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Governance and Accountability in the Modern Local Authority: An Exploratory Analysis of Views From Inside and Out - With Particular Reference to Outsourcing and Partnership Working

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**GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN THE
MODERN LOCAL AUTHORITY:**

**AN EXPLORATORY ANALYSIS OF VIEWS FROM INSIDE
& OUT – WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO
OUTSOURCING AND PARTNERSHIP WORKING.**

ALEX STRICKLAND FRSA

A thesis submitted to the University of Huddersfield
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for
the degree of Doctor of Public Administration

17th March 2015.

ANNEX 8

Volume III of VIII

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Case Study 1 Interviews

Table of Quotations for Analysis

REF	WHO	THEME	CAT	COMMENT (Page numbers below refer to interview page numbers at the top of each interview)
A1	Council Leader	Economic Growth	Place Shaping	'Our key priority is economic well-being as this drives everything forward' (p1).
A2	Council Leader	Economic Growth	Fiscal Challenge	'So economic growth is therefore essential as the financial envelope changes to maintain and sustain the type of service provision we wish to provide in the borough'.(p1).
A3	Council Leader	Economic Growth	Place Shaping	'...economic sustainability and well-being is absolutely key therefore to driving forward the borough into the future' (p1).
A4	Council Leader	Economic Growth	Skills	'...the whole skills agenda [is important] because clearly we want a highly skilled workforce who can meet the requirements of the inward investment employers we are attracting into the borough' (p1).
A5	Council Leader	Economic Growth	Skills	'So we are working closely with our partners in education - FE colleges and our schools to identify what it is in terms of skills..... that employers require, to actually say that we can take these people on, to meet our requirements for the future' (p1).
A6	Council Leader	Economic Growth	Transport	'we have to derive a clear economic benefit from HS2, so we've done a lot of work understanding what high-speed rail has done elsewhere on the continent' (p7)
A7	Council Leader	Economic Growth	Transport	'we have got very clear views about what we need to do to drive the economic benefits out of high-speed rail' (p7)
A8	Council Leader	Economic Growth	Transport	'we have now developed our own interchange hub proposal [for HS2] and that includes a garden city style approach that includes employment, leisure, retail and new housing' (p7)

Table of Quotations for Analysis

REF	WHO	THEME	CAT	COMMENT (Page numbers below refer to interview page numbers at the top of each interview)
A9	Council Leader	Economic Growth	Transport	we don't want a 'box on a car park'. We don't want marshalling yards what we want is a clear economic plan that [delivers].... long-term sustainable and manageable economic growth' (p8)
A10	Council Leader	Economic Growth	Fiscal Challenge	'We face a big challenge because we have an ageing demographic okay - a lot of people in the borough are becoming older there is therefore a higher rate of dependency' (p1).
B1	Council Leader	Joint Working	Health & Wellbeing Board	'.....take the Health and Wellbeing Board. It is clearly a partnership. Its key priority is reducing health inequalities across the borough. No we can't deliver that - we can have a leadership role as a council but we can't deliver that because we don't have the resource available or indeed the power to actually meet those requirements' (p2).
B2	Council Leader	Joint Working	Police Commissioner	'The police Commissioner produces a West Midlands Police and Crime Plan. But feeding in to his plan is our local plan so what we do is we decide as a local partnership..... what are the key priorities in XXXXXX by way of crime reduction and criminal justice' (p2).
B3	Council Leader	Joint Working	Dementia	'So then issue is about how do we actually engage with our communities ? How do we effectively get our communities to engage with us ?..... Let's take..... adult social care provision we have a program called 'Experts By Experience'..... in essence [it] takes people who have an understanding of a long-term condition or a particular issue about health or social care and we have brought together a group of those people - about 25 of them now - and they help and support the commissioning functions within the council' (p3).
B4	Council Leader	Joint Working	Dementia	[when formulating the Dementia Strategy]'..... we will bring in our experts by experience..... and they are party to developing the program that we are going to commission [for those services]' (p3).
B5	Council Leader	Joint Working		'Q so it is intelligent commissioning If you like ?' (p3)
				'A. Yes it intelligent commissioning in the sense that we have people who are users of services who actually help us define the specification of the services that we require so that is what they do. And they are actively party to that...' (p4)
B6	Council Leader	Joint Working		'....we are constantly looking for new ways of working within local government through Memorandums of Understanding or some other joint type of arrangement with other

Table of Quotations for Analysis

REF	WHO	THEME	CAT	COMMENT (Page numbers below refer to interview page numbers at the top of each interview)
				local authorities' (p5)
B7	Council Leader	Joint Working	Dementia	`So Mrs Jones phones up she goes through our Connect service now she maybe phoning about a particular issue, but our call centre people then ask her a range of questions to see if she needs any other services. So for instance I'll give you a classic example.....(an example detailed in the interview of a lady calling with a housing problem resulted in also resolving heating problems and a claim for benefits towards costs). (p5).
B8	Council Leader	Joint Working	Dementia	`So let's take another example let's take dementia..... we are signing up a lot of people as dementia friends. We will also signed up a lot of businesses as dementia friendly businesses..... These [businesses and Dementia friends] are able to pick up on it at an early stage to say to people you are not alone [and signpost for help]. (p6).
C1	Council Leader	Quality Service		Q. [On the] question of outsourcing is it fair to say that nobody is too bothered about whether services are provided directly or outsourced as long as the services are delivered well ? (p4). A. I think that's probably right. It is all about quality isn't it ? (p4).
C2	Council Leader	Quality Service		[making reference to the commissioning of health services] 'people were saying well actually I don't really care who delivers it provided it is delivered safely effectively and with the quality underpinning it' (p4).
C3	Council Leader	Quality Service	Refuse Collection	`as a council don't empty our bins we contract out the emptying of the bins, we as a council don't repair our own roads we contract out the repair of our own roads. We contract out either 92 or 93% of all adult social care in this borough'. (p4).
C4	Council Leader	Quality Service	Adult Care	`So all the people out there who use adult social care services (apart from the assessment process) the services are delivered by external organisations' (p4).
C5	Council Leader	Quality Service		`we have just recommissioned our sexual health services we have jointly commissioned them as a public health issue with XXXXXX City Council' (p4)
C6	Council Leader	Quality Service	Road Repairs	` Our road repair service if jointly commissioned with XXXXXX County Council. So the people who repair our roads do so under a joint contract with Warwickshire' (p4).

Table of Quotations for Analysis

REF	WHO	THEME	CAT	COMMENT (Page numbers below refer to interview page numbers at the top of each interview)
C7	Council Leader	Quality Service	Housing Repairs	`We also do things ourselves, so for instance we manage the contract for housing repairs for a number of other local authorities, because we have a model in XXXXXX which enables us to identify the cost of those items and monitor the performance of those contracts' (p4).
D1	Council Leader	Reshaping Governance		Q. `where you stand on this debate for more freedoms flexibilities, powers and funding streams for local authorities' ? (p7)
				A. `... If the national debate is moving towards Combined Authorities.....we are not going to say we will not have those discussions..... but there are some very clear areas where those discussions will NOT include. And they will not include strategic land use i.e. housing issues which will be dealt with through our own Local Plan' (p7).
D2	Council Leader	Reshaping Governance		`.....but there's a lot of work got to be done before we get anywhere near to [the stage] were Greater Manchester has got for instance, because they have been going at it for quite some years and we are in a different place to them' (p7).
E1	Council Leader	Appetite to Scrutinise	Community Leadership	Q. `....in terms of community leadership with elected councillors being the only people who sort of have a democratic mandate on this is it fair to say that that is respected amongst partner agencies do they respect the community leadership role ? (p2).
				A. `....I think that they respect and regard the community leadership being provided by councillors as being absolutely important. (p2).
E2	Council Leader	Appetite to Scrutinise	Democratic Deficit	`So there is an issue about democratic deficit in other organisations that the local authority brings to the table, so they overcome the criticism of other organisations [that] there is a democratic deficit' (p3).
E3	Council Leader	Appetite to Scrutinise	Democratic Deficit	`I am trying constantly to overcome the accusation of democratic deficit within these organisations' (p3).
F1	Council Leader	Overview Role of Scrutiny		`Scrutiny has two roles it has the role of monitoring performance of the programme but equally it is concerned with influencing some of those priorities within the programme'. (p2)
F2	Council Leader	Overview Role of Scrutiny		`we are very keen [that Scrutiny should] have a policy development role because otherwise it just becomes very much focused on programme management..... which

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REF	WHO	THEME	CAT	COMMENT (Page numbers below refer to interview page numbers at the top of each interview)
				really isn't the sort of thing that we only want scrutiny to do'. (p2).
G1	Council Leader	Motivation		'I've been a public servant along time started the ground floor up as a parish councillor and so I have come up through the ranks you know' (p8)
G2	Council Leader	Motivation		'what you can do is actually hope that you can deliver something that makes people life a bit better every day' (p8)
G3	Council Leader	Motivation		'we are on the ground, voted in, people know where to put the X's if they don't want us they put their X somewhere else and what better sign of democracy is there than that ? (p8)
A11	Chief Executive	Economic Growth	Jobs	'the most important thing to the people that I serve <u>the key thing is sustainable decent employment</u> ' (p7).
A12	Chief Executive	Economic Growth	Jobs	'Q. that is the top line issue is it ? A. Yes that is the top line issue. So from that then comes the opportunity to buy - and I'm being really basic here - it is a basic point - you can complexify the equation, but it's a basic point- decent job, decent salary, knowing that you are going to be employed for the next four or five years, gives you financial security it provides a degree of happiness and well-being, and people in work tend to be healthier than people who can't get into work for whatever reason - so there is a health angle - decent housing, multiplier effect of the economy and people actually feeling good about themselves and their homes there is <u>a social dividend</u> from that. Actually Howard Bernstein from Manchester [City Council] articulated it absolutely brilliantly' (p7/8).

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REF	WHO	THEME	CAT	COMMENT (Page numbers below refer to interview page numbers at the top of each interview)
A13	Chief Executive	Economic Growth	Place Shaping	`.....Yes we will continue to deliver on the highways, bins, education and the rest of it - you know that is the day job. The leadership role - that is our opportunity [as officers] to engage with our politicians on a regional scale - and what does that mean to the population that I serve ? It means a greater opportunity then to drive, understand and to realise the benefits [deriving from economic growth]' and actually you can't deliver economic growth if you haven't got the health and well-being of the right skills coming through so if you pull up too far apart - and you look at local government and it's all structured people and places places and people - aren't we ? This place is - now I come from a people background children's [services]. <u>But actually I spend most of my time now dealing with economics.</u> So for me it is about people and jobs who then drive the local economy'. (p6/7).
B9	Chief Executive	Joint Working	Community Leadership	`I serve the only group of democratically elected folk i.e. politicians..... [save for Police and Crime Commissioner] - so they have the only democratic mandate locally. So there is a place leadership role in there and it is fortunate in that every where I have worked particularly in XXXXXX and in XXXXXX that partners recognise that. (p8).
B10	Chief Executive	Joint Working	Fiscal Challenge	Q. they do recognise it ? (p8)
				A. Yes they do recognise it. And actually there is an appreciation amongst partners but if we work together we can actually improve the transactional aspect of the business that we do whether it be a police officer or a GP..... but there is a higher value in terms of co-designing and co-deliverythere is, is a <u>massive opportunity to understand the system.</u> Going back to your earlier point, what I would love from any government is a <u>longer term economic view</u>but wouldn't it be great if as a nation we said to the great cities that you mentioned earlier and boroughs like ours frankly, what would it look like over a 10 to 15 year settlement ?_(p8).
B11	Chief	Joint Working	Joined Up	Q. to give the stability to plan ? (p9).

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REF	WHO	THEME	CAT	COMMENT (Page numbers below refer to interview page numbers at the top of each interview)
	Executive		Services	A. Yes - right across the public sector.....there is the challenge back to central government and to local government and our partners to say <u>redesign the system to meet that - don't keep going to the Barnet graph of doom</u> – lemming like - start now, maybe it's too late, but start looking at it now and so what does that look like but don't look at it from the fiefdom of being a chief executive of the council, or being chief constable of the police force or being the chief executive of an acute trust. Have a look at it in the round - because you and I as consumers - students patients whatever function we are doing - ain't bothered about whether it is local government or NHS, we just want half decent service at the front end. So for me, there is a <u>new public leadership dynamic</u> conversation, whatever you want to call it, which I think we need like yesterday. (p9).
B12	Chief Executive	Joint Working	Joined Up Services	Q. so what do you think on this debate about <u>Total Place and community budgets</u> etc ? (p9).
				A. Well, I come from Greater Manchester don't I ? Community budgets yes I think fundamentally that they are a way to go the devil is always in the detail with those. let's get into Greater Manchester and look at their public service reform offer and give them <u>the freedom and flexibilities to deliver</u> - it doesn't need – Howard [reference to Sir Howard Bernstein Chief Executive of Manchester CC] would kill me for saying that - but they don't - they need the flexibilities'. (p9).
C8	Chief Executive	Quality Service	Pragmatism	Q. What are your thoughts in terms of outsourced services ? (p10)
				A. I work on the basic assumption that <u>what matters is what works. And what works is what matters.</u> So I am absolutely clear that outsourcing commissioning is with us (p10).
C9	Chief Executive	Quality Service	Quality	`..... what matters to our residents and our communities is having the very best service' (p10)
C10	Chief Executive	Quality Service		`The true test of somebody in my position is would you outsource the most toxic area which has got to be children's social care...' (p11)
C11	Chief Executive	Quality Service		`A..... we outsourced children's centres to the voluntary sector, and charitable organisations you could argue we have outsourced education to academies. So actually you look at the model and I commission all sorts of public private agencies to deliver

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REF	WHO	THEME	CAT	COMMENT (Page numbers below refer to interview page numbers at the top of each interview)
				services both here and in my last place' (p11).
C12	Chief Executive	Quality Service	Contract Monitoring / Responsibility	Q. what about when it goes wrong ? Who do people look to blame they hold to account ? (p11).
				A. I am accountable - I'm accountable. It is public money, but I think that something across the public sector that we need to improve upon is our <u>contract monitoring</u> . How we hold people to account so even go back to the old world when we had a failing academy I was held responsible as director of children's services. They were my children - under the Children's Act 2004 I have responsibility and accountability for that. So regardless of who delivered the services whether it was delivered by Mr Tesco or whoever - they were <u>my children</u> .(p11).
D3	Chief Executive	Reshaping Governance		Q. it seems to me that this been almost a stranglehold of centralisation from London Whitehall - I know people are starting to see that now with talk of devolution of power to the cities..... (p6)
				A. Yes - it's no point in asking for [additional resources] it because you not going to get it butsurely Joe and the team [reference to Mayor Joe Anderson at Liverpool City Council] should be given the ability to innovate and develop freedoms and flexibilities that is what government can give (p6)
D4	Chief Executive	Reshaping Governance		Q. I think that that is what they are looking to try to do isn't it ? (p6)
				A. Absolutely (p6)
D5	Chief Executive	Reshaping Governance		Q. yes you I read somewhere last week that XXXXXX [City Council] were looking for financial independence within six years and I know it's the same for other cities as well (p6)
				A. It is. We will be financially independent in this small borough in three years.(p6)
D6	Chief	Reshaping		Q. really ? (p6)

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REF	WHO	THEME	CAT	COMMENT (Page numbers below refer to interview page numbers at the top of each interview)
	Executive	Governance		A. Yes three years, because we have so little government grant. If we are allowed to continue to [drive] economic growth and the business rates that we get from that and our council tax, that we have huge opportunities here to model for central government what post austerity in that sense looks like. Now is it sufficient to model it on a 205,000 population of a small borough ? What is the scalability of that ? We should be having that conversation with central government (p6)
D7	Chief Executive	Reshaping Governance		`...and for me in local government..... we need to articulate and it's bigger than the question of whether we need combined authorities or city region - it is about national identity and at the moment we are under siege from ourselves (p7).
D8	Chief Executive	Reshaping Governance		Q. and there is a powerful economic case around that isn't there about freeing these places up ? (p7) A. Yes (p7)
D9	Chief Executive	Reshaping Governance		Q. it's not just the political issue about powers is it ? There is a credible economic case to say that if you give us the powers we will then go on to deliver the infrastructure to move these places on.(p7) A. Yes - and the most important thing to the people that I serve the key thing is sustainable decent employment. (p7)
H1	Chief Executive	Leadership	Persona Not Divisible	`.....but my day job is leadership. So everything I do when I behave the way I speak the way I walk when I go out to get a cup of coffee from here way I present myself - is all leadership' (p4).
H2	Chief Executive	Leadership	Persona Not Divisible	Q. so there is no division between the private persona and the public role ? Is that fair to say - that it is all encompassing ? (p5) A. Very good question - yes there is no division.....(p5).
H3	Chief Executive	Leadership	Visible	Q. so is it all about leaving the front then - have you got to be visible - have people got to 'know' that you are there etc ? (p2) A. You have to be visible.....and interestingly there is no leadership style. The leadership approach like brought to this role in XXXXXX so far is very very different to the leadership approach that I followed in Salford' (p2)..

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REF	WHO	THEME	CAT	COMMENT (Page numbers below refer to interview page numbers at the top of each interview)
H4	Chief Executive	Leadership		Q. Very different – in the sense ? (p2)
				A. In the sense that in XXXXXX a lot of it was based on fear - fear of losing my job - fear of the next inspection – fear of the next serious case review.... (p2).
H5	Chief Executive	Leadership	Authentic	`.....all I do is I look at the situation and say will what would I expect if I was in that situation so last night for instance I spent 2 ½ hours with a colleague in somebody's front room next to XXXXXX - a bit like if you are in Halewood [reference to Ford Motors] - it is tough with shift changes etc - so last night I went down there and met with residents in the front room we had a lovely cup of tea and biscuits and we talked through the issues. Now I didn't need to do that –' (p3).
H6	Chief Executive	Leadership	Authentic	Q. but I bet it was appreciated ? (p3)
				A. It was appreciated.....why did I do that ? - Because next time I am able to empathise and there is an authenticity about it as a leader you have to be authentic'. (p3).
H7	Chief Executive	Leadership	Servant Leadership	Q. does that tie into the issue of servant leadership - not because of what you get out of it but because of what you can do for others for the team and indeed the general public ? (p3)
				A. Well I just think that's so important - I was looking [at]... a Chinese reflection on leadership - when you leave or when you die there should be no sense that you have gone – and it should be invisible when you are there – you know what I mean ?.....So when I leave this place, I don't want a ripple and that is the true test.(p3).
I1	Chief Executive	Organisational Culture		Q. do you notice a difference from XXXXXX [City Council] – in terms of [organisational] culture ? (p1)
				A. Huge (p1)
I2	Chief Executive	Organisational Culture		Q. really,.... ? (p1)
				A. Oh God yes it's like being on a different planet (p1)

Table of Quotations for Analysis

REF	WHO	THEME	CAT	COMMENT (Page numbers below refer to interview page numbers at the top of each interview)
I3	Chief Executive	Organisational Culture		A.We failed an Ofsted inspection but culturally we were isolated, we were excluded we were seen as bringing down the whole organisation and over the five years I was the we turned it round to being a go to part of the organisation.... we.... turned [it] around[so] Children's Services was actually the highest functioning part of the organisation with the strongest team. (p1)
I4	Chief Executive	Organisational Culture		[with reference to morale at Salford]`..... Dreadful - really dreadful - dreadful in the organisation, dreadful in children's services and is no one way of changing it you know there's no silver bullet is just constant hard work and just talking to staff there you know it was about being visible it was all the usual stuff and it was about me being clear to myself that I am not moving on until this job is done. It's funny because when I left there was a piece of the Manchester Evening News and I'd forgotten I said this to a journalist, but I said if we don't turn around children's services you won't need to sack me because I'll go' (p1).
J1	Chief Executive	Management	Delegation	And I am very clear that we employ experts –
J2	Chief Executive	Management	Delegation	Q. let them get on with it ?
				A. yes – let them get on with it – enable them, don't disable them. And I don't need to see the micro detail - why would I ? I trust my colleagues. Use me when you need to use me. And do I know what's going on ? Yes I do - because I have detailed systems so I know exactly where each part of my business is operating from.
J3	Chief Executive	Management	Performance Indicators	Q. and you make that your business to know ?
				A. Yes I make that my business - so all this stuff that you see on the wall here our performance indicators and frameworks are all very mature [pointing to the office wall covered in charts/figures] and they are all very mature here - just like they were mature in XXXXXX in the businesses that I ran up there. It's just the transfer - different style - different approach - but the forensic detail so that it may as a leader wants to roll my sleeves up and reach in to any part of the business have a look at it and put it back but always always put it back. Do not pull it out and hold onto it put it back – yes
J4	Chief	Management	Machine	Q. and that the people get on with who were doing it ?

