimming for pensioners and young people. This made South Leeds and East Leeds Sports Centres unsustainable. In these two sports centres participation in free swimming went up by 130%, but in better off areas the increase was just over a third.

Income deprivation and inactivity go hand in hand with health problems. In Leeds alone it costs the NHS over £10m a year in health related inactivity problems. What an Olympic legacy.

The posh boys had the temerity to criticise Danny Boyle's opening Olympic ceremony celebrating the NHS – yes they did – and we do not hear much these days about Cameron's big society, where volunteers are expected to fulfil the roles of employed professionals. I have news for the posh boys – of all the volunteers in Leeds over half are engaged with sport, encouraging others, but there is a limit to what they can achieve if there are no facilities. Now our golf courses and bowling greens are under threat. What an Olympic legacy.

I was formerly a member of the Regional Sports Council, now Sport England, and travelled all over Yorkshire assessing assistance to Local Authorities in sporting facilities. I remember the excitement over the building of the Don Valley Stadium in Sheffield and now that is under threat. What an Olympic legacy.

What has happened to the Sports Council's motto, Sport for All? It is now sport for the favoured few.

In 2015 the electorate will remember that, and so take this message back to your leaders – if your Government does not give Leeds a fair settlement it will be the facilities in the areas you represent which will have the facilities withdrawn.
(Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Cohen.

COUNCILLOR COHEN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am speaking on minute 126, page 134. I read with some alarm, Lord Mayor, the proposals for this year's budget, particularly in relation to free transport from home to school or college. This is particularly in three key areas – home to school transport for those attending faith schools outside a reasonable walking distance from home; travel for post-16 mainstream transport from their homes to their colleges or schools; and those aged 16-25 with special educational needs, transport from their homes to their places of education.

I will take, if I may, each one in turn briefly within my remaining time. In terms of travel to faith schools, I simply find it staggering that the party opposite are proposing a policy that effectively makes it more difficult for families on low incomes to get their children to faith schools. It surely should be something that we respect a parent's right to choose the education that they think is best suited to their children and faith schools across the country deliver tremendous results and tremendous citizens for our country and our city. For Labour to be presenting a policy that by its very nature discriminates against less well-off families I find staggering in the extreme.

When one looks at post-16, those who are over 16 travelling to schools, again how this fits in with the policy on becoming a NEET free city, again I do not know, I do not understand. I am sure there will be a muddled explanation.

In terms of 16-25 year olds with special educational needs, how this fits in with an agenda of making sure all within society get the best possible chance and the best possible education, again, I simply do not know.

We all read yesterday in the Yorkshire Evening Post that some method was found by which to save the Middleton Golf Course. I simply hope that we can apply at least the same kind of priority as a bare minimum to educating our children to make sure that we do not disincentivise education, that we do not put people off by making access to education more difficult, which is exactly what some of these proposals are about. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Wadsworth.

COUNCILLOR WADSWORTH: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I also want to comment on page 134, Minute 126, the Strategic Financial Plan including additional budget proposals for 2013/14, and particularly the saving of £100,000 by charging for bulky waste collections. Although the charges have not been worked up as to how

they work, clearly the people who will be affected by that will be the people without cars, vulnerable people, tenants and people on ALMO estates. The department seems to hide around the fact that it will reduce the amount of waste going to landfill. I cannot see that, it seems to be utter rubbish, if you will pardon the pun. What it will do is actually reduce recycling because the waste will still be there and it will either be fly tipped or burned in private gardens or go to unlicensed providers which we spent a lot of money trying to get rid of and now they seem to be going to come back because of this proposal.

The other thing that has happened is that there has been a survey done and only 1,000 people replied to the survey out of 750,000 Leeds residents, which seemed extremely small. 500 of those were in favour of this proposal. My real concern is that there is going to be more work for Streetscene in clearing this waste that is undesirably tipped or burned or whatever and that there will also be a lot of work for environmental enforcement teams, and I just feel that the work that that will take will be more than the £100,000 saved so we will be back in a negative position again.

The next barmy idea to me seems to also be to save another £100,000 by a ban on commercial waste entering our household waste sites which, to you and I, is effectively a van ban. Trade waste is not accepted by any vehicle on to our sites anyway currently, so I cannot see how we are going to increase that and save another £100,000. Where is the saving going to come from? We already have restricted days for vans, which is Saturdays and Wednesdays, and the purpose of introducing that was that we could do more enforcement and actually see what vans were bringing in etc, and that seems not to be happening. Why is that not happening? Are our staff not trained correctly? Are there not enough of them? They are all questions that need asking before we start to bring in savings.

We also introduced ANPR, which is Number Plate Recognition, to track vehicles. That should be reducing the amount of waste. I just cannot see where it is going to be, but what it is going to do by reason of the proposals coming into effect, is that the effective van ban will have large scale impact on fly tipping which again will have to be disposed of through Environmental Services, which will be the neighbourhood teams who will have to pick up the bill for that.

It just seems to be two ideas that in the long run are going to cost more money and just have not been very well thought out. I just feel that the Group over there seem to be like children at a party, moving the chairs around with no prize at the end. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Harrand.

COUNCILLOR HARRAND: Lord Mayor, the Minute I am referring to in the extra pack is about business rates and being given the opportunity to talk about the Council's approach to the private sector and the impression it can give of underestimating the private sector.

I went to the State of the City meeting in November and then I went to a breakout session about transport, and it was packed. After about ten minutes I asked, "Is anybody here from the private sector?" We went round the table and we had got 30 people round the table and we found one young man in the corner who confessed to be working in the profit-making sector. The session, I should also say, was 90% masculine, 90% white British, which is not a fair reflection of the city.

We were there to talk about transport in Leeds but there was nobody there to tell us the point of view of First Bus or Network Rail or Northern Trains or the airport or Transport Development Group or Jet2. The experts on transport in Leeds were somewhere else; they were not there. Perhaps the private sector was represented in the other sessions but I have not been able to trace it throughout.

I suggest that this book and this meeting was about the state of the city's public and voluntary sector, both of which are essential to the city and I do not undervalue, but are not the full story.

The public and voluntary sector generates 25% of the jobs in the city. The private sector generates the rest. In this book at the very best, most generous evaluation, 15% relates to the private sector which generates 75% of the economy.

The State of the City agenda, the State of the City document, is the world as seen by officers. There is room in this for a report on the new bird hide at Skelton Grange, which must be a good investment, but it does not mention significant contributions to the prosperity of the city by many other sectors.

Would it not be interesting to have somebody either write this document or speak to us here on the night from Asda – they know a lot about the economy of the city, don't they? What about the Leeds Building Society, they will tell you. Yorkshire Bank, Northern Foods, Optare – interesting to see what they have got to say, they have just taken their business rates out of Leeds to go into North Yorkshire now. Trinity people, they will know about the development of the city. All those organisations, there could be dozens more, have a lot to tell us about their view of where the city is going to be in a few years' time. Wouldn't it be nice to have a section there on the printing sector, a very important of the city? Pharmaceutical, the haulage companies, why don't they all write a page in this document?

If we do this again, Mr Riordan, we write a document like this, can we please have a better reflection of the economy of the city, because if Councillors and officers in Leeds do not give the impression that we are welcoming to the private economy, Manchester City Council certainly will. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Wakefield.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: I would like to thank Councillor Nash for keeping warm - one through her speech and one for putting her hands in her pockets all the way through because she is clearly quite cold in this room.

The warmest part, I think, came from Councillor Cohen's contribution when he said he showed concern about our budget, about some of the impact. This is from a person whose Government has just destroyed the welfare state and made life impossible for many disabled people. You get the prize for hypocrisy, Councillor Cohen, without any doubt.

Let me come to some of the issues, I will try and race through them because I think the earlier point by Councillor Walker is a very powerful one. Remember last time we talked about the cut in the Early Intervention Grant being done on the last day of summer and actually no debate, no accountability. We just had a letter from two Ministers who actually conflict with each other about the figures and the understanding about it. Had there been a debate then we could have asked our MPs to ask how we carry on supporting women between violence and resettling elsewhere with medical support. We could have asked how we are going to carry on

giving respite to disabled people; how we are going to carry on supporting young people trying to reintegrate them into education.

This was a grant that was never announced in the overall cuts and has not only done severe damage to our budget this year, which we will talk about next Council, it has actually done enormous damage to people who want to get that support and reintegration into our schools and it is a similar line to Councillor Mitchell's contribution. Disabled people in this country must feel totally betrayed. Here they were, portrayed in the summer as people with great talents, skills and a great contribution to offer and they inspired this nation. For years in this Chamber all of us have been supporting the line that we want to encourage disabled people to participate in sport, education and other activities and as Councillor Mitchell stressed, what do they get? A cut of up to £59 a week, Councillor Carter, to stop them being able to go out and do all these things.

I would thirdly like to congratulate Councillor Towler's maiden speech because she raised a very important point. The Prince's Trust, which is hardly a subversive left-wing think tank, has just reported that 27% of our young people feel there is no hope for them in this country; 47% of NEETS think they will be permanently damaged for the rest of their lives and never catch up. We are talking about 18 and 24 year old people here who have got a lifetime in front and already they are writing their chances off.

If you have read the Evening Post sometime today you will see hundreds and thousands of people leaving this city because they do not believe they have got any hope left in this country, which must be a real tragedy for this city and for all of us who care about our younger generation.

One of the things I can say, that the efforts that Councillor Ogilvie mentioned earlier and the efforts of the Children's department colleagues, have been able to reduce, from these figures just given to me, the NEETs figure from around about 2,000 last year, provisionally the December NEET figures now are 1,374. That is a significant drop and it is thanks to all the efforts of all the partners and the people in it; we are starting to make progress on our ambition to be a NEET free city.

Clearly there is more work to do. The launch of the Apprenticeship Agency last week started people up but I am absolutely positive that we will make sure that we keep to our ambition of being NEET free.

Let me just go to Councillor Harrand. Councillor Harrand, I welcome your contribution, I think it is valid, and I think there is something to reflect on how we bring more private sector – they are invited, some of them cannot turn up because they are doing other things.

Let me say there are means and ways of raising concerns about State of the City. It is a far better way doing it in the way you have done than actually going to the pub on an afternoon when we were talking about vulnerable children, vulnerable elderly, and some people on that side found it a lot smarter to sit in a pub and use social media to somehow boast about walking out of the Council in the afternoon. We take our responsibilities extremely seriously and I welcome those contributions that people make, but I do not think...

THE LORD MAYOR: Could you make your final point?

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: ...serious when you just walk away and decide that it is a lot better to make a point in a pub over in Wetherspoons. I am happy to talk about it after. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

(iii) Development and the Economy

THE LORD MAYOR: We are now moving on to comments on Development and the Economy. Councillor Varley.

COUNCILLOR VARLEY: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I would like to speak on Minute 135 on page 140. I welcome the D to E in the resolved part of those Minutes – not before time, actually, as far as I am concerned because some stoneworks were replaced by stealth in part of my ward's conservation area and we do know that this now has been revisited and partially returned to stoneware, but it has come to a full stop.

I would like also to say that these resolved parts of the Minutes should be addressed and monitored with vigour in order that we do not get this kind of situation again. We all have a duty as ward Councillors to make sure that what is happening in our wards should be the right thing.

Where we have to cover footpaths with other than stoneware, I would like to make a plea for the properties of whatever is laid is carefully scrutinised before it is done and also the laying of this property, whatever it is, to be done in a proper manner. We have a stretch in the town centre where it has been laid with tarmac and badly laid, which means that there are depressions in it which contain, after heavy downpour, water, making puddles and, of course, in this icy weather they often turn to treacherous icy patches, which is a death trap for people walking along that particular part. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Hyde.

COUNCILLOR HYDE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I speak on Minute 152, extra papers, East Leeds Orbital Road. Firstly, I would just like to welcome the initial Executive Board paper. Colleagues from East Leeds have been discussing this particular matter for some time and have some very specific views. Really we are saying that the East Leeds Orbital Road should be constructed and should be constructed not piecemeal but in one, and we welcome the paper to look at initial proposals to actually find mechanisms to do that.

I am speaking really for the selfish reason as a ward Member in Killingbeck and Seacroft because we will end up with all the consequences of it not being built from the development out the outer ring. My colleague here who can also speak has got the same concerns as I have, particularly round about traffic.

If the road is not built, my ward will end up with all the traffic running into Leeds City Centre and all the commercial traffic coming in as well. We already have great problems as a ward with traffic coming through.

The other thing I would like to raise is about green belt development. My ward has the highest percentage of brown field development land in the city. This particular outer ring was going to have substantial green belt development and I am really concerned as a ward Member and I have expressed it as John knows and Councillor Lyons in East Leeds in the Regeneration Board about the brown field developments in our ward taken at the expense while developers develop the green

belt. I am also concerned about how the development is happening on the outer edge and how that will develop in terms of integrating together with the rest of East Leeds. It is a major development that is taking place and if we do not get the road built then actually we are going to have some substantial problems in terms of the infrastructure to East Leeds itself.

I also want to raise the question of unemployment. My ward has 8.5% and climbing. It is actually 11%, the latest figure that I saw from the Council is inaccurate, it is 11% now. The mechanism that we need to find is how we can use the outer development, if we are going to have outer development how can we use the housing development and school developments to increase jobs and apprenticeships for people in my patch, as well as other wards adjacent to.

The other issue I would also like to ask the Executive Board Members to look at is about schools and how that reflects in terms of a new development to East Leeds and the rest of East Leeds in general, particularly my ward which is adjacent to it.

Lord Mayor, I do welcome the report initially and I am looking forward to seeing the initial findings of the report back to Executive Board, how this road is going to be funded. It is crucial and it is a substantial piece of development that needs to happen in the east of the city to make development regeneration work. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Khan.

COUNCILLOR KHAN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. My fellow Councillors, I would also like to speak with regards to Minute 152 in the extra papers regarding East Leeds Orbital Road.

Development is the way forward for local economies. We are all aware that national funding is ever decreasing. We are also aware of introducing investment into our city. This is why it is important to Leeds during these difficult financial times and this is why we need to get it right. Development and regeneration should shape our city in a sustainable way. This includes making sure that development has the much needed infrastructure to support new growth. The Orbital Road provides a great example of such critical infrastructure. The road will help East Leeds the scale of development that should take place which is set to redesign the geography of Leeds in a way that will affect all who live here.

I am sure we would all agree that East Leeds and the Orbital Road is a fantastic example of what can be achieved with extremely stretched resources. I would like to think that progress like this could be made within my ward of Burmantofts and Richmond Hill. Perhaps it is because I represent the ward with a significant area of deprivation and I appreciate the effect regeneration can have on an area.

This is the power of development. It can quite simply transform localities but our city grows and develops. We must ensure that growth is supported by the right infrastructure, such as the Orbital Road.

It is not only roads that are needed. Without schools, doctors' surgeries, shops and parks development will not be sustainable. Public transport is also vital to ensure that newly developed areas are accessible and that people living in new homes can access work.

As a Council we should take the strategic lead to make sure that development is beneficial to Leeds. Development must provide homes, schools and jobs and training. It must create opportunities for local residents of all ages, different backgrounds and ability. In short, it must only improve our city.

I hope that everyone here agrees that we have to continue to focus on responsible sustainable development. This means making sure that growth is co-ordinated and planned for both local communities and our city as a whole.

There is no getting away from the fact that growth is vital for the future of Leeds. It will provide homes, jobs and training and it will help grow our economy and attract investment. In these cash strapped times it will be one of the few ways the Council can generate income...

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

COUNCILLOR KHAN: Both come at cost but it can be managed, supported and sustainable. Projects like East Leeds Orbital Road show that we can get it right. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Carter.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Yes, my Lord Mayor. It is difficult to disagree with the recommendations except for the fact that, as I pointed out at the Executive Board, it is a report about a report. To be frank, we have tried to be as supportive as possible and try and have a consensus view on all these things but you are pushing patience beyond the point where it is tolerable with this.

It is two and a half years since the Council agreed this land should be released for housing purposes. In that two and a half years it seems to me we have done nothing. By now we ought to have a designated route for the Leeds Orbital so that we are in a position to go to developers and say, "That is the designated route, that is what we want in totality. We know we will have to find some of the funding because we are going to be beneficiaries of some of the land being sold because we own it that it is built on" and force the developer into the position where they either agree with – or the group of developers agree with – the proposals or they face the consequences, and the consequences are compulsory purchase, but not until we have got our ducks in a row.

I wonder what we have been doing for two and a half years, to be frank with you. We should have been at that point now. We should have been having a report at the Exec Board last week that showed the definitive route for the Orbital Road. Councillor Khan, I do not know whether you realise but public transport runs on roads and it will need to run on this road when it is there, otherwise there will not be a proper public transport infrastructure for these new dwellings.

We are just miles behind the curve. As I said in the Exec Board, the Council is on its knees in front of the developers again. We should now be in a position where the definitive route is known, where we can activate compulsory purchase where we need to make sure we get the infrastructure right.

The people of this city are going to say to you, if you can't get the infrastructure in for 6,000 dwellings, how the hell are the rest of us going to cope when we have five, six, seven, eight thousand houses because we will get even less

importance attached to the infrastructure that is necessary and it is time you moved forward.

You are now in the last chance saloon with this because the developers are going to be in with appeals before you know it, so you had better get yourselves equipped to deal with it. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Lyons.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: I was beginning to think that I was past it, as far as I was concerned even John Procter was not listening to me any more regarding trying to get a link road up, Manston Link Road and the East Leeds Link Road. We have been arguing this and there has been no argument between us for a long, long time.

I am only pleased that I voted for my Leader, Keith Parker *(laughter)* to be here. Where we are, Andrew, we have got down and we are discussing now at full Council what we should have been discussing a long time ago, I will agree with that, but we have had a hell of a game, as you know, trying to get the developers to get round and say who is going to pay for this particular route. We have not mentioned the Manston Link Road, which you have got to have the Manston Link Road to join up with the East Leeds Link Road, else it will be no good whatsoever, and it has all got to be done as one so that they cannot argue about us and we cannot argue about the traffic. This must be done and it must be done now, there is no doubt about this.

Let me tell you why I am so adamant and why I really think we should be arguing. I am an inner city Leeds Councillor and I represent Temple Newsam. Last night I was at a meeting and coming out there were 15 lads and you do not run away from them because we were in Old Moor and I know them all, so we were all right. What they wanted to ask me if there was any chance we could get any of them a job. When you look at the kids, or look at it ten years ago when they were throwing petrol bombs around the area, we have brought it round. Now we have got kids out there that are not working. We have not only got kids that are not working, we have got the parents that are not working and then we got talking about bedroom tax and all sorts – I can see I am going to run out of time so I had better hurry up.

What we have really got to do is to get cracking with this before it is too late. We must argue and tell these developers, look, what Andrew said, if you are not on board get off, we will get somebody else on because they have been messing around too long, and I must say, some of our officers have took some arguing with as well, so we need to get them really on board so that we can get cracking.

The red light is coming on in a minute. I could stop here for half an hour and argue that we need, we definitely need this route, we need it for East Leeds and we need it for the people that are out of work, that get up in a morning and have nowt to do and then rely on us. Remember, all of us, we if are Councillors, if we do one thing we should be getting the people to work and not to forget that all the kids are not coming out with A-levels, some of us are coming out and want looking after in areas where they are going to start building.

Let us start building this route and let us start arguing with our officers and with developers to get it cracking and get it cracking now. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Richard Lewis.

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Can I start off with Councillor Varley's comments on stone paving. I think this is a very difficult issue, not least because the views of local residents are often not what we expect them to be and in some areas there is a huge call for us to retain every bit of stone paving and in other areas people feel differently. For all of us there is a big potential cost if we do what the deputation argued when they came, which is that we always replace like with like.

I think we had a good discussion in Exec Board about the need for Members to be proactive and for us to do a better job of consultation to find out what really people want. I think with where we are going to be doing our maintenance next year we will have some issues, simply because we are doing a lot of roads that have got stone paving. I think with Members being clued up before we start and with us being able to talk to people before work starts, we have a chance of having sensible conversations to see where people do want stone paving. It is an issue where I think localism should reign but there is a huge cost to localism and I think it would be unjust for us to say do stone paving where people want it because there is a knock-on for everybody else in the city.

On the big issue that has been raised by a number of people, the East Leeds Orbital Road, Graham has raised the issue of the brown field sites in Killingbeck and Seacroft and I was just reflecting how you have actually got the roads in Killingbeck and Seacroft, haven't you, you have got some lovely dual carriageways. Unfortunately, they do not go anywhere, do they? They are wonderful.

We have a huge disparity there, is there not, between a ward one side of the ring road that has huge brown field sites awaiting development and a lack of interest from developers, and on the other side of the ring road we have got this swathe of land on the eastern edge where the developers are queuing up to do something but where there is no infrastructure there is no facilities and there are huge, huge problems, such as the problem we have with the Manston Lane issue. We have got ransom strips, we have got dozens of landowners and it is not easy to do it, to come up with some solution that is going to satisfy everybody.

