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 9

Volume IV of VIII
# Table of Contents

**Volume IV: Annex 9**

## Case Study 2 Interviews

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Table of Quotations for Analysis</td>
<td>429</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annex 9A - Chief Executive Interview</td>
<td>460</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annex 9B – Council Leader Interview</td>
<td>501</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annex 9C – Head of Partnerships and Democratic Services</td>
<td>575</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annex 9D – Scrutiny Interview</td>
<td>613</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Case Study 2 Interviews

**Table of Quotations for Analysis**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>REF</th>
<th>WHO</th>
<th>THEME REF</th>
<th>THEME</th>
<th>CAT</th>
<th>COMMENT (Page numbers below refer to interview page numbers at the top of each interview)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| A14 | Chief Executive | A         | Economic Growth | Place Shaping | Interviewer: Yes, so in addition, then, to the sort of day job of providing services, in terms of providing the schools, keeping the streets clean, and everything else – in addition to that, is this sort of place-shaping model, isn’t it, in terms of what it is you’re looking to create? (p5)  
Respondent: Yes. I think that’s the most important – local authorities need to be relevant, and have to have impact; otherwise, why are they there, really? ….. (p5) |
| A15 | Chief Executive | A         | Economic Growth | Jobs       | Respondent:……..[with reference to the importance of economic growth]. I think lots of evidence that if you’re in work, it’s better than not being in work; less poverty, but also, generally, more emotional wellbeing; children generally have less mental health issues (p5) |
| A16 | Chief Executive | A         | Economic Growth | Transport  | Interviewer:Just ….. thinking about the question about transport, and this One North business about linking everywhere up and improving connectivity: how important is that….. ? (p29)  
Respondent: Yes, for a number of reasons; partly because that’s what drives jobs, and it’s jobs that drive moving people out of poverty; a good quality of life. We want a vibrant economy here…… so we want a town centre that looks nice, and that people want to come to (p30) |
| A17 | Chief Executive | A         | Economic Growth | Workload   | Interviewer: How much of your time is spent doing sort of economic issues, in terms of regeneration? ……..(p32)  
Respondent: If you asked which of the main service areas I spend most of my
<p>|   A18 | Chief Executive | A | Economic Growth | <strong>time on, then yes (p32)</strong> | Respondent: And if you look at adverts for chief executives’ jobs, it’s fairly standard now that they expect you to have some regeneration background, or some sense of that, and increasingly, you do find very few chief execs can’t operate with some degree of confidence in an economic regeneration environment. It was a big learning curve for me, because I hadn’t to a big extent, but you have to be able to do that. On this combined authority, the way we work is that each chief exec takes a lead on one of the functions, and they’re all economic issues. The chief exec at XXXXX leads on transport. Wakefield leads on skills; XXXXX leads on innovation and ___ [0:37:33], and I lead on infrastructure, which includes housing and broadband, so we have all taken responsibility for some area of the economic devolution argument, for example, and [economic 0:37:44] investment. Now, that basically means we just vaguely keep an eye on it, and everyone else does the work; it doesn’t mean we do a lot of work. I do see it as a key part of my role; getting to know local businesses. I don’t see that as taking over from the role of my business support officers, but I think it’s important that the chief executive is seen as open to business. (p33/34) |
|   A19 | Chief Executive | A | Economic Growth | Jobs | Respondent: Our biggest employer is XXXXX what was XXXXX a crucial relationship for us, because they employ 6,000 people in XXXXX Interviewer: Everybody has been telling me it’s absolutely key, yes. Respondent: So I do make sure that link is to me, and I go to meetings with them, and I know who they are, and that is there. I think there is something about the leader of an organisation, as in a chief executive, rather than a political leader, being business-savvy and understanding that. (p34) |
|   P1  | Chief Executive | P | Interlinked Public Policy | | Interviewer: I suppose, if you think of housing, in a sense, you need to fix that to fix other things. It’s got a knock-on effect, in terms of social care; it’s got a knock-on effect in terms of employment, and I suppose that’s the thing, really, I think that I have learnt over the last couple of weeks, speaking to people: how these things are all linked together. |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Executive</th>
<th>P</th>
<th>Interlinked Public Policy</th>
<th>Synergy</th>
<th>Presence</th>
<th>Joint Working</th>
<th>Health</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>P2</td>
<td>Chief</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>Interlinked Public Policy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P3</td>
<td>Chief</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>Interlinked Public Policy</td>
<td></td>
<td>Quality of Life</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P4</td>
<td>Chief</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>Interlinked Public Policy</td>
<td></td>
<td>Synergy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P5</td>
<td>Chief</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>Interlinked Public Policy</td>
<td></td>
<td>Synergy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B23</td>
<td>Chief</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Joint Working</td>
<td>Presence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B24</td>
<td>Chief</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Joint Working</td>
<td>Porous Boundaries</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B25</td>
<td>Chief</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Joint Working</td>
<td>Health</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B26</td>
<td>Chief</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Joint Working</td>
<td>Health</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executive</td>
<td>Joint Working</td>
<td>Health</td>
<td>Interviewer: Right. (p9)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B27 Chief Executive</td>
<td>B</td>
<td></td>
<td>Respondent: Well, in lots of places, the chair of the Health and Wellbeing Board isn’t even a councillor, or if they are, they’re not me or the leader (p9)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B28 Chief Executive</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Joint Working</td>
<td>Planning Powers</td>
<td>Respondent: ...so most elected members of most local authorities, for example, are very sensitive to any suggestion that the combined authority get planning application powers, because they very much see that as a local issue (p10)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H8 Chief Executive</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>Systems</td>
<td>Respondent: ......I suppose it’s a bit of a glib summary, but it’s partly systems leadership. I think you have to have the skill to operate in a complex environment, so I think that’s partly the skill to understand you can’t be in charge of everything, so it can’t be leadership through command and control, and it can’t necessarily even be leadership through getting easy ownership of a decision. A lot of it is trying to lead across the system, which means you need to be able to influence; you need to be able to negotiate; you need to be able to woo people. (p16).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H9 Chief Executive</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>Soft Skills</td>
<td>......I think internally, it’s about: how do you inspire people? How do you give them a sense of what the future is; what we’re trying to achieve? How do you keep people focused on, “It’s about impact, not about process,” (p17/18).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H10 Chief Executive</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>Systems</td>
<td>...... A lot of it, I think is about having a net of tentacles’ (p19).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C13 Chief Executive</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>Quality Service</td>
<td>Challenge</td>
<td>Respondent:...........I’m a pragmatist think sometimes it’s appropriate, sometimes it isn’t........... in my own opinion [outsourcing] has driven service improvement. Certainly, adult social care, I think, has vastly improved once we started using external companies, because it’s a – (p24)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Interviewer: It’s a challenge. (p24)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table of Quotations for Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ID</th>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Quote</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C14</td>
<td>Chief Executive</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>Quality Service</td>
<td>Pragmatism</td>
<td>Respondent....... I’m a pragmatist; I think it’s a mix. I think it is still ideological, and maybe that’s more noticeable here, where it’s no overall control, so you see the political party differences much more strongly. (p24/25)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C15</td>
<td>Chief Executive</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>Quality Service</td>
<td>Quality</td>
<td>Respondent ........ I think the challenge for local authorities is less around contract management than quality management. (p28)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G11</td>
<td>Chief Executive</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>Motivation</td>
<td>Socially Valuable</td>
<td>Respondent I’ve never worked in the private sector. I think I do like being in something that I feel is a socially valuable job in that sense. (p36)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G12</td>
<td>Chief Executive</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>Motivation</td>
<td>Justice</td>
<td>......the sense of being able to influence where I can see examples of social injustice. The chance to make a difference: that is a motivator for me, and I like the problem-solving side. I like being in a job where you have to deal with lots of problems all the time (p36)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G13</td>
<td>Chief Executive</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>Motivation</td>
<td>Variety</td>
<td>...... I like broad and shallow. I don’t actually understand anything in any detail, but I do an awful lot of different things, and for me, that suits me better than had I become a very good lawyer, for example, where I probably would have understood a lot of stuff in depth (p37)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G14</td>
<td>Chief Executive</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>Motivation</td>
<td>Variety</td>
<td>Respondent: And increasingly, and I think that is partly, frequently, my message to staff, is that more and more of us have to be generic. I think there are fewer and fewer narrow professionalisms, and if you look at all the restructures that have been done, most places have gone from eight or nine directors to three or four. It’s a standing joke here; the heads of service, which is our equivalent of assistant directors, how long can a job title get? Because every time we restructure, we just stuck another function on somebody, so people are now running functions they probably didn’t know existed five years ago. So I think we’re all becoming increasingly broad and shallow, and I think a lot of people at the senior level of government are probably motivated by that mix of liking to do lots of different things, but also liking to feel they’re making a difference in the world somewhere. (p38)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E9</td>
<td>Chief Executive</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>Appetite to Scrutinise</td>
<td></td>
<td>Interviewer....... do you find that there’s an increasing appetite amongst members to get a democratic grip on some of these sort of unelected bodies? In terms of scrutiny, is there a wish, is there an appetite amongst politicians to widen the remit and try to make these things accountable? (p12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E10</td>
<td>Chief Executive</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>Appetite to Scrutinise</td>
<td>Unelected Bodies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Respondent: I think members get frustrated with organisations that are not democratically accountable, but have a significant impact on place, because the politicians get blamed for it all, so if they can’t have any control over it, and there isn’t that accountability. (p12)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>E11</th>
<th>Chief Executive</th>
<th>E</th>
<th>Appetite to Scrutinise</th>
<th>Political Blame</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>...............we’ve got issues about the hospital here. They certainly find it frustrating that, potentially, we could see significant restructuring of the hospital and various other services, and there is no political involvement in that at all (p13).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>E12</th>
<th>Chief Executive</th>
<th>E</th>
<th>Appetite to Scrutinise</th>
<th>Political Blame</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Interviewer: I suppose the other thing about it, as well, just thinking about this thing about place, and about place-shaping, and sorting that out, the thing is, is that I suppose you’ve got so many things these days; the global economy, where firms can make decisions on the other side of the world and it effects what happens here, whereas people are here for keeps, aren’t they? And the decisions that are made; they’ve got to live with them and they’ve got to defend them. Respondent: Yes, yes. Interviewer: I think it’s that local connection, sometimes, [that sort of drives 0:45:30]. Respondent: Yes. I think that’s the other thing about local democracy, as well. You do get people moving in and out, and becoming politicians, but generally, most politicians are in the same place most of their political career at a local level. I think, whilst you never know who’s going to get re-elected, and you never know how long they’re going to be around, generally, they live here, and they have to live with the consequences of their decision, and they have to live with the consequences of their decision on the doorstep, over many years. There is an element, in a place like this, where a lot of the staff live here, as well, but realistically, at a senior level, you get a turnover, because people are ambitious; there’s only ever one chief exec and four directors, so eventually, if anyone else wants to be chief exec, they’re either going to kill me or move, aren’t they? (p40/41)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


<p>| Q1 | Council Leader | Q | Politics is Central | Elections | Respondent: and what pleases me the most as a conservative, it was a by-election; I’d lost in the May election in 1990 and then I won the by-election off Labour in the year that the poll tax was introduced. (p2) |
| Q2 | Council Leader | Q | Politics is Central | Elections | Respondent: it was the fifth time I’d fought that ward. Yes. (p2) |
| Q3 | Council Leader | Q | Politics is Central | Political Beliefs | Respondent: Well I sort of first got involved in politics because I wanted to make a difference and change things for the good, for the people of XXXXXX basically, so it’s that really and with my political beliefs…,(p9) |
| Q4 | Council Leader | Q | Politics is Central | Budget | ‘……Yes, in 2008 I became leader,………. I’d done the Conservative budget for a number of years, and I’ve sort of won the argument within the group that we can look to reduce…….The first year that I got real control of our budget process and I’d got the groups backing to do it, I reduced that to 2.5%. The following year I cut it down to an increase of 1.7% and the following year it was a 1% decrease, and I think that’s the first decrease in local taxation that has ever occurred. (p18) |
| Q5 | Council Leader | Q | Politics is Central | Budget | Respondent: ‘…..[with reference to priorities] ……. I would suggest that it’s putting together a balanced budget for next year’s budget process, and sort of get to grips with the savings that we need to make, which for XXXXXX is going to be £12.2 million we need to save (p11). |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q6</th>
<th>Council Leader</th>
<th>Q</th>
<th>Politics is Central</th>
<th>Budget</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>politics is central</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Q</td>
<td></td>
<td>Politics is Central</td>
<td>Budget</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Q</td>
<td></td>
<td>Politics is Central</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Q</td>
<td></td>
<td>Politics is Central</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Q</td>
<td></td>
<td>Politics is Central</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Respondent: Yes but something which you talked about earlier is that I’ve always maintained that we could and should do a lot more in joint services with other councils, and we can reduce our costs that way without affecting the frontline services.
Interviewer: Yes.
Respondent: A few years ago with the conservative group leader in XXXXX we put a scheme together where we going to share a senior management team, which would run both councils, and that – just in the...
Interviewer: What sort of joint chief executives and...
Respondent: Yes, and senior management; the whole senior management structure would have been shared, you know, and we would still have sort of management at a lower level, in whichever...
Interviewer: Yes.
Respondent: And they’d be split sort of thing; the two councils would be run totally separately but we’d just have an agreement that the chief exec. would spend part of the time in XXXXX and part in XXXXX and that was because we were both in opposition at the time, but our finance offices got together and they estimated that within two years, after sort of putting it in practice and settling down etc.
Interviewer: Yes, so for it to bed in, yes.
Respondent: That would have saved £2.5 million and by further integration there would have been much greater savings as it was further integrated in.
Interviewer: Yes, and presumably part of the motivation behind that is to do as much as you can in terms of shared services for sort of backup stuff, back office stuff.
Respondent: Back office stuff, yes. (p13/14)

Q7 Council Leader Q Politics is Central Budget

Respondent: And I’d have gone then, through to the middle management and made reductions which I think I’d sort of set in place how to do that, and better procurement things which we did, which I like to think helped the liberal – first the liberal and then the Labour leadership in years since then. (p16)
<p>| Q8 | Council Leader | Q | Politics is Central | Political Beliefs | Respondent: ...the vast majority of the work is done with cross party agreement, you know, I would say 80/85% of the work a council does is agreed upon by all political parties. It’s only the sort of last 15/20% where there’s disagreement, and that’s all we read about in the paper, it doesn’t sort of sell that. (p9) |
| Q9 | Council Leader | Q | Politics is Central | Political Beliefs | Respondent: Well I think the major thing about XXXXXX I would say, is that we don’t want to lose XXXXXX Banking Group. Interviewer: Okay. Respondent: It’s one of the headquarters in XXXXXX one of their three headquarters, and last time I was leader, it was under serious consideration. Interviewer: Because that’s former XXXXXX isn’t it? Respondent: Yes, the XXXXXX Building Society, so I fought very hard to help with other people and it was a Labour government at the time and the minister came up on a regular basis with us to talk with XXXXXX Banking Group to try and ensure that we retained that presence in XXXXXX because that would have major impact on our local economy. They employ more than 5,000 people in XXXXXX (p41/42) |
| A20 | Council Leader | A | Economic Growth | Skills | Respondent......I think people are coming round to [the idea that] apprenticeships are the way forward’ (p58). |
| A21 | Council Leader | A | Economic Growth | Transport | Respondent ...... if you were building a factory to manufacture widgets which you’re going to send throughout the UK and possibly Europe, do you want to invest in a place in XXXXXX which it’s going to take you at least an hour to get to the nearest motorway no matter which way you go....? (p39) |
| A22 | Council Leader | A | Economic Growth | Transport | Interviewer: So if that link could be improved and you could improve those journey times to Manchester, presumably that would be a real boost for Calderdale? (p27) |
| A23 | Council Leader | A | Economic Growth | Transport | Respondent: Oh yes, and with the changes in the hub in Manchester, we should be able to get direct links to the Manchester airport, which would be excellent. (p27) |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Council</th>
<th>Economic Growth</th>
<th>Jobs</th>
<th>Interviewer: Yes, so presumably, I mean just thinking about that issue about inward investment, I mean presumably – what happens? If you get a company that wants to come to XXXXXX and they give you a ring and say, “Councillor look, I’m looking at bringing this here, but I need X, Y, Z”, I mean what happens then? Do you then sort of start having a think and having a chat with the economic development people about, have we got the site? Have we got the skills? Just give me a flavour. Respondent: Well we like to be a bit more proactive because we try and identify sites which are going to meet the criteria of new businesses. (p38)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A24</td>
<td>Leader</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Economic Growth</td>
<td>Jobs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A25</td>
<td>Council</td>
<td>Leader</td>
<td>Economic Growth</td>
<td>Jobs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Table of Quotations for Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quotation</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A27</td>
<td>Council Leader</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A28</td>
<td>Council Leader</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A29</td>
<td>Council Leader</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A30</td>
<td>Council Leader</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Interviewer: Is that right?
Respondent: And I’m assured that whenever work was done on the track, they dropped the track so that there was headroom under the bridges for electrification, and when Summit tunnel was closed, I don’t know if you remember that. Interviewer: Yes. Respondent: There was a fire and it was closed for about two years in the late 90’s, I’m told they also dropped the track there as well for possible future electrification, because they had to relay the track throughout the tunnel, and so they reduced the — they increased the depth of the tunnel so that it could take electrification. Interviewer: So what’s the hold up on that? Is it just the money to do it? Respondent: It’s the money to do it, yes. Interviewer: The money to do it. Respondent: A few weeks ago, I speak to — they had a meeting in Leeds, an announcement where the prime minister came up, and Patrick McLoughlin. Interviewer: Yes, when he got attacked by the [0:28:49]. Respondent: Yes, the secretary of state for transport came up. Interviewer: Yes. Respondent: And as I was leaving — I always go across to Leeds on the train, and I was leading to come back to XXXXX on the train and Patrick McLoughlin just stopped me as I went out of the door and asked me if I knew the way to the railway station. That was a bad mistake of his, because he had a 10 minute walk with an ear bashing about the need for — and I got a promise from him that he would come up and have a meeting.
<p>| Interviewer: Really? | Respondent: And he’s coming on Monday. | Interviewer: Ah well done. I mean presumably sorting that issue out is probably important, but one of the things that XXXXXX said to me on Monday was that – because I was asking about these travel to work areas in terms of how XXXXXX sits with that, and he was saying to me “Well you know, it’s primarily Leeds and Bradford” and I said, “Well what about Manchester?” He said, “Oh it’s difficult because of the lakes.” | Respondent: Yes but people do live in XXXXXX and travel to Manchester. | Interviewer: Yes. | Respondent: Now they tend to earn good salaries. | Interviewer: Right. | Respondent: And I think it’s a real plus for XXXXXX because a proportion of those good salaries are spent in the economy in XXXXXX. | Interviewer: Yes. | Respondent: You know they come back to XXXXXX and go to the excellent eating places we have. | Interviewer: Yes. | Respondent: The children spend their pocket money etc. in the local community. | Interviewer: Yes, so it all comes back into XXXXXX. | Respondent: Yes. | Interviewer: So if that link could be improved and you could improve those journey times to Manchester, presumably that would be a real boost for XXXXXX. |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>A31</strong></td>
<td><strong>Council Leader</strong></td>
<td><strong>A</strong></td>
<td><strong>Economic Growth</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Transport</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent: Oh yes, and with the changes in the hub in Manchester, we should be able to get direct links to the Manchester airport, which would be excellent.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer: Oh right, yes.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent: And if we can’t get a direct link at least we could go to Victoria from XXXXXX and just swap platforms and get on a train to the airport, rather than having to go to Piccadilly.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer: Yes, because this is the thing, I mean transport is interesting because it shows, I suppose, the effect of sort of needing the thing to be integrated.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent: Yes. (p22-27)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent: Yes but people do live in XXXXXX and travel to Manchester.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer: Yes.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent: Now they tend to earn good salaries.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer: Right.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent: And I think it’s a real plus for XXXXXX because a proportion of those good salaries are spent in the economy in XXXXXX</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer: Yes.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent: You know they come back to XXXXXX and go to the excellent eating places we have. (p25/26)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A32</td>
<td>Council Leader</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Economic Growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table of Quotations for Analysis</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<p>| Interviewer: Okay. Respondent: You know, you can follow the lines, if you look at that route, I think that is a strong possibility of a route. Interviewer: Would that go up sort of round Keighley area and up towards Skipton? Respondent: Yes, somewhere round about that area, up above Keighley you know. I’m just trying to think, is it Steeton, that sort of area? Interviewer: I know, yes. Respondent: Come across to that area and across to Leeds sort of thing, following the – I think you’d come up the Ribble Valley and down the Aire Valley. Interviewer: I know where you mean, yes. Respondent: That sort of thing, and because you’re in the valley sort of thing, I just think that that is... Interviewer: That sounds like the best route. Respondent: A good route for it because it wouldn’t be as expensive. Interviewer: What did you think about the – I mean just whilst we’re on transport, because it fascinates me, I mean it’s got that many links into everything else, in terms of the One North proposals to try to – obviously George Osborne has been saying what he’s said on that, there are issues about trying to improve the connectivity across the Pennines and trying to improve the links for freight as well from Liverpool to Hull, I mean what’s your thoughts generally on that? Respondent: Well I always think that High Speed 3 should be Liverpool and major cities through to Hull and up to Newcastle, and join the lot, so I’m fully... Interviewer: Yes, it doesn’t work otherwise does it? Respondent: No, and that – we could really make a major impact on the northern economy and create the jobs which are needed. Interviewer: Yes. (p27-30) |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Role and Service Area</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Extract</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A33</td>
<td>Council Leader</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Economic Growth</td>
<td>Place Shaping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Interviewer: Yes, what about tourism here, I mean as I say, you know, I've come here for years, I've always loved it; what's the – how big is tourism in terms of your economy here and what you do? Respondent: I can't give you any exact figures off the top of my head, but it is important; there are quite a lot of people employed in tourism of one sort or another, and we have some real gems. Hopefully down by the railway station we've got Eureka, the children's museum. (p44-45)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A34</td>
<td>Council Leader</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Economic Growth</td>
<td>Place Shaping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Respondent: You know, our town centre, I think is absolutely superb. Interviewer: It is, and the other thing that strikes me, just sort of walking round, not only XXXXXX but of course XXXXXX there's a lot happened in XXXXXX in terms of the investment that's gone into that, and there's just a real buzz about those places. Respondent: Yes. Interviewer: You know there really is. You see people going in and out and it's busy. It's absolutely brilliant. (p50)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R1</td>
<td>Head of Democratic and Partnership Services</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>Care Services</td>
<td>Alex: Just thinking about XXXXXX generally, what is the top priority here? ....... Is it fair to say top priority is jobs and economic regeneration? (p2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R2</td>
<td>Head of Democratic and Partnership Services</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>Care Services</td>
<td>OFSTED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>XXX: I think it is up there, but I would probably put alongside that looking after the vulnerable members of the community, both adult and children. You may know that we are in intervention at the moment as far as OFSTED is concerned. (p3) Alex: I didn't know that. (p3) XXX: Not entirely positive reports on safeguarding of children. We are hoping to come out of that as the result of the next inspection which is imminent, but we have been under that process for the last three years. (p3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R3</td>
<td>Head of Democratic and Partnership Services</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>Care Services</td>
<td>OFSTED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R4</td>
<td>Head of Democratic and Partnership Services</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>Care Services</td>
<td>OFSTED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R5</td>
<td>Head of Democratic and Partnership Services</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>Care Services</td>
<td>Staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R6</td>
<td>Head of Democratic and Partnership Services</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>Care Services</td>
<td>Staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R7</td>
<td>Head of Democratic and Partnership Services</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>Care Services</td>
<td>Alex: Presumably, given the tight financial settlement that everybody is working within, I suppose there is a question whether down the line you will get local authorities only delivering statutory services and nothing else? XXX: I forget the graph of doom that was being talked about. Alex: The graph of doom yes. XXX: Was one that depicted the spend on just adult social services alone, because of the increasing population, expanding to take up the whole of the predicted budget that was available for local authorities. Well I think that has been criticised to some extent for the way in which it was depicted, because it won’t happen that way. But there is an element of truth in that, that because we have a population that we know is going to get older and increase and with the increases in medical help, people are living longer and living with more problems unfortunately. The money is going to have to come from somewhere, so there are some very, very difficult questions to be answered. Your generation Nancy will inherit a great deal of the problems that are currently there and I have got two sons who are not much older than you and I do worry about what we are handing on to you, because, not to worry… (p24/25)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S1</td>
<td>Head of Democratic and Partnership Services</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>Public Health</td>
<td>XXX: I was only talking about this this morning, that trying to embed the public health ethos across all aspects of the authority is difficult. Because it is a relatively new concept for us to have public health come back into the responsibility of local government. (p9/10).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S2</td>
<td>Head of Democratic and Partnership Services</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>Public Health</td>
<td>School Transport …..the buses within XXXXX are schoolchildren, going back and forth to school. How do we make sure that that is something that results in there being some health benefit to children, rather than having them constantly on buses, is there a better way of doing it? Can they cycle to school? Can they walk to school? (p10).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| S3 | Head of Democratic and Partnership Services | S | Public Health | Health | "......if we can do things at the front end of the system, again going back to children, preventing childhood obesity, but also stopping smoking for example, that is our responsibility within the local authority is to try to have an impact on that. Teenage pregnancies, all of those things, if we don’t spend the money at the front end, the preventative stuff, we are just storing up problems for ourselves further down the track. (p11)."
 |
| D10 | Head of Democratic and Partnership Services | D | Reshaping Governance | | "XXX'I was heavily involved in the work behind setting up the combined authority, advising not just XXXXXX but also our West Yorkshire partners. (p12)"
 |
| D11 | Head of Democratic and Partnership Services | D | Reshaping Governance | | "I attended a number of discussions about what the combined authority (a) was going to be empowered to undertake initially, but what it was going to have to be prepared to contemplate undertaking as part of its ethos for being set up, years down the track.(p12)"
 |
| D12 | Head of Democratic and Partnership Services | D | Reshaping Governance | | "One of the things that is within the powers of the combined authority, which is not yet fully understood, is economic regeneration and development, but also planning.(p13)"
 |
| D13 | Head of Democratic and Partnership Services | D | Reshaping Governance | | "I think that the way in which the combined authorities will work, is that they will take on a greater regional responsibility for the regional planning that needs to take place. I am talking not just about planning issues themselves, but about transport infrastructure’. (p12/13)"
 |
| D14 | Head of Democratic and Partnership Services | D | Reshaping Governance | | "Alex:Presumably if you get that you have then got the issue of, “How do we skill people up to take these jobs?” (p21)"
<p>| | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>D15</strong></td>
<td><strong>Head of Democratic and Partnership Services</strong></td>
<td>D</td>
<td>Reshaping Governance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>XXX: Well there is that, and also where do you put the people by way of housing? Because XXXXX it’s geographical, topographical profile, it is not brilliant. You are talking about the further up the manor you go, you have got valleys which are difficult to place any form of significant levels of housing. (p21)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>D16</strong></td>
<td><strong>Head of Democratic and Partnership Services</strong></td>
<td>D</td>
<td>Reshaping Governance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>So there are all those different issues at play. (p21)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>D17</strong></td>
<td><strong>Head of Democratic and Partnership Services</strong></td>
<td>D</td>
<td>Reshaping Governance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Alex: What is your travel to work area like at Calderdale? Does it rely on Greater Manchester? Or is it Leeds? What is the pattern? (p21)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>D18</strong></td>
<td><strong>Head of Democratic and Partnership Services</strong></td>
<td>D</td>
<td>Reshaping Governance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>XXX: It is coming in more from Leeds than from Manchester. I don’t think Manchester is something that feeds into us a great deal, because it is not that easy to get to. If you are travelling by car it is a nightmare on the M62. (p22)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>D19</strong></td>
<td><strong>Head of Democratic and Partnership Services</strong></td>
<td>D</td>
<td>Reshaping Governance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The rail link is not brilliant, so I think we are not a massive inward attractor of commuters. A lot of people travel out from XXXXX to go and work elsewhere. So the more we can improve our transport the better we can be by way of attracting people to come into XXXXX but we have to give them jobs to do that. (p22)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>D20</strong></td>
<td><strong>Head of Democratic and Partnership Services</strong></td>
<td>D</td>
<td>Reshaping Governance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>XXX: It will bypass us to an extent, unless we get our own upgrade as part of our electrification of the XXXXX it’s called. So we would need that on the back of HS2. (p23)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ID</td>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Role</td>
<td>Quotation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D21</td>
<td>Head of Democratic and Partnership Services</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>Alex: And that HS3 that was being talked about, about a new line across the Pennines, that wasn’t going to come to XXXXXX at all presumably? (p23)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D22</td>
<td>Head of Democratic and Partnership Services</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>XXX: No. (p23)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D23</td>
<td>Head of Democratic and Partnership Services</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>Alex: So the crucial thing is to upgrade that XXXXXX line? (p23)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D24</td>
<td>Head of Democratic and Partnership Services</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>XXX: Absolutely. (p23)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D25</td>
<td>Head of Democratic and Partnership Services</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>XXX: I know the XXXXXX members, it probably stands true for all of the West Yorkshire members, there was just no appetite at this stage for them to give up their ability to determine what happens within their own region on planning issues (p15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D26</td>
<td>Head of Democratic and Partnership Services</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>XXX: That will be I think a significant obstacle to overcome, because if you look at an area like XXXXXX it is a very distinct area. (p15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D27</td>
<td>Head of Democratic and Partnership Services</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>Reshaping Governance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D28</td>
<td>Head of Democratic and Partnership Services</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>Reshaping Governance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D29</td>
<td>Head of Democratic and Partnership Services</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>Reshaping Governance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D30</td>
<td>Head of Democratic and Partnership Services</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>Reshaping Governance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D31</td>
<td>Head of Democratic and Partnership Services</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>Reshaping Governance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F10</td>
<td>Scrutiny Officer</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Overview Scrutiny Function</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F11</td>
<td>Scrutiny Officer</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Overview Scrutiny Function</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T1</td>
<td>Scrutiny</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>Ad Hoc Scrutiny</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Table of Quotations for Analysis</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Officer</strong></td>
<td><strong>Respondent:</strong> For about two and a half years, there's been a strategy review of health and social care services, and in February, three of the provider trusts, three of the provider organisations produced what they called the Strategic Outline Case that had five models for the provision of predominantly acute hospital care across half of XXXXXX and XXXXXX (p19) Their preferred option that they stated at that time was that XXXXXX XXXXXXX Infirmary would become what they call and unplanned site and XXXXXX XXXXXXX Hospital would become a planned site [and what that meant, in shorthand, was 0:03:03] that we wouldn't have A&amp;E in XXXXXX There would be some minor injuries unit cover at the hospital but there wouldn't be an accident and emergency – (p19)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>T2</strong></td>
<td><strong>Scrutiny Officer</strong></td>
<td><strong>T</strong></td>
<td>Ad Hoc Scrutiny</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>T3</strong></td>
<td><strong>Scrutiny Officer</strong></td>
<td><strong>T</strong></td>
<td>Ad Hoc Scrutiny</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>T4</strong></td>
<td><strong>Scrutiny Officer</strong></td>
<td><strong>T</strong></td>
<td>Ad Hoc Scrutiny</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>T5</strong></td>
<td><strong>Scrutiny Officer</strong></td>
<td><strong>T</strong></td>
<td>Ad Hoc Scrutiny</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>T6</strong></td>
<td><strong>Scrutiny Officer</strong></td>
<td><strong>T</strong></td>
<td>Ad Hoc Scrutiny</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>T7</strong></td>
<td><strong>Scrutiny</strong></td>
<td><strong>T</strong></td>
<td>Ad Hoc Scrutiny</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Officer</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>Goodwill</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent:</td>
<td>If they said, “No, you've got no powers to ask us,” we’d do a press release. We’d say, “We asked Yorkshire Ambulance Service to come and tell us about keeping people safe, and they wouldn’t talk to us.” (p26)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>L7</strong> Scrutiny Officer</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>Goodwill</td>
<td>Respondent: I’m talking about health and social care because that’s the scrutiny panel I support more. We’ve just revised our contracts, hub care is provided by private organisations in XXXXXX predominantly. Hardly any is in-house, it’s all contracted out. (p28)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent:</td>
<td>Yes, that’s carers going into old people’s homes and cooking them a meal or bathing them or whatever support they need. (p28)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>L8</strong> Scrutiny Officer</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>Goodwill</td>
<td>Interviewer: That’s all outsourced, you say? (p28)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent:</td>
<td>90% of it is outsourced. It’s been a service that has been subject to criticism, not just in XXXXXX but up and down the country for doing visits for 15 minutes, for paying people off for zero based contracts. (p28)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>L9</strong> Scrutiny Officer</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>Goodwill</td>
<td>The workers who are on minimum wage or thereabouts not being paid travel time. (p29)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer:</td>
<td>Yes, I’ve heard of this before, so they’re chipping off the time of the people who are going – (p29)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent:</td>
<td>Yes. They’ve got a task which is going and taking them medication, and they rush in without shutting the front door to save time. (p29)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>L11</strong> Scrutiny Officer</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>Goodwill</td>
<td>They’re probably few and far between. We’re changing the contracts. What we’ve done in XXXXXX is we had about 15 providers. We’ve reduced it to 3 based on a locality, so we’re giving more business to 3 companies, and we’re trying to pay them on outcomes rather than inputs. (p29)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L12</td>
<td>Scrutiny Officer</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>Goodwill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>L13</strong> Scrutiny Officer</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>Goodwill</td>
<td>Interviewer: Is that difficult to measure in terms of the contract? (p29)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L14</td>
<td>Scrutiny Officer</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>Goodwill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Officer</td>
<td>Scrutiny Officer</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>Goodwill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer:</td>
<td>Scrutiny Officer</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>Goodwill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L16</td>
<td>Scrutiny Officer</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>Goodwill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L17</td>
<td>Scrutiny Officer</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>Goodwill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L18</td>
<td>Scrutiny Officer</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>Goodwill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L19</td>
<td>Scrutiny Officer</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>Goodwill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L20</td>
<td>Scrutiny Officer</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>Goodwill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U1</td>
<td>Scrutiny Officer</td>
<td>U</td>
<td>Scrutiny Agenda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U2</td>
<td>Scrutiny Officer</td>
<td>U</td>
<td>Scrutiny Agenda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U3</td>
<td>Scrutiny Officer</td>
<td>U</td>
<td>Scrutiny Agenda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U4</td>
<td>Scrutiny Officer</td>
<td>U</td>
<td>Scrutiny Agenda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U5</td>
<td>Scrutiny Officer</td>
<td>U</td>
<td>Scrutiny Agenda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M5</td>
<td>Scrutiny Officer</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Scrutiny Resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M6</td>
<td>Scrutiny Officer</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Scrutiny Resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V1</td>
<td>Scrutiny Officer</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>Scrutiny Culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V2</td>
<td>Scrutiny Officer</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>Scrutiny Culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interviewer: I suppose that’s the thing, isn’t it? When you’re looking at scrutiny, I suppose really what you’re after is people who are going to read the stuff, take an interest in it, get to grips with the issues and really try and pursue it to get an answer or get a start of an answer, but to get something. It’s more than the party political knockabouts.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Respondent: Yes. There’s nothing wrong with a bit of party political from time to time.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interviewer: No, I’m a great fan of it.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Respondent: There’s a guy who used to train on scrutiny, he was a former councillor, and he was Labour, party member. There’s nothing that’s more fun than having a pop at the Tories. He’s be talking to Tories and vice versa, but you don’t do that -</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What I think can sometimes be very powerful in scrutiny is a councillor who has, I went on one Yorkshire and Humber training session and the councillor told me, he was from Rotherham, and an old guard councillor from Rotherham, old Labour, been a Labour councillor for 30 years, said, “Get this son an obsession.”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In other words, find something to focus on, because you can’t do everything. Get this son an obsession.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I worked with a councillor called XXXXXX Thompson in XXXXXX who was a Labour councillor who subsequently resigned from the Labour Party because of the Iraq war and stayed just independent who was more green than the Greens.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Whatever the issue was, XXXXXX would ask about solar panels, or XXXXXX would ask about water runoff or whatever. What that did is it sharpened up the officers, because if XXXXXX -</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V3</td>
<td>Scrutiny Officer</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>Scrutiny Culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer: If they’re going to ask about it - Respondent: He’s going to ask about it. We could be talking about sport and he’d find a green element to it, and that’s fine because the officers thought, “Oh, Christ, Keith’s on that committee, I’d better…” Roger XXXXXX here who is a Conservative. There’s XXXXXX he’s on the right of the Conservative Party, XXXXXX. If you start talking about European grants, he’ll go onto a bit of a rant. In my personal view, it’s not a particularly thoughtful rant, but again, don’t casually say, “We’ve been working with the EU on this,” because XXXXXX will come in with his views and present that challenge. He said some things in some settings that I find difficult but he’s actually quite fearless. I worked closely with a Conservative councillor last year and she said, “You don’t need to worry about XXXXXX following the line because he doesn’t follow the Conservative Party lines. He just does what he wants.” (p47/48)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent: Scrutinising decisions of cabinet is an important safeguard. When I worked at XXXXXX we used to talk about you’d call a decision in, you’d take it to scrutiny, you’d take it back to the executive as they called in in XXXXXX. The executive always made a recommendation in response. “Point A: The Executive thanks such-and-such a scrutiny panel for all its work in this issue. Point B: Piss off.” Obviously not phrased like that but - Interviewer: That was the gist. (p61)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V4</td>
<td>Scrutiny Officer</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>Scrutiny Culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interviewer: Is there a correct following that through to try and make sure that when scrutiny does something and comes up with something and does a really good in-depth piece of work, is there any magic trick or is there anything which you can do to try and make people take notice of it and do something or is it too difficult? Respondent: I don’t think there’s a magic trick. Sometimes if you do something in-depth, you get it into people’s heads, members’, councillors’ heads. Someone described it as a bit of work that has a long tail. My colleague XXXXXX in XXXXXX talked about that, so you imagine the graphs going over time. It has an impact. It’s not about reports, it’s not about report back, it’s about councillors remembering. There’s a thing in the world of dementia called the Butterfly Scheme. It’s a very simple scheme, it was devised by a relative of someone with dementia. What happens in acute hospitals in particular is that the staff aren’t trained at working with people with dementia, and sometimes don’t identify people with dementia. If you agree and you’ve got dementia, or your relative agrees, there’s a butterfly emblem put on your bed and then you train your staff. So if you haven’t got a butterfly emblem and they bring you a cup of tea around, they say, “Here’s your cup of tea.” If you have got a butterfly emblem they bring you a cup of tea and make sure you drink it, because what happens is people get dehydrated with dementia in hospitals where they’re supposed to be looked after, because the staff are busy and people with dementia are difficult and the staff aren’t trained. The Butterfly Scheme is something that struck a chord with the councillors, and if you met our mayor, XXXXXX now and said, “What’s the Butterfly Scheme?” she’d say, “Yes, that’s what we heard about in the dementia review, that’s where there’s a symbol on the bed in hospital.” So it’s got a long tail. She can talk about that in the community, she knows a bit about that.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Annex 9A - Chief Executive Interview