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REF	WHO	THEME	CAT	COMMENT (Page numbers below refer to interview page numbers at the top of each interview)
	Executive		Analogy	A. Yes so from my perspective it might need a squirt of oil in there if you take the machine analogy - but be really clear that you put it back - it is not my job to manage the frontline - because actually that is disabling - and in my experience that starts to lead into issues and problems.
G4	Chief Executive	Motivation		Q. you sound really driven in terms of [service] delivery - is that fair to say ? (p12) A. Yes (p12)
G5	Chief Executive	Motivation	Privilege	Q. is that fair to say that you've got passion just to get in and sort it out - because that really comes across ? (p12) A. I will say how I feel about it Alex, <u>it is just a privilege</u> . It privilege to be in this role. (p12)
G6	Chief Executive	Motivation	Privilege	Q it is very interesting that you say that - because I tell you I have always regarded every public service role that I have ever done - and I only work within the public service - I've always use the same word. (p12) A. Yes - it is a privilege - you know I get very well paid, but a lot of tax as well - and don't get me wrong. (p12)
G7	Chief Executive	Motivation		Q. not about the money though is it ? (p12) A. No - it's not (p12)
G8	Chief Executive	Motivation	Financial Sacrifice	Q. this is what people don't understand.... It is not what drives you is it ? The thing that drives you wanting to do what you do... (p12) A. Yes - there have been times in my career - and I will share it with you because I've been very open with you - where I have been offered a pay rise for acting up and I have refused it and said keep the money - have then gone home and thought why have I done that ? I've done that because I have a right to do that, my director of finance tells me I have a lowest paid Chief Executive in the country, but I love that. I love it you know. As much as I like to go for a nice skiing holiday, but I love it because why wouldn't I ? because it is really about having the authenticity – (p12)

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REF	WHO	THEME	CAT	COMMENT (Page numbers below refer to interview page numbers at the top of each interview)
G9	Chief Executive	Motivation	Justice	`...I'm not one to judge your pontificate on it but yes <u>it is about delivery</u> and everybody counts. And I know that the some people they will think that's a load of rubbish and the other people it will mean something to them. And I also know that I'm not going to be able to deliver to every person but it won't with the lack of trying. And I suppose for me what really really does drive me is <u>justice</u> . And tried to correct injustice and that is the thing that will really get to me - the point that sometimes I am not rational about it really - I always being asked by some children - what makes you angry ? Well I don't get angry really - I mean, I can wind myself up. But if there was to be a time it will be when I see <u>real injustice</u> . And that could be everything from apartheid and racism to poverty, the poverty opportunity or anything like that it's about tackling the injustice that is the reason why I am a public servant, because I'm trying to find an avenue I have been blessed in this role and blessed in my last role to be fortunate enough to <u>try to influence the factors that will drive justice</u> ' (p12)
G10	Chief Executive	Motivation	Privilege	Q.....if you had your time again, would you do it again ? (p17) A. Without a doubt - no hesitation. Absolute privilege. And a great joy - I am the luckiest person in the world (p17).
B13	Chair of LSP	Joint Working		`.....partnership working took root for a number of reasons. The first one is financial - it is like joining two companies together.I have got representatives [on the Local Strategic Partnership Board] from the police and the other top the senior members, of health, I got them from fire and ambulance, education further education and members of the community, meeting, all meeting, about four times a year' (p2).
B14	Chair of LSP	Joint Working		`.....so partnership working is a more effective and if you work together it is efficient...' (p2).
B15	Chair of LSP	Joint Working		`.....we have the community safety partnership board which is concerned with community safety - and what we try to do is link them up as they cross reference sometimes such as the Police Commander comes to both. Our Chief Executive comes to both. The Leader comes to both' (p2).
B16	Chair of LSP	Joint Working	Fiscal Challenge	`.....it's getting efficient and effective and cost-effective' (p3)

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REF	WHO	THEME	CAT	COMMENT (Page numbers below refer to interview page numbers at the top of each interview)
B17	Chair of LSP	Joint Working	Fiscal Challenge	`...- so government started giving local government like us less....and said you got to do more with less -..... going back to jobs - the only way to get people in work is to keep them out of trouble' (p3).
B18	Chair of LSP	Joint Working	Fiscal Challenge	`.....partnership working is important because we are looking at everything [to get best value]' (p4).
B19	Chair of LSP	Joint Working		`.....partnership working works there is no doubt about that and it is working (p6)
B20	Chair of LSP	Joint Working	Fiscal Challenge	`Q. just in terms of your partnership board and thinking about the varied membership of it [police probation fire etc] is there a problem in terms of managing different organisational cultures do people think differently or does it work okay ? (p6).
				A. I think it generally works because we've all got the same problems - less money to do more with.(p6).
B21	Chair of LSP	Joint Working	Fiscal Challenge	Q and that's the underlying problem ? (p6).
				A. Yes - well it underlies everything (p6).
B22	Chair of LSP	Joint Working		`....[On the Partnership Board] we have the chief executive the leader of the council the police commander Probation Officer, all the top dogs and we have two 16-year-olds from local schools you are very articulate and we have our meetings between 4 and 6pm so as to accommodate them'. (p8)
K1	Chair of LSP	Lateral Accountability		`What you are saying is are we challenged enough - and I don't think we are...' (p7).
K2	Chair of LSP	Lateral Accountability		Q. and just in terms of scrutiny on this partnership was your thoughts on that ? (p9)
				A. Oh it isn't scrutinised (p9)
				A. Well it's probably self scrutinised because we scrutinise each other if you like, to a point. (p9)
K3	Chair of LSP	Lateral Accountability		Q, That's interesting... (p9)
				A. Yes (p9)
K4	Chair of LSP	Lateral Accountability		Q. presumably though self scrutiny is a sort of discipline on it in the sense that if people sit in a meeting and promised to do certain things about the next meeting there is a sort

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REF	WHO	THEME	CAT	COMMENT (Page numbers below refer to interview page numbers at the top of each interview)
				of requirement that they have delivered that ? (p9)
				A. Yes. But community safety is different because we can get members of the council attending these meetings and the putting forward questions if they want to.(p9).
F3	Scrutiny Officer (SO) & Scrutiny Chairman (SC)	Overview Role of Scrutiny	Digital Strategy	Q. so it all both got a strategic role to it as well as just monitoring and keeping an eye on things - it almost got a strategic remit then ? (p4)
				A. (SC) correct - we can send [as a result of the overview function] recommendations to the Cabinet member to be taken up. We were just doing the Digital Strategy and the board sent a stream of recommendations that have been taken account of. (p4)
F4	Scrutiny Officer (SO) & Scrutiny Chairman (SC)	Overview Role of Scrutiny	Members Contribution	Q. so would you say them that that sort of [overview] policy function is every bit as important as scrutiny of decisions taken day-to-day ? (p4).
				A. (SO) I would say certainly now at XXXXXX that is probably what [Scrutiny] is best at. Because there is that dialogue with that discussion and it is all about adding value. The scrutiny members don't want to be doing stuff if at the end of the day it is not going to add value. We still do have holding to account of the executive. Executive members are required twice a year to come for each of the scrutiny boards to explain at the beginning of the other program going forward but also of the end of the year they will be called into the scrutiny board and will be set right Cabinet Member have you achieved X, Y, and Z ? So there is still that holding to account process that takes place. But I think it is fair to say Alex, that the majority of the work of scrutiny is around policy review. (p4).
F5	Scrutiny Officer (SO) & Scrutiny Chairman (SC)	Overview Role of Scrutiny	Policy	Q. has that changed over the years ? Has that increased as the other side [has decreased a bit] or has it always been like that in XXXXXX ? (p4)
				A. (SO) I would say since 2006 when I arrived here, it is probably been more predominantly that way [titled towards overview/policy]. (p4)

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REF	WHO	THEME	CAT	COMMENT (Page numbers below refer to interview page numbers at the top of each interview)
F6	Scrutiny Officer (SO) & Scrutiny Chairman (SC)	Overview Role of Scrutiny	Housing Allocation	`..... (SO) but I mean that is an extreme example Alex, to give you another example of boards - Economic Development and Land as it is now, did a dedicated XXXXXX of work on housing allocation policy. Now in that instance the committee not only took evidence from the council's own officers, but also from the local CAB, a couple of registered social landlord and another organisation whose name escapes me' (p2).
F7	Scrutiny Officer (SO) & Scrutiny Chairman (SC)	Overview Role of Scrutiny	Housing Allocation	`..... (SO).....- Economic Development and Land as it is now, did a dedicated XXXXXX of work on housing allocation policy. Now in that instance the committee not only took evidence from the council's own officers, but also from the local CAB, a couple of registered social landlord and another organisation whose name escapes me' (p3).
F8	Scrutiny Officer (SO) & Scrutiny Chairman (SC)	Overview Role of Scrutiny	Area Focus	`.....(SO) if you look at some of the council's priorities for North XXXXXX [which includes XXXXXX Wood], unemployment is a problem up there - and the fact that it is a scrutiny board –Economic Development & Land that has as a major part of its programme year-on-year to be frank - is to keep a check on progress for North XXXXXX (p8)
F9	Scrutiny Officer (SO) & Scrutiny Chairman (SC)	Overview Role of Scrutiny	Area Focus	`..... (SO) I mean that is a good example actually bringing all these subjects together - about the implications of unemployment, skills, welfare generally, health - well that is one area in particular [North Solihull] where there is a consideration collectively of all the issues'. (p9).
E4	Scrutiny Officer (SO) & Scrutiny Chairman (SC)	Appetite to Scrutinise	Hold Executive to Account	`.....I mean if I were to say to Alex of probably until <u>three years ago we didn't even have that executive board members coming to scrutiny</u> that I've just defined for you, so there was even less of a focus on holding to account - but I would say that that is stronger now'. (p4).
E5	Scrutiny Officer (SO) & Scrutiny Chairman	Appetite to Scrutinise	Hold Executive to Account	` <u>We still do have holding to account of the executive. Executive members are required twice a year to come for each of the scrutiny boards to explain at the beginning of the year to explain program going forward but also of the end of the year they will be called into the scrutiny board and it will be said - right Cabinet Member have you achieved X, Y,</u>

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REF	WHO	THEME	CAT	COMMENT (Page numbers below refer to interview page numbers at the top of each interview)
	(SC)			and Z ? So there is still that holding to account process that takes place' (p4)
E6	Scrutiny Officer (SO) & Scrutiny Chairman (SC)	Appetite to Scrutinise	Annual Report	`.....every year we produce the annual report and it is a review of all the work that the scrutiny boards have been involved in – (SO) it is a published document, available on the website – (SC) it is presented to [full] Council by me and any member of the full council can ask questions either myself or individual board chairman' (p9).
E7	Scrutiny Officer (SO) & Scrutiny Chairman (SC)	Appetite to Scrutinise	Other Bodies	`.....the legislation was altered in 2006 for police matters and <u>crime and disorder scrutiny</u> to scrutinise partners who were responsible for producing the Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy, they can be required to attend meetings - and equally agencies involved in delivering health services they can be required to attend <u>health scrutiny meetings</u> ' (p2).
E8	Scrutiny Officer (SO) & Scrutiny Chairman (SC)	Appetite to Scrutinise	Other Bodies	`.....Take for example our partners in delivering the XXXXXX partnership agenda, the legislation now says we can require them to submit information but we can't require that they attend our meetings' (p3).

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REF	WHO	THEME	CAT	COMMENT (Page numbers below refer to interview page numbers at the top of each interview)
E8b	Scrutiny Officer (SO) & Scrutiny Chairman (SC)	Appetite to Scrutinise		Q. Do you get many members who want to serve on scrutiny - is it a popular thing to want to do ? A. (SC) well I can only speak from my party but I don't think any legs or arms were broken [laughter] to get people to sit on boards you know. Usually the leader of the day [of a party grouping] will send out before the elections a questionnaire to members which says if you are successful in being elected or re-elected where are your interests ?Q. I never knew that...A. (SC) I know they burn the midnight oil - it only really of the new members we tend to think that they need to find the feet and there may be a year or so – well that is how we do it and don't know about anyone else. (SO) I think that's fair to say that that is probably typical of other [party] groups as well. As officers we have recently got a piece of work which emphasised the importance to members of selecting people who have a specific interest or bias towards a particular topic - because in my view and I think this is shared by colleagues it is better to have a member sitting on a board or a task and finish group if they genuinely are interested in that subject. (SC) absolutely. (SO) so yes as the chairman says that is taken account of in the conservative group but across the board there is that sort of consideration and takes place yes. (p5)
L1	Scrutiny Officer (SO) & Scrutiny Chairman (SC)	Goodwill	Voluntary Co-operation	Q. is it true that you can ask other people to attend even though you cannot compel them to do so ? (p2). A. ('SC) yes you can invite them -and we have - and generally people do come along (SO) but I think the housing allocation examples well, gives an example when we extended invitations to wider organisations on that particular subject, and they willingly wanted to engage on it.' (p2).
L2	Scrutiny Officer (SO) & Scrutiny Chairman (SC)	Goodwill	Voluntary Co-operation	'....(SC) I can't think of anybody saying I am not coming or anything like that' (p2).

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REF	WHO	THEME	CAT	COMMENT (Page numbers below refer to interview page numbers at the top of each interview)
L3	Scrutiny Officer (SO) & Scrutiny Chairman (SC)	Goodwill	Voluntary Co-operation	`...(SO) But of the chairman has said we have been quite fortunate in XXXXXX in that if we have asked partners to attend - touch wood - they have always done so as a matter of goodwill'. (p3).
L4	Scrutiny Officer (SO) & Scrutiny Chairman (SC)	Goodwill	Office Co-operation	`.....So in delivering the scrutiny function we rely quite heavily on officers within the particular departments in terms of providing evidence providing information and providing witness testimony - without their goodwill, although I do appreciate that there are legal powers to involve them, scrutiny would flounder in Solihull'. (p3).
L5	Scrutiny Officer (SO) & Scrutiny Chairman (SC)	Goodwill	Voluntary Co-operation	<p>.....Q. what do you do in scrutiny to deal with that outsourcing issue ? Do you get the contractors in - how is it done - what do you do ?' (p6)</p> <p>`A. (SC) I think we touched on it briefly a few minutes ago - take our highways contract with Amey - now cannot [knock on the door] and say we want you here - <u>we can invite them</u> but we cannot compel them to come before us. (SO) I have never known an instance where a contractor have denied a scrutiny board request' (p6).</p>
L6	Scrutiny Officer (SO) & Scrutiny Chairman (SC)	Goodwill	Voluntary Co-operation	`.....there has never been an instance [where somebody has said] we will not attend that meeting' (p6).
M1	Scrutiny Officer (SO) & Scrutiny Chairman (SC)	Scrutiny Resources	Fiscal Challenge	`.....(SC)Yes of course we could do with more or could do better with more or whatever but I think we do a good job with what currently have. We have to operate within the various constraints that we have got (p3).
M2	Scrutiny Officer (SO)	Scrutiny Resources	Member Skills	Q `.....In terms of the skills are resources of committee members - do they feel adequately skilled up trained and resourced to do what they are there to do ?' (p4)

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REF	WHO	THEME	CAT	COMMENT (Page numbers below refer to interview page numbers at the top of each interview)
	& Scrutiny Chairman (SC)			A..` (SC) I believe so -.....they have an induction course and then there is continued training which all members will go to’ and that is ongoing’ (p5).
M3	Scrutiny Officer (SO) & Scrutiny Chairman (SC)	Scrutiny Resources	Staff & Budget	`.....We are 2.5 FTE we don’t have a revenue budget_so Scrutiny wants to call in an expert witness, I have to go to my manager..... to see if there is a budget pot that can be used..... and I have to say though that every request up to now that has been made, has been met’ (p7)
M4	Scrutiny Officer (SO) & Scrutiny Chairman (SC)	Scrutiny Resources	Fiscal Challenge	Q. o in spite of the tight funding situation and the resources you remain optimistic in terms of the direction it is going in ? (p8)
				A. (SO) I certainly think so (SC) I do. (SO) I would have to be honest and say somebody in your position could ask me again, in a couple of years time, and the position may be different of course (p8)
M4a	Scrutiny Officer (SO) & Scrutiny Chairman (SC)	Scrutiny Resources	Staff & Budget	`But I have to say to you that when Scrutiny was introduced in 2000 it was of course modelled on the Parliamentary Select Committee process. We are never going to be anywhere near [as effective] that model because we just have not got the resources to operate in that way’
N1	Ward Member	Representation	Local Groups	`.....back in 1970 - I got involved with the local theatre group, which I used to manage for them, and a parish councillor rang me up on one night, and said what colour are you XXXXXX - so I said blue - she said would you like to get on to the parish council ? So I served on the parish council until 1991.’. (p1).
N2	Ward Member	Representation	Local Groups	Q so that most of the new real good grounding in terms of what happens ?
				A. Well yes - particularly in the local community because we did a lot as a local council..... but I was on there for over 20 years and I was Chair for a couple of years and was chair of the local village XXXXXX for about five years.....I chaired the finance committee - and then an opportunity arose back in 1984 - I suppose I was a bit naughty really, because the residents Tory councillor moved out of XXXXXX to live in another part of the borough so I thought I will have a stab at being the candidate. So he got

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REF	WHO	THEME	CAT	COMMENT (Page numbers below refer to interview page numbers at the top of each interview)
				deselected and I got selected' (p1/2).
N3	Ward Member	Representation	Live in Ward	`.....I'm probably quite parochial but I believe that the ward councillor should live in the ward that they represent - I have got to fellow ward councillors neither of them live in XXXXXX - they live some way away - I get all the queries'. (p4)
N4	Ward Member	Representation	Accessibility	Q. because you're here ?
				A. Yes - people knock on my door, if I go shopping up the road to Morrisons, my wife sometimes says to me where on earth have you been, if I pop into the doctor's surgery or if I ride my bike around the village - I get people stopping me with queries.. I've got lots of roots in the community - I am president of the local theatre group, president of the local cricket sports club, every Wednesday if I can, I go over to the church hall and they have a coffee morning for an hour and a half - I go up there with my notebook and pickup queries and to me that the role of the ward councillor. You get involved with your community. I've been at it for a long while and they all know me. (p5)
N5	Ward Member	Representation		Q. so every trip out to do is half an hour because someone stops you with queries ? (p5)
				A. That's right yes (p5)
N6	Ward Member	Representation	Local Groups	`....Having got involved from earlier days <u>with local organisations in the village</u> - cricket club or the theatre group - I ran the youth club in the Methodist Church for two or three years....., what I try to do in the local area is <u>to maintain the local areas vibrancy and trying to get the community to work together'</u> (p5).
N7	Ward Member	Representation	Local Groups	`We used to have about 21 local organisations within XXXXXX - active ones - if you take a lot you know, the girl guides and Boy Scouts the church, operatic Society, The keep Fit club, the Weight Watchers, you know all of that - we had a fantastic village XXXXXX we still got it, but it is hardly used any more' (p6).`

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REF	WHO	THEME	CAT	COMMENT (Page numbers below refer to interview page numbers at the top of each interview)
N8	Ward Member	Representation	Local Groups I am still governor of the local junior school. I am chairman of the finance committee there, 480 pupils budgets of £1.25 million.' (p16).
N9	Ward Member	Representation	Workload	`.....I am 75 next birthday - but I am probably doing 35 hours a week' – (p16)

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REF	WHO	THEME	CAT	COMMENT (Page numbers below refer to interview page numbers at the top of each interview)
N10	Ward Member	Representation	Typical Day	<p>Q. is there anything like - and I suspect there isn't - just thinking now about your role as a ward councillor in particular - do you have anything like a typical day ? Could you give me an idea of what it is like when you get up in the mornings and the kind of things that you typically do ?</p> <p>A. Yes</p> <p>Q. you see the reason I ask - is that I read all sorts of books and stuff on Public Administration, Local Government and the rest of it - and I just wonder sometimes just how many people writing these books have gone to people who are actually involved and said – oh by the way - what do you actually do ? What happens ? Can you give me a pen portrait of what you might do in a typical day ?</p> <p>A. Yes well take Tuesday of this week - usually get up and have breakfast at about 8 o'clock 830 and the phone goes there is a lady who had got a housing problem - I am being evicted - so that was the first one - I haven't finished my breakfast - and the leader rings me.....</p> <p>Q. I am getting the picture.....</p> <p>A. I go off to a meeting of CENTRO members on putting passengers first - I come back and Janet [my wife] says there are three people you need to ring - the first one a lady can't understand what we are doing over the road with a scheme that started this week, another one that got a problem with parents parking outside the school in the afternoon, we had people driving across the footpath across a zigzag and parking outside the school on the grass verge – what am I going to do about that ? I deal with all those take them on board and say I will try and sort something out - I go up to the Church XXXXX lady complains you can't read the road signs on the connector road because the trees overhanging the road signs – oh and somebody has put gloss paint on the 50 mph signs - now I find out that that is going to cost £750 to put that right because can't get the gloss paint off, so we have got to order new signs.</p> <p>Wednesday morning - I have a team meeting here every month with the local police, the neighbourhood manager the other two ward councillors - we have got about 15 issues to deal with - overhanging trees down the village, we have got an alleyway just across the road here the chap next door keeps it clean, it is now full of dog poo and there is graffiti all over his fence – (p13/14)</p>
O1	Ward Member	Civic Pride		<p>`Now I like to think that I can solve those problems. It's important that we keep the village - I know it's not a village really..... (p15).</p>

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REF	WHO	THEME	CAT	COMMENT (Page numbers below refer to interview page numbers at the top of each interview)
02	Ward Member	Civic Pride		Q. it is a lovely place (p15).
				A. I want to see it kept tidy. I want to see the grass cut, I want to see people look at their property....(p15)
03	Ward Member	Civic Pride		Q. so there's a real civic pride there ? (p15)
				A. Yes (p15)
04	Ward Member	Civic Pride		Q. so you got civic pride, you've got the public service ethic, you've got the wanting to make a difference and that's really what it's about ? (p15)
				A. Yes that is really what it's about (p15)
05	Ward Member	Civic Pride		- I was elected to look after the residents of XXXXXX and that is my first priority (p17)
06	Ward Member	Civic Pride		Q. so when you go to Whitehall with the begging bowl and say sort it out.....(p18)
				A. Yes - when I went to Whitehall to get more money I took the other two group leaders with me and we all spoke with one voice. (p18)

Annex 8A - Council Leader Interview

1 **Q. What are your key priorities ?**

2

3 A. Our key priority is economic well-being as this drives everything forward, in
4 essence because local government finance being what it is government funding has
5 fallen dramatically and therefore we need to encourage inward investment to deliver
6 revenue to provide the services that we need so that is achieved predominantly
7 through the retention of a proportion of business rates. So economic growth is
8 therefore essential as the financial envelope changes to maintain and sustain the
9 type of service provision we wish to provide in the borough. The reason for that is
10 that there are two big issues in this borough first is the whole skills agenda because
11 clearly we want a highly skilled workforce who can meet the requirements of the
12 inward investment employers we are attracting into the borough such as [REDACTED]
13 [REDACTED] International Airport - the Monarch hangars there. We have just
14 attracted investment from Aero Engine Controls-and they will be looking for people
15 who are skilled up enough to meet their requirements. So we are working closely
16 with our partners in education we are running a number of seminars which identify
17 with the educational sector - FE Colleges and our schools to identify what it is in
18 terms of skills - not the GCSEs - but the softer skills that employers require to
19 actually say that we can take these people on to meet our requirements for the
20 future. And the reason for that is that the economy in [REDACTED] faces a big challenge.
21 We face a big challenge because we have an ageing demographic okay - a lot of
22 people in the borough are becoming older there is therefore a higher rate of
23 dependency. We have got a national issue with regards to dementia and because of
24 the ageing demographic we will therefore suffer from a lot of older people needing
25 care in their old age. We also have the provisions of the Care Act [which puts
26 responsibility for co-ordinating care services firmly with local authorities]. We also
27 have massive proposals with regards to regeneration. We have one of the largest
28 regeneration projects in Western Europe and we have already delivered a large
29 amount on that. In recent years we have rebuilt all of our schools, we are re-building
30 most of our public housing, so we have got some big challenges in the borough.
31 And economic sustainability and well-being is absolutely key therefore to driving

32 forward the borough into the future. So we are very clear on what our priorities are
33 and those priorities are described and the narrative supporting those priorities is
34 described within our Council Plan. we have FOUR key priorities within the Council
35 Plan.

36

37 Interview Paused for 5 minutes to allow Leader to consult with a colleague on an
38 unrelated matter.....

39

40 so just pick up the challenges there, those are the priorities [] and
41 that is where they are listed . So in essence what we then have to do is decide how
42 we underpin those priorities with policy programmes which everyone then has to
43 deliver on. So from a governance perspective the strategic direction of the authority
44 is set by the leader and the Cabinet so we identify what our strategic priorities are.
45 We then align the scrutiny process that gives help and support to delivering those
46 priorities through the programs which they are embedded within but equally to also
47 have some input into actually developing those programs [from a policy point of
48 view]. Scrutiny has two roles it has the role of monitoring performance of the
49 programme but equally it is concerned with influencing some of those priorities within
50 the programme.

51

52 **Q So it has got a sort of policy development role as well ?**

53

54 A I think it has we are very keen to have a policy development role because
55 otherwise it just becomes very much focused on programme management
56 performance management which really isn't the sort of thing that we only want
57 scrutiny to do.

58

59 **Q In terms of partnership working councillor how do you see that - presumably**
60 **from what you have said about regeneration the skills agenda presumably you**
61 **can only deliver that within a partnership framework ?**

62

63 A well I just come out of the meeting so let's take the Health and Wellbeing Board. It
64 clearly a partnership. It key priority is reducing health inequalities across the

65 borough. No we can't deliver that we can have a leadership role as a council but we
66 can't deliver that because we don't have the resource available or indeed the power
67 to actually meet those requirements or deliver the programs that underpinned that.
68 So therefore partnership in the health and well-being board has to be with other
69 commissioning bodies to ensure that the plans and priorities match our plans and
70 priorities. The CCG's operating plan will mirror our health and well-being strategy. So
71 we align them.

72

73 **Q so people need to talk to each other across the board ?**

74

75 A yes well let's take the police and crime commissioners. The police Commissioner
76 produces a West Midlands police and crime plan. But feeding in to his police and
77 crime plan is our local plan so what we do is we decide as a local partnership
78 through the community safety partnership what are the key priorities in [REDACTED] by
79 way of crime reduction and criminal justice. So we identify our priorities we then
80 submit them to the police and crime Commissioner and he incorporates those
81 provided they match his priorities into his West Midlands plan. So the strategic
82 layering is in essence there is no point in us being an outsider, we in essence need
83 to have the strategic priorities to marry up with other plans. Health and Wellbeing
84 Board, CCG, adult social care, NHS England all of their priorities are known to each
85 other and are matched within overall priorities.