I think what was important about the report which came to us at Exec Board was accepting the principle that the Council has to take the lead on this scheme, nobody else is going to, you cannot leave it to *laissez-faire*. The compulsory purchase has to be part of our armoury to enable us to deliver this road and, finally, that we are going to do the feasibility study which is time limited, in three months we will be coming back with that study saying exactly where we are going.

I do understand what Andrew is saying about time scales but I do think where we started from was not a good place and there are some very significant issues in the area that you cannot just come in and steamroller through.

Can I just add a plea that we do not just think about this as the only thing that is needed in this area is an Orbital Road. The road network in that area is already saturated in some parts and is really straining, but that is not the only issue. There is an issue of public transport provision because I think we desperately need to think about the public transport provision for the new housing developments that we have in that area. If we do not do that, if we think that we can just design a road network that disgorges private vehicles on to the rest of the network, I think we are failing the city.

Various people have also raised the issue of it is not just about roads, it is the rest of the infrastructure because we have a big problem as a city in how are we going to pay for the infrastructure that an area like this will need. That is about schools and we will have the debate later on; it is about health centres; it is about a lot more than roads.

One significant challenge that sits for me behind all the financial issues that we face is how do we finance the infrastructure across the city to develop all the housing that we will see coming in the next few years?

Just one point I would like to make about East Leeds, and certainly I have listened to protestors from places like Scholes. I think there is almost an assumption that this will happen quickly. I do not think it will. I think we are talking about a long, long time before the developers get to the point of filling in this area and I think that is one of the issues because we could have said to the developers right, "We will sign agreements with you that when you reach a certain quantum of housing you can pay for this, that and the other." They would have made sure that they were not going to that particular point and we would have been stuck where we in five, ten years would have had to come in and solve the problem.

I think we are doing the right thing, let us see what the feasibility study comes back with and let us move on this. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

(iv) Environment

THE LORD MAYOR: We are now moving on to comments on the Environment Minutes. Councillor Harington.

COUNCILLOR HARINGTON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. This is page 136, Minute 130.

The story so far. Leeds has agreed to go for a 40% cut in carbon emissions by 2020. One of the key ways of doing that is to improve insulation in people's homes. This will not only reduce emissions, it will cut energy costs, it will help combat fuel poverty and in the process it should also create jobs. We have made a start with the Wrap Up Leeds programme which has resulted in around 10,000 homes being improved.

The Government, though, has now changed its way of financing insulation through the Green Deal. As people probably know, this means that you can get your home assessed, you can have work recommended and any work you choose to have done can be paid for through your bills so there is no up-front costs.

At the heart of this is the golden rule which means that whatever you save must be more than you pay to get the work done.

The Government was hoping that it would get private money to be able to finance the cash for the loans. This has not happened so the Authorities in the Leeds City Region are getting together partly to see what they can do in terms of economies of scale but also being inspired by the Birmingham example to go for £56m through prudential borrowing to help finance the loans and also get £22m from the Eco Funding – that is the energy company obligation. This should be able to finance 6,000 homes improvements in Leeds and 6,000 in the rest of the city region, analysis is being done to show that this should be the take up from customers for this

and also, although £56m obviously is a huge sum, it is not being all lent out at once and so the risk is minimised, the money will just be available according to need.

Because the Green Deal is not ready to go yet, this is the Green Deal Go Early Scheme and this is good because it means that something is being done, but a key issue is not going to be answered which is that, according to the Green Deal Go Early, people can get loans at zero interest whereas the Green Deal itself will demand interest at 7.5%, so the key question is whether that will be a deterrent for people to engage in the scheme or not.

The other issue is that some people, the hardest to reach properties, will not qualify for the Green Deal scheme because their properties will cost too much to do, so the big question is how many people who really need the assistance will not get it.

However, there is a good initiative with the Leeds City Region that they are working together with Leeds as the anchor authority. A lot of work has been done, a lot of progress. However, we have to be clear that this is just the start. I have mentioned that it will be 12,000 homes in the City Region to begin with but it has been calculated that by 2020 it should be around 300,000 homes that are done, which might need between 2018 and 2020, 20,000 a year.

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

COUNCILLOR HARINGTON: Last sentence. In other words, a lot has been done but there is a heck of a lot still to do. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor David Blackburn.

COUNCILLOR D BLACKBURN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I speak on Minute 130, page 136, and Minute 131 on page 137.

I am not going to go into detail on Minute 130 because Roger has just said, I think, more or less everything, but what I would like to do on behalf certainly of our Group is welcome the initiative. I think over the last couple of years we have made some great movements forward and we are stopping ahead of the game and naturally getting in there.

On the bulky fuel purchasing, as I asked a question earlier on, one of the things I was somewhat sceptical about the scheme to start off with – and I have got to say I have changed my mind. It is an admirable project actually people's fuel bills go down, that is a good thing for fuel poverty, but what we have got to remember, anybody that comes in my office will see I have got a photograph that is taken some years ago of a row of houses in Morley that was once on a calendar that Councillor Anderson will remember, and there is this one house where the roof is full of pigeons in the middle of winter and the rest of the roofs are empty, and that is the one that has not been insulated.

The best way to save money on energy is to block the holes up and insulate the houses. As long as we can do this in line with the reduction in prices for fuel, I think that is important. We have got to keep on top of that because that is most important, because lots of our houses are not houses built for northern Europe; they are houses built for the Mediterranean and we have got a northern European climate. Thank you.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Hardy.

COUNCILLOR HARDY: Lord Mayor, I would like to speak to Minute 131 page 137 regarding bulk fuel purchasing.

Lord Mayor, it is really fantastic news that last month the Executive Board decided to support a funding application to the Department of Energy and Climate Change or, as it is common known, DECC to deliver a bulk fuel purchasing scheme for Leeds.

Now my speech has been completely ruined because I just found out before I came in the Chamber, we have got the funding, so it has ruined my speech and you will not have to listen too much to me.

As Members representing wards right across the city will know, the ever increasing cost of energy prices have a severe impact upon large numbers of residents, and this is no different in the ward that I represent, Farnley and Wortley. For far too long the big six have been aimed to dictate to residents the price of their energy and the implementing of horrible rises without any recourse. Now they will have a recourse.

Now we have the funding from DECC it will be greatly received and will mean that working in conjunction with CO2Sense some of our most vulnerable householders, of which there are many, will be able to switch en masse their provider and hopefully make significant savings on their current costs by getting the best possible deal. At the same time, they will benefit from other energy saving measures, such as Smart Meters and energy saving matters such as insulation.

Finally, it would be remiss of me if I did not thank the tremendous work undertaken by the Scrutiny Board chaired by Councillor Anderson which looked into fuel poverty and the issue of fuel purchasing. Without being a little bit gloating, I was part of the Board and did raise initially the question of what could be done on bulk fuel purchasing, and I have to say that the way that all members of Scrutiny approached the subject was excellent and showcased the best way of what Scrutiny can achieve.

Let me finish by saying hopefully this means that everyone who lives in a one bedroom flat right up to a mansion – I was going to mention Les Carter but he is not here – will be better off. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Hussain.

COUNCILLOR HUSSAIN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am going to speak very briefly on Minute 132, page 138. It is about the refurbishment of the tropical gardens, Tropical World, in Roundhay Park.

I welcome the refurbishment of Tropical World. As local Councillors myself Councillor McNiven and Councillor Urry are really pleased that we have this facility in our area which is a fantastic tourist attraction not just for the area and is loved by all the residence of the city and many visitors across Yorkshire and the rest of the UK and far afield. One of the top ten most popular visitor attractions in Yorkshire with over 300,000 visits a year.

This attraction is not just entertainment but has ability to inspire and educate. It is important, therefore, that we can continue to make sure that Tropical World

continues to move from strength to strength for further generations and this new refurbishment will ensure that this work is taking place.

Tropical World has not benefited from any significant investment since opening although it has been maintained and expanded slowly. As part of the refurbishment work a bespoke children's room, an educational space, will be developed to enhance its power to inspire and educate. The café, retail, toilet and entrance facilities will be enhanced to boost the capacity and work on aquarium, crocodile and nocturnal areas will commence to give visitors an even more immersive experience.

All is very exciting and I cannot wait to have a visit to Tropical World when this work is finished. I would like to thank Councillor Dobson as the Executive Board Member for pursuing this and the Executive Board Members for approving this refurbishment. On a final note, it would be amiss if we did not pay special thank you to the Ziff family whose continued patronage for Tropical World and, indeed, culture across the city, is fantastic and much appreciated. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Jonathan Bentley.

COUNCILLOR J BENTLEY: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I would like to speak on Minute 133 on page 139, regarding the Queen Elizabeth II Fields Challenge. Members may know that that Queen Elizabeth Fields Challenge is a scheme to mark and celebrate some of the key events of 2012, including the Queen's Diamond Jubilee and the Olympic and Paralympic Games, and bring some lasting benefit and memory of those events.

The challenge is to identify and permanently protect 2012 outdoor public recreational spaces throughout the country.

I welcome the administration's support for this scheme and for their identifying eight public green spaces across the city that would be permanently protected and reserved for sport and recreation. I am pleased to see the involvement of the private sector and the third sector in partnerships with Parks & Countryside developing terrific volunteering opportunities not only for the management of the green spaces but also for the sporting and recreational activities.

This afternoon we have heard a lot about the need for sport and recreation, starting with the terrific deputation from Oliver and a number of comments from Members talking about the Health and Wellbeing Minutes and I think we all recognise the benefits of outdoor play and recreation. We also recognise the constant danger we are in in cities like Leeds where every spare bit of land, especially green field land, is seen as a development opportunity.

Giving protection to these Queen Elizabeth Fields literally gives much needed breathing space for our communities, which brings me to my own ward. I was really pleased to see that the 30-odd acres of West Park playing fields in Weetwood have been included in the scheme. This is much valued open space but from time to time there have been rumours of its demise. I really welcome the guarantee of protection for it.

My one worry, with the Executive Member may wish to comment on, is why the western-most part of the site, the top corner of the site, the green space immediately next to the West Park Centre, has apparently been excluded from the area of protection.

I would urge Members who have got a Queen Elizabeth Field in their ward to engage with their residents, with the Parks Department, with the private sector sponsors involved to see how through volunteering and community involvement the full benefit of the spaces can be exploited.

I would urge the administration not to be limited by these first eight sites but to see this as just a start and, under its own initiative or with other partners, look to give the same opportunities and protection to every recreational green space in the city. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Leadley.

COUNCILLOR LEADLEY: My Lord Mayor, I have just worked out that Councillor Hardy speaks exactly like Alf Garnett, though I think his politics might be slightly different! *(laughter)*

COUNCILLOR FINNIGAN: I would not be sure about that!

COUNCILLOR LEADLEY: Beyond that I wish to refer to minute 134 of the meeting of the Executive Board held on 9th January, which is on page 139 and to do with the outbreak of Ash Dieback, or *chalara fraxinea*.

This seems to be one of those things which Central Government knew about in this case as long ago as 2009 without doing nearly enough, much as the severity and length of the 2001 foot and mouth epidemic was due to the hesitancy of Central Government which at first did not control movements of livestock and vehicles closely enough when and where outbreaks began and then eased off to early when the disease was being beaten, allowing it to flare up again.

Ash trees are common in Leeds, especially in the east and south. Large losses would be noticeable. Is it really wise of the city Council to sell infected trees as firewood, as seems to be suggested in the Minute, when it might spread the disease? Burning trees where they are felled might be seen as wasteful. Perhaps they could be sent in a controlled way to a wood-burning power station but selling them on the open market as firewood does seem a bit risky. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Martin Hamilton.

COUNCILLOR M HAMILTON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. This is Minute 133, page 139. I am feeling slightly guilty about shoehorning something into this Minute but having heard Councillor Hardy I do not feel at all guilty any more about that.

This is, I think, an interesting Minute and one that I support and I am going to support what Councillor Bentley said about this. Clearly any protection we can give to our playing fields and our green spaces is something that we should welcome and so this particular initiative, I think, is particularly good. I welcomed the request that the LDF actually reflect this across the board, across the city, in terms of protecting our playing fields.

However, I think it is worth saying that very often through historical accidents the location of our playing pitches and sports facilities is a historical accident and does not necessarily reflect the needs of the communities across the city, so some areas are very well catered for and have plenty of playing fields, other areas are not.

That is simply because many of these playing pitches were laid out many decades ago when the population was different and people's needs were different.

So it is really in that spirit that I very much supported the deputation from the Hyde Park Olympic Legacy Committee at the last Council meeting – got it in there – to really address the particular problems of Health and Wellbeing in the Hyde Park area, in the south and in the area.

As you know there is a particular issue around some playing fields off Victoria Road and the Legacy Committee are very keen to see a way in which the community can benefit from those playing fields. I was very pleased that the Council was able to respond to that deputation, albeit that now there is going to be a slight delay for various reasons and some paper is going to be coming I think probably at the next Executive Board.

I very much welcome the work that is being done in responding to that particular deputation and I think we need to look at playing pitch provision in the round. Yes, there is public provision which the Council may often own or other public bodies own and that is one thing. There is also an awful lot of private land in the city which could be made better use of and I think that is a prime example of that.

I would really welcome any efforts that we as Councillors and the Council can make to realise the ambitions of the Hyde Park Legacy Committee and one thing that I would appeal to the Grammar School really to hold out an olive branch and start discussions about how we can make that piece of land something which the community can be proud of. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Dobson.

COUNCILLOR DOBSON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. OK, from the top. Roger, thank you for your words around – we were calling it Go Early, we have now given it the somewhat imaginative title, following Wrap Up, of Wrap Up Plus. A lot of work went into that one. Wrap Up Plus will effectively be picking up the slack now until March 2013. There are details about how residents can access it on the website and I would encourage all Councillors in the Chamber to take advantage of that and get it out to your various residents' groups.

Green Deal. We are hoping - it is the only show in town at the moment – it will be a success. I think the level of ambition that has been shown not just by this Authority but by working with the City Region shows that we know that. The significant sums of money that we are hoping to draw down to help people in fuel poverty and to reduce our emissions will be taken up but I too do have concerns around the interest rate. We are hoping that it is a success, we will be promoting it as a success because, as I say, it is where the action is in terms of significant environmental improvements, but it does come with a lot of question marks and quite a lot of caveats and there is a lot of work to be done, I suspect, from members in this Chamber to promote that with your various communities and community groups.

David, thank you for your welcome of the Bulk Purchasing Initiative, but I will re-emphasise what I said in Questions, when you look at the significant challenges facing people we do have, as you quite rightly say, significant emission targets for this city and we are doing a lot of work across the piece to address them but in the here and now I am concerned, as is this administration, with the real issue of fuel poverty, so for us it is about trying to develop schemes that address that for our poorest communities but working in tandem to address the longer term issues about

how do you get people's houses to a state of adequate repair and adequate insulation because, quite frankly, a lot of people are simply letting money go up in smoke in terms of burning gas and electric that is simply going up into the atmosphere and that is not sustainable.

We, as you know, David, are completely committed to this agenda. Again, I will make the point of saying what I always do, that I thank the Greens for being a very useful critical friend around this agenda and a lot of the work we have done in collaboration has been really worthwhile.

John, yes, we have got the money, we have got the money to do the take-up. We hope to be engaging with thousands of houses across the six areas that are engaged in the joint scheme and, as I say, we are hoping that we can have something in the region of 6,300 signed up by August, so it really is a good news story but, let us be perfectly honest, it is real tip of the iceberg stuff, fuel poverty and the carbon agenda. The amount of houses that we are talking about for me still does not demonstrate the significance of this agenda and it is a long, long road that we are starting down, but we are in it for the long haul and I think we have shown commitment as a Council, actually, to this agenda, and it does transcend party boundaries, actually.

Councillor Hussain, yes, Tropical World. Not just great for Roundhay but, as you quite rightly say, it is a great facility for the city and actually one where I have not been for many years since my children were little, but when I went it is still one of those places that is interesting, engaging and educational. I think it is fair to say it was looking a little tired and this phase 1 of the investment will make significant inroads into that. Again, it has been said but I think it is worth reiterating, the continued support for this city and city projects from the Ziff family really is exemplary and, again, I would like to echo Councillor Hussain's thanks to them around that.

Councillor Bentley with the QEII Fields. It is an interesting debate that often comes up in Executive Board around the whole issue of Local Development Frameworks and how we can look at actually protecting green space as part of that broader agenda and, again, I agree with you to the extent that the eight sites are a very, very useful starting position but I think as a Council we are all fully aware with the Health and Wellbeing agenda, the access to public green space, some of the huge issues that are going to be coming down the track for this Council in terms of development, we have to maintain and protect and, indeed, cherish our green spaces.

On the specific point you raised, what we have actually asked to be encompassed in the scheme at this time is the playing fields, and it is the playing fields that is actually done in the Fields in Trust arrangements. I think it crosses over into another portfolio regarding asset management but I understand that that is still under consideration.

Finally, on ash dieback. Without getting overly involved in the Government's position and the Government of 2009's position, what I will say for Leeds is we have a lot of ash trees, it is about a third of our tree population and this could impact big on the city. That said, I think we have to be proportionate. If there are clear cases where ash dieback is affecting trees that are close to highways and houses, we will remove them. There are also issues where some trees could actually, for want of an oxymoron, live on whilst dead as a natural wildlife habitat and we would be reluctant to move those. There is also a question mark in this agenda as to how many trees could actually absorb the disease and then recover, so from a Council perspective

what we will be doing will be proportionate. We will not take our eye off the ball. I have spoken to my officers at length and I have got faith that they know what they are doing on this agenda.

THE LORD MAYOR: Can you make your final point, please?

COUNCILLOR DOBSON: Thank you, Lord Mayor.

(v)

Neighbourhoods, Planning and Support Services

THE LORD MAYOR: We are now moving on to Neighbourhoods, Planning and Support Services. Councillor Charlwood, please.

COUNCILLOR CHARLWOOD: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Minute 126, page 140. In the climate of austerity and this Government's sustained attacks on the working poor, on disabled people and those seeking work, Labour Councils like ours are doing everything possible to protect people and improve services, not join in with the race to the bottom encouraged by this Tory Government.

The Localism Act required us to create a tenancy strategy. We were encouraged to adopt more flexible tenancies in the social housing sector in the generous spirit that suggests that Council house tenants should no longer expect a home for life, rather than a fixed term tenancy after which they would be expected to move on.

The idea is that in time of budget constraints and a housing shortage, we should think about limiting the length of time people can use Council owned housing and we have refused to do so. We have consulted with ALMOs, BITMOs, housing forums, tenants' groups and the Scrutiny group looked at this and I am proud that Leeds City Council has decided to put social tenants first. We will not contribute to the pressure people are already under by this Government. Children need secure housing to go to school and we know people are healthier and happier when they live in communities where people know each other, so we will expect landlords to use the most secure type of tenancy and vulnerable and elderly tenants will never be offered flexible tenancies.

The Government again in their spirit of generosity have offered us a way to get out of our duty to homeless people. Let us be clear, rather than encourage the building of more social housing in response to the housing shortage, they want to give Councils an excuse to treat homeless people less favourably and we have decided not to end our duty to homeless people if they refuse to accept property, for example. There is good reason for this. In our Council stock we have 97% decency. In the private rented sector decency is about 45%. There is no security of tenure. Rather than force poor people into the open market in a time of austerity when we know the standards are low, we are adopting a range of measure to protect them:

1. private tenancies will have a minimum term of 24 months;
2. we would assess whether these would be affordable for people; and
3. the landlord would need to be a member of the Landlord Accreditation Scheme, a fit and proper landlord who would be a good landlord, not just an adequate landlord.

Instead of washing our hands of the needs of homeless people, we will raise standards in the private sector. We refuse to reduce the security of social housing

tenants by changing the tenancy term that they can expect. Rather than erode standards in difficult times, our tenancy strategy will protect both homes and future tenants and improve standards in the private rented sector. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Iqbal

COUNCILLOR IQBAL: Lord Mayor, fellow Councillors, I am speaking on page 142, Minute 138, Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act Election Results.

My Lord Mayor, while there was little appetite from the public for the Police Commissioner given the turnout in the region in last November's election, only 13.3%, one of the results of the new role is the formation of new the Police and Crime Panel in West Yorkshire. As Members may be aware, Councillor Lowe, Councillor Les Carter (who is skiving today) *(laughter)* and myself have been appointed to this Crime Panel and if I may I just want to try and outline a few key points about how this Panel will work and what I think the major challenges will be.

Firstly, it is worth noting that the Police and Crime Panel has no direct responsibility for the police force under the new regulations. What it will do is hold the Police and Crime Commissioner to account on behalf of the people of this city and the people of West Yorkshire, and I can assure you Members in this Chamber that this is what we will be doing in a realistic and I am sure on occasions very robust manner.

The good news is as we enter this new way of working that the PCC and the members of the new Crime Panel will have a solid base on which to build on. We are very fortunate to have in the West Yorkshire Police, and through its support staff and PCSOs, an amazingly hardworking and dedicated workforce and I would like personally to thank them all for their continued efforts in keeping us safe and battling crime.