1 START AUDIO

2

3 Interviewer: [0:00:01].

4

5 Respondent: Yes, yes.

6

7 Interviewer: Do you enjoy it, then?

8

9 Respondent: Housing, or being a chief exec?

10

11 Interviewer: Both.

12

13 Respondent: Yes, yes.

14

15 Interviewer: Yes?

16

17 Respondent: Yes, yes.

18

19 Interviewer: So, you were at for how long?

20
Respondent: Three years. I don’t know how much background you want, but I was originally a graduate trainee in housing management with Hull City Council, so I did the qualification for the Chartered Institute of Housing, worked in housing management, and kind of worked my way up through the various estate housing [manager 0:00:28] roles, and then Hull created a post of area director, which was basically setting up geographically-based committees of the council to drive community involvement and community-based regeneration within areas, so I moved into that post. A lot of that was about European funding; community economic enterprise, community involvement stuff.

Then, I moved to Leeds as chief executive of a housing ALMO. Leeds put its housing into the arms-length organisations. It set up six [alms housing 0:01:03] ALMOs, and I went as a chief exec as one of those, and then about three years later, two years later, it merged them into three, so then I was chief exec of one of the remaining three. Then, I went to _____ in about 2009, as director of Adult Social Care and Communities there.

Interviewer: Oh, really?

Respondent: Which was interesting, because I didn’t have a social care background, but what _____ wanted with somebody with the leadership background, so I was at _____ for about three years in that role, so that was adult social care, museums, [culture side 0:01:38], and it was originally housing, which was [Crosstalk], but then, because we restructured, oddly enough I lost housing and ended up with lots of stuff I hadn’t done before.

Interviewer: Right (Laughter).
Respondent: Then, I came here, in October 2012.

Interviewer: Wow. You know the thing that has amazed me about this speaking to people? It is how everything is sort of linked in. I had a conversation with Councillor [redacted] yesterday, and he was telling me about the top priorities for the council being jobs and regeneration, and about sorting out the issue in terms of Ofsted that you’ve got at the moment, and about the physical regeneration of the town centre and the [redacted] which I think is wonderful, by the way; I visited it years ago, and I fell in love with. I think it’s brilliant [when it’s done 0:02:24].

But all those issues, and going back to what you said, in terms of housing and social care, everything is linked in, isn’t it?

Respondent: Yes, well, my own view is: I think housing is a really good grounding for almost any local authority work. Housing management, rather than housing strategy, is incredibly generic: it’s a very problem-solving based job. You do community work, you do the legal stuff, unfortunately, sometimes.

Interviewer: Yes (Laughter).

Respondent: You manage – housing officers as frontline staff probably spend more time with politicians than in a lot of services, where you don’t really meet politicians until you’re a lot more senior, because housing is such a [live ward 0:03:04] issue. So, I think it’s a really, really good grounding, actually. If you’re looking – if
you talk about the combined authority, of the five West Yorkshire
chief execs, three of us have got a housing background.

Interviewer: Is that right?

Respondent: Yes; well, Joanne [Redacted] at Wakefield, and Tony [Redacted] who’s
actually just leaving [Redacted] we were all originally – I mean,
Obviously, everyone had diversified in different ways, but all
originally that route. I think there are quite a few chief execs now
who probably came through a similar route.

Interviewer: I suppose, if you think of housing, in a sense, you need to fix
that to fix other things. It’s got a knock-on effect, in terms of
social care; it’s got a knock-on effect in terms of employment,
and I suppose that’s the thing, really, I think that I have learnt
over the last couple of weeks, speaking to people: how these
things are all linked together.

As a lawyer, you tend to think down tram tracks; law, and that’s
it, but just speaking yesterday about sorting out jobs and
regeneration, that issue is linked in with skills and sorting them
out in terms of the funding for skills and getting people skilled-up
to do their jobs. It’s linked into transport stuff; the issue on the
[Redacted] line.

Respondent: Yes, absolutely.

Interviewer: Which everybody is telling me here is a real priority (Laughter).
Respondent: Yes, yes. I suppose what links it all is quality of life for residents, isn’t it? And you can look at that down a lot of different lenses. Some people will look at it down the educational lens, and education is the key to everything; some people will look down other lenses. I think lots of evidence that if you’re in work, it’s better than not being in work; less poverty, but also, generally, more emotional wellbeing; children generally have less mental health issues.

As you say, everything is linked, but what links it is quality of life for residents and communities, and lots of things feed into it.

Interviewer: Yes, so in addition, then, to the sort of day job of providing services, in terms of providing the schools, keeping the streets clean, and everything else – in addition to that, is this sort of place-shaping model, isn’t it, in terms of what it is you’re looking to create?

Respondent: Yes. I think that’s the most important – local authorities need to be relevant, and have to have impact; otherwise, why are they there, really? [Lots of 0:05:29] people can run a waste-management contract.

Interviewer: Yes (Laughter).

Respondent: So, I think there is – if you’re going to do something, you do it well, so I think if we are providing services, they should be excellent services, but there is a thing about: why a local
authority as opposed to lots of management contracts? I think partly it is the democratic – it’s about locally-elected people shaping the place, and also deciding what services should look like, so that local democracy element is probably the most crucial one. But then, I think it is also about saying, “Actually, it’s those [lineages 0:06:04], and synergies, [whatever] linkages and synergies – if you’re delivering waste management and you’re delivering adult social care, then you can link up asking bin-men to keep an eye out for people who look vulnerable and feed straight back.

I think there’s something about how you manage things as a package, but consummately going back to: you’re trying to do the right thing.

Interviewer: It’s interesting what you say in terms of the accountability issue, because that was really the key thing that got me on to this: thinking about how complex everything has become. I suppose, 30 years ago, you had councils that were providing services directly. You had people who were elected to look at it; it was relatively simple. Everyone knew where they were.

Nowadays, it’s all complex, because you’ve got partnerships; everybody’s got to work together. Maybe the lines of accountability aren’t particularly that clear, but what you’re saying is that that democratic issue, in terms of the democratic legitimacy that you get, is really crucial in terms of local authorities.

Interviewer: Just thinking about that, and thinking about the community leadership stuff: [I trust 0:07:24] part of your job is to sort of hold [the ring] on all of these partnerships, is it? To get an overview and keep everyone alive; is that [0:07:32] (Laughter)?

Respondent: I certainly try doing that. I guess it depends what you mean by partnerships, doesn’t it? I suppose local authorities are one player in an area. I think we do quite frequently end up as the leader in all the different systems, because of the democratic leadership and the political leadership, but there are some partnerships that we play into as an equal; there are some that we lead; there are some that we’re quite a minor player in.

I suppose part of my role is making sure the council is present and at the table of the places it needs to be present and at the table of, and that we are getting the best out of any partnership working, so: are we talking to the right people? Are we in partnership with the right organisations, and is that working? I think there’s always a challenge in any local place that the local authority is quite often the biggest player, and quite often, you can become a bit insular, and that can be a challenge.

I’ll quite happily bounce around all these strategic meetings, saying, “Oh, [we’ll be in Crosstalk 0:08:30] in partnership with anyone,” but then on the ground, people say, “Well, why do we have to talk to the third sector? Why do we [have to talk to them Crosstalk 0:08:36]?”

Interviewer: Yes, yes.
Respondent: So I think there’s – I talk about porous boundaries. I think local authorities have to have porous boundaries; they have to be open to any other sector, any other partner, joint working, and trying to maintain that porosity, if that’s a word; it probably isn’t.

Interviewer: Yes (Laughter).

Respondent: It’s probably a challenge, yes, and then depending on the – I mean, it’s the governance stuff that you’ll be more familiar with than me. Once you enter formal partnerships, you’ve got all the governance and accountability issues, haven’t you? So that is a challenge with the combined authority. It’s a challenge with things like the Health and Wellbeing Board, because, while they’re clearly structured into local authority governance, obviously they have non-local authority and non-elected membership.

Interviewer: Yes.

Respondent: A lot of the work we’re doing with health now is, “Well, where’s the mandate on that?” It’s not always clear, is it? Flowing through central government, local government, or where it is.

Interviewer: Yes.

Respondent: The government is putting a lot more – or the Department of Health and NHS England are putting a lot more expectation on
Health and Wellbeing Boards, so there’s been a number – we’ve all commented recently how many things come out of NHS England directly to the chair of Health and Wellbeing Boards, and don’t go to the chief executive or the leader. That’s an emerging pattern.

Interviewer: Right.

Respondent: Well, in lots of places, the chair of the Health and Wellbeing Board isn’t even a councillor, or if they are, they’re not [me or the leader 0:09:44].

Interviewer: Yes, yes.

Respondent: So, there’s an assumption outside local authorities that Health and Wellbeing Boards are probably different from how they’re assumed internally, and actually, they are just a council committee, in theory, aren’t they?

Interviewer: Yes.

Respondent: So there’s something about: how do you make sure governance and accountability works, and things either don’t get missed or the wrong thing gets done? As you know, in a local authority, even if you achieve the right outcome, if you do it the wrong way –
Interviewer: You’ve had it, yes (Laughter).

Respondent: You’re very vulnerable to judicial review and things, aren’t you?

Interviewer: That’s right; that’s right.

Respondent: There is, I think increasingly, because the move much more towards sub-regional and regional working, and obviously the whole devolution debate is around city regions; it’s not around individual authorities.

Interviewer: Yes.

Respondent: It’s: where is the dividing line between local sovereignty and sub-regional working? Which is a tension [for Crosstalk 0:10:33] everyone, so most elected members of most local authorities, for example, are very sensitive to any suggestion that the combined authority get planning application powers, because they very much see that as a [local issue Crosstalk 0:10:45].

Interviewer: Yes; I’m told that is a very sensitive thing in terms of – you know, if somebody from another authority decided that [a site is going to be something 0:10:54].

Respondent: Yes.
Interviewer: It's very interesting what you say; in terms of the position of the council on partnerships being first among equals because of its democratic legitimacy, do you find that partners respect the democratic mandate of a council? Do you have an added sort of...?

Respondent: No, no. I see what you're saying.

Interviewer: [Crosstalk 0:11:16] (Laughter)?

Respondent: When I said first among equals, I think what I meant was, I think, different partnerships in the combined authority, which effectively, is a partnership of local authorities; it's a peer partnership, in effect. There are some where we are first among equal because of our size, and because of our leadership role. There are others where we might be a minor player. I suppose we're different in different ways. I think the democratic – I think people outside of the world of local authority struggle with the politics. Health struggle with local politics. They will say they don't do politics; it's interesting as soon as a national minister says something, they will leap all over the place, but they do struggle with local politics, and they do – I wouldn't want to be quoted on this, but obviously, local councillors can be of varied calibre, whereas most other partners are led by professionals.

I know, for example, our clinical commissioning groups really struggle with some of the elected members here, because they just don't get the fact that politicians want to change the world,
and they can’t change the world if they don’t get elected, so they
do play to the electorate, and they find that very difficult.

In some ways, it's interesting; if you take the GPs, for example,
working with the politicians on the Health and Wellbeing Board,
in some ways they’re very similar, because both the politicians
and the GPs are now operating as strategic leaders, because of
the CCG. But they all directly see people, because the GPs see
them in the surgery, and the members see them in the ward.

Interviewer: Yes; yes, yes.

Respondent: So, actually, they can have really interesting conversations
about what life is really like, because they’re seeing it first-hand,
but on the other hand, the GPs are entirely professional, not
elected, not interested in politics, but very, very bright and
technically qualified. The local members are very tuned into the
place and the residents, but a lot of them are obviously not
qualified, not experts in anything, but very knowledgeable about
a lot of stuff, and those two worlds don’t easily come together.

Interviewer: Yes, and do you find, in terms of – thinking of health, or thinking
of other things, do you find that there’s an increasing appetite
amongst members to get a democratic grip on some of these
sort of unelected bodies? In terms of scrutiny, is there a wish, is
there an appetite amongst politicians to widen the remit and try
to make these things accountable?

Respondent: I think members get frustrated with organisations that are not
democratically accountable, but have a significant impact on
place, because the politicians get blamed for it all, so if they can’t have any control over it, and there isn’t that accountability.

**Interviewer:** Yes.

**Respondent:** I don’t think every politician necessarily wants to be in charge of everything, but I think they do find that frustrating. I’m probably more familiar, or more thinking in my head about the relationship with health, because that’s more of a live issue, because we’ve got issues about the hospital here. They certainly find it frustrating that, potentially, we could see significant restructuring of the hospital and various other services, and there is no political involvement in that at all.

**Interviewer:** Yes. [Redacted] mentioned this to me the other day. There was a massive issue.

**Respondent:** Yes, and it’s a big issue, yes, so they can [call scrutiny on that Crosstalk 0:14:29].

**Interviewer:** Because that hospital’s only recently been done, hasn’t it?

**Respondent:** Yes. Everyone will have different views of the rights and wrongs of the case, but I think the principle being that a significant impact on local services, a decision is made that doesn’t involve any local politician. They find that frustrating, because they know they will be blamed for it.
Interviewer: Yes, yes.

Respondent: Or praised for it, depending [which way you go 0:14:49].

Interviewer: Yes; whatever (Laughter).

Respondent: Scrutiny does have the right to call all health bodies in to scrutinise them, but the council doesn't have the right to be part of the decision-making process, and I think that is a frustration. They do find it frustrating, sometimes, even at the level of the police, and obviously, the police does have a political and democratically-elected leadership, but local politicians aren't necessarily involved.

I would guess the sorts of things they — I don't think any of them want to take over Boots or WH [redacted] but anything that has a significant impact on [rights 0:15:18] and locality, I think they can find it frustrating if there is no democratic input.

Interviewer: Yes. It's fascinating to hear. I was of the view that a lot of these things have happened to try to improve efficiency in delivering services, whereas, to some extent, maybe accountability has taken a sort of back step, and so it's trying to play catch-up on some of these issues, to try to make sure that it works (Laughter).
Respondent: It's all sorts of tension, isn't it? Because other people would say, "That's just politicians wanting to run everything, and they don't have to run everything." I think they didn't have any more control over PCTs and the old structure; I just think it's almost more noticeable now, because health is such a big issue in the press and everything.

Interviewer: Yes; yes.

Respondent: I think there are still issues about: where's the space for them? I think, absolutely, space for strategic leadership, but a lot of politicians actually get very operational, so when they say 'democratic mandate', what they really mean is they want to do hands-on management, and that probably isn't appropriate.

Interviewer: Yes. (Laughter) Yes.

Respondent: So, there is a thing about: what do we mean by accountability? The health world would argue they are politically accountable, but obviously, they're politically accountable through national politics, which is much less of a day-to-day sense of politics, really.

Interviewer: Yes, yes.

Respondent: I suppose that whole issue of accountability – I think where people get uneasy is in local government, and you know as well
as anyone how convoluted it can be, but in theory, you should be able to trace a decision through all the appropriate constitution and back to the relevant act of parliament. It should all, eventually, even if it takes you a while to work it out, be clear how the decision got made, and where the authority came from to make that decision.

I think a lot of the uneasiness now is that there are some quite big decisions made all over the place, and actually, it’s not always that clear who had the authority to make that decision; where did it flow through? Where did it come from? And that is partly an uneasiness, I think.

Interviewer: Yes, and just on the question, in terms of going back to what you said about leadership, in terms of your position at [redacted] when you took something that was slightly different, and your position here: give me an idea, if you can, of what kind of leadership you need, in a sort of complex partnership environment. What kind of skills do you need to do it, in terms of making it work? What do you look at?

Respondent: [Crosstalk 0:17:52]. Well, I think there are lots of different leadership models, aren’t there? I suppose it’s a bit of a glib summary, but it’s partly systems leadership. I think you have to have the skill to operate in a complex environment, so I think that’s partly the skill to understand you can’t be in charge of everything, so it can’t be leadership through command and control, and it can’t necessarily even be leadership through getting easy ownership of a decision. A lot of it is trying to lead across the system, which means you need to be able to influence; you need to be able to negotiate; you need to be able to woo people.
You need to accept that you can’t know everything, so actually, yes –

Interviewer: Yes. Is that difficult to do?

Respondent: Yes. Well, I find it difficult to do.

Interviewer: (Laughter) I think I would.

Respondent: Yes; you have to trust your staff. You have to trust that people will get on and do intelligent, clever things without you telling them to do that. I think it gets easier because you see it happening, so it’s an experiential thing, to some extent, isn’t it?

Interviewer: Yes, yes.

Respondent: Equally, you learn where you do need to keep an eye on things. There’s a real balance. My tendency is that I tend to learn by micromanaging and then pulling back, and you can’t micromanage everything, and actually, that can become very destabilising for an organisation, because everyone just sits, then, waiting to be told what to do, and you can’t [afford that Crosstalk 0:19:14].

Interviewer: Yes. Yes, I’ve seen it happen (Laughter).
Respondent: Yes, so I think even in your own organisation, it’s about – I think internally, it’s about: how do you inspire people? How do you give them a sense of what the future is; what we’re trying to achieve? How do you keep people focused on, “It’s about impact, not about process,” because a big organisation can become quite navel-gazing, can’t it?

Interviewer: Yes. Yes.

Respondent: And people can quite often reward themselves for following good process, without looking to see if it’s made any difference. I think that [constant Crosstalk 0:19:43] -

Interviewer: I’ve seen that as a lawyer; tick a box, and (Laughter)...

Respondent: Yes, exactly. Part of the leadership role is, I think, that constant internal challenge: what are you doing? How is it making a difference?

Interviewer: Yes, so a constant eye on outcomes, really, in terms of what’s delivered.

Respondent: Yes, yes. I think a big part of it is problem-solving, and unblocking; you need to be able to spot where the blockages are in the organisation, and then a lot of it is about that system leadership; if you want something to happen, if we need new jobs, we’re not going to do that by employing another 1,000
people. We’re going to do that by encouraging lots of start-ups; trying to get [inward 0:20:12] investments, and I can’t order someone to start a business up and employ someone (Laughter).

Interviewer: Yes (Laughter).

Respondent: So, it’s how do you influence; how do you create the right environment? A lot of it, I think, is about having a net of tentacles, if that makes sense, [that you can pull in Crosstalk 0:20:27].

Interviewer: Yes; it does make sense, yes.

Respondent: And I think the other thing is learning that — I think the hardest thing that I found, when I went to [censored] — oddly enough, when I was chief executive of ALMO, it was a single function, housing, and it’s small. So you can actually — you know what difference you are making on a daily basis. When I went back into local government as a director [0:20:48] here, I could sometimes look back on what I’ve done over the last month, and actually, I would struggle to say: where did that make an impact?

Interviewer: Right.

Respondent: Because sometimes, actually, where I’ve made the impact is, I’ll have had a meeting trigger something off that will happen in five
years’ time. The more senior you get, I think the harder it is to say, “I did that.”

**Interviewer:** Yes.

**Respondent:** I think what almost – and it doesn’t sound very [sexy to say, “I influenced that,” Crosstalk 0:21:08].

**Interviewer:** Yes, so in terms of quick wins, it’s a bit – eh?

**Respondent:** Yes. You can sometimes do it, and I think we all find our own way of doing it, so lots of chief execs will say – quite a common thing is your top seven things that you personally want to achieve. I sort of tend to think, “Where do I want to put personal leadership?” Here, for example, I’m very interested in digital innovation driving change, so I take some personal leadership of some of the programme of that, and I’m interested in trying to change domestic violence, so I’ve put some personal time – not personal time, but energy into that.

**Interviewer:** Yes, yes.

**Respondent:** Whereas I kind of vaguely hope planning officers know what they’re doing, and I don’t get involved in that unless there’s a problem.
Interviewer: As a planning lawyer, I wouldn’t assume that, but there you go (Laughter).

Respondent: I went to a meeting [0:21:55] meeting in London a couple of months ago that was with senior civil servants, discussing how services might work with more neighbourhood control. On the one hand, it felt like, “Where have we made any difference today?” We had a very esoteric policy discussion, but actually, potentially, in five years’ time, we could have more neighbourhood management of services, and that won’t have happened unless some of us sat and had that very esoteric policy –

Interviewer: Is there a sort of balance between -? In terms of what you say on the sort of digital infrastructure stuff, that’s obviously crucial now, in terms of sorting out broadband and sorting those issues out, to sort out the infrastructure, so you can get jobs in, and drive growth, and all the rest of it.

In terms of that, how much input can a local authority actually have in terms of driving that? With the current powers that you’ve got, and through the combined authority, have you got enough in terms of powers, funding, to actually drive that agenda and [give the idea a push Crosstalk 0:23:06]?

Respondent: I think it’s understanding – I think part of the leadership role is trying to work out: where are all the different things you could bundle together to push on that? All of us would say, “No, we haven’t got enough power,” because we’re all power-mad; [you’re talking to a 0:23:16] local authority chief exec, aren’t you?
Interviewer: Yes (Laughter).

Respondent: So, in terms of – if you took broadband infrastructure, we do have a part-government, part-ERDF funded project through the combined authority to roll out broadband access across the region, so there is an ongoing project which has got – BT won it under tender, so it’s a contract to get BT to put fibre-optic cabling and new cabinets in.

Where one of the blockages on that is, which I think we struggle with, is [state age 0:23:49] rules, because it’s commercial, so [state age rules petters]; a lot of us would think, “Can’t we just get on and do it? Yes, it’s interfering in the market, but the market’s not delivering what we want it to anyway, is it?”

Interviewer: Right, [anyway 0:23:57]. Yes.

Respondent: So that kind of – where your scope and influence stops and starts can be a barrier, but there are sometimes ways round it. A number of authorities are now looking at putting in their planning requirements – Leeds has done some work which we’re now looking at around what its planning requirements are for a new home, that includes that it has to have the capacity for broadband in planning.

Interviewer: Right, yes. Yes.
Respondent: So, if you’re building, as well as putting the drains in, you put the ducts in for fibre-optic cable.

Interviewer: At the same time.

Respondent: So, it’s about thinking about, “What powers have you already got?” Rather than thinking, “God, it’s really frustrating I can’t get broadband across the whole of [blank] what powers have we got? I think we would always all say we could do with more powers and more money, and yes, we could; we could do more, but I think part of the role of senior – not just the chief exec – senior people, is thinking, “What are all the different things we do, that if we bundled them together and thought about the relationship between them, we could then have that impact?” I think there is a role for – you’re almost back to, as well, what is the role of a local authority? Which is a very live debate, isn’t it?

Interviewer: Yes, yes.

Respondent: The combined authority, linked to the LEP, has got four economic priorities, if you like, and infrastructure is one of them, so stimulating housing, stimulating broadband; we see that as a key local authority role. What we don’t see as the key local authority role is digging the ditches to put fibre-optic cable in and building the houses, but it’s about facilitating [and enabling Crosstalk 0:25:28].

Interviewer: Yes, yes, so it’s enabling that to actually happen.
Respondent: Yes.

Interviewer: Just on that issue in terms of – just thinking about outsourcing stuff, and this thing about the [commissioning council 0:25:39]; the debate about whether councils should provide services directly or not. I put it to [••] on Monday, and I was surprised when I originally thought this, but it struck me that, in terms of outsourcing, it’s not as ideological as it once was. When it was coming in, in the ‘80s, there was a big ideological debate around it, and it was politically controversial.

I was asking: has the ideological gloss now been stripped from outsourcing? Is it really just a case of delivery, and does it deliver, and if it doesn’t deliver, we’ll do something else? Is that – or is outsourcing still an issue?

Respondent: I think it’s still an issue. I think you’ll get different mind-sets, to be honest. I’m a pragmatist; I think sometimes it’s appropriate, sometimes it isn’t. I don’t particularly – I think the problem with headlines like ‘the commissioning council’ is that it boxes you into one way to go. Having said that, I think outsourcing, in my own opinion, has driven service improvement. Certainly, adult social care, I think, has vastly improved once we started using external companies, because it’s a –

Interviewer: It’s a challenge.
Respondent: I think the problem with the local authority delivering everything is it gets a bit smug, really, and it's very dominated by the unions. I'm a pragmatist; I think it's a mix. I think it is still ideological, and maybe that's more noticeable here, where it's no overall control, so you see the political party differences much more strongly. There will be some members from all three parties who would take an equally pragmatic approach [of it 0:27:17].

I think where there is still a difference is, you're more likely to get on the left-end Labour end, more the sense that local authorities should be employers; they should be role models of good terms and conditions, and that municipal ownership is a good thing in itself.

And you're more likely to get Conservatives saying, "Local authorities should be small. State input should be minimal."

Interviewer: So you've still got that political sort of -?

Respondent: They wouldn't necessarily articulate it like that, but it's still there.

Interviewer: But it's still there.

Respondent: One minor example here is that we own the theatre; the Victoria Theatre. We struggle to invest in it; there is a Friends of Victoria Theatre, which a number of times has raised the possibility of setting up a trust and transferring it to a trust. There isn't a business case that says that will necessarily stop our subsidy of
it. Our Labour Party has been quite, “No, we want a municipally-owned theatre. That’s important.”

The Conservatives have been, “We just want a theatre that works. That’s important.”

Interviewer: Right (Laughter).

Respondent: I think if we’d come up with a model that said the trust could get rid of all the subsidy[0:28:17] and make a profit, Labour probably would move in that direction, so there’s sort of an element of pragmatism, but there is this very strong view. We are outsourced here; waste management is outsourced; [lots are 0:28:29] outsourced, because there was a Conservative-controlled council for a long time.

There are a number of newer Labour members who would want to take, and have asked us to look at, in the past, taking waste management back in-house, because they see it as a job; it’s working for the council, council terms and conditions. We’ve said no, because we can’t afford it, but genuinely, part of the problem is sometimes we do outsource, because it’s cheaper, because it’s terms and conditions.

So, actually, they’re right in a way, but you could argue council terms and conditions are too generous. I said to my senior management team the other day, “None of us are proposing cutting our own terms and conditions, are we?” But I don’t know; how do you decide what are the right terms and conditions? But certainly, part of the reason we outsource is because it’s cheaper, and the reason it’s cheaper is because private companies don’t pay the same pension [arrangements and Crosstalk 0:29:21] everything that we’ve got, so somewhere,
Labour are always slightly uneasy because they know that, really.

Interviewer: Yes, yes.

Respondent: I think my own experience, certainly in social care, was that competition in the marketplace does drive up quality, but I am equally aware social care is an obvious example, equally, of where paying people minimum wage and treating them like crap means you get poor quality, so it is a balance, isn't it?

Interviewer: A lot if it's down to treating people right, isn't it (Laughter)?

Respondent: I think everybody has got more pragmatic about outsourcing, but I wouldn't say the ideology has gone out of it completely, no.

Interviewer: That's interesting. It is interesting.

Respondent: And actually, when we talk [on 0:29:57] West Yorkshire around shared services, a number of – we're outsourced waste management; a number of the others are still in-house waste management, and the others, politically, just wouldn't agree to outsourcing in order to join up with us, and we can't afford to in-source to join up with them, so you will still get that tension.

(Laughter) Yes, you've still got that. The other thing is, in terms of outsourcing, on the question of – is contract management still
an issue for local authorities? They've been particularly bad at that in certain [places Crosstalk 0:30:30].

Respondent: Erm, yes, well –

Interviewer: South West [won 3,000 pay to contract 0:30:33] and all that [nonsense] (Laughter).

Respondent: I think it varies. I think the challenge for local authorities is less around contract management than quality management. Again, I would go back to my social care background. I think a lot of the arrangements with private sector providers you can't manage by saying – I mean, it’s one of my frustrations with health. They say, “We’ll just specify the contract, and that will be what gets delivered.”

I don’t think you can deliver quality through compliance with a specification. I think that’s about: how do you develop the market? How do you get good quality providers in the market? How do you work with them? When I was at [redacted] for example, when we did training on new social care legislation, or just how to be nice generally in social care, we did it cross-sector, so the private providers attended the same training as our staff.

I think you have to have a relationship. It’s partly – I say it’s about quality; it’s about relationship management. It’s about a relationship; it is not about managing what the words said on a contract. That’s fine if you want to say, “I ordered 100 sheets of paper, and you only delivered 50,” but if it’s a service – if there’s
somebody, at the end of the day, there’s a human being
impacted on, it has to be relationship management, I think.

Interviewer: Yes, yes. That’s interesting.

Respondent: That’s a skill I think we do have in probably some bits of social care; I think we have it in some bits of – people who work with businesses
absolutely understand that relationship management issue, so I think we have those skills in some places, but not widespread enough, I think.

Interviewer: Yes. It is interesting to pick up on that, because there are different views in terms of outsourcing, and whether it’s a good thing or a bad thing, but that is interesting what you say; it is not simply the issue of contract management. It’s the issue, really, of: how is it delivered?
Where’s the quality? How [is the market developed 0:32:21]? Are people getting a grip on that quality issue?

Just in terms of – going back to the regeneration stuff; I’m thinking about thinking about the question about transport, and this One North business about linking everywhere up and improving connectivity: how important is that in terms of Is that central [to what you are hoping to do Crosstalk 0:32:53]?

Respondent: Yes, for a number of reasons; partly because that’s what drives jobs, and it’s jobs that drive moving people out of poverty; a good quality of life. We want a vibrant economy here; we don’t want to just be the place where people come home and sleep and then go and work somewhere else, and town centres are partly what drives a vibrant economy. People come into a town centre to shop, so we want a town centre that looks nice, and that people want to come to.
We want our assets to work, and actually, ... as a place, as a culture, both politically and residents, is a somewhere that really values its heritage, so [Crosstalk 0:33:32].

Interviewer: Oh, yes. That has really come across to me this week. That has come across, and the other thing that’s come across is civic pride. It really does, doesn’t it?

Respondent: Yes. It really does. ... would never be a council that would own the ... and board it up, and say it’s a pain in the arse. They would always want that to be an asset that’s cared for, and used, really. So, it’s important because it’s important for residents in ... to have a nice-looking town centre with assets that they can use, and that becomes sustainable. I mean, I don’t want the ... boarded up because it’s expensive [without paying its way 0:34:03] (Laughter). Not that I don’t care about it, but I want it to pay its way, so there’s that issue.