86

87 **Q and in terms of community leadership with elected councillors being the**
88 **only people who sort of have a democratic mandate on this is it fair to say that**
89 **that is respected amongst partner agencies do they respect the community**
90 **leadership role ?**

91

92 A it interesting I think within the [REDACTED] partnership that is the key partnership body
93 as a governing board within that there are some reward funding elements within that
94 so we have a wider partnership with the probation service the ambulance service the
95 Fire Brigade and I think that they respect and regard the community leadership being
96 provided by councillors as being absolutely important.

97

98 **Q yes....**

99

100 A I think one of the comments that has been said in the health and well-being board
101 is that because health don't understand very much how communities work because
102 they are very health focused having input from councillors does overcome some of
103 the democratic deficit within their own organisations. So there is an issue about
104 democratic deficit in other organisations that the local authority brings to the table so
105 they overcome the criticism of other organisations there is a democratic deficit. Now
106 it's unfortunate that some of those organisations do often act in isolation you know
107 acute trusts for instance would not have elected members on their boards but they
108 would be aware of the work being done by the Health and Wellbeing board. They
109 would overcome some of the democratic deficit in their own areas.

110

111 **Q so there are mechanisms therefore within the local authority to try and bring**
112 **some of these outside bodies and held to account to some extent ?**

113

114 A absolutely I am trying constantly to overcome the accusation of democratic deficit
115 within these organisations. From the perspective of members on the ground they
116 have two roles they have a role as elected members to overview the strategy of the
117 Council and to be party to those strategies and programmes, but equally they have
118 the community leadership role. The 2000 Act of course, spoke very much about
119 members being community leaders. So one of our other priorities is Stronger
120 Communities.

121

122 **Q yes....**

123

124 A. So then issue the about well how do we actually engage with our communities ?
125 How do we effectively get our communities to engage with us ? So we have got a
126 couple of initiatives. Let's take one within adult social care provision we have a
127 program called 'Experts By Experience'. So the experts by experience program in
128 essence takes people who have an understanding of a long-term condition or a
129 particular issue about health or social care and we have brought together a group of
130 those people - about 25 of them now - and they help and support the commissioning

131 functions within the council.

132

133 **Q ah right..... so they actually feed into that process ?**

134

135 A. Yes they actually feed into that process. So what we would do for instance is our
136 dementia strategy we will bring in our experts by experience to say what does it
137 mean on the ground the someone who has got dementia and what would their
138 pathway look like and what input can we have with him that ? So the experts by
139 experience are brought into that role and they are party to developing the program
140 that we are going to commission [for those services].

141

142 **Q so it is intelligent commissioning If you like ?**

143

144 A. Yes it intelligent commissioning in the sense that we have people who are users
145 of services who actually help us define the specification of the services that we
146 require so that is what they do. And they are actively party to that so if you were to
147 spoke to the Director of Adult Social Care and said tell me what experts by
148 experience do he would give you a whole raft of things that they have helped us to
149 commission and organise specifications on okay ? So that it is one example of why
150 we have engaged with the public.

151

152 **Q. and just in terms of commissioning and this general question of**
153 **outsourcing is it fair to say that nobody is too bothered about whether**
154 **services are provided directly or outsourced as long as the services are**
155 **delivered well ?**

156

157 A. I think that's probably right. It is all about quality isn't it ? Don't forget we
158 [historically] had a care trust in ██████████ and we were one of only five in the country
159 we joined with the health service to jointly commission services. We actually do that
160 now under another program called ICAS through the Better Care Fund. When we
161 were scoping all of that people were saying well actually I don't really care who
162 delivers it provided it is delivered safely effectively and with the quality underpinning
163 it and that people listen to what I have got to say so that is actually what people

164 want. So for instance we as a council don't empty our bins we contract out the
165 emptying of the bins, we as a council don't repair our own roads we contract out the
166 repair of our own roads. We contract out either 92 or 93% of all adult social care in
167 this borough.

168

169 **Q. as much as that ?**

170

171 A. Absolutely. So all the people out there who use adult social care services apart
172 from the assessment process which is done by social workers or trusted assessors
173 the people services are delivered by external organisations. They are commissioned
174 and that's the way we do things in ██████████ And likewise we have just
175 recommissioned our sexual health services we have jointly commissioned them as a
176 public health issue with ██████████ City Council. And the reason is we get
177 economies of scale and get a stronger specification through a joint procurement
178 process by working with other local authorities. So we have defined the specification
179 and the provider which is one of our acute sector hospitals providing those services
180 will provide services across the ██████████ So we won't actually deliver those services on
181 the ground but we got the specification we monitor the performance and we monitor
182 the quality so that is how we do things in the borough. Our road repair service if
183 jointly commissioned with ██████████ County Council. So the people who repair
184 our roads do so under a joint contract with ██████████ We also do things
185 ourselves so for instance we manage the contract the housing repairs for a number
186 of other local authorities, because we have a model in ██████████ which enables us to
187 identify the cost of those items and monitor the performance of those contract
188 effectively. Our Building Control group actually procure and manage the delivery of
189 housing repair contracts for other local authorities.

190

191 **Q so it is really sharing best practice across the board so that everybody can**
192 **benefit ?**

193

194 A. Absolutely and we have a joint procurement arrangement with Coventry City
195 Council and we procure certain services of behalf of Coventry which they do not
196 provide or procure themselves. And so we are constantly looking for new ways of

197 working within local government through Memorandums of Understanding or some
198 other joint type of arrangement with other local authorities.

199

200 **Q. and presumably that is because your focus is on the bottom line in terms of**
201 **delivering these priorities almost regardless of the method by which they are**
202 **delivered to actually get results ?**

203

204 A. I think the first criteria I mean when we procure now yes we have a value for
205 money criteria but there is also a criteria in there with regards to quality. There is
206 also a criteria in there with regards to partnership. There is also a criteria with
207 regards to communication. And how do we interact with our communities ? So let's
208 take another example information advice and guidance - massive issue - the Care
209 Act places massive new obligations on local authorities to provide information advice
210 and guidance for people who interface with the care system. So what we have done
211 is we have defined a new specification and we have brought together art Connect
212 service in ██████ which will now triage people and signpost people at a very early
213 stage to identify where their needs are best met. So Mrs Jones phones up she goes
214 through our Connect service now she maybe phoning about a particular issue, but
215 our call centre people then ask her a range of questions to see if she needs any
216 other services. So for instance I'll give you a classic example - last year the winter
217 warmth campaign aimed at reducing excess winter deaths the winter warmth
218 campaign in ██████ as we call it, is a partnership arrangement between Age UK,
219 other third sector organisations, the Fire Service, the Revenues and Benefits
220 section, ██████ Community Housing. So we had a lady thrown up last year this is a
221 classic example of how this thing can work. A lady phoned up last year with a
222 question about housing repairs. The person who took the call said okay that's not a
223 problem we will deal with that route ██████ Community Housing, as they deal with
224 our housing repairs. While you're on are there any other issues you know, it is quite
225 cold having a heating in the house etc ? It turned out that she had a one bar electric
226 fire. She was then asked what other sources of heating the were in the house. She
227 said welll I have got problems with putting money in the gas metre because it is
228 `pretty tight'. So out of that the winter warmth campaign took on the responsibility of
229 delivering extra heaters to that individual to keep them warm in the winter it is a

230 vulnerable elderly person - so she phoned up with the housing issue we then go out
231 and deliver her some other equipment to deal with the heating issue. Our Revenues
232 and Benefits department then give her a small grant to help towards the cost of
233 putting that equipment on to take her through a medium term period so she could
234 actually warm her house up. They then undertook a wider review of her pensions
235 benefits and other income to make sure that she was actually getting all the support
236 that she needed to get her through the winter. And that service operates 24/7,
237 ██████████ Community Housing our arm's-length housing management organisation
238 delivered the heaters the revenues and benefits department immediately sprung into
239 action realised that an emergency payment was due because this lady was going to
240 suffer potential hypothermia because she had not much heating in house prior to
241 undertaking a more thorough review of what she needed and that was all delivered
242 as a joint up service. So it really is about improving somebody's life without actually
243 doing very much but just by joining up the services to actually meet that person's
244 needs.

245

246 **Q.that is really interesting councillor, because to be honest you know I've read**
247 **stuff about shared services and whatever else but that example has really**
248 **brought it to life to me**

249

250 A. It is a practical example. So let's take another example let's take dementia. We
251 are moving towards becoming a dementia friendly borough. Now that means that we
252 are signing up a lot of people as dementia friends. We will also signed up a lot of
253 businesses as dementia friendly businesses - including the John Lewis partnership
254 (touch wood). There are a lot of people now within our community in ██████████ with
255 early stage dementia. These [businesses and Dementia Friends] are able to pick up
256 on it at an early stage to say to people you are not alone and we can work with you
257 on these things, and that has transferred into our CCG developing a Dementia
258 Strategy which has also incorporated `Telecare'. Telecare is a service which allows
259 people to receive care in their own homes. We have invested heavily in a clear
260 referral system when we identify someone who is in early-stage dementia so with the
261 Alzheimer's Society we offer information support but we also offer practical help
262 through our tele-care service to offer ageing adaptations to keep that person

263 independent for longer in their own home and we have got some real examples of
264 work that has practically worked. I won't name names but we had a lady who had
265 problems maintaining yourself because in essence she could not hold a cup properly
266 for instance. We identified that so are aids and adaptations team went out and
267 identified what we could do to support her to actually make a drink in the morning
268 and be able to hold it and drink it. It's small things like that that change people's lives.

269

270 **Q but it is real practical things ?**

271

272 A absolutely so we are working closely to try and develop a range of pathways as we
273 call them, that identify people's needs at an early stage and then we can actually
274 deal with those issues and then move on to a much more comprehensive review of
275 what the wider needs might be. So our connect service is doing that now.

276

277 **Q. it is brilliant to sort of hear how it all fits together if you like in the wider**
278 **jigsaw. Can I just us councillor and finally and this is very instant for me to**
279 **learn about in terms of partnership working where you stand on this debate for**
280 **more freedoms flexibilities, powers and funding streams for local authorities ?**
281 **The debate about devolution to city regions would you stand on all that ?**

282

283 A. Well I mean it's a current question. We do collaborate with other local authorities
284 and I just explained that some of that to you. On a more strategic level so I'm not
285 talking about delivering services on the ground at a more strategic level, we do work
286 increasingly through the Local Enterprise Partnerships - the Greater [REDACTED] and
287 [REDACTED] Local Enterprise Partnership, through the Growth Fund and the Growth
288 Strategy which we have to deliver on so we do collaborate with, for instance, our
289 near neighbours - [REDACTED] [City Council] and we are a joint economic hub -
290 which means that when we need financial expertise say on procurement issues we
291 can tap into that resource collectively. We also have an Integrated Transport
292 Authority across the West Midlands in essence devolving powers over transport to
293 the region dealing with transport issues across the [REDACTED] Well we do have issues in
294 [REDACTED] and I think were not unique in this, is that our strategic land use issues are
295 very much our business we believe that sovereignty i.e. our identity as [REDACTED] is

296 very important to us in [REDACTED]

297

298 **Q. Lots of civic pride in this borough - I have noticed it when I have been**
299 **conducting these interviews. From the discussions I've had that has really**
300 **come across.**

301

302 A. Absolutely. If the national debate is moving towards Combined Authorities
303 whatever that might mean, whatever model that may be we are not going to say we
304 will not have those discussions - of course we will have those discussions because
305 that is the way we have to be pragmatic but there are some very clear areas where
306 those discussions will NOT include. And they will not include strategic land use i.e.
307 housing issues which will be dealt with through our own Local Plan and they will not
308 deal with issues such as [REDACTED] sovereignty in the business of being absorbed by
309 anybody. So you know our identity is very important to us we are the jewel in the
310 Crown in the West Midlands we got all the big strategic assets, the key players, and
311 we are going to try to maintain control over those. So we are up for the debate we
312 have no problem with that, but there's a lot of work got to be done before we get
313 anywhere near to [the stage] were Greater Manchester has got for instance,
314 because they have been going at it for quite some years and we are in a different
315 place to them and we need to know what the architecture is so that is what we are
316 proposing to do.

317

318 **Q. and real final question this time councillor, in terms of HS2 - your thoughts**
319 **on that in terms of regeneration and how it affects [REDACTED] ?**

320

321 A. Okay. HS2 I think we have to recognise is a potential reality what we have to do in
322 [REDACTED] and I think our friends in [REDACTED] equally recognise this is that we have
323 to derive a clear economic benefit from HS2, so we've done a lot of work
324 understanding what high-speed rail has done elsewhere on the continent, and we
325 know of some cities where high-speed rail has delivered economic growth and we
326 know other areas where because they did not have plans in place it has not. So what
327 we're saying is that we have got very clear views about what we need to drive
328 the economic benefits out of high-speed rail. It is not predicated on high-speed rail

329 coming because we have got our wider UK Central strategy, but within the particular
330 area where the station is [proposed] we have now developed our own interchange
331 hub proposal and that includes a garden city style approach that includes
332 employment, leisure, retail and new housing all set in the 140 hectares of land but
333 with a high emphasis on green environment and infrastructure. So it is a garden city
334 concept - and that will be proposed to take forward in terms of our current plans.

335

336 **Q. Councillor Richards was telling me that what you didn't want the was just a**
337 **station ?**

338

339 A. You know you can use this phrase we don't want a `box on a car park'. We don't
340 want marshalling yards what we want is a clear economic plan that does exactly
341 what I opened up with and said to you that provides this borough with long-term
342 sustainable and manageable economic growth - every opportunity and that is what
343 we are looking to do so as it sustains this borough and enables us to provide the
344 services that we want and that is what we are going to do we are going to drive the
345 economic benefit of HS2 for the benefit of this borough. And that is what we are very
346 clear on.

347

348 **Q. I appreciate it councillor - can I just ask you very very finally in terms of**
349 **your views on public service - presumably you enjoy what you do - despite the**
350 **challenges ?**

351

352 A. Yes I mean I've been a public servant a long time started the ground floor up as a
353 parish councillor and so I have come up through the ranks you know. It's a bit of a
354 bug, once you get it it's difficult to get away from it, it's never always easy you know
355 you cannot please all the people all the time - but what you can do is actually hope
356 that you can deliver something that makes people live a bit better every day and you
357 know people phone me, I try and resolve the problems - the proviso is I can do my
358 best offer no guarantees and I think that all of my colleagues are in it for the same
359 end that is to try and do something to make the lives [of people] better. And you know
360 actually if you look at it there isn't a better system you know this is the best system
361 that we've got. All other systems have got flaws, this one's got flaws but from a

362 democratic accountability perspective - we are on the ground, voted in, people know
363 where to put the X's if they don't want us they put their X somewhere else and what
364 better sign of democracy is there than that ?

365

366 **Q. and on that note councillor it just remains for me to thank you very much**
367 **for your assistance in this interview and also to let you know that your**
368 **colleagues at [REDACTED] have been very helpful to me in this project and I am**
369 **sincerely grateful bow to you and them for all your assistance.**

370

371 A. Welcome Alex - Good Luck with everything.

372

373 Interview Ends (27 minutes) 4 November 2014.

374

Annex 8B - Chief Executive Interview

1 **Q. so how long have you been at [REDACTED] now then ?**

2 A. Three months and three weeks

3 **Q. is that all it is ? Because you took over from Mark [Rogers] who went to**
4 **[REDACTED] ?**

5 A. Yes – there was an Interim Chief Executive who stepped up into the role - Phil
6 was only doing it for around 5 to 6 months. And this is a very stable in a good way
7 organisation it's a very well-functioning organisation.

8 **Q. do you notice a difference from [REDACTED] [City Council] – in terms of**
9 **[organisational] culture ?**

10 A. Huge

11 **Q. really,.... ?**

12 A. Oh God yes its like being on a different planet

13 A. And there is a complex answer in that question - the work we did in [REDACTED] was
14 really hard work really difficult but got it was exciting it was very energising but it was
15 never a long-term I mean I did five years there

16 **Q. you were Director of Children's Services ?**

17 A. Yes

18 **Q. I mean that is a difficult post that ?**

19 A. We failed an Ofsted inspection but culturally we were isolated we were excluded
20 we were seen as bringing down the whole organisation and over the five years I was
21 there we turned it round to being a go to part of the organisation, but we not only
22 turned around but we got into a place where children's services was actually the
23 highest functioning part of the organisation with the strongest team. I look back now
24 and out of the team that we had there at the time everybody has moved on to
25 promoted posts which says something about the team so one of my colleagues is

26 now a director of children's services the others are all assistant directors or have
27 moved on to be heads of service you know we built a fantastic team.

28 **Q. what was morale like when you first turned up at [REDACTED] ?**

29 A. Dreadful - really dreadful - dreadful in the organisation, dreadful in children's
30 services and is no one way of changing it you know there's no silver bullet is just
31 constant hard work and just talking to staff there you know it was about being visible
32 it was all the usual stuff and it was about me being clear to myself that I am not
33 moving on until this job is done. It's funny because when I left there was a [REDACTED] of
34 the Manchester Evening News and I'd forgotten I said this to a journalist, but but I
35 said if we don't turn around children's services you wont need to sack me because
36 I'll go.

37 **Q. I saw it...**

38 A. Yes and I meant it. I meant it because that's me if you can't do the job and you
39 can't meet the expectations of Ofsted or whatever it is the new got to accept that is
40 not the role for you and it doesn't say anything about you as a person or even your
41 professional capability or capacity it's like football management - are you a red or a
42 blue ?

43 **Q. red**

44 A. good - all my family are season-ticket holders - it's like Moyes - though he was a
45 really good manager and Everton give him credit the rubbish football club with no
46 money into the really good job we go to Manchester United but it didn't work out -
47 was that about him and there were some who were never going to support him. It I
48 don't actually go to support Liverpool I was indoctrinated in it. So you got to be
49 upfront.

50 **Q. so is it all about leading the front then - have you got to be visible - have
51 people got to `know' that you are there etc ?**

52 A. You have to be visible. You know like most people I read all the management
53 books and leadership books and undergone some fantastic courses and
54 postgraduate qualifications, but I've got something from all of them some of them be

55 really really insightful - can I actually remember them all – can I actually tell you for a
56 couple of hours what they all taught me - no I can't. But it probably boils down to a
57 couple of traits - were those traits already there ? Probably yes but have they been
58 honed and am I more self-aware now, if I realise the intended consequences of what
59 I do or don't do - then I am probably more self-aware. And interestingly there is no
60 leadership style. The leadership approach like brought to this role in [REDACTED] so far is
61 very very different to the leadership approach that I followed in [REDACTED]

62 **Q. Very different – in the sense ?**

63 A. In the sense that in [REDACTED] a lot of it was based on fear - fear of losing my job -
64 fear of the next inspection – fear of the next serious case review - I mean a phone
65 call would come in and say that the child death and to be frank you would go to the
66 toilets and vomit you know - maybe that's me ? It made me poorly really I suppose,
67 and have an impact on my own life. I just lived and breathed it.

68 **Q. it is a very difficult role isn't it ?**

69 A. Very difficult.

70 **Q. I mean I always say in terms of my own stuff that I do, general local**
71 **government law but I would never touch social services but I just know that I**
72 **could handle it.**

73 A. Yes - it's just that I take the leadership thing personally. You know and I I'm no
74 great leader I am no big I am - all I do is I look at the situation and say will what
75 would I expect if I was in that situation so last night for instance I spent 2 ½ hours
76 with a colleague in somebody's front room next to [REDACTED] - a bit like if
77 you are in Halewood [reference to Ford Motors] - it is tough with shift changes etc -
78 so last night I went down there and met with residents in the front room we had a
79 lovely cup of tea and biscuits and we talked through the issues. Now I didn't need to
80 do that –

81 **Q. but I bet it was appreciated ?**

82 A. It was appreciated. And yes it was nice to get a [REDACTED] on the back and a lovely email
83 from them because we all like a bit of appreciation - why did I do that ? - Because

84 next time I am able to empathise and there is an authenticity about it as a leader you
85 have to be authentic.

86 **Q. does that tie into the issue of servant leadership - not because of what you**
87 **get out of it but because of what you can do for others for the team and indeed**
88 **the general public ?**

89 A. Well I just think that's so important - I was looking through an old management
90 book having a tidy out at home and out of this [REDACTED] of paper and it was a Chinese
91 reflection on leadership - when you leave or when you die there should be no sense
92 that you have gone – and it should be invisible when you are there – you know what
93 I mean ? Back to football - Alex Ferguson - Manchester United - was a success of
94 that club all built around one man ? And when that one man goes does it all fall
95 apart ? And is that actually good leadership ? So when I leave this place, I don't want
96 a ripple and that is the true test. So go back to my old place at [REDACTED] Has it moved
97 on and developed or has it actually slid back ? I am actually going back there in a
98 few weeks to open up one of these new build schools - and that will be quite
99 interesting for me I do keep in touch with a few friends of the work colleagues by the
100 by, but I would never go back as the big I am - I don't mind going back to open a
101 school - kiss a few babies and that's it - but I have completed my role the and it's not
102 for me now you know.

103

104 **Q. so you did what you have to do at the time and it is time to move on ?**

105 A. Yes - but that visible leadership is so important. Again it's the cliché of the
106 conductor - coordinating the playing of the instruments - I could not play an
107 instrument now - asked me to write a report and it will be rubbish - but what I am
108 able hopefully to do in my role is coach, enable, mentor and inspire people to do
109 that. And I am very clear that we employ experts –

110 **Q. let them get on with it ?**

111 A. yes – let them get on with it – enable them, don't disable them. And I don't need to
112 see the micro detail - why would I ? I trust my colleagues. Use me when you need to

113 use me. Add do I know what's going on ? Yes I do - because I have detailed systems
114 so I know exactly where each part of my business is operating from.

115 **Q. and you make that your business to know ?**

116 A. Yes I make that my business - so all this stuff that you see on the wall here our
117 performance indicators and frameworks are all very mature [pointing to the office
118 wall covered in charts/figures] and they are all very mature here - just like they were
119 mature in ██████ in the businesses that I ran up there. It's just the transfer - different
120 style - different approach - but the forensic detail so that it may as a leader wants to
121 roll my sleeves up and reach in to any part of the business have a look at it and put it
122 back but always always put it back. Do not pull it out and hold onto it put it back –
123 yes

124 **Q. and that the people get on with who were doing it ?**

125 A. Yes so from my perspective it might need a squirt of oil in there if you take the
126 machine analogy - but be really clear that you put it back - it is not my job to manage
127 the frontline - because actually that is disabling - and in my experience that starts to
128 lead into issues and problems.

129 **Q. it's very interesting that you say that, because one of the things that I have**
130 **found going round [different authorities] and it drives me mad - is the fact that**
131 **some managers tend to micromanage - and it really annoys me. You know I**
132 **always think that if you've got the right people in place then just let them get**
133 **on with it because I have always thought that sort of nine times out of 10 on**
134 **these things they will run - if you've got the right people work they will run well**
135 **- and the one time out of 10 it doesn't you can sort it.**

136 A. Yes - understand the difference between management and leadership. So when
137 required, I will manage. So as Chief Executive of this authority as Head of the Paid
138 Service as when required I will manage. But my day job is leadership. So everything
139 I do when I behave the way I speak the way I walk when I go out to get a cup of
140 coffee from here way I present myself - is all leadership.