In regards to crimes such as burglary, for example, we are also making positive strides. For example, in the last twelve months up to September 2012 burglary rates in the city dropped by 36% with 3,276 fewer victims, while homes in South Leeds have seen a reduction of 39% compared to the previous year. While undoubtedly good news, as we know one burglary is far too many, especially for the victims of this crime, and it is vital that significant reductions continue to be made.

Even taking into account these encouraging statistics, we simply cannot get away from the fact that there are massive challenges ahead for the force that can impact on the good work which has been achieved over many years. Clearly the most important factor will be the significant cuts that are being proposed by the Government on our police force's budget. This is going to be an enormously challenging issue and as a part of one of the Panel's key roles it will be for us to scrutinise in a constructive manner the decisions made by the PCC to ensure they meet the key priorities of our city and residents.

One of the ways that I believe that we can ensure policing continues to move in the right direction is to make sure partnership working remains at the very forefront of the force's priorities. Safer Leeds, for example, has a fantastically strong record of partnership working in the city and while it is worth highlighting...

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

COUNCILLOR IQBAL: ...that the PCC no longer has a requirement to sit on the Community Safety partnership, I will certainly be lobbying now to ensure this type of close working continues because it is undoubtedly extremely beneficial in tackling crimes across our communities. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Anderson.

COUNCILLOR ANDERSON: Lord Mayor, I refer to Minute 155 in the supplementary pack.

I am concerned that the review is not taking the opportunity to look at more root and branch improvements that can be made for tenants. Fine, we may be looking at changing the Government's model but I do think the tenants of this city deserve a lot more look at what has gone right and what has gone wrong and I will explain that further in a minute.

I also think that the information that has been put before us is very, very lacking in detail about how local Members are going to get involved and also what roles the Area Committees are going to take, and I do feel that that should be put into the public domain as soon as possible so that we can have a full and frank debate about what will and won't work, because what happens in one part of the city in terms of tenants' needs is different in other parts and we need to make sure that we get it right to benefit all tenants in what we are doing.

It is also very low in detail as to how tenants are going to get involved in a local way, so I do think something more needs to be done about that.

I am also very confused as to what you are actually planning to do about your proposals for repairs and maintenance. You seem to want to face every way at the same time. I do need think you need to be a bit more clear.

For example, there have been problems recently and then Morrison's took over the contract, but do we not think we need to look at the ALMOs to see what they have done in terms of contributing to the problems that have existed? For example, a complaint going back to 2010 finally reached Stage 3 with the tenant's complaint being fully upheld in February 2011. In July 2011, with issues still outstanding, the complaint was closed without anyone confirming with the tenant that all work had been satisfactorily completed. Despite all the reassurances, work still remains outstanding and the matter is now in the hands of the Ombudsman.

There is also another example where a tenant who had been fighting for four years, starting in April 2008 – when we were in power, I accept, before you come back and say anything about that – to get a leak to her cellar repaired, work has also been required to re-render the gable end of the property to resolve the problem of damp in the bedroom. By September 2012 with the matter still unresolved it had escalated to a Stage 3 complaint. The tenant is still suffering from damp in her bedroom and has threatened to refer the matter to a solicitor.

A tenant also complained recently about the conduct and poor workmanship of an operative. That took the matter to Stage 1 but then it was dealt with by Morrison's Resident Liaison Officer. No Council Customer Relations Officer has been involved in what has been happening here.

What is evident is that even where a complaint is long-standing and has escalated to the formal complaint procedure, nothing is being done in most cases by the ALMOs to check up and make out and see what is happening.

THE LORD MAYOR: Can you make your final point, Councillor Anderson?

COUNCILLOR ANDERSON: For example, we are concerned at the double counting that possibly could mean that public money is not being used effectively because we are getting charged twice for some of these things. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Lyons.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: Thank you very much. I hope I get paid extra for speaking twice! I don't get paid? I will make it very short!

It is 156 extra papers, the building of additional Council houses. I sometimes wonder and I am going to check very carefully on my Euro Millions because luck seems to be going our way regarding what is happening with us in administration so I will check very carefully and then I will go across there if I have won millions!

What I am talking about now is starting to build Council houses. We are once again starting to build Council housing and I could say – I had better hurry up else it will start flashing red lights and God knows what and I will get into trouble with the Lord Mayor – we have got a choice based letting and the people that ring me up, come to my house, come to my surgery, most of the cases are about either young lasses, young fellas with very young families trying to get a house, they are all sleeping on their mother's couch. They are all sleeping everywhere that there is.

For the last few years it has been very, very difficult to try and get anyone a house. On choice based letting you have to be in Category A to get anywhere like getting a house, especially somebody said you will want a choice of where you live. It is not a choice of where you live – it is a choice of where you can get a house on social housing. I represent the biggest social housing area in Europe – I can check the figures if somebody starts arguing with me. As far as I can see, once we start building these hundred and odd houses, we have made a start.

We were talking about a bedroom tax earlier on and there are people that want to move instead of paying, or cannot pay the extra money. There is nowhere for them to go, we have not built the houses.

Thank you very much for what you are doing with these houses. Go across to Halton Moor and Osmanthorpe and the Nevilles and tell them you are starting to build Council houses and starting to see the look on some of the young lads' and lasses' faces with young families with even a chance of getting some social housing. It is all right for us, we go home to a nice warm house (I hope anyway) but most of them do not and they are wandering around and they are getting into more difficulty and more debt as time goes on.

It is a start with a hundred houses to start and I think we will carry on building so that we can put people of social needs into social housing. The sooner we do that the sooner my caseload goes down to start with, but apart from all this...

THE LORD MAYOR: Is this your final point, Councillor Lyons?

COUNCILLOR LYONS: This is the point, I am getting to that. *(laughter)* I will have to have you playing hell with me – I have had every Lord Mayor for the last 33 years play hell with me!

As far as I can see thank you very much, it is good luck and we have got to put it out to the people of Leeds, we have started now building social houses and we intend to carry on. Thank you very much. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Morgan.

COUNCILLOR MORGAN: Lord Mayor and fellow Councillors, I feel very blessed to be following Councillor Lyons! *(laughter)*

I have got to say I am delighted to be speaking to Minute 156 and I am also delighted to see this Council using its resources to build much-needed new Council houses.

Most of you are aware that Killingbeck and Seacroft – Seacroft again, we are doing well boys – has a large number of Council housing estates. Through contact with our residents, I get to see the impact of people being in secure and well-managed tenancies. Council tenants know they can speak to their landlord when they have difficulties, know they can be involved in decision-making in their community and they can expect to be treated fairly.

In building new houses at the same time as renewing its commitment to offer secure tenancies, the Council is offering new opportunities for families to grow and develop. The larger houses in Seacroft serve a need for the many families who choose to live there and as the children brought up in those households reach an age when they need their own accommodation, understandably they want to be near their families and stay in the neighbourhoods they grew up in. This is where their support networks are.

On the Council's waiting list there are 558 people who need a one-bedroom property, and these 558 people have chosen Seacroft as their preferred area to live. A large proportion of these are single working people. I fully support the idea that flexible properties are required to allow for the demand for one-bedroom properties seen across Leeds.

In Killingbeck and Seacroft there are 620 households which will be affected by the bedroom tax and this will only add to the demand for one bedroom properties. By taking this action now, the Council is trying to assist those affected by the cuts imposed on its tenants.

Whilst the 105 houses being built will not meet all of the demand from tenants, it will at least help some of those in housing need. One major step is to try and bring back empty homes into use. I welcome and support the strong actions the Council has taken to return empty properties to a decent condition. This provides a family with a home and improves the look of the local area. It is impressive to see the transformation of an empty property into a family home and this is good.

This Council is using its land sensibly, proposing to build on areas where the vision of regeneration has already been established. I support this and I also support working with housing associations...

THE LORD MAYOR: Please can you make your final people, Councillor Morgan?

COUNCILLOR MORGAN: ...where larger developments allow for a mixture of Council and other affordable housing. This is an exciting move from our Council and one that shows commitment to this great city that is Leeds. I look forward to seeing this progress. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: We have just got time for Councillor Gruen before we move on to the next lot of Minutes.

COUNCILLOR P GRUEN: Thank you very much. I start with Councillor Charlwood's speech, which was a wonderful reminder of Labour values. We consider Council homes to be an alternative way of living but a safety net and we will support tenants in Council homes, and that we will not simply abandon them because the Government tells us we can, but that we will ensure that through tenancies we continue to stay in touch with them.

From Councillor Iqbal's speech, if I could just ask you to listen to the one key fact – burglaries in twelve months down by 36%, which means 3,276 fewer victims, and that is a fantastic achievement by everyone concerned in Safer Leeds and West Yorkshire Police and most of all, of course, people in the neighbourhoods who now have fewer burglaries. Next year our key priority will be on domestic violence, something that is neglected and not as well understood as it should be and it will get the same focus and the same target as burglaries have done this year.

I am grateful to both my colleagues Councillor Lyons and Councillor Morgan talking about the new initiative about Council housing. We are dipping our toe in the water after years and years and years of no Council houses being built. We are doing this despite not getting sufficient funds from the Government. When the Homes and Communities Agency was in its heyday in the last three years of the Labour Government, we had £100m towards housing in this city alone. All of that is out the window, to a very large extent.

Councillor Anderson and there ALMO review. I was intrigued when we talk about damp in homes when we are talking about a strategic review of how the ALMOs and the future management of housing will actually function in this city. I agree with you, we need to put the full facts out to tenants, I agree with you tenants need to be fully involved and informed. I think the work that has been done and the report that came to Executive Board was sufficient for the decision to be taken on which two options to pursue. That is not the end of it. There is a lot of work left to be done, a lot of consultation to go through, a lot of people to be involved to ensure that everyone involved in housing in this city feels they have played their part in coming to a decision.

I know time is tight so I will finish there. Thank you very much, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

(b) Advisory and Procedural Committees

(i) Development Plans Panel

THE LORD MAYOR: For the benefit of people in the public gallery, we are now moving on to page 12, Item (b), Advisory and Procedural Committees, Development Plans Panel. Councillor Gruen again, please.

COUNCILLOR P GRUEN: On the Development Plans Panel I think the comment that I would like to make is that a discussion in public has now started regarding the way forward on a lot of the information which has been worked up on site allocations and particularly on the strategy and now particularly on the community infrastructure levy.

This is a start to that debate. The Council is fully aware of its responsibilities in having a balance between the issues of what it can charge and what is affordable. The Council has to take a balance. Councillor Taggart who chairs the Development Plans Panel and all the people on that will be very cognisant of the fact that the city is watching. That means the communities are watching as well as the developers, as well as the Chamber. There is a balance to be struck between ensuring that development if it happens, as colleagues said earlier on with the Orbital Road, that investment is made and infrastructure is provided, that we do not end up with three, four, five thousand houses in East Leeds and no infrastructure.

I keep saying, we say that the city is open for business but it is open for business not at any cost. It is open for business for developers who want to work with us constructively, collaboratively, together for the benefit of communities to leave a lasting legacy, not just houses but a legacy. The Community Infrastructure Levy also has to look towards the big ticket items.

I just mention flood defences. Do I need to say more on flood defences? Every Member in here will understand the importance strategically of that kind of investment and infrastructure, so this is a delicately balanced debate which is being taken forward. Thank you very much.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Golton.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I just wanted to comment on the Community Infrastructure Levy and the recent announcements that have come from the Government in reference to making sure that we have better community access to these funds and its relationship to neighbourhood planning.

The Executive Board is well aware of my mania for neighbourhood planning, primarily because I believe that neighbourhood plans are the best bit of the Localism Act because it enables our communities to organise, to build capacity and to get people who are not normally interested in politics and planning and local affairs into a structure where they can actually participate properly and make sure that a community itself is more sustainable and self-sustaining.

Also, of course, it does imply that the neighbourhood plans are brought together by neighbourhood forums which represent the entire community. There is a stipulation in there that there should be young people, that we should make sure that we have diverse cultures represented and that there should be balance in terms of sexes.

The only reason I have gone on about that is that the Government has decided that the Community Infrastructure Levy should be higher in those areas that have neighbourhood plans, specifically that instead of having a recommendation of being 155 for normal payback to communities, for those areas that have neighbourhood plans it is stating that it should be 25%. I would therefore suggest that the Council should make it plain that just because they have a centralising nature and are currently suggesting a very large proportion be kept centrally by the Council instead of being divested to communities, that they make a commitment here

that they will not pull back their commitment to taking neighbourhood plans forward and enabling communities to do that just because they might lose some money through the Community Infrastructure Levy. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor John Procter.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Same Minute, same page.

I find myself in the unusual position of agreeing with quite an amount of what Councillor Peter Gruen has said today. I know it is concerning, I will try not to make a habit of it, but I do.

I want to echo really the sentiments that Councillor Carter said in terms of the East Leeds Orbital route. We really do have to get on the front foot in relation to Community Infrastructure Levy and how we deal with developers. They would have you believe that they are struggling, they have not got two pennies to rub together and isn't it all very difficult. I have to say that many of these developers and landowners do not live in your ward, Graham, in Killingbeck and Seacroft, they do not live in your ward either, Michael, despite you have got some exceptionally nice areas in your ward as well. They live in the very leafy lanes, yes, some in Willerby, many, many of them in the Harewood ward and many more still actually out of this city altogether. They are not personally affected by what they are bringing to communities in Leeds and it is our job collectively, I would submit, to make sure that we get every penny piece that we possibly can for the communities in this city from the developers who are making vast, vast, vast sums of money from turning agricultural land, £10,000 an acre, to prime development land, quarter of a million, half a million an acre plus. You do not need to be a mathematical genius, do you, to run those sorts of numbers. There is huge, huge money at stake here. You only need to look at actually who owns a lot of the land in the east of Leeds to find out it has already been bought up by the Taylor Woodrows of this world, Persimmons of this world and the like, and they will make vast sums of money on the back of the decisions that are in this Council.

I think it is right that we move ahead with this charging schedule. It is right that we get the right sums of money that, yes, enable development to occur but not at any price – absolutely not at any price because, as we will talk about later on today, that infrastructure is important and it does need to be paid for and isn't it right that those who are making the most sums of money should actually be the people who pay for that infrastructure as well. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Taggart.

COUNCILLOR TAGGART: Well, first of all the Labour Party would much rather we had a system that was inherent within the Unitary Development Plan whereby we developed previously developed land, brown field land, and then phase 1, phase 2 sites, and it is Labour Party to protect the green belt. It is actually the policy of this Government that we have now got to basically allow a free for all and developers, as we know, are not terribly interested in brown field land. They do want the green bits of John's ward, for example, and it is his Government's policy that has resulted in the land banking and the allowing that position and all the rest that goes with it. That is the kind of anarchy that is taking planning away from Planning, really.

As far as Community Infrastructure Levy is concerned, three things I should say. One is at our meeting on Monday we decided to defer taking some decision till

later in the month to do further work, at the request of Councillor Anderson in particular and as Chair I was happy to do that.

Secondly, anyone who thinks Community Infrastructure Levy will provide an unlimited sum of money for the needs of the city, I am sorry, you are living in a fool's paradise. That is not what the Government has designed. What the Government has designed is a system that will give you roughly ten to 15% of what you need for your infrastructure, so it will go into the pot but it will not necessarily provide a solution.

The other thing that is interesting is what the Minister just a few days ago, because some people think that if you get a Community Neighbourhood Plan it will stop all new development, it will stop all those people coming into our village from elsewhere. It does not do that at all. In fact this is one of the things the Minister says, and I am going to quote this. By the way, Stewart is right, where there is a Neighbourhood Development Plan and there is CIL moneys forthcoming, 25% of it will go to that community to spend as they see fit, and it might be on any old thing whatsoever really, but not necessarily comply with the policies of the democratic City Council.

One of the things the Minister said was:

“Communities without a Parish or Town Council will still benefit from this incentive because they will get 15% with the local Planning Authority retaining it and spending it in accordance with the wishes of the community. Instead of hectoring people who are forcing development on communities, the Government believes that we need to persuade communities that development is in everyone's interest. Incentives are key to getting the homes built that we both need for today and for future generations”

so it is still Government policy to allow thousands of new homes to be built in Leeds, particularly in green field and green belt areas, and personally as Chair of the Development Panel, I think we regret that because Leeds is a very green city and we love and respect the green parts of Leeds and we have got large areas of land previously developed, houses demolished, factories gone, which are ripe for development, developers are not interested and it is Government policy, oddly enough, to annoy their own supporters in the leafy fields and suburbs, but such is life.

I can assure when at the end of January we have another meeting of the Development Plans Panel and we will take decisions on the CIL levels particularly for office development in the city centre, that was one of the issues we discussed, and we are also specifically looking at the boundary of charging zones in basically the vicinity of north of Weetwood Police Station, at the very reasonable request of Councillor Anderson, and I will repeat for the benefit of all 99 Councillors here today, actually we are willing to examine all the boundaries of all the areas at our meeting on the 29th so if you have not seen the boundaries and you cannot find them on the website (although they are there) see me afterwards, I will make sure you have a copy and make sure you get into it very quickly if you want the Panel to discuss those matters at the end of the month.

The plan is, we will bundle up the work and we will hand it to the Executive Board who will take a decision on the whole thing. Members of Council, thank you very much. *(Applause)*

(c) **Area Committees**

(i) **North West (Inner) Area Committee**

THE LORD MAYOR: We are now moving on to the North West (Inner) Area Committee. Councillor Walshaw.

COUNCILLOR WALSHAW: Thank you, Lord Mayor. There is absolutely no escape from the current planning theme so I would like to talk about the work of the Inner North-West Planning Group of which I am the Chair, and it is to speak about Minute 52 on page 335.

It is the comment on the Government's proposals to expand permitted development rights. First of all, just I would like to very quickly thank the work of Ryan Platten, our Community Planner. He has done the lion's share of the work on this report and I would always having a Community Planner, but hands off Ryan, we got him first.

The Government has proposals to greatly expand permitted development and that is the stuff that does not need planning permission. It is their contention that the planning system is somehow holding the economy back, is mere red tape, is just bureaucracy and in no way at all is it the expression of the democratic rights of the people of the United Kingdom – no, no, no.

There is a wide range of proposals. We have done a detailed report which I recommend people read, but I could not possibly hope to rubbish and ridicule all of them in three minutes, so I have chosen two.

The first one is – and I am going to read this as a quote:

“Do you agree that in non-protected areas the maximum depth of a single storey extension should be increased to 8 metres for detached houses and 6 metres for any type of house?”

That is no planning permissions needed for single storey extensions. Picture my ward Headingley – or Kirkstall or Harehills or Beeston, Hyde Park and Woodhouse – six metres is larger than most gardens so there is the potential that across the city we could see gardens and yards disappearing, and that fundamentally makes houses and neighbourhoods much less liveable in. In Headingley Councillor Walker and I have a Liveability Agenda where we want to bring families back to Headingley. That is going to be compromised by these proposals. Landlords having HMRs, they just might build loads of single storey extensions, who knows.

I think the key thing in all seriousness is that their neighbours and their wider community and their elected representatives will have no right of enquiry, no right of consultation and no right of appeal.

Everyone can claim – did I miss a meeting? What happened to Localism here? Where is the neighbourliness and where is the democratic ability for us to manage change as a city. I think that is wrong and I think it is the wrong path to go down.

Example two is even better:

“Are there any changes which should be made to householder permitted development rights which make it easier to convert garages for the use

of members of that family?"

Our answer can be rather pithily summed up as "No". The system already accommodates this and in London and the south-east the evidence is you tend to get a lot of illegal occupation, illegal sub-letting of these developments.

I can see the lights are going on, so just to sum up, you have seen the response from Nick Boles MP – he says we are wrong. I completely disagree with him, we are right and I think this kind of approach by Government, this railroading through, this attack on the planning system is wrong. The planning system is efficient; the planning system is not the enemy. There are much wider problems in the British economy and these will not be solved by extending permitted development rights because, let us be clear, physical to the city lasts lifetimes. We live in a city where we are still dealing with the 19th Century, let alone what could be brought about by these changes to PD, so these changes to permitted development are going to leave a legacy of discord, disharmony and problems that we are going to have to solve as a city and they are wrong. Thank you very much, Lord Mayor.
(Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Akhtar.

COUNCILLOR AKHTAR: Thank you, my Lord Mayor. First of all I would like to thank Councillor Walshaw for his comments and the work undertaken by the Planning sub-group which he chairs, compiling a response to the Government on their plans to extend and permit development rights to home owners and businesses.

My Lord Mayor, I am in complete agreement with Councillor Walshaw that if these proposals are given the go-ahead the potential for real problems in Inner North-West and indeed across the city are extended. What the Government will be doing here if they relax these laws is taking away the power of Council in making sure any proposal for eight metres or the six metre single storey for rear extension is proper, correct and does not impact negatively either on the neighbours or the local community in general.