I think the other issue is, when you’re working with a city region, sub-region, it’s important to collaborate with other local authorities, but also, you don’t want to fall behind. For example, Leeds and Manchester are constantly talking about the connectivity between Leeds and Manchester, which is great, but if all the connectivity between Leeds and Manchester is via Huddersfield, ... could end up being left behind.

Interviewer: Yes, and at the moment, that’s the plan for HS3, isn’t it?

Respondent: Yes, so we’re [tucking in under 0:34:35] ... because if we get left behind, ... do, as well, because we’re [on the] ... route.
Interviewer: Right, yes.

Respondent: So there is that slight sense of, “Yes, we want the best for the situation, but we all want the best for ourselves, as well,” and what we don’t want to do is get left behind. We haven’t got a university, so it’s important for us that all the other authorities are having good relationships with university, and fighting for their universities, because we still benefit from – Huddersfield University is a huge asset for all of us.

I think – I’ve forgotten your question (Laughter). Economic regeneration is important, because it creates jobs and it creates businesses, and that’s what creates local wealth. It’s also, on a very narrow point, because the way the government has changed [local authority 0:35:19] finance, more and more of our income comes from business rates, so the more businesses we’ve got –

Interviewer: [The more you can 0:35:25]...

Respondent: The better, as long as they’re in properties, not just sitting in their spare bedroom. Yes, how do you create an affluent society? Because affluence brings wellbeing, and affluent societies have shopping centres people want to come and use; people have money to go and spend in the shopping centres they want to come and use. They look after the buildings, and –

Interviewer: How much of your time is spent doing sort of economic issues, in terms of regeneration? Is it possible for you to [tell us 0:35:56]?

Respondent: In terms of what?
860 Interviewer: In terms of day-to-day [time to do your task 0:36:01].

862 Respondent: [Crosstalk 0:36:02].

864 Interviewer: Is that the biggest thing you do, or…? Is that the main issue, or is it a bit of everything?

867 Respondent: If you asked which of the main service areas I spend most of my time on, then yes; that’s probably answering a slightly different question. I don’t spend a lot of my time here on adult social care, or museums, or anything, because they have got professionals in charge; they’re up and running.

873 Interviewer: Taken care of. Yes.

875 Respondent: Clearly, on a local basis, we’ve got professionals running the economics side well, but because it’s the regional, sub-regional stuff, and because there’s just so much – because a lot of it is about: how do I present the council as business-friendly? I think, increasingly, that’s probably the one thing that’s changed most in the role of the chief executive in the last few years: chief executives are increasingly also almost the chief economic officer, in some ways.

883 Interviewer: That’s very interesting. Yes.

885 Respondent: I wouldn’t want to say the chief economic officers aren’t delivering themselves.
Interviewer: Yes, yes.

Respondent: And if you look at adverts for chief executives’ jobs, it’s fairly standard now that they expect you to have some regeneration background, or some sense of that, and increasingly, you do find very few chief execs can’t operate with some degree of confidence in an economic regeneration environment. It was a big learning curve for me, because I hadn’t to a big extent, but you have to be able to do that.

On this combined authority, the way we work is that each chief exec takes a lead on one of the functions, and they’re all economic issues. The chief exec at [insert] leads on transport. Wakefield leads on skills; [insert] leads on innovation and [insert] [0:37:33], and I lead on infrastructure, which includes housing and broadband, so we have all taken responsibility for some area of the economic devolution argument, for example, and [economic 0:37:44] investment.

Now, that basically means we just vaguely keep an eye on it, and everyone else does the work; it doesn’t mean we do a lot of work. I do see it as a key part of my role; getting to know local businesses. I don’t see that as taking over from the role of my business support officers, but I think it’s important that the chief executive is seen as open to business.

Interviewer: Yes; knows what’s going on in terms of – yes.

Respondent: Our biggest employer is [insert] what was [insert] a crucial relationship for us, because they employ 6,000 people in [insert]

Interviewer: Everybody has been telling me it’s absolutely key, yes.

492
Respondent: So I do make sure that link is to me, and I go to meetings with them, and I know who they are, and that is there. I think there is something about the leader of an organisation, as in a chief executive, rather than a political leader, being business-savvy and understanding that.

Interviewer: Yes, yes.

Respondent: Not necessarily commercial deals, but certainly business, and I would say the one common skill-set of all the chief execs of the combined authority here is that we all have some finger on something to do with the economic stuff.

Interviewer: Right. That’s fascinating.

Respondent: Whereas other [developments Crosstalk 0:38:39] – I do lead on health and social care, and that is probably because of my background. Some of the others aren’t interested in health and social care at all, and there will be other things they’re doing that I’m not interested in, but the commonality is the economic [forum 0:38:50].

Interviewer: Yes. It’s fascinating; it really is brilliant to get that insight, because like I’ve said to other people this week, I learn an awful lot more by having a conversation in terms of, “What do you do?”

Respondent: Yes. The trouble is, once you start me off, I’ll keep talking (Laughter).

Interviewer: Oh, it is; it’s absolutely fascinating. I’m just looking down at my list here; I think it’s pretty much all covered. I think the only other question
that I would ask you is in terms of your motivation. You’re obviously very inspirational.

Respondent: [Crosstalk 0:39:30].

Interviewer: You’re obviously – I just say what I think. You’re obviously inspirational; you’re obviously driven to deliver results. What’s your motivation? Public service? What drives you on it?

Respondent: I like being busy, and I like being busy with things that I’m interested in, if I’m honest. I like health and social care because I find it intellectually interesting; I like a lot of the theory. I like the idea of, “How do you influence wellbeing?” I like concepts; I like theory, so I like being in a job where I can apply concepts and theories. I like being busy.

I suppose, in some ways, I wouldn’t necessarily have said I’m public sector ethos in the way that some people say, “I just want to be out there to serve people,” but equally, I’ve never worked in the private sector. I think I do like being in something that I feel is a socially valuable job in that sense.

Interviewer: Yes, yes.

Respondent: I think I’d struggle if I didn’t have that sense of, “Am I adding value somewhere in the world?” really, and I’m not the most – I don’t go over and fight Ebola; I’m not a completely selfless Mother Theresa, but I like that sense of being – social injustice; the sense of being able to influence where I can see examples of social injustice. The chance to make a difference: that is a motivator for me, and I like the problem-solving side. I like being in a job where you have to deal with lots of problems all the time. I actually quite enjoy that side of the job, really.
I suppose, partly, I also like the fact it's very different. I get very bored very easily, and I suspect most chief execs do.

Interviewer: So, there's no two days the same, in terms of (Laughter)?

Respondent: Yes, exactly. I like broad and shallow. I don't actually understand anything in any detail, but I do an awful lot of different things, and for me, that suits me better than had I become a very good lawyer, for example, where I probably would have understood a lot of stuff in depth, but not – [though that's probably the wrong Crosstalk] example, actually, because lawyers probably do do that breadth as well. I'm sure would say he does everything broad and shallow these days, as well (Laughter).

Interviewer: I think the thing that I found was that, in terms of some of the stuff that I do, because I don't just do planning stuff, because I do pretty much [in regeneration, I do a lot Crosstalk].

Respondent: I think it probably was the wrong example, because – yes.

Interviewer: But it does give you some opportunity so that [Crosstalk].

Respondent: Mm, it's having a finger in lots of pies, isn't it?

Interviewer: Yes.
And increasingly, and I think that is partly, frequently, my message to staff, is that more and more of us have to be generic. I think there are fewer and fewer narrow professionalisms, and if you look at all the restructures that have been done, most places have gone from eight or nine directors to three or four. It’s a standing joke here; the heads of service, which is our equivalent of assistant directors, how long can a job title get? Because every time we restructure, we just stuck another function on somebody, so people are now running functions they probably didn’t know existed five years ago.

So I think we’re all becoming increasingly broad and shallow, and I think a lot of people at the senior level of government are probably motivated by that mix of liking to do lots of different things, but also liking to feel they’re making a difference in the world somewhere.

Yes. I think it’s brilliant. I first came to [to see 0:42:43] about 25 years ago, and I just fell in love with the towns here. I love it. It’s got real character.

Yes, because I went to – I was in Hull for a long time, and I felt a real emotional connection with Hull. That’s where my son was born. I came to Leeds – I live in Leeds – and yes, Leeds is a great city, and I really, really enjoy it. It’s a place, and I like it. I went to [redacted] and I think I never really did feel quite connected with [redacted] and I think that’s partly because I was commuting in.

I came here, and I still don’t live here, because my son’s still at school, but I felt a real, and always have done, emotional connection with [redacted] quite early on. I think that’s partly because, for me, it suits me, but it’s the size of it; I think I quite like being able to be fairly hands-on, having just said I don’t interfere. I probably do. I quite like having an organisation that I can understand in my head. I think I’d struggle with an organisation of 10,000 staff, if I’m honest; it suits me. I feel I can make a difference, but I also think the members here, the elected members, they are so passionate about [redacted] This is a
place where people care about the place, as you said. I think you just
do get that emotional connection very quickly, here.

People quite often say, “Oh, [redacted] and [redacted] are very similar;
just [redacted] is a bit bigger.” But they’re not, actually; they’re very, very
different in that sense, I think.

Interviewer: Yes. I have definitely got that this week; from speaking to people, from
speaking to your leader yesterday, from speaking to [redacted] and [all of you
0:44:13]. I’ve really got that idea. You’ve only got to look at the
building (Laughter). You’ve only got to look at the building. It’s just
fantastic. They don’t build them like that anymore, do they?

Respondent: No. Don’t ask me how much it cost.

Interviewer: It’s a real – you know, it is great to see.

Respondent: I think that’s something I quite like about local government. I mean, it’s
not [the main 0:44:32] motivation, but I think in most local authorities,
there is that real respect for civic tradition. There’s a whole area of the
work which is about how we’re delivering services, combined
authority, etc., but we’ve also all got a mayor, and a mayor’s office,
and very arcane rituals, and actually, they are so important as part of
the fabric of local government, aren’t they?

Interviewer: Yes, yes.

Respondent: And every authority’s got that [Crosstalk 0:44:55].

1063
Interviewer: I suppose the other thing about it, as well, just thinking about this thing about place, and about place-shaping, and sorting that out; the thing is, is that I suppose you've got so many things these days; the global economy, where firms can make decisions on the other side of the world and it effects what happens here, whereas people are here for keeps, aren't they? And the decisions that are made; they've got to live with them and they've got to defend them.

Respondent: Yes, yes.

Interviewer: I think it's that local connection, sometimes, [that sort of drives 0:45:30].

Respondent: Yes. I think that's the other thing about local democracy, as well. You do get people moving in and out, and becoming politicians, but generally, most politicians are in the same place most of their political career at a local level. I think, whilst you never know who's going to get re-elected, and you never know how long they're going to be around, generally, they live here, and they have to live with the consequences of their decision, and they have to live with the consequences of their decision on the doorstep, over many years.

There is an element, in a place like this, where a lot of the staff live here, as well, but realistically, at a senior level, you get a turnover, because people are ambitious; there's only ever one chief exec and four directors, so eventually, if anyone else wants to be chief exec, they're either going to kill me or move, aren't they?

Interviewer: Yes. [Got to move around Crosstalk 0:46:07] (Laughter).
Respondent: So you do get that slight churn. I know some people say, “You’ll all be off, so you don’t really have to live with the effect of your decisions.” I don’t think any of us are that cynical, but I do -

Interviewer: I don’t believe that, and I would quote on that the words of Howard Bernstein, last week, who said, “You’re only as good as your last failure.”

Respondent: Yes, and I think most of us have pride enough in our job to deliver, but I do think local politicians absolutely do have to defend on the doorstep what they’re doing, so that sense of how shape a place, I think, is vital.

Interviewer: It’s fascinating, and as I say, local authorities have fascinated me for years. I love the way they work; I love the mechanisms. [0:46:46]. It’s just absolutely fascinating. It’s brilliant, I’m really grateful to you for all your help on this.

Respondent: Well, it’s very nice to meet you.

Interviewer: I really appreciate it, and I really appreciate the fact that has helped me out. As I said to your leader yesterday, I shall sing praises.

Respondent: [Crosstalk 0:46:56].

Interviewer: I always have done, actually; I have always told people to come and visit here, because I think it’s brilliant.
Respondent: Yes. No, it is a lovely place, yes.

Interviewer: But I really do appreciate it.

Respondent: Good. That's fine.

Interviewer: So, thank you very much.

Respondent: Are you off back to Liverpool -?

END AUDIO

www.uktranscription.com
Annex 9B – Council Leader Interview

1  START AUDIO

2  Interviewer: I think it’s good, I mean I got the chance just to do this, as I say I did
3  my first degree in politics and then I trained as a lawyer, and then I got
4  the chance then to do this researching public administration and what
5  I’m really looking at is local authorities; how they work. I’m particularly
6  interested in partnership working, outsourcing.

7

8  Respondent: Yes.

9

10 Interviewer: I’m interested in questions of sort of leadership and things like that,
11 and what struck me about it is, to the extent that stuff is written about
12 local authorities by academics, very few people have actually
13 bothered to go and ask people who are actually doing it, and it’s
14 amazing when you read these books because it’s all sort of second
15 and third hand stuff. So, what I really wanted to try and do, was get a
16 picture of what happened by picking people’s brains who actually do
17 the job and who are actually involved in it, and that’s really what I’m
18 trying to do, just to get an idea in terms of what happens, how you see
19 it.

20 I’m interested in your views on the situation about the combined
21 authority as well, because all that’s obviously topical, and just in terms
22 of your position, councillor, in terms of your position here, I mean how
23 long have you been a councillor? Your council control is pretty recent
24 isn’t it?

25

26 Respondent: Yes, well I was first elected in 1990.

27

Respondent: Yes.

Interviewer: That's a good record isn't it?

Respondent: Yes, and what pleases me the most as a conservative, it was a by-election; I'd lost in the May election in 1990 and then I won the by-election off Labour in the year that the poll tax was introduced.

Interviewer: Really? That was something.

Respondent: It was the fifth time I'd fought that ward. Yes.

Interviewer: That's really about determination as well, isn't it?

Respondent: Yes.

Interviewer: Because I mean politics fascinates me anyway and I suppose in a sense, you know, politicians have it in their blood, don't they?

Respondent: Yes.

Interviewer: They feel a sense that they want to do it, so you went for that a number of times before you actually got it?
Respondent: Yes.

Interviewer: And it was a by-election.

Respondent: Yes.

Interviewer: Wow, and you've held that seat since, consistently?

Respondent: No.

Interviewer: No?

Respondent: I lost in 96 by 280 votes and I won it back in 98 by 380 votes.

Interviewer: Wow.

Respondent: And then I lost it again in 2002.

Interviewer: So it's been really sort of up and down.

Respondent: Yes, I mean I could possibly argue, it's a ward that I should never have won, and I think I fought it because the ward that [redacted] the ex-MP for [redacted] used to represent the council.

Interviewer: Is that right?
Respondent: In 87.

Interviewer: Yes.

Respondent: So I started fighting it then, and I sort of thought, go for it, and even the conservative members said I’d never win it.

Interviewer: Really?

Respondent: Because it was five times in such a short – because of the by-elections, there were a number of by-elections.

Interviewer: Yes, and just in terms of your ward, *** is in that ward isn’t it?

Respondent: *** and *** yes, which I represent now.

Interviewer: I’ve been through there; I passed through there years ago on the bus, I loved it, I thought it was a brilliant place.

Respondent: Yes.

Interviewer: I mean just whilst you’re on that councillor, can you give me an insight right, into just thinking – not thinking at the moment about leadership duties, but just thinking about ward stuff in terms of sort of representation of your ward; give me an idea what that is like. Can you
paint a picture for me about if you were to be elected a ward
councillor, what happens? Give me an idea of a typical day.

Respondent: Well a typical day, it varies so much, there isn’t such a thing as a
typical day, but as a ward councillor, we just deal with issues as they
come up.

Interviewer: Yes.

Respondent: We’ve three conservative councillors and we both work very closely
with each other, whoever sort of picks up the query first acknowledges
receipt of the issue, because it’s usually by email now.

Interviewer: Is it really?

Respondent: Yes, well especially in [redacted] and [redacted] because…

Interviewer: Right.

Respondent: And so the first person to pick it up of the three of us usually says,
“And I’ll be dealing with this” and we copy the other two in.

Interviewer: Right.

Respondent: So that they know it’s been dealt with and we sort of…
Interviewer: Yes, so it’s a bit of teamwork really across...

Respondent: Yes, it’s good teamwork and the other thing which we do; we ensure that we keep in touch with the electorate. Outside election time we put out between three and four in-touch sheets about issues regarding the ward.

Interviewer: Yes, right.

Respondent: And at Christmas we send them a Christmas card.

Interviewer: And who do you send that to?

Respondent: To every household.

Interviewer: Everybody?

Respondent: Every house in the ward and the vast majority of them are delivered by the three councillors so they actually see us walking round as well, and we get a lot of...

Interviewer: That is important isn’t it, because the classic problem what people always say is, “You only see these politicians at election time.”

Respondent: Yes, that’s it; we still get accused of that, but we tend to have a good argument, and most people do respect that we’re there. Any public
meetings etc., we’re there in the ward etc., and I think we do represent
the ward well.

Interviewer: Yes.

Respondent: And all three of us have a reasonable majority.

Interviewer: Yes.

Respondent: I was re-elected in May and it’s the first time my percentage of the
vote has dropped below 50%.

Interviewer: Oh really?

Respondent: And it dropped to 43%.

Interviewer: Yes.

Respondent: And that was because of UKIP standing.

Interviewer: Yes, that was a bit of a national trend, that sort of...

Respondent: Yes, and it was, I think, the same day as the European elections, so...
181 Interviewer: Right, yes. So, where they got the bounce from it sort of fed through in terms of...

184 Respondent: Yes, but you know, I think in a four cornered fight, to still get 43% of the vote is...

187 Interviewer: Yes, it’s not bad is it? It’s not bad, and in a former life when I was a sort of political scientist, sort of crunching all these figures and stuff, and you’re right, to get that in a four cornered fight is good. I mean presumably in terms of just thinking about sort of ward representation, in terms of what drives you, I mean what’s the sort of key motivation behind that? Obviously you’ve got wider sort of politics stuff on it, but in terms of your motivation, what gets you out of bed in the morning in terms of ward councillor stuff, if anything?

196 Respondent: Well I sort of first got involved in politics because I wanted to make a difference and change things for the good, for the people of ..., basically, so it’s that really and with my political beliefs, but when you look at anything, Westminster or local councils, the vast majority of the work is done with cross party agreement, you know, I would say 80/85% of the work a council does is agreed upon by all political parties. It’s only the sort of last 15/20% where there’s disagreement, and that’s all we read about in the paper, it doesn’t sort of sell that.

206 Interviewer: Yes, that’s why [0:08:44] the Daily Mail.

208 Respondent: You know, all ... councillors agreed that we should give a good service to the elderly people of ..., you know.
Interviewer: Yes, I mean it is interesting that, because the thing that you see is obviously the division and the party political sort of fight of Westminster and everything else, but in a sense, and I suppose I've sort of come to this view, dealing with members of a period of years, I mean it strikes me that people are in it for the right reasons. From what I have seen of all parties regardless...

Respondent: Yes.

Interviewer: I think everybody is in it to try to do the right thing, as they see it, and to try and make a difference for the good, which is positive really, and I suppose as well, in a sense, all politics is local isn't it, in the sense that everything sort of comes back to the service you can give to that ward and what you can do for them, and I suppose it all feeds back into that. I mean it's fascinating to just get a picture of what a ward councillor would do for me, I mean it really is, because presumably again that plays into the wider sort of observation of you wanting to serve people or wanting to do public service for the people of ______ and the people of your ward.

Respondent: Yes.

Interviewer: What about, what's the situation in terms of - I mean very interesting discussion with ______ the other day, and I've looked at your community strategy in terms of what your priorities are, and I think it's fair to say that jobs is right up there; jobs and economic regeneration is pretty much up there.

Respondent: Absolutely, yes.
Interviewer: And was also telling me about the situation with Ofsted and the need to sort of deal with that situation and sort that out, and obviously you've got the challenges around health and social care and integration and everything else. I mean in terms of your top priorities councillor, just talk me through that, give me an idea of what the key thing is for [BLANK] at the moment. Give me a flavour.

Respondent: Well at the moment I would suggest that it's putting together a balanced budget for next year's budget process, and sort of get to grips with the savings that we need to make, which for [BLANK] is going to be £12.2 million we need to save.

Interviewer: What's that as a percentage?

Respondent: As a percentage of the net budgets now, we do a three year budget so this is for 17/18 and the net budget, we're reducing it down from – it's just over 160 million, the net budget.

Interviewer: Yes.

Respondent: So, it's a fair percentage.

Interviewer: Yes, I mean I read the other day that council funding from 2010 had been cut generally by about 30%.

Interviewer: Yes, but it's a massive amount.
Respondent: But if you look deeper into that though it's not quite as bad as that.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: It's something that I keep disputing because part of those savings is that back in 2010 there was a sort of standard 2% inflation increase for wages, well there's been no increase for wages but it's classed that 2% increase for the wages as reductions in spend.

Interviewer: Yes.

Respondent: Well to me that's false accounting.

Interviewer: Yes, I mean is it getting harder to make the savings, what's required?

Respondent: It is because as it stands at the moment we've managed to do it without any major impact on essential services, and that's been a priority across all parties.

Interviewer: Yes.

Respondent: There's been that thing that we've got to maintain the high standard and quality of service which we give to the people of [redacted].

Interviewer: Yes.
Respondent: And I think as we go down it gets harder and harder to do that.

Interviewer: Yes, because all the easy stuff has been done earlier on and then it gets to the...

Respondent: Yes but something which you talked about earlier is that I've always maintained that we could and should do a lot more in joint services with other councils, and we can reduce our costs that way without affecting the frontline services.

Interviewer: Yes.

Respondent: A few years ago with the conservative group leader in [redacted] we put a scheme together where we going to share a senior management team, which would run both councils, and that – just in the...

Interviewer: What sort of joint chief executives and...

Respondent: Yes, and senior management; the whole senior management structure would have been shared, you know, and we would still have sort of management at a lower level, in whichever...

Interviewer: Yes.

Respondent: And they'd be split sort of thing; the two councils would be run totally separately but we'd just have an agreement that the chief exec. would
spend part of the time in [REDACTED] and part in [REDACTED] and that was because we were both in opposition at the time, but our finance offices got together and they estimated that within two years, after sort of putting it in practice and settling down etc.

Interviewer: Yes, so for it to bed in, yes.

Respondent: That would have saved £2.5 million and by further integration there would have been much greater savings as it was further integrated in.

Interviewer: Yes, and presumably part of the motivation behind that is to do as much as you can in terms of shared services for sort of backup stuff, back office stuff.

Respondent: Back office stuff, yes.

Interviewer: So you can protect frontline.

Respondent: Yes, the most important thing is the people who actually provide the service to the general public, and I would argue that sometimes there's far too many tiers of management, and I also feel that there's, how can I put this? Some, not all, but some managers are there through length of service rather than capability.

Interviewer: Yes, I've seen it, no, you're right; I mean I've seen it in different authorities. It's a bit different for me sometimes because the work that I get, I get on a contract basis, and you're only as good as your last failure basically, so it is what it is, and once a contract is up, you've got someone else, but it is true, I suppose. I suppose there are people
that you see in different places that have been there for a very long
time, and it’s difficult to sort of get people to move along really.

Respondent: Yes, but when I was leader before of council in 2009/10, I
started off with a restructure of the senior management team, and at
the time, the senior management team was 33 and I cut it down to 26,
and two of that 26 was actually financed by the Primary Care Trust.

Interviewer: Right.

Respondent: So in effect, cost wise to the council, it was down to 24, and once
you’d paid all the redundancies etc., that fed through to £600,000 a
year savings.

Interviewer: Oh so it’s not bad is it really?

Respondent: No, and that didn’t affect frontline services at all, you know, nobody
noticed any difference at all.

Interviewer: That’s interesting.

Respondent: I actually – my next step then was to actually do the same with middle
management, but officers tend to suggest that you cut the frontline
and the management structures never change, so I sort of sent out
this clear signal that, you know, I’m starting at the top and I’m working
down.

Interviewer: Yes.
Respondent: And I'd have gone then, through to the middle management and made reductions which I think I'd sort of set in place how to do that, and better procurement things which we did, which I like to think helped the liberal – first the liberal and then the Labour leadership in years since then.

Interviewer: Yes.

Respondent: You know, because groundwork was done.

Interviewer: Because the framework was there, yes.

Respondent: And in 2010 I actually set a budget which gave a 1% reduction in council tax without cutting a single frontline service at all.

Interviewer: Right.

Respondent: And no increases in costs apart from some inflation of costs, you know, like for swimming pools etc., they just went up by about 2% for inflation.

Interviewer: What fascinates me is, I read somewhere the other day that people are actually quite surprised that the local authority sector has been able to absorb a lot of these cuts on the scale that they have, and they're quite surprised that they're able to do it.
Respondent: Yes, I'm not, I was quite adamant that we could have reduced council tax considerably, or spent more money on services, before the austerity measures about the current government, this was in 2008/9 when I...

Interviewer: Right, so that was sort of the back end of the ___[0:19:56] from the financial crash.

Respondent: Yes, in 2008 I became leader, I was deputy leader before then and responsible for – I’d done the Conservative budget for a number of years, and I’ve sort of won the argument within the group that we can look to reduce, and I started work in 2008 to look at how we could get that down with the officers, and in 2008, the budget for the three years forecast an increase in council tax of, I think it was 4.8% each year. The first year that I got real control of our budget process and I’d got the groups back in to do it, I reduced that to 2.5%. The following year I cut it down to an increase of 1.7% and the following year it was a 1% decrease, and I think that’s the first decrease in local taxation that has ever occurred.

Interviewer: Yes.

Respondent: Certainly in [redacted] and I don't think it had happened before in [redacted] council or any of the district councils.

Interviewer: How much of a challenge is it? Because just picking up on this issue about budgets, and it fascinates me, because everything sort of comes back to budgets and stuff. Picking up on a discussion I had with [redacted] when you think about the priorities that you’ve got in this borough in terms of jobs, and to sort out jobs, you know, you’ve got to sort out skills, you’ve got to sort out transport, you’ve got to sort out a
range of things, when you’re dealing with sort of public health matters, you’ve got challenges around air quality, stopping smoking, all kinds of issues, and all these issues are interlinked aren’t they, and some of them you will only get a payoff out of, way down the line.

You know, like some of these public health issues around obesity you mentioned, sorting all these issues out, and the really complex issues, the really cross cutting issues that you’d need to do something in terms of investment; you’d need to put a lot of work and a lot of time in to do it presumably, but you’ll only get that payoff later down the line, how do you juggle with that? Is it easy to sort of argue for resources to go in, if the payoff is going to be 20/30 years down the line?

Respondent: Yes, you’ve got to have that vision for the future, and what it’s likely to be like in the future.

Interviewer: Yes.

Respondent: I would suggest it’s difficult to do it for 30 years at a time, but certainly...

Interviewer: Yes, it’s hard to do it for three.

Respondent: Yes, certainly five to 10 years, you can see things by investment.

Interviewer: Yes.

Respondent: Which is – I think there are some good examples where we’ve done that in social care, both adults and children social care; we’ve invested
in there, you know, in 2008 we invested in two new swimming pools. That was a bit of good fortune; we had a share in Leeds [blurred] airport and we received pay out from that, because the airport was owned by the five West Yorkshire authorities, each with a varying degree of shareholdings in them, and so all five agreed to dispose of our shareholding, and...

Interviewer: So that was sold off to a private company was it?

Respondent: Yes.

Interviewer: Right.

Respondent: And with our share of the investment which we got back, we built two new swimming pools.

Interviewer: Right.

Respondent: You know, so that...

Interviewer: So that played into that longer term issue about sorting out health and sorting out leisure and everything really?

Respondent: Yes.

Interviewer: Because all these things are linked in aren't they? I mean that's what fascinates me about it.
Respondent: Yes, they are, and I would think actually about – by the government giving us back the powers for public health, that sits well, I think, with the council and you know, back in 2008/2009, we started talking with the primary care trust at the time, and the national health service, about what we could do to work much closely together.

Interviewer: Yes.

Respondent: A, to cut costs, but at that time it was to cut costs so that we could invest more in the services of our health and social care parts. Because if we have better sports facilities for people, they're fitter, they don't need the hospital as much.

Interviewer: Yes.

Respondent: And so there are savings there and we were putting the argument across that those savings have got to be shared.

Interviewer: Yes.

Respondent: Because although we make an investment the hospital benefits.

Interviewer: Yes.

Respondent: Some of that should come back to the council for the investment.
Interviewer: Yes, so you want some pay back on that to sort of reinvest?

Respondent: Yes.

Interviewer: And I mean that is interesting to me because it sort of shows how everything links together, and presumably when you look at an issue like health and social care and the integration around that, and sort of sorting out issues around dementia, or even sorting issues around early years education, you know, everything has got to link together. And, I suppose if you think about jobs and the issue about being able to grow the local economy, being able to get the right skills and to train people up so that they can take jobs and be able to attract jobs, so you’re thinking about transport and the line that comes through from Manchester, which everybody, myself included, trundles through on that, 5 miles an hour.

Respondent: Yes.

Interviewer: I mean it’s all linked in. I mean in terms of the importance of partnerships to get those issues sorted out, I mean just give me a flavour on that.

Respondent: Oh it’s highly important, you know, if as leader at the council, I started shouting about how important it is to invest in the – to electrify the line and put some decent rolling stock on and increase the signalling system so that we can get more trains running along, you know, because at the moment because of – in parts of the it’s a very old signalling system.

Interviewer: Yes.
Respondent: So, because of that, for rail safety reasons, we can only have a train about every 13 minutes.

Interviewer: Is that right?

Respondent: With a modern train system you can have them every five or six minutes. So, we could almost double the number of trains available on the line. If those things came through, I was told a number of years ago that the [ ] line, they were looking to electrify it in the late 50's.

Interviewer: Is that right?

Respondent: And I'm assured that whenever work was done on the track, they dropped the track so that there was headroom under the bridges for electrification, and when Summit tunnel was closed, I don't know if you remember that.

Interviewer: Yes.

Respondent: There was a fire and it was closed for about two years in the late 90's, I'm told they also dropped the track there as well for possible future electrification, because they had to relay the track throughout the tunnel, and so they reduced the - they increased the depth of the tunnel so that it could take electrification.

Interviewer: So what's the hold up on that? Is it just the money to do it?
 Respondent: It's the money to do it, yes.

 Interviewer: The money to do it.

 Respondent: And a few weeks ago, I speak to – they had a meeting in Leeds, an announcement where the prime minister came up, and Patrick McLoughlin...

 Interviewer: Yes, when he got attacked by the ___[0:28:49].

 Respondent: Yes, the secretary of state for transport came up.

 Interviewer: Yes.

 Respondent: And as I was leaving – I always go across to Leeds on the train, and I was leading to come back to [censored] on the train and Patrick McLoughlin just stopped me as I went out of the door and asked me if I knew the way to the railway station. That was a bad mistake of his, because he had a 10 minute walk with an ear bashing about the need for – and I got a promise from him that he would come up and have a meeting.

 Interviewer: Really?

 Respondent: And he's coming on Monday.
Interviewer: Ah well done. I mean presumably sorting that issue out is probably important, but one of the things that [redacted] said to me on Monday was that – because I was asking about these travel to work areas in terms of how [redacted] sits with that, and he was saying to me “Well you know, it’s primarily Leeds and [redacted] and I said, “Well what about Manchester?” He said, “Oh it’s difficult because of the lakes.”

Respondent: Yes but people do live in [redacted] and travel to Manchester.

Interviewer: Yes.

Respondent: Now they tend to earn good salaries.

Interviewer: Right.

Respondent: And I think it’s a real plus for [redacted] because a proportion of those good salaries are spent in the economy in [redacted].

Interviewer: Yes.

Respondent: You know they come back to [redacted] and go to the excellent eating places we have.

Interviewer: Yes.

Respondent: The children spend their pocket money etc. in the local community.
Interviewer: Yes, so it all comes back into [redacted].

Respondent: Yes.

Interviewer: So if that link could be improved and you could improve those journey times to Manchester, presumably that would be a real boost for [redacted].

Respondent: Oh yes, and with the changes in the hub in Manchester, we should be able to get direct links to the Manchester airport, which would be excellent.

Interviewer: Oh right, yes.

Respondent: And if we can’t get a direct link at least we could go to Victoria from [redacted] and just swap platforms and get on a train to the airport, rather than having to go to Piccadilly.

Interviewer: Yes, because this is the thing, I mean transport is interesting because it shows, I suppose, the effect of sort of needing the thing to be integrated.

Respondent: Yes.

Interviewer: Needing to get – I mean the argument about HS2 presumably, and you’re right slap bang in the middle of it here on that Y.
Respondent: Yes.

Interviewer: I mean the arguments around that, there was lots of talk in the media about it being in terms of journey time to London, but of course the other issue is capacity and connectivity because as far as I can see on it, unless they sort out that west coast mainline, you won’t even be able to get a seat on it.

Respondent: Yes, this is the main point, you know, the high speed train, yes, you get to London quicker, but you will free up more time on east and west coast lines for local and goods traffic which again will help the local economy.

Interviewer: Yes.

Respondent: And one thing that I’m keen about as well is to ensure that we do have good connections to the new station in Manchester and Leeds to connect into the High Speed 2. I’d love a High Speed 3 to come through [redacted] but I think...

Interviewer: It’s not going to is it at the moment?

Respondent: No, well I think it would be far too expensive and I see the best way and most economical route would be up via Skipton area and a route up that way, sort of thing.

Interviewer: Oh right.
Respondent: And I think you could almost get by without having to tunnel, because
that's usually the most expensive.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: You know, you can follow the lines, if you look at that route, I think that
is a strong possibility of a route.

Interviewer: Would that go up sort of round Keighley area and up towards Skipton?

Respondent: Yes, somewhere round about that area, up above Keighley you know.
I'm just trying to think, is it Steeton, that sort of area?

Interviewer: I know, yes.

Respondent: Come across to that area and across to Leeds sort of thing, following
the – I think you'd come up the Ribble Valley and down the Aire
Valley.

Interviewer: I know where you mean, yes.

Respondent: That sort of thing, and because you're in the valley sort of thing, I just
think that that is...