141

142 **Q. so there is no division between the private persona and the public role ? Is**
143 **that fair to say - that it is all encompassing ?**

144 A. Very good question - yes there is no division..... Something I've learnt actually
145 fairly recently, as a leader I am who I am. I cannot put on a uniform or a costume and
146 pretend to do that –

147 **Q. it's really valuable to know that though isn't it ?**

148 A. Yes it is. But it's taken me a long time to realise that. What I've been in the world
149 of work for about 25 years now from leaving university and it's taken me all the time
150 that personal journey to understand that I am who I am and to be comfortable with
151 that. You know and actually influence subjectively sometimes quietly is powerful.

152 **Q. there is a lot of credibility around that though isn't there ? I am what I am -**
153 **take it or leave it sort of thing.**

154 A. Yes. The take it or leave it - I would rather they take it the leave it - but I think for
155 me looking back on even on the three months that I have been here, some of the
156 events instances and stuff that comes up you know - going out of here putting my
157 jacket on and going out - standing on the front line with police officers and
158 colleagues dealing with group of people who are being particularly nasty - these
159 people have moved on to one of our parks - and not somewhat offering the solution,
160 but being there with them saying that I will pick that up all I will do that about being
161 willing to roll my sleeves up and get back to that authenticity. You might say should a
162 Chief Executive be doing that ? No they shouldn't be - but they can do it if they do
163 not take control from the people there. I was the with one of my team who leads on
164 this type of work and [REDACTED] was the boss so I said to him what you want me to do
165 and he didn't really know what to say to that - and in the end he wanted me to stand
166 at the back gate over the what what happens for half an hour and report back and I
167 said right [REDACTED] cheers - I will do. So it was really practical but I wanted to get an
168 understanding of what's going on and your beer production review of the understand
169 police colleagues and other colleagues that worked well and if the something that
170 comes up that unusual and we can look at it and decide what we need to do about it.
171 And that gives me efficacy it gives me authenticity with the community and council
172 members - because I serve through them - and like last night at [REDACTED] So I think that I

173 want people to take it and it is a judgement call. I was very very lucky as DCS
174 [Director of Children Services]

175 **Q. Lucky ?**

176 A. Yes lucky

177 **Q. it's not often people say that in that role is it ?**

178 A. I was lucky to get the role I was a very lucky person.

179 **Q. did you enjoy the role ?**

180 A. Yes I loved it. Yes it defined who I was. It was the most demanding role most
181 punishing role both the context and the role. ████████ was not an easy place to work
182 in. Salfordians are hard people - they don't do love - and rightly so - because as the
183 city it was at the heart of the industrial revolution it was the backbone of the United
184 Kingdom economy in many senses and those people are extremely proud and for
185 too many years – decades - a bit like on Merseyside in Liverpool Birkenhead for
186 decades just had a really good kicking from everybody, actually the wealth of London
187 and the chattering classes to be a bit parochial here came from the industrial
188 heartlands and the industrial revolution so the West Midlands the North West the
189 north-east the East Midlands

190 **Q. it seems to me that this been almost a stranglehold of centralisation from**
191 **London Whitehall I know people are starting to see that now with talk of**
192 **devolution of power to the cities and all the rest of it**

193 A. Yes - it's no point in asking for it because you not going to get it but when Joe
194 Anderson [Elected Mayor of Liverpool] with all due respect to the elected Mayor of
195 Liverpool he's not going to get any more money from central government because
196 there isn't any more money. But surely Joe and the team should be given the ability
197 to innovate and develop freedoms and flexibilities that is what government can give

198 **Q. I think that that is what they are looking to try to do isn't it ?**

199 A. Absolutely.

200 **Q. yes I read somewhere last week that [redacted] [City Council] were**
201 **looking for financial independence within six years. And I know it's the same**
202 **for other cities as well.**

203 A. It is. We will be financially independent in this small borough in three years.

204 **Q. really ?**

205 A. Yes three years, because we have so little government grant. If we are allowed to
206 continue to [drive] economic growth and the business rates that we get from that and
207 our council tax, that we have huge opportunities here to model for central
208 government what post austerity in that sense looks like. Now is it sufficient to model
209 it on a 205,000 population of a small borough ? What is the scalability of that ? We
210 should be having that conversation with central government. Because that could
211 actually apply - not only to other local authorities - but also to the health service and
212 to other parts of the public sector. And I think for me, that is the leadership role. Yes
213 we will continue to deliver on the highways, bins, education and the rest of it - you
214 know that is the day job. The leadership role that is our opportunity [as officers] to
215 engage with our politicians on a regional scale - and what does that mean to the
216 population that I serve ? It means a greater opportunity then to drive, understand and
217 to realise the benefits [deriving from economic growth]. If I'm coming into Liverpool I
218 will go one of two ways - either over the Runcorn Bridge all through the tunnels. My
219 wife used to work on Mersey Ferries - a real Scouser - a genuine Scouser - she was
220 the first woman ever to dock a Mersey Ferry. So I truly have married into Liverpool.
221 So you go into Liverpool and you are proud to enter that city. And likewise with
222 Manchester. I more Liverpool than Manchester – I mean I have worked in
223 Manchester, I used to work in Knowsley [Knowsley MBC] and really proud to go in
224 there, and I'm proud to come into the West Midlands but why ? Because of the
225 people - the culture - the Brummies are different to Liverpoolians who are different to
226 Mancunians and their different to the Geordies or whatever, but actually there is an
227 authenticity in these people.

228 **Q. all of those cities [redacted] Liverpool Manchester Leeds Newcastle**
229 **Sheffield - you know, they are all proud in their own right aren't they ? They**
230 **are all proud they all want to make a contribution.**

231 A. Yes and they are distinct. Why cannot we as a nation in a very small country
232 nurture that distinctiveness ? We are not France or Germany or Italy or Spain, were
233 not the United States in any sense, we are Britain - the whether we have a separate
234 Scotland or whatever we are one nation. And for me in local government in that is
235 the ██████ that we need to articulate and it's bigger than the question of whether we
236 need combined authorities or city region - it is about national identity and at the
237 moment we are under siege from ourselves.

238 **Q. and there is a powerful economic case around that isn't there about freeing**
239 **these places up ?**

240 A. Yes

241 **Q. it's not just the political issue about powers is it ? There is a credible**
242 **economic case to say that if you give us the powers we will then go on to**
243 **deliver the infrastructure to move these places on.**

244 A. Yes - and the most important thing to the people that I serve the key thing is
245 sustainable decent employment.

246 **Q. that is the top line issue is it ?**

247 A. Yes that is the top line issue. So from that then comes the opportunity to buy - and
248 I'm being really basic here - it is a basic point - you can complexify the equation, but
249 it's a basic point- decent job, decent salary, knowing that you are going to be
250 employed for the next four or five years, gives you financial security it provides a
251 degree of happiness and well-being, and people in work tend to be healthier than
252 people who can't get into work for whatever reason - so there is a health angle -
253 decent housing, multiplier effect of the economy and people actually feeling good
254 about themselves and their homes there is a social dividend from that. Actually
255 Howard Bernstein from Manchester [City Council] articulated it absolutely brilliantly
256 and I have copied this and I hold my hands up –

257 **Q. well he is regarded as the Guru isn't he ?**

258 A. Yes - I've had the privilege of sitting with Howard in Manchester when I was
259 working in ██████

260 **Q. I'm due to see him make a speech next week in Liverpool about HS2. You**
261 **really rate him do you ?**

262 A. Oh God yes - there will never be another Howard. But going back to that
263 economic growth and the well-being of our population are two sides of the same
264 coin. You cannot drive population well-being you can't influence it you can't drive it
265 you can't manage it unless you have economic growth. And actually you can't deliver
266 economic growth if you haven't got the health and well-being of the right skills
267 coming through so if you pull up too far apart - and you look at local government and
268 it's all structured people and places places and people - aren't we ? This place is -
269 now I come from a people background children's [services]. But actually I spend
270 most of my time now dealing with economics. So for me it is about people and jobs
271 who then drive the local economy.

272 **Q. just in terms of that, just thinking about partnership working then -**
273 **presumably you would say that partnerships were crucial to this ?**

274 A. Yes. I serve the only group of democratically elected folk i.e. politicians - well you
275 could say the chief constable does as well now with the PCC [Police and Crime
276 Commissioner] - so they have the only democratic mandate locally. So there is a
277 place leadership role in there and it is fortunate in that every where I have worked
278 particularly in [REDACTED] and in [REDACTED] that partners recognise that.

279 **Q. they do recognise it ?**

280 A. Yes they do recognise it. And actually there is an appreciation amongst partners
281 but if we work together we can actually improve the transactional aspect of the
282 business that we do whether it be a police officer or a GP or whatever so yes that is
283 the first level - but there is a higher value in terms of co-designing and co-delivery
284 and yes economically you make savings, but actually there's not huge savings in it -
285 but what there is, is a massive opportunity to understand the system. Going back to
286 your earlier point, what I would love from any government is a longer term economic
287 view. I am a realist I understand that the economic window is the political window it's
288 five years - but wouldn't it be great if as a nation we said to the great cities that you
289 mentioned earlier and boroughs like ours frankly, what would it look like over a 10 to
290 15 year settlement ?

291 **Q. to give the stability to plan ?**

292 A. Yes - right across the public sector – this is our national plan for investment which
293 is going down because we have the bars are nation's books - it will not be any more
294 and not be any less - it's that. Imagine doing that as if it is a big business and saying
295 here's my income profile spot on over the next 10 to 15 years - and we can do that in
296 the public sector. You can - we know our demand - we know our money - we know
297 that the demand is going to outstrip the money - so let's just plot that for 15 years
298 and say that what it's going to be - there is the challenge back to central government
299 and to local government and our partners to say redesign the system to meet that -
300 don't keep going to the Barnet graph of doom – lemming like - start now, maybe it's
301 too late, but start looking at it now and so what does that look like but don't look at it
302 from the fiefdom of being a chief executive of the council, or being chief constable of
303 the police force or being the chief executive of an acute trust. Have a look at it in the
304 round - because you and I as consumers - students patients whatever function we
305 are doing - ain't bothered about whether it is local government or NHS, we just want
306 half decent service at the front end. So for me, there is a new public leadership
307 dynamic conversation, whatever you want to call it, which I think we need like
308 yesterday. It is so urgent and in this place as in [REDACTED] we are now pushing that. I
309 got in here today from a meeting in [REDACTED] with my colleague who was
310 previously running the authority and the Chief Superintendent - and the local
311 superintendent - I thought we finally been caught [!!] Those guys there were
312 following up on a conversation that I had with the chief superintendent about two
313 months ago, and it had subsequently with the deputy chief constable and the chief
314 constable - about what was a new targeted policing model look like for [REDACTED] What
315 does a fully integrated model look like - so can police officers deploy my officers, can
316 my officers deploy police officers ? Were not carrying the Queen's Warrant, I am not
317 a trained police officer which is a highly trained and skilled role - but what happens if
318 there is as a domestic violence issue and there is loads of handoffs and referrals and
319 that is why we have poor care for families and sometimes deaths occur. So actually
320 let's just have it as a one-stop shop led by the police officer. Everywhere is doing it -
321 but are they doing it at a system scale ? Are they up to be dancing on a pinhead of
322 your resources are your resources and my resources are mine ?

323 **Q. so what do you think on this debate about Total Place and community**
324 **budgets etc ?**

325 A. Well, I come from greater Manchester don't I ? Community budgets yes I think
326 fundamentally that they are a way to go the devil is always in the detail with those. I
327 think the payment by results model that we have seen with the troubled families
328 programme - I am highly sceptical about it and funny because nobody I know does it
329 for the money. Okay they're doing phase 2 of it now and they've reduced the funding
330 but I actually think that if they took all the funding away, we would still do it. Because
331 we recognise that it is the right thing to do. And the concept should not be now about
332 troubled families - they should be bolder - let's get into greater Manchester a look at
333 their public service reform offer and give them the freedom and flexibilities to deliver
334 - it doesn't need – Howard [reference to Sir Howard Bernstein Chief Executive of
335 Manchester CC] would kill me for saying that - but they don't - they need the
336 flexibilities.

337 **Q. just to get on with it ?**

338 A. Yes - work with partners - take the regulators out of keep the accountabilities -
339 give them the freedom and flexibility is to get on with it. Give them the opportunity to
340 say over the next 5 to 10 years 'the gloves are off' 'prove it'. Have the courage to do
341 that. Because if you look at Norway, they had a model of children's centres in
342 Norway. When we introduced children's centres on the Blair government within six
343 months Surestart had already started to look at outcomes. Well how intellectually
344 can anybody expect within six months that you will have shifted the outcomes in a
345 local population - these things are long-term, they are 20 and 25 years. And Norway
346 only now are beginning to look at some very sketchy outcomes - they took the view
347 absolutely the right view this is a generational issue

348 **Q. so getting away from the short term thinking ?**

349 A. Yes - we are investing for 25 years - and that goes back to my earlier point lift the
350 political horizon above five years. Now does that mean that we have a government
351 in place for 25 years no it doesn't because that will be a dictatorship - but surely
352 there are mechanisms to plan it - we've got enough brains in this country to do that -

353 and imagine what that would mean for communities actually let's see something
354 through to its conclusion.

355 **Q. that was actually one conclusion in a recent study on accountability**
356 **[CREWE & KING: 2013] that said that people shift offices and positions at**
357 **central level and 10-20 years down the line it was therefore difficult to hold**
358 **them to account.**

359 A. Yes.

360 **Q. What are your thoughts in terms of outsourced services**

361 A. I work on the basic assumption that what matters is what works. And what works
362 is what matters. So I am absolutely clear that outsourcing commissioning is with us.
363 And it's quite interesting coming to a Conservative authority from a Labour one – you
364 would kind of think it was the default position outsource everything - I remember
365 being in a meeting with the city mayor ■ Stewart in ■ and ■ said to me that
366 I want this to be the very last resort - only sort of when the lifeblood is going out of
367 me would I consider outsourcing. But I had such a good relationship with ■ that I
368 could say look we have been outsourcing and commissioning in this borough for
369 years we've spent half a billion with the private sector to get new schools so I said to
370 look let's just be clear about this - what matters to our residents and our communities
371 is having the very best service - they're not interested in the ■ badge - it is on
372 the van of the company who do our estate management - it is on the bin wagons
373 with Amey, or Balfour who do the street scene or whatever - that's fine because the
374 service is good. The true test of somebody in my position is would you outsource the
375 most toxic area which has got to be children's social care –

376 **Q. there is a hot debate about that the moment...**

377 A. Yes very much so - but then we outsourced children's centres to the voluntary
378 sector, and charitable organisations you could argue we have outsourced education
379 to academies. So actually you look at the model and I commission all sorts of public
380 private agencies to deliver services both here and in my last place.

381 **Q. what about when it goes wrong ? Who do people look to blame they hold to**
382 **account ?**

383 A. I am accountable - I'm accountable. It is public money, but I think that something
384 across the public sector that we need to improve upon is our contract monitoring.
385 How we hold people to account so even go back to the old world when we had a
386 failing academy I was held responsible as director of children's services. They were
387 my children - under the Children's Act 2004 I have responsibility and accountability
388 for that. So regardless of who delivered the services whether it was delivered by Mr
389 Tesco or whoever - they were my children.

390 **Q. and that presumably is because as part of the public service a political**
391 **decision has been made to do that [outsource] but in terms of lines of**
392 **accountability there is still a public service element in the delivery of those**
393 **services ?**

394 A. Yes - so it is a problem with an Academy as director of children's services I would
395 get one of my colleagues and I would go down to the school get in the chair of the
396 foundation trust get the headteacher in and say this is not good enough and this is
397 what we are going to do - I wouldn't ask them what they were going to do, because
398 clearly they were struggling, and I would just park my tanks on their lawn. I actually
399 made myself very unpopular interestingly, on that occasion with the Department of
400 Education [nationally] who along with OFSTED subsequently said that local
401 authorities have do intervene but they hated it when we did it.

402 **Q. Really ?**

403 A. Oh God yes - I had a full civil service team up here [REDACTED] to engage in what
404 basically became a public flogging - but it had to be done.

405 **Q. because you put your view on it, intervened and it was not popular ?**

406 A. Yes the situation wasn't good enough - we had put £25 million investment into a
407 brand-new school that was at best a quarter full, we couldn't recruit any other
408 children to it - it is an Academy - and because the Academy chief executive had
409 political roots all over Westminster he was untouchable. They had six head teachers
410 in four years. The results are going down down down down down down down.

411 **Q. presumably then when the results go down the can't attract any pupils to it**
412 **and just get worse and worse and worse ?**

413 A. Yes and there are academy schools like that all over the country and nobody is
414 prepared to deal with it. Now on my watch and me being me, and I am not being the
415 big I am, I cannot turn my head the other way I had to get involved. It was just
416 unacceptable.

417 **Q. and just thinking about accountability and public service and elected**
418 **members - presumably if you got services outsourced and everybody is**
419 **looking at commissioning council models and everything else - and it's all**
420 **about working with partners and community leadership and interest in the use**
421 **said that partners really respect the mandate that elected members have - have**
422 **you found in your own experience both here and [REDACTED] that members have**
423 **been prepared to sort of embrace that meta-governance role to hold other**
424 **bodies to account ?**

425 A. I think for me I have been very lucky in my local government career, in the sense
426 that I have worked for some brilliant [elected] leaders and very great cabinets. But
427 like for us as officers - with members there are mixed abilities and the some
428 challenges within that. But as a local government civil servant I am accountable to
429 elected members. In this role I am accountable through cabinet to the leader of the
430 council. My job is to advise members on developing policy which they then develop
431 and own. And then the other aspect of the job is in developing strategies to deliver
432 that policy and that is what I own and my officers own. I have always been very clear
433 about that - in fact I have that strong Internet during the first week of my local
434 government career by a really great cabinet member, who is sadly no longer with us.
435 And I know that's the remit - and as long as I am clear with members about that and I
436 am also clear that they gave me the job in whatever context, so they have mandated
437 me so therefore I have the ability to discharge that mandate.

438 **Q. you sound really driven in terms of delivery - is that fair to say ?**

439 A. Yes

440 **Q. is that fair to say that you've got passion just to get in and sort it out -**
441 **because that really comes across ?**

442 A. I will say how I feel about it Alex, it is just a privilege. It privilege to be in this role.

443 **Q it is very interesting that you say that - because I tell you I have always**
444 **regarded every public service role that I have ever done - and I only work**
445 **within the public service - I've always use the same word.**

446 A. Yes - it is a privilege - you know I get very well paid, but a lot of tax as well - and
447 don't get me wrong.

448 **Q. not about the money though is it ?**

449 A. No - it's not

450 **Q. this is what people don't understand.... It is not what drives you is it ? The**
451 **thing that drives you wanting to do what you do...**

452 A. Yes - there have been times in my career - and I will share it with you because
453 I've been very open with you - where I have been offered a pay rise for acting up and
454 I have refused it and said keep the money - have then gone home and thought why
455 have I done that ? I've done that because I have a right to do that, my director of
456 finance tells me I have a lowest paid Chief Executive in the country, but I love that. I
457 love it you know. As much as I like to go for a nice skiing holiday, but I love it
458 because why wouldn't I ? because it is really about having the authenticity –

459 **Q. but that really does say something about the motivation doesn't it ? These**
460 **days when we read all the stuff in the Daily Mail that comes out about how**
461 **much people [council officials] are getting paid and all the rest of it - that really**
462 **says something about motivation doesn't it ? But you want to do what you**
463 **want to do and to some extent what you paid as a side issue ?**

464 A. Yes - I read somewhere somewhere up in Merseyside chief executive was
465 finishing up there and was paid £176,000 a year – what ? for a tiny borough –

466 **Q. well there are a lot of them - I mean Cheshire East was pushing £200,000. I**
467 **mean I don't downplay the challenges there at all but you look at it and you**
468 **say well it's couple market towns [Knutsford, Macclesfield, Sandbach, Crewe,**
469 **Wilmslow].**

470 A. It is isn't it.....Sandbach and a bit of Crewe isn't it ?

471 **Q. yes - Crewe was the most challenging area up there, but a lot of it was**
472 **Wilmslow and Alderley Edge footballers territory.**

473 A. I'm not one to judge your pontificate on it but yes it is about delivery and
474 everybody counts. And I know that the some people they will think that's a load of
475 rubbish and the other people it will mean something to them. And I also know that
476 I'm not going to be able to deliver to every person but it won't with the lack of trying.
477 And I suppose for me what really really does drive me is justice. And tried to correct
478 injustice and that is the thing that will really get to me - the point that sometimes I am
479 not rational about it really - I always being asked by some children - what makes you
480 angry ? Well I don't get angry really - I mean, I can wind myself up. But if there was
481 to be a time it will be when I see real injustice. And that could be everything from
482 apartheid and racism to poverty, the poverty opportunity or anything like that it's
483 about tackling the injustice that is the reason why I am a public servant, because I'm
484 trying to find an avenue I have been blessed in this role and blessed in my last role
485 to be fortunate enough to try to influence the factors that will drive justice.

486 **Q. it is really interesting for me is how you say that in terms of the way you**
487 **view public service - and the way you view it as a privilege because it is very**
488 **very similar to how I think.**

489 A. Good.

490 **Q. and it's very very similar to what has driven me over the last 15 years.**
491 **Because it is a privilege it really is - and I think sometimes you can say that**
492 **people and I don't understand it and I really don't understand, but I think that if**
493 **you have worked within the public service and you have been fortunate**
494 **enough to come into contact with a number of different colleagues across**
495 **different disciplines in different departments, and yes there's always issues,**
496 **there are always challenges and always problems - you people have better**
497 **days than others - but I have never failed to be inspired by the public servants**
498 **that I have seen - and they really do try to do the best - quite often in difficult**
499 **circumstances - especially when resources are getting cut, and people are**
500 **faced with doing two jobs at once and everything - but you see it at all levels,**
501 **particularly on the front line, and in social services you know -**

502 A. Oh yes - you look at children social workers and this is what upsets me you know
503 today in Rotherham [reference to the recent child abuse scandal at Rotherham MBC]
504 today in ██████████ where they are all under pressure the moment, there will be
505 social workers going on today what all the signals in the environment will be saying
506 to the light off, roll over and stay in bed. But they just get on with it - they are putting
507 on their uniforms and going into work, picking up the case files and getting on with it.

508 **Q. even though it is not popular and they don't get much money out of it....**

509 A. Yes - if you think your social worker in Rotherham - but that's just really show the
510 injustice to them - because my friend Joyce Thackers who resigned as director of
511 children's services in Rotherham - it was her and Martin Kimber the Chief Executive
512 who commissioned the Jay Report, not government - not some politician. The Chief
513 Executive and the DCS commissioned the Jay report. They realised that there were
514 issues in that borough and in that town and they had worked and worked and worked
515 at it but had not got as far as they needed to. So they decided to commission a
516 report as an external driver to obtain improvement. Now, not one police officer has
517 walked, not one GP, or headteacher so the accountability is with Martin as chief
518 executive and with Joyce as DCS. And they walked... now where as the public
519 responsibility ? I am not saying it will make it any better if everyone else resigns, no
520 they shouldn't - and have also going to be very contentious here and say that Martin
521 and Joyce should not resigned. They are the ones that will understand the situation
522 and how to find a solution. But bringing in the new team who will spend 6 to 12
523 months unravelling what is there. We have this thing that you fail and you're out -
524 that they deliberately come in to fail ? No. Joyce is the most passionate wise humble
525 DCS I have ever had the privilege to spend time with.

526 **Q yes - I saw her giving the ██████████ to the Commons select committee.**

527 A, and for ██████████ with all due respect to another public servant, you are fired - he
528 is like Lord Sugar..... Well he is isn't he ? What has ██████████ ever said that is
529 positive about services ?