As the report has quite rightly pointed out, there is considerable evidence the proposed eight metres or six metre single storey rear extension would highly likely be controversial and there would be no means in which this can be addressed, which obviously will bring serious repercussions including, for example, potential for more neighbourly disputes. I truly hope that the Government will listen properly to the views expressed in this consultation and will decide not to proceed with this proposal which flies in the face of one of their supposed key policy proposals, namely to provide more powers in which to promote greater localism. Thank you, Lord Mayor.
(Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: As we are past the hour of 4.30 I will now call upon Councillor Wakefield to exercise the right of final reply.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I think most of this afternoon I have heard comments and contributions relating to unemployment, benefit, homelessness, fuel poverty, advice, disabilities and so on. It did remind me – and I made a quick reference to it early in the day – about the debate that took place in Parliament last week which again, in terms of the debate, was one of the most dishonest debates I have ever heard. Again, it was about stereotyping and demonising people on benefit and a very false dichotomy between the skivers and the strivers, which we have heard.

Just a couple of points. One of the things they have been peddling this welfare report has been about generations of families that have never worked. The research and the evidence proves that amounts to one per cent of two generations of families that have not worked. Again, you would have thought 99% of people who are claiming benefits would come from generations and generations of benefit. The other one, which I find deeply offensive because we are dealing with it time and time again, is about lifestyle. Yes, there are people, Councillor Lyons and myself met them some years ago, who were on benefits drinking lager outside, but bear this in mind, there is less than 5% of welfare benefit people – they probably all live in your ward, Mick (*interruption*) but those on benefits. I will tell you something, this party actually has no time for people who can work and will work and spend most of the time chanting at Mick and I about, if I remember, the National Front and BNP. I have got no time for people like that, I do not think any of us have time for that and I am very much for people who get the opportunity to get the work and get them off benefits. That is not what this debate has been about. I found it, as I say, quite sad that we have had to go through this.

You think that people on benefits are on some kind of bonanza so I thought I would check. What does a JSA single person get on JSS? £71. It has been worked out that in the next three years that person will lose £7.41. That is the Institute of Financial Studies. If you are a couple you get £111 to survive. I defy anybody in this room, because we have had these offers before, I remember Michael Portillo and others saying they could, I defy anybody to actually say they could survive off that level of money week in, week out, year in, year out.

I think that is important because, as I say, we have never really got to the facts of this. As a result of those welfare changes now we now have those kind of people living day to day with people like Alec Shelbrooke advising them how to spend money, which I think is deeply offensive and he ought to be ashamed of himself seeking the publicity that he did around that. I would like to actually guide him around when he talked about subsidies and how to spend, he should be very careful when he goes to Parliament because there happens to be a bar there that is very well subsidised and I feel he has got the publicity he wants.

I also find it deeply worrying that people like Greg Mulholland voted for these benefit changes. He is a man who does construct himself as somebody who is quite radical and yet he put his hand - I will compliment Sarah Telford and some of those but Greg Mulholland, who represents an area where there is a high level of benefits actually voted for these changes.

As a result of all that we now have 500,000 cashiers, we have 300,000 nurses, we have 150,000 teachers, we have 40,000 soldiers who are being hit by these welfare changes in benefits and taxes.

This idea that somehow they are getting at skivers and helping strivers is completely false, it is a complete misrepresentation and actually, sadly, it is deeply, deeply offensive to those people who are working.

In Leeds, I think Councillor Groves mentioned this earlier, we now have 41,000 people who have been affected by the benefit change and, as you rightly say, £9.25m is coming out of the poorest areas of our city. In Burmantofts alone you are talking £900,000, nearly a million pounds, that will be taken out of a community desperately in need. In Gipton it is £700,000 and even in Alwoodley that was mentioned before, there is something like £200,000 coming out of that community as

a result of these benefits. You rightly pleaded their case, their needs, but they will be affected even worse.

The argument must be is this really working? I think we can see it is not in terms of the economy. Is there another way? I am very much persuaded by people who argue that if you want to get people off benefits, given the vast majority of people are working, pay them a living wage. We should stop subsidising employers that can afford to pay a living wage. We should give dignity to people who are working and that would bring down the benefit bill.

My other argument would be, which I am persuaded by, let us start controlling rents in the private sector. Again, that is another way that we could reduce housing benefits and make it possible for people then. I do think there is an argument about a different way and I could go on to building houses and so on.

One of the things I was please about today, in a kind of way, was the debate about the East Leeds Orbital Road because what everybody is saying in this Chamber is that the Council should take the lead, the Council should show civic leadership and make sure that we get those houses, we get those jobs, we get those apprenticeships to the building of 7,000 houses, schools and roads and so on.

Actually, the point that we did not discuss long but I think it is a really, really useful initiative under Councillor Lewis's initiative, was the use of brown field sites, packaging together in areas where there is a very low level of interest because the market does not want to, and actually providing the desperate thing that we face day in, day out, one and two bedrooms houses. We can actually do it and begin to transform.

When you put together the building of Council houses, you are beginning to get something here. You are beginning to say that actually what Councillor Carter and what the Conservatives have argued very well today is we need on a Leeds basis a Keynesian package. Isn't that exactly what we are trying to do when we are investing in homes, first time for I think nearly 30 years, we are investing in brown fields, we are investing into infrastructure, we are building it and isn't that a better way than punishing people on welfare and actually providing jobs and homes, the proper homes to deal with fuel poverty, apprenticeships, schools and all the things they want.

I think when you look at it as a package as a whole what we have is a real intervention that this Government is failing to do.

I will say one thing on CIL because John Procter, to his credit, sounded more like a Trotskyist than anybody else because you are right, John, to talk about not letting the developers off the hook for paying, and if anybody has invented a dog's breakfast, this Government's confusion between a CIL and 106 has made it very difficult to come to some sensible arrangement. I would say that we need to make sure, John is absolutely right, that the developers pay their way, we will show the way, we will provide the infrastructure but they have to provide with us in partnership the jobs, homes and opportunities that this city needs.

I move the Minutes, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: May I call for the vote on the motion to receive the Minutes, please. *(A vote was taken)* That is CARRIED.

ITEM 10 – BACK BENCH COMMUNITY CONCERNS

THE LORD MAYOR: For the benefit of people in the public gallery we are now moving on to the middle of page 14, Back Bench Community Concerns, and I would like to get two in before the tea break. Members in the public gallery, if you can stick it out for another 20 minutes, you are welcome to join us for tea!

Councillor Finnigan.

COUNCILLOR FINNIGAN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. The Back Bench concern that I am raising this afternoon relates to Morley Fire Station. People will remember that my colleague Councillor Elliott spoke most eloquently about defending Morley Fire Station last year at the point that it was threatened for closure by the Fire Authority. I am here to commend those people who were part of Morley Borough Independents' Campaign to keep Morley Fire Station open.

As you have already heard from Councillor Selby, two and a half thousand objections came from the Morley area about these particular changes. Why did people object? There was a significant concern amongst the communities that we serve that closing Morley Fire Station, closing it in an amalgamation with Hunslet Fire Station somewhere near the White Rose, would put communities at risk, certainly those communities that live on the outskirts, like East Ardsley, like Drighlington, like Gildersome. There was a strong view that in those circumstances those communities may well have been at risk and that moving Morley Fire Station on to the ring road would create all sorts of problems and potentially fatalities. That is why those people got themselves organised and joined our campaign to make sure that the fire station remains open.

We have been partially successful with that campaign. We are pleased that the Fire Authority has reconsidered its initial proposals for closure and has decided that Morley Fire Station will remain open. That is a partial victory, but we have significant concerns for the new staffing arrangements that are going to be introduced to Morley which create a new series of challenges and concerns.

Morley Fire Station is likely to be staffed pretty much during the day. Following on from that, staff will be on call. They are supposedly going to turn up at the fire station within five minutes of getting a call and then at that particular point getting themselves sorted and get out to whatever shouts they have got to get out to.

We think that extra five minutes again puts those same communities at risk. We take into account that Morley Fire Station not only deals with problems with fires in and around the Morley area but also has a significant call upon its services because of our proximity to the M62. We do believe under these arrangements there is a real potential for those communities to be at risk and for those services that Morley Fire Station provides so well to be compromised with this arrangement.

We are asking this Council to support our campaign to look at a different arrangement called Close Call. Close Call looks at actually providing accommodation at Morley Fire Station so that those fire-fighters can be there 24 hours a day – none of this we will give you a call and we want you to be here in five minutes if you can manage it, taking into account there is not snow, taking into account there is not congestion or all the other challenges that fire-fighters might actually face.

This is a proposal that was discussed and supported by the fire-fighters at Morley Fire Station, who accept that changes need to occur and it is their view that this is a reasonable compromise, taking into account the savings that need to be made, making sure that Morley Fire Station remains open, that this new way of staffing, this Close Call, may well be a solution to the challenges that we presently face. We would want cross-party support for this particular approach and that is really why we are raising it at this point as a back-bench community concern.

What we would also say is that we need to look wider at the fact that West Yorkshire Fire Authority, the most efficient Fire Authority in the country, gets such a raw deal. It got such a raw deal with the previous Government as well and certainly one of the things that we have significant concerns about is the fact that certainly under the previous Labour Government money pushed its way through to those areas that are traditionally Labour leaning, so you have got Manchester, you have got Merseyside, you have got other Fire Authorities supported financially in a much fairer and a much more significant way than West Yorkshire.

Under the present Government all that happens is a similar thing where they make sure that the money is forwarded on to the communities that they want to protect, that tend to be in more leafy areas. What we think should happen is that there should be an independent commission that looks at how Fire Authorities are actually financed, take it out of the political chicanery that goes on at this particular point and look at making sure that West Yorkshire Fire Authority gets the fair support that it should have financially irrespective of which Government is actually in charge.

Finally what I would say is that I would like to thank those people who have been involved in our campaign, particularly Brian and Christine Guy and the Fire Brigades Union that worked very hard with us to actually achieve this. We would like to thank Councillor Renshaw for her eloquent speech at the Fire Authority defending Morley Fire Station, but we cannot because she did not turn up.

I would also like to thank Councillor Dawson with his performance of Ed Balls on YouTube about saving Morley Fire Station, because without that sort of support we would not have achieved what we have tried to achieve today.

We think that it is significant that Morley Fire Station remains open but we want the management and staffing structures to be looked at again. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Before I call on Councillor Selby, can I just say that the Chief Executive and Councillor Wakefield have an important meeting to attend in Paris in connection with the Tour de France and Leeds' part in it, so they have now left the meeting but I am delighted to welcome Alan Gay – I do not know whether Alan Gay is as delighted as I am! Councillor Selby, please.

COUNCILLOR SELBY: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I listened with interest to what Councillor Finnigan has had to say. It is with some pity that he failed to acknowledge the involvement of Ed Balls and Hilary Benn in the campaign to save both Hunslet and Morley Fire Stations and it would have been a little bit gracious of him to have done so, and also to acknowledge the actual work that was done, not what he perceives was done, by Councillor Dawson, who did play an important role in helping to save this station.

When the Fire Authority made its decision on 21st December we were faced with doing two wrongs. Either we cut fire cover to an extent that we did not like, or

we were faced with the Fire Authority going bankrupt as a result of cuts from last year's settlement and cuts in this year's settlement and conscious that we are facing as well cuts next year. We are faced with doing wrong or doing wrong.

What we could not do as a responsible Authority is apply the Derek Hatton Sedonite head in the sand approach and no reasonable Labour Authority in Yorkshire ever went down that line. When there is a Labour controlled Fire Authority we were not going to do that and so we had to come to deal with a very, very difficult situation.

What we did do is we took into account all the consultation that took place, as I said earlier on, 45% of the 12,000 came from Leeds, and we made what I thought *was a reasonable decision*.

Can I deal with the issue of crewing that Councillor Finnigan refers to? This actually is in operation in Leeds at the moment, it is in operation at the Wetherby Fire Station. It is also in operation elsewhere in West Yorkshire. Councillor Finnigan talks in terms of the scheme Close Call. What he does not mention is, of course, the capital expenditure that would be incurred as a result of doing what he wants to do. There are no proposals from him where that money is going to come from. Is he offering, on behalf of the Morley Independent controlled Morley Town Council some capital funding towards this? Is he offering some revenue support, because that again is something that would need to be considered.

As a Fire Authority we have to look at all the issues and, bearing in mind the situation, we have probably come to the best we possibly can bearing in mind the financial constraints that we were placed under.

I would have liked in an ideal situation, we would not have done any of these cuts. I did not come into Local Government to support major cuts in services. Nobody on this side did - nobody. Ed Balls did not come into politics to cut services in the way that this Government is forcing us to do so; Hilary Benn did not come into politics to do that; Neil Dawson did not come into politics to do that. We came to serve our communities and we are faced with a very awkward situation and that, unfortunately, is why we have ended up with the situation that we have got.
(Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: We now move on to the second Back Bench Community Concern, Councillor Taylor.

COUNCILLOR TAYLOR: I would like to talk about infant mortality rates in my ward and the importance of outreach work, particularly for young mothers in reducing these numbers.

My ward contains one of the most deprived areas in Leeds, an area where there are high amounts of pregnancy amongst young teenagers. The statistics show that women from areas of deprivation and women from certain ethnic groups leave it late to seek antenatal care, which could have an effect on pregnancies.

Statistically infant mortality rates are 60% higher for babies born to teenage mothers than for mothers aged 29 to 39. It is vitally important that resources are in place to provide advice and guidance to these mothers. In addition to a high mortality risk, teenage mothers and their babies are also more likely to be affected by a host of other poor health outcomes. For example, teenage mothers are three times more likely to smoke throughout their pregnancies than older mothers. Post-natal

depression amongst teenage mothers is three times higher than women in their twenties and thirties. Teenage mothers are 50% less likely to breastfeed.

The children of teenage mothers are also up to 63% increase of risk of being born into poverty and have a lower educational attainment. Furthermore, daughters of teenage mothers are more likely to become teenage mothers themselves, which creates a vicious circle.

Chapel Allerton is an area of Leeds where in the past infant mortality rates have been high due to the high level of deprivation and high number of teenage pregnancies in recent years. I understand that this rate had dropped significantly in recent years and I would be interested to know whether this is a consequence of specific action that has been taken to address this issue.

While these figures indicate that progress is being made to address infant mortality rates, I am still concerned that more could be done in terms of identifying vulnerable teenagers and ensuring that the right help is at hand for them. "Teenage mother" is a term that is widely used but really is that the term that is applied to a range of young women in different situations and with different needs. Some teenage mothers have lived at home with their own parent and have a broad support network through families and friends, and particularly in areas of high deprivation are often vulnerable and isolated, living alone without any support network for themselves.

Whatever situation these mothers find themselves in the one thing that is clear is that they all need professional medical care and advice during pregnancy and lifestyle support afterwards. The key to address teenage pregnancy in the long term is, of course, education. Educating early through school, providing advice and education on the pitfall of getting pregnant too early is very important as it will help them to make informed choice about their future. However, there needs to be a broad collection of measures in place to continue to offer help, advice, care and support to young girls who do get pregnant to ensure the best possible outcome for both themselves and the baby during and after pregnancy. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Rafique.

COUNCILLOR RAFIQUE: My ward colleague Councillor Taylor raises some really important concerns and points about supporting teenage mothers in our communities in an effort to reduce infant mortality rates. It is vital that we continue to be inventive in the ways we look after teenagers who become pregnant. I hope that the Executive Member for Health and Wellbeing will be able to tell us about some of the ways that this is being done.

However, one of the things that I feel is often overlooked when discussing teenage pregnancies is the role that young men have to play. The health and wellbeing of mothers and babies is an absolute priority. However, young men have a responsibility as fathers. I realise the situation is not always straightforward as in some cases the father of the child may not be in the picture as relationships may have broken down. However, there are situations where young fathers are in the picture and do not want to play an active role in the upbringing of the child. In these cases they should be encouraged and helped to do so. I think that it is really important that there are services that are there to support them in their decision. Expecting a child at such a young age can be a very daunting prospect, particularly for teenage girls but also for young men too and I feel this important point is often overlooked.

There is also a stereotype surrounding teenage fathers that they more often than not choose to dissociate themselves from the child and the mother of the child. This is simply not the case and it is more of a case of looking at what we can do for these young men through this stage of their lives. Young men can often feel isolated and uninvolved in the process and feel like they have little to contribute to the situation. However, the opposite is true.

Their involvement is crucial and getting involved from an early stage is all the more important to learn the necessary responsibilities that are needed when the baby is born. The father's involvement in looking after the child is really important in creating a strong family bond as well as their own development. I really would like to see the introduction of more schemes in my ward which specifically recognise the role of young fathers...

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

COUNCILLOR RAFIQUE: ...teenage pregnancies and educate and encourage them to have a greater involvement during pregnancy and contribute and a constructive role after the birth. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Mulherin.

COUNCILLOR MULHERIN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Let me start by thanking my colleagues for bringing this really important matter to the attention of Council. Infant mortality rates are a vital indicator of health inequalities and clearly the aim of Local Authorities and our health partners working together should be to do all that we can to bring the number of infant deaths down.

Teenage pregnancy historically contributes significantly to higher infant mortality rates and the figure that Councillor Taylor mentioned that infant mortality rates for babies born to teenage mothers are 60% higher than for mothers in their thirties and twenties is a real cause for concern.

Since April 2009 the NHS has been running an excellent programme in Leeds called the Family Nurse Partnership. It is an intensive preventive programme of positive intervention delivered specifically by specially trained family nurses and it is offered to vulnerable first time teenage mothers throughout their pregnancy until their child is two. Although there has yet to be any evaluation of the impact of this project here in Leeds, it builds on 30 years of experience and evidence in the US that shows that it improves parenting, reduces child abuse, improves maternal health in pregnancy and birth outcomes, reduces attendance at A&E and hospitalisation for injuries, improves the child's emotional, behavioural and cognitive development and their school readiness, improves the mother's life course and her financial independence in the longer term and reduces the child's involvement in crime and antisocial behaviour.

Since its introduction in Leeds in 2009 the Family Nurse Partnership has helped 231 teenage mothers in Leeds. It is helping to nurture strength and instil confidence whilst reducing the stigma felt by teenage parents. The vision is for this programme to be expanded to all first time teenage mothers aged 17 and under, and to all first time mothers under 19 who are in our care.

The additional funding that this scheme has received in the last few years will enable it to continue to extend its reach and help many more children and families in the city.

Further localised work to tackle infant mortality began in Chapeltown and Beeston Hill in 2008 where two demonstrator sites were established with aims which included reducing conceptions in under 18s, increasing breastfeeding rates, reducing overcrowding and reducing rates of smoking during pregnancy which can result in low birth weight babies.

When these demonstration sites were introduced Chapeltown had higher than average infant mortality rates which, as Councillor Taylor stated in her speech, I am happy to say has been reduced. Programmes run through the infant mortality demonstration sites include baby cafes in each areas to support and promote breastfeeding; a smoke-free home scheme supporting those who want to give up smoking whilst pregnant and support the households to give up smoking too; work with children's centres and early start teams to improve infant nutrition; and specific work to address the links between domestic violence and infant mortality.

In addition to this and in response particularly to Councillor Rafique's comments, there is some work focused at the moment on raising the importance of the role of young fathers, but this seems to be an area where work through out networks needs a lot more to be done. The NHS are currently working on a scheme of a dramatisation with local playwrights which will highlight the importance of fathers' involvement through local community radio. There is an ongoing piece of research between Leeds City Council and the University of Leeds called Following Father which is exploring ways of improving engagement with teenage dads. The research is exploring fathers' identities and their relationships with existing professional support. The circumstances and life experiences of young teenage dads are complex and varied and they typically face a host of challenges entering and sustaining active parenthood. They need flexible and emotional and practical support...

THE LORD MAYOR: Can you make your final point, Councillor Mulherin?

COUNCILLOR MULHERIN: ... to help them through what is a difficult and challenging period in the life of anybody who is a new parent. It is hoped that this continued research will inform a more supportive system for young fathers as we go forward. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: I now propose to break for tea. Could I have you back by 20-past five, please, and people in the public gallery are more than welcome to join us in the Banquet Hall. Thank you.

(Council adjourned for a short time)

THE LORD MAYOR: Right, Members, we are on the third Back Bench Community Concern and can I call on Councillor Urry, please.

COUNCILLOR URRY: Thank you, Lord Mayor. We want particularly to address the closure of the Leeds Remploy factory, which has led directory to redundancies in wards across the city, including my own ward, Roundhay, and what we as a city can now do support our disabled workers.

In 1947 the Labour Government created Remploy for injured ex-servicemen. Remploy factories continued providing work for people with physical or learning issues until the then Disabled Services Minister, Maria Miller, announced to Parliament on 7th March 2012, following a Government appointed Sayce Report:

“Money to support disabled people into employment should follow individuals, not institutions. Remploy factories should be set free from Government control. Government funded segregated employment is not consistent with the objective of disability equality which is at the heart of what this Government stands for.”

I think we know what “setting free” means in this context and I am afraid the Minister was disinformed. The factories never were segregated, they always employed disabled and able-bodied people. That was their business model. More importantly, how were displaced, disabled workers to find mainstream work in a time of mass employment and under-employment in a deep recession?