Interviewer: That sounds like the best route.
Respondent: A good route for it because it wouldn’t be as expensive.

Interviewer: What did you think about the – I mean just whilst we’re on transport, because it fascinates me, I mean it’s got that many links into everything else, in terms of the One North proposals to try to – obviously George Osborne has been saying what he’s said on that, there are issues about trying to improve the connectivity across the Pennines and trying to improve the links for freight as well from Liverpool to Hull, I mean what’s your thoughts generally on that?

Respondent: Well I always think that High Speed 3 should be Liverpool and major cities through to Hull and up to Newcastle, and join the lot, so I’m fully...

Interviewer: Yes, it doesn’t work otherwise does it?

Respondent: No, and that – we could really make a major impact on the northern economy and create the jobs which are needed.

Interviewer: Yes.

Respondent: And one of the pleasing things, I think, is that – I’ve forgotten which company it is but it’s one of the Japanese companies, are actually talking about a new factory up in the north east for production of trains.

Interviewer: Oh really?
Respondent: Yes, so we’d have Bombardier in Derbyshire and a new – I’m trying to think which – it’s one of the big international Japanese companies who are talking about a factory up there, and why not? The only new trains that have been purchased for the north – in this area in the north of England anyway, and I think pretty much the north of England, has been the electrified line from Leeds up to Skipton, you know, that’s the Aire Valley route sort of thing. And those trains came from Portugal.

Interviewer: Is that right?

Respondent: Yes.

Interviewer: It’s mad isn’t it?

Respondent: We invented the bloody form of transport, you know, and we import – and I think that’s absolutely criminal to our heritage.

Interviewer: I went to a meeting with Downtown Business Organisation that operates in Leeds and Manchester and whatever, and we had a debate a couple of weeks ago in Leeds about devolution to Leeds and what will happen, and one of the things to come out of that was this sort of criticism that a lot of these things are being – in terms of trains, that we’re bringing them in from abroad and it’s just mad. I mean presumably again that opens up the other question about getting skills of people to do it and making sure that you’ve got the skills in place. It’s a long-term issue.
Respondent: Yes, and that’s important as well, because I do feel that schools are letting down the people, you know, we are not stretching children; all children should be stretched, and every child has a talent, and the schools should find that talent and encourage it, and no child should be wrote off as being not worth it, and unfortunately that does happen.

Interviewer: Yes.

Respondent: Which is why I’m absolutely over the moon about the changes which Gove introduced about education; every education list – he’d shoot me for saying that, you know, I do feel that they are making a difference and if you go to these successful schools now who are getting good Ofsted’s, they have strong management, strong discipline in the school and the children learn. You can see that because the results improve and that’s what we should have in every school; every school should be top Ofsted rating, otherwise...

Interviewer: Yes, because education matters so much doesn’t it, in terms of everything else.

Respondent: Absolutely yes.

Interviewer: And if you don’t get that right...

Respondent: Child poverty etc., the best cure is to give the children a really good start in life and get them out of the habit of generations of the family not working, and get them out learning.

Interviewer: Yes.
Respondent: I feel it is the only way out of child poverty.

Interviewer: I mean it is so crucial, I mean my mum’s retired now but she was a primary school teacher for 30 years, and it’s such a key thing isn’t it, if you don’t get that right, you can’t build on anything else, and it’s got a sort of knock on effect.

Respondent: Yes.

Interviewer: What do you think about – just thinking about this thing about powers and about Leeds city region, just picking up in terms of education and skills, I mean do you feel at the moment that you’ve got enough powers in terms of skills funding? Have you got enough funding? Have you got enough powers in terms of skills to be able to look into what you need to develop the local economy or do you need more?

Respondent: Well you can’t take money from an empty pot, and if you look at the economy, you know, the national debt is increasing; every minute at the moment the national debt increases, and until we’ve got rid of the deficit, and we’re still talking about the deficit, not the debt.

Interviewer: I know, you’re right.

Respondent: And until we’ve got that in hand, we can’t really spend too much. But, you know, again the government is looking ahead, that we can’t just stand still and cut taxes, we’ve got to look to the future as well, which is why they’re looking for this investment, and I think the north is getting a much better case than they’ve had in the past.
826 Interviewer: Yes.

828 Respondent: I do feel quite strongly actually that the best vehicle for some of this is the LEPs, the Leeds city region LEP, to have businessmen themselves involved, because it's great just politicians thinking that we know best, but I like to listen to people who've actually put their own money on the line, and they're sort of saying...

834 Interviewer: Well do you know what councillor, it's very interesting that you should say that, because first of all, I went to the Northern Futures event in Leeds last week with the deputy prime minister, one of the things to come out of that was, was that people said exactly that, the fact that it needs an entrepreneurial spirit, it needs businesses to take a risk and to drive it, and the other thing is, is that in Liverpool, we saw – we were lucky in terms of the Capital of Culture that we got back in 2008 and that drove a lot in terms of regeneration and investment, and we were very lucky in terms of that.

But the other thing that we were lucky with, and we got it through just on the right side of the recession and the austerity issues, was the redevelopment of Liverpool One, the city centre retail stuff in Liverpool, which has brought Liverpool up, I think it was 15th in the country to 5th, in terms of the retail; it really sort of reshaped that. But, I think one of the big things that we found in Liverpool was the fact that that was private sector funding, and it really showed a confidence. Because in the past, there has been public sector funding, which is fine, but you know, it didn't give that sort of buzz to the place really.

853 Respondent: Yes, Heseltine I think started that with pouring money into Liverpool, and it was just pouring it into a bottomless pit.
Interviewer: Yes it needs a strategy, doesn’t it?

Respondent: Yes.

Interviewer: It needs a strategy and it needs the sort of partners in terms of business for it to...

Respondent: Yes, and with the backing of the community, because you’ve also got to have the community behind it as well.

Interviewer: Yes, just on that issue though, I mean in terms of, you’ve told me about the partnership work and about the importance of the LEP and the importance of business, and in terms of the council and the council’s democratic mandate, you know, in all this the council stands out because it’s got a democratic mandate that other people don’t have.

Respondent: Yes, just under 40% of the electorate bothering to vote for us.

Interviewer: There is always that [0:42:18] slightly better than the turnout on the police commissioners, but just on that issue, I mean do you find, first of all that that gives the council as a whole, an added legitimacy, and secondly, do partners respect that? I mean do partners respect the fact that the democratic mandate there? Does it have any impact on what you do? Just give me an idea about the community leadership stuff?

Respondent: Well, I think they do, you know, I think partners do respect, but I think partnership in [rest of sentence not legible] works because there’s mutual respect.
Interviewer: Right.

Respondent: And it’s all parties respect the need that we’ve got to work with the private sector, and our public sector colleagues; the health service, the CCG etc., you know, it’s got to be partnership work and that is as well with consulting with the public as well.

Interviewer: Yes.

Respondent: And you’ve got to explain what’s happening to the public, so that they get behind it as well, and they see the benefits of it.

Interviewer: Is it difficult to get the public interested in this stuff or are they turned on by it?

Respondent: The best example that I can say is that in our health and wellbeing board, you know, we partnership with national health service and the CCG, and I keep telling the doctors, I’ve said, “You really ought to lead on this because there’s about 20% of the population out there believe what politicians say. 80% believe what you say.”

Interviewer: Right yes, that’s true.

Respondent: So, I always push on that, you know, that’s just an example, they’ll listen to you.
Interviewer: Yes.

Respondent: And similarly, I firmly believe that businessmen should be listened to because they know what’s best for their business and what will give them encouragement to expand and create more jobs and more wealth in [redacted].

Interviewer: Yes, so presumably, I mean just thinking about that issue about inward investment, I mean presumably – what happens? If you get a company that wants to come to [redacted] and they give you a ring and say, “Councillor look, I’m looking at bringing this here, but I need X, Y, Z”, I mean what happens then? Do you then sort of start having a think and having a chat with the economic development people about, have we got the site? Have we got the skills? Just give me a flavour.

Respondent: Well we like to be a bit more proactive because we try and identify sites which are going to meet the criteria of new businesses.

Interviewer: Right.

Respondent: And whether we like it or not, it’s difficult to find businesses who want to invest in [redacted].

Interviewer: Is it really?

Respondent: Well it’s so difficult to get to; the road infrastructure etc., if you’re...

Interviewer: I love [redacted] as well, it’s one of my favourite towns; I love it.
Respondent: It is, it’s a superb place.

Interviewer: Yes, I got a tour of the top of the town about 20 years ago and fell in love with the place.

Respondent: But if you think about it, if you were building a factory to manufacture widgets which you’re going to send throughout the UK and possibly Europe, do you want to invest in a place in which it’s going to take you at least an hour to get to the nearest motorway no matter which way you go, or do you want to build it in Brighouse or where it’s five minutes up the road?

Interviewer: Right, yes.

Respondent: So we’ve got to look – and of course the is absolutely superb, it’s a fantastic place but it’s a valley and there’s very little flat land in a valley.

Interviewer: Yes was saying this the other day, about housing, that it’s difficult to sort of find anywhere to put houses.

Respondent: Yes, so you need flat land and we’ve got to make sure that we have land available for businesses to move to.

Interviewer: Yes, is that protected in terms of your local plan? Have you got…?
Yes, well it's in the process of being finalised is our plan, we haven't – but we should be safe from being challenged; usually you're only challenged on the housing front. And we have…

Like Cheshire east this morning.

We have certainly enough land designated for housing to meet our commitment for well over five years, already allocated.

Right, okay.

In our existing development plans.

Yes.

So you can never say never, but there is a good chance that nobody will be able to successfully challenge us because of that, but we still need to get our plan organised, and in that we do try and identify places where it would be suitable for businesses to be created, and if a business wants to move into [redacted] or expand in [redacted] and the place they want, if it's in greenbelt, I would say for housing, no, because we should be able to find sufficient land in Brownfield and areas which are not greenbelt, to build houses.

Yes.

But if it's a business and we've got a lot of greenbelt around the M62, if they wanted something, I would go out of my way to try and ensure
that they got that planning permission. We’d have to go through the
planning regulations etc. to justify it, but of course one of the
justifications for development in greenbelt is the creation of jobs which
would benefit the whole community.

Interviewer: Are there any particular sort of – I mean presumably as leader you
would welcome a lot of investment in terms of business, but is there
any particular business that you’re keen to attract in [redacted]? Is
there any particular sector that you’re looking at? Is there anything in
particular you think, “Well if I could get that, you know, it would have a
real impact”?

Respondent: Well I think the major thing about [redacted] I would say, is that we
don’t want to lose [redacted] Banking Group.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: It’s one of the headquarters in [redacted] one of their three headquarters,
and last time I was leader, it was under serious consideration.

Interviewer: Because that’s former [redacted] isn’t it?

Respondent: Yes, the [redacted] Building Society, so I fought very hard to help with
other people and it was a Labour government at the time and the
minister came up on a regular basis with us to talk with [redacted] Banking
Group to try and ensure that we retained that presence in [redacted]
because that would have major impact on our local economy. They
employ more than 5,000 people in [redacted].

537
Interviewer: Gosh, so it is really important.

Respondent: Yes, but after seeing that, the one thing that I would try and discourage is more jobs reliant on the finance industry, because if you have all your eggs in one basket...

Interviewer: I understand it.

Respondent: So, I would welcome basically anything but I would prefer diversification.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: On the job front. And when you think, going back into heyday, we had woollen mills, we had carpet factories, we had machine tool engineering, we had biscuits, we had sweets; McIntosh's and Riley's. There was a good diversification of industry, you know, and we have a good history.

Interviewer: It's brilliant.

Respondent: And one of the...

Interviewer: And it's such a proud place as well, I mean that's what strikes me about it. Whenever I come to whenever I come to West Yorkshire, it stands out that there is a pride about the place, you know, people are really proud of the history, the culture or the tradition, you know, it's brilliant to see.
Respondent: Yes, I mean whenever I have opportunity to discuss with business people who are possibly considering coming up into [redacted] I always point out, if you look at the industrial record of the people of [redacted] they are not militant, they actually work, usually cheaper; it’s less cost to employ people in [redacted] they’re more loyal so you save on training costs.

Interviewer: Yes.

Respondent: And this was all actually backed up with – when [redacted] actually looked and analysed this, they agreed that they have far less staff issues...

Interviewer: Far less trouble here than elsewhere.

Respondent: In [redacted] they don’t have to pay as much for the staff. It’s not millions of pounds but you know it’s just slightly cheaper...

Interviewer: [0:52:58] there’s a stability in terms of the staff here.

Respondent: Yes, there’s that loyalty, people tend to, if you get a job you stick with that job, and you know, it used to be sort of like a job for life, and firms respected that. The employers tend to look after the staff because they respected that.
Respondent: So you know, I think the workforce in [redacted] is one of our biggest assets and we don't sell it enough.

Interviewer: Yes, what about tourism here, I mean as I say, you know, I've come here for years, I've always loved it; what's the – how big is tourism in terms of your economy here and what you do?

Respondent: I can't give you any exact figures off the top of my head, but it is important; there are quite a lot of people employed in tourism of one sort or another, and we have some real gems. Hopefully down by the railway station we've got Eureka, the children's museum.

Interviewer: Yes.

Respondent: We've got 90 year old minster, the [redacted] Minster, we've got the Square Chapel for the arts, and in 2016 we'll have the [redacted] reopening.

Interviewer: Yes, do you know, that is an absolute gem, I fell in love with that place years ago when I first come here and it's absolutely brilliant.

Respondent: Yes.

Interviewer: And [redacted] was telling me the other day about the plans that you've got to sort of get that back, it's fantastic.
Respondent: Yes, I mean a lot of people are upset because they’re saying that we’re ripping up the old cobbles and the slope, do you remember the slope?

Interviewer: Yes, I do.

Respondent: And those cobbles.

Interviewer: Yes.

Respondent: And local people sort of say, “Oh you’re spoiling the heritage” and I point out to them that when that was first opened, for quite a while actually, for about 50 years or so of its existence, that was grass and sheep grazed in it.

Interviewer: Right.

Respondent: And again, just going back to the – that was built by businessmen and it was only actually operated as [redacted] for just over 20 years and it made its money, and it was only open two hours a week.

Interviewer: Is that right?

Respondent: Yes, on a Saturday it opened for two hours, now we believe that there was a lot of trade done outside in the public houses etc.

Interviewer: Right, yes.
Respondent: But that only opens for two hours, and the other thing which people often don’t realise, but as you walk round it there isn’t an out facing window.

Interviewer: Is that right?

Respondent: And that was because the cloth was so valuable it reduced the risk of breaking.

Interviewer: Oh my god. I mean it is – you’ve said about it being a gem, I mean it really is, it’s one of those places that you just think – and presumably when it’s refurbished, it’s going to be a real sell isn’t it?

Respondent: Oh yes. I mean hopefully we’ll...

Interviewer: I’ll definitely be coming back to look at it, it will be fantastic.

Respondent: We’ll attract some good restaurants and cafes etc. in there.

Interviewer: Yes.

Respondent: Hopefully it will be open from 7.00 or 8.00 in the morning through until midnight.

Interviewer: Yes.
Respondent: And it’s not going to be...

Interviewer: Because [redacted] was telling me that one of the issues that you had with it was, some of the units in there are very small in terms of getting visitors to sort of take any interest in it.

Respondent: Yes, they are, I mean they were just small individual shops.

Interviewer: Yes, I remember going in and looking at them and stuff. But it’s brilliant, it really is, I mean you must be very proud of getting it sorted out.

Respondent: Oh yes, and we’ll...

Interviewer: And it will integrate as well won’t it, in terms of in the town centre.

Respondent: Yes, we see that as, we actually refer to it as the town square and hopefully we can have much more entertainment, by levelling it off, it lends itself for so much more uses, and especially in each corner as well, we’re going to have a little amphitheatre in each corner.

Interviewer: Wow.

Respondent: You know so that you can have different things going on in four different corners of the...
1185 Interviewer: Yes and how long is that going to be open for in terms of the opening hours? Is it going to be open into the evening?

1188 Respondent: Yes, well that’s what I was saying. Hopefully it will open 7.00 or 8.00 in the morning and stay open until midnight.

1191 Interviewer: Oh really, so that should give a real buzz to the town centre, because that’s part of the problem these days with places, isn’t it, that 6 o’clock comes and the place just shuts down?

1195 Respondent: Yes, and hopefully there will be always something going on there, I feel that has the potential to be the Covent Garden of the north.

1198 Interviewer: Wow, I love that, I really do love it, I think it’s brilliant and I think as well, and I speak as a planning lawyer on this because I know there’s all these issues trying to sort these things out, but I sometimes think that if you can bring these old buildings, part of the challenge is, not only to use them but to integrate them with everything else that’s going on, and to sort of bring them back into modern use but to give them a real purpose for the community.

1206 Respondent: Yes, and I think this is one of the good points about [BLANK] as a whole as well, if you look at all the towns, to a large degree we have retained our Victorian heritage.

1210 Interviewer: Yes.

1211

1212 Respondent: You know, our town centre, I think is absolutely superb.
Interviewer: It is, and the other thing that strikes me, just sort of walking round, not only but of course there's a lot happened in in terms of the investment that's gone into that, and there's just a real buzz about those places.

Respondent: Yes.

Interviewer: You know there really is. You see people going in and out and it's busy. It's absolutely brilliant.

Respondent: The council actually – we've been heavily criticised for spending £40,000 on trying to sort of publicise and the way that we've done it, we got an expert PR company and this results in sort of marketing techniques around pretty gritty, and I think it actually sums up because it is gritty and it is extremely pretty.

Interviewer: But it's a living environment isn't it? You know, it's not a museum; people are living and working there.

Respondent: Yes, and people are proud of it.

Interviewer: Yes, and rightly so.

Respondent: One of the problems is though that they're not particularly proud of but they're proud of they're proud of they're proud of villages like [1:00:39].
Interviewer: Yes, they’re brilliant.

Respondent: And ___[1:00:42] Bridge and all the way through, sort of thing.

Interviewer: It’s brilliant, but I suppose in a sense, that that’s similar with a lot of boroughs.

Respondent: Yes.

Interviewer: I mean I read something about ______ a few weeks ago and they said a similar thing about that; the people are proud of Huddersfield.

Respondent: Yes.

Interviewer: ______ you know, where did they get that from, type of thing?

Respondent: Yes, but I think as more people use that pretty gritty they will come to like it, and sometimes it’s good to have something which people sort of thing, ______ and they think, “Oh pretty gritty.”

Interviewer: Yes, it’s good, it clicks doesn’t it?

Respondent: Yes, and I think that could be a major thing for us to improve on our tourists and on business connections and new businesses coming into ______.
Interviewer: Yes.

Respondent: And one area which I think we are growing is in the IT sector, it's way beyond me, I've just moved on from a quill pen.

Interviewer: My brother's in IT and he knows all the ins and outs and I just say, "Oh can you sort that out?"

Respondent: Yes, my grandchildren show me how to use my iPhone.

Interviewer: What's amazing though is that they pick up on it now, don't they, so quickly, it is literally second nature to do emails, to do – they just don't even think of it.

Respondent: Last year I was in Manchester at a shop, and my wife was in the changing rooms trying something on and there was this father and son, and the son was three, and he was working a computer there, you know, really flying round it and I was just fascinated by it, you know.

Interviewer: Yes, how do you do it?

Respondent: Yes, and I was talking to the father, sort of thing, you know, and he was sort of saying, "I thought I was quick until he came along."
Interviewer: It must be like learning languages though mustn’t it? It must be because if you can pick up that early, going back to education in schools, if you can pick on that early and you get into it, so that by the time you’re three you can sit there and whiz around on the iPad and everything else, you know, it’s...

Respondent: Yes, and if you look where – in two language families, they learn a lot quicker, you know, I was told a long time ago that the third language is much easier to pick up.

Interviewer: Yes.

Respondent: But I’m afraid at my school I spent most of my French lessons stood in the corridor, because...

Interviewer: You and me both.

Respondent: I don’t think the teachers believed that somebody could be so thick.

Interviewer: But I think it’s all about making it relevant isn’t it?

Respondent: Oh yes.

Interviewer: And I think in terms of IT, today in terms of jobs, it’s pretty ___[1:03:58] because I suppose even – I mean there was a report out yesterday from the people at John Lewis that said part of the problem – you probably saw it, part of the problem with the national economy is that too many jobs are low level.
Respondent: Yes.

Interviewer: And I think it was something like 20% of the jobs require primary school level attainment and the thing is they're trying to skill it up and try and do something.

Respondent: Yes.

Interviewer: Presumably in terms of that, you know, IT is pretty central.

Respondent: Oh yes, I mean when you think about it now, a car mechanic needs to be an expert on IT, because everything is done by computer now.

Interviewer: True.

Respondent: The computer tells you where the problem is.

Interviewer: It's true.

Respondent: So many things, and one criticism that I do have of the last government is that they tried to push too many people to university, and if you didn't go to university...

Interviewer: It's often said.
Respondent: You were a failure and then we're short of plumbers, electricians, which are highly skilled jobs.

Interviewer: You're right.

Respondent: And car mechanics etc., you know, and the respect for those jobs was taken away and that's why young people didn't want to go into them, and sciences, we've never pushed sciences enough, and that really is the future.

Interviewer: Yes, it's the sort of technology stuff isn't it, because I suppose if you can look into that, and there are all kinds of options in terms of the sort of green stuff that's coming through as well, in terms of green technology and everything else, it all sort of starts to link in.

Respondent: Yes.

Interviewer: But I mean just thinking about that in terms of too many people getting degrees, if you think of it, the thing that really drives business, I suppose, is the skills, the competences, and it's really that sort of practical apprenticeship stuff that you need isn't it?

Respondent: Yes, and some of the degrees are just totally useless. One that always sticks in my mind is in Sheffield they were running courses, degree courses on Star Trek; I love Star Trek, but a degree.

Interviewer: Bloody hell.
Respondent: And media studies, I was told by somebody at the BBC is that if they get a CV in and the degree is media studies it goes straight in the bin, you know. They just consider...

Interviewer: The only thing I wonder about now and I don’t know whether it’s [1:06:46] out or not, but I wondered about the fact that now that there’s the sort of cost element on the tuition fees that everybody is looking at, and it’s put the market at the forefront. I wonder now whether people think twice in terms of what they do, and I wonder now whether maybe there’s a bit more of a question as well, when I leave university I’m going to be £20,000 or £30,000 in debt, and what am I going to have that’s going to be able to allow me to go and earn something?

Respondent: Yes, I think they’re actually thinking of that now at 14 or 15, and they really are planning. I know that from my grandchildren.

Interviewer: I think that’s true.

Respondent: And other young people, they are planning way back there as to the courses that they need to do and they’re talking to the schools about the – I keep calling them O levels, the GCSE’s which they want to go to, to ensure that they get the A-level courses to ensure they get the university place that they want. Or the skills they need for whatever they want to go through.

Interviewer: It’s absolutely true; we’ve got somebody in our family at the moment that’s finishing off the A-levels, looking to go to university, and honestly she has planned that, really much more than I ever did. I said, “Oh I’ll do whatever I’m told”, but she has planned it and there’s
been much more thinking into it; it's absolutely amazing how people sort of...

Respondent: And I think people are coming round to apprenticeships are the way forward, and the only thing that I do disagree with some organisations is that they're using young people, because it's not really a true apprenticeship. I believe an apprenticeship means that you've got a job at the end of the training period.

Interviewer: Yes. You've got a concern that some are just using it for cheap labour?

Respondent: Yes, and there are some great young people; Cameron, she's an apprentice, and she lives in, I think it's Pudsey.

Interviewer: Right.

Respondent: She's got a family member who works in [censored] so she gets a lift, but she got off her backside and got this job because it's what she wanted.

Interviewer: Yes. That's the thing as well isn't it, and it's like everything else, when you've got in somewhere and you've seen how it's operating, you can learn much more from that and picking everything up from everybody else; you learn much more from that than you ever would from reading books. It's just the way it is, isn't it? Because if you're in that environment and you've got people there, you sort of pick everything up.
Respondent: And to be honest, even the more menial jobs, there’s a lot of expertise there, and we’re not passing that expertise on to the young people of the future.

Interviewer: That’s true.

Respondent: And I know this is the case with our gardeners; people who look after our parks etc., there’s a great deal of knowledge there but they’re all getting to retirement age and there’s no...

Interviewer: Yes, so it’s trying to make those jobs really appeal to...

Respondent: Yes.

Interviewer: Yes, and I suppose the other thing as well is you speak to people like that; they take an awful lot for granted, you know, I suppose if you were to speak to them they’d say, “No, no it’s only basic stuff”, but if you start talking to them and say, “Oh well ___[1:10:33]” you break it down, there’s all these things what they do, they take it for granted, but anybody else ___[1:10:39].

Respondent: Yes, where’s the best place to plant a particular flower; I’m such an expert that Anne bans me from even weeding because I tend to leave the weeds and pick up the flowers.

Interviewer: You and me both, so I couldn’t touch it.

Respondent: I’m the other extreme, but there’s so much skill in these jobs.
Interviewer: There is.

Respondent: You shouldn’t downgrade anybody’s job, because as I said before, everybody has talents and it may be classed as a menial job but it really has talents, and sometimes they make a menial job a pleasure, not only for themselves but the people who they affect as well.

Interviewer: It’s true.

Respondent: And my favourite example of that is in town centre, you’ll see him, he’s 64 years old because he retires next year, but he pushes the barrow round cleaning up the street. Most of the people in the town centre know him, they talk to him, he chats back to them, he’s our best PR guy.

Interviewer: Yes, selling the place, yes.

Respondent: And they tell him, “Oh there’s a pile of rubbish just down there.” And he just goes straight down there with his barrow, cleans it up.

Interviewer: Sorts it out, yes.

Respondent: Sorts it out for them.

Interviewer: Yes.
Respondent: And I think he does a fantastic job.

Interviewer: That’s brilliant isn’t it? I mean as you say, most of these jobs, the thing is, is that I’ve often thought people only realise the value of them if they’re not done.

Respondent: Yes.

Interviewer: If they’re not done and then the rubbish isn’t cleaned in the town centre and the town centre is a mess, then it starts to have a knock on effect, people don’t want to go there and it gets a bad reputation, and it’s true isn’t it, people behind the scenes sort of keeping everything going.

Respondent: Yes, I still maintain that there shouldn’t be a need for them because we should take our rubbish home or throw them in the bins provided.

Interviewer: That’s true.

Respondent: But unfortunately that will never happen.

Interviewer: Councillor it has been brilliant talking to you, I have really enjoyed it firstly, it’s an absolute privilege for me to come and have a chat with you and to sort of find out what happens and how you do stuff; it really is a privilege and I really do mean that; I’m very grateful to you. Is there anything else that you want to add? I mean in terms of your motivation, is there anything else that you want me to pick up on? Because I think it’s brilliant, and I think you’ve given a real showcase for I really do, I think it shines through.
Respondent: Yes, I mean I’ve lived here all my life, and you talk about this wonderful building we’re in; I like to tell people that Charles perfected his arts in Westminster and the good people of allowed him then to come up and build our town.

Interviewer: Quite right, as you say, that’s power in the north isn’t it?

Respondent: Yes, and this...

Interviewer: That’s the real devolution.

Respondent: Yes, and this whole building cost £52,000 to build.

Interviewer: Is that right?

Respondent: Yes, without any modern technology.

Interviewer: When was that?

Respondent: It was opened in 1863, and...

Interviewer: That’s fantastic.
Respondent: Sir Charles [redacted] actually died whilst it was being built and his son took over and finished it.

Interviewer: Is that right?

Respondent: Yes, but that was thanks to people like the Crossley family, famous of course for Crossley’s carpets and Dean Clough which is another fantastic place to look at.

Interviewer: Yes.

Respondent: And the only other thing that – I mean we’ve talked about the infrastructure and road transport etc., but the M62, and I remember when the M62 was being built in the late 60’s, everybody was telling me – well not everybody, but a large proportion of the people were saying, “That is a complete white elephant, it’s a complete waste of money”, who would say that now? And this is the argument that I use when people talk about the railways, the High Speed 2 and High Speed 3, if you look, the biggest growth in this country came about by the railway companies in the 19th Century that built up the infrastructure of the railways, and perhaps one of the advantages they had at that time is that they did not have the planning restraints that we have now.

Interviewer: Yes.

Respondent: They just got on; they got an act of parliament and did it.

Interviewer: Got it done, yes.
Respondent: Risking their own money again for it, and more often than not they were very successful.

Interviewer: Yes.

Respondent: And we all owe that connectivity around Great Britain to them. I think it sort of proved beyond doubt that transport infrastructure is extremely important and somehow we’ve got to sell that to the...

Interviewer: Yes, the powers that be.

Respondent: Yes, I call them dinosaurs.

Interviewer: Who don’t see it. There’s a northern directness on that. I mean I went to a meeting a couple of weeks ago with Sir Howard Bernstein, Chief Executive of Manchester of course, regeneration guru and everything else, and he came over to the Liver Buildings in Liverpool to sort of talk about HS2 or whatever else, and what he said was, he said that in the time that we’ve taken to debate HS2, and of course, [1:16:57] for a number of years yet, but he said in the time that we’ve taken to debate it, China have put in three lines.

Interviewer: And that just says it all doesn’t it really, in terms of trying to sort this out?
Respondent: Yes, I think the way we do it is the correct way but perhaps it shouldn't take quite as long, because the other good example is the third runway at Heathrow, that has got to happen.

Interviewer: Yes. It's been parked now until after the election.

Respondent: Yes, because nobody wants it in their backyard. They know the need for it, but I'm afraid that if you buy a house near an airport, you're going to have planes. I have one lady up in [redacted] who complains to me constantly every time she sees me about the noise of the church bells, and I just say to her, "Well you shouldn't have bought a house next to the church; it was there 100 years before your house was built."

Interviewer: Yes, it's amazing, I mean it really is, and I must say, I think at the moment just looking at this stuff, and looking particularly at these debates around devolution and powers and looking at the situation about One North and transport stuff, I'm hoping that there is now a consensus of opinion, possibly after Scotland and [1:18:47] there, I'm hoping now that there'll be a consensus of opinion across the parties to do something.

Respondent: Yes.

Interviewer: To sort it out, what might be a centralised system.

Respondent: Yes, I think there is agreement in the principle of devolution.

Interviewer: Yes.
Respondent: But there are too many arguments still raging about how that comes about.

Interviewer: You’re right.

Respondent: And actually I agree with George Osborne about a lot of things but I’m not a great fan of elected mayors.

Interviewer: Yes.

Respondent: It perhaps works in London but a model there doesn’t mean to say it’s going to work everywhere.

Interviewer: I think that this is one of the things, and I think actually that’s an interesting point because it was one of the points that came out of the deal in Greater Manchester a couple of weeks ago, that you cannot have a one size fits all; what works in one place isn’t going to work in another, and it’s all these local dynamics in different places. I mean in Merseyside, part of the problem that we have got in the Liverpool city region is the fact that the history of working together is perhaps not as strong as it was in Greater Manchester authorities and you’ve got personalities which are involved in that as well.

And I think that if there’s – I suppose if there’s any sort of division that Whitehall mandarins can point to, to say, “You’re not getting those powers, you’re not getting that funding”, I suppose I just sort of wonder whether we’re going to use that as an excuse, to sort of keep everything in London really.
Respondent: Yes, I mean that is something which I think George Osborne says loud and clear, he doesn't actually come out directly and say it but you know, the only game in town is elected mayors and if you don't have an elected mayor you don't get the cash and you can't do anything without the cash.

Interviewer: Yes, because it struck me from just reading that stuff in greater Manchester in terms of the deal there, that the key thing really is the city region, the combined authority and the sort of joint working around that.

Respondent: Yes.

Interviewer: Rather than the thing that ____[1:21:25] picked up on in terms of the elected mayor.

Respondent: Yes, and this is part of the problem as well, in – I talk about West Yorkshire; we've got the West Yorkshire combined authority which incorporates ____ we've got the Leeds city region which incorporates Craven, Harrogate, Selby, which are district councils of North Yorkshire County Council.

Interviewer: Yes.

Respondent: And we've also got Barnsley.

Interviewer: Is Barnsley in the Leeds city region?
Respondent: Leeds city region, yes, and that area as well is the LEP, well I think everything should be condensed down to the same – the West Yorkshire combined authority as far as I believe, the best model would be, if that was the Leeds city region as well.

Interviewer: I see, yes.

Respondent: Or incorporate, if it isn’t, then incorporate the boroughs, the district councils into it, but then they can’t really then be part of North Yorkshire because North Yorkshire would be looking to do some sort of deal for the whole of North Yorkshire.

Interviewer: Yes, because they can’t have, can they – am I correct in thinking, councillor, that they can’t have an area from a non-metropolitan county as part of the combined authority? They can’t have it can they? I know there’s an exception for .

Respondent: Yes, so they’ve already broke that rule. And, I think that’s more to do with the fact that is the holding Labour area in North Yorkshire, they wanted to join with the people in West Yorkshire who are predominantly Labour leaders.

Interviewer: Right, so there’s party politics at play?

Respondent: Yes.

Interviewer: It is really fascinating to sort of get your take on it councillor; I think it’s excellent in terms of what you’ve told me. I think it’s very instructive for me to learn about the issues around partnerships. It’s very instructive
to me to learn about how you get in with investments, how you bring up the area, it really is useful to sort of pick up on this, because working as a lawyer for the last 15 years, I've tended to think in tram tracks about law and legal matters, and I think what our discussion has shown and what the discussions with your colleagues has shown, is the fact there is a much, much wider thing that's operating beyond that.

And the key thing I suppose, is this sort of agenda really, in addition to delivering your services, which you have to do, in terms of social care and education and and everything else, which is probably sort of a day job that you've got to get right and you've got to keep on top of, but in addition to that, from what you've said here, you're constantly thinking about how you can improve, how you can shape the area, how you get in with investment, how you improve the town centre and how you can do these things. It's a constant...

Respondent: Yes, but that's all the quality of life isn't it, and it's money that does that, and if you can get it through private finance, the private sector investing money into it, the people they employ will help to make a better place as well.

Interviewer: Yes, and of course I bet is pretty much like Liverpool in the sense that everybody that's been there loves it.

Respondent: Yes.

Interviewer: We always say in Liverpool that it tends to get bad press from people who've never been, and yet it's true you know, because I go round the country and speak to people and anybody that's been there says, "Oh I loved it." And I trust it's the same here.
Respondent: Yes, I have a very good friend who comes from Liverpool and he says there's only a few areas where if you park your car it'll come back and there won't be any wheels on it. He said the vast majority of Liverpool it's safe to park.

