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LORD GODDARD OF STOCKPORT SAYS WE HAVE TOO MUCH DEMOCRACY

Lord Goddard of Stockport told politics students at St. Ambrose College, “there may be too much democracy at the moment.”

The former gas engineer, who became leader of Stockport Metropolitan Council and was one of the architects of Manchester's innovative city financing deal, was ennobled in 2012 and believes the House of Lords has a vital role.

However, he told a packed audience of Politics A level students at the top Hale Barns Catholic Grammar School, “As Plato said paradoxically, too much democracy can be bad for democracy. The referenda, voting for police commissioners, all the council elections, European elections, maybe all too much for the voter.

“Thankfully there has been a surge in interest in politics especially in young people over the last few years, but we are in danger of turning people off again by continually asking them to vote on so many issues.”

Lord Goddard, 63, who was a councillor in Offerton, was at St. Ambrose College, “not just to tell the students about the role of the second chamber but to listen to their views and report back what young people are thinking in the country.”

He said: “True we may have too many peers at the moment and The House of Lords might have become too big after Tony Blair was forced to create another 200 peers when which in turn meant David Cameron had to redress that balance but the House of Lords has a vital role as the second dimension. Just look at the tax credits issue which was blatantly wrong and the House of Lords was able to throw it out and force the Government to reconsider.”



Lord Goddard is pictured with David Lindsay St. Ambrose College's Head of Politics and on the left A Level politics students George Ellison, 18 from Baguley and on the right Michael Pearson, 18, from Sale.

George, a Labour party member said: “Even though there has been a small dip in young people wanting to join the Labour movement recently, I do feel the wider gap between the two main parties has increased interest. There is more of a choice.”

While Michael said: “The House of Lords has an essential role as a revising chamber, which has been clearly demonstrated recently with the Tax Credits legislation and as Politics students we are all interested to see what the Strathclyde Commission will recommend about the future of the House Lords when it reports back shortly.”

David Lindsay said: “Lord Goddard belies the stuffy, out of date image of the old House of Lords and is very much a man of the people, and our students warmed to him immediately.”