I have seen no starker example of the direct impact of remote and impersonal Government policy on vulnerable people than when at 11.30 am on 30 November last year the remaining staff at Remploy Leeds finally downed tools, having lost their livelihood, the dignity of work and often their social lives as well. Government answers suggest that just 3% had found other work when their factories closed.

I spoke to several of the former Remploy staff just this morning. They tell me they received no real help from Central Government to find other work. A big complaint has been the difficulty of accessing promised financial support. The Access to Work Programme has not helped; they felt they had simply been shown the door and left to sink or swim.

The Remploy factories were diverse enterprises producing many things, including electronics, furniture, military supplies, motor parts, CCTV and much more. Yes, there certainly were chronic management failures which had to be addressed. The last Labour Government reorganised the businesses to save them; I am afraid this Government simply closed them.

On 6th December the current Disabled Services Minister gave remaining Remploy staff an early Christmas present by announcing yet another round of factory closures.

Labour believed in joined-up Government linking different policies across programmes. It is very hard to see any such coherence in current policies. The closure of factories simply makes more people dependent on benefits and loss of income reduces funds and takes demand out of the economy and the loss of productive work means that the health of those affected will decline and the demands on the NHS will therefore grow. This makes no sense for Leeds or anywhere but the real question now is what we as a city can do for our disabled citizens so that they can find work.

Councillor Sobel.

COUNCILLOR SOBEL: Thank you, Councillor Urry. There are a number of places in Leeds whose business aim is to provide a quality service and provide employment for disabled people. Within Leeds City Council we have Roseville, the SLATE Furniture Store in Hunslet, which sells quality used furniture and electricals, and their new café in Holbeck. In East Leeds there is a social enterprise called

Paperworks; at the Becklin Centre there is another social enterprise, Buster's Café, and there are others. Until 30th November, there was Remploy.

This is not the end of the story for the workers at Remploy, but not due to the intervention or the Remploy management but due to the vision of Tony Gledhill, the Trade Union Convenor, and Tina Brown, the local site manager. In March 2012 after the initial announcement of the closure Tony called a meeting with the GMB Trade Union and Co-ops Yorkshire and Humber. Tony outlines his firm belief that the Leeds business was viable and the workers could run it themselves. Tony felt this could be achieved through the co-operative values of self help, self responsibility, democracy, equality, equity and solidarity – values I, as a Co-operative Councillor, strongly share.

With the support of the GMB and the specialist knowledge of those in the Co-operative movement, but none from the Government's much trumpeted Mutual Support Programme, that vision is now a reality with the new Co-operative Enabled Works up and running in Morley. Morley's Labour Councillor, Neil Dawson visited the old Remploy site and met the affected workers and has been working with Tony and others to support the creation of the new Co-operative in Morley and was at the site just last week and helped to garner local support. He has been working alongside Ed Balls, the local MP, to ensure the Co-operative have local intelligence and contacts. Thank you, Neil.

The Co-operative is initially focusing on contract packing, pick, pack and distribution, electro-mechanical assembly, fulfilment work and mailings. It operates a share scheme that enables the Co-operative to generate cash so it can function as a business. It can make profits out of its trading and operates like any normal business, but its mission is to provide employment to and help disabled people made redundant from Remploy.

This is about more than employment. Enabled Work has tried to give employment, training and rehabilitation to disabled people so they can live a fuller, more satisfying independent life. They are respected and supported in everything they do, unlike the Government, unfortunately.

Council, this enterprise deserves the support of everybody in Leeds whether it be the Council, other businesses seeking services, members of the general public or, indeed, anybody who simply cares about the life and work of disabled people. We need to ensure that Enabled has a market for its services and that Council procurement is not shut off to the valued social mission and other criteria. It cannot at the moment replace Remploy in the number of jobs but there is a lot we can do to support Enabled Works and Leeds City Council with its Social Enterprise Rate Relief Scheme has already helped Enabled Works to get this special rate.

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

COUNCILLOR SOBEL: This is my final point, thank you. There is more that we can do to support the disabled into work in this city through supporting organisations like Enabled Works and its extending employment apprenticeship schemes to disabled people. Thank you.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Ogilvie.

COUNCILLOR OGILVIE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Can I start by thanking Councillor Urry and Councillor Sobel for bringing this important concern to the attention of full Council this afternoon.

I am sure we have all watched the dismantling of Remploy factories around the country and specifically here in Leeds with a growing sense of anger and dismay. It was good, therefore, to hear Councillor Sobel's comments about the new Co-operative Enabled Works that has been set up in Morley and if I can say my thanks and congratulations to everyone who has been involved with that, including Tony Gledhill, the TUC Convenor, and Tina Brown and if I can thank Councillor Sobel, Councillor Urry and Councillor Dawson for the help that they have given to get the new organisation up and running.

I do agree with Councillor Sobel that for third sector organisations like the new Co-operative we need to ensure our procurement procedures here at the Council recognise the social value and are open to the third sector.

This Government's treatment of Remploy workers fits into their wider demonisation of those most in need in our society, as Councillor Wakefield commented earlier. Iain Duncan Smith, of course, is the Conservative Minister who said that Remploy workers were, and I quote, "not doing any work, just making cups of coffee" – a shameful and wholly inaccurate thing to say and just shows how out of touch Conservative Cabinet Ministers are.

The Government has put in place what is called the People Help and Support Package for our Job Centre Plus which is supposed to offer personalised support to those affected by the Remploy closures. We know that this Government has a very poor track record in its back to work programmes. It is only a few weeks ago we heard of the first abysmal results from the Government's so-called work programme, so we will be keeping a very close eye on this support and I am more than willing to make representations to the manager of Job Centre Plus in Leeds if this support is not reaching the people it is supposed to, and I heard Councillor Urry's comments on this.

What are we doing in the Council and what do we need to do more of to help disabled people in relation to employment? Under Councillor Yeadon's leadership Adult Social Care commissioned Leeds Mind - WorkPlace Leeds, to provide an employment support service for people with mental health issues across Leeds, and since April last year the team have supported 65 service users, with a number gaining employment, some doing volunteering and others undertaking training.

Also, Adult Social Care commissioned Leeds MENCAP Pathway Service to provide support for people with learning disabilities, and between April and December of last year the service supported 54 people into paid employment with a number able to come off benefits.

Corporately across the Council all managers are provided with a range of toolkits including an equality toolkit and a reasonable adjustment toolkit to help them remove barriers to employment for disabled people. We, of course, also have a disabled staff network and through our 250 Opportunity Scheme we offer work placement opportunities and employment support for disabled people.

It is clear, however, that we must do more to make sure that we are acting as an exemplary employer for people with disabilities and to make sure that more is done across the city, so Councillor Yeadon and ourselves have asked our Lead

Members, Councillor McNiven and Councillor Mitchell, to lead a cross-cutting piece of work looking at disability and employment in the Council and across the city and, Lord Mayor, we will keep you informed of how this work progresses. Thank you.
(Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: Community Concern number 4, Councillor Robinson.

COUNCILLOR ROBINSON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Some of the perennial Councillors in this Chamber may be able to cast their mind back to when the Honourable Member for Elmet and Rothwell was a Councillor in this Chamber before going on to bigger things. (*laughter*)

In 2007 severe floods hit the villages in the Harewood ward like in many other parts of Leeds, and this severely affected one of the villages, Collingham. Alec, to his credit, was on the scene helping residents, emergency services and the Environment Agency, as well as the incredibly good work done by Council employees on the ground. Small businesses like local pubs and shops were damaged as well as devastation done to local people's homes.

The local residents and the Flooding Committee that was organised worked with Councillor Procter and yourself, Lord Mayor, as well as Alec, to lobby and push the Environment Agency and the Council to take action to protect people's homes - this was despite the cuts at the time being brought in by Gordon Brown as Chancellor and as Prime Minister. While announcing £200m-worth of funding for flooding schemes, this actually would never have come into place until 2011. It was another perfect example of the last Labour Government spending money before it was even raised. This will go down as one of the other Brown classics as zero per cent growth and saving the world.

The administration, to its credit, has recently announced funding for schemes around the River Aire and there is no doubt that this will benefit many people across the city centre and across the wider Leeds area. However, I do not want small businesses and hardworking families outside the city centre to be forgotten about and while work has taken place and improvements have been made to alleviate some of the worst problems and the ramifications of flooding along the A58 and in Collingham, there remain concerns, especially around St Oswald's Church. Anyone who knows the church there knows that it dates back to pre-Norman Conquest and that some parts of the church are over 150 years old and they are the newest parts of the church.

I have made many representations to officers to ensure that improvements are brought forward and officers of the Council have made a start and things are improving. However, there remains work to be done and this work should take place now. Working alongside Yorkshire Water and our other partners and stakeholders, this would help protect this pleasant rural community and its transport links to Wetherby, Leeds and the A1. If we spend money now this Council will save money in the future if flooding like 2007 comes again.

I was very pleased to hear earlier. I was very pleased to hear earlier Councillor Gruen give his support to flood defences and I hope that he will also ensure that officers in his department look properly at all sites in Collingham and around the surrounding area to make sure that flooding concerns are given the priority that they deserve and that people have the certainty when they buy their homes and move into communities that they are free from flooding problems and that

communities have the confidence in this Council. Thank you, Lord Mayor.
(Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Richard Lewis.

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I was going to say something nice but after those comments about Gordon Brown, how can I?

COUNCILLOR ROBINSON: I said nice things about you! *(laughter)*

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: Just to make the obvious political point, having had a couple of meetings with Caroline Spelman in conjunction with Andrew and various other people, one highly placed individual did say, "Well, you know it was Caroline Spelman who actually pulled the funding for flooding that put us in the difficult position anyway."

I will not be negative any longer than that but to say on the bigger Leeds scheme that we were able to put in a bid for the funding that Danny Alexander announced when he came to Leeds not so many weeks ago, albeit it was very frustrating because the timescale for that bid was about a week and with about two days to go they then said, "Oh, we are pulling the deadline for getting your information forward a day", which does not actually inspire you to think they are taking the thing as seriously as they should be, but I am optimistic and I think that was the right thing that he has done in terms of talking about flood alleviation for cities - and it is not just us, it is Exeter, it is Ipswich, it is Derby, Sheffield that I hope can benefit.

On your more specific issue about Collingham, I do understand that work has been undertaken which should alleviate the problem that you have experienced. I did, while you were talking, have this kind of vision of everybody clinging to Alec as he floated down Church Lane *(laughter)* because I am told he has got a lot bigger. You could not possibly comment, I do understand that.

I understand that there is further work that Highways are talking about at the moment that should offer an extra guarantee.

I have to say that my overall message is a bit of a downer because over the past year we have seen so many occasions and so many places where very heavy surface rain has just bypassed or overwhelmed any drainage system that we have in many locations across the city. I do not know whether Collingham is going to be in that but it is a very serious concern to me that there is almost nothing that we can do, given the way that weather is developing, to deal with those things, other than those kind of things that are coming afterwards and early warning systems, although in some cases that does not work because within 20 minutes you go from a fairly OK situation to an area flooding.

I think we just have to change our emphasis of what we are doing to work with communities more and to do as much as we can. I hope that Collingham's problems are behind us but I think we have to face up to the fact that across the city we are going to see our flood defences and our drainage systems tested to the utmost and we will really find that in cases there is a wanting and that will be another call on our financial resources that we did not want to see. Thank you, Lord Mayor.
(Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: Community Concern number 5, Councillor M Hamilton.

COUNCILLOR M HAMILTON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Lord Mayor, when I was first elected to the Council ten years ago one of the first pieces of casework that I dealt with was a student living in the Cardigan triangle area of the ward, which is just behind Headingley Stadium. This lad invited me to his house to show me what he had rented. It was absolutely terrible, the condition of the property. The light fitting in the front room was hanging off and there were bare wires, there was a hole in the back window and cold was getting in, the oven was coming away from the pipe and it was fractured – it was an absolute death trap, actually. I was horrified that properties of that condition were actually being let to students.

The student actually signed up to the contract in good faith early in the year in the pitch dark, in pitch black, so he had been shown round the house, there were no lights in there, it was being refurbished and apparently and, all right, probably stupidly, he signed up to this property not being able to see what the condition of the property actually was. Obviously then he moved in later in the year, found that many of the repairs that had been promised had not been carried out and he just wanted his money back, wanted his deposit back and to move on.

It was then that I realised there was a real issue with the condition of properties and I think the issue of landlord licensing then started to come to the fore. It was actually a year or so after that incident that the Government introduced the Housing Act in 2004 which introduced the concept of landlord licensing. There were three types: mandatory licensing for the larger properties, which included a large number of properties in Headingley ward; selective licensing, which was for areas of so-called low demand; and then additional licensing which is something the Council could apply for and still can apply for in other parts of the city that are not included in those two categories.

At the time the debate was really about what was appropriate for Leeds and Headingley and whether we actually needed to pursue a policy of licensing at what would be a relatively small number of properties that were not covered by the main licensing scheme. That particular property, however, would not have been covered by the standard licensing scheme, it would have needed the additional licensing to be covered.

A few years later we had selective licensing introduced in South and East Leeds in these areas of so-called low demand where there was a real concern about tenants being exploited. I got the figures and I understand that about 560 or so licences have been issued in those areas of selective licensing and there is about 50 more pending. There have been 58 prosecutions for breaches and fines of £53,000, so that is the system that is operating in South and East Leeds where the Council made a decision to implement a specific scheme to deal with a specific problem. There are still gaps, there are other properties that are not covered by the current licensing regimes.

I think it was viewed the Headingley perhaps was not a special case and did not deserve to be treated as such because at the time you have the Unipol Code of Standards, you have the Council's Accreditation Scheme. There was also at the time that I dealt with that particular student a shortage of properties so students genuinely did not have a lot to pick and choose from. The situation now has changed somewhat in that there is a big over supply of properties so students do have the ability to choose and find the best properties.

I think the problem with that situation is that we are actually now in the danger of what happens to these empty properties that we have got. I think Headingley is doing well, the centre of Headingley is doing well now, we have got very successful primary schools. We would like these properties to be brought back into use and ideally families to come back into the area, young couples or young professionals.

These properties, of course, were bought during the property bubble and now the landlords are saying they just want to get someone moved in and get whatever money they can. I think there is a danger that we might end up with a situation where unscrupulous landlords actually try and get whoever they can into these properties to get some money in to pay off their debts, and so the most vulnerable tenants may end up living there, people who cannot perhaps deal with issues of poor quality properties in the same way that perhaps the students could. We could be in the same position that we were ten years ago where that student had a very poor quality property but it is not students who are suffering, it is more vulnerable people.

I think there is a case now for introducing licensing across the board in the city. Other Authorities are doing this. Newham has introduced a blanket licensing regime, Liverpool are consulting on this now. Headingley has changed a lot in the last ten years from an area where people felt the students could look after themselves to a free market situation where there is plenty of supply. I think we are now entering a new phase and we need to address this.

I noticed that the Labour Leader is now proposing a National Landlord Register, which would effectively do the same thing. I am not sure we can wait for the next General Election and even if Labour won, I am not sure it would necessarily be a priority for Labour to introduce this in the first few years, so I really think we should start to address...

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: You are in Government now.

COUNCILLOR M HAMILTON: Yes, I am just saying you are proposing this and we can do something about this, Lord Mayor, we can do something locally.

I would like to propose that the Executive Member bring forward a proposal to Executive Board to introduce this policy as other Councils are doing to license every private property landlord-owned in the city. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Peter Gruen.

COUNCILLOR P GRUEN: I enjoyed that speech, thank you very much, and the intervention was brilliant. I think two meetings ago when we had a Back Bench concern from two Members of Farnley and Wortley I said to them this and I say again to the member now, for me as a Exec Board Member it carries much more weight if I hear all three ward Members speak on a Back Bench concern.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: Provided they are three Labour.

COUNCILLOR P GRUEN: I am bound to ask Councillor Walker and Councillor Walshaw what they think about the issues that you have raised because I think that Back Bench concerns can go across Groups, the common issues, the common interest, and I think it makes it much more powerful. I just give you that hint, if you want to really make a difference with me then I expect all Members to be involved.

In terms of the subject matter itself, I note you quoted Newham. Newham is a particular case because they have predicated their action all on antisocial behaviour and they have a particular problem – and this is how desperate things are in London boroughs – people are letting out for rent their garden sheds and the garden sheds are being rented and people are paying to stay in garden sheds, so a very different proposition to Headingley and Hyde Park.

Indeed, there are issues in Headingley, I acknowledge there are issues and, as Councillor Hamilton knows, we have a three-pronged approach at the moment. Mandatory licensing takes place for all HMOs of three storeys or more with five or more units of accommodation. We have a selective licensing scheme in Cross Green which works well and will continue through its five year period. We are going to put in place a new approach of a Leeds Neighbourhood approach where we are creating a neighbourhood team to tackle regulating standards in the private rented sector and reducing empty properties on an annual basis.

I inherited a Private Rented Sector Working Group - and I am glad to see Les is back with us – and I inherited this working group when I came into this role. Two and a half years on I will share with you that I have said to the private rented sector and the landlords, they need to do more. I do not want to keep meeting people who turn up every three months and keep asking me what I can do for them when they never offer what they can do in their own areas for people who are desperate for housing and renting. They need to do more, they need to bring their properties up to a proper standard, they need to have health and safety and fire standards, they need to look after their tenants properly and they need to be landlords – many are but a lot are not. I think there is a whole sector of work which we are embarking on now in terms of the private rented sector and early debates referred to that as well.

I will certainly bear in mind what Councillor Hamilton said and look forward to receiving comments from Councillor Walshaw and Councillor Walker. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Graham Latty.

COUNCILLOR G LATTY: Lord Mayor, please may I seek leave of Council to introduce a sixth Community Concern in the name of Councillor Pat Latty.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Lamb.

COUNCILLOR LAMB: I second that, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: All those in favour? (*A vote was taken*) That is CARRIED, thank you very much.

We move to Community Concern number 6, Councillor Pat Latty.

COUNCILLOR P LATTY: Lord Mayor, I wish to draw attention to a problem which has caused a great deal of upset amongst residents in my ward, and I am sure to almost all of the Members in the Chamber – I mean dog fouling. There are lots of very responsible dog owners who religiously clean up after emptying their dog, but there is a very big minority who do not seem to think they have any responsibility for the filthy mess they allow their dogs to leave.

I have had and continue to have calls and emails complaining of this disgusting habit from people of all ages, but I am particularly concerned about the dangers it raises for mothers of small children. It gets on the wheels of their

pushchairs and on their shoes. This is horrible but if a child gets dog mess on their hands it is very likely it will find its way into their mouths or eyes. This can and does cause real problems, even blindness can follow.

I was approached by one grandma who, whilst cleaning up after her own dog, was clearing up after other people's dogs, hoping to save her grandchildren and other people's from walking in it. Last year I heard about a problem with dog dirt being thrown up when workers were strimming and they were cutting the grass along our new Sustrans cycle and pedestrian route. It got so bad that they were getting the dog dirt thrown up into their faces, which really is not very nice.

It is great to complain but what can we ask for that will make a difference? We really must take a stronger line on this problem. We need a more innovative approach and staff who work the sort of hours that will catch them in the act, so to speak. It is all right being able to issue tickets but what is the point if there are no dog walkers about? We need staff who are out and about out of hours and at weekends. We need more prosecutions with the results published, more education would help - people still do not realise that our bins are dual purpose and will take dog dirt.

Signs. Not long ago we were walking at Bingley Five Rise Locks and saw the sort of signs – I am sorry about this – Bradford put up. Not only were there lots of them but they were two or three times the size of ours and impossible to miss, so can we have a rethink about how we tackle a problem that just should not occur in a civilised society. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Wadsworth.

COUNCILLOR WADSWORTH: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I echo everything that Councillor Latty says. Dog fouling is a big problem both in our parks and open spaces and in ALMO land and on the paths and bridleways. I had an instance a few months ago when I took a Council officer out, in actual fact, to see something and I will not name the person particularly but I quote what she said when she got out of the car – she trod in something and she said, "Oh hell, it's dog shit" and she had to be cleaned up before then entering somebody's property and it was not a very pleasant experience.

The addition to that is that we get an awful lot of bagged up dog waste which is then hung on trees and left around litterbins and I think there is a big issues about signage because we went on to a policy where we used dog bins and it was only dog waste in dog bins and general waste in general bins and now we have gone off that policy and people are not really aware that they can actually put dog waste into the general waste bins. I think signage is a big, big issue around this city regarding dog waste.

As you have heard, it is not just unsightly and unpleasant, it is a health risk to children and in areas where children play it is very dangerous, really, rather than just unsightly and unhelpful.

With regard to enforcement, the evidence I have is that in the last six months of last year we issued 99 FPMs but only 22 of them related to dog fouling, and people seem to, when they get caught, pay up and then carry on fouling rather than actually doing anything about it so I think that the enforcement needs to be stronger and, as Councillor Pat Latty says, publicising it is a big thing.