Interviewer: It's true, I think the thing with it is, it's pretty much like Glasgow and Belfast for that matter; Belfast is one of my favourite cities, I love it, but if you think of those cities as well, I mean they always get a bad reputation, a bad press, you know, the same thing, anybody that's been there, I mean I've been to Belfast hundreds of times, and Glasgow as well, and whenever I go there I always get a very, very warm welcome, Newcastle the same, you go there, it's always good. So it's really about sort of selling the place isn't it? It's about selling the place, keeping everything positive, and I suppose not only that, but doing that, going back to your first point, doing that in a context, in an environment that's tight financially.

You've got to live within what you've got which gives you pressures and constraints, but in doing that, you're still sort of making the case to try and drive the area forward. And I think from a public service point of view, I don't know about party politics, but from a public service point of view, that's got to be highly commended, I mean it really has.

Respondent: Yes, but again I couldn't do that without the excellent staff which we have.

Interviewer: Well that's true; that is true, and said the same point to me earlier in the week; he said exactly the same. He said the thing is – because I asked him whether he enjoyed doing what he was doing and he said he loved it and everything, but he made that point to me as well, he said, "Well the thing is, I'm very fortunate in the sense that the team that's here are brilliant; they're all committed." And I must say
councillor, I’ve worked in about 25 or 30 different authorities because I move round on temporary contracts; I go wherever I’m asked to go to do whatever I need to do, and I never fail to be amazed by the public servants that I come into contact with, which are largely sort of planning officers, highways officers, economic development people, housing officers, licensing people, and they really do go the extra mile. And I think particularly in the context where there’s difficult financial settlement and there are savings to be made and everything else; people are juggling things trying to do everything, but what always sort of strikes me, there tends to be a good will there and a lot of these policies that I’ve seen tend to run on there, because the sort of public service ethic that people want to __[1:29:05].

Respondent: Yes, and the same argument I used about politics where most of it is in agreement, it goes for the staff as well, because you get the negative part because one officer has a bad day and upsets a member of the public, that gets the headlines.

Interviewer: Yes, that’s right.

Respondent: I’ve always maintained that in __we get far more compliments than we get complaints; I bet that’s pretty much the same throughout the country.

Interviewer: Yes. It’s just not on the front page of the local press, is it?

Respondent: No, I used to beat the drum about this in the 90’s when I was chairman of leisure services, our compliments far, far outweighed the complaints, but the __[1:29:54] would only talk about the complaints.
Interviewer: Yes, so you’re sort of constantly fighting that battle in terms of getting the good news story through aren’t you really in terms of trying to do it?

Respondent: Yes, but good news doesn’t sell papers.

Interviewer: No, they don’t want it. I think it’s brilliant, and from my point of view, as somebody who loves the north, loves Yorkshire, I love Lancashire too.

Respondent: Well we all have our crosses to bear.

Interviewer: But I think it’s brilliant to see [redacted] on the up, I really do, I think I’ll definitely be coming back in 2016 to see [redacted] I’ll definitely be doing it, and I’ve told other people about it as well, about the redevelopment and as far as I’m concerned, in terms of trying to get tourists here, I’ll definitely beat the drum on my side of the Pennines, there’s no doubt about it.

Respondent: And hopefully we’ll have a much better train system for them to come through [redacted].

Interviewer: Well yes that’s it, I mean, I suppose the lines – I’m doing this thing, it’s at Huddersfield University so I sort of go on the other line coming through, but you can really make that distinction between the two lines, the fast service to Huddersfield from Manchester, and [redacted]. Although that said, the scenery on that route is fantastic, and you’ve got time to look at it, that’s the thing.
Respondent: I think the big difference is though is that you’ve got relatively new trains on the Huddersfield line.

Interviewer: That is true.

Respondent: They’re 30 to 40 years old on the ...#

Interviewer: I know.

Respondent: And some of them were a temporary measure to get through until new trains could be sourced, and they’re still running.

Interviewer: Yes, I mean one of the comments from Mr Clegg last week at that Northern Futures thing, was about these pacer trains, and they’re on a number of lines, I mean they’re on the lines over in Lancashire from Preston to Blackpool or whatever, and honestly they are like cattle trucks, and I suppose the other issue as well is in terms of the investment, it’s obviously going to be paid for and this was the point of Sir Howard Bernstein, you’ve got to make the case for it to try and get this stuff done. But, I suppose the other thing in terms of trains is making them affordable as well, because that’s another issue.

I went to Newcastle a couple of weeks ago from Liverpool and it cost about £175 to get a ticket and it cost about £80 to get a first class ticket to Leeds, you know, they need to try and sort it out, but it’s about thinking long-term.

Respondent: Yes, but I think the transport is heavily subsidised.
Interviewer: Yes, oh it is.

Respondent: If you compare it to the cost of running a car etc., it’s cheap, but people somehow don’t look at that aspect of it.

Interviewer: Yes.

Respondent: I suppose if the service is right people don’t mind so much, I mean...

Interviewer: If there’s a regular service, you know when you get there the train’s going to turn up on time, and you’re going to have a comfortable, good experience whilst on the train, but if like in [redacted] you go down to catch a train at 8 o’clock to go to Leeds to work and you stand most of the way, it’s not a very pleasurable experience.

Respondent: No.

Interviewer: So it’s...

Respondent: So you’ve got the problems on that commuter route into Leeds have you as well, on the overcrowding issues?

Interviewer: Yes, I mean it has eased somewhat because a lot of the trains now have three carriages; they only had two before and you really were packed. Sometimes the train was full when it got to [redacted].

Respondent: Oh god.
Interviewer: Yes, I mean we see it on the lines from Liverpool to Manchester, so you get to 7.30/8 o'clock it's just absolutely rammed, you know.

Respondent: Yes, but I think as well though, we've got to have an integrated ticketing system.

Interviewer: Yes.

Respondent: Similar to London, I think the Oyster card in London is absolutely fantastic.

Interviewer: Have they got something similar at the moment in West Yorkshire? Is there something?

Respondent: Well it's getting there.

Interviewer: Yes.

Respondent: There's hopefully going to be integrated ticket card for the buses etc., and hopefully on the trains within West Yorkshire, but I should be able to use the West Yorkshire Oyster card to go to Manchester, and the people in Manchester should be able to use the Manchester Oyster card to come to Leeds, because it just makes everything so easy, and actually...

Interviewer: And the technology must be there mustn't it?
1917

1918 Respondent: Well it is; it is in London. Greater London all you need is an Oyster
card and you just swipe it as you go through the tube or the bus; it's a
fantastic system and we should have the same.

1921

1922 Interviewer: What's the issue councillor? I mean just while I think on; what's the
issue in terms of bus regulation? Is there any issue about re-regulating
the buses in terms of...

1925

1926 Respondent: Well some do, but I'm a firm believer in competition; I think
competition drives up standards and lowers prices.

1928

1929 Interviewer: Yes.

1930

1931 Respondent: When all these things were run by the councils etc., I don't think the
service was as great, I don't think British Rail was as good as it is
now. I think the workers at British Rail, I used to think they're
supposed to be civil servants and they weren't civil and certainly not
servants. And the old thing of the British Rail sandwich, it's the last
thing in the world that you wanted, whereas now you can get some
reasonable food on the train.

1938

1939 Interviewer: It's true – it is true, I mean that's certainly improved, I mean we've
noticed it I suppose most on the West Coast mainline, but also the
East Coast mainline is quite good as well isn't it? I came up to Leeds
last week and I was quite impressed by it.

1943

1944 Respondent: And if you can get cross ticketing, that's – and it does work in London
because on London...
1947 Interviewer: But that would be cross ticketing not only for West Yorkshire but presumably for Greater Manchester.

1950 Respondent: Yes, but we should be able to build up the agreements between the two, and why not?

1953 Interviewer: Yes.

1955 Respondent: They do it in London; if you look at all the different councils in London and Greater London, they have their sort of subsidies sorted out across London; you’ve got the different rail companies that you can use Oyster from, no matter which station you go out of, it’s usually a different station that runs trains – a different company that runs the main trains from there, but you can use your Oyster card on any of those within the Greater London area. You’ve got the underground which is a different system, you’ve got the buses in London and they are not all London transport buses, they’re individual; there are private companies competing with London as well, the London...

1966 Interviewer: Presumably as well, I mean the scale that – when you think in London, sort of 60/70 miles out of London, it’s probably a reasonable commute for somebody to do, whereas if you look here, 70 odd miles from Liverpool to Leeds, everybody would think it was a big effort to try and do that.

1972 Respondent: Yes, well it is because we’ve got a crap infrastructure.
1974 Interviewer: Yes, but it’s about building that infrastructure up isn’t it, to be able to sort of link in.

1975

1977 Respondent: Yes, I mean we have a daughter who lives in Tenterden in Kent, and from we usually – because Anne doesn’t like to change platform at Leeds, it’s a direct train to London, Kings Cross from

1978

1979

1980

1981

1982 Interviewer: On that ground central?

1983

1984 Respondent: Yes, which takes three hours. If they relaxed the rules and there was more space on the east coast line that could actually cut out Pontefract and it would be two and a half hours to get to London and back, journey time. That would actually improve people from to get to London on that service.

1985

1986

1987

1988

1989

1990 Interviewer: Yes.

1991

1992 Respondent: And then when we get to London we cross to St Pancras and within 35 minutes we’re in, what’s the station that we get off at in Kent? I’ve forgotten what it is, but it’s quite a distance down; in the car it usually takes me about an hour from the M25 to get there.

1993

1994

1995

1996

1997 Interviewer: Ah right, so it’s quite a way down.

1998

1999 Respondent: Yes, it used to be the main station for Eurostar in Kent.

2000

2001 Interviewer: It’s not Ashford is it?
2003  Respondent:  Ashford, that’s it; Ashford International, and then Hayley just usually
comes and picks us up.

2006  Interviewer:  Yes, so it’s not a bad ___[1:40:33].

2008  Respondent:  No, and that’s the High Speed 1 that we go on from there.

2010  Interviewer:  Of course, yes.

2012  Respondent:  That’s why, not many people have been on the High Speed 1 and see
the benefit.

2015  Interviewer:  I don’t think I’ve been on it but I think I might now.

2017  Respondent:  It’s a fantastic service and the trains are really comfortable; they’re
good quality trains.

2020  Interviewer:  It’s good, so it’s all back to sorting the infrastructure stuff out isn’t it?

2022  Respondent:  Yes.

2024  Interviewer:  It’s fascinating; it is absolutely fascinating for me to sort of pick up on
this because the thing I think that I have found, in the last three or four
weeks speaking to people, that I didn’t particularly appreciate before,
there’s that with the context of all the stuff in terms of One North and
all the debates around [1:41:25] is the importance, first of all, of sorting out infrastructure, and secondly sorting out the issue in terms of skills, going back to your point on apprenticeships and getting that sorted out.

And it strikes me that if you do that and then sort out the issues around digital economy, about broadband and get that sorted, but they are really the sort of building blocks, aren’t they, in terms of the long-term – building long-term economic strength.

Respondent: Yes.

Interviewer: That’s brilliant, councillor I really appreciate it, thank you very much, absolutely fantastic.

Respondent: Alright, thank you.

Interviewer: As I say have been...

END AUDIO

www.uktranscription.com
START AUDIO

Alex: Basically what happened was I trained originally as a political scientist. I then taught myself government law. I then qualified as a lawyer and sort of moving around all these different places.

I then got the chance to do this Thesis in Public Administration at Huddersfield, which suits me because it's Northern and everybody is friendly, so I am happy with that.

What I am really looking to try to do, is get an understanding in terms of what happens, particularly around partnership working, questions around outsourcing, whether that works, whether it doesn't work. What kind of leadership is needed, what kind of management skills are needed. Whether we think scrutiny works or doesn't work, it is those kind of things.

Obviously there are different aspects of that, I can explore different aspects with different people. Just in terms of your position just talk me through it, how long have you been at [redacted]?

[redacted]: Just about seven years but only in post as Head of Democratic and Partnership Services for about four years. I have become fairly familiar with the way in which [redacted] operates.

Alex: So you were Head of Legal before that?

[redacted]: Yes. There are slightly different titles that are used across different authorities, but before becoming Head of Democratic, which effectively is Head of Legal as well, it is not in the title, but it should be.
Alex: It is on the list isn’t it?

Mike: It is yes. I was what is called Legal Services Manager, which was in charge of the Legal Services Department, then I stepped up when my predecessor moved on to Wakefield, that is [redacted] She was in my role before she went to Wakefield.

Alex: Oh right.

Mike: She moved on, as I said, four years ago and then I stepped up. But we deleted the Legal Services Manager post, just because it was a convenient way of making a saving. So yes that is my role within [redacted].

Alex: Just thinking about [redacted] generally, what is the top priority here? I have dug out your community strategy and have been having a look at that? Is it fair to say top priority is jobs and economic regeneration?

Mike: I think it is up there, but I would probably put alongside that looking after the vulnerable members of the community, both adult and children.

You may know that we are in intervention at the moment as far as OFSTED is concerned.

Alex: I didn’t know that.
Not entirely positive reports on safeguarding of children. We are hoping to come out of that as the result of the next inspection which is imminent, but we have been under that process for the last three years.

There is a lot of work that has been done to try to ensure that the systems and procedures and especially the front line services are bolstered. As I said, we are hoping that we will come out of that as a result of the next inspection, which will be before Christmas, we don't quite know when.

Alex: So it is on the horizon pretty soon then?

Well we think it could even be, we could get the call tomorrow morning, which is the next point at which the inspection can start, because it is likely to be a four week process, so there is limited time before Christmas. But obviously that is a significant priority for the council.

Alex: How has that impacted on morale?

Yes, quite significantly. The service in particular, the CYP, Children and Young People's Service, obviously it is criticism of the practice that is in place within that service, inevitably has led to concern about the morale of staff and part of the problem has been with the turnover of social work staff as well.

Alex: It is difficult, isn't it, to get people and keep them, in the current climate?
Exactly. When we are in the area we are in, I am talking about West Yorkshire geographically then attracting permanent social work staff is difficult when they are in demand, and there tends to be a greater level of pay, certainly within Leeds City Council which is not too far away if you are working in this area and you can travel to those places.

But we have now in place some very good senior management, and as I said, we are hoping that we will be able to demonstrate that we have learned from having had the intervention in place, and the work that was undertaken, as far as that is concerned, will get us to a position where...

Alex: Is that intervention viewed as a positive in terms of a learning experience?

Well I suppose it could be viewed as a positive in terms of that, but we would rather not be in intervention because the next OFSTED review can go one of two ways. It could place us out of intervention. I suppose three ways - maintain intervention or the government could say, "Well you haven’t demonstrated that you are able to do what you need to do without further intervention and we are going to take it over."

Now that would be very, very unwelcome, just because of the financial cost of it. But you can imagine that if that did happen, the effect on morale would be devastating. Yes, I mean that is the worst case scenario.

Alex: I mean Children’s Services, all this business around Rotherham and everything else, it is a very difficult area anyway. It is a very difficult area and it is one of these situations where you have got public servants in terms of social workers, who are very, very committed to it.
Quite often it is pretty much a thankless task. They don’t go into it for the money, they go into it because there is a calling there.

It can be very difficult and I think if you look at some of these areas like Rotherham, the day after all that happened, sort of working on the ground, had to get up and come out the next morning and carry on.

Exactly, yes, it is not easy to do.

Alex: It is difficult. Are you content that in terms of corporate leadership on that, that it is what you expect it to be?

It is, I think we certainly have had a period where the OFSTED reports indicated that perhaps there was a lack of understanding and ownership about the corporate parenting role that I have. But that has been addressed and certainly the Corporate Leadership Team of which I am a member. So there is the Chief Exec, the five Directors, one of whom is the Director of CYP, Head of Finance and myself, sit on the council’s Corporate Leadership Team.

We are regularly briefed by the Director about the progress that is being made and concerns and the need for there to be a better understanding across all Directorates of the input they could have in helping with the issues faced by the CYP Department.

It is not something that just affects that service, it affects us all. So there is a good understanding of that and we all do what we can to help and give support to...

Alex: It is difficult as well trying to get people into those Director posts in terms of Children’s Services, from what I have heard, it is near impossible.
Well it is, Somerset have just lost their Director and yes, I was only speaking to [redacted] at the back end of last week, he is our Director of CYP about the fact that yes, there are severe shortages amongst senior well positioned Directors, for picking up the type of issues that are being experienced through many local authorities, because of things that have happened at [redacted] Somerset, Rotherham, where is next? That is the concern.

Alex: It is interesting because I read last week that the Chief Executive of Doncaster, Jo Miller made the point about Chief Executives that weren’t engaged on the Children’s Services they shouldn’t be in the job, she said. So they are making the point that it was regardless of the background that anybody had, that that was a crucial issue.

I would be amazed if there was any Chief Exec in any authority these days with everything that is happening around child sexual exploitation and the safeguarding generally, if they weren’t fully on top of that part of their brief, they would have to be.

I know [redacted] our Chief Exec certainly is. She is very au fait with issues that we have.

Alex: Just thinking about Children’s Services on the one side, health and social care, questions around jobs that are linked to infrastructure and skills and sorting the economy out. All these things are interlinked aren’t they and presumably you can only get a result on those through partnership work, is that fair to say?

I think you are right, increasingly I think these days local authorities are very unlikely to be able to deliver these major initiatives working in isolation. We just don’t have the budget a lot of the time for doing that.
And because of the greater integration that is taking place with health
and with other authorities it wouldn't make a great deal of sense for us
to do things on our own, because we would be either repeating things
that have been done elsewhere within the health service for example,
or operating in isolation and possibly having a counter effect on
something that is taking place within a neighbouring authority.

You may be aware Alex that West Yorkshire recently set up a
combined authority?

Alex: Yes.

That was in April of this year and that includes [blank] as well. The need
to understand quite where that sits as far as regeneration, economic
development, planning infrastructure, transport infrastructure, it is
massively significant and not quite understood yet, as to what
influence it will have across what is regarded as Leeds City region, so
not just the West Yorkshire authorities but wider authorities across the
area.

Alex: Of course everybody is looking over the Pennines now at the situation
in Greater Manchester after last week.

Well yes, if you think back, I forget when it was, that Manchester had
its referendum on appointing a Mayor, the appetite for doing that was
practically zero. But the discussion that is taking place at the moment,
because it is Greater Manchester as opposed to Manchester is much
more positive.

But yes, there is an absolute understanding that we can't act alone,
we don't have the resources that we used to have to do that, even if
we wanted to, it wouldn't be sensible to do that.
Collaboration and partnership working is very much at the forefront of what we think about when we are doing anything.

Alex: You do lots of stuff through your Local Strategic Partnerships?

That is not in existence any longer, it is the Health and Wellbeing Board that has absorbed what used to be the LSP. So there has been a shift in emphasis to an extent, which focuses on, I think the Health and Wellbeing Board is – it’s a title that results in there being a misunderstanding of what its role is, because of health, it tends to be the case that people think it is to do with just our partnership with the NHS.

Whilst there is a massive part of that with the Clinical Commissioning Group, the wellbeing element of it brings in a great many other things that impact upon how the community within [redacted] needs to be looked after.

If you think about when you are planning road schemes etc., well the way those are laid out can impact upon whether people have a greater desire to cycle to work or to walk to work. Which is all to do with health and wellbeing, because if you want to try to make an environment in which that could contribute to a healthy lifestyle.

But if you are not creating the basic infrastructure which allows people to think about doing that, and everyone has to jump in a car to get where they want to go, that is not good.

Alex: This is the thing, the more you think about this stuff, the more you realise how it links into everything else. There is nothing that seems to stand on its own.

Well no that is right and I think public health coming into the local authority, I was only talking about this this morning, that trying to
embed the public health ethos across all aspects of the authority is difficult. Because it is a relatively new concept for us to have public health come back into the responsibility of local government.

But when you start to stop and think about the remit that we then have as being responsible for public health, well you can argue that it impacts upon practically everything that we do, and whether there is an understanding yet across all departments of the council that you need to have one of your checklists being, “What is the impact on public health?”

Now they won’t apply to everything but when you are talking about sustainable transport for example, the vast majority of people that use the public transport system, the buses within [REDACTED] are schoolchildren, going back and forth to school.

How do we make sure that that is something that results in there being some health benefit to children, rather than having them constantly on buses, is there a better way of doing it? Can they cycle to school? Can they walk to school? So all of that.

Alex:

Presumably it is important to try to think of that so as particularly in towns where the financial settlement is tight and probably getting tighter for everybody, there is a chance to bring down some knock on costs, whether it is in terms of healthcare or whatever it is down the road?

Well we hope so, because obviously, I forget what the context of the report was I heard on the radio this morning, but it was talking about, I think it was actually back in the last week, about obesity and the bariatric treatment that is afforded to people who have gastric bands fitted.

The argument for doing that is to say, “Well if you prevent the problems that result from obesity further down the track, and you do
the preventative stuff and spend money at the front end, you are saving money by not having to have the treatment."

It is the same for the local authority, if we can do things at the front end of the system, again going back to children, preventing childhood obesity, but also stopping smoking for example, that is our responsibility within the local authority is to try to have an impact on that. teenage pregnancies, all of those things, if we don’t spend the money at the front end, the preventative stuff, we are just storing up problems for ourselves further down the track.

Alex:

Presumably part of the issue is to get it across to the powers that be that it is worth putting that money in now, even though you are not going to see a pay-out for maybe 20 years down the line?

It is that long term. We have got an initiative within start at the moment for 20 mile per hour zones across a good chunk of the borough. Now that is designed to try and improve road safety. It will also create the environment hopefully when more children will be encouraged to walk and to cycle, because of the reduced traffic speed.

There is also some evidence that the benefit of the air quality will be enhanced, although there are studies which indicate that that is yet to be proven if you have cars going slower it doesn’t necessarily mean that the pollution is improved. Some argument is that it is increased because it is not running the engine at an efficient speed, but the jury is out on that.

So yes, all those things require some fairly long term thinking and that doesn’t always apply to, not just local politicians but national politicians.

Alex:

While we are just thinking about long term thinking, I attended a meeting last week with Sir Howard Bernstein, Chief Executive of
Manchester, regeneration guru, and he was quite candid about it. He said the present system is bust, in terms of Whitehall designing what is happening to local authorities, deciding from on high. Too much centralisation, too much control, really going down this agenda about it is combined authorities in terms of devolution of powers, sort of pushing powers down.

Is it fair to say that if there are moves in that direction, because we always see that after the General Election and whether politicians go cold on the idea somewhere down the line. But if there is moves in that direction, is it fair to say that that might do something to try to deal with this short term, long term issue?

You would hope so. I was heavily involved in the work behind setting up the combined authority, advising not just [redacted] but also our West Yorkshire partners.

I attended a number of discussions about what the combined authority (a) was going to be empowered to undertake initially, but what it was going to have to be prepared to contemplate undertaking as part of its ethos for being set up, years down the track.

One of the things that is within the powers of the combined authority, which is not yet fully understood, is economic regeneration and development, but also planning.

I think that the way in which the combined authorities will work, is that they will take on a greater regional responsibility for the regional planning that needs to take place. I am talking not just about planning issues themselves, but about transport infrastructure.

That needs a higher level doesn’t it?

Well arguably it does.
It is pretty strange, because you sort of think back to the 1980s when the metropolitan county councils were abolished, we have almost come back full circle.

One of the things that local politicians are wary about is the description that has been applied to the combined authority that it will become West Yorkshire County Council again, which we moved away from. But I think that if it restricts itself to those issues, that is, as I said infrastructure, regional developments and planning, and then it will almost inevitably have to leave the other areas of local government to the district councils. So for example will still have to be responsible then for adult and children's safeguarding, housing and all the other stuff would go to the combined authority. Whether that is something that will happen within, I don't think it will happen within the short term, but maybe ten years down the line, who knows? It will be interesting to see what happens in Manchester, because I think that will be regarded within Leeds as, "If Manchester is doing that, why shouldn't we?"

I think that Leeds is regarded as the next one to come on track. Clegg said last week that Leeds was the next one, Sheffield, they were the next.

He would say Sheffield.

Yes, he would say Sheffield, that they were the next ones.

Of course in Liverpool we had difficulties with the combined authority because there is, whereas in Manchester there has been this collaboration which has gone on for years, through AGMA and the ten local authorities.
In Merseyside we have got severe problems about guarding turf and personalities.

And that is a fundamental obstacle because if you can't get that right, you are not going to get the co-operation that you need. There needs to be that recognition of not protecting a locality but the wider region.

Alex: What about the spatial planning issue in terms of the combined authority? I spoke to the leader of [redacted] last week, and they have the debate down there with [redacted] and they have got problems down there with the West Midlands authorities working together, because they don't talk to each other, and there is all that sort of stuff going on.

He said to me that one of the basic problems he had with that was that planning issues for [redacted] being decided by [redacted] Is there a similar issue here? Can you see it being decided in Leeds or [redacted]?

There will be. The discussions that have taken place, we had to be very careful throughout all of the, not negotiations but all of the planning on the governance structures for the combined authority, to ensure that as part of the requirement for central government that the combined authority had the power to deal with planning issues, that it wasn't something that was given a high profile.

I know the [redacted] members, it probably stands true for all of the West Yorkshire members, there was just no appetite at this stage for them to give up their ability to determine what happens within their own region on planning issues.

That will be I think a significant obstacle to overcome, because if you look at an area like [redacted] it is a very distinct area.
Alex: It is, one of my favourite areas I must say. I love it. I first visited here about 20 years ago when I was a student at Liverpool University. I used to travel around [coded] and [coded] and [coded] it is a brilliant place.

It is and it has got quite distinctive, even within the fairly, well it is not a small area, but you have quite distinctive areas which have their own character. Even within [coded] you look at the upper valley, [coded] [coded] the Fell Tops, very, very different from [coded] and from Brighouse.

Now you can imagine therefore that trying to get an understanding of what is going to benefit those communities by way of planning applications, local politicians would regard giving the power to determine an application that sits in one of those areas to somebody sitting in Leeds, without the understanding of the local knowledge, as being an incredibly difficult hurdle to overcome.

Where is it you live Nancy?

Nancy: Huddersfield.

Huddersfield, so you travel into [coded]?

Nancy: Yes.

Do you know [coded] that well? Do you spend most of your leisure time presumably over in Huddersfield?
Nancy: Well it depends, because my friends are all from [redacted] so that means coming to [redacted]. But I live on the outskirts of Huddersfield, but more near [redacted] and Brighouse.

Interviewer: I see, so towards the [redacted] boundary.

Nancy: It is not like you have to go through Huddersfield, so it is not so bad, but with family it is more Huddersfield areas for leisure but with friends it’s more [redacted].

Interviewer: I don’t live in [redacted] so I get to know the area mostly from going out to meetings through work. But the way I describe [redacted] as being quite distinctive, that area of the Brighouse and [redacted] areas, is very, very different from [redacted].

Nancy: Yes.

Interviewer: [redacted] has got this reputation as being quite a cookie sort of place.

Alex: It has been gentrified hasn’t it? I went there about 18 months ago and I hadn’t been there for a number of years and I was amazed at the way they had…

Interviewer: Do you get to go to [redacted] at all, or is it too far?

Nancy: It is quite far, but I have been quite a few times.
Alex: It is worth the trip isn’t it?

(Laughter)

Nancy: It is different, real different.

So you can imagine, the local politicians have a very keen affinity with the local area, and I have heard it said that the last thing that they would want to do is give up the control that they have over what happens in that area.

Alex: I can understand.

They will get criticised...

Alex: All politics is local isn’t it again?

(Laughter)

Yes, and where does that sit then with the combined authority with the Localism Act, which is designed to try to give a greater control to local neighbourhoods for their own planning regime. Neighbourhood plans which dictate to some extent the sort of development that neighbourhoods want to see within their area.

Well if you are doing that how can you possibly…?

Alex: I am not sure that was ever thought through.
(Laughter)

Well how does it sit with the combined authority model then? If you take special planning, as you said, and put it in a big regional authority, that works very well for the economic industrial parks etc., where do you site those? Where are the best transport links for putting up the next industrial park? That is sensible.

I guarantee that everyone will say, "Well not near us please." So yes, there are certainly tensions that will have to be explored as part of that.

Alex:

Just touching on that, just thinking about partnerships generally and the combined authority, in terms of challenges in terms of leadership, how do you see that? It is not going to be an easy ride is it? Any of this stuff, nothing is easy.

It has been quite a tame ride thus far. The combined authority meets, I don't think it has the profile that it needs to have just yet. It isn't scrutinised in the way that I thought it might be, and that is possibly because at the moment it isn't making any controversial decisions, despite the fact that it has a certain level of power that has been given to it.

Whether the announcement that David Cameron made this morning about £15bn transport fund and where that will then have to be decided. Because you can imagine, all the authorities within West Yorkshire and will have their pet schemes.

We have one which tries to improve the transport link between and Huddersfield, going up on the A629, the big one that goes up the hill.
So there is a view that we will have within [redacted] of that, whatever money comes to us from that fund will need to be spent on improving the transport [redacted] links between ourselves and Huddersfield.

But there will be an argument in Leeds that there are better schemes placed there, similarly in [redacted] We are desperate within [redacted] for an upgrade of the electrified rail line and a better link between ourselves, Leeds and Manchester. But that has been something that has been talked about for some time, it is what we would want.

Alex: How crucial is that?

I think it is absolutely vital.

Alex: It takes ages to trundle through on that train across the Pennines doesn’t it?

(Laughter)

It does, and if you talk to the politicians about it, they have, to be fair to them, have both political persuasions, Labour and Conservative have been arguing consistently that that is a scheme that needs to be the top of the list of priorities.

Yes, who knows where that will go, we need an enhanced and upgraded station and platforms within [redacted] but all of that is a lot of money. You are talking about tens of millions of pounds of schemes to do that.

But with that, if you are upgrading your transport infrastructure then you have to be prepared to upgrade your industrial infrastructure as well and have...
Alex: So you have got it all linked in again.

Yes, you are not going to have part of those designed if you increased the transport you are going to bring hopefully economic regeneration and inward investment into the area. Well you have got to put it somewhere, so you can’t consistently say we want the transport links but we don’t want to have the factories or the sheds.

Alex: Presumably if you get that you have then got the issue of, “How do we skill people up to take these jobs?”

Well there is that, and also where do you put the people by way of housing? Because it’s geographical, topographical profile, it is not brilliant. You are talking about the further up the manor you go, you have got valleys which are difficult to place any form of significant levels of housing.

So there are all those different issues at play.

Alex: What is your travel to work area like at Greater Manchester? Or is it Leeds? What is the pattern?

It is coming in more from Leeds than from Manchester. I don’t think Manchester is something that feeds into us a great deal, because it is not that easy to get to. If you are travelling by car it is a nightmare on the M62.

The rail link is not brilliant, so I think we are not a massive inward attractor of commuters. A lot of people travel out from to go and work elsewhere. So the more we can improve our transport the
better we can be by way of attracting people to come into [REDACTED]
but we have to give them jobs to do that.

Alex: What is the situation in terms of HS2 and [REDACTED]?

[REDACTED]: We benefit from it but there won’t be a direct spur coming in to us, as far as I am aware. Yes, we will hopefully benefit from it.

Alex: You are sort of in the middle of that ‘Y’ aren’t you?

[REDACTED]: It will bypass us to an extent, unless we get our own upgrade as part of our electrification of the [REDACTED] it’s called. So we would need that on the back of HS2.

Alex: And that HS3 that was being talked about, about a new line across the Pennines, that wasn’t going to come to [REDACTED] at all presumably?

[REDACTED]: No.

Alex: So the crucial thing is to upgrade that [REDACTED]?

[REDACTED]: Absolutely.

Alex: It is interesting how all these things link together isn’t it?
Well yes, it is a massive jigsaw, it is trying to get a handle of how it all pans out and yes the responsibility that we have as a council for trying to knit that all together.

Alex:

Just on that point about responsibility, thinking about community leadership and the 2000 Act and all that, and thinking about how the council sits with partnerships. How important is that community leadership role, given that the council is the only one in it that has got any democratic identity?

Interesting point because one of the things that has become apparent with the budget cuts that have been effected over the last two, three, four years and will continue to be effected over the next two, three, four years, is trying to move away from the council being regarded as the body of first resort.

In other words, if something was to go wrong within a family then at the moment it is the case of, well it is the council that will be the body that you turn to, to sort it out. Quite often what we would like perhaps to move towards being is an authority or a body that signposts people to where they can get help and not being the organisation that provides that.

That is a difficult position to get to because like it or not local government has that role and for it to start moving away from that and become a commissioner is changing a cultural way of looking at things and you also then need to also have in place the organisations to whom you can signpost people.

That is going to take a fairly marked shift in how funding is set up to allow that. So for example, if you have got people who come with, as the population increasingly gets older, the services that we provide for vulnerable adults and care home facilities and all of the rest of it, like residential homes etc., should we be the organisation that is seen as capable of providing that? Or do we just try to make sure that there
are either the voluntary sector or private organisations that provide
that, but we just signpost people off to that?

Alex: Presumably, given the tight financial settlement that everybody is
working within, I suppose there is a question whether down the line
you will get local authorities only delivering statutory services and
nothing else?

I forget the graph of doom that was being talked about.

The graph of doom yes.

Was one that depicted the spend on just adult social services alone,
because of the increasing population, expanding to take up the whole
of the predicted budget that was available for local authorities.

Well I think that has been criticised to some extent for the way in
which it was depicted, because it won't happen that way. But there is
an element of truth in that, that because we have a population that we
know is going to get older and increase and with the increases in
medical help, people are living longer and living with more problems
unfortunately. The money is going to have to come from somewhere,
so there are some very, very difficult questions to be answered.

Your generation Nancy will inherit a great deal of the problems that
are currently there and I have got two sons who are not much older
than you and I do worry about what we are handing on to you,
because, not to worry…

(Laughter)

Don't get depressed over it.
You know there will be significant challenges that you have with the demographics alone, depicting that there will be fewer people of your age to provide for the income, the taxes that then are spent on looking after a population that in 20 years’ time, getting old and etc.

Alex: This stuff is not cheap either is it? When you are talking about social care it really isn’t cheap. I suppose if you have got a declining population. I know the other authorities have said to me that the problem that they have got is their population hollows out, particularly in the North of England, whereby they will lose people.

They all come up here to University and then once they are 21 they all disappear down South. Then they all come back later on.

The difficulty is that you will lose that sort of economic productiveness in terms of trying to sort it out.

It is not all doom and gloom.