530 **Q. probably not a lot...**

531 A. Not a lot - when was the last time he rolled his sleeves up and got out there as the
532 chair of the really important committee as that and not going to be an executioner
533 ruin people's careers today - instead one of the do try get some empathy and some
534 understanding - he has never been anywhere near a DCS - reasonable some of
535 those tough Northern patches.

536 **Q. is that a wider problem about inspection then ? People coming to a view**
537 **never actually been involved in it ?**

538 A. No I don't think it's that - I think the regulation - particularly OFSTED - I absolutely
539 think that inspection and regulation is a good thing. So work from that premise - it is
540 just the lenses that sometimes they look through. OFSTED inspection of teachers
541 DCS whatever – the [criteria] changes with the season. So nobody is quite sure. So
542 there we got this national thing called CSE [Child Sexual Exploitation]. Well actually
543 we've had CSE going back in history. In Roman times it was the done thing to sleep
544 with children. So what we do is we regulate a system, when as a society we have
545 actually sexualised children. Now it's all over Coronation Street at 8pm at night - so
546 there is a sexualisation of children and young people. Kids are wired differently and
547 then there is a thing called the Internet. And yet you still working in old fashioned
548 ways with laws and jurisdictions. And teachers, social workers, youth workers, they
549 are up against it - the are still judging them on standards that are out-of-date - they
550 were out-of-date five years ago, they were out-of-date last year and out-of-date now.
551 The world has moved on.

552 **Q. yes...**

553 A. I'm not saying that you lower your sights - and say a certain amount of child abuse
554 or underperformance is acceptable - no it isn't - still has to be regulated still have to
555 be reported on still have to have standards, but crucially you need context as well.
556 So to expect every child in the country to be at the same place, when every child is
557 different every context is different. That is not to say that children in Manchester got
558 weasels to underperform against children in Windsor high school which is known as
559 Eton! Now we can have the same expectations but some of those factors that
560 children start life with our different and potentially less enabling but they have equal
561 value. So as a society why don't we be more subjective when we look to the lens ?

562 Have regulation but be a bit wiser. Let think about outcomes. Not just publish and be
563 damned and say that that's your problem. Let's just say it's part of a narrative and
564 the next stages we are going to be doing X.

565 **Q. is part of it about realising that in a sense things are not simple There**
566 **are problems and issues and context that there are difficulties around it and**
567 **part of the solution is to realise that and then work with partners to try and get**
568 **these matters sorted out ?**

569 A. Yes. Working with people - it's like a coastal ecosystem. So it is fragile. So as you
570 come back on the seashore you have your first adaptive plants [you can tell I used to
571 be a Geography teacher] and colonisation so sand dunes become fields and things
572 like that. We see that up our way in the Wirral. So West Kirkby and around there -
573 used to be harbours there that are now all landlocked virtually. So Parkgate is a
574 good example - and working in local government and the public sector is a bit like
575 that - because in winter we all have storms, demand [for services] goes up then you
576 might have a couple of years with no storm so it booms a bit, but it comes again and
577 you can't predict it and what you do each time if you lose some of your resilience and
578 then it comes back again.

579 **Q. so you lose your resilience because you been battered so many times.**

580 A. Yes - and the ecosystem becomes a bit moribund because it is just hanging on ,
581 and actually what we should do is put some sea defences up and protect the
582 ecosystem that's called investment - because I don't know anybody truthfully now
583 would want to be a DCS,

584 **Q. that the other point the make these posts that difficult that nobody actually**
585 **wants to take them up ?**

586 A. That's it - I mean I've been very lucky in that I had very supportive wife children
587 and friends but it still made me poorly,

588 **Q. it's tough business in terms of stress and emotional strain ?**

589 A. Shockingly tough - stuffing knocked out of you - I'll never get over that. In the last
590 week or so we have a child protection issue here and it was sorted in a matter of

591 minutes, but colleague said to me they saw an expression on my face that they had
592 never seen before - and it was - that was stress. I discussed with my DCS and we
593 managed to sort it out, but it's a bit like post-traumatic stress, it is always with you. I
594 see that not only in leaders but also on the front line and unless that issue can be
595 dealt with we are going to have difficulties in recruiting frontline social workers. If
596 you're leaving university now why would you want to go into social work ?

597 **Q. Well it's not the money is it ? Or even the prestige ? I suppose in a sense it**
598 **is a bit like teaching in that you have to be really driven to do it ? My mum who**
599 **is retired now was a teacher for 30 years and that made me understand how it**
600 **was a vocation and not just a job.**

601 A. You got to be enabled as well. I am married to a teacher but I see the stress in her
602 - she needs noncontact time, time to prepare etc.- people say you get long holidays -
603 but the truth is you're in recovery. You know she can't speak for the first two or three
604 weeks [due to exhaustion] that she has a holiday and then she goes back again. And
605 then she's panicking about GCSE and A-level results and she teaches one of the
606 best schools in the country.

607 A. So there's lots of stuff in there - I have rambled a bit - I am sorry Alex.

608 **Q. well that's fantastic because you've covered everything on my sheet there**
609 **and a whole lot more - my final question and it's going to be my question to**
610 **everybody - I think I know the answer from what you've said to me - if you had**
611 **your time again, would you do it again ?**

612 A. Without a doubt - no hesitation. Absolute privilege. And a great joy - I am the
613 luckiest person in the world.

614 **Q. really grateful to you Sir it has been an absolute pleasure and I really**
615 **appreciate your assistance.**

616 A. You're most welcome Alex and good luck with the project.

Annex 8C - Interview with Chair of Local Strategic Partnership

1 **Q. first of all just in terms of your own position - you have got a view positions**
2 **haven't you ? The portfolio member for communities and partnerships, chair of**
3 **the [REDACTED] local strategic partnership, and chair of the community safety**
4 **board. Lots going on there isn't there ?**

5 A. mmm yes

6 **Q just to get an idea again in terms of motivation do you enjoy anyone of those**
7 **roles particularly more than others what is the thing that you enjoy most about**
8 **it ?**

9 A, don't think I do actually [enjoy any one role more than others] and the day I don't
10 actually enjoy coming through that door will be the day that I don't stay - because I
11 have been a councillor for 29 years. [REDACTED] [Cllr [REDACTED] has served longer for 31
12 years I have been here since 1984 but lost my seat for two years. But I enjoy it all. I
13 have been doing the community safety portfolio for a long time it must be 14 years
14 and of course I was chairman of the West Midlands police authority so they
15 automatically gave me community safety as well. I mean I've done every single area
16 - all the outside bodies everything.

17

18 **Q. really ?**

19

20 A. Yes all of them.

21

22 **Q. so in terms of partnership working then I mean is it fair to say if you look at**
23 **something like the things that confront you today in terms of issues for**
24 **instance I was speaking to your chief executive last week and he told me that**
25 **one of the key issues that you have got [in this borough] is jobs and economic**
26 **regeneration because there are a lot of spin-off benefits from it**

27

28 A. That's right

29

30 **Q. so issues like that or if you look at community safety crime and disorder or**
31 **your look at skills and education - is it fair to say that those things can simply**
32 **not be tackled in isolation by a local authority and that it needs a wider**
33 **community basis to tackle those problems ?**

34

35 A. Well they can be - but we are trying not to do that - that is the whole thing.
36 Partnership working - I mean when I came on in 1984 I sat in this room the police
37 would come they will just listen you could not ask them to do anything, we did mix
38 very much, we hardly went over the road there was at the police meeting at the
39 community board it was quite large so the 20 to 30 people on it, with the police ran it,
40 we didn't talk to health - now - I am chair of the partnership board actually I'm not
41 quite sure how long it's been going probably four years maybe five now.

42

43 **Q as recent as that ?**

44

45 A. Oh yes it all new - partnership working took root for a number of reasons. The first
46 one is financial - it is like joining two companies together. I mean I've just been
47 reading the front of here [pointing to the headline in the ██████████ Post] saying
48 local government region is on the way {making reference to a possible combined
49 authority in the West Midlands] but the government will say that that is because they
50 want to become more effective and efficient - right - now this borough council has
51 been around for a very long time and we are pretty mean and lean in some ways.
52 We've got quite a good track record and as the Chief Executive said absolutely
53 employment is vital but my partnership board and this is just a paper from it
54 [reference to a recent agenda extract presented] I have got representatives from the
55 police and the other top the senior members, of health, I got them from fire and
56 ambulance, education further education and members of the community, meeting, all
57 meeting, about four times a year - we cut it down - we were meeting every other
58 month [so six times a year] and were all working together. So Fire and Police
59 obviously meet quite often as emergency services

60

61 **Q yes....**

62

63 A. But for for example and again with stuff that comes under me - domestic violence
64 - now domestic violence people used tend to think that it used to just be picked up by
65 social workers, wellll now, we have a team, and be got probation - probation is on
66 my group as well - so you get probation you get social workers and police and you
67 get somebody from the police designated just to work on that sort of angle.

68

69 **Q. so it is really bringing everybody in to tackle a particular problem ?**

70

71 A. Absolutely. We are also trying to get communities to work together as well.
72 Because since the last world war the social change has been dramatic, the way of
73 living is changed, both parents often go out were all living pretty much longer and we
74 got an explosion at one end of children coming into the world and immigration
75 whatever reason, so we have to try - so partnership working is a more effective and
76 if you work together it is efficient and as long as they talk to each other which is what
77 we have to do. We also have a drug and alcohol strategy which is underneath the
78 community safety partnership board - so the community safety board and the local
79 strategic partnership board are separate so the latter incorporates all the essential
80 services education health and so on

81

82 **Q which is the overall**

83

84 A. Yes and then we have the community safety partnership board which is
85 concerned with community safety - and what we try to do is link them up as they
86 cross reference sometimes such as the Police Commander comes to both. Our Chief
87 Executive comes to both. The Leader comes to both. And then we have the health
88 and well-being board which is slightly separate which is predominantly the hospitals
89 and the GPs working together. And of council representatives on that, so this is
90 happening all the time - it's getting efficient and effective and cost-effective because
91 in the time I've been here now the government - I know you're not here to talk politics
92 - but I would say because I'm a Conservative

93

94 **Q. don't worry - I always talk politics - it fascinates me anyway...**

95

96 A. I would be saying [making reference to the national political situation] that we
97 were left another five years ago billions of deficit which we haven't had for years.
98 Labour would say it was because international problems with banks and so on, to
99 some point I can understand that that was absolutely true, but even so, we were in
100 the mire - so government started giving local government like us less

101

102 **Q. yes....**

103

104 A. and said you got to do more with less - so this partnership board must have been
105 going for about five years I am not quite sure, because I took over for the last leader,
106 who asked me to do it - so going back to jobs - the only way to get people in work is
107 to keep them out of trouble.

108

109 **Q yes...**

110

111 A. Right

112

113 **Q So it all links in doesnt it ?**

114

115 A. Yes, it all links in. So we have a youth employment section, looking at the young
116 people trying to prevent them getting into difficulty with the law to catch problems
117 early so we got a team who look at that young people - or try to do - and again we
118 try and identify other problems - but partnership is like a marriage almost its give-
119 and-take working together . Government money coming in is less and we've been
120 told to freeze our council tax for four years now and we will probably do it again this
121 year, wages haven't gone up, and as you well know we have the odd union
122 problem at the moment, so people are getting a bit impatient and I would say - as
123 we are politically motivated - as is [redacted] [reference to Cllr [redacted]] - we are both
124 Conservative - I don't know what other people might say - that the government were
125 wrong, to cut back in certain areas - these are political decisions

126

127 **Q yes....**

128

129 A. the what we have to do locally is trying to deal with the amount of cloth we've got
130 and make it work so we have to prioritise for example I look after the charities as well
131 and there are hundreds of them - we give so much - and we have got back
132 tremendously -

133

134 **Q in terms of what - what the council gives charities ?**

135

136 A yes we used to give a lot more out used to be around £80,000 [per annum]
137 something like that I called back about £34,000 of that but in the meantime, the
138 three big charities who help like the Citizens Advice Bureau, Age UK and Dial - a
139 group that look after disabled people have all received council funding we are
140 looking to make charities self-sufficient but they are suffering from overload and say
141 you can cut. because people are getting into debt which citizens advice assist with.

142

143 **Q. I heard this last week about the CAB were the funding gets cut**

144

145 A. that's right yes.. They are invaluable. And there are a lot of good charities around
146 but we have have to be more strict

147

148 **Q. given what you say about tight financial settlements from central**
149 **government do you foresee a situation where local authorities will be**
150 **providing just statutory services ? and to be fair I suspect that whichever**
151 **party is in power the position is going to be something similar because I don't**
152 **see any other party saying much different**

153

154 A. I agree - some say there is not that much between us [the main parties] and the
155 other point is that to an extent on the doorstep they don't trust us. And this is why we
156 get fringe groups coming in like UKIP and the Green party - now the Green party is
157 strong here in fact they are predominantly the opposition. We have only got two
158 Labour seats even though we have got a large area which is socially deprived -

159 [REDACTED] -

160 which is one of the most deprived areas in Europe let alone the UK. But the rest of
161 the borough is thriving. I mean the average house price is over £100,000. I mean

162 my daughter lives up in the Wirral in Wallasey

163

164 **Q right - up on my patch ?**

165

166 A. Yes that's it you see. I mean I paid about £350,000 for my house the country and
167 my council tax is around £2000 whereas for my daughter it is about £1400 so things
168 are different in different places you see... partnership working is important because
169 we are looking at everything [to get best value]. I was talking about finances - I mean
170 the police allocate so much money within the partnership for community safety will
171 try and use that money to save look after [various groups] say by going into schools
172 teaching children how to cross the road etc so that is how partnership works.

173

174 **Q. do you see a situation arising whereas because the financial settlement is**
175 **so tight you know with an ageing population and greater demand for services**
176 **and the resources are getting less and less - do you see a situation arising**
177 **whereby local authorities will be providing just statutory services paired right**
178 **back to the bone as it were ?**

179

180 A. Well it is certainly getting that way - it depends because we could get to this
181 [pointing to the ██████████ Post headlines about combined authorities being
182 needed for economies of scale]. I am on the cabinet there are seven members as
183 you probably know , a leader deputy and several with various portfolios and we are
184 priding ourselves on developing UK central which is the area around the airport and
185 the ██████████ and were the new HS2 rail station will be located and that will have a big
186 impact.

187

188 **Q. yes ██████████ was telling me the other day.....**

189

190 A. We think that we are now working on what we call a garden city - see if we can
191 create a nice area to live, because it is all green belt of course. But the train tracks
192 are going through the middle of it. By creating infrastructure we are creating jobs for
193 people to work on it as well. So as a borough we have one of the lowest
194 unemployment rates in the country apart from our blip at ██████████ [Wood] which

195 has high youth unemployment. We are constantly trying [to improve the situation]
196 with jobs fairs etc. So partnership working is the only way forward well it is working
197 you see.

198

199 **Q. (from Councillor) so how many other authorities have you been to ? two,**
200 **three or four ?**

201

202 A. (from Researcher) Well I am due to go to another authority at [REDACTED] next
203 week so I am comparing two authorities but I am also speaking to people from
204 different organisations as well just to get an idea of how these things fit together.

205

206 A. (from Councillor) I think that all authorities are doing partnership working now

207

208 **Q. I think you're right - what fascinates me about and I think you are right in**
209 **the sense that water this would be considered to be a prosperous borough**
210 **that there are still these pockets of deep seated depravation that you need to**
211 **tackle - and presumably the problems in those sort of areas are really cross-**
212 **cutting problems of education, employment, skills, poor health, crime and**
213 **disorder community safety and they all link in which is why presumably you**
214 **need to tackle lung on a partnership/community basis ?**

215

216 A. We have about 56 priority families and they have particular criteria it could be
217 they have problems with domestic violence or that they are unemployed sickness
218 disability and the other big buzzword now in the last two years is definitely dementia
219 and there are problems around issues of stress and mental health and it is reckoned
220 that one in four people suffer from symptoms of that. Taking mental health, it is
221 reckoned that more and more people are suffering because it really can beat
222 anybody who is having headaches or stress-related job issues or unemployment and
223 Alzheimer's is causing another part of it - but there more recognition of dementia it
224 is not necessarily the over 60s although they predominantly suffer with it but people
225 can get it from the 20s to the 50s and it is an area where partnership working needs
226 to focus upon [given the ageing population]. So where as nationally when I was a
227 youngster the bigger areas of public spending were defence health and education

228 now all the money is health and education and of course were getting pilloried by all
229 those people coming into the country - I mean obviously I am politically motivated but
230 for those people out there, I can understand , I mean I don't think we have gone
231 through a time like it. I have these debates with my family who are in part Labour so
232 we agree to differ on these things but in a sense I think we have become a more
233 selfish world since this is a late 50s early 60s people move about my mother was
234 down in Bournemouth and I moved up here I come from Lancashire as well - I was
235 born in Lytham.

236

237 **Q. Lytham - nice....**

238

239 A until I was 18. And you know the North-South divide is still there and it within
240 boroughs as well and we are trying to deal with it. Now of course they are looking
241 towards HS2 and HS3 to bring up Liverpool and Leeds and so on I am not sure it will
242 make that much difference but I'd like to think so. But you know in in your area at
243 Merseyside is certainly one of the largest areas of unemployment that there is

244

245 **Q. it is and in terms of relative deprivation you know we are certainly in the top**
246 **of that league - that said over the last five years or so ago the Liverpool Local**
247 **Economic Partnership within the Liverpool city region has been one of the**
248 **best in terms of being able to drive regeneration. One of the things that we**
249 **were very lucky with in Liverpool was not only did we get the city of culture**
250 **back in 2008 you know and that really improved the place and it allowed us to**
251 **get infrastructure in and everything else but not only did we get that book**
252 **crucially we got the Liverpool One retail development which was all private**
253 **sector funding which was different to what we had experienced previously and**
254 **the fact that we did that arose from complaints in the retail community that**
255 **retail spend was leaking to neighbouring retail centres such as Chester**
256 **Preston and the Trafford Centre and the fact that they were able to get that**
257 **development through really radically reshaped the retail offer in Liverpool and**
258 **I think now in the National League for shopping areas we have gone from 15th**
259 **position up to 5th. So it's really improved it and the transport has improved**
260 **this as well so of course things are improving all be it from a relatively low**

261 **base.**

262

263 A. Partnership working works there is no doubt about that and it is working.

264

265 **Q. just in terms of your partnership board and thinking about the varied**
266 **membership of it [police probation fire etc] is there a problem in terms of**
267 **managing different organisational cultures do people think differently or does**
268 **it work okay ?**

269

270 A. I think it generally works because we've all got the same problems - less money to
271 do more with.

272

273 **Q and that's the underlying problem ?**

274

275 A. Yes - well it underlies everything . So it's like the college we've got about six
276 sixth form colleges now and of course we've got all the schools out on the road now
277 anyway - it's a simplistic way of looking at it but as a country we just see ourselves in
278 debt it's not only this country because America is having problems with it too and
279 Europe as well of course - and now we've just got this demand for billions to pay to
280 the EU [refers to a demand that the UK pay £2bn extra contribution to EU due to
281 economic growth by 1 December 2014] and the people in the street think and I
282 agree it is just wrong! And countries like Germany and France are given handouts. I
283 mean in this country despite the difficulties we still have a good health service even
284 though it is stretched beyond limits and of course employment within our health
285 service is very mixed ethnicity but in my experience and a lot of my experience is
286 police driven [given my former position of chair of the West Midlands police authority]
287 places are changing very fast I mean where I come from in Lytham I used to be a
288 dormitory town for Manchester now we have Blackpool and I love Blackpool but
289 which now suffers from high crime etc Manchester is now developing because of the
290 airport - it's not the second city because that is [REDACTED] - and you got to
291 remember the manufacturing base I shrunk. I mean Lancashire and Yorkshire were
292 all cotton and wool and my family was in that

293

294 **Q really... ?**

295

296 A. Oh yes but it all went we had a lot of mills in Preston and around and in Yorkshire
297 but the north-west and north-east has never really quite recovered from that whereas
298 [REDACTED] which has been the centre more of cars light engineering and
299 manufacturing has kept up because it's now been doing other forms of
300 manufacturing. [REDACTED] here of course is absolutely the backbone

301

302 **Q yes - your chief executive was telling me about that....**

303

304 A. oh yes - there is no doubt about it I mean if they moved out to become a little
305 village which we originally were of course because actually the borough is made up
306 of little villages - it is actually in the Domesday Book.

307

308 **Q. it is a lovely place though.....**

309

310 A. Oh yes it is - there's no doubt about it

311

312 **Q. even just walking through the town centre there you get the feeling that it's**
313 **a busy bustling place.**

314

315 A. Well when I came on the council the town centre was not pedestrianised. But
316 there again lots of places were the same. So you drove up and down the High
317 Street. So it has all changed radically.

318

319 **Q. in terms of citizen participation and this goes back to what [REDACTED] [Cllr**
320 **[REDACTED] was telling me last week, do you have a problem in terms of getting**
321 **people involved - sort of electors wanting to participate directly or have they**
322 **got other things to do ?**

323

324 A. Yes I think we do [have a problem]. I mean we have the Patient's Participation
325 Group and because all the partners get involved in help that probably has a strong
326 foundation. What you are saying is are we challenged enough - and I don't think we

327 are. I think we have become a bit of a selfish society we just got home from work
328 shut the door look after our children do DIY etc. It is difficult when I was Chair of
329 Adult Social Care, [my attention was drawn to] the shortage of care homes for
330 instance. I was speaking to a lady the other day and she said well as far as I'm
331 concerned when I am old I can go into a care home and I don't expect my family to
332 look after me - I said well I am Northern and I do! Because I did but it's a different
333 way of looking at things. I mean I am a northern bigot I mean really am. It fact of life
334 you know northern people there are no flies on us - it is an absolute fact that we say
335 what we think. I mean some people see this [West Midlands] as the North which is
336 absolute rubbish - the north is Lancashire and Yorkshire and the north-east and
337 Scotland. Here it is different now - people don't pop in any more - or you don't leave
338 your child to be picked up from school by the person next door unless you really
339 know them. One of my functions is to try to improve neighbourliness by bringing
340 people together. We are trying a project at [redacted] [highly socially deprived
341 area] in two streets, where we are posting leaflets to fix up meetings in people's
342 houses to improve neighbourliness because it's all gone. I look after bereavement for
343 example, the crematoria is part of my remit, and the further south you go they are
344 very much more guarded about death. Whereas you know where I came from Mrs
345 Bloggs died next door and everybody was round to help. It's a small thing but it is
346 true. The third out that Lancastrians and Yorkshire people are much more friendly
347 and want to get down to [redacted] they become more guarded. But that's a social
348 thing. The partnership is a way of trying to bring people together and trying to get
349 people involved. Now on this board that I've just told you about that I have, it reflects
350 the fact that the community is changed. So we have the chief executive the leader of
351 the council the police commander Probation other all the top dogs and we have two
352 16-year-olds from local schools you are very articulate and we have our meetings
353 between 4 and 6 PM so as to accommodate them. On the community safety
354 partnership, there are also representatives from all parts of the borough. But the real
355 question is as you say are we getting out there ? And apart from what we consult for
356 publicity on the planning matters for instance, people have other pressures. One of
357 the reasons why people don't mix as much is that we are all sitting in front of
358 computers.

359

360 **Q. Yes indeed - that's true. But the know you even see in workplaces were**
361 **there is increasing reliance upon email. Whereas I would much rather pick up**
362 **the phone to a colleague and have a face-to-face meeting and deal with**
363 **various matters it in one meeting rather than sending emails back and forward.**

364

365 A. Will we used to conduct a lot of business via the virtual meeting [a sort of
366 conference call] of the police committee linking above the Home Office in various
367 locations [London,. Glasgow etc). But you see talking about the workplace, brings us
368 back to the point that employment is essential for good health.