We need more resources around enforcement and particularly out of hours because these dogs do not foul nine to five, they foul outside those hours and they are not all strays, a lot of them are walked by people and foul early in a morning and late at night. Ultimately we need better education because I think we have proved with everything we do in the Council, if we start it early people tend not to foul, so if we start in our schools with children and explain that to them, I think that is the way we need to go. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Dobson.

COUNCILLOR DOBSON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I felt like applauding quite a lot of that myself, actually, because we talk about community concerns, a lot of them are quite specific to wards, which is fair enough, that is what community concerns are about, but this is a city concern. I cannot think of one ward across the city, across all 33, where we are not plagued by this menace of irresponsible dog owners. I say dog owners rather than the dogs because it starts with the owner.

The vast majority of dog owners in this city are perfectly responsible people who do the nasty part of being a pet owner and pick the damn stuff up and dispose of it responsibly, and that really is the vast majority of people, but where it is a problem – and my ward is a prime example too – it continues to be a perpetual problem and fills my inbox year in, year out. That is despite what I consider the best efforts not just of this administration but the previous one, who put some resources into the issue, when we relaxed the rules around bins where we could put the waste, and still it is a problem.

When I speak to my Locality Managers and say to them, it is like a tidal wave of stuff. Where is it all coming from? (*laughter*) Where does it come from? After the biology lesson, what does tend to be the case is that you will normally find it on the same routes, it is on the same pieces of parkland – basically it is the same few people.

The fixed penalty notice is one of those things where we find people pay the fine. If they pay the fine we cannot basically advertise the crime. It is only when people do not pay the fine we put them before a court and we can then make a hoo-haa about it in the press as we have done and will continue to do.

I do accept that resources are limited. I think in terms of actual budgets and departmental budgets it will stay limited. I would ask, and it is an open question, I do not know the answer in terms of Area Committee funding, is this something that Area Committees would want to divert some resources to help fund extra people on the streets?

If the argument is to be progressed through fixed penalty notices it could be something that could get us to a break-even position on the staff we employ, be it through Area Committee money or elsewhere.

The signage I accept. You do see the signs on the bins but you have got to have a good old look and I think we could improve on that, and again that is something I am prepared to look at.

The health issues cannot be overstated, Pat. I think you are absolutely right. My children are grown up now but I used to throw my hands up in horror when it would be on their shoes, in their sandals, on their hands and really the health issues cannot be overstated.

In terms of education, we are failing to get this message out and I genuinely accept that. We do not seem to have had any significant movement on the re-education of some dog owners than 20 years ago when my kids were little, so these are concerns I take seriously.

What I would ask, for any Member, bring them to me and the other thing, in terms of enforcement quite a lot of people have actually said to me in my ward, "I know who has done it and I will make a statement" and we have acted on that and prosecuted on that basis and when they have denied it we have put them before a court. I am not afraid to do that, we have laws and by-laws within this Council that for years I think we have been a bit lackadaisical at enforcing. I think we should, I think it is the right thing to do and certainly on our watch that is the approach that I very much want to develop.

Thank you for bringing the concern forward, it is one we do take very seriously indeed. Thank you. *(Applause)*

A MEMBER OF THE PUBLIC: What about horses. What about horses?
(interruption)

THE LORD MAYOR: Please could you give me silence.

ITEM 11 – WHITE PAPER MOTION – EDUCATION

THE LORD MAYOR: We now move on to the White Papers. The first one, Education White Paper, Councillor John Procter.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Thank you, Lord Mayor and, as the saying goes, follow that!

Lord Mayor, we bring this White Paper today to deal with one of the biggest challenges facing this city in probably a generation and it is yet another issue where the Labour administration is, to coin a phrase of my Leader, behind the curve - some would say is downright failing the families of this city.

I am disappointed that the Leader of Council is not here to hear what we have to say on this matter because when some of us called for developers to pay their rightful sums of money towards the infrastructure of this city, he thinks it is appropriate to describe me as a Trotskyist. *(laughter)* This from a man who is on an aeroplane flying to Paris no doubt to take his seat at his table for dinner. Far be it from me to categorise that behaviour.

Lord Mayor, it is important that we should understand the scale of the challenge that this city faces. That in itself is its very problem – the city has absolutely no idea of the scale of the problem that it faces. Yes, we know birth rates last year were in excess of 10,000 - 10,350. That is in Leeds – in Leeds and only in Leeds. My children, like many of the children born to families in the Wetherby and Harewood ward, were not born in Leeds, they were born in the hospital where the GPs generally refer all of the people from those communities, the closest hospital, which is Harrogate. You would not think it beyond the wit of human beings to actually talk to the NHS in Harrogate to assess the births of children with an LS postcode, would you, but I am afraid it is and that is something that we do not even

do in this city, so we do not even know the scale of the problem, we do not know the number of children that are born to families within this city.

It may come as a little surprise to colleagues opposite but children do not start school the day after they are born. They do tend to wait four years before they actually attend school and you would think, would you not, that that would give a reasonable period of time for this Authority to get its act together and make suitable provision. That is something that simply has not been happening and does not look as if there is any prospect of it happening in the near future.

Nothing I have said should come as a surprise; indeed I know it does not come as a surprise to Councillor Blake because my colleague, Councillor Alan Lamb, has been pushing this point for a good two years now in terms of trying to make the present administration recognise this particular issue.

The reason why I am speaking to this White Paper and not my colleague Councillor Lamb is in relation to the next point that I raise and that is that none of what is taking place currently in this city is dealing in any way with the 70,000 plus new homes that we are expected to build over the next 15 years. No provision has been made within the Development Plan of the city to find sites for schools, to identify where those schools will go and where they will complement the housing that is being developed. That is short-sighted in the extreme, Lord Mayor.

The amendment that is tabled by Councillor Blake is, frankly, laughable. She talks about the unexpected rise in birth-rate. It is not unexpected at all – the birth-rate has been broadly steady, actually, for the last three years. It has been just above 10,000 births for all of those years, per year.

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

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: There is a startling suggestion that the administration has got a grip in this amendment of this subject. It clearly has not got a grip, Lord Mayor, and we want to know today what they intend to do about this issue. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Graham Latty.

COUNCILLOR G LATTY: I formally second this, my Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Blake.

COUNCILLOR BLAKE: You can always rely on John Procter to re-write history. It is not that long ago that we were sitting in this Council in Opposition pointing out to their administration that Education Leeds was still having to close schools when the birth-rate was going through the roof and they failed to talk to health colleagues and they did not take any notice at all of the reality of what was happening in this city. (*Applause*) That is why – it is all on record, it is all the verbatim and that is why we are facing the problem that we have got today.

As you quite rightly say, the birth-rate has been dramatic, the increase, and we are still looking at a consistent additional 3,000 plus young people entering primary as are currently entering secondary. The problem is not going to go away. As I said, Education Leeds put us on the back foot and we ended up in a situation, a crisis situation where we had to go completely against our Education Policy in this

city and introduce three form entry primaries as the only way we could deal with your complete failure to recognise what was happening in this city.

On top of this the Government is expecting us to build 70,000 houses in the city. If this comes to be we are looking at needing 42 additional two form entry primary schools and an additional six eight form entry secondary schools. I do not know where you have been, John, in terms of not knowing what is happening here but we have been fully briefed, your Groups have been offered a full briefing and we have set up a cross party working group highlighting the detail of what is happening in the city.

The anticipated cost if this comes to be is £474m before 2026. We have talked about CIL, we have talked about 106, we have talked about the debate, we have talked about what will be needed to provide from that money. If you are telling me that developers are going to provide all of that amount, I think you are living in cloud cuckoo land. We have to talk to Government to address the problems that are facing us.

We have set up a Basic Needs Operational Programme Board. You did not do that. We have brought together the Development Department with Children's to start addressing this. You did not do any of this, which is why we are in the situation that we are. We are looking at assets and infrastructure but we are also looking at the 0-19 strategies around the future needs for education in a very changing landscape.

There is an urgent need to talk to Government about this to provide the funding that we need, so what is their response? Lord Mayor, their response is to completely change the way that school places are provided by introducing the Free School Agenda. Well, thank you very much. Millions of pounds being diverted into the Free School Agenda. Free School applicants do not even have to tell us if they are planning on coming into Leeds, they certainly do not have to tell us where they are thinking of opening up. They could be opening up in an area where there is no need at all. We saw the fiasco in Bradford last year, the millions wasted there, and we know that DfE officials are at this moment scouring the city looking for any old building that they might be able to open a school in.

Lord Mayor, this is shambolic. It is not the way to run education policy in this city, in this country and wake up, because colleagues of yours across the country, Tories, Liberals both coming together through the Local Government Association, lobbying Government, saying the Local Authorities need to get back their powers to build and provide much needed schools and places for the children in our communities.

I will continue to look forward to working with the cross-party group...

THE LORD MAYOR: Can you make your final point, Councillor Blake.

COUNCILLOR BLAKE: ...and all Members who are involved in this, but the Government needs to wake up to the crisis that is happening all over the country and in this city in particular. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Congreve.

COUNCILLOR CONGREVE: Lord Mayor, I formally second.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Gettings.

COUNCILLOR GETTINGS: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am pleased to hear a bit of passion in the Education debate. Three thousand additional children entering primary education – that is the increase in the birth-rate. Obviously a major problem for the city. The main focus in this debate, Lord Mayor, is the education and welfare of young people and I hope we focus on that rather than getting in to political debates on this issue.

In Morley the MBI Group have fought every year on the fact that Morley children should go to Morley schools – Morley schools for Morley children. We are delighted that last year Gildersome Primary School was enlarged, now it is a two form entry with a nursery for the first time. In Morley South there are proposals to rebuild Newlands School – long overdue – and it will be a third form entry, again catering for the needs in our ward. We are grateful for that so there is some good news within the city on this issue.

If you look at the figures for the whole city, every single ward is facing a crisis of places in schools and everybody, whether your children are born in Methley and live in Methley or Wetherby or Farnley or Rothwell, all of us will want our children educated in local schools where there is family support, where there is community support and where there is our children's centres and support. I am sure we all want that.

I hope, Lord Mayor, that we could have more cross-party discussions on this issue with cross-party support and for once in our history perhaps have unanimous support for a policy to deal with a problem. It is a whole city problem, every single Councillor in this room should be concerned about the situation.

The one issue that I would agree with Councillor Procter on is the issue regarding planning applications where already within the figures that we have been presented with, we have had lots of figures presented to us in the working group and what have you, is the fact that children moving into these new houses to be built do not figure in the equation, so the situation is worse than the figures we have already got.

I hope, Lord Mayor, we can now call for more cross-party working on this major city issues.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Peter Gruen.

COUNCILLOR P GRUEN: I am going to concentrate on the planning issues in the White Paper and in the amendment in the two minutes 50 seconds left.

The reason we cannot accept the resolution from John Procter is, if you read carefully the paragraph about instructing officers to bring forward proposals because he says we should fully fund the required education provision within the Authority. We said earlier on it will not happen through CIL, we know it will not happen through Section 106 and then it says "or other sources of funding." That is easy to write, it is very difficult to deliver.

Judith has outlined how much just the 70,000 growth strategy would amount to and we know from the charging mechanism now being proposed for CIL, even in these early days it will raise not that amount and, frankly, there is not anybody in this Chamber who says all of that money, even if it were available, should go solely on

schools because there are doctors' surgeries and health centres, there are playing fields, there are green spaces, there is traffic in terms of public transport, all sorts of other demands on that funding.

If through the East Leeds Regeneration Board, if our consideration of the North-East quadrant is a microcosm to go by in the future, then we have severe storms coming our way. The developer has not brought forward any proposals to build any part of the road, never mind the whole road, at any point in time. When we start talking about schools, their initial proposal was to go on the cheapest possible land in the area, whether or not a school should be placed there or not but that was what they wanted.

I have to say in this respect the Authority has got its act together. We are talking with different professional leads in different departments to set out the strategic position for the Authority.

The real killer in all of this is that the Statutory proposal is we have 13 weeks in which to consider a planning application. We could have longer if we come to some agreement with developers, but if they sit back and do nothing and wait for the time to go and come to no agreement with us, then whether it is our administration or anybody else's administration, we are totally stymied because it goes off to Mr Pickles and you know what will happen once it goes to Mr Pickles.

The difficulty is these are very complicated subjects, very complicated matters. We are discussing them cross-party, we are discussing them professional across Directorates and departments and we will strain every muscle that we can to get the best deal for Leeds. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Cleasby.

COUNCILLOR CLEASBY: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Well, Planning. Peter, you forgot one important aspect of planning and that is the development side of planning, like the development side of education, which is why we are in a situation now where if you were to share these 3,000 children out, Judith, it works out to three classes of 30 per ward. That is quite a staggering figure; that is quite a staggering omission. It is all very well slagging off the Government and slagging off the other administration – and yes, Councillor Taggart, I was part of it but I was also in Opposition when you were part of the original administration when we had an LEA. These problems came up then; they are always coming up because the same officers, the same methods are being used in this city that then compound problems and suddenly we find out, as Councillor Procter said, how is it a child is born and then four years later we discover it exists? I have been in Scrutiny and in other committees where it's, "Oh, Councillor Cleasby, Data Protection Act, they cannot share information like that." A load of cobblers! *(hear, hear)*

The future of our pupils are too important for the Data Protection Act. They are too important for us to simply try to write words to be eloquent. Judith, you refer to the Core Strategy, you refer to the CIL. I am sorry, these problems existed before we even thought of those things, so it is not the problem, the problem is that we have got people in Education who are not interfacing with the Development Planning Officers, we are not having a city and communities that are being developed and then we suddenly find we have enormous problems. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Andrew Carter.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Thank you, my Lord Mayor. To listen to Councillor Gruen you would think the job is just too big to tackle. I am sorry, that won't do. We know all about the difficulties, we know all about the problems, we know how hard it is, we know that Governments of any political persuasion are more likely to hinder you than help you. You have got to find a way through it and when Councillor Procter refers to being behind the curve – absolutely spot on. It does not matter whether you are talking about the relief road, the East Leeds Orbital, or you are talking about Education – you have got to get on the front foot.

It is no good, Judith, harking back to Education Leeds. If we are going to hark back, why the hell did we ever have Education Leeds? We all know why that was and if you had not made such a mess of Education then, they would not have ever been born, so please let us not go back to Education Leeds because you brought it about; it was your fault.

The question is, and you will probably end up back there the way you are going, it would not surprise me at all, a little bit less hysterical response and more thinking about actually what you are going to do would be a great deal more helpful to everybody. The simple fact is, this Authority has a Statutory obligation to educate these young people.

You talk about 70,000 houses you did not know you were going to get; the number of houses that we appear to be going to be landed with now is precisely the number that your last Government intended to inflict on us through the Regional Spatial Strategy, so what has changed? Nothing. We have known for years.

Collectively, I will give you this, maybe we should have been thinking three years ago a lot harder about how we pull this together. I am still very concerned, I remember the phrase (some of you who have been long enough) one Council. This has never been one Council. It has worked in silos as long as I have been here and it is still working in silos and we still have not got the closeness of working between Planning, Education, Highways that is necessary if we are going to get on the front foot with these numbers, and we have reached a stage now, my Lord Mayor, where I am afraid it is not an option. Whatever we have to do to get on the front foot we have to get there and start working on it now because we will have to provide these places one way or another. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Taggart.

COUNCILLOR TAGGART: Well, it is true that we have had peaks and troughs of numbers in the past but in the past there was a system whereby a Local Authority would approach Central Government and say, "These are the projected figures" and would come up with a plan. It would be about locally provided local schools in the right locations etc, etc, and that is how it used to be.

Nobody has mentioned Michael Gove so far. Michael Gove is in love with Free Schools and with Academies and he has made it absolutely clear he is predisposed against typical LEA provided schools. He does not see that as the future at all.

We do not know where the Free Schools are going to be and, as has already been said, they could be in parts of the city where actually they are not needed for numbers reasons.

The old way is a good way, actually, and it applied to all Local Authorities irrespective of their political persuasion. What are your child numbers now, what are the projected numbers, what do you need to do? Then you can argue about where you get the money. That is never easy but at least you have a plan, you would have a vision about where you wanted to go. Now we are facing an immediate crisis.

I remember when I became a Bramley Councillor with Ted and Denise, we would row with officers in Education Leeds about Rodley Primary School. We said "You are going to need this school" and then one of them said, "Well, we are thinking of closing Bramley as well and maybe Stanningley". This is how they were talking in 2004/5. Now all the primary schools are full. We have built a handful of new houses in our ward, much welcomed houses, and the Headteacher said, "I am overflowing with children, Neil, I cannot cope." In a way we should be glad that people want to come and live in Leeds and have children. If it was a terrible city you would not want to have children in it, so it is a plus.

This Government does not help us, this Government hates Local Government and this Government hates the planning system as well because the planning system would be able to work forward to make sure we had this adequate provision.

I hear what is said about silos. I have been a Councillor for over 32 years (some people may say that is too long!) but in that time I have chaired a number of Council committees (when we had committees) and always what I found, we generally had good cross-departmental working and people with real vision in departments who had really good ideas.

I can tell you as Chair of the Development Plans Panel, and it will not necessarily be so apparent from the Panel meetings but certainly in Chair's briefings we have people there from Highways, I have loads of questions about schools and education. We have good cross-departmental working and we have got some very good senior officers who are good on all of this and it is remiss of the Councillor for Horsforth to say it is the fault of the officers. That is an easy way out. You were part of this administration for six years, you had an opportunity to sort it out and you did not.

We are trying to sort this out. We actually care about the needs of children and young people in this city and the answer is, we need a locally agreed plan with the democratically elected people of Leeds and we want a Government we can work with that realises what the problem is and how we need to go forward. What we do not need is a plethora of Academies and Free Schools. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Pat Latty.

COUNCILLOR P LATTY: Lord Mayor, I am very happy to speak in support of Councillor Procter's White Paper. It illustrates problems that have been evident in my ward for many years, problems which we tried to get the then Education Leeds to acknowledge but to no avail. Development in Aireborough generally, but more particularly in Guiseley, has led to the population of Guiseley increasing by 11% over the last ten years. That is like adding a small township to the area, or a couple of extra Hawksworths.

All those people were not adults. As my husband says *ad nauseum* – houses need people and people need children and what do children need? School places, of course. As a result our primary schools are faced with huge entry form problems –

problems which can only be solved by increasing the size of at least two of them or even building a new school, and we are not exactly flush with sites to do that.

Even a school just outside our ward is having problems with the numbers of our children trying to get places. In Tranmere, which will shortly achieve Conservation Area Status, Education are seeking to increase the size of the school on a totally unsuitable site. Now we are in the throes of Core Strategy, site allocations, neighbourhood plans, etc, all of which is another way of saying 2,300 houses in Aireborough and once again houses need people and people need children and children need school places. It is a fact of life.

Lord Mayor, I heartily support this White Paper. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Hyde.

COUNCILLOR HYDE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. A lot has been said in the last few moments, quite heated, I thought, but we are talking about our children, the future of this city. I think rather than having chit-chat across the room and the usual banter, of debate there is a structure in place which is the Board and a Cross Party Working Group to look at the problem. We do need to resolve them. Everybody is saying the same things.

The key thing is the planning process will not sort out some of the key issues. Section 106 and CIL will not sort it out. The key thing is we need large injections of cash, and it does mean Government money and it does mean money from developers maybe as well, but I think all those need to be open because I can tell you that my own ward, for the first time ever, has got huge demands on our schools. All our schools are full and we now need more places, and the school that we pulled down under the previous administration, we now need that school – we need a new school to replace it. That is a fact, that is only recently. It is not just in development areas, it is actually across the whole city.

I think we actually do need genuinely to work together and lobby the Government. Regardless of where we go, the buck stops in terms of major funding. That is with the Government but we also need a plan to deal with it.

I think the sensible approach has now been presented by Judith, which is to create the Joint Working Group and the Board, to look at this problem and present a plan. I think that is the way forward.

If we do not do that we will end up having these debates ten years later down the line when we have got 70,000 houses whatever been built and we have children being bussed out of the city, as it happening at the moment. We will not have any real rational basis.

I think the proposals that have been produced by Judith, even though there has been cross chat across for all sorts of reason and history, that does not help our children. The key thing is that we actually get a sensible solution to the problems and that does mean – and the part that is really important in Judith's amendment is lobbying the Government and this Council writing to the Secretary of State saying "This is not just our problem, it is your problem as well" because these children right across the country, and particularly in this city, which is a lot of children that are coming through the system, is very important, Lord Mayor.

I think we should support Judith's amendment even though we disagree across the other side for all sorts of reasons. We do need to lobby Government to get that brass. £400m has been cited, I have checked that figure our myself and I think it will not be far away because we are doing the stuff in East Leeds at the moment and those three primary schools – the cited one primary school for East Leeds, it is actually going to be three that are required on the East Leeds Orbital Road and another High School, Lord Mayor. It is not cheap brass, it is a lot of money that we do need and we will not get it through the Planning process. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: I am afraid, Councillor Marjoram, we have run out of time for comments, so I move straight to Councillor Procter to sum up, please.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Indeed, many of my colleagues were eager to talk in this particular debate but unfortunately with the time constraints that we now have on these White Papers it is not possible, I am aware of that.