Alex: No, it’s not. I think in reality I think a lot of places like [redacted] need to build on is about the attractiveness of the place to live really. With a lot of these Northern places they are very good culturally, they are very good in terms of the character and trying to promote that.

Yes let’s keep that secret, we don’t want all the Southerners coming up.

That’s right, we won’t tell them you see.

(Laughter)
But the thing about it is, it is a bit like Liverpool, it gets a bad press from everybody who has never been, and when you speak to people who have been they love it, we sort of get used to that.

It is very interesting to get your views on this, I am really grateful and I am grateful for your input as well in terms of what happens in Huddersfield, how you view the links between the two areas.

I am very much getting the impression that partnerships are the way forward and there is not really any way out of that. We are in a difficult situation that we might have to re-think issues about governance, we might have to re-think issues about scrutiny and there might be a debate about structures but to underline it all is that it is going to work in partnership.

Presumably in terms of outsourcing services, is it fair to say, because I did not have this view when I started out on this, but from speaking to people, is it fair to say now that nobody cares about that issue that much, provided the services are provided, providing you sort out the contract management stuff.

Is it as ideological as it once was? Because when all this stuff was brought in in the 1980s it was all politically viewed.

I think within this area, within West Yorkshire there is a greater desire to ensure that we collaborate amongst ourselves as much as we possibly can.

Alex: In terms of shared services and stuff?

Yes, before we look at outsourcing. Now that isn’t to say that I don’t think there is any ideological concern about outsourcing, but I think there is a recognition that we can create efficiencies, (a) within individual authorities first, before we get to a position where we can say, “Okay, we recognise that we haven’t been doing this particular
area of work in as efficient a way as possible, let’s make sure that we put that right.”

Then if there is an opportunity for then saying, “Now that we have made the savings for ourselves, is there a way of doing it, or having it done better and cheaper?”

We are not handing over a vastly inefficient system to a private organisation and they come in and say, “Thanks very much, we will make all these savings for ourselves, and provide you with a service that you could have provided yourself if you had had the time and effort.”

We are doing that within [redacted] recognising that we need to do that.

But then the next step of that is to say, “Having done that and having created the efficiencies ourselves, is there an opportunity to collaborate with a neighbouring authority on economies of scale for things such as the payroll systems that we all operate, HR services, transport, repair work, legal services. Can we provide those things better by having greater collaboration?”

Only then do you get to a position where you say, “If we can’t or if there is no appetite for doing that, is it something that we would then look at outsourcing?”

I don’t think there is any concern about outsourcing...

Alex: From an ideological point of view?

No, I think politicians though would want to ensure that we have done all we can first to make sure that we are as efficient as we possibly can be, and that has certainly happened within [redacted] with our, what is called facilities management system. So things like looking after the buildings and the security systems that we have. Cleaning of the buildings, repairs and maintenance for example.
What we recognised for ourselves was that we had, over the years
developed an inefficient way of doing that, because we allowed, quite
a strange way where we had our estate managed.

If a building was being used by a Directorate then it was that
Directorate that was responsible for that building. So you then had a
vast number of buildings across the authority being looked after by the
Economy and Environment Department, by the Communities
Directorate, by CYP, by Adult Health and Social Care.

It wasn’t always the case that they would talk to each other about
getting it one contractor. So for example, for the disposal of
confidential waste, you might have as many as a dozen separate
contractors coming into the authority dealing with our confidential
waste, because each Directorate, responsible for a building was going
out and procuring their own.

Now we have put a vast number of those things right, but that applied
across things like the provision of hand towels in the toilets across the
authority. Well we had, I am not exaggerating, probably upwards of a
dozen different suppliers. Well you can’t begin to negotiate a sensible
contract that way.

We knew why, and the debate we had internally within the authority
was, recognising that we have that inefficient system, is it better to go
out and procure what was called a total FM package to get an outside
provider to come and say, “We can do all of that for you.”

The concern I expressed, amongst a number of other people was that,
“You are just handing over the savings to that external provider,
because we know we are inefficient. Therefore let us make the
savings ourselves by rationalising all our contracts, ending a number
of the systems in place where local contractors had a certain level of
business provided to them. Well can they provider more by doing it for
a bigger number of properties within the authority?”

We are on with that and we have got to a position now where I think
we are ready to think about whether we should be going and looking
for a better solution now, having created those efficiencies ourselves.
What is the situation about contract management? Are you pleased with it?

No.

We all look at the situation about Southwest One and causing a 3,000 paying contract and all that.

Again it is one of those issues that I don't think local government has been good at doing, where you negotiate, it can be a multi-million pound contract and you then put the contract on the [redacted] and very rarely pull it off, to ensure that you hold the contractor to the provisions of the contract.

When the legal department gets a ring.

Yes, when it goes wrong. I think we are getting better at doing that and what Alex is talking about Nancy is where you have, well certainly it will be the same within Huddersfield, that you have – most people when you talk about services provided by the council think about bin collection. That is the one thing where everyone has a bin collected.

That's the thing you know, the bins and the burials. Somebody once said to me, "We don't trust you with anything else, it is bins and burials and that is it."
The other thing, sorry to lower the tone, is cleaning up dog poo, that is the other thing we do. But on the bin collection, within a seven year contract, you are talking about maybe a £60m contract, so significant amounts of money for collecting rubbish.

The work that goes into the writing of that contract, our contract for our waste collection service is up for renewal in August of 2016, so just over two years away. We are already starting the work now on writing the contract, or the processes that it will have to take in, so that come August 2016 we can give it to whichever contractor wins it.

When you are talking about a contract that can be as big as this, and within that contract there will be detailed provisions for how they go about providing the service, at what cost and what are the penalties for example if they don't get it right, if they miss collections, if they don't provide a certain amount of recycling.

What Alex is talking about is that quite often the contract management just doesn't happen.

Alex: You let them off the hook basically?

Yes, you allow a contractor to get in and do it, they miss collections and you go, “It is okay, you will get it right next time.” Over the years what local authorities have not been good at doing is holding contractors to account.

In the private sector it happens where the bottom line is, the profit that is made, somebody asking a company to provide a service to them, will say, “You have to provide that service, that is what we pay you to do. If you don't get it right we are either going to you for damages for not getting it right, or tell you to get it right.” Local authorities have not been good at doing that and we need to get better.

I think there is a recognition we need to get better.
Alex: I think that message is pretty much coming to me across the board, in terms of lessons to be learned, that is one thing that everybody needs to try and catch up on.

I will give you an example of where we recognise it needs to happen. We have just let our £20m construction contract for the refurbishment of the [Redacted].

Alex: I love that building. I have just had a look at it now actually on the way in, it is fantastic isn’t it?

There is a new library going to be built towards the bottom end of that, so the combined spend on a brand new library, which looks fantastic on paper, the whole thing will look fantastic when it is built, and the refurbishment of the [Redacted] we are looking at about a £20m to £22m spend in total.

Again that is work that has taken two and a half years to get to this point. What we recognised was that we have got a construction partner who is going to be expected to receive that amount of money in providing to us a refurbished [Redacted] and a new library.

We have just appointed, which we have often done, a Contract Manager for managing that contract. So whilst we have got a lot of people who have been involved in the process of getting us to where we need to get to, what we now have is a specialist in saying, “I am going to keep an eye on whether the contractor is providing exactly what is expected of it within the contract.”

Alex: That is a massive step forward in terms of local authorities isn’t it?
Well it is because, and you have probably been in the [blank] it is an iconic building.

Alex: Oh it is brilliant. I loved it 20 years ago when I first saw it.

But it was underused, what did happen in there really?

Alex: There were empty units in there wasn't there?

Yes, because of the size of those units. They were designed originally for the display of wool by merchants going in, that is why the wool shops is called what it was, because the traders would go into the [blank] in the right sort of areas, and put on their display, the wool that they had for sale.

The character of the place, it is wonderful isn't it?

But the problems that created because of the size of those units, they are not brilliant to try to get other retailers to come in there, is very difficult, just because of the size of the units.

We are hoping it will be very, very different when it re-opens in summer of 2016.

Summer of 2016?

That is the plan.
Alex: I will definitely make sure that I come back over to have a look at it. I think it is brilliant, it is one of those jewel in the crown things isn't it?

Well hopefully my description of our Project Manager will mean that it is on track and on time and on budget.

(Laughter)

Nancy: Are you going to make it look more modern?

To some extent. Obviously it is a listed building, so there is a limited extent to what you can do with it. But the link between the and the library, which will look a very modern looking building, but hopefully, I think in architectural terms it is sympathetic to the .

The Central Piazza will hopefully be a much more useable space than it is now. It will have areas for seating and for relaxing and the shops around it and the restaurants around the outside will hopefully bring people in, so that you will want to go there, as opposed to just walking through it and occasionally going to an activity, you will want to go there as a destination.

With it linked to the library as well and to the Square Chapel, which is just below it, they are on with doing their own extension as well. So that whole area should be fantastic.

Alex: It is really about bringing these buildings back to life isn't it, making sure that they have got a use and that they don't just decay and it is about keeping them.
Well there is an architectural book that is out there, which is a coffee table book, which talks about the [redacted] as being one of the 20 most important public squares in the world, architecturally.

Alex: I knew it was fantastic.

(Laughter)

Well if you think if that was in an Italian city it would be fantastic.

Alex: Yes, you are right. It is a real showcase.

Well let us hope that that is money well spent, because it is a lot of money to spend on it, but hopefully it will be worth it.

Alex: Just one other question. In terms of, if we are moving towards this model of a commissioning authority, what does that say to you about accountability in general terms? It raises an issue doesn’t it?

It does, it is interesting. That is one view, whether it will happen, obviously a great many things need to fit into place for that to happen, both political will and an element of realism as to what local authorities can provide.

Accountability, yes, because we have often had the discussion that if you think about the ability that we have as an authority to undertake what are known as community asset transfers of buildings. We have done a number within [redacted] so the concern that is expressed quite often by politicians though is that if you transfer an asset or transfer a service into a trust model for example, the general public won’t understand that nuance and will still regard it as the council.
So if we are a commissioning authority will there be still a tendency for people to regard the council as being responsible for something, even though it isn't our responsibility, it has been transferred into a trust. Politicians will be anxious about that, because they won't thank the system for providing them with the perception of accountability but not actual responsibility or not actual control over what is happening.

So getting that model right is going to be difficult. Then, if it is accountability, well at the moment we are fairly open and transparent about the local government system.

If you start creating trusts or separate companies, I suppose there are two questions, do they need to understand what the systems are? And, so long as the systems work does there have to be that level of accountability that exists at the moment? Who knows?

Alex: Presumably you will only get that question asked if something goes wrong, and then suddenly [Crosstalk 0:56:23] somebody to blame.

That's the problem, if everything works well...

Alex: Nobody cares do they?

No, it is when it goes wrong people look to say, "Whose fault is this? Who is responsible for it? Who is to blame for it?"

You do need to have those clear lines of accountability, clear lines of governance. But yes, it only ever becomes important...

Alex: Yes, you get the contracts out when there is a problem?
967: Yes.

969: Final question, I have asked everybody, despite all the challenges I presume you enjoy it, in terms of what you do?

972: I love it. I like coming to work.

974: What is your motivation? Public service?

976: It is seeing things delivered. I mean the combined authority was one, the A great deal of what I do personally is behind the scenes and I am not one for looking for the recognition from that, because I get a quiet satisfaction in knowing the contribution I have made to something.

981: But hopefully yes, the work that I have put in personally in dealing with some of the big issues that we have, will allow things to develop.

983: My role as being the Chief Legal Officer for the Council means that a great deal of the decisions that are taken have an input from me, and that requires sometimes a fairly challenging weighing up of issues and being prepared to be pragmatic. But also being prepared to take responsibility for saying, “No that can’t happen.”

989: That is not always easy is it?

991: No it is not.
Alex: That is not always easy. I have worked in authorities where sometimes that has been a difficulty in terms of, on occasions [cloud 0:58:31] departments not wanting to take legal advice. You do get it.

Well exactly, you do and that is part of why I enjoy the job that I do, because no two days are the same. I can come into work thinking, “I have got this, this, this and this to do.” Something will happen, which creates an interesting problem to solve.

Alex: So before you get on to your list, you have got three other things to do?

You don’t even put onto the list, it just doesn’t happen. There are days where that happens and it is exhilarating, because of what happens.

If anyone says that local government is boring, they have either never worked in local government or they have and they didn’t...

Alex: Didn’t embrace it?

Exactly. As I said, I thoroughly enjoy coming to work and that is helped by the fact that the teams which I am responsible for are very committed to what they do. There is a level of responsibility that they want to make a difference and do the best that they can do.

I think the old perception of local government as being an easy ride has long gone.

Alex: I think you are right. I have probably been around about 25 to 30 different authorities now, in some different places and they have all got their own challenges and their own issues and their own problems,
and there are always difficulties. Particularly in the last three or four years, with the budget cuts that are going around, you have seen how difficult it has been.

Particularly in terms of morale and stuff. But the thing that has really struck me is that public servants that I have come across, whether they are the planning officers, housing officers, environmental health people, high risk people, is that they really all go over and above to be able to try to deliver a service.

Sometimes it is in a situation where there is a difficult backdrop but they really have still done it. That is pretty much a similar thing really that drives me, as a public service.

We see it increasingly where there have been cuts across staff and the level of work required hasn’t reduced and therefore people increasingly step up to cover the extra work involved.

You see it regularly where people are working over and above what is required of them just to get the job done.

That is true. I think a lot of authorities rely on goodwill to get the job done.

Yes and the vast majority of time people are prepared to put that in, because they enjoy what they do, which is great.

Very grateful to you both for that, I think it is fantastic. Really useful to get an insight from somebody who is dealing with it rather than just reading books, what I am supposed to say. Very, very useful.

Good. So have you got meetings set up with the Chief Executive?
Alex: Yes I have, I am seeing your Scrutiny Officer tomorrow.

Okay, which one?

Alex: [name]

[Name]: [name] yes.

Alex: I am seeing your Council Leader on Thursday and I am seeing your Chief Executive on Friday, so it is going to be a good week.

Well hopefully you will get a different but similar perspective from those three. I am sure there will be fascinating discussions, as all three of them have been in local government for some time and I can guarantee you will have a good three meetings.

Alex: It is brilliant. It really is good for me to get around and speak to people.

So when can we read your Thesis?

Alex: It might bore you to death, that is the only problem.

(Laughter)

I am looking to complete it in the spring, so hopefully at the moment I have got a target hand in date for March 17th, so I am hoping to crack on.
So any significance with that being St. Patrick’s Day?

It is, it is, that is my plan at the moment, I don’t want it to slip, I want to try to get it in. But thanks to your efforts and your assistance I should be able to do it.

Any excuse to come to [redacted] as well.

(Laughter)

Good, I am glad we could help.

Thank you very much sir, thank you.

END AUDIO

www.uktranscription.com
Annex 9D – Scrutiny Interview

START AUDIO

Interviewer: That’s on.

Respondent: Just to remind me, what do you do? What is it for?

Interviewer: What it is is I’m doing a course at Huddersfield University on public administration. I’m looking in particular at local authorities, how they work, governance on the one side and accountability on the other.

On the governance side I’m looking at things like outsourcing of partnerships and what happens, because it’s all more complicated than it used to be of course, and on the accountability side I’m looking at scrutiny. It’s really on that scrutiny that I just want to pick your brains. Basically, I’ve spoken to...

Respondent: Have you been to any other authorities?

Interviewer: I have; I have. I’ve been to one authority down in the West Midlands, who were very helpful. I’m seeing yourselves and I’m seeing another authority in the West Yorkshire area, so hopefully at the end of it I’ll have three, which should give me a good idea in terms of what happens.

Respondent: Yes.
Interviewer: Just in terms of scrutiny, I’ve had a bit of a look at stuff on your website just to get an idea of what goes on. Just talk me through, if you can, just in terms of the operation of it. You’ve got five scrutiny panels, is that correct?

Respondent: We’ve got five scrutiny panels, yes. They more or less match the structure of the council, which there are pluses and minuses about, I think – possibly more minuses than plus. I think you end up… If you have a structure of scrutiny panels that matches the officer structure of the council, then it’s harder to move away from the old committee model, I think.

Interviewer: Yes.

Respondent: It also gives perhaps disproportionate influence to the director, so I’m always quite keen when we can manage to get the Director of Economy and Environment to report to a different scrutiny panel about a particular issue – not that I want to make his life a misery, but it gets him out of his comfort zone. You can get too cosy otherwise, or there’s a risk of being too cosy.

Interviewer: I suppose as well that a lot of these issues – I was talking to yesterday about social care stuff and talking about jobs and regeneration – the thing is that all these issues link in, don’t they? They all link together. If you look at jobs, you need to look at infrastructure and skills.

Respondent: Absolutely.

Interviewer: They all sort of tie in, really.
Respondent: Just to give you a current example, our Economy and Environment Scrutiny Panel has decided to look at public health and the environment, so they’re looking at air quality and what we do about air quality in terms of people’s health, so that’s public health. It’s a really good example of something that cuts across both sides.

Interviewer: Yes.

Respondent: We’ve got five scrutiny panels. They more or less have seven members on each. That’s not exactly consistent, but it is seven for four of them. When we first… Myself, and [redacted] and [redacted] slightly strangely, all started work at the same time. The 18 months before, they had established a three-strong scrutiny support team and all three members of the team left at the same time.

Interviewer: Really?

Respondent: As far as I can tell, not for any bad reasons (Laughter).

Interviewer: Yes.

Respondent: The head, she got promoted and got a job in [redacted] as it happened.

Interviewer: It happens, doesn’t it?
Respondent: The second one left to go round the world with her husband – or her boyfriend, I think, her boyfriend at that time – and the third one was actually seconded into the post and went back to his substantive post.

Interviewer: It doesn’t take long to lose the team when that happens, does it?

(Laughter)

Respondent: No, I know. We were all appointed in… I started at the end of September 2009, and at the time they met every three weeks, which in my view was far too – well, was too often.

Interviewer: Yes. Yes, because when you finish one you’re right on the next one.

Respondent: Exactly, you’re just on a treadmill, really, and what becomes important is the meetings and not what the meetings are doing.

Interviewer: Yes, good point, actually, yes.

Respondent: It took us about two years, two-and-a-half years perhaps, to persuade them that they should meet less often. In fact, when we first started saying it, they said, “We used to meet fortnightly.” Given you’ve got to get the papers out eight days in advance, you just…

Interviewer: Yes, it’s just mad. You just go from one to the next, to the next.

Respondent: We’ve worked hard to get them – and they now meet… It’s quite interesting, actually: I say they meet 10 times a year, or they’d have 10 scheduled meetings year; my immediate boss, who works for □
who’s the Head of Democratic… Who’s the Democratic Services Manager, he says they meet twice a cycle, because his head is in cycles.

This is s. document has got a cycle through nine weeks or so of all the meetings. I’ve said to “You don’t need to think in terms of cycles with scrutiny, because we don’t report into council.” There’s Council at the bottom.

Interviewer: I see; I see.

Respondent: He has all these… What happens is you start with planning on 5th August and then you get through to council in October.

Interviewer: This cycle business, then, is in terms of the council meetings?

Respondent: They’re all the council meetings.

Interviewer: I’m with you; I’m with you.

Respondent: But we’ve got it… Actually, to be fair, what does happen is that we set up 10 meetings, we occasionally cancel one because there’s no need to have it, but equally more often we set up an additional meeting when a particular issue crops up.

Interviewer: Right, so there is some flexibility on that in terms of what you need to do.
Respondent: There’s flexibility on that, but what we try and do, with a degree of success, is get them to... We feel that some of the best value they add is by doing detailed reviews.

Interviewer: I was going to ask you that.

Respondent: That means that we do work outside formal meetings.

Interviewer: Yes.

Respondent: Actually, at one level I would have – this is probably far too radical for – I’d have four meetings a year. I’d say, “Let’s fix four meetings and then let’s design a work plan around what you want to do,” which might mean three more formal meetings, it might mean visits to other authorities, it might mean interviewing.

Interviewer: These are sort of the wider policy stuff in terms of scrutiny reviews you’re talking about with the...?

Respondent: Yes.

Interviewer: There have been some important ones done, haven’t there? I saw one that was done on economic regeneration, one that was done on children’s social care. There have been a few good ones done.

Respondent: There’s been a few. The one that I’m proudest of, because I did it or I worked on it, was we did just some work on dementia and we got the report printed up quite nicely.
Interviewer: That's a crosscutting issue if ever there was one, isn't it?

Respondent: A crosscutting issue. That was one that the members... What we do with council is we stick them in a committee room and expect them to be interested. Why would you be interested? With the dementia report we took them up to a social work office about a mile and a half up the road up there, we [set out a day's 0:07:38] programme, and we had lunch with people with dementia in a day centre and they met one or two, actually, quite inspirational NHS staff.

That report, it doesn't say anything that Surrey, or Suffolk, or Sandwell haven't said about dementia; it's not original work, but it drew emphasis to it and those recommendations got built into the Joint Dementia Strategy.

Interviewer: Presumably, by doing that and by taking people to have that time in terms of getting involved with people with that issue, presumably that was a big learning curve for members and they could really pick up on it.

Respondent: Yes.
193  Interviewer: I suppose if you’ve done something like that, you remember it, don’t you? It locks in your mind, doesn’t it, rather than just reading papers in a committee room or something?

197  Respondent: Yes. There obviously is a place for the committee room, but I don’t think we do enough of it. There are some authorities’ scrutiny functions who do nothing but that; that’s what they’ve got…

201  Interviewer: In terms of the policy stuff?

203  Respondent: Yes. Where was it? I heard a talk from my equivalent in… It wasn’t Buckinghamshire, but it was round that way and they did…

206  Interviewer: It’s all down south, isn’t it? (Laughter)

208  Respondent: They did something like 25 one-day inquiries a year. That’s what their work programme was, so they would meet and they’d say, “We want to look at council tax collection rates,” or children with special educational needs, or whatever it was, and they would get witnesses lined up, spend four or five hours questioning people and talking to them, and then they would write a report. That’s what they did; they’d highlighted particular issues.

216  Interviewer: Yes.

218  Respondent: I think one of the… Is this okay? I’m not talking off track?
Interviewer: No, it’s brilliant. It’s very, very useful for me to get an insight into it, because what I was surprised about when I spoke to another authority was that they said to me that in terms of scrutiny the policy function was probably the most important. That was a surprise to me.

Respondent: I think in some respects it is, because that’s where you can say something, whereas we... It’s a shorthand. We call that the ‘overview’. Overview, scrutiny; that’s overview, scrutiny. Scrutiny is looking at things that have been done.

If they have been done, it’s important; it is important, but things that have been done, I would rather that the scrutiny panels told the Cabinet what they think the Cabinet ought to be doing than told the Cabinet they didn’t like what they had done.

Interviewer: Yes.

Respondent: You do both.

Interviewer: The overview side of it, then, the policy is sort of feeding into the wider debate before they actually take the decisions, and hopefully it would be a real deep, considered view, like with this. It should be [a sort of, you know] [Crosstalk 0:11:07].

Respondent: Yes. I wouldn’t want to overstate how...

Interviewer: These issues aren’t simple, are they?

Respondent: No.
Interviewer: It takes some thinking about and working out.

Respondent: I wouldn’t want to overstate it, but I saw… What did I see Brighton had done? Brighton had done some stuff. Yes – and sometimes you can shine a light on something that perhaps isn’t at the top of everybody’s agenda – in Brighton they’ve just a report in Brighton; they had an issue about… It was about stag and hen parties, and people going down for stag and hen parties predominantly and hiring/renting big flats designed for the purpose. What was happening was people having a great time in Brighton – fantastic, that’s really good – but late-night drinking.

Interviewer: [Coming home ___ time] [Crosstalk 0:11:56], yes (Laughter).

Respondent: Noise, predominantly noise. I remember I had a glance at their report and local residents saying, “There was a stripper,” a male stripper in the street at 3 o’clock in the morning with a dozen women baying at him, while you’re trying to get your kiddie to sleep.

Interviewer: Yes, [that’s not good, is it? 0:12:13].

Respondent: It wasn’t something that was, as far as I could see, on top of the council’s agenda. Some local residents had raised the issue and the scrutiny panel said, “Okay, let’s go and talk to the businesses that rent out these flats, because they’re bringing people in, they’re bringing money into the city. Let’s also talk to residents.”

I think the other thing that you have to do with councillors is you have to remember they’re councillors and not officers. Whilst that’s a really good, considered report, it doesn’t have reams of data in there; it’s
councillors saying, “We’ve looked at this and something should be done. This is an important issue.”

Interviewer: It’s putting it on the agenda, really.

Respondent: It’s putting it on the agenda.

Interviewer: Yes.

Respondent: Tonight, we’ve actually got the Adults, Health and Social Care Scrutiny Panel tonight, and we’ve got a presentation from a woman about becoming a dementia-friendly borough. She’s been seconded to Alzheimer’s to work on that and one of our recommendations was we should become a dementia-friendly borough, so that’s quite satisfying. That’s three years old now, two-and-a-half years old – three years old. You can have that.

Interviewer: Can I have this to have a look at?

Respondent: You can have that, yes.

Interviewer: Because that would be really interesting to look at that, because of the crosscutting nature of it and because it raises so many other issues in terms of trying to resolve that. Presumably, the other thing is that if you get to some way of resolving that, then presumably it’s got a positive knock-on effect across the board.
Respondent: It does. As I say, I wouldn’t want to... Most of our work is actually done in the committee rooms in committee meetings. [It stills away 0:13:49] and [____] is quite a traditional council. We’ve tried to do things to break them away from that.

A lot of scrutiny, the way that the scrutiny panel’s work – and I guess this sort of leads into the accountability a bit – is there are three... There’s a little triumvirate of the chair of the scrutiny panel, the director of the services that is predominantly being scrutinised, and us three, the scrutiny officer. Those are the three people probably who have most influence over what happens.

Interviewer: Yes.

Respondent: When [the 0:14:27] communities, the Communities Scrutiny Panel, the director is a guy called [____] who is possibly our most imaginative and radical – in style, not in politics – radical in style director. He’s the one who does Twitter, more than any of the others (Laughter). He’s the one who led on our council’s contribution to the Tour de France and stuff like that.

At one stage we had this woman, [____] who’s actually a lecturer at I think it’s [_____] chaired the Communities Scrutiny Panel. She’s a lecturer and so she would say, in the middle of a committee meeting, in Committee Room B, our formal committee room, she’d say, “Let’s split into three groups and have a quarter of an hour’s discussion about...” They did work on domestic violence, so the victim’s perspective or the police and domestic... Whatever she’d picked up.

Interviewer: Yes.
Respondent: She'd say, “Okay, two councillors and one officer; two councillors, one officer." She'd do what she'd do with a bunch of students.

Interviewer: Yes. It got a debate going.

Respondent: It got them talking.

Interviewer: Yes, it's good.

Respondent: The committee clerk, [who are 0:15:40] my close colleagues but they're very traditional, was going, “How do I minute this?” [who we] worked with, the guy in there, [who said, “Don’t. You do not need to minute it.” “Yes, but it’s a proper meeting.” “You can’t minute it, there are three groups talking. Just put your pen down and have a rest.” That’s not wild; that’s just doing what you do in a training session with staff, isn’t it?

Interviewer: Yes.

Respondent: “Let’s just spent 10 minutes talking about this and we’ll come together again.”

Interviewer: It’s sort of generating ideas, isn’t it?

Respondent: You try to break them up from… Seventy per cent – I don’t what per cent – 70% of our work is still an officer report to a committee meeting.
Interviewer: Do they tend to question that? If you put an officer report on, do you ever get people...? Do you get people questioning it to the extent of...? Presumably, when you put a report you've got to be... You've got to make sure it's all well documented and researched and everything; do you get people questioning the facts behind it?

Respondent: Yes, sometimes.

Interviewer: Or do they just accept what you put in?

Respondent: Sometimes. I think in — I'm giving you some of the strengths — is a traditional council and actually sometimes the scrutiny councillors in public don't like criticising the council, as they see it, even though that's their role.

Interviewer: Yes.

Respondent: Certainly me, and and part of our role we feel is to stir things up a bit, is to say, “Ask some questions.”

Interviewer: Because presumably, under the 2000 act, scrutiny really is your only check and balance, isn't it?

Respondent: It is your check and balance.

Interviewer: Unless you stir it up a bit, you're not going to get...
Respondent: Absolutely, and that’s where the good... We get some councillors who turn up and they haven’t read their papers. We get some councillors...

Interviewer: It often happens, doesn’t it? (Laughter)

Respondent: We get some councillors who turn up and they don’t really want to be there, but we get some who are good and ask good questions.

Interviewer: Is it easy to attract councillors to serve on scrutiny, or is it difficult?

Respondent: I don’t think that’s a question that… The whips appoint to the scrutiny panels.

Interviewer: [0:18:06], yes.

Respondent: I think there are people who are enthusiastic about particular aspects and will ask to go on a... They’re interested in children’s services, or they’re interested in the economy or whatever, so there’s a degree of selection. One of the weaknesses with our system, I think, in is that other councils have a scrutiny coordination committee.

Interviewer: Yes, they do.

Respondent: Again, if you look at the guidance from the acts, that’s recommended. We don’t, so we have no… What that gives you is... Like for example, which I work closely with on... I’ll tell you why. I work closely with because we share an acute hospital trust
and I [work to 0:19:02] support health. [You’ve got a minute?] Shall we
go into the…?

Interviewer: Yes.

Respondent: [We’ll go into the ...]

Interviewer: You were telling me about how you worked closely in terms of the -

Respondent: I was using them as an example because if you have a, this is only my observation because I’ve never worked anywhere that’s had one but you have a lead councillor who’s responsible for scrutiny, who’s responsible for making sure it does its job.

We have meetings of the five scrutiny chairs and their deputies but it has no status. It does have a bit of influence but...

You’ve got a formal committee and some councils have the scrutiny committee that keeps an oversight and coordination of the work plans of the others, and sometimes it’s the only time where calling is done, and we’ll do things like oversee training for members and stuff like that.

What happens, we have these meetings, the scrutiny chairs and I chair them and that doesn’t feel right. For pragmatic reasons we don’t appoint a chair to that meeting because you just end up trying to work out who’s going to chair it.

This is probably a little arrogant of us but some councillors’ viewpoint is a chair of that group will dominate it and you don’t want that to happen.
If he’d been given that role by council, then that would be right. I spend all my time on health and the health scrutiny function is the particular, because you know we have particular powers of health scrutiny.

Interviewer: Is that the major thing that you’re involved in at the minute?

Respondent: For about two and a half years, there’s been a strategy review of health and social care services, and in February, three of the provider trusts, three of the provider organisations produced what they called the Strategic Outline Case that had five models for the provision of predominantly acute hospital care across half of Huddersfield and [blank].

Their preferred option that they stated at that time was that Huddersfield [blank] Infirmary would become what they call and unplanned site and [blank] [blank] Hospital would become a planned site [and what that meant, in shorthand, was 0:03:03] that we wouldn’t have A&E in [blank].

There would be some minor injuries unit cover at the hospital but there wouldn’t be an accident and emergency -

Interviewer: That will be in Huddersfield? Did that cause a row?

Respondent: Yes, absolutely. Significant local anger. Actually just starting to write the report up. The council set up something called the People’s Commission which is like having a set with scrutiny power.

It was very political, I think they just wanted to do something different, and they set it up and I got asked to support that as well.
Interviewer: Who was on that?

Respondent: Six different councillors who aren’t necessarily on scrutiny. Some of the more senior councillors, and they decided to appointment an independent chair, so we’ve got an independent as the chair of it, a guy called Professor [redacted] who’s from Oxford Brookes University, and six councillors.

We’ve got a formal meeting tomorrow, an informal meeting with him on Thursday when we’re hoping that they will reach some conclusions.

Interviewer: That’s an ad hoc committee just to deal with that issue?

Respondent: Ad hoc, just one issue. When I first saw the council resolution, I said, “That’s what scrutiny does, why have they done that? We’ve got scrutiny to do that.”

People are still saying: why are you doing it this way? I think just by doing something a bit different, it’s made a bit more of an impact. This is very low key publicity but we’ve publicised it, we’ve got a logo and we’ve done some printing.

Interviewer: That takes views from people, pretty much operating in a similar way to what scrutiny will do in terms of getting views -

Respondent: Yes. We had nine locality meetings where we met with -

Interviewer: Oh, so it goes out and about across the -
Respondent: We went out and met, we went to [redacted] and [redacted]. We had low attendances, we were disappointed by the attendances.

Interviewer: It's often the problem when you're trying to get people to -

Respondent: We picked the wrong times for some of the meetings, but what happened was there was a bit of consultation overload or fatigue, because the health service had been out consulting, but we sent out the councillors, we didn't send out middle ranking officers which is what the health service did. What we had was effectively seven, two of them were so badly attended there was hardly anybody there at all, but seven focus groups. We didn't set out to have focus groups. They all lasted two hours.

Interviewer: Shows you it's a key issue then, doesn't it?

Respondent: I said seven rather than nine because two of the meetings only had one person, so you can discount those. I remember one at [redacted] where there were eight people but the debate went on for two hours, and at the end of it, one of the people who was presenting quite a challenge to the council said how much she'd enjoyed it.

People at the end of it said they really enjoyed -

Interviewer: There was a real input then from the people? It wasn't simply a case of councillors or officers deciding something, there was a real input from people on the ground about giving the views on those issues? I've not heard of that before.
Respondent: Apart from the fact it’s not a scrutiny panel but it is doing scrutiny work, it’s an interesting case.

Interviewer: It is.

Respondent: People came and said, “Don’t close our A&E,” but after they’d said that and we started talking to them, they started talking about general practice. They were talking about GPs. Actually, the issue for a lot of people was their GP services, access to it predominantly. Yes, they came back to a fact that Huddersfield seems a long way away if you’re living in [redacted] or [redacted] end, and how safe was it to travel longer distances and this, that and the other. But actually, we talked about general practice. Although the headline was accident and emergency, what people wanted to talk about was about how the GPs worked.

We’re meeting with them on Thursday to draw some conclusions and myself and Professor [redacted] are going to say to the six councillors, I hope we are because this is what we planned, “Do you accept there’s a case for change?” If you don’t accept there’s a case for change, you’re going against what NHS England are saying. You’re going against what the Keogh Report says. You’re going against what our clinical commissioning groups say.

Interviewer: Sort of establish that principle before it goes any further?

Respondent: Some of the people who’ve come to the locality events don’t want any change. They’re saying, “It ain’t broke, don’t fix it,” but the national policy imperative, and partly financially driven, is broke, it does need fixing.
A&E units aren’t meeting their targets of dealing with people in four hours.