369

370 **Q. and this goes back to what [redacted] [Chief Executive] was telling me last week**
371 **that jobs and driving economic growth is the cornerstone of everything**
372 **because if you can crack that issue and you can generate economic growth**
373 **then an awful lot of other policy agendas are delivered will it in terms of health**
374 **and well-being or reducing crime and disorder and indeed over the longer term**
375 **reducing cost of welfare.**

376

377 A. Trying to get community cohesion is so important if you get more people working
378 together - and the workplace itself is changing - you are you to do a 40 hour week
379 [working as a nurse] and I used to get to Stoke Mandeville hospital at 7:15 AM and
380 not a minute later - but yet things will change and are changing in the workplace I
381 mean lots of people work from home - my daughter works from home –

382

383 **Q. I do it a lot I have done it for the last five years plus.**

384

385 A. Yes my daughter does it - she works full-time from home just coming to the office
386 to pick files up - it worries me on one level because she does not get the socialising.
387 Quite a lot of our staff here at my officers are home on a Friday but they are on call
388 on the end of the phone or email. Only my iPad I just love it I had to use my
389 computer now the only reason use my computer is to print documents out.

390

391 **Q. yes they are very useful**

392

393 A. Only we are almost paperless now in this authority, although we have some way
394 to go. We used to get mail as members every Friday night on the mail run - 51
395 members - now it all been cut out - we do still get some papers but most of it is gone
396 most of it is electronic. To see the community safety stuff all the papers - the agenda,
397 the minutes are all on computer.

398

399 **Q. and just in terms of scrutiny on this partnership was your thoughts on that**
400 **?**

401

402 A. Oh it isn't scrutinised

403

404 A. Well it's probably self scrutinised because we scrutinise each other if you like, to a
405 point.

406

407 **Q, That's interesting...**

408

409 A. Yes

410

411 **Q. presumably though self scrutiny is a sort of discipline on it in the sense that**
412 **if people sit in a meeting and promised to do certain things about the next**
413 **meeting there is a sort of requirement that they have delivered that ?**

414

415 A. Yes. But community safety is different because we can get members of the
416 council attending these meetings and the putting forward questions if they want to.

417

418 **Q. when you look at partnership working and you think about community**
419 **leadership is it fair to say that elected members are the only ones with that**
420 **democratic legitimacy ? Do other partners recognise the mandate that elected**
421 **members have in discharging the community leadership role ?**

422

423 A. I would say that partners do respect it but I wouldn't say that the community did,
424 because of course were touched with politics. But within a lot of it [in terms of
425 community safety] there isn't a great deal of politics. So if you take probation that's

426 been a shakeup and this now operates on a regional basis with our region going up
427 to Staffordshire and Stoke and within that there are people who focus just on those
428 coming out of prison. And then there is the other side of it were probation
429 administers community work [as part of a criminal sentence]. So there are two
430 separate departments within the probation service under the same wider umbrella.
431

432 **Q. it's fascinating..... It really is fascinating to get your insight on this**
433 **because you know you can read books on partnership working but it only**
434 **really when you speak to people to see and to really get a feel for how it plays**
435 **out in practice. And of course how you are trying to get together through**
436 **partnerships to deliver wider policy objectives. And presumably that is**
437 **governed by the wider council community strategy is it ?**
438

439 A. Yes that's right [although the duty to produce these set out in section 4 Local
440 Government Act 2000 is to be abolished]. Under the 2000 act the Cabinet system
441 was introduced replacing committees and you can have up to 12 members of the
442 Cabinet we actually have seven and those cabinet members can actually take
443 decisions. Some said that the previous committee system was fairer because involve
444 more people [i.e. elected members] in decision taking. But before cabinet or
445 individual members make a decision the matter is referred to the scrutiny boards -
446 and of course scrutiny boards are increasingly looking at the policy that is presented
447 to the Cabinet member.
448

449 **Q. just taking the comparison to the previous committee system is there a**
450 **difference in how I hesitate to use the term - backbench members are seen in**
451 **contrast to those actually occupying decision-making roles within Cabinet ?**
452

453 A. Absolutely. Well the theory is that backbenchers actually work in the wards doing
454 all the caseload stuff was scrutinising decision-making [of cabinet]. Then you have a
455 cabinet member who actually takes decisions, was a cabinet consisting of seven
456 members from the ruling party and three members of the opposition take certain
457 decisions whilst other matters are dealt with by full council.
458

459 **Q. does it work better than the committee system ? Because the course of the**
460 **some authorities are returning to that ?**

461

462 A. While not many of go back - its smaller ones I think. Not many cities have. No I do
463 feel for them [backbench members] it isn't the same. But it is no different to
464 government as a unless you are Minister a backbencher does not have that much
465 power. I'm not sure I think scrutiny boards are working well but they're still not
466 working quite as well as they should do in some ways.

467

468 **Q. it is interesting actually because people have told me not from this authority**
469 **but from other authorities and actually seeing the scrutiny people here next**
470 **week - but I'm getting the idea in terms of scrutiny that it's something that still**
471 **needs to be developed and that people are still working out what it needs to do**
472 **how it needs to do it...**

473

474 **Q. Councillor I really appreciate what you've done for me here**

475 A. well, I don't think I've done very much

476

477 **Q. on the contrary - you have given me a real insight into how partnerships**
478 **operate how they work on the ground, what actually happens, who is involved**
479 **and you see you give me an insight into the problems and the challenges and**
480 **it's fascinating.**

481

482 A. A lot of it is about sharing.

483

484 There was then a discussion about agendas and council meetings.

485

486 **Q. and just as a sort of final question really that I'm asking everybody - if you**
487 **had your time again would you do the same ?**

488

489 A. would I come on the council ?

490

491 **Q. yes would you come on the council would you do what you do now ?**

492

493 A. Yes I cover a political family so I am wedded to it a bit. My mother was on the
494 council - my Great Great Grandfather came down with Kier Hardie. He was one of
495 the first five socialist MPs for Blackburn.

496

497 **Q. wow – really ? political history fascinates me....**

498

499 A. And the half my family, from Nelson around there

500

501 **Q. I know Nelson well because I've done a lot of housing regeneration work for**
502 **Pendle Borough Council**

503

504 A. Social housing is another big problem - because successive governments have
505 got rid of housing stock and it's a problem. So what I do it again ? Well I would like to
506 be an MP of course.

507

508 **Q. would you really ?**

509

510 A. Oh yes – I am nearly 70 now it's too late

511

512 **Q. never say never - never too late - so you couldn't be tempted ?**

513

514 A. No it is a young man's sport to a certain extent. I did never want to be an MP
515 initially. When I first went to the council I was married to a consultant surgeon, the
516 children went to boarding school so I had time to do things you know, that doesn't
517 happen so much now but was the case then and I had the time and I saw it as giving
518 service to the community but people don't see it like that anymore.

519

520 **Q. but you do ?**

521

522 A. Oh yes I do...

523

524 **Q. so you still think that there is a public service ethic at work ?**

525

526 A. Yes it is public service - but actually we don't get paid megabucks for it - and
527 actually this authority is very mean - financially probably get just under £7000 a year
528 basic which is nothing

529

530 **Q. I mean you just wouldn't do it for the money would you ?**

531

532 A by comparison to other authorities - cabinet members get extra for that but by
533 comparison to big-city authorities like Liverpool Manchester [REDACTED] with the
534 basic is about 10 to 12,000 we are way behind. You can't get people in all groups of
535 politics to come in because they don't want to do it. It is demanding and as I say I
536 was doing 50 or 60 hours a week as chairman of the police authority so it's almost
537 like a proper job.

538

539 **Q. but it's a public service but that drives you to do it ?**

540

541 A. Well initially yes. What that's how I see it but I think now it's even more as a
542 political motivation. And the community actually think we don't care and we don't
543 bother

544

545 **Q. I was going to say you feel appreciated ?**

546

547 A. No - not really - well depends where I am – sometimes. Just to conclude I would
548 say that partnership working is here to stay.

549

550 **Q. thank you Councillor that has been really enlightening and is very much**
551 **appreciated.**

552

553 Interview ended.

554

555 28 October 2014

Annex 8D - Joint Interview with Elected Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee (SC) & Scrutiny Officer (SO)

1 **Q. so gentleman thank you for taking the time and trouble to assist me this**
2 **afternoon. You will be aware that I have spoken to your chief executive and to**
3 **other colleagues throughout the authority over the last couple of weeks. One**
4 **of the things I am trying to do here is to get away from an academic**
5 **perspective and try to understand from a practitioners point of view how**
6 **scrutiny actually works. Just in terms of your structure - and I have dug out**
7 **your scrutiny procedure rules at 3 o'clock the other morning for bedtime**
8 **reading, as you do - and I see that you've got an overarching management**
9 **committee with various committees on that – do you just want to talk you**
10 **through how it works please ?**

11 A. (SC) as you say OSMB [Overview and Scrutiny Management Board] is the top
12 scrutiny management board as you say - and its members are scrutiny chairs of
13 boards that sit under it. (SO) it is politically balanced as all the scrutiny committees
14 are. It is to provide that management overview of the scrutiny process although it
15 does have a workload itself in terms of partnership/resourcing and corporate issues.
16 But under that there are specific scrutiny boards built around different themes and
17 obviously doing specific pieces of work on those themes. And it seems to work really
18 well. (SC) yes I think it does work well - I have to say - and we do take it seriously.

19 **Q I was going to say that in terms of some of the stuff that I have read**
20 **particularly from the Centre for Public Scrutiny, that was actually a big issue**
21 **about the extent to which authorities actually take scrutiny seriously. But**
22 **you're quite pleased with how it actually runs then ?**

23 A. (SC) well I am very pleased. Usually at the meetings we try to discuss four items
24 so we allow sufficient time to do them justice - but every now and again we have
25 single agenda committees that look at a particular issue in detail. For instance we did
26 HS2 . We do have an HS2 working party which is responsible to the full council. I am
27 a member of that working party. He spent a good half day plus on that one.

28 Witnesses come from HS2, the council's land valuers, and other people and I think it
29 was a very very good [REDACTED] of work that we did that day. (SO) just to enhance on
30 that, a lot of the scrutiny work is done through these main boards, but from time to
31 time it will really 'go to town' on specific topics and it was decided in terms of HS2
32 that it needed a dedicated meeting and actually the first meeting on that was one
33 whole day - the morning was taken up by HS2 to talking about the exponents of the
34 scheme etc, and then in the afternoon it was a listen to community groups.

35 **Q Is that a problem about getting people involved ? Or be quite happy to.....**
36 **?**

37 A. (SC) not in the case of HS2. No we have sufficient number of people at that one -
38 and they also attended the HS2 to working party as well. (SO) but I mean that is an
39 extreme example Alex, to give you another example of boards - Economic
40 Development and Land as it is now, did a dedicated [REDACTED] of work on housing
41 allocation policy. Now in that instance the committee not only took evidence from the
42 council's own officers, but also from the local CAB, a couple of registered social
43 landlord and another organisation whose name escapes me. But hopefully that
44 shows that there is a willingness in scrutiny here to go wider than just within [the
45 council]. And it wants to try to seek out witness testimony from people who have got
46 a genuine interest.

47 **Q. do you generally get cooperation from people ? Because I correct in saying**
48 **that the only people that you can compel to come before you are either**
49 **members of the Cabinet or council officers - is that broadly correct ?**

50 A. (SO) broadly correct - although the legislation was altered in 2006 for police
51 matters and crime and disorder scrutiny to scrutinise partners who were responsible
52 for producing the Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy, they can be required to
53 attend meetings - and equally agencies involved in delivering health services they
54 can be required to attend health scrutiny meetings - but other than that you are right
55 is limited to paid officials of the council or Cabinet members of the authority.

56 **Q. is it true that you can ask other people to attend even though you cannot**
57 **compel them to do so ?**

58 A. (SC) yes you can invite them -and we have - and generally people do come along
59 - in fact we had one session that was in private, so I'll just give you the basics, well
60 we wanted to know about security measures in the town [centre] in the case of
61 emergency and the police came along and they accepted the invitation on the basis
62 that members would like to know certain things. (SO) but I think the housing
63 allocation examples well, gives an example when we extended invitations to wider
64 organisations on that particular subject, and they willingly wanted to engage on it.

65 **Q. from speaking to your Chief Executive one of the things that come across**
66 **to me from that meeting was just how many issues now local authorities are**
67 **expected to deal with that are complicated and linked into other things - so for**
68 **instance we were talking about jobs being a key issue and that links into**
69 **infrastructure, skills housing and that has got a knock on effect to everything**
70 **else. In terms of the role that scrutiny has over wider bodies you're happy are**
71 **you that you can apply scrutiny over that wider partnership model ?**

72 A. (SC) I would say so. I have done this now [chaired the committee] for two years
73 (SO) and I joined in 2006 – (SC) but I think we find that we want information or want
74 a person I can't think of anybody saying I am not coming or anything like that.

75 **Q. that is really encouraging - as things are set at the moment under the 2000**
76 **Act, and awful lot rests of scrutiny doesn't it ? In terms of being able to secure**
77 **accountability and get answers where you need them ?**

78 A. (SO) and even more so these days - because there is the high-profile situation in
79 the health arena arising from Mid Staffs [a reference to Mid Staffs NHS Trust
80 failings]. Were it was shown I think perhaps with some justification that scrutiny
81 [under Staffordshire County Council] could have done a bit more. So scrutiny even
82 more is directed towards taking that wider well-being approach across its area.. You
83 are right though in posing the question that you do because our powers are still
84 limited in some directions. Take for example our partners in delivering the [REDACTED]
85 partnership agenda, the legislation now says we can require them to submit
86 information but we can't require that they attend our meetings. But of the chairman
87 has said we have been quite fortunate in [REDACTED] in that if we have asked partners to
88 attend - touch wood - they have always done so as a matter of goodwill.

89 **Q. that is interesting, given the important position that scrutiny has. What is**
90 **the position in terms of resources from your side ?**

91 A. (SC) I think that within the financial constraints and what have you, bearing in
92 mind that we are a small met [reference to metropolitan borough established under
93 the Local Government Act 1972 and assuming unitary status after the abolition of
94 metropolitan county councils under the Local Government Act 1985] 206,000 is a
95 population now. Yes of course we could do with more or could do better with more or
96 whatever but I think we do a good job with what currently have. We have to operate
97 within the various constraints that we have got. (SO) yes to give you some facts and
98 figures 2.5 FTE staff, supporting the scrutiny function. By that I mean scrutiny officer
99 and Democratic services because we provide a combined role unlike some
100 authorities who at a scrutiny committee will send a scrutiny officer and an officer from
101 Democratic services. So in delivering the scrutiny function we rely quite heavily on
102 officers within the particular departments in terms of providing evidence providing
103 information and providing witness testimony - without their goodwill, although I do
104 appreciate that there are legal powers to involve them, scrutiny would flounder in
105 ████████ So we do have to work quite closely with the Executive, whether that is at
106 the member level or the officer level supporting the Executive. But I think that works
107 well in the sense that there is an open transparent dialogue between the Executive
108 and scrutiny in terms of if we were looking 12 months ahead what are the key issues
109 facing this borough ? [This is a reference to the overview/policy role that scrutiny
110 plays under the Local Government Act 2000]. Or some of the key decisions [as
111 defined by the Local Government Act 2000 as having corporate significance or
112 impact on more than one ward] are going to have to be taken over that 12 month
113 period. So as a result of that dialogue the scrutiny chairmen and the boards will
114 identify the most important topics for scrutiny to be looking at in taking the agenda
115 forward over the next 12 months.

116 **Q. so it all both got a strategic role to it as well as just monitoring and keeping**
117 **an eye on things - it almost got a strategic remit then ?**

118 A. (SC) correct - we can send [as a result of the overview function] recommendations
119 to the Cabinet member to be taken up. We were just doing the Digital Strategy and
120 the board sent a stream of recommendations that have been taken account of.

121 **Q. so would you say them that that sort of [overview] policy function is every**
122 **bit as important as scrutiny of decisions taken day-to-day ?**

123 A. (SO) I would say certainly now at [REDACTED] that is probably what [Scrutiny] is best
124 at. Because there is that dialogue with that discussion and it is all about adding
125 value. The scrutiny members don't want to be doing stuff if at the end of the day it is
126 not going to add value. We still do have holding to account of the executive.
127 Executive members are required twice a year to come for each of the scrutiny
128 boards to explain at the beginning of the year to explain program going forward but
129 also of the end of the year they will be called into the scrutiny board and will be set
130 right Cabinet Member have you achieved X, Y, and Z ? So there is still that holding
131 to account process that takes place. But I think it is fair to say Alex, that the majority
132 of the work of scrutiny is around policy review.

133 **Q. has that changed over the years ? Has that increased as the other side [has**
134 **decreased a bit] or has it always been like that in [REDACTED] ?**

135 A. (SO) I would say since 2006 when I arrived here, it is probably been more
136 predominantly that way [titled towards overview/policy]. I mean if I were to say to
137 Alex of probably until three years ago we didn't even have that executive board
138 members coming to scrutiny that I've just defined for you, so there was even less of
139 a focus on holding to account - but I would say that that is stronger now.

140 **Q. do [executive members] willingly submit to that, come along happily ?**

141 A. (SC) yes they do come along, whether it is happily is another matter [not serious].
142 To be fair they do come along and do give a good presentation of their own
143 particular thing and then [scrutiny] members go and ask the questions - it may be
144 that we are just noting something - or it might be that we make suggestions and
145 suggest 12345 or whatever it happens to be, and that will go off and end up at the
146 Cabinet.

147 **Q. It is very interesting to me that the emphasis is on [overview] policy**
148 **development stuff. That to me is something that is surprising and is**
149 **encouraging from what I have seen at other places. Because it obviously got a**
150 **positive role in terms of policy development. In terms of the skills are**

151 **resources of committee members - do they feel adequately skilled up trained**
152 **and resourced to do what they are there to do ?**

153 A.(SC) I believe so - when members come onto a board perhaps for the first time
154 they have an induction course and then there is continued training which all
155 members will go to even if they've been on the board for three or four years and that
156 is ongoing.(SO) we had refresher training for members last year, which was very
157 watchable scrutiny in its general terms, but as the chairman said the specific
158 induction for new members so that they can be enshrined if you like what scrutiny is
159 all about. But we also endeavour to put on stuff as the need arises and the most
160 recent example I can give to you is members serving on our health scrutiny
161 committee. You're probably aware that there was some new guidance issued on
162 health scrutiny [] and we put on an event which was very well attended, in
163 fact I think only one member of the scrutiny board could not attend. It was put on
164 specifically to inform them of what the new guidance was about.

165 **Q. Do you get many members who want to serve on scrutiny - is it a popular**
166 **thing to want to do ?**

167 A. (SC) well I can only speak from my party but I don't think any legs or arms were
168 broken [laughter] to get people to sit on boards you know. Usually the leader of the
169 day [of a party grouping] will send out before the elections a questionnaire to
170 members which says if you are successful in being elected or re-elected where are
171 your interests ?

172 **Q. I never knew that...**

173 A. (SC) I know they burn the midnight oil - it only really of the new members we tend
174 to think that they need to find the feet and there may be a year or so – well that is
175 how we do it and don't know about anyone else. (SO) I think that's fair to say that
176 that is probably typical of other [party] groups as well. As officers we have recently
177 got a [redacted] of work which emphasised the importance to members of selecting
178 people who have a specific interest or bias towards a particular topic - because in my
179 view and I think this is shared by colleagues it is better to have a member sitting on a
180 board or a task and finish group if they genuinely are interested in that subject. (SC)
181 absolutely. (SO) so yes as the chairman says that is taken account of in the

182 conservative group but across the board there is that sort of consideration and takes
183 place yes.

184 **Q. it's interesting to me that you say an awful lot of this relies upon goodwill,**
185 **of officers of members - that the scrutiny function seems to have a high**
186 **priority placed on it here and seems to be well respected across community**
187 **partners as well. What is the situation in terms of outsourced services ? If you**
188 **get an [external] company providing services - and one of the interesting**
189 **things to me from the discussions I've had over the last week or so, that**
190 **although outsourcing was controversial ideologically at least a national level**
191 **when it was brought in the 1980s, now the ideological issue seems to have**
192 **been stripped away from it and the issue now seems to be how do you get the**
193 **best value and best service one of that is provided in-house or it is outsourced**
194 **- what do you do in scrutiny to deal with that outsourcing issue ? Do you get**
195 **the contractors in - how is it done - what do you do ?**

196 A. (SC) I think we touched on it briefly a few minutes ago - take our highways
197 contract with Amey - now cannot [knock on the door] and say we want you here - we
198 can invite them but we cannot compel them to come before us. (SO) I have never
199 known an instance where a contractor such as Amey have denied a scrutiny board
200 request (SC) very good they are – (SO) we would generally go through the council
201 client officer first because that is where the legal duty lies - because they [the council
202 officer] could be compelled by law to attend and provide information –

203 **Q. so you would save the highways department first look we've got an issue**
204 **here what's happening with it ? And it would only be at that discussion... ?**

205 A. (SO) not necessarily after that - it may be that the two are brought in together - but
206 what I'm saying is from the scrutiny perspective, we would go through the client
207 officer in terms of the wider engagement. But I can't think of an example in ██████████
208 were that request for wider engagement - say a particular agency not turning up -
209 has been declined. I remember one council wanted a water authority to come before
210 it and they refused to do so, so they bought an empty bucket on the seat [laughter].

211 **Q. picture speaks 1000 words doesn't it ?**

212 A. (SO) well exactly - touch wood, we have never been in that scenario – (SC) that’s
213 right - and to bring the up-to-date [reference to a town centre regeneration scheme]
214 this [office] will be a pile of rubble in about 18 months time - the shopping centre is
215 being extended - we have had the people in from lend lease whom we have signed
216 the agreement with now, and we’ve got a couple of pieces of work on that. (SO) as a
217 major project - and I mentioned earlier that OSMB has a handle on strategic
218 corporate issues - that is one, because part of the council resource, in terms of
219 providing staff accommodation will be going. So over an extensive period now the
220 scrutiny board has kept the handle of the development of the project and for various
221 meetings it has had the developer in, [council] appointed architects and other bodies
222 who are stakeholders in the project. So yes, there has never been an instance
223 [where somebody has said] we will attend that meeting.

224 **Q. it is very encouraging to me that you get that level of cooperation from**
225 **contractors. Presumably they look at it on the longer term, wishing to keep the**
226 **contract etc, is that fair to say ?**

227 A. (SC) you are probably right - it could be a bad career move if they didn’t sort of
228 thing. (SO) I think I’m right in saying though Chairman and Alex, that within our
229 contracts there is a clause that requires cooperation with the local authority in terms
230 of attending its meetings if and when required to do so. Now that not only covers
231 scrutiny but also the executive function as well - so if the executive wants to engage
232 with them on a particular subject if there is a type of clause in the contract - but in
233 terms of specific scrutiny powers, there is not the specific legislation in place to
234 support us there may be something in the contract that could get them there anyway.