Lord Mayor, the debate that has just gone over here within the administration, effectively – and I say that because it is an internal debate with themselves because they have not agreed with themselves. Different Councillors are contradicting one another. Just to prove the point how out of touch this administration is, Councillor Taggart clearly has not bothered to pass a paper which his Development Plans Panel took forward and approved to Councillor Blake. Judith, all of your figures are wrong. You actually need to refer yourself to something – and I thank my colleague Councillor Fox for passing me this copy while I was speaking – called the Leeds Infrastructure Funding Gap, and turn to the relevant page on Education and you can very clearly see, Judith, if you bother to get the papers, that you were wrong. Wrong not by a little bit but about £250m, actually, because the requirement has identified within these papers, approved by your administration and this Council, clearly states, "The total requirement" (big bold letters) "is £655m" to deal with what is coming at us from building 70,000 houses.

That, colleagues, is the problem, because this administration has not got a grip on the issue at all that is coming at us and the people who are going to suffer are the families in this city.

Free Schools are just lobbed in as, "Oh, it's all the Government's fault, Free Schools, Free Schools." Do you think Free Schools just appear overnight? It takes years and years, as my colleague Councillor Cohen can testify, it takes years and years for Free Schools to come about. Why are you not talking to the potential providers of Free Schools? It is not that difficult, is it? In case you had not noticed, it is actually now Labour Party policy – Labour Party policy – to support Academies. Do you remember someone called Lord Adonis? He was the guy who was up here when we were in administration telling us we needed Academies. It is Labour Party policy to support Academies and also to support Free Schools so not only are you out of step with what is going on in this city, you are completely out of step with your national party.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Again.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Lord Mayor, instead of carping and moaning, as is the wont of this administration, about how terrible it all is, how tough it all is, how much you have all been cut and all the rest of it, how about you have serious, meaningful discussions in the all party grouping, which we suggested at Executive Board. Councillor Lamb tells me those discussions that have taken place are not

making any significant progress because, in case you had not noticed, there is another round of children that need admitting to schools in a few months' time and we in this city need to make that provision for the children and families in this city, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: May I call for a vote on the amendment in the name of Councillor Blake, please? *(A vote was taken)* The amendment is CARRIED and becomes the substantive motion.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Lord Mayor, can I have a recorded vote, please?

THE LORD MAYOR: Yes. Have we a seconded? Yes.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Lord Mayor, just to be clear, the recorded vote request was for the amendment. Under Standing Orders of this Council you can request a recorded vote after the vote has been taken.

(A recorded vote was held on the amendment)

THE LORD MAYOR: There are 92 Members present in the Council Chamber. Those in favour of the amendment in the name of Councillor Blake 61; those against 28; three abstentions. The amendment is CARRIED and therefore becomes the substantive motion.

All those in favour of the substantive motion please show. *(A vote was taken)* The substantive motion is therefore CARRIED.

ITEM 12 – WHITE PAPER MOTION – ENERGY BILL REVOLUTION CAMPAIGN

THE LORD MAYOR: We move on to the next White Paper, Councillor Ann Blackburn.

COUNCILLOR A BLACKBURN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Lord Mayor. I am speaking on the White Paper Motion on the Energy Bill Revolution Campaign.

As many of you may remember, back in 2010 the Green Group were instrumental in putting forward proposals for a home insulation scheme in Leeds which became Wrap Up Leeds. It should be no surprise, then, that I am today asking Council to support the Energy Bill Revolution Campaign.

This is a national campaign made up of 120 organisations and the Sustainable Energy Partnership, calling on the Government to make homes cheaper to heat with a real focus on those who struggle hardest to heat their homes. Cold homes are damaging the health of vulnerable members of society including children, older people and people with disabilities. Diseases such as asthma are made worse and people are more likely to have strokes and heart attacks. Illnesses caused by cold homes cost the NHS nearly £1b each year.

This campaign calls for the Government to use the money it gets from carbon taxes to help make homes super energy efficient with excellent insulation, renewable energy and modern boilers.

If the Government recycled this carbon revenue back to households, it could provide billions of pounds to help insulate the UK's homes. There is, for example, enough carbon tax revenue to treat 600,000 fuel poor households every year, providing each of them with a grant worth an average £650 to install energy efficiency measures. This would reduce their energy bills by an average £310 a year.

Early Day Motion 47:

“... calls on the Government to use revenues raised from the European Emissions Trading Scheme and the carbon floor price to provide additional resources for policies to deliver energy efficiency in homes, especially those housing the fuel poor.”

This has been signed by 179 MPs from various political parties and I hope that all Leeds MPs will give this motion their support.

Nine councils have, or are planning to, put forward a motion in support of this campaign. Bearing in mind the comments made this afternoon showing support for more insulation measures to be carried out in Leeds, I hope that this Council will join these Councils by supporting this White Paper in support of this campaign. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Campbell.

COUNCILLOR CAMPBELL: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I think there are two facts which are indisputable: fuel prices will continue to rise and, though it may seem a little strange on the coldest day of the year, the world is getting a lot warmer.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: Rubbish. You do not know that.

COUNCILLOR CAMPBELL: Oh come on, Les.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: It is not a fact. It is not a fact.

COUNCILLOR CAMPBELL: All 7.63 billion except one people in the world know that it is getting warmer. *(laughter)*

Thank you, Lord Mayor. Those two facts...

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: It is not a fact.

COUNCILLOR CAMPBELL: ...coupled along with the issues that England has without a doubt some of the worst energy efficient houses in the whole of Continental Europe, means that the issue of fuel poverty will continue to dog all of us.

There are two things you can do, I suppose: artificially reduce fuel prices which in the long run does not work; or you can use less fuel. It seems to me that for two reasons we ought to do that. One, if we use less fuel it is cheaper for people. The other thing, of course, despite what Les says, if you use less fossil fuels it reduces the impact of global warming – or not global warming, as Les may well have us say. Having said all that, it is a joy to be here, to know that the Tory dinosaurs are not completely extinct! *(laughter)* It may well have been global warming that did for the last lot! *(laughter)*

I think it is fairly clear that we need to reduce fuel consumption. The best way to do that, the most efficient way to do that is to make sure that everybody lives in the most fuel efficient house they can and the way to do that requires not just the City Council – and we talked about the initiatives we are doing today, and very good, but it requires a concerted effort by everyone to ensure that every house receives the ultimate in energy efficient saving measures, and if this is a method to get funding in towards that, then that should be supported by all of us because whether you believe in global warming or not, I will appeal to your patriotism. If we are dependent on Middle Eastern oil...

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: You mean we are going to leave Europe?

COUNCILLOR CAMPBELL: ...then it is our patriotic duty to ensure that we use less of it. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Leadley.

COUNCILLOR LEADLEY: My Lord Mayor, Councillor Blackburn's draws attention to a matter which needs addressing. It is certain that the LDF target of building 74,000 new homes in Leeds between 2010 and 2028 is unachievable, it will not happen, so what we must do as well as actually building a more reasonable number of new homes, is to make the best of the stock that we have.

Commercial premises are having to meet increasing BREEAM energy efficiency standards and extremely stringent Code 6 energy efficiency requirements will be imposed on new dwellings through Building Regulations from 2016 onwards, but it is clear that the vast majority of us will continue to live in dwellings whose original specification was far below Code 6 – I think ours must have been Code Zero when it was built. That extremely high standard might not be achievable by retro fitting but we must do our best.

Energy supply and conservation are becoming more important. Gas and electricity prices have risen so sharply over the past two or three years that they have even prompted a revival in domestic wood and coal burning. We need to look at all parts of the energy cycle, including recovery of energy from waste, which has been misunderstood and misrepresented in the past.

There are outstanding planning applications which will be considered on their own merits but the principle of conserving energy by not allowing it to be lost from the energy cycle – for instance by burying unrecyclable energy-bearing materials in landfill sites – must be upheld. Whether by rising prices, taxes or regulations energy conservation will be forced upon us. The City Council must play its part in guiding that process along the proper path to make sure that no-one is left out in the cold, not even Councillor Carter. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Dobson.

COUNCILLOR DOBSON: Yes, thank you, Lord Mayor. In supporting this White Paper I think it is one of those arguments, is it not, about the rights and wrongs of global warming - is it happening, is it not happening. Personally I think it is. I think it is probably a far more complex picture than simply do emissions help the world to heat up. I think it is probably cyclical but I think we are accelerating that process and there are ways that we can easily avoid that. Of course, it goes back to the argument that we have had earlier on in Council today.

The crux of it for me is about fuel poverty and clearly through the two main carbon taxes it will generate income in the region of about £60b over the next 15 years, so it seems to me entirely reasonable that that sum of money, or at least a decent percentage of it, should be set aside for helping people in fuel poverty with some of the schemes around a lot of the properties in Leeds, and I think Tom makes a good point about the houses - will they get built, will they not get built. Some of that housing stock is old, it is hard to heat and it needs a radical rethink.

The technologies are out there from enveloping, through to external lagging, through to energy efficient boilers. There are lots of methods that can be used in hard to treat premises that will address both carbon emissions and fuel poverty.

There is also a more pragmatic argument and it is about business. This is something that could kick-start an entire industry. Money is tight, we are not asking for new money from Government but certainly to divert money into some of the schemes. Councillor Harington and I went to a house in Leeds 7 that has been developed by LATCH and they are doing it using Wrap Up Plus money, or funds that can be accessed through Wrap Up Plus, and they will make this house perfectly energy efficient and bring a late 19th Century house back into use in the 21st Century. There is a business argument, there is a pragmatic argument for doing this. It will generate income, it will generate jobs, it will help the city's finances, so I am hoping all Councillors see fit to back this particular White Paper. Thank you, Lord Mayor.
(Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Anderson

COUNCILLOR ANDERSON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I want to set out the reasons I personally support the thrust of this motion - and I say the thrust of this motion. I could be pedantic and pick on some of the words that have been used but in general the thrust of the motion. I do think that it is important that this funding will provide additional jobs in this area. I do agree that it will also maintain some of the jobs. Some of the money that has been used is being removed and so this money will maintain the skills that a lot of people have been getting and the more we can get the units costs down, the more it becomes affordable for other people to start introducing these things.

I also do think that it will end up putting money back into the local economy as well. If we have got local tradesmen doing the work that will benefit. It will also put money back into the pockets of the fuel poor, because if they do not have to pay out as much for their fuel costs, they will then be able to spend it on other things locally, no matter whether it is going down the pub for a pint of beer or paying their £2 for the Lottery. They will then be freer, which I believe that people should be free to choose how to spend their money in terms of what they are doing.

I also think that the reduction of fuel poverty is vitally important and this will achieve that as well. Any contribution towards this, even if the Government do not give all the money at least they can give some of it and it is moving things forward.

It also has great benefits towards the Health Service as well in terms of winter debts and various other things like that, so that is a reason I support it. We all have residents in our wards that would benefit from this – yes, it will benefit; every single ward in this city has areas of deprivation where people would benefit from this.

One thing I would say in terms of the carping. Stop talking about carbon reductions because people do not believe it. There are too many sceptics out there

but if you make the economic case for it, there are a number of sceptics out there – you may not be one.

COUNCILLOR ILLINGWORTH: In your own Party.

COUNCILLOR ANDERSON: No, all round, there are sceptics all round, but just make the economic argument, make it about reducing energy prices and you will win the argument, that is the point I am trying to make.

Finally, can I congratulate George Munson and his team for all of the money that they have been able to secure for all the various schemes here. They have shown the way forward and – and this I where the barbed comment comes in – maybe, Councillor Dobson, you could speak to George to learn how to do a proper funding application and not make the mess you did over the food waste reduction in terms of things.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Cummins.

COUNCILLOR CUMMINS: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Lord Mayor, I would also like to speak in support of the White Paper regarding the Energy Bill Revolution.

My Lord Mayor, the scourge of fuel poverty continues to be a real problem for many residents in my ward of Temple Newsam, with energy bills causing huge financial hardship with an estimated one in four households struggling to heat their homes. Cold and badly insulated homes damage the health of our most vulnerable residents, costing the NHS £1b each and every year. The figures are stark, with nearly 7,000 households living in poverty in East Leeds alone. There can be no doubt that the need for positive action is more pressing now than it has ever been before.

As a Council and as an administration we have been determined to meet this challenge head on and are working hard to find new ways in which to combat fuel poverty, to drive down energy bills and to reduce carbon emissions.

While Council schemes such as Wrap Up and the recently launched Wrap Up Leeds Plus, for example, have and will make a real difference to the lives of many homes and residents in the city, there can be no doubt that if we are to make a real and long-lasting impact on the scandal of fuel poverty, significant funding is going to be needed. If we can persuade the Government through the Energy Bill Revolution to use the billions of pounds it currently receives per year from carbon taxes to make our homes super energy efficient, we will have the opportunity to achieve the level of funding which is desperately needed to achieve the ultimate goal of ending fuel poverty.

Already it is worth noting that this campaign has attracted support from children's and older people's charities, environment groups, health and disability group, trade unions, consumer groups, businesses and, as of this week, the Early Day Motion has attracted 169 MP signatories, who cross all political parties, including our very own East Leeds MP, George Mudie.

The opportunity to make a difference is here so let's not waste it. I am delighted that this Council is adding its support to this campaign. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Harington.

COUNCILLOR HARINGTON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. As we have just heard, this campaign is supported by a wide range of different groups. Children's and older people's charities support it because they hope it is going to combat fuel poverty. Health and disability groups support it because they hope it is going to make warmer homes with the health benefits which will stem from that. Environmental groups support it because it will cut carbon emissions. Consumer groups support it because it will cut prices. Politicians and trade unions support it because it should be able to help kick-start the economy and bring in jobs. In other words, you name the box and this campaign helps to tick it.

The fact that the Green Deal is not able to support all the people in fuel poverty is the Achilles' Heel of the Green Deal. It is not a mean deal but it is a lean deal. What we could do with this campaign is to heal the Achilles' heel of the Green Deal and make it a real deal. *(Applause)* In short, it is a no brainer – support the motion. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Atha.

COUNCILLOR ATHA: I am only here to deliver a compliment to Councillor Ann, to our learned friend over there, because she has created here a really quite unique resolution. It deals with a series of issues all related in a coherent manner, which for this Council is quite unusual. *(laughter)* She includes global warming, European Trade and Emission Scheme and carbon floor price, fuel poverty and health, domestic energy efficiency, job creation and a lot more, all in one well constructed resolution, so thank you very much indeed.

I think when we come to what actions we are going to follow it is pretty limited. When we do write to MPs to sign the Early Motion we should get back an immediate feedback of those who do not; then we should be writing to them. We should be sending this resolution to the Whips in the Parliamentary Parties so that they can in fact feed it out. We have got to make people in the end responsible and the only way to make them feel responsible is from time to time to draw them up and put them to account and, quite frankly, a lot of the MPs do not do the tasks they should be doing because they are too busy doing other things. This is so important.

It is also a beautiful bit of suggestion of socialism, because you are actually suggesting that the money the Government takes from the populous actually goes back through the process to actually serve the populous, and this is something that does not often happen. I compliment you greatly on this particular resolution.

I would ask the Lib Dems to go to their Leader, Nick Clegg, and ask from him a promise that if he becomes Prime Minister after the next election, which is always a statistical possibility if you have been watching that chap on television who does magical things, if he becomes Prime Minister after the next election he will follow this demand up and in the meantime exercise such authority he has over his own party in the House to vote for this particular resolution.

I think it would be pretty much a waste of time sending that message to the Conservative Whip in the House because, quite frankly, they do act at times like coelacanths. They do in fact make up policy on the hoof, the policies always have to be remodified. Quite frankly, if we could have all party support for this kind of approach then, in fact, we would stop the terrible situation that when I visited an old lady in Headingley - not a poor woman, big house – she had a small little stove going and it was blasted freezing. I said, "Why don't we get some more heating?" She

said, "I only put it on during the day at this level because I want to keep the money for the evening." I just thought how wrong it is that some old dear like that should be in that position.

When I was a wee kid we used to get changed for bed in front of the fire, the only fire in the house...

THE LORD MAYOR: Please will you finish your point, Councillor Atha.

COUNCILLOR ATHA: Yes, I was just about to go upstairs to get to bed!
(laughter) We used to dash like hell up to this attic where we slept and then freeze for the first half hour. I think we should have put up with those days long ago.
(Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Leslie Carter.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: Thank you, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR ATHA: I bet he couldn't run upstairs!

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: Lord Mayor, just a few points. First of all, my record in this Council on saving fuel is second to none. Remember all those houses which had new doors, new windows; all saved energy to those people. No argument from me; a lot of support from me. No argument anywhere where we are saving energy.

I got a bit cross with the former teacher over there. Like a lot of teachers teaching our children that this question of climate change or earth warming we know as a fact. It is not a fact. Councillor Dobson said the correct thing, what he said is it may be cycle, it may be that we are having a climate that is changing and it may be now coming on, it may not be, but if we are saving plastic bags over here is not going to make a damn bit of difference either there or there. What would make a difference is if you start reacting to what is going on. If you think about it carefully, instead of messing about we should be looking at what we heard earlier about the problems on floods in Collingham – spend the money on that. Why waste billions on this so-called carbon protection which is costing us a damn fortune and ruining industry instead of spending the money in the right area?

COUNCILLOR ATHA: He thinks the earth is flat, still.

COUNCILLOR ILLINGWORTH: You really are a dinosaur.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: Can I just say, Lord Mayor, she refers to £4m carbon European emissions, God knows what. We could leave Europe and save that money but you are supporting that. You support that money spent in those areas, so do not use it as an argument for you. You actually support that money being spent in that way.

Lord Mayor, just to get the matter straight, as far as energy saving is concerned I will be voting with this Paper, I will not be voting against it, but do not bring so-called facts which are not facts into the debate. Thank you, Lord Mayor.
(Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Ann Blackburn to sum up, please.

COUNCILLOR A BLACKBURN: Thank you very much, Lord Mayor. I thank you for all the comments and support.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: Oh, thank you!

COUNCILLOR A BLACKBURN: It had to be spoilt by the last speaker but I understand he is going to support it anyway despite some of the comments he has made. As I said, thank you for all the support. Barry's comments over here, I think everybody, despite our political view, agrees that this can only be a good campaign to back because, as Roger says, it makes it the real deal. As you might say, everyone is a winner, so thanks very much. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Can I call for a vote on the motion in the name of Councillor Ann Blackburn, please? (*A vote was taken*) I think that is CARRIED unanimously, so thank you very much.

ITEM 13 – WHITE PAPER MOTION – POVERTY

THE LORD MAYOR: Can we move on to the final White Paper, please, in the name of Councillor Blake.

COUNCILLOR BLAKE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Lord Mayor, in moving this White Paper Motion I want to highlight the very real concerns of this Council of the growing impact of poverty on the future life chances of children and young people in our city.

I would like to start by acknowledging the steps we are taking in Leeds to help our young people and their families: the excellent work to provide jobs establishing apprenticeships, the ground-breaking initiative setting up the Apprenticeship Training Agency and support for our most vulnerable families through advice on welfare reform and early intervention work in Children's Centres to name but a very few.

We welcome the amendment to the Financial Authorities Bill which will hopefully lead to a cap on interest charges. This Council has been at the forefront of the lobby to highlight the scandal of astronomical interest rates affecting our most vulnerable.

We have highlighted the overwhelming evidence of damage to the life chances of young people growing up in poverty as noted in this motion. Our Child Poverty Strategy states that we have 23.4% of our children living in poverty. One of the key indicators of this is the eligibility for free school meals. It is no surprise that the number of children eligible for free school meals is rising sharply, one of the clearest signs of the pressures that families are under. There has been a massive assumption by Government that these children live in workless houses. In Leeds, 59% of children living in poverty live in a household where at least one adult is in work.

On top of this, we are weeks away from the introduction of the most Draconian welfare reform measure imaginable and we are talking about the families of nurses, soldiers, police officers. We are talking about 4.6m women affected by Child Benefit cuts. We are talking about women earning £12,000 a year seeing their maternity pay, pregnancy support and tax credits being cut by £1,300. Two-thirds of those affected by the one per cent benefit and tax credit squeeze are women, with direct consequences for child poverty.

All of our communities in Leeds are affected, every single ward; an estimated 41,000 households, as we have heard, affected by the Council Tax Benefit changes, the bedroom tax, alone; an estimated £9.3m coming out of our communities. That is almost £620,000 in my ward, Middleton Park, £701,000 in Gipton and Harehills, and even over £200,000 in Alwoodley.

The sheer scale of the loss is unimaginable in terms of impact on the families but also on the local community and local businesses.

We have heard about the devastation of the loss of £9m in our Early Intervention Grant and the profound consequences this will have on our work to protect vulnerable children and their families. We know that families are under enormous pressure and the impact is devastating, we all have to stand up to fight to protect those most at risk. While we do, remember this, we are looking at Child Benefit going up by just 20p a week, Job Seekers Allowance by 72p a week, Maternity Allowance by £1.37 a week, while the income of millionaires will go up by £2,058 a week as a result of the tax cuts introduced in the last budget. This is the shocking truth of Britain today.