Interviewer: Is the plan then to put a report together which takes into account what the people have said when they’ve gone out and about on these -

Respondent: Yes, it will take account of what they’ve said but it will be the councillors and Professor [name] analysis at the end of the day.

Interviewer: What will happen to that report? Once that’s gone, where does that go?

Respondent: That is an interesting question. It’s one we haven’t quite worked out because there’s a slight difference of opinion. It was a special meeting of the council, an extraordinary meeting of the council was called to set up the People’s Commission.

My view, which is mirroring something that [name] the chief executive said some months ago is we should have a second special meeting of council.

Interviewer: So it might go back to that?

Respondent: It goes back to full council. We ended up with a timetable that actually finishes this week, and then there’s a meeting for them to agree their final report.

We would have taken it to council in December, my advice was I haven’t got time to write a decent report in that time. Writing a poor report would undermine what we’ve done.
I’m hoping I can write a good report.

It takes time -

It takes time, and it’s an iterative process. The next council meeting after December is in February which is where they’re discussing next year’s budget proposals. We don’t want to mix this up with that highly criticised debate.

So let’s have a special meeting of the council. The leader of the council thinks it should go to the health and wellbeing board first. The health and wellbeing board has got NHS membership as well as council membership.

I think giving its first excursion to a place where we might be making quite strong recommendations to the clinical commissioning group means it could start with a row, and better to go to the council and for the council to endorse the whole thing.

Then say to the health and wellbeing board, “You take four of these recommendations.” The council asks the health and wellbeing board to take four of these recommendations.

I’ve got an email in this morning. We’ve got a couple of campaign groups who are very critical of this approach. Their view is that the People’s Commission has no statutory position which we use in scrutiny.

How are they losing out on it though if you’re not using scrutiny?

They’re not losing out -

What this woman, [redacted] and her colleagues, it’s unfair to say it’s their prime concern, they’re very concerned about privatisation
of the NHS. They want to avoid all opportunities for privatisation, so they're going on that line.

Their view is that the scrutiny panel has statutory powers to call in the NHS and has statutory powers to get information out of the NHS and the People's Commission doesn't, and they think we're not using our statutory powers properly. That's their view.

My view is that they're hanging something on, yes, there is a statutory power and I think if we ended up not being happy that we were getting information, then we've got two options.

Actually, the current legislation, we've got two options. One is the council can decide how it fulfils its health scrutiny function, and could give People's Commission the powers. That's one option, that might be a bit traumatic.

The other is to say, "This isn't working, pass it to scrutiny."

Interviewer: Then scrutiny could pick up on the work that had been done?

Respondent: I find it quite strange that they're picking up almost on this constitutional issue, The People's Commission has asked without any statutory powers the chief officer of the Clinical Commissioning Group to attend and give evidence, and he has.

They've asked the chief executive of the acute trust to attend and give evidence, and he has.

We've asked Yorkshire Ambulance Service to come and give evidence without any statutory powers, and they have.

Interviewer: So there's been cooperation across the board?
Respondent: If they said, “No, you've got no powers to ask us,” we'd do a press release. We'd say, "We asked Yorkshire Ambulance Service to come and tell us about keeping people safe, and they wouldn't talk to us."

Do you remember when Have I Got News For You did the tub of lard with [name] Hattersley?

Interviewer: Yes.

Respondent: You put a tub of lard on the table and say, “We invited [name] Hattersley and we've got a tub of lard.” You say, “We invited the Yorkshire Ambulance Service and they couldn't even bother to come and talk to us about keeping people safe.”

Interviewer: On that wider point because that's very interesting to get an insight into what happens, particularly on the health side of things. It's fascinating for me to pick up on this.

In terms of the question about who scrutiny can compel, am I correct in thinking that the present legislation allows you to compel cabinet members, officers on the council, and then there's other legislation in terms of health, police?

Respondent: Yes.

Interviewer: Say you've got shared services for instance, or if for instance, you've got outsourced services, how do you deal with that? Have you ever had a private company where you've asked them to come in and save you outsourced services and they've said, "No, we're not doing it" or has everybody generally been cooperative?
Respondent: There are several answers to that question. I can’t think of an instance when someone has said, “No, I won’t come.” We’ve had one or two instances where people have found it really difficult to make a date, but they haven’t said no.

Interviewer: Like Tony Blair appearing before the Arms to Iraq, quite happy to appear but trying to find the day, couldn’t quite do it.

Respondent: We use a number of mantras, clichés, evidence from a variety of sources, scrutiny ought to take evidence from a variety of sources. Sometimes it’s quite hard to persuade councillors. Sometimes they’re content to hear from the director and I don’t think we’ve been ambitious enough in who we’ve called in.

I’m talking about health and social care because that’s the scrutiny panel I support more. We’ve just revised our contracts, hub care is provided by private organisations in predominantly. Hardly any is in-house, it’s all contracted out.

Interviewer: That’s adult social care, is it?

Respondent: Yes, that’s carers going into old people’s homes and cooking them a meal or bathing them or whatever support they need.

Interviewer: That’s all outsourced, you say?

Respondent: 90% of it is outsourced. It’s been a service that has been subject to criticism, not just in but up and down the country for doing visits for 15 minutes, for paying people off for zero based contracts.
The workers who are on minimum wage or thereabouts not being paid travel time.

Interviewer: Yes, I've heard of this before, so they're chipping off the time of the people who are going -

Respondent: Yes. They've got a task which is going and taking them medication, and they rush in without shutting the front door to save time. They're probably few and far between. We're changing the contracts. What we've done in [redacted] is we had about 15 providers. We've reduced it to 3 based on a locality, so we're giving more business to 3 companies, and we're trying to pay them on outcomes rather than inputs.

Rather than saying, "We're paying for 1,000 hours a week, we're paying you to take these people from A to B to get them more independence," or whatever it might be.

Interviewer: Is that difficult to measure in terms of the contract?

Respondent: Yes, it is difficult to measure, but what you can get is you've got bigger organisations which become more professional. We're encouraging them to pay the living wage. We're encouraging them to do these things -

Interviewer: I presume everybody's looking for an outcome, you either get the outcome or you don't. If you don't get it, then you're on the rack for it.
730 Respondent: By and large, councillors are happy with this approach, but in March I think it is, we’re going to get those three companies to come and meet the scrutiny panel.

734 Interviewer: Are they quite happy to do that?

736 Respondent: I don’t think they know yet, but they will be because the commissioning side of the council will say you’re going to come.

738 My experience is, A) people see the advantages in talking about what they do, and B) they like doing it. If you feel you’re doing a good job and someone says, “Come and talk to me about the job you do,” you go along and do it.

743 Interviewer: You’re quite happy to do it, yes. Presumably as well there’s a commercial interest for them because if they don’t cooperate -

746 Respondent: We ought to do more of it across the Someone said to us the biggest employer in is Bank, the old Building Society. What happens, I think there are 6,000 people in working for Bank.

750 If Bank goes down as it nearly did in 2008 or even in the crash, the town goes down, but we’ve never got in. We should be talking to in scrutiny, and we haven’t done that yet.

754 Interviewer: Yes, because the impact of their operation will be so large.

756 Respondent: Also, it’s not just about calling them in, they might say to us, “If we’re going to stay in what the council’s got to get better at is A, B, C and D.” They can give messages back.
Interviewer: That feeds in to the economic development stuff, doesn't it, in terms of trying to keep people here and keep jobs?

Respondent: The guy in there, has done work on domestic violence with the community’s scrutiny panel and they've called in, they've talked to victims of domestic violence, they've talked to voluntary organisations, women's organisations, and that's just valuable for them to hear that stuff. They've talked to the police as well.

I can't remember where it was but one scrutiny function, they had a much more formal way of working out what should be on the work plan than we have, and they had some criteria.

One of their criteria is interesting. At one level you say that's a bit silly because you ought to do the boring stuff, but if it isn't interesting, you won't get -

Interviewer: You won't get anybody to, no, it's true. I suppose if several of the councillors as well, if they're not interested in something, you need somebody who's going to get into it.

Respondent: One of the things about scrutiny is that people forget, we forget, councillors forget, is because it's not running the show it doesn't have to be comprehensive.

Let's pick a different example, our scrutiny panel on children, in children's services we've got a problem with our social care for children. We've got government intervention, we have governance.

Interviewer: was telling me yesterday there's an issue. Is that children's services itself that's got the issue in terms of the intervention?
Respondent: Yes. So that scrutiny panel should give disproportionate attention to social care for children as opposed to education. It's not got to ignore education, and certainly some councillors have been very astute and said, "We're in trouble on social care for children because we took our eye off the ball. Let's not take our eye off the ball on education."

If you looked at the budgets, you'd spend 80% of your time on education and 20% on social care because that's the money that's spent. I'm guessing, it's maybe 70-30, but you ought to be looking at particular aspects of social care.

We don't need to look at residential care for children and young people to the same extent as social work services because the residential care hasn't been criticised enough -

Interviewer: So it's really a case of retaining a degree of flexibility so as you can put what was going to be as limited resource, really direct it to where it's most needed to get the best outcome that you can?

Respondent: Yes, if you can. When I go back to what I was saying at the beginning of our discussions, if the director has too much power in setting the agenda, then there is a temptation for them to direct you away from things they don't want scrutinising.

Interviewer: Yes.

Respondent: The most Machiavellian will do that deliberately and the least Machiavellian will do that almost by default. Our director of children's services who I think is a success, and he came in after we got the Ofsted, he says, "I've got all these mechanisms set up to look at social care, it's duplication and I want the scrutiny panel to look at A, B, C, D and E."
We’re going, “Whoa, hang on.” If you start setting agenda and the scrutiny panel doesn’t look at the right things...

I hope you don’t mind me telling you this as it happens because I’m sure you’re not a shrinking violet.

When we had the Ofsted on social care for children, the government insisted we set up an improvement board with external bodies.

After a period of time, one of the scrutiny panel members on children’s rang me up and said, “I want the scrutiny panel to do a detailed review into social care for children. How do we go about that?”

I said, “First of all we talk to the chair of the scrutiny panel,” which we did. I drafted a recommendation for them if they wanted to do it. I didn’t go to that meeting, I think [redacted] was at that meeting, and they passed this recommendation setting up a review.

The next morning the chief executive who wasn’t [redacted] it was a previous chief executive, came into my office uninvited, which he’s quite entitled to do, he’s the chief executive, but he’d never done before, and he said, “What happened last night at scrutiny, [redacted].”

I explained and I told him what I wrote, and he said, “Yes, I thought you might have drafted that. I’m going to stop this. We’re not doing this review, [redacted] we’re going to stop it,” and he walked out.

I thought if he stops this review going ahead, I can’t do scrutiny again, because the scrutiny members are just going to say, “Oh, the chief executive decides.”

Interviewer: I understand, yes.

Respondent: Also bearing in mind I’ve got a mortgage, we went ahead, and he came in again. He came to see me three times in my office did the chief executive.
The second time, this is the most pressure I’ve had in _____ from senior officers, he said, “You go and tell Councillor Raistrick,” who was the chair, “we’ve got an improvement board doing this,” and he’s jabbing his finger at me like this, he’s not actually jabbing it but he’s that close.

“You go and tell Councillor Raistrick we’ve got an improvement board. This is duplication. It’s going to make us look stupid in front of the government and he’s got to stop his review.”

I went to see Councillor Raistrick, I toned it down. I said, “____ is concerned that this is duplication and we’ve got an improvement board that’s doing this work.” I took him through the arguments.

___ Raistrick said to me, “How long have we had an improvement board, ___ I said, “It’ll be 18 months now, ___ He said, “Well, it isn’t fucking working.”

We’re doing our review. We did the review.

Interviewer: That’s the principle, isn’t it, in terms of who’s deciding what --

Respondent: Yes, the councillors decide. It isn’t fucking working, we’re doing the review. We did the review. ___ said to me, “If this thing’s going ahead, you’re going to get minimal cooperation from officers. I’m not having my officers wasting their time.”

Interviewer: Really?

Respondent: We didn’t get minimal cooperation because the new director realised it was worthwhile investing the time, but they talked to ___ and we had the meeting in one of the meeting rooms upstairs and there was me and a committee administrator and somebody else.
said, “I want the officers to leave. Yes, I want you to leave, and you, you leave.” He gave them a bollocking for what they were doing, completely counterproductive because those members came out livid.

Interviewer: It’ll make them more determined.

They came into my office and told me exactly what he’d said, so doing it confidentially isn’t going to work, and it just made them more determined.

These 51 people in these pictures, they’re nice as pie until you actually tell them they can’t do what they want to do.

I tell that story about because that’s right. When you look at all the bits of work that I feel, not all of them, some of the bits of work that I feel least proud about are where probably I’ve been a bit too compromising and tried to balance officer and members because what happens is no one’s satisfied.

The councillors aren’t satisfied that they’re doing proper scrutiny, and the officers have still had to come and talk about something they’re uncomfortable about doing.

I was talking to someone from the health service the other week and I said I’m a broker. He said, “I know you are.” That’s what our role is, it is brokerage.

Like this guy Raistrick, we had quite a lot of problems with him, with his style. He worked with at that time, and he would say, “Go and find this out for me, and would dutifully do that, probably with not sufficient, “What do you want to know?”

So it would go through to the director of children’s services to do something or do nothing, and then would send a reminder three days later.
So we ended up with a row. There’s a nice story of the two of them sitting in that room together. [Redacted] phoned up and said, “I want the last five years outturn reports on the budget for children’s services put, [Redacted].”

[Redacted] starts, this is between us, writing an email to get this from the director of children’s services, and [Redacted] says, “We can get those ourselves, [Redacted] we don’t need to bother the director of children’s services. We can get that.” Two advantages to that, one is we don’t bother the director of children’s services who is a busy man. Secondly, he doesn’t know we’re doing it, we’re helping the scrutiny process get informed.

Thirdly, why does he want it? Is he asking for the right documents, as an amateur? If he actually tells us what he wants to know, then we can help get him -

Rather than give him 5 documents that are 30 pages long, we can do the analysis and give him 5 figures. That’s why independent support for scrutiny...

It’s a funny function. You’ve got the chief executive who’s my manager coming in to tell me - I’m almost the only person in the council if he says stop I don’t have to do it, because if I do stop, he’s my manager for pay and rations.

In terms of what we’ve do, it’s got to be with the councillors. If we get it wrong, [Redacted] at one stage in this bit of work with children’s services, rang up Ofsted directly, by this time [Redacted] that chief executive’s left, he actually works in health service at the moment, and [Redacted] was here.

[Redacted] said something, to use some phrase which is like, “You’re independent within the council but not of the council.” Our relationship with Ofsted is a really important relationship and we can’t have scrutiny officers going independently to Ofsted.

I’m not sure that she was right but it’s a nuance, isn’t it? You’ve got to think of the bigger picture. If we were so aggressive that we called in
cabinet members and officers and gave them a right kicking every
month, it just wouldn't work.

Interviewer: It loses its impact.

Respondent: Not many councillors are skilled enough or have the time to do it
themselves. They have many skills, that's not denying their skills.
Some of them do. There's a guy in Leeds called [redacted] chaired the Yorkshire and Humber joint health scrutiny panel.
He got majorly obsessed. You'd get emails from [redacted] at 1:00 in the morning about bits of data he was trying to get off
NHS England, but he had the commitment. He was an academic, he
was a just recently retired university lecturer, so he had the resource,
and he did a really good scrutiny job, probably through his obsession.
Can't do it all the time, can't do it on every issue, and the point, I'm
telling you stuff that you'd know I'm sure, but the point of having
councillors is that it is the butcher, the baker and candlestick maker.
You don't want people who are intellectuals all the time. You want
people who understand what people who live around them think and
want -

Interviewer: What about the resources issue here? I was amazed, I went to see,
sat in a public scrutiny last week -

Respondent: Who did you talk to there, Tim Gilley?

Interviewer: I spoke to [redacted]

Respondent: Yes, I know him.
Interviewer: I was going to speak to Jessica [Crowle 0:33:28] then I spoke to [ ] and it was very good. [ ] is very helpful to me. One of the things that amazed me was that I looked at their annual report and I saw that the discretionary budget for scrutiny is a matter of a couple of thousand a year.

I was amazed it was that low. I know there’ve been staff cutbacks but I’m amazed it was that low. What’s the situation here? You guys are all beavering away, you’re trying to sort this out.

Respondent: We spend relatively little on top of our salaries. We’re three full time workers. The bulk of the spend on scrutiny is three full time workers, the special allowances for the chairs of the scrutiny panels and the administration around running meetings.

We don’t spend it but we could spend about 8,000.

Interviewer: Is that enough for what you need?

Respondent: If there was something really major that cropped up and we had to make a case for more, I think we might get it. It’s almost like: why have we got three scrutiny officers, why haven’t we got six, why haven’t we got two?

The councillor sets the level of -

Interviewer: Yes, and you’ve got to try and live within -

Respondent: So we’re quite parsimonious. Four years ago perhaps we decided we wanted to look at the council’s medium term financial strategy. The only person who understands the medium term financial strategy in
depth is the head of financial services who’s the guy we’re scrutinising.

We got an external guy at £1,000 to help us with that process because we didn’t see how we could do that bit of work just taking advice from [redacted] who was the head of finance at that time.

Pete’s a great guy and honest, but -

Interviewer: It’s about maintaining that distance, isn’t it?

Respondent: He’s not going to say it’s a bit of bad work, is he? He’s not going to say it’s saving on the edge of financial rectitude. He’s not going to say that stuff, so you need to take an outside look. We pay for that.

Interviewer: It’s as and when something comes up that you might need to do it, then you’ll pay for it?

Respondent: The thing that we like to do, [redacted] did a work on biomass boilers, the green stuff, and he took some councillors on a trip to Barnsley where they’ve done some stuff.

Paying for a coach or a minibus and some lunch, that is really valuable to take members out. We don’t go very far, I’ve been to [redacted] to talk to the people who run their sports services because they’ve got a particular relationship on sports services that we were looking at.

At one stage, they’ve probably changed now, in [redacted] we used to have a massive scrutiny team. They had a chief officer leading it. They had someone on 100 grand.

Interviewer: They’ve got 12 or something down there.
Respondent: Yes, they used to have 30 or 25. What the council said was, “We serve a million people.” It’s a really big council.

I don’t think in the scheme of things you can justify that. and myself in particular, less so, have done one or two bits of work that effectively are policy development. Or we’re a resource that’s around and it’s not scrutiny.

just done a of work on how we could webcast our council meetings, nothing to do with scrutiny particularly. It has a bit of an impact on scrutiny because we might webcast scrutiny, but a resource. He’s been used, he’s written the report, he took it to governance and business committee last night, been thanked for his work and he’s been asked to do some more work.

is looking at how she can pull together a little policy function that will include us. We’re up for that. and don’t know about it properly, knows a little bit because he’s picked it up from other sources.

We’re up for that because in times of cuts, if the chief executive says, “This is how I’m going to organise things,” you usually go along with that, but the question is: can you retain your independent support to the scrutiny panels when you’re helping the cabinet develop a bit of policy?

Interviewer: Yes.

Respondent: I think you have to just take hats off and put hats on, because I don’t think we’ve got the luxury. Every time we have cuts, every year, you
think there are three of us and they're cutting services to vulnerable
old people and they're not mending the potholes in the roads properly.

Interviewer: This is the thing, isn't it? I think as well that, you'll know this better than
I do, there's a tendency sometimes to see scrutiny as a relatively easy
target in terms of resources. When you've got all this other stuff going
on in terms of social care and stuff, frontline services [Cross talk
0:39:27].

Respondent: If you said to me, "Could we do it with two scrutiny officers, it's a bit
like I said to you before, the council sets its own level. I think one
would be a big ask.

What I've said to is I think we could do it with four scrutiny
panels, not five. You've still got the same number of issues to
scrutinise, it doesn't matter how many committees you've got, you've
still got roads and people and buildings and planning and all that sort
of stuff, but we could do it more efficiently with four scrutiny panels
across a relatively small council.

Could we do it with two of us rather than three of us, or two and a half
of us rather than three of us? Yes, we could, we just do less. [Cross
talk 0:40:20].

The other thing, the cynics, actually said this, you might have
to ask her when you meet once you've settled the cabinet,
what are the rest of the councillors going to do?

To some extent, our role is keeping them busy. Does it justify
spending £100,000 or whatever we get on salaries, 3 people, to keep
people busy? Probably not, so you try and get some value out of it,
but there is a little bit around you have a cabinet of 7 and there are 51
councillors. What do the other 44 do?
Interviewer: You say that, but speaking to people, even now that is a big issue. All these years after the 2000 culling, it is still a big issue, because of course, previously on the committee system, some places have gone back to them. In terms of that, at least there was always something for councillors to do.

Now, it’s a sort of community leadership stuff and it’s scrutiny, but all the stuff I’ve seen on it seems to suggest that backbench members, to use that term, feel like second best -

Respondent: There was a Labour minister who was chair of a select committee and wrote a book, wrote his diaries, and he was also a junior minister, bloke, I can’t remember his name but he wrote some really entertaining diaries, I’ve got them at home.

He said he would rather be the chair of a select committee than a junior minister because you have more influence. If you’re a junior minister you’re sent to visit a factory in Wigan. There’s nothing wrong with Wigan, but...

Interviewer: Nothing wrong with Wigan for the tape.

Respondent: If you’re a select committee chair, what was he called? The diaries, they’re very entertaining, he’s got a nice story in his diaries and his name will come back to me as I’m talking.

He’s gone to some conference about something he doesn’t know anything about. He’s got a speech that’s been written for him, he’s glanced through it and he stands up at 9:30 to open this conference, and he says, “What happens when you’re a junior minister is you get someone writing a speech for you. It says all the right things, it’s usually worthy and it’s usually turgid and it’s invariably boring.”

Throws it down, speaks off the cuff for 20 minutes. At the end of that session, the press officer for the department starts walking towards...
him. The press officer works for Alastair Campbell, so he's thinking, "Oh, shit, I'm really in trouble now."

The press officer walks over, the mouthpiece of Alastair Campbell, the second or third most powerful man in the government, and the press officer says, "That was really good, that was really lively, it went down a treat. Well done, that was great."

So phew, and then this minister, whose name will come back to me, says, "Tell me, who wrote the speech?" and the guy said, "Oh, he's over there." He was actually in the audience having heard his work that he'd been crafting for weeks described as turgid and boring.

Interviewer: The thing is though you do see that. I've been into politics 30-odd years, I watch all the ins and outs of everything, and you see it sometimes, particularly in some of these regional parliaments.

I watch a lot of the goings on at Stormont and you see ministers standing up there, Martin McGuinness with a speech, and he's reading this stuff out that the civil servants have given him and you're thinking, "Bloody hell, is anybody going to put a bit of life into this?"

Respondent: Mullin, that's the guy's name.

Interviewer: Oh, Mullin? Yes.

Respondent: As soon as I started Googling him, I remembered.

Interviewer: He was very effective of course on the Home select committee. He was one of the most effective ones we've seen.
Respondent: If you go to the Centre for Public Scrutiny annual conference which I try to do, one of us goes and we always try and get a couple of members to go.

Up and down the country there might be 20, perhaps more, but a number of scrutiny chairs who really recognise what it can do, and they do it well, very well. I don't think we've got any here. We've had glimpses of it, but you see people who -

Interviewer: Where are the best places for scrutiny in terms of authority? Are you able to name names?

Respondent: Tameside used to be a number of years ago. We went to visit Tameside, we thought they might actually slightly oversell what they did. I couldn't tell you but...

We'd done some work on health, on a Yorkshire and Humber joint scrutiny committee. It started with cardiac services for children and there was a major controversy here because, to cut a long story short, a review was going to close the Leeds unit.

Interviewer: Yes, I remember.

Respondent: Kids from Leeds were going to have to go to Newcastle. This is where this guy the major obsession was chairing it.

I used to go sit at the back to observe these meetings because we had a council there, and a woman called who's a Conservative councillor, it's interesting, hasn't been Conservative controlled, it's been a hung council, but they put a Conservative onto this because she's good. They're really not bothered by the fact that she's a Conservative.
Actually for two or three meetings I didn’t think she was, it just never occurred to me she was a Conservative, she’d come from [BLANK].

She has read her papers, and sometimes the papers on this scrutiny panel, this scrutiny committee are 100 pages, 150 pages long. She’s read the papers, she’s pursued issues, she’s asked good questions.

Interviewer: Makes a difference, doesn’t it?

Respondent: So you see people like [BLANK] On that committee there was [BLANK] from [BLANK] and [BLANK] from Wakefield who was older. [BLANK] read the papers, not quite as intellectually bright as [BLANK] Labour, but a proper politician, and Betty would just pursue the issues, and Betty and [BLANK] sat next to each other, Tory, Labour, because they weren’t there to do Tory Labour stuff.

Interviewer: I suppose that’s the thing, isn’t it? When you’re looking at scrutiny, I suppose really what you’re after is people who are going to read the stuff, take an interest in it, get to grips with the issues and really try and pursue it to get an answer or get a start of an answer, but to get something. It’s more that than the party political knockabouts.

Respondent: Yes. There’s nothing wrong with a bit of party political from time to time.

Interviewer: No, I’m a great fan of it.

Respondent: There’s a guy who used to train on scrutiny, he was a former councillor, and he was Labour, party member. There’s nothing that’s
more fun than having a pop at the Tories. He's be talking to Tories and vice versa, but you don't do that -

What I think can sometimes be very powerful in scrutiny is a councillor who has, I went on one Yorkshire and Humber training session and the councillor told me, he was from Rotherham, and an old guard councillor from Rotherham, old Labour, been a Labour councillor for 30 years, said, "Get this son an obsession."

In other words, find something to focus on, because you can't do everything. Get this son an obsession.

I worked with a councillor called [redacted] in [redacted] who was a Labour councillor who subsequently resigned from the Labour Party because of the Iraq war and stayed just Independent who was more green than the Greens.

Whatever the issue was, [redacted] would ask about solar panels, or [redacted] would ask about water runoff or whatever. What that did is it sharpened up the officers, because if [redacted] -

Interviewer: If they're going to ask about it -

Respondent: He's going to ask about it. We could be talking about sport and he'd find a green element to it, and that's fine because the officers thought, "Oh, Christ, [redacted] on that committee, I'd better..."

[redacted] here who is a Conservative. There's [redacted] he's on the right of the Conservative Party, [redacted] who's [redacted]

If you start talking about European grants, he'll go onto a bit of a rant. In my personal view, it's not a particularly thoughtful rant, but again, don't casually say, "We've been working with the EU on this," because [redacted] will come in with his views and present that challenge.

He said some things in some settings that I find difficult but he's actually quite fearless. I worked closely with a Conservative councillor
last year and she said, "You don't need to worry about following
the line because he doesn't follow the Conservative Party lines. He
just does what he wants."

His most sort of difficult times have sometimes been emails that have
been lubricated by a decent Merlot, and he also did something that
was actually outrageous which was about three years ago in a full
council meeting.

A petition was presented by some trade unions predominantly who
were outraged enough to want to protect their members' jobs. A walks to the front of the council chamber and picked up a petition and
tore it up. That's out of order, and he got bollocked for it.

In a sense, I disagree with him in his sentiments entirely, but he's got
some spirit. [Cross talk 0:51:10] waving the mace around.

Interviewer: This is very true. There was a news article from Stormont a couple of
weeks ago to say that the speaker there, he's taken too tough a line
on members of that assembly and suspending them for going against
various rules and whatever.

It leads to this question about if you're going to sanitise everything,
there's going to be no spirit there, there's going to be no argument. It's
a balance, isn't it? You do need these people, you want a bit of colour
into it -

Respondent: I think so.

Interviewer: Plus it makes people take notice, and this is the whole problem in
terms of politics across the board. There's argument now that all the
parties say the same thing, they all do the same thing, that there's no
difference, they all take the party line, it's all media, it's all spin.

You need people. If you think of the people that you're remembering in
terms of the policy, you think of Enoch Powell and Tony Benn, you
think of these big figures. You don’t think of somebody who’s just sitting in a ministerial chair for two years to get a job.

Talking about that sort of thing, and I know we’ve gone around lots of things, some of my best experiences in scrutiny have been where we have engaged with the public, and we engage with the public because it’s on issues that are important to them.

Two or three years ago, the council consulted on introducing dog control orders. [Name] calls them doggie asbos. [Name] and the letters’ pages of the paper are split between dog owners and predominantly people who use sports fields and parks, so dog poo on the sports field.

“We spend three quarters of an hour cleaning up the football field so our nine years old can run around safely.”

Dog owners are saying, “Actually, most of us are responsible. It’s a small, irresponsible minority that are not going to change, whatever you do.”

We had a meeting of the economy and environment scrutiny panel where 25 perhaps members of the public came, and the cabinet member at the time who’s actually one of our most astute politicians, a guy called [Name] who’s a Labour councillor, that’s [Name].

He used to write plays for Radio 3 and Radio 4. He’s an interesting character. We had these two camps. We had the dog owners. We had one woman who stood up and said, “I train dogs for a living, that’s my job. I go to the park, I’ve got to let them off a leash, that’s the job. That’s how I make my living.”

We had the sports people saying, “We have this problem.” [Name] was able to explain that the dog control orders would not stop dogs being taken off their leash in every park, this is what it means, it’s different.

It was a passionate but rational discussion, and I believe that the dog control orders were amended to a degree following that discussion.
Those people, it wasn’t set up as a consultation exercise, we use this somewhat trite phrase which is, “Scrutiny is a meeting in public, not a public meeting,” but there’s some truth in it, it’s not there for the public to come and shout, it’s there for the public to come and observe, hold to account the councillors for what they’re doing as well as councillors holding other people to account.

This woman [redacted] that’s writing to us about health and her comrades as they probably are, were saying, “We’re going to hold you to account for doing your job properly.”

When I worked in [redacted] I worked in [redacted] for many years, there was an issue about, there’s a theatre in an area of [redacted] called Little Germany, Chapel Street, it’s a sort of community theatre.

Interviewer: I know where it is, yes.

Respondent: It was in financial difficulties, this is 10 years ago now, and the scrutiny panel decides to have a look at it, and we decided the best place to have the scrutiny panel meeting would be in the theatre.

This was only one item on the agenda, there were four other items on the agenda, I had to go for another item. Turned up to theatre, because it was run by volunteers, they’d forgotten to put the heating on in the theatre and it was ice cold.

So the meeting was held in the bar, the bar wasn’t open unfortunately, and there was a table in the middle with the councillors on it and people with an interest in the theatre had turned up in their hordes to come and lobby, have their say, maybe 100 people.

It’s the only meeting I’ve been to where I’ve sat on the floor because there weren’t enough chairs, so I let members of the public sit.

The guy who chaired it, he went through the way the meeting was going to be run, then he said, “We’re going to have a presentation, we’re going to take evidence from these, then councillors are going to
ask questions, and then the public can ask questions. That's how we're going to structure it.”

After about a minute, a member of the public puts her hand up and says, Councillor [Mod 0:56:54], “I explained to you, you're going to get a chance later on.” She said, “We can’t hear.”

At which point, the councillors picked up the tables, moved them to the middle of the bar, rearranged the room and put themselves in a place where they could be heard. It was brilliant. It was proper politics as theatre in a theatre.

Interviewer: Doesn't that really bring it to life though? Fantastic.

Respondent: We had people who ran drama classes for disabled kids and actors and things. The difficulty with that, and I'll put it sort of crudely, is mob rule. Actually, the theatre wasn't financially viable, and 100 people coming and saying it was a great thing didn't make it financially viable.

The tough thing for councillors in scrutiny is to say, “We've heard all that. We still think something’s got to be done about the finances.”

Interviewer: It's a bit like your NHS issue.

Respondent: On the accident and emergency. If we actually had a vote, the people of [ ] would say, “Don’t change our A&E,” and a lot of the evidence is saying it isn’t working very well. People are going to A&E who don’t need to go. We can’t recruit sufficient consultants and senior staff for A&E, we're covering it with locums which a lot of evidence says is less safe than having permanent staff. You know all the arguments, da-da-da.
Interviewer: Yes.

Respondent: If I write a report that says people want to keep their A&E, the health service is going to say, “Thank you very much for your report,” and carry on exactly as they are.

I'm mildly obsessed by this. You've got [blank] Hospital built with a PFI.

Interviewer: It's PFI, is it?

Respondent: It's PFI and it's about 14 years old. We've got Huddersfield [blank] Infirmary, 50 years old, looks like [blank] Soame 0:59:05] was involved in it. It's a horrible ugly building, scruffy, with fitted above hospitals.

What the acute hospital trust is saying is our preferred option is to have the on plan site at Huddersfield, we'll have to spend £150 million on doing the building up and reduce the number of beds at [blank] from 400 to 87.

So [blank] en masse are saying that's madness. New building, old building. We're paying £10 million a year interest on the PFI and you're going to reduce that -

Interviewer: They're not cheap those PFI deals.

Respondent: - from 400 to 87? I think our report, and the members will decide, should say we really need convincing from a financial basis that this will be the better option. I think I can see the argument for doing it.

The argument is that the building at Huddersfield is not fit for purpose and has got to be changed. This will be the acute trust's side of it. We've got to do something about that building.
Anyway, they've said to us there's more space on the site, we can rebuild a block without shutting the hospital, rebuild a block, knock down the old block. Rebuild a block, knock down the old block.

You can't in [redacted] it doesn't work.

Interviewer: Can't you?

Respondent: Anyway, the PFI deal was a really bad deal and unpicking it won't work. So there's a pragmatic response, and the people of Huddersfield get their - and [redacted] because they'll be going to use it, get a better hospital in Huddersfield.

So we don't say no change, we say, "Really convince us that this is the right way to go," because the people in [redacted] are not convinced that our spanking new hospital -

Interviewer: That you're paying for on the PFI?

Respondent: We will be paying for another 50, 45 years.

Interviewer: It's this balance between the politics and evidence based policy.

Respondent: This is the report that they produced about the hospitals. It's called the Strategic Outline Case. It has many flaws.

Interviewer: Is that on a website?
Respondent: Yes, you can find that. Here are the two hospitals. That's a photograph of [redacted] Hospital. That's an architect's impression, that's not a photograph, because it's such a scruffy building, they didn't want to present that as the site.

Imagine that, you're from Liverpool, you know about tower blocks. My best friend at college was from Knowsley.

Interviewer: Ah, right.

Respondent: Imagine that as a scruffy building rather than this, and that is what it looks like. This is the one that they're going to reduce from 400 beds to 87, if they get their way. I don't think they will get their way exactly like that.