235 **Q. it is fascinating to me to hear from you gentlemen about how it all works -**
236 **I’m pleased that you are optimistic about the fact that it works and appears to**
237 **work well, is there any way that the function can be improved ?**

238 A. (SC) while I suppose the answer to that is yes - because let’s face it you can
239 always improve something. (SO) well I shall throw one straight at you, in the respect
240 that we have already said that scrutiny here in ██████████ operates in a particular way.
241 And I will be blunt chairman and say on a shoestring – (SC) yes (SO) compared to
242 some other authorities. If you look at ██████████ [City Council] for example they

243 have got a scrutiny team which at the last count was 12 or 15 offices. And that is just
244 scrutiny [i.e. no Democratic Services]. We are 2.5 FTE we don't have a revenue
245 budget so Scrutiny wants to call in an expert witness, I have to go to my manager -
246 Democratic services Manager - to see if there is a budget pot that can be used to call
247 in that particular expert - and I have to say though that every request up to now that
248 has been made, has been met, because it has been recognised that that work has
249 been vital to the work of a particular scrutiny board. But I have to say to you that
250 once scrutiny was introduced back in 2000 it was a course modelled on the
251 Parliamentary select committee process. We are never ever going to be anywhere
252 near [as effective as] that model because we just haven't got the resources to
253 operate in that way, so I have to say to you, if this authority was blessed with more
254 resources, and it was able to divert some of those resources to scrutiny, well then I
255 think yes - we could do an even better job.

256 **Q. I was very surprised - I read the annual report from the Centre for Public**
257 **Scrutiny - and I am actually going to see them in London on Friday - it said that**
258 **the discretionary budget for Overview & Scrutiny - where they exist - is only**
259 **typically £5000-£8000 a year - and I was shocked that it was that low.**

260 A. (SO) you will also read in there that not only have authorities got a shockingly low
261 revenue budget, they have also got a reducing staffing resource as well - given
262 these very tight times I am afraid that one of these areas were local authorities are
263 trimming to the bone. I think you will find in many districts for example now, there is
264 either half a post or one post or even none at all

265 **Q. yes indeed - I have seen it happen....**

266 A. (SO) and it is put in as part of Democratic Services or a policy function or
267 whatever. I believe we are quite fortunate here in that [REDACTED] has had some tight
268 financial times here - and we expect to hit a wall again in 2016 - but in fairness to
269 [REDACTED] it has preserved an element of the scrutiny function, recognising that it does
270 produce value. (SC) yes. (SO) but that could change. (SC) the lack of funds as it
271 were is not through a lack of enthusiasm for scrutiny - I think there is a good
272 enthusiasm for scrutiny - there might not have been in the early days, but there
273 certainly is now.

274 **Q. so in spite of the tight funding situation and the resources you remain**
275 **optimistic in terms of the direction it is going in ?**

276 A. (SO) I certainly think so (SC) I do. (SO) I would have to be honest and say
277 somebody in your position could ask me again, in a couple of years time, and the
278 position may be different of course I am aware that this council in 2016 in terms of its
279 revenue budget, will hit a brick wall - so who knows - there could be something
280 around the corner that would change matters. But as it stands at the moment and
281 certainly in terms of previous brick walls authority has hit

282 **Q. yes - you sort of get used to them don't you ?**

283 A (SO) but it has wanted to preserve scrutiny value that it produces. (SC) we have
284 frozen our council tax for four years now - and at the same time made all the other
285 savings as well how long that will go on for I do not know.

286 **Q. yes - I speak to authorities all over the place now - authorities that I go to**
287 **work at - and increasingly it is difficult trying to deal with these tighter and**
288 **tighter financial settlements you know you do sort of wonder, how far it can**
289 **actually go sometimes before impact on the frontline - it's difficult**

290 A. (SC) if you look at [REDACTED] is affluent - it's Jags, its this its that – until you get to
291 the other side of the A45.

292 **Q. this is what your colleague was telling me last week....**

293 A. (SC) And you go to [REDACTED] [an area of high multiple social deprivation]
294 - take it as its whole - three wards - that was [REDACTED] overspill - but we took it off
295 [REDACTED] [City Council] in 1974, but they are pleased with what [REDACTED] Council
296 does for them.

297 **Q. they are pleased with it ?**

298 A. (SC) we are doing very very good service up there.

299 **Q. and there are lots of challenges up there in terms of what people have told**
300 **me. Employment, health, education, skills, across-the-board ?**

301 A. (SC) yes it is - I mean we get the figures every month for unemployment and it is
302 falling all the time - the odd blip you get it somewhere down here – (SO) if you look
303 at some of the council's priorities for [REDACTED] [which includes [REDACTED]
304 [REDACTED] unemployment is up there - and the fact that it is a scrutiny board –Economic
305 Development & Land that has as a major part of its programme year-on-year to be
306 frank - is to keep a check on progress for [REDACTED]

307 **Q. On a sort of area basis with all the issues linked in ?**

308 A. (SO) I mean that is a good example actually bringing all these subjects together -
309 about the implications of unemployment, skills, welfare generally, health - well that is
310 one area in particular [REDACTED] where there is a consideration collectively of all
311 the issues and in fact there is a task and finish group at the moment looking at areas
312 of deprivation in the south of the borough, not just in the North, because it is
313 recognised that the council cannot lose sight of the fact that it is not only [REDACTED]
314 [REDACTED] that may need some attention. (SC) is in the top 5% of socially deprived
315 areas ? (SO) some parts of [REDACTED] are yes – (SC) we've also got a 15 year
316 area regeneration programme going on up there - I think were at year six or
317 something like that - because it slowed up a bit with the recession. But were getting
318 new houses up there, new schools, and the plate is beginning to improve, because it
319 was late 1960s early 1970s when it was built, and I remember looking at it then -
320 because I worked there - not on the site but in the area, you looked at some of them
321 [housing units] when they were finished and you thought that going to last that long.
322 And subsequently we acquired them, we bulldozed them and building new houses.
323 (SO) I suppose an early example of a sign of success arising from the programme, is
324 that there has been a complete turnaround in terms of educational achievement, and
325 if you look at the stats - the educational stats in [REDACTED] have just gone through
326 the roof.

327 **Q. it is really amazing how all these [public policy] issues linked together -**
328 **housing health skills employment transport...**

329 A.(SC) that's right yes. And every year we produce the annual report – sorry, [REDACTED]
330 [reference to SO] produces the annual report - and it is a review of all the work that
331 the scrutiny boards have been involved in – (SO) it is a published document,

332 available on the website – (SC) it is presented to [full] Council by me and any
333 member of the full council can ask questions either myself or individual board
334 chairman.

335 **Q. well it has been fascinating - gentlemen - it really has - I am really indebted**
336 **to you both for giving me in-depth insight into what happens [with the scrutiny**
337 **process]. I have learned much more from chatting to you guys than I have**
338 **from reading reports etc - it really interesting to get an insight into it,**
339 **interesting to me that you are looking at the overview/policy development**
340 **stuff, the partnership working, really positive as well that you are optimistic**
341 **about it [the operation of scrutiny] notwithstanding the tight financial**
342 **constraints that everybody is operating within. Is there anything else that you**
343 **gentlemen wish to add ? I think we've covered a lot really**

344 A. (SO) well I think we have given you a flavour of how scrutiny operates - there are
345 some areas were bound to be could do better, given a change of circumstances
346 [particularly resources] but final words Chairman, in terms of the scrutiny function in
347 █████ - I think we do punch above our weight (SC) absolutely right - I am sure of it.

348 **Q. thank you gentlemen - really appreciate it - absolutely brilliant.**

Annex 8E - Ward Member Interview

1 **Q. so just some background for you - I work as a local authority lawyer, and I**
2 **get all over the place [country] and I regard it as a privilege to do it, not least**
3 **because I love it - I really do enjoy it - I like working with members, I like**
4 **working with officers - I think it's great. And I got the opportunity to do this**
5 **project as part of my degree studies - doing a research degree in Public**
6 **Administration - so they said to me what do you want to do, so I said local**
7 **authorities it's all I care about - and the thing is that I taught myself local**
8 **government law about 20 years ago when I finished university - I took a year**
9 **out and taught myself and I subsequently qualified as a lawyer and all the rest**
10 **of it - and it's interesting because what you teach yourself you tend to**
11 **remember. So this project partly focuses on the question of how local**
12 **authorities work - what they do, who does what, to try to learn more about that**
13 **in detail [governance] .Because what I found is that you can get academics**
14 **writing stuff - which is useful - but quite often it lacks the practical edge**
15 **particularly if academics have had no practical experience in the field. It is**
16 **quite seldom actually that they go to people [practitioners] and just ask the**
17 **question - what happens - what do you do ? - and this is really what I am trying**
18 **to do, to understand more of what happens, particularly from the point of view**
19 **of elected members. Interestingly I note that you have got the portfolio for**
20 **Highways.**

21 A. Yes Transport and Highways

22 **Q. which must be fun is it ?**

23 A. It is yes

24 **Q. do you enjoy it ?**

25 A. I do yes. I mean I've done various things over the years - I started off as a parish
26 councillor in [REDACTED]

27 **Q. did you really ?**

28 A. Yes - back in 1970 - I got involved with the local theatre group, which I used to
29 manage for them, and a parish councillor rang me up on one night, and said what
30 colour are you ■■■ - so I said blue - she said would you like to get on to the parish
31 council ? So I served on the parish council until 1991.

32 **Q so that most of the new real good grounding in terms of what happens ?**

33 A. Well yes - particularly in the local community because we did a lot as a local
34 council, I've got reservations about the current one and particularly parish councils in
35 urban areas - because you get this double rating issue for starters [a reference to the
36 funding of parish council activities] but I was on there for over 20 years and I was
37 Chair for a couple of years and was chair of the local village ■■■ for about five years
38 - I chaired the finance committee - and then an opportunity arose back in 1984 - I
39 suppose I was a bit naughty really, because the residents Tory councillor moved out
40 of ■■■■■ to live in another part of the borough so I thought I will have a
41 stab at being the candidate. So he got deselected and I got selected.

42 **Q. Right - because of your experience on the parish council you have a profile**
43 **- people knew you were and what you did ?**

44 A yes - but he was the parish councillor as well as a borough councillor - but he had
45 moved out the village - and there was a view amongst the council hierarchy that they
46 wanted members who actually lived within the ward - so I went for it and got it. That
47 was in 1984.

48 **Q. so that's 30 years ?**

49 A. Yes 30 years

50 **Q. wow... Do you feel proud of it ?**

51 A. Yes - course I do - I was leader [of the borough council] for seven years - I ran a
52 minority administration for one year - I was two short of an overall majority –

53 **Q. was that a juggling act ?**

54 A. Yes it was - I knew all the members well anyway - then we got overall control in
55 2000 - so I was leader from 2000 to 2007

56 **Q. so you had overall control from 2000 then ?**

57 A. Yes we lost it again in 2010 to 2011 but there was a Lib/Lab pact we regained
58 control in 2012. I did transport and highways when I stepped down as leader [in
59 2007] until 2010 when I was the opposition spokesman on transport and highways
60 for a year and when we got back in control the lead again me [that portfolio] back
61 again.

62 **Q. there's a lot happening with that - I do highways stuff as a lawyer, because I**
63 **do lots of highways law traffic management and I also deal with it on the basis**
64 **of infrastructure - and it interesting just how highways feeds in to regeneration**
65 **quite often.**

66 A. Well it does - one of the big issues now in my view is that you can't have
67 economic regeneration without the infrastructure and the infrastructure includes
68 highways. And one of the principal things with economic regeneration and
69 redevelopment is that you need to get people from where they live to whether jobs
70 are - and that is a **transport issue** unless it is on the doorstep, which in a lot of
71 cases it isn't - and unless you got the **skills** locally to feed in to what the employers
72 want.

73 **Q. this is interesting - this feeds back to what [redacted] {reference to Chief**
74 **Executive] was telling me earlier in the week - because I said to him you know**
75 **what is the top line issue - what is the thing that as an authority you care about**
76 **most - and he said jobs. - Jobs and economic development - that is the thing**
77 **to sort.**

78 A. Well yes - it is jobs and people at the end of the day. And we are a very diverse
79 borough as well.

80 **Q. yes - go on - tell me more about the borough – please**

81 A. I mean the south of the borough is particularly affluent. We have got very low
82 unemployment levels there at 1 or 2% - but the three northern wards that we have
83 got which is next door to here - between here and [redacted] – where the
84 unemployment is dropping down but it's only down to around 8% and it has been as
85 high as 15% - and there are a lot of unskilled people - it is [redacted] overspill -

86 because 25/30 years ago they built this big [REDACTED] council estate - it was
87 done under [REDACTED] Crossman [reference to the Labour cabinet minister] when he
88 was the Housing minister - and since then, back in 2002 we launched the
89 regeneration of [REDACTED] - which is a transformation programme really - so we
90 aim to get different forms of housing tenure, a mix.

91 **Q. it is very difficult – regeneration - isn't it - because I often think that there**
92 **has got to be that many building blocks in the right place at the right time for it**
93 **to work - because you need housing, transport, skills, everything has got to**
94 **mesh together to work ?**

95 A. Yes that's right - we were lucky as a local authority - we built eight new primary
96 schools under the Building Schools for the Future programme [national programme
97 introduced under the Blair Labour Government] and we rebuilt all of the secondary
98 schools in the north of the borough - and through the regeneration programme we
99 have four more new schools to do, two which are underway, so we will have ten new
100 primary schools in the north of the borough. But we have been badly impacted by the
101 recession - because we started the [REDACTED] transformation programme in
102 2002 but we have had to extend that little, because our contribution to regeneration
103 is land and the impact of the recession meant that land values plummeted.

104 **Q. I think to be honest that there are a lot of local authorities that were in just**
105 **that position. They had investment programmes that were put on hold simply**
106 **because the decline in land values meant that the local authority simply could**
107 **not raise the contribution required to match investment from outside. Values**
108 **had gone right down which meant lots of programmes being placed on hold.**

109 A. So we are slowly transforming the area. We've already opened one new village
110 centre. We are doing another village centre in the north of the borough, which is
111 really about focusing whether facilities - shops , doctors etc can be placed so as to
112 have maximum impact.

113 **Q. and that is really the whole argument in terms of sustainable development**
114 **and building sustainable communities to ensure that these communities are**
115 **able to function and run effectively without having to rely on central areas for**
116 **day-to-day needs.**

117 A. Yes that's right

118 **Q. is really interesting to able to pick your brains on this because I am**
119 **fascinated by it - you think of something like regeneration and there are that**
120 **many strands to it which have to be put in place - but it also highly political -**
121 **and you've got interest of different stakeholders, you got to try and balance**
122 **everything, it's not easy particularly when you've got funding issues and when**
123 **other constraints apply. Just thinking about regeneration and going back to**
124 **the discussion that I had with [redacted] [Chief Executive] earlier in the week - what**
125 **are your thoughts on partnership working in terms of working with the third**
126 **sector working with the private sector - to secure regeneration - what your**
127 **general thoughts on that ?**

128 A. I think that unless we end up with good cooperation between different partners,
129 we are not going to get people on board [in terms of regeneration]. We have got
130 quite good partnership arrangements in [redacted] but my big concern is that the local
131 authority tends to put in most of the finance.

132 **Q. OK and that's a concern when the resource pot is going smaller and smaller**
133 **presumably ?**

134 A. That's right - to get the health authority to put money in, to get the police to put
135 money in, and of course the voluntary sector have got no money have they ? It
136 always seems as though the funder is the local authority and there is going to have
137 to be better cooperation in terms of funding [joint working] say from the police - but
138 there again all their funds are being cut, but unless we can work together we are not
139 going to achieve what we need to achieve

140 **Q. just on that - you talk about your background as a parish councillor in the**
141 **ward councillor and you are obviously very proud of that role - which I think is**
142 **great - because it is elected members that reflect the general will through the**
143 **elective mechanism - there is nothing else in the local system that has got that**
144 **- and do you find that that partners respect that mandate - given the**
145 **community leadership role demands that everybody works together ?**

146 A. I think they do - I'm probably quite parochial but I believe that the ward councillor
147 should live in the ward that they represent - I have got to fellow ward councillors
148 neither of them live in [REDACTED] - they live some way away - I get all the
149 queries.

150 **Q. because you're here ?**

151 A. Yes - people knock on my door, if I go shopping up the road to Morrisons, my wife
152 sometimes says to me where on earth have you been, if I pop into the doctor's
153 surgery or if I ride my bike around the village - I get people stopping me with
154 queries.. I've got lots of roots in the community - I am president of the local theatre
155 group, president of the local cricket sports club, every Wednesday if I can, I go over
156 to the church [REDACTED] and they have a coffee morning for an hour and a half - I go up
157 there with my notebook and pickup queries and to me that the role of the ward
158 councillor. You get involved with your community. I've been at it for a long while and
159 they all know me.

160 **Q. so every trip out to do is half an hour because someone stops you with**
161 **queries ?**

162 A. That's right yes - we've just started a small 1.5 million regeneration scheme up the
163 road here were going to improve the public realm - were going to pedestrianise it.

164 **Q. investment in the public realm is very important isn't it ?**

165 A. Yes – but it raises questions - people are saying to me why you're spending
166 money on a cycleway - I said because we are trying to encourage cycling and
167 walking because we want to improve people's health - and they say it's a waste of
168 public money, but it's not a waste of public money. If we can improve people's health
169 than that is going to improve the local economy.

170 **Q. all these issues [on the public policy agenda] all link in ?**

171 A. They do.

172 **Q. what fascinates me with your comments is that you are clearly wedded to**
173 **this community –**

174 A. Oh yes I am

175 **Q you are clearly wedded to it - you have got a passion for it - I can see that,**
176 **regardless of politics, party politics or anything like that, you have got a**
177 **passion for one thing to do [what you see as] the right thing for the community**
178 **- what is it that actually drives you to do it ? Is it possible to pinpoint why you**
179 **like to do it ?**

180 A. Having got involved from earlier days with local organisations in the village -
181 cricket club or the theatre group - I ran the youth club in the Methodist Church for two
182 or three years, so I get involved with a lot of young people, I trained as an engineer,
183 but I then got working in personnel which involves people. I love dealing with people.
184 And what I try to do in the local area is to maintain the local areas vibrancy and trying
185 to get the community to work together. It is getting more difficult. When I first started
186 there were more people who wanted to get involved in the local community.

187 **Q. Have you noticed a decline in numbers on that ?**

188 A. Yes because the pressure is on - you cannot get the younger people to get
189 involved - they have young families they have got mortgages the bulk going to work.
190 If you go back 30 years more mothers stayed at home to look after children so they
191 were more part of the community - there is more pressure on now - and this
192 technology people are walking around with iPads and iPods - now it's emails. I get a
193 lot of queries across the borough by email, a lot of people know me locally just come
194 and knock on the door - but people don't come and communicate like they used to
195 the art of conversation has gone because of technology. So the community [ethos] is
196 difficult to maintain because people are out at work all the while, and bigger
197 demands from people now - they want everything - when we first got married, we
198 borrowed a settee, we didn't have a television for a few years - now everybody gets
199 everything to start with - all at once and I think that has changed people's
200 perceptions. We used to have about 21 local organisations within [REDACTED] -
201 active ones - if you take a lot you know, the girl guides and Boy Scouts the church,
202 operatic Society, The keep Fit club, the Weight Watchers, you know all of that - we
203 had a fantastic village [REDACTED] we still got it, but it is hardly used any more. There was
204 weddings there every weekend, but people are good deals on hotels don't they ?

205 The local operatic society as it disappeared through lack of support, the local theatre
206 group is still there but is struggling, because people don't go to amateur dramatics
207 like they used to - they will go to the [REDACTED] [REDACTED] or the [REDACTED] or
208 something. So I think it is becoming more difficult and I think that the role of
209 councillors has changed a bit, because non-executive councillors feel disconnected.

210 **Q. Now then - I wanted to ask you about this - because I have read some stuff**
211 **somewhere in the dim and distant past as you do, that sort of said that**
212 **councillors who were not part of the Cabinet felt somehow as if it was a**
213 **second rate role. Is that true ?**

214 A. Yes it is true - we try as an executive to keep the backbenchers involved - but it's
215 not the same. Under the old committee system everybody was involved. I remember
216 the old Public Works Committee which dealt with highways in those days - but they
217 were collective decisions that were taken at a meeting, I'm not saying it was
218 particularly the right way because when you look back it was a rather long-winded
219 way of doing it - you could end up having a protracted debate about where a yellow
220 line was going to go - what doesn't happen anymore - but the public still expect
221 answers of their councillors. A lot of it is now delegated to officers - such as traffic
222 regulation orders. You try to involve your backbenchers in what you are trying to do,
223 and so you do it through a group meeting there is a bit of resentment because it is
224 like them and us.

225 **Q. really - you do sort of get that impression that it is them and us ?**

226 A. Oh yes - I mean under the 2000 Act the idea was for councillors who are not on
227 the executive were to get out there into the community - and I don't really think it's
228 worked. I'm not particularly sure that scrutiny works properly

229 **Q. yes that's another question**

230 A. When I was leader I would have been happier if scrutiny looked at what the
231 council should be doing and put some policy ideas to the executive - to feed into the
232 process - because otherwise scrutiny is just looking at decisions that have already
233 been taken. Were as I would like to see scrutiny before I make a decision. I don't
234 think we want to go back to the old committee system

235 **Q. some authorities have done of course**

236 A. yes I know - but to me it was an inefficient way of doing things. It is much easier
237 now - I had a cabinet meeting yesterday I have the opposition spokesman there are
238 lessons in the end of the day I made the decision [on my highways portfolio area] it is
239 democratic I do take account of what they say but they know full well that I can
240 overrule them any day of the week. And I think some of the backbenchers think the
241 they say things like did you really take notice of what he said etc - I had a request for
242 a pedestrian crossing and I said I will consider it but at the end of the day it will
243 depend on resources and it may be that I cannot provide it. It is getting more and
244 more difficult - with less and less funding you need to prioritise - my biggest fear for
245 the future is always going to simply end up with local authorities just providing
246 statutory services ? And somehow the community is going to have to take on board
247 issues such as libraries, leisure, etc.

248 **Q, so it's a real rethink in terms of what local authorities actually do ?**

249 A. Yes - because of the resource situation - the Chancellor is not going to give any
250 more money is he ? And we know that come 2020 we are going to end up being self-
251 sufficient because we are not going to get any government grant. So the writing is on
252 the wall.

253 **Q. What about 2050 when you have got the Barnett graph of doom, You ageing**
254 **population and increasing demand and a declining income base ?**

255 A. That's right - I mean there is duplication - we have 39 LEPS across the country.
256 We don't need 39. Our LEP - greater [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] - have got some
257 districts in South Staffordshire and from Worcestershire - because it's really the
258 travel to work area - but then there's the Black Country LEP, and there is a Coventry
259 and [REDACTED] LEP. And there are seven metropolitan boroughs in the West
260 Midlands [Wolverhampton, Dudley, Walsall, Sandwell, Coventry, [REDACTED] and
261 [REDACTED] but there are three LEPs covering them. No we have not gone for a
262 combined authority yet - there is pressure for a combined authority - there is a
263 comparison that is drawn between us and Greater Manchester.

264 **Q. Now of course Greater Manchester have gone for it big time**

265 A. but they have got 10 boroughs of about equal standing - we have into the West
266 Midlands - we've got big brother [REDACTED] a little tiny [REDACTED].

267 **Q. Is that really how it is seen ?**

268 A. Yes

269 **Q. you see I tended to compare [REDACTED] / [REDACTED] to Manchester/Stockport]**
270 **was my sort of idea.**

271 A. But there is this fear of big brother [REDACTED] because they are all domineering

272 **Q. In this context were everybody is looking at city deals city regions**
273 **combined authorities....**

274 A. Well we used to have city region type structures - particularly with the RDA
275 [Advantage West Midlands] then the RDA disappeared and we ended up with LEP's.

276 **Q, Well, whilst we are on it , what are your general thoughts on this agenda for**
277 **more devolution - freedoms of flexibilities – etc more power to local authorities**
278 **more freedoms to raise your own finance?**

279 A. Well you see Whitehall releasing the powers and purse strings ?

280 **Q. probably not – No**

281 A. I don't - I really don't they will drip a bit more down, like a dripping tap, but at the
282 end of the day I don't think central government are going to release the purse strings
283 that much. But there again you would have some local authorities who will charge
284 this charge that will expect taxpayers to pay for it. We are practically the lowest
285 council tax of 36 Mets.