Lord Mayor, I move the White Paper Motion. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Hanley.

COUNCILLOR HANLEY: I formally second, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Sue Bentley.

COUNCILLOR S BENTLEY: Thank you, Lord Mayor. It is a fact that living in poverty has drastic effects on health, educational attainment, employment and safeguarding. Poverty overwhelms even the most stoical of families and pervades every aspect of life. This must be a real concern for all of us.

What did Labour do about child poverty? They set a very laudable, unfortunately unachievable, target to eradicate child poverty by 2020. I have to say in all fairness, in the first five years they made great reductions. Unfortunately, in the next five years to 2008, we were almost back to where we started. However, this did lead to a cross-party Child Poverty Act in 2010 which actually made sure that all future Government's would agree to reduce child poverty by an achievable 10% by 2020.

They did not curb the legal loansharks by using the Financial Services powers and they removed the 10% tax breaks, which is quite shameful, quite frankly. Liam Byrne's note to his successor said, "Dear Chief Secretary, I am afraid to tell you there's no money left." That's nothing new – Jim Callaghan left a similar note when he left Government and I am afraid that is the tale of all Labour Governments – they have left the country in a financial mess. *(Applause)*

That is why this Coalition Government has had to make some very tough decisions and reduce budgets, including Welfare Benefits. I am proud to be a Lib Dem. I am proud to be in Coalition and to bring our policies to reduce poverty and we have done that by increasing the tax thresholds, targeting financial support at our most deprived children through the Pupil Premium, giving the most deprived two-year old children 15 hours of free pre-school education. We have also created the Youth Contract guaranteeing every young person work placement or training, and for

entrepreneurs we have introduced the new Enterprise Allowance. Unfortunately I doubt if any of these policies would have been introduced had it just been a Conservative Government.

It is a sad indictment on society that 59% of claimants are from hardworking families and I do not share Councillor Lamb's implied optimism that the private sector will pay higher wages in a better economic climate. I have to say, I agree with Councillor Wakefield's earlier comment that we should not be subsidising businesses through our tax credits. I do support a living wage and that is something that we should all be pressing for.

Research shows that people in low paid work tend to remain in low paid work, so we need to break that poverty cycle. We need to use apprenticeship schemes and encourage employers to upskill the workforce. I have to say I was unable to comment on a University Technical College but that would be absolutely brilliant, to give our children the opportunity to achieve vocational skills and also help our local businesses.

We need to ensure that all eligible children for free school meals are actually registered so that they get the benefit of the Pupil Premium and we must also have a duty, each one of us...

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

COUNCILLOR S BENTLEY: ...has a duty to ensure that our residents are getting all the benefits that they are entitled to. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Golton.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: After that I second and reserve the right to speak. *(interruption)* Can't do that any more?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Lamb.

COUNCILLOR LAMB: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Lord Mayor, I enter this debate as someone who knows what it is like to grow up in poverty. I remember only too well what it is like when the money runs out before the end of the week arrives. I know what it is like to be the kid that sticks out like a sore thumb with his free school meal card and I know what it is like to go home from school hungry because I never wanted to use it.

I remember the stress and arguments when I needed £5 for a school trip on a Monday and mum only had £4 in her purse to do the food shop until Friday. I also know what it is like – and this will come as a surprise to many people here – to have to be taken into care when it all gets too much for mum to take. We always had a roof over our heads, there was always food on the table but life was tough. My mum hated that she had to claim benefits but when our family broke down I dread to think how life might have been without them.

Lord Mayor, I am someone who believes in the Welfare State and I understand its importance. The reality, in my view, is that the system is broken and in many cases counterproductive. All too often people are trapped in poverty. The way we measure does not help. Using the 60% of mean income measure means

that the most efficient way to eradicate poverty is to make everyone poorer. That cannot be the right approach.

It does not, of course, help Councillor Blake's argument that there are 300,000 fewer children living in poverty today than when Labour left office in 2010. I would suspect, however, that for those 300,000 children, life is no different. I would also strongly suspect that for the million children that Gordon Brown claimed to have removed from poverty at the stroke of his pen, life was similarly unchanged.

I am not one of those people who is comfortable with the strikers versus shirkers debate, pitting neighbour against neighbour. Of course there are those who abuse benefits but I would suggest that for every Frank Gallagher and Vicky Pollard there are 50 more people like my mum who are desperate to get off welfare and support themselves.

There seems little doubt that the welfare system needs reform. We will never make any progress in tackling poverty while some people are financially better off out of work than in work. Like many of my colleagues there are a number of things that I wish this Government were doing differently, but I genuinely believe that a combination of education and welfare reform could have a real and lasting impact on reducing poverty in this country.

Lord Mayor, my proposal, and I think Councillor Bentley has misunderstood it, I support the idea of a living wage; the easiest way to introduce it is to raise the tax threshold to about £12,500 leaving people earning pretty much what they would on the proposed living wage.

The other thing that the Opposition need to take into account, we have heard a lot from them about all the cuts that they oppose but the reality is the spending envelope that whatever Government has to work in will be exactly the same and we have to come to terms with the fact, even now with all the cuts that are going on, all the things you oppose, this Government is spending more money than it has coming in. The amount we spend has to come down and you never, ever say what you would cut instead and no-one is going to take you seriously until you start to address that.

Lord Mayor, it is a great stain on our city that where you are born has the biggest impact on how long you live. There is a real commitment in this place to tackle poverty and reduce inequality in our city. We cannot go on complaining about everything the Government does without offering any alternative solutions. It is time for us to come together and focus on what we can do in Leeds to reduce poverty and inequality and improve the outcomes of every child in this city. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Graham Latty.

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

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Finnigan.

COUNCILLOR FINNIGAN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. That is an excellent speech.

Welfare Reform in three minutes – very, very briefly, the reform of the welfare system is inevitable. It is unaffordable as it stands at this particular point.

Regardless of what Government get elected in 2010 we will be going through a similar process at this particular point. Absolutely no doubt at all about that.

The way forward – make work pay, Universal Credit is a big positive, seems to have major support across all political parties. We all have to remember that since 1988 under successive Tory and Labour Governments there was an 85 pence in the pound clawback on Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit. You did not do anything when you were in power, you did not previously; Universal Credit offers at least some hope.

If you look at Universal Credit it talks about conditionality. You do not get benefits on the basis of doing nothing. If you trace that back, it was first introduced when the previous Government introduced Employment Support Allowance, it was a continuation of that particular issue. Bedroom tax is a poor idea, it is not going to work. That inevitably will be superseded, I think, in years to come because it will create all sorts of problems but before Labour gets too high and mighty about that, the first political Government that actually introduced a bedroom tax was yourselves in 2008 in the Local Housing Allowance.

When you look at how you actually deal with welfare reform, there is an issue about driving up the tax threshold because most of these benefits are assessed on your gross, so if you do lift the tax threshold, certainly on Tax Credit, certainly on Universal Credit, people will genuinely be better off and that is how you get a living wage, not fiddling around round the edges trying to get certain organisations to agree and commit to it. You make sure that you take those people out of tax.

One of the big issues about welfare reform is the group that nobody wants to talk about and nobody wants to tackle, and that is pensioners, Les – pensioners – because ultimately, if you look at welfare reform, the big, big issue is that one of the major expenditures is on pensioners and nobody wants to touch the welfare reform issues that are relevant to pensioners, primarily because pensioners vote and it is bad news.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: You leave my fuel allowance alone!

COUNCILLOR FINNIGAN: The Winter Fuel Payment which, to be honest, a lot of advisers call the Winter Flight Payment because that is what a lot of pensioners use it for, is something that needs ultimately to be looked at.

If Labour are serious about welfare reform they need to suggest what alternatives they are going to be putting in place because at this particular point, you do moan and groan about all sorts of things, the bedroom tax and all the rest of it – if you are that committed, commit yourselves to abolishing it as part and parcel of your manifesto for the next General Election because at this particular point that is not what you are saying.

Frank Field, who is a man who ought to be listened to and really does know more about welfare reform than probably most people in this particular Chamber, does have a lot of good ideas, all of which you try and bury. You really cannot be doing that.

If at the end of the day you are looking at welfare reform, it is inevitable there ought to be some opportunity of knocking out some of the crazy ideas like the bedroom tax but also looking at a progressive system that will genuinely make sure

that work pays and drive people out of the benefit system and into a proper living wage. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Dowson.

COUNCILLOR DOWSON: Lord Mayor, I am speaking, as you would suspect, in support of this White Paper and in particular I want to focus on the impact of child poverty on educational attainment, which shows that children living in deprived areas do poorly at all key stages of school. Only 25% of children living in the most deprived areas of the country achieve five or more GCSEs A-C including English and maths, compared to 68.4% of those living in the least deprived areas. This cannot be right.

We are not just talking about poverty leading to inequality of educational attainment but also to an inequality of opportunity. Children who do not achieve good GCSE results have less chance of progressing through to A-levels, university and also apprenticeships. Just by living in poverty they find they are denied the life chances of their more affluent peers and it is shameful that we live in a society where this is still allowed to happen, a society where money counts more than ability.

Let us be clear, these children do not have to be living in a household where no-one works, as is often the stereotype peddled by the Government. We know that 59% of poor children are growing up in a home where at least one person does work. I am talking about the working poor, the people who seem to be falling between the cracks, the people who are doing their best to work hard and support their families but who are finding it increasingly difficult to do so. The people hit by cuts to Working Tax Credit, fuel poverty and the increasing costs of living.

We are already seeing the number of children who turn up at school hungry increasing. Teachers are reporting rising numbers of children unable to concentrate or misbehaving in class as a result of being hungry. Their situation has not been helped by Government education policy which has seen the removal of Educational Maintenance Allowance, a huge hike in tuition fees and recently the decimation of the Early Intervention Grant. We are working extremely hard in Leeds to mitigate as much of this impact as possible. We have the Leeds Education Challenge, which is keeping the family of Leeds schools together to deliver the best possible outcomes for children and young people, trying to avoid the fragmentation that the Education seems to insist goes ahead. We cannot stand by and watch our plans and ambitions when they are consistently undermined by Government policy. The Government needs to stop now and reassess their continuing attacks on the welfare system. These reforms have already meant that they are in danger of missing their own target of eradicating child poverty by 2020.

Research by the Institute of Fiscal Studies claims that by 2020 one in four, or 3.3m children will be living in poverty. Can we really, really sit here and let 3.3m children...

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

COUNCILLOR DOWSON: ...be condemned to a future of under achievement and lack of opportunity? No. I certainly cannot and I would ask all of you to join us in lobbying the Government to take decisive action now before it is too late. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Maqsood.

COUNCILLOR MAQSOOD: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I also wish to speak in support of this White Paper and I would like to make Members aware of just some of the ways in which poverty impacts upon the health and wellbeing of children in Leeds.

Poverty is an issue which impacts on almost every area of life and when it comes to children who are born into poverty, it puts them on a cycle of deprivation and poor health and lifestyle outcomes which they may never escape from, which can drastically reduce both the quality and length of life.

There are many statistics which draw similar conclusions that poverty has a detrimental effect on many different areas of health, including diet, active lifestyles, oral health and even life expectancy and infant mortality rates, which was discussed at length by my colleagues in the Back Bench Community Concerns earlier. For example, there continues to be a strong link between deprivation and poor diets and higher levels of obesity amongst children. Children living in poverty are less likely to eat healthy meals and are less likely to consume the recommended amount of fresh fruit and vegetables, instead relying on fast food and snacks with high sugar and salt content. Excess weight and obesity in children can be the trigger for a range of health complaints in later life, including diabetes, high blood pressure, musculoskeletal disorders, respiratory complaints, cancers, cardiovascular disorders, strokes, infertility and mental health issues like depression. All of these health problems reduce quality of life and affect life choices.

Another factor that demonstrates the link between poverty and diet is the affordability of food. This is seen in the massive nation-wide increase in the use of food banks in recent months. During the last half of 2012, 150,000 people in Britain, which inevitably includes families with young children, had to resort to using food banks. The largest provider of food banks in the country, the Trussell Trust, has even estimated that they will have to expand their service to feed an additional 250,000 people in 2013, which will mean a 400% increase over the past two years. It is simply not right that thousands of people in one of the world's wealthiest countries are having to resort to using food banks to survive. One imagines that this situation will only become more common once the effects of the welfare cuts begin to cut even deeper.

The fact that a Leeds resident can live ten years longer than another resident just by virtue of where they live within the city boundaries...

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

COUNCILLOR MAQSOOD: ...is simply staggering. The statistics clearly illustrate the situation we find ourselves in and even with further welfare cuts expected, the outlook for bridging this gap does not look good. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Gerald Harper.

COUNCILLOR G HARPER: Where is Councillor Carter? Has he gone home? Councillor Lamb, I do hear what you say and I do think you are pretty genuine, but unfortunately your Government is completely the opposite. They do not care about people in this country, poor people in this country.

Recently a lady came to see me at the surgery in Little London before Christmas, a single lady with two young children under five. She had a job but was made redundant in November. Her ex-partner had left her, leaving her in debt and struggling to pay the bills. She lives in a small, three bedroom house in Little London. It is riddled with damp, the children have to share the smallest room as the other room is covered in black mould and damp walls. One of the children suffers from asthma and because of that she cannot pay the bills and is in debt. We will call her Mary because she does not want her name used. She borrowed money from one of the rip-off merchant loan companies and she is being charged over 3,400% interest on this loan.

She came to me in desperation. She had not eaten herself for two days because she decided the children came first. She had a token meter to pay for the electricity but that had run out and she could not afford to top up the electric. I gave her £20 to buy some electric – you would think she had won the Lottery. She broke down in tears in front of me. “What should I do?” she said. “They are not taking my children off me.” She was more frightened she was going to lose her kids. “What can I do when they bring the new policy in about the spare bedrooms and having to pay extra money? I cannot pay any extra, I do not have the money to survive on. We hide in the bathroom when the loan company man comes round knocking on the door asking for money.”

Unfortunately, this is Cameron and Clegg’s Britain.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: No.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: No, no.

COUNCILLOR G HARPER: People losing their jobs, people going hungry, food banks appearing to help the poor, loan sharks feeding off people’s misery, families living in cold houses they cannot afford to heat and this Government are now saying that the benefits people are getting have to be cut to help pay off the deficit. At the same time they are giving the rich tax cuts worth £100,000 a year while child poverty is on the increase.

It is absolutely sickening to hear Cameron and Clegg trying to justify their obscene policies. The Tories, the majority of the Government Tories, do not care about the poor and never have. They are trying to dismantle the Welfare State and public services and if you support their policy, they are doing a good job, but none of this would be happening if it was not for the bleeding heart Liberals who Mr Clegg has walking blindfold into oblivion.

Child poverty is on the crease. Those, for whatever reason, who are suffering will get further into debt and in my ward, as Kamila just said, many will die ten years earlier...

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

COUNCILLOR G HARPER: ...because of the situation they find themselves in. This Government, I can tell you, you will not get away with this. We are going to fight this. My colleagues and myself will do everything we can to change this and stop this. We are going backwards as a nation but the battle is far from lost.

THE LORD MAYOR: Your time is up, Councillor Harper.

COUNCILLOR G HARPER: We are not in this together, we are on our own.
(Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor John Procter.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Lord Mayor, it was going quite well until that last contribution, wasn't it? It is just farcical and demeaning of the people who are in poverty in this city that we hear contributions like that last one from Councillor Harper. I did not really believe the last section of it; I do not think he believes it, to be honest with you. I suspect it has been written by some of the army of researchers and assistants that work in the Labour Group office (*interruption*) because it certainly is not what I would expect him to associate himself with.

The idea that representing people who are in very desperate dire straits in this city is solely the preserve of the Labour Group in this Council is a joke. It is insulting. It is insulting to the people of this city. Do you think that we do not get people with equally desperate situations in our surgeries and in our postbags?
(*interruption*)

COUNCILLOR TAGGART: You do not hold surgeries.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Lord Mayor, I hope...

THE LORD MAYOR: Can we have a bit of peace, please?

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Yes, indeed. Lord Mayor, we are not making much progress here, are we? I can stay here all night if Members opposite want to.

The fact of the matter is they shake their heads and say, "Oh, you do not understand." You have heard a real personal story from Councillor Alan Lamb and many of us...

COUNCILLOR RAFIQUE: There's always a personal story from Councillor Lamb, isn't there?

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: ... as many of you know who know me and my family as well, many of us have got similar experiences within our recent family past.

COUNCILLOR RAFIQUE: That's not true.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Don't say it's not true, what do you know about me or my family? Nothing. Nothing at all. It's time that some of you people zipped your mouth, opened your ears and listened to reality.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: Well said, John.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Lord Mayor, that typifies the Labour Group on this Council – in the main self-interested, self-obsessed. It is a disgrace, Lord Mayor, it does nothing to deal with the people who are in genuine, real poverty in this city. It does nothing to address the people who are in genuine need.

What we should be doing, Lord Mayor, is joining together to deal with some of these very real cases that Councillor Harper does highlight but no, instead it is part of the trend that we have seen through this entire Council proceedings today, it is about

a Group in administration who moan and groan, who aim the bullet at a national Government with no solutions themselves. They have no ideas, no fresh thinking, no proposal to deal with any of these matters at all and time and time again throughout this Order Paper we see “Oh, let’s go and moan to the national Government, let’s complain about their cuts.” Well I have got news for you all – if there was a Labour Government here now, today...

THE LORD MAYOR: Please can you make your final point?

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: ... we would still be having exactly the same cuts and that is what your party nationally have realised and that is what you actually genuinely do know. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

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

COUNCILLOR BLAKE: What did Oscar Wilde say about something happening once being unfortunate, happening twice - following Councillor Procter twice in one night, that is quite something.

You know, we have had a really good debate tonight, some really, really powerful contributions in terms of hearing personal experiences, hearing from Members who represent people who come to them with really genuine cases of hardship and surely as elected Members in this city it is up to us to bring together our personal experience together with the experience of those that we represent and put it into a meaningful way that we can actually work together to highlight where Government who makes the decisions that affect so many people in our communities and to actually highlight the impact of the policies that they are putting forward.

I am afraid that the reality of looking at the Front Bench of the Government actually does not give you any hope that they actually understand that what happens to someone’s life chances when so much money is taken away from them.

I go back to the real point of the motion which is about highlighting the impact on children and young people in this city, and I think we do them a great disservice if we descend into the sort of personal abuse that we are only too used to getting from your side.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Look at your Member who is opposite, for goodness sake.

COUNCILLOR BLAKE: If you have been through these circumstances then surely you must be deeply offended by the language that this Government uses to describe people who through no fault of their own end up in extremely difficult circumstances.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: You should tell sixteen million quid Blair.

COUNCILLOR BLAKE: Their language is deliberately divisive, deliberately set up to set communities against each other. We are saying in Leeds we know what we are doing in Leeds, we know how to work towards getting more jobs for our communities, to supporting young people, but we are being thwarted by Government policy at every turn. Even the two year old vulnerable children, that is being funded by the money that we have lost through the Early Intervention Grant, despite the promises of new money coming through. It is lies, lies and lies and that is what we are so upset about. There are so many cases of children who are suffering in this

city right now and I think it is upon all of us to pull all of the stories that we have got, understanding the real impact, to make the story, to tell the story and to go down to Government and make them listen and make them do something about it. I urge you all to do that. We have not even started to talk about...

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

COUNCILLOR BLAKE: ...the impact on safeguarding and young dads who are not going to be allowed to have a spare bedroom for their children to go and visit them at weekends. That is the level that this Government is stooping to.

THE LORD MAYOR: The red light is on, Councillor Blake.

COUNCILLOR BLAKE: I move the White Paper Motion. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: I understand that a recorded vote is requested. Is it seconded?

COUNCILLOR WADSWORTH: Seconded.

THE LORD MAYOR: Recorded vote.

(A recorded vote was held on the amendment in the name of Councillor S Bentley)

THE LORD MAYOR: There are 90 Members present in the Council Chamber. Those in favour 12; those against 78; no abstentions so the vote has been LOST.

I will now call for a vote on the second amendment in the name of Councillor Lamb. Do I have a seconder for a recorded vote? Right.

(A recorded vote was held on the amendment in the name of Councillor Lamb)

THE LORD MAYOR: Again, there are 90 Members present in the Council Chamber. Those in favour 20; those against 69; no abstentions, so the amendment is LOST.

I will now call for a vote on the motion in the name of Councillor Blake.

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

THE LORD MAYOR: Do I have a seconder? Right.

(A recorded vote was held on the substantive motion)

THE LORD MAYOR: Again, 90 Members present in the Council Chamber. Those in favour 63; those against 15; 12 abstentions, so the vote has been won. CARRIED.

That brings us to the end of the Council meeting. Thank you very much for your attendance and a safe journey home.

(The meeting closed at 7.45 pm)