Interviewer: Seeing from what you say, the thing needs to be backed up, doesn't it?

Respondent: So the scrutiny, because what we're doing is scrutiny even though it's not a scrutiny, would be to say we haven't been convinced by your financial model. Not only us, the commissioners say that they're not convinced by it. The head of the Clinical Commissioning Group has said, "We don't see how it works out financially."

Interviewer: You need to make the case.

Respondent: You end up with different vocabulary being used. To a hospital manager, A&E, it seems to me, this is my observation, is about heart attacks and strokes and people dying from major traffic accidents. For the members of the public who came to our events, it's about what
happens when your daughter falls off her bike. That's what they mean by A&E.

Interviewer: That's right, and it's the fear factor as well. It's a case of: what do I do if?

Respondent: What happens now and has happened for a number of years is if you have a major heart attack in any part of [redacted] you don't go to Leeds Hospital, you don't go to Huddersfield Hospital, you go to Leeds anyway. It's already happening.

The specialist services are in Leeds. If you have a stroke in [redacted] or Huddersfield and you live in Huddersfield, you go to [redacted] because that's where the stroke unit is, it's already happening.

I think the People's Commission has accepted if you're about to die, go to where the specialist is, it doesn't matter, well, make sure it doesn't matter if it's a longer journey.

Interviewer: Yes.

Respondent: Do you remember the footballer who collapsed at Spurs for -

Interviewer: I do.

Respondent: The story about that is that there was a consultant watching the game, heart surgeon, went onto the ground, went into the ambulance with him, and the ambulance drove past three hospitals in London because the consultant knew where the best place to go was.
So the journey time's longer, the outcome is -

Interviewer: I suppose it's this issue about convincing people that the journey time isn't going to be a problem.

Respondent: Yes, and that's a hard job.

Interviewer: Instinctively you think, "If I can get somewhere within five minutes rather half an hour or something."

Respondent: This is where scrutiny is a good place to rehearse arguments. The health people say the treatment starts when the ambulance arrives. We've got skilled paramedics in the ambulance, the treatment starts when the ambulance arrives.

You need to get to the specialist service and the journey time isn't so critical. It is critical and it's critical for different conditions.

There's one, it sounds ridiculous but they said this in one bit of research I read, it's critical for drowning. Well, of course it bloody is. You can't wait an hour for a doctor if you're drowning.

What the people are saying to us is, A) we're really not convinced, convince us. Secondly, once you're there, we want to visit our relatives.

Interviewer: That's the other point of course.

Respondent: Most people in acute hospital are now over 65, so their wives and husbands and carers and nearest and dearest are over 65. It's not universally true obviously, but it's an older population.
Interviewer: There's a question around getting to visit where -

Respondent: If your husband's in Huddersfield Hospital and it's three buses, and it's three buses to Huddersfield Hospital from anywhere in [redacted] except for here where you can get two buses.

Interviewer: If you live in the centre of [redacted] -

Respondent: You're all right.

Interviewer: It's still two buses every day, twice a day if you want to visit twice a day. What happens is usually neighbours rally around and they give you a lift, and it's a balance. None of us can have a hospital on our street corner.

Interviewer: It's a balance, you're right, it's difficult.

Respondent: It's a balance, so that's where the scrutiny process, when it works well, should be rehearsing those arguments in public. The in pubic bit is really important.

Interviewer: It's fascinating. I'm really grateful to you.

Respondent: I'm worried I'm giving you all the best examples because actually, some of it we go, "Oh, bloody hell, look at this agenda, it's terribly boring." It's not really that impact.
Interviewer: The thing that's common to me from it is that first of all there's a real determination on behalf of scrutiny to get to grips with some of these issues. These issues, you mentioned about the situation with A&E, it's a difficult issue. You mentioned about the dementia stuff. It's not easy stuff but it requires somebody to do the thinking and to involve people in what the solutions are, and although they're not easy you need to try and start that work and get it moving.

What you've said is interesting because if somebody had said to me even six weeks ago, "Scrutiny, what's the main thing?" I'd have said scrutinising decisions that comes from cabinet.

From what you're saying to me, yes, it does do that and that is important, but you've also got this other stuff which the main overview stuff in terms of policy.

Respondent: Scrutinising decisions of cabinet is an important safeguard. When I worked at [redacted] we used to talk about you'd call a decision in, you'd take it to scrutiny, you'd take it back to the executive as they called in in [redacted].

The executive always made a recommendation in response. "Point A: The Executive thanks such-and-such a scrutiny panel for all its work in this issue. Point B: Piss off." Obviously not phrased like that but -

Interviewer: That was the gist.

Respondent: All you've done is delayed something for 4 weeks 90% of the time. In the middle of that you've got a director usually because I think we still call the officers to account more than the cabinet members which is a flaw and we've got them to come in public to explain their decision.

This is benefitting it but predominantly, you're too late. I'll give you this example. I love my subjects, I'm going on about it.
Interviewer: It's absolutely fascinating for me to hear, I'm really grateful.

Respondent: When I worked in [redacted] there was an issue about Ilkley Moor, the management of Ilkley Moor which is within [redacted] Council District.

The cabinet, the executive member at the time was a Conservative, it was a Conservative run authority at the time, Anne [redacted] and Anne [redacted] said, "I'm not bringing my report on Ilkley Moor to scrutiny, I'm not bringing it. We'll take it to executive. If you don't like it, call it in."

The chair of the scrutiny panel said, "I want a discussion at scrutiny before it goes to executive," so there's a challenge and I'm the little scrutiny officer and the director is saying, "I'm doing what Anne [redacted] says, we're not bringing you a report," and it's my job to try and support scrutiny.

Eventually I said, "We don't want your report with your recommendations, we want a discussion. It's not about the report, it's about the issue." Eventually they came very reluctantly, and the director, a guy who I liked called Allan Mannerings, he brought two PowerPoint slides which I think was intended to be an insult to the scrutiny panel.

It's meant to be, "All right, you've made us come - two slides."

Interviewer: That's all you're getting.

Respondent: The first slide talked about the issues, bracken was an issue on Ilkley Moor. Grouse shooting is an issue on Ilkley Moor. Maintaining the buildings the council owns is an issue on Ilkley Moor, and four or five others I can't remember.

The options, which was you could sell it, you could invest in it, he gave them exactly what the scrutiny panel needed for a proper discussion.
Interviewer: Oh, that really opened up the debate because you have the basics to run through it all? Fascinating.

Respondent: An hour later, Anne [redacted] is walking away with more or less cross party support for where she’s going. Why was she so reluctant to bring it? Because the politics meant she didn’t want to give them the press release.

She wanted to say, “I have come in and saved Ilkley Moor. I use that as an example: don’t write a 30-page report. Come and tell us what you’re thinking about. The scrutiny panel can say, “Have you thought about this? Have you thought about that?”

Then if you’re clever as an officer, you write your report for cabinet that says, “We’ve talked to the scrutiny panel, they were very helpful, they gave us some really good suggestions and we’ve built them into our proposal.”

Interviewer: So it incorporates it?

Respondent: That makes it a lot harder for the scrutiny panel to call it in. Sometimes what you get when you get those discussions, we had one, I think it was a calling, the cabinet changed, reduced the opening hours in some of our customer access points in the towns other than [redacted] as a cut, as a saving.

Interviewer: The one-stop shops?

Respondent: Where you go to pay your council tax or to make a query about a service or whatever. They shut them, they changed them from five-
day a week to three-day a week and they had a schedule. I can't remember where it's a calling or whether it came before it went to cabinet, but they took it to the councillors, and the councillors by and large accepted that we had to make savings. They accepted the case.

One of them said, I think it was Brighouse, "You're suggesting Monday, Wednesday and Thursday open?" The officer said yes, that's right, and this is a Brighouse councillor.

The Brighouse councillor said, "But it's market day on Tuesday. You're closing it on market day." It's simple thing, isn't it, but the local councillor -

1623

Interviewer: It's local knowledge, isn't it?

1625

Respondent: Someone in the office across the road where you met yesterday has been working out staff schedules without thinking about it's market day on Tuesday, or Wednesday or Thursday, whatever it is.

1629

Interviewer: That just demonstrates the need for local input in it.

1631

Respondent: And pulling somebody out into the open, because at some stage, probably someone from Brighouse who wasn't a councillor would have said, "What, they're going to close it on market day when people do come in?"

A lot of our work passes without notice or interest. We've got a meeting tonight, and when I first came here I found, and we still do, we have financial monitoring reports that come every quarter to scrutiny, and it's a waste of time, usually.

I went to see the guy who's the head of finance and I said, "These reports you're bringing, they don't say anything." He said, "Yes, I
know. We need to report to the scrutiny panels, I said, “But you’re not reporting, you’re not saying anything.”

He said, “No, we need to have a process by which it can be seen that we’re putting these reports into the public arena.” “You’re not saying anything.” He said, “I know.”

So occasionally, you will get an issue out of them. It’s usually not a financial issue, it’s a service issue, because they’re all about services, the financial reports are about services. We do this, so we have 20 reports a year...

**Interviewer:** It’s not really telling anybody anything?

**Respondent:** It’s not saying very much, it’s not doing very much. Members quite like it because they feel it’s something they should keep their grip on, but they’re not keeping their grip on it because the reports don’t really help them.

The first one when I came in 2009, I was supporting use of resources that looks at legal services and financing, the central services.

It was quarter 2 report. It said, let’s say the budget for legal services was £1 million. It said, “In the first 6 months of this year we’ve spent £550,000 and the budget’s £1 million and we will be in balance, we will not overspend.”

I’m saying you spent £550,000 in 6 months and you’re going to spend £450,000 in the next 6 months where most of it is staff? “Don’t ask these questions, We are publically presenting a balanced budget.”

I said, “It’s not being queried. How do you drop £100,000 over 6 months?” Eventually they said, “We’ve got some vacancies in HR and we’ll transfer money over there, that’s how we’ll cover it.” I suppose that came out -
1673 Interviewer: It wouldn’t have come out without the question.

1674

1675 Respondent: They weren’t presenting it for proper, they were really quite fed up with me -

1676

1677

1678 Interviewer: Yes, asking a question.

1679

1680 Respondent: All right, so you’ve got vacancies in HR. Why have we got vacancies in HR, do we need those posts? Can we scrap them? Why don’t we scrap the posts? “Well, we need them.” “If you need them, fill them.”

1681

1682 I was doing that and the members weren’t, so it was happening behind the scenes. Some of the reports got a little bit better.

1683

1684 In adults health and social care, not so much recently but up until a year ago, 18 months ago, they were overspending on residential care for adults by £800,000 or £900,00 a year, and underspending on home care £800,000 or £900,00 a year.

1685

1686 I was saying: shouldn’t we be looking after people at home wherever we can? Eventually they said to me we assess people’s needs and we need to spend more on residential care because they need residential care. That’s what we’ve got.

1687

1688 I said the only place we can get it is from home care because we can’t overspend. All right, so that did open up the debate a little bit, but that item we’ll be dealing with tonight is probably between 8:15 and 8:30, and the members will be putting their coats on.

1689

1690 We rarely stick to it but what we say is that we should have meetings that are no longer than two hours and meetings that have no more than three substantive items on it. We don’t stick to it but it’s a rule of thumb, and the reason being that if you have an item at the scrutiny panel that takes five minutes, you haven’t scrutinised it, or it’s been so trivial that -
Interviewer: Shouldn't have got...

Respondent: If you have an item that takes 40 minutes, and if you have 3 items on an agenda, you might take an hour and 2 half hours, but if you give something 40 minutes, it's probably set at the right level that there's enough there to have a discussion about. It probably means that members have given it a good go.

Sometimes it means that the officer, cynically or otherwise, has brought a 30-minute presentation. Good tactic, don't answer questions, talk at them. I have done it myself in the past.

Again, not always trying to cynically, but an element of that.

Interviewer: Like talking out a parliamentary bill, isn't it?

Respondent: I failed here because we've got five substantive items.

Interviewer: Might be a long night then.

Respondent: My thinking around this agenda: closer to home is about all the hospital changes, and we fought hard to get the information out of them. They actually gave me the report in writing, then withdraw it because they didn't want it on our website, so one of our battles is to get information out into the public arena.

I think that we've neglected mental health at the scrutiny panel. The chair agrees, and they run mental health services, so I didn't want to knock that off when that came up.
The better care funds, the health and wellbeing board asked for it to
go to scrutiny before it went to cabinet and that's going to cabinet in
December.

At one level, that's a technicality but it's again some public scrutiny of
an issue.

We had an outstanding item on equipment and adaptations which
members actually raised, they were concerned. This is for disabled
people, putting stair lifts in, that sort of stuff, and members want it
dealt with sooner rather than later so I couldn't postpone that.

That's about waiting times, how long does it take to get a walk-in
shower -

Interviewer: It's always a key issue, isn't it?

Respondent: I think that could be quite straightforward but good scrutiny, so it gets
out into the open. Then I'd asked the women who's doing the
dementia friendly stuff to come, and I didn't want to not disappoint her
but if I'd pushed it back it would have been in February or March
because it's not going to be in December.

Then we've got the revenue one, that will be 8:15, 8:30. Then we
always have the work plans to finalise when they really are putting
their coats on and I'm saying, "Hang on a minute, you need to decide
what you're doing," and they're going, "See you, [redacted]."

Interviewer: I'm really grateful to you about all of this because you have given me
such an insight this morning into scrutiny stuff. I've worked for local
authorities now for -

Respondent: When you talk to [redacted] she will tell you a different tale. I don't think
she'll disagree with anything I've said in principle, but she goes to our
use of resources scrutiny panel and that's our worst resources
scrutiny group panel. It doesn't work anywhere near as well as it
should do.

It's partly down to where we were about an hour and a half ago which
was it should be the most senior of the scrutiny panels and it should
be looking at the council's budget position -

Interviewer: Sort of corporate.

Respondent: But it doesn't. Over the past five years, we've probably had four
discussions about the legal services structure: how many solicitors
we've got, how many legal assistants we've got. It's just deadly, it's
not adding any value.

Because it's not got that strategic look, the groups don't put their best
people on. You get a self-fulfilling prophecy.

He asked a question last meeting, and I thought to myself I have no
idea what he's asked. I've got absolutely no idea what he's asked, nor
has he. Eventually, the officer who was from HR, she's looking at her
boss like this. Eventually, what he wanted was any answer.

So she gave an answer that wasn't the answer to his question
because no one knew what the question was and, "Thank you very
much, thank you." She just said something that was completely, it had
two or three of the words you used, she reflected it back to you but
she didn't answer your question because it made no sense.

will say possibly, "I turn up for use of resources, I'm not really
sure what it's actually doing."
I've said to her, she's been here two years and she's probably been to two or three other scrutiny panels, "You've seen the worst one." She's come to one of mine and she said, "That was good, I enjoyed that," when we looked at an issue in some depth.

What I started doing, and I don't oversell it because I think the problem we have, we often have good discussions and it makes no difference or it makes a marginal difference.

I started doing what I call themed meetings. We had a discussion on diabetes, the adults health and social care, where I got some people with diabetes from Diabetes UK. We got the consultant from the hospital, we got a range of six expert witnesses and they had a good discussion about diabetes.

It raised one or two issues but has it taken it any further? Probably, probably not. You have a five times higher chance of getting diabetes if you're Asian compared to being white.

In [redacted] one of the clinical commissioning groups has a population that's 75% Asian. They've done masses on just identifying diabetes. Diabetes kills. People think it doesn't but it does.

We've got 12% of our population is Asian. Most of them have got diabetes. We ought to be doing something about this. People end up getting limbs amputated because of diabetes.

In a sense, the bit of work we did was about raising awareness for it, but if you said, "Has it made any difference whatsoever?" I'd have to say hardly any. That happens.

Interviewer: Is there a correct following that through to try and make sure that when scrutiny does something and comes up with something and does a really good in-depth [redacted] of work, is there any magic trick or is there anything which you can do to try and make people take notice of it and do something or is it too difficult?
I don't think there's a magic trick. Sometimes if you do something in-depth, you get it into people's heads, members', councillors' heads. Someone described it as a bit of work that has a long tail. My colleague [name] in [organisation] talked about that, so you imagine the graphs going over time. It has an impact.

It's not about reports, it's not about report back, it's about councillors remembering. There's a thing in the world of dementia called the Butterfly Scheme. It's a very simple scheme, it was devised by a relative of someone with dementia.

What happens in acute hospitals in particular is that the staff aren't trained at working with people with dementia, and sometimes don't identify people with dementia.

If you agree and you've got dementia, or your relative agrees, there's a butterfly emblem put on your bed and then you train your staff. So if you haven't got a butterfly emblem and they bring you a cup of tea around, they say, "Here's your cup of tea."

If you have got a butterfly emblem they bring you a cup of tea and make sure you drink it, because what happens is people get dehydrated with dementia in hospitals where they're supposed to be looked after, because the staff are busy and people with dementia are difficult and the staff aren't trained.

The Butterfly Scheme is something that struck a chord with the councillors, and if you met our mayor, [name] now and said, "What's the Butterfly Scheme?" she'd say, "Yes, that's what we heard about in the dementia review, that's where there's a symbol on the bed in hospital."

So it's got a long tail. She can talk about that in the community, she knows a bit about that.

The Centre for Public Scrutiny does surveys that say: what percentage of recommendations for scrutiny have been agreed by cabinets?
Interviewer: It's not particularly the point.

Respondent: It's not the point, because if I wanted to get 100%, I could get 100% on that easy. It would have no value. Do you agree with virtue? Yes we do.

The scrutiny panel is very concerned to make sure everyone gets the best service possible. Yes, we'll have a bit of that.

Interviewer: It's really this longer term thinking, isn't it?

Respondent: Sometimes it comes with the most interesting things. There's a risk that we set in the agenda, not the councillors, because I spend my time thinking about, you can tell, I've been talking to you for two hours about it. I spend my time talking about scrutiny and doing it.

Ward members were fed up about planning enforcements. What members saw was people getting away with getting retrospective planning applications approved.

Interviewer: It is an issue, yes.

Respondent: They raised this issue and the officers came and talked to them about it and said, "If someone's built a garden wall that we would have given them planning permission, what do you want us to do, make them knock it down?" The councillors said yes, because then the next person gets away with it and the next person.

They had this debate, it didn't come from us, it was members saying, "We do our surgery. Some people say, 'The bloke across the road has built this and he hasn't got planning.'"
Interviewer: It's a big issue. As a planning warder I can agree.

Respondent: They bought a ward issue and gave the director -

Interviewer: So they really brought that -

Respondent: - of economy and environment a hard time. The one thing that I've observed in a council that members are expert on is planning.

Interviewer: Yes, I know it's true.

Respondent: Because it is so -

Interviewer: It really is true. They get people knocking on their doors -

Respondent: It's important to people.

Interviewer: It really is.

Respondent: They will have obviously lots of other knowledge, and they sit on the planning and they get trained, they have to be trained for working on planning committee. They know about predetermination and all the rest of it.

Interviewer: They do.
1909  Respondent: I hear them talking and I think I don't know any of this stuff. I'm not that interested, to be honest, but I don't quite understand what they're talking about but they know. That example was one where members came -

1914  Interviewer: I think they're making a business turn out of the -

1916  Respondent: - and said, “This is a really important issue.” One of the things I'm worried about having missed, this same  Raistrick, three and a half years ago when he was on the scrutiny panel for children, he said, “I was out for a drink in  and there were these Asian lads harassing a young white girl and I think they were trying to get her into prostitution.”

1922  You're out for a drink, teenagers, young people, there's the sexual tension, there's drink, there's all the rest of it, I suspect that what we probably missed what was a councillor reference on child sexual exploitation.

1926  I'm not going to be called for any enquiry but he had picked up something and we didn't quite follow it through.

1929  Interviewer: I suppose it's always with the benefit of hindsight, because you look at those issues now when you're think of Rotherham, when you think of  it's easy in hindsight to look back and say maybe we should have -

1934  Respondent: But those are the things we've got to use in better scrutiny, and I use Rotherham and the main thing I use, particularly given the work I do, is the Francis Report about Mid Staffs Hospitals.
Francis made 290 recommendations, 6 were about scrutiny. What he said about scrutiny was you took on trust far too much what the people responsible for running services told you.

The chief executives of the hospitals were coming to scrutiny councils, "It's all right, it's all okay. It's a blip," or whatever. He said, "You've not paid attention to what people and the press were telling you."

This is just an example, again, from my personal work. A couple of months after Francis, the local paper, a local journalist wrote an article about CQC reports into some residential homes.

The article said a resident had been found with faeces under her fingernails. I took the report to the director of adult services and one of the heads of service, just me, I said I think this should come to scrutiny.

They're good, honest committee workers, managers, and they said, "these are old reports, this is 6 months old, and CQC goes in once. Someone might have faeces under her fingernails but 20 minutes later she wouldn't have done."

Interviewer: Snapshot -

Respondent: I didn't quite say, "You're being complacent," but I said two things to them. One: six months isn't an old report, it's a new report. When does it, you know?

"Secondly, you're not right, it's three months old," and they were saying it's about six months old. It wasn't six months old, it was three months old. Three months old is brand new.

Interviewer: You're right.
Respondent: We brought the issue of quality in residential care to scrutiny because I was down at the Centre for Public Scrutiny and we heard from the scrutiny manager, my equivalent at Staffordshire County Council who had given evidence himself to Francis.

He talked to a group of scrutiny chairs, health committee scrutiny chairs, and officers about his scrutiny chair of health sat effectively in the dock with Francis, and Francis had put up a PowerPoint with all the regulation that related to health overview in scrutiny and the law.

"Bullet point one: Councillor [Name] How have you implemented that?"
Councillor [Name] hadn’t read it.

"Councillor, point two, how have you implemented that? What does that mean for your work of your committee?" The whole room down in London in a local government house went white because my scrutiny chairs couldn’t answer those questions. I hadn’t advised them.

Interviewer: It was probably a string of different -

Respondent: I’ve read the regulations, I haven’t read them in the last six months. I think I know them, I refer to them when there’s a particular question.

So when someone like Francis comes up, I’ve got a balance between the director of adult services, [Name] I have a lot of time for her, I like her personally, I think she’s a very skilled manager, I think she’s going to get a bigger job somewhere else soon, she’s got all this and she says, “It’s an old report, six months old.”

I’ve got to go on the side of saying, “Sorry, we’re hauling you in front of scrutiny,” not using that language but, “Sorry, this is going on the agenda.

I get paid £35,000 a year. The director of adult services gets paid £110,000 or £120,000 a year. I’m a minion in this setup but we’ve got to work on...
1996 really good, puts pressure on me, that's her job, I think that's right, but she's not a bully. It's a creative tension, if you like, but you've got to...

1999 Rotherham and Mid Staffs and the Winterbourne View which was about a hospital in the South West with learning disabilities where the BBC -

2002 Again, it wasn't councillors that found out about Winterbourne View, it was the BBC with a hidden camera, that scrutiny.

2003 Our press, when I see articles in our what is now sadly only a weekly paper about things in the council, my thought is, not is the journalist making mischief which he or she may be -

2007 Interviewer: Check that issue just to see.

2009 Respondent: - but let's check it out, it's a of evidence. I've sent an article from the Huddersfield to the members of the scrutiny panel this morning, just sent them the link to the Huddersfield website.

2010 I think I do it more than and we work in different ways, but I'll send half a dozen articles or reports to councillors every week -

2011 Interviewer: Just to keep people up-to-date with what's about, yes.

2012 Respondent: Yes, stimulate their thinking. An example of something that's happened elsewhere. What happened in Mid Staffs was the system of which the scrutiny panel was very little didn't listen to what patients and their relatives were saying, and they talk about 1,500 unnecessary deaths.

2013 Interviewer: Serious stuff.
Respondent: It’s always going to be serious about vulnerable elderly people and children, but the same about people speeding through your village. If residents say people are driving too fast through my village, you don’t say, “We did some checks six months ago.”

Interviewer: It’s this issue about ringing alarm bells to get people to look at some of this stuff to bring it -

Respondent: Yes. I’m going to have to stop shortly but we started off talking about accountability. The regulation, as you were saying, it’s about holding the cabinet and chief officers accountable, and it is. Just as an aside, I think councillors sometimes feel much more comfortable having a go at a director than a fellow councillor, there but for the grace of God go I.

We had a Labour administration until July, [ ] will have told you about that, and I think the Labour scrutiny members backed off a bit over the previous month, they didn’t want to criticise their own cabinet member, but if you get the directory, you’re not criticising your own cabinet member even though he or she sat next to them. It’s somehow more comfortable.

Road traffic accidents is a good example, we’ve not dealt with this in a number of years, I’ve not been involved for a number of years.

They respond to road traffic accidents based on stats, so we can’t do anything about this road until...

Councillors say, “What, until three people have been killed?” and the officers say, “It’s because we’ve got limited resources, we’ve got to put our resources where the biggest risk is, and we’ve got to do that statistically.” Up to a point.
Interviewer: How many people have got to die before you do something to sort it out though?

Respondent: Possibly a final anecdote, this is 35 years ago, when I was single, I shared a house with a college lecturer who was also a Labour county councillor when we had a county council, West Yorkshire County Council.

He told me this story about some of his constituents complained about street lighting. So he phoned up the officer concerned and said, "We've got street lights out in my ward and I want them repaired." The officer said, "Ah, Councillor [name], do you remember 6 months ago at the means and ways budget committee, you voted to take £30,000 out of street lighting in Leicester?"

He said, "Yes, I remember that stuff, I was there." "Well, the consequence of you taking out £30,000 from street lighting is that we can't do all the repairs. That's what we decided to do."

Lester said, "That makes sense to me. Okay, I'll report back to my constituents." There are two councillors for his ward. The other bloke is another Labour councillor who's been a train driver or something. He phones up, "Street light's out in my ward. I want them fixed," and the officer says, "Do you remember six months ago you took this budget decision to take the money out?"

Lester, my friend, says, "Yes, I remember this issue," and the councillor said, "I don't give a bugger. Fix the street lights." Lester said to me, "Who was the better councillor? Who got the job done for his constituents?"

Actually, both of them are right, aren't they, and that's the balance. So you've got to have people who say, "I don't give a bugger, fix the street lights," but equally you've got to have officers who are robust enough to say, "No, because you took the money away from us. Give us the money back, we'll fix it."
Scrutiny is one place where sometimes, not always but sometimes you can have that.

Interviewer: Get that debate, yes.

Respondent: Get that debate going. I’m sure I’ve made it look and sound fantastic compared to being sometimes very, very dull.

Interviewer: I’ll tell you what you have done, sir. You have given me a really in-depth insight into what happens.

Respondent: Or what should happen sometimes.

Interviewer: What you’ve done for me is you’ve really brought it to life. I could sit there and read a load of stuff and for me it wouldn’t have the same impact in terms of what you said to me today, really.

I’m really grateful to you because those issues, particularly in terms of the health and social care stuff and the talk about public participation and the role of members and the role of officers, you’ve really shone a light onto that, I’m really grateful.

Respondent: You said you’re passionate about politics, I’m passionate about politics.

Interviewer: Yes.
Respondent: This guy, Raistrick is an interesting character, I’ve talked about him two or three times. That’s there. He runs the newsagent’s on Hipperholme crossroads. The director of economy and environment, in an officer meeting he once said to me and the six or seven other people who were there, “I’m sick of being told how to do my job by a newsagent.”

The chief executive of the time, not said to him two things, “One, he didn’t used to be a newsagent, he used to run a business. So when he’s talking about the economy, he used to run a business with a seven figure turnover. Secondly, you listen to the newsagent. You listen to the local councillor because the fact that he’s a newsagent doesn’t make his opinions any less worthy. People come into the shop.”

Interviewer: Plus the fact people come to the shops, they’ll bar the way.

Respondent: Officers, when we meet, “Bloody hell, Councillor So-and-so, she hasn’t got a clue, has she?” Often she hasn’t, and often she’s a pain in the backside, but if you don’t believe there’s a role for councillors, go and work for Heinz. We’ve got Nestlé’s making chocolate across the road from the railway station, go and make Mars Bars or whatever Nestlé’s make.

Interviewer: That taps into a wider issue. There are all these arguments these days about how local authorities have been coming out of the private sector and it’s been commercialised and sold and everything else, but there’s a real issue in terms of public service. You could outsource and privatise everything and let everything just be run by the private sector.

That is one view, but if you take the view that these issues in terms of the economy, health care, public services, if you take the view that
they are public policy issues and they are decided through the political
process, then there is a legitimate role for members to be evolving -

Respondent: Absolutely. You had all that energy about the Scottish Referendum.
Why? Because it was so important. The 16 year old kid who got the
vote for the first time in Scotland or someone who's never voted in
their life, suddenly realises that we're going to be a different country,
so you've got this energy.

You then get the Manchester situation, we had an announcement last
week.

Interviewer: Absolutely.

Respondent: If you ask the technical question of people: is there any appetite for
regional government? They don't know what it is. If you ask them
whether they want an elected mayor in a referendum, they usually say
no. That's what's happened up and down the country, but if you say: is
Manchester important?

Interviewer: If you ask them the question and say: is the Westminster system too
centralised? Are you listened to? Do you feel distant? You'll get a
different -

Scotland, I was up there a few times, I went to a meeting in Liverpool
with Alex Salmond who is probably one of the shrewdest political
operators I've seen anywhere.

It was fascinating to see the energy in that debate, and I felt really
lucky, given 300 years since the union, to see that happen, and it's
clearly had a spinoff in terms of the debates in England around
powers and decentralisation and what should happen to the cities and
the counties. It's clearly given some energy to that.
We'll wait and see what happens at the general election in six months and whether politicians lose interest, but I do tend to think that when you look at the situation in terms of the Greater Manchester stuff and to some extent what's happening here with the combined authority and you look at the situation in Sheffield and to some extent the situation that we've got in Liverpool but not as difficult there because we've got fragmentation amongst the authorities.

It looks pretty much unstoppable now. You've got the chief executive of Manchester City Council saying that the current system is bust in terms of centralisation.

Maybe there's now a realisation that it's not only the local authority sector fighting its own corner, that really in terms of the national economy, you're not \[1:48:18\], that it really does boost national economic growth to give these places the power and funding.

These are proud places. Liverpool, Manchester, West Midlands, The North East, Yorkshire, they're real proud places, and just maybe now they're starting to revive and pick up on the old history when they used to have some powers.

Respondent: The LEP and the combined authority and the Leeds City Region, they don't set the heart racing, but people don't like the fact that the trains from ... Manchester are 30 years old. You'll have been on one this morning.

Interviewer: Yes. I was speaking to \[ about this yesterday; I think you're absolutely right. If you start talking about \[1:49:17\] and devolution and all that, I think people switched off.

The leader of Trafford Council said in a conference I was at last week, speaking about people don't give a stuff, that's what he said, and I think it's true, but if you start speaking about the fact that you can't regulate the buses because you've got no power to do it, because you can't regulate the routes you can't get people to work on time. You
can’t sort out the trains, you can’t electrify the railway line, you can’t put in the infrastructure, you’ve got no control over the skills budgets.

If you start talking about things like that and say because we can’t sort out the skills we can’t kill people up, we can’t attract industry, people then start to look at it but it’s about making that case in terms of public policy: how do you integrate health and social care -

Respondent: Exactly. [Redacted] and [Redacted] are not going to compete with Leeds in terms of the economy. That’s going to be the regional centre. The centre of Leeds is going to be an exciting big city place, and [Redacted] and [Redacted] are not.

I don’t know whether it’s still true but Saltaire in [Redacted] is 15 minutes from Leeds City Centre on the train. People from Leeds at one stage were buying houses at Saltaire without looking at them. They’d see a photograph of them, they knew what Saltaire was like. The houses were cheaper than Leeds, they were 15 minutes from Leeds City Centre on the train and Saltaire’s a nice place.

So [Redacted] is the place where people live who work in Leeds.

Interviewer: This is the other thing as well. If you look at how these boundaries are, in Liverpool now we’ve got a city mayor that was elected. I think looking at it from a leadership point of view, it’s probably a good thing but the problem is the authority of that stops at the city boundary.

In Merseyside, we’ve got Wirral, we’ve got Sefton, we’ve got Knowsley, we’ve got -

Respondent: Didn’t you end up with a name for the organisation that had eight titles in it?

Interviewer: It was absolutely ridiculous.
Respondent: When it should have been called either Merseyside or Liverpool, like Manchester.

Interviewer: It was absolutely ridiculous but the problem you've got is that these days it's something like 50% of the commuters come from outside the local authority area. You've got people who were looking at these things on false boundaries, and one of the problems you've got now in Liverpool is the mayor's got authority over the Liverpool City Council area, but not over Wirral, or Knowsley or anywhere else, and that was a particular issue.

They're looking to trying and resolve the combined authority but there have been difficulties there. It comes back to what you're saying that there needs to be a recognition that the main cities drive it, and they drive growth for the wider area so that if you get Leeds, which is prosperous, it brings prosperity to [redacted] to [redacted] to [redacted]. I think Manchester have understood that for the last 10 to 15 years through AGMA where the 10 authorities have worked together, whereas others haven't and the West Midlands is catching up as well.

Respondent: The 2000 act, rather the stuff around it talked about having cabinet members in particular who are recognised. I think they are few and far between but the people who are recognised are the mayors. The Mayor of Liverpool, I can't remember his surname but he's called Joe, isn't he?

Interviewer: Anderson.
Respondent: Joe Anderson. Boris and Ken. You don't even need to know their surnames, it's Boris and Ken.

Interviewer: It is interesting because it does give you a focal point. I was looking at something the other day, we were talking about the 1980s and the situation we had in Liverpool where the council refused to set a rate and we had all the ins and outs of that.

What they said then was everybody in Liverpool in the mid-1980s knew who the councillors were. They all knew the councillors, they all knew the chair of the committees, they all knew the directed the services, the director of education.

It's true. People in Liverpool then did know. If you ask people now, they'd probably know the mayor but they probably wouldn't know anybody else.

Respondent: I know Derek Hatton, I know his name. Whether it was because you had passion of politics...

At one level there's a rose tinted look back really. I'll tell you who's written interestingly, Alan Bennett has written about growing up in Leeds. One essay I've read of his about how important the council was to them, and the emblem of Leeds City Council was on every lamp post.

In the 1930s when there were municipal socialists, because it was the council that was building the schools and the roads and the hospitals and bringing the gas in and doing all that stuff that made such a big change to their lives that there are points in time when that becomes a big issue.

Right, shall we call a halt?

Interviewer: Thank you very much, sir, really, really do appreciate it.
END AUDIO

www.uktranscription.com