286 **Q. is the right ?**

287 A. Yes - we are right down the bottom end - but then again we are the lowest funded
288 from central government as well - if you compare us and [REDACTED] we get one
289 third government grant and to get council tax funding and [REDACTED] is the other
290 way. - Two thirds grant and one third council tax.

291 **Q. I presume that because of the relative prosperity of [REDACTED] ?**

292 A. Well yes - I don't think anybody has ever been able to work up the formula of how
293 they do it –

294 **Q. quite - it's back to our friends in Whitehall again**

295 A. It is

296 **Q. black box you know...**

297 A. It is - I have been to see successive ministers trying to get more money.. One
298 previous leader {Tory} to me went to see ministers to try to get more money and the
299 Tories were in control {at central level as well as local} and it came back on the train
300 with £1 million less. I did do a bit better I did get 90,000 more once when I went to
301 see one of the Labour ministers - but I suppose [with ██████████ it's all to do with
302 social deprivation - I know they've got that - but is it fair that our pupils in terms of
303 education grant get £1000 less per head than they do in ██████████ ? Is that fair
304 when we have ██████████ kids using these schools and they don't bring that
305 funding with them ? It is difficult to know where local government finance is heading
306 something is going to happen because of the Scottish referendum isn't it ?

307 **Q. Yes**

308 **Q. it's definitely on the agenda now - it is being looked at**

309 A. It will be interesting to see what they come up with - about whether Scottish MPs
310 can vote on English matters - you back to that argument again aren't you ?

311 **Q. I think the thing that worries me about it is that if this whole argument about**
312 **Westminster about English MPs and Scottish MPs if it is all reduced to an**
313 **argument around Westminster voting rights, is that going to help anybody who**
314 **feels distant from Whitehall ? Whether it's in ██████████ Liverpool or**
315 **anywhere else ?**

316 A. It's not is it ? No it's not gonna help a person lives across the road is it ?

317 **Q. No**

318 A. and the other problem you've got is that the local population are so disconnected
319 with politics. And they really are. And it's very difficult.

320 **Q. Well this fascinates me you see, because I have always taken an interest in**
321 **it - and I'm just one of these political people - I was sort of told off for**
322 **discussing politics when I was at school for instance, and I've always been**
323 **drawn to it, but you do meet people who say oh I don't care about that –**

324 A. That's right - we go knocking doors and the number of people don't even bother to
325 vote - and you know people died for the bloody vote - excuse my French – and they
326 say well you're all the same. What are you going to do that is different ?

327 **Q. it's an important principle though isn't it - because I suppose if you were**
328 **just looking at efficient service delivery you might be able to let the private**
329 **sector just do the lot - but there is a question of public policy - public policy,**
330 **legitimacy, running these things the public benefit, public value, there is that**
331 **kind of thing that comes into it.**

332 A. Oh yes

333 **Q. and I mean you seem to me to be almost a prime example of that ethic -**
334 **public service ethic - and I right to say that ?**

335 A. I am 75 next birthday and I love it - I do I really do - to the extent somebody parks
336 down there on/by the grass verge on/by the yellow line I go and tell them off but I get
337 insulted. But it matters to me because people are destroying their own environment.

338 **Q. in terms of your ward role - because obviously you have had many roles**
339 **across the authority – leader, cabinet etc....**

340 A. Well I've worked across the region - because I have sat on Centro for transport,
341 on the board for [REDACTED] on behalf of the authority, because we have a
342 share in that –

343 **Q. is that share split between the seven authorities ?**

344 A. Yes - on population basis - are share is 3.5% but for [REDACTED] it is 18%.

345 **Q, because the airport is on your patch isn't it ?**

346 A. Yes it's on our patch - so it is very important to me.

347 **Q, does the airport drive development in terms of investment etc ?**

348 A. Well yes - because it employs with spin offs something like 7000 people and its
349 growing - the airport itself employs about 600 people but with all the commercial
350 businesses supporting it at about 7000. So the spin-offs – the airlines, the retail, the
351 commercial, transport, and its growing and for every 1 million extra passengers we
352 get it creates 5000 jobs.

353 **Q, it is really good to see these assets being used instead of everybody having**
354 **to trundle down to Heathrow when they want a flight**

355 A. Yes - but some people say or what is the local authority doing getting involved in
356 airports - traditionally of course it was owned by West Midlands County Council. So
357 all the local authorities have a 49% total shareholding with the remaining 51% being
358 split between two pension funds one based in Australia and one based in Canada. It
359 works quite well, we get a decent dividend out of it, the airport is expanding, we have
360 just spent £45 million on extending the runway - we had to divert the a A45 road at
361 the end of the runway, and that's all been done - an extra lane has been built around
362 junction six because of traffic congestion - we have had funding the Department of
363 Transport because you're going to have to do we build a bridge that goes over the
364 West Coast mainline. And then of course we have got UK Central which has
365 probably been mentioned to you as well, for one HS2 arrives.

366 **Q, so is HS2 actually coming up here [on your patch] ?**

367 A. Well, yes - the plan is for the interchange station to be by [REDACTED]
368 International - with the airport and the [REDACTED] Yes there is a triangular [REDACTED] of land
369 there about 148 acres, which has got four landowners - [REDACTED] City Council,
370 two private landowners and we have a small land holding there. But we don't want
371 just a bog standard HS2 station - particularly like the one they have got at Ebsfleet
372 for HS1 - which is just like a bloody box.

373 **Q. I have seen it yes**

374 A. We want to create a garden city - but something like 2,500 houses on that site, we
375 want commercial developments on there, we want a people mover from the
376 interchange station to the [REDACTED] and the airport - so we really want to create a

377 completely new infrastructure around there. We just don't want a bog standard
378 station at 6000 surface car park spaces –

379 **Q. so you are trying to take HS2 and integrate it into a wider development ?**

380 A. Yes that's right

381 **Q. of housing, retail, commercial....**

382 A. Yes - and that will create something like 200,000 jobs over the next 30 years [on
383 the wider UK Central project which includes ██████].

384 **Q. 200,000 ?**

385 A. 200,000 jobs

386 **Q. that is worth having isn't it ?**

387 A. Of course

388 **Q. I suppose in a sense it goes back to this question of infrastructure - and**
389 **about the importance of investing in it - I don't know what you think about it**
390 **but I suppose if you think back to governments of all political persuasions -**
391 **they have all neglected the long term over years and years - and with the West**
392 **Coast mainline is jammed –**

393 A. That's right - it can't take any more trains - and one of the biggest issues for
394 infrastructure is how you get more commuter traffic onto it [the west coast mainline]
395 but it's difficult because the intercity trains have preferential times - so you can't get
396 more commuter traffic on it which is what you need - to get people off the roads and
397 onto public transport. In the West Midlands there is a 6% annual growth in rail
398 passengers but bus passengers it stagnant. So you look at how these issues may be
399 sorted out - you've got workplace car park charging, but we would never have that in
400 the West Midlands -you have got congestion charging, you got to give people
401 freedom of choice - but if you can provide a first class integrated public transport
402 system as an alternative you will get people to use it.

403 **Q. it interesting that you say that because the report that was published this**
404 **week [ONEILL: RSA CITY GROWTH COMMISSION 2014] on the city devolution**

405 **issue - was basically saying well okay devolution of powers is fine but the**
406 **game changer for all of it is going to be transport. That is what needs to be**
407 **sorted out [to drive economic growth].**

408 A. Yes and it is about interconnectivity - we are now looking in CENTRO of taking
409 over the London Midland franchise - to run the local trains - Northern Rail are doing a
410 similar thing but equally we have got another project now which is called Midland
411 Connect - where we want to connect transport wise, through railways, the West
412 Midlands and the East Midlands and that is a strategy that we are involved in now as
413 well. And taking over London Midland involves not only the seven Mets but also
414 seven shires. - If we can get that franchise in 2017.

415 **Q. where does London Midland go from - go down to London from here but**
416 **also up to Liverpool as well doesn't it ?**

417 A. It does - but it also covers the local commuter routes [around ██████████]

418 **Q. it is interesting because if you look at some of this stuff, I was looking at**
419 **material on journey times - and journey times between these key centres -**
420 **Manchester to Leeds can take an hour to do 40 miles on a clapped-out train**

421 A. Crazy isn't it ?

422 **Q. Liverpool to Manchester an hour on a clapped-out train, but if you look at**
423 **some of the routes in the South, Paddington to Reading 25 miles you can do it**
424 **in 25 minutes, because the investment is gone into the infrastructure, and it**
425 **hasn't gone into these other places.**

426 A. I mean I've argued against the people who oppose HS2 - because it's not
427 particularly about trying to quicken the speed between London and ██████████ it is
428 what it does - with conductivity - and taking it up north - because you are connecting
429 the north with the South - and that is important.

430 **Q. this is interesting - this is very much the argument that has been put**
431 **forward by people in Manchester.**

432 A. If you look at the south-east - it is overheated isn't it ? And it will be interesting to
433 see what they come out with after the next election but were they are going to put
434 the second runway

435 **Q. quite – well that is another one of these issues which has been left –**

436 A. My bet is that it will either be Heathrow or Gatwick. They are not gonna put it
437 anywhere else. We made a bid in [REDACTED] - we are doing 9 million passengers to
438 [REDACTED] and were probably be doing 12 million by 2020 - but with a new
439 extended runway we could only push 36 million on that runway. So while you want
440 second runway ?

441 **Q. I suppose the issue is though the airport runway issue is like a whole lot of**
442 **other issues that has been left - it's like the charging the social care issue, is**
443 **that the these questions sometimes in the basket is too hard to deal with and**
444 **they all leave it because it is too hard to deal with..**

445 A. That's right politically - it's just unacceptable

446 **Q. it is fascinating to me to just be able to just sort of key into what makes you**
447 **tick as it were... Can I just ask you something.?**

448 A. Of course yes.

449 **Q. is there anything like - and I suspect there isn't - just thinking now about**
450 **your role as a ward councillor in particular - do you have anything like a typical**
451 **day ? Could you give me an idea of what it is like when you get up in the**
452 **mornings and the kind of things that you typically do ?**

453 A. Yes

454 **Q. you see the reason I ask - is that I read all sorts of books and stuff on Public**
455 **Administration, Local Government and the rest of it - and I just wonder**
456 **sometimes just how many people writing these books have gone to people**
457 **who are actually involved and said – oh by the way - what do you actually do ?**
458 **What happens ? Can you give me a pen portrait of what you might do in a**
459 **typical day ?**

460 A. Yes well take Tuesday of this week - usually get up and have breakfast at about 8
461 o'clock 830 and the phone goes there is a lady who had got a housing problem - I
462 am being evicted - so that was the first one - I haven't finished my breakfast - and
463 the leader rings me.....

464 **Q. I am getting the picture.....**

465 A. I go off to a meeting of CENTRO members on putting passengers first - I come
466 back and Janet [my wife] says there are three people you need to ring - the first one
467 a lady can't understand what we are doing over the road with a scheme that started
468 this week, another one that got a problem with parents parking outside the school in
469 the afternoon, we had people driving across the footpath across a zigzag and
470 parking outside the school on the grass verge – what am I going to do about that ? I
471 deal with all those take them on board and say I will try and sort something out - I go
472 up to the Church ■ lady complains you can't read the road signs on the connector
473 road because the trees overhanging the road signs – oh and somebody has put
474 gloss paint on the 50 mph signs - now I find out that that is going to cost £750 to put
475 that right because can't get the gloss paint off, so we have got to order new signs.
476 Wednesday morning - I have a team meeting here every month with the local police,
477 the neighbourhood manager the other two ward councillors - we have got about 15
478 issues to deal with - overhanging trees down the village, we have got an alleyway
479 just across the road here the chap next door keeps it clean, it is now full of dog poo
480 and there is graffiti all over his fence –

481 **Q. it is always those kind of issues causing difficulty isn't it ?**

482 A. Yes

483 **Q. small issues on the grand scale of things but really important to people**
484 **locally,**

485 A. Yes - that's why I became a ward councillor. Now if I ignore those – he who
486 ignores his resident gets kicked up the bum doesn't he ? So I come home and then I
487 got reports to read because I've got meetings the next day - like yesterday for
488 example - we had a decision session [for my Highways portfolio]. So yesterday I had
489 three meetings - I had a meeting with the director responsible for highways in the

490 morning, I had the decision session in the afternoon I came back here than we had
491 the Cabinet meeting last night - we took the cabinet meeting to one of our deprived
492 areas

493 **Q. oh - you take it out and about do you ?**

494 A. Yes we go to different places rather than just sitting in the Council House
495 [reference to Council HQ]

496 **Q. is it well-received ?**

497 A. Well we only had two people last night in the public gallery

498 **Q. I'm the kind of person who will go to that and think oh it's worth going to
499 see that... It's a good idea though to get out and about**

500 A. It lets people see what we're up to rather than just sitting in a committee room at
501 the Council House

502 **Q. it is fascinating to me in terms of what you've described because there is
503 obviously a lot going on and really I suppose it's back to this motivation point
504 – it can't be for the money, as far as I understand it there is nothing in it**

505 A. That's right well I've never done it for the money-

506 **Q. so it must be really because of the public service ethic ?**

507 A. Yes - I mean you like to think that you can make a difference. That is what it's
508 about. I hate people saying to me [REDACTED] is a forgotten part of the borough
509 - it is going down hill you know - there is graffiti everywhere. Now I like to think that I
510 can solve those problems. It's important that we keep the village - I know it's not a
511 village really.....

512 **Q. it is a lovely place**

513 A. I want to see it kept tidy. I want to see the grass cut, I want to see people look at
514 their property.....

515 **Q. so there's a real civic pride there ?**

516 A. Yes

517 **Q. so you got civic pride, you've got the public service ethic, you've got the**
518 **wanting to make a difference and that's really what it's about ?**

519 A. Yes that is really what it's about .There is a chap that lives up the road to doors
520 away, he's all right - but if I see litter I will pick it up - if he sees litter he will kick it
521 down the road because he knows that I will pick it up. Now the guy had a go at me
522 last year because they weren't very happy at the way they were cutting the grass.
523 We had to cut back - we used to cut the grass verges and collect it. Now we have
524 the stop doing that because it saved £170,000. And I cut my own anyway - the chap
525 down the road stopped me and said looked at this grass cutting is terrible - I said
526 well I cut my own and he said well you are a bloody idiot. So I said whilst I am cutting
527 my front lawn I can cut the grass verge.

528 **Q. but maybe though - going back to your earlier point about deciding exactly**
529 **what local authorities of the to do may be people have got to start rethinking**
530 **what they actually do themselves ?**

531 A. Yes can we bring in co-production ? We've got some neighbourhood champions -
532 they are few and far between - but we have got some - and they come out and
533 they've gone and put on protective clothing and taken the graffiti off the cable boxes
534 - that is the sort of thing that we try to encourage. I had a gang a year last February
535 and took an old pub in the northern part of my ward, local residents neighbourhood
536 manager and myself - and we totally tidied up around this pub. I personally collected
537 40 vodka bottles

538 **Q. wow**

539 A. 40 - we filled the skip the rubbish - and that was some council employees like our
540 neighbourhood team, some local residents as volunteers and me as a ward
541 councillor. And people saying what you doing for ■■■ ? I say because we have got to
542 keep the place tidy.

543 **Q. I suppose that that is real community leadership in action... You've got all**
544 **these partners joining together to do it, you are overseeing it as the ward**
545 **councillor, because you want the job done and you want a result.**

546 A. Trying to get a lot of people to do that is hard work - but I do think that that is the
547 way forward - get people to own their community and if you can set the example as a
548 ward councillor, that is why think it's important that you actually live in the ward. I
549 mean I know it is not always possible, because you can't get people volunteer to do
550 it [be ward councillor] .I am 75 next birthday - but I am probably doing 35 hours a
551 week –

552 **Q. you do about 35 hours a week ?**

553 A. I am still governor of the local junior school. I am chairman of the finance
554 committee there, 480 pupils budgets of £1.25 million.

555 **Q. this is great for me - to hear this in action In terms of civic pride, public
556 service ethic, really lived - I mean this is what you do - and this is what gets
557 you up in the morning.....**

558 A. It is - yes the alarm goes off maybe 6:30 AM we have a cup of tea and then down
559 we come - and the phone is going all the while - some people come round and say
560 well he's my councillor with the bloody hell is he ? Well I am often at the meeting in
561 the Council House - well he should be here they say. This one guy calls on the every
562 fortnight on his pushbike, lives on the other side of the village, and he will come here,
563 and he has got a mania about blocked drains - it's amazing what you get involved in
564 - it's quite wide-ranging - and I suppose even more so being responsible for transport
565 and highways because that is really practical to people isn't it ? I think most people
566 take the view that as long as the street is fairly clean, the lights are on and the bins
567 are emptied, they are quite happy - but that is not what it's all about that is part of it

568 **Q. Will that is what the Chief Executive described to me earlier in the week as
569 the day job.....**

570 A. Yes - that's the day job that is....

571 **Q. I thought that was very interesting because I have never heard it described
572 like that - but what he said to me was we got to empty the bins we got a sort
573 the highways out, we've got to run the schools, but the other important thing
574 is in terms of jobs economic development and regeneration - but then what
575 really comes across to me today is that in addition to that you've got this**

576 **community development stuff going you got this community leadership going**
577 **on - real grass roots stuff - linking in with different partners different people**
578 **different groups right across, try to make a difference. And from what you say**
579 **to me that is all bound up with a belief in public service, and it is bound up**
580 **with a real civic pride - you know and people might say that that is from a**
581 **bygone age - it seems that what you're telling me that is pretty much alive and**
582 **well ?**

583 A. Yes - I want the place to look well - you've got to keep [standards] up and that is
584 what it is about to me - and I think to a large extent people appreciate it - they will tell
585 you that much - but we hold monthly surgery at the local library - the three of us
586 [ward members] and we probably get 10 or 12 people at each surgery.

587 **Q. Do people ever tell you about things that go right or is it only about things**
588 **that go wrong ?**

589 A. Very little telling you it is gone right..... I had a lady a fortnight ago she lives at
590 the top end of the village and she rings me up and she said look [redacted] there has been
591 a roadworks side on the grass verge outside of my house for two weeks could you
592 moved please? By the way when I drive to [redacted] there are all these bollards on the
593 road that are left from when you did previous works at Chester Road. So I got them
594 moved. Now I bumped into her last week in Morrisons and said to her by the way
595 Daisy were you pleased that they were removed - oh she says that is what I expect
596 you to do.

597 **Q. So in a way then is it a bit harsh to say it is a thankless task ? Or is it true ?**

598 A. Well it can be thankless from that point of view, but it doesn't bother me –

599 **Q. so it doesn't bother you, because of what drives you ?**

600 A. That's right yes - I've got a role - I was elected to look after the residents of [redacted]
601 [redacted] and that is my first priority - because if I ignore that.... Being purely non-
602 political - there are people here of different political persuasions to me and vote for
603 me purely because I am [redacted] And they've told me that. And some of the come up to
604 me at the election and said look I voted for you but I wouldn't vote for your party
605 nationally. Fair enough.

606 **Q. that is interesting - I have a great regard for elected members, I really do.**
607 **And I have probably worked in about 25 different local authorities - I get all**
608 **over the place - but I have never had as much of an insight into what local**
609 **members do as you have given to me this afternoon. I mean I've had a vague**
610 **idea of what they do, and I've always respected them because I've always**
611 **appreciated that they take an awful lot on – there is a big commitment, there is**
612 **a big job of work to do.**

613 A. When you compare us with a member of Parliament - I am on call 24/7,
614 everybody knows will live they know by email, they know my phone number. Some
615 councillors use the council office as the contact - most of us don't but some of us do,
616 but how can I represent the people who elected me if they can't get hold of me ? I
617 mean Janet criticises me sometimes - she is an amazing wife, so supportive, I
618 couldn't do it without her - she knows who to speak to in the Council house and she
619 gives them the answer.

620 **Q. so it's a team effort ?**

621 A yes - somebody from the last week and said the pedestrian crossing sign as been
622 twisted around, so she rang up the Highway Manager (██████) and I was in the Council
623 House in the afternoon and ██████ said oh you wife has been on and it's been sorted
624 out - but that's how it works with me- sometimes I think it is unfair to my wife
625 because yes we go on holiday but I fit it in - we had six short breaks this year.

626 **Q. just snatching them when you can ?**

627 A. Yes she grabs my diary and said you got nothing on then - so we went to Devon
628 for six nights and that's how we do it. But I enjoy it. Politically at ██████ we get on
629 well cross-party.

630 **Q. this is what I've often found - that at local level there is a lot of cooperation -**
631 **it's not like the Westminster bun fight....**

632 A. Occasionally we might have a sort of `punch-up' in the council chamber and then
633 we will go and have a drink together afterwards - when I was leader the leader of the
634 Labour group used to say to me the thing about you ██████ is you say things but you
635 always got a smile on your face when you say it. That to me is what it's about - if you

636 can't work together, there is no hope. You can have a good dingdong in the chamber
637 - that politics - but at the end of the day were all there for one thing

638 **Q. you see that is what I have always suspected that at a local level that**
639 **members across the board are trying to do the right thing quite often in**
640 **difficult circumstances - you know and you tell me what you do 35 hours a**
641 **week with the assistance of your wife and anything else - and you do that for**
642 **relatively nothing really because of the public service ethic and civic pride.**

643 A. When I started I think we used to get £5 attendance allowance will go into a
644 meeting - money has never come into it with me. I must admit it was very difficult
645 when I was employed as well - with the decline in the engineering industry I got
646 made redundant at 57 - I became leader when I was 60 - as leader we did a lot – we
647 did regeneration, I have a 14,000 name petition for trying to sell a dog exercise area
648 to build a new leisure centre because it was the only way I could fund it. But I got it
649 done because I was determined. The Labour group were against me but I got them
650 on my side.

651 **Q. is it fair to say that when it comes to the well-being of the borough on**
652 **issues such as regeneration - that the hallmark1 is party consensus rather**
653 **than division ?**

654 A. Yes - it wouldn't work otherwise.

655 **Q. so when you go to Whitehall with the begging bowl and say sort it out.....**

656 A. Yes - when I went to Whitehall to get more money I took the other two group
657 leaders with me and we all spoke with one voice. And we told the Minister jointly
658 between us that you are doing us down. We've got role to play and you're not
659 helping us - I did get 90,000 extra at least it was positive - and it put us on the map -
660 we wanted to make it known down in Westminster that we were not a pushover - we
661 matter - our people matter - and if we don't go and champion the views of the people
662 we represent and who is going to ?

663 **Q. well I think this afternoon has been really fascinating - I have never had**
664 **such a detailed insight into what a ward councillor actually does - I've never**
665 **had such an insight into the civic pride that is there, I have never had such an**

666 **insight into the public service ethic that is there - I've always suspected it was**
667 **there, but I've never really got under the skin and understood it - you have**
668 **been able to really bring that to life for me. You know I could pick up half a**
669 **dozen books and read about the role of a ward councillor and I would get**
670 **perhaps next to nothing - but with what you have told me that what drives you**
671 **what the motivation is civic pride, public service ethic, making a difference,**
672 **doing the right thing. You know really just wanting to do what right thing. I**
673 **think it's brilliant - will ask you the final question that I have asked everybody -**
674 **and I suspect I know the answer to this - but if you had your time again with**
675 **you do it again ?**

676 A. Yes course I would.

677 **Q. really grateful to you sir – really appreciate it**

678 A, a pleasure - nice chatting to you Alex and good luck with well a selector the
679 project.