

LEAD MEMBER FOR RESOURCES AND CLIMATE CHANGE

DECISIONS made by the Lead Member for Resources and Climate Change, Councillor Nick Bennett, on 15 July 2021 via MS Teams

Councillors Johnny Denis, Wendy Maples, Georgia Taylor and David Tutt spoke on item 4 (see minute 24)

22 DECISIONS MADE BY THE LEAD CABINET MEMBER ON 6 JULY 2021

22.1 The Lead Member confirmed as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 6 July 2021.

23 REPORTS

23.1 Reports referred to in the minutes below are contained in the minute book.

24 NOTICE OF MOTION: CLIMATE CHANGE

24.1 The Lead Member considered a report by the Director of Communities, Economy and Transport.

DECISIONS

24.2 The Lead Member RESOLVED to recommend that the County Council rejects the Notice of Motion.

Reasons

24.3 The Council has recognised the severity of the climate crisis by declaring a climate emergency and setting a clear and evidence-based trajectory towards carbon neutrality from its activities. The scale of the Council's functions and the diversity of providers the Council works with makes this a complex and substantial task. Significant work has already been undertaken to reduce emissions and this has been built upon by the Climate Emergency Action Plan which is driving the next phase and has been further informed by the recent Scrutiny Review.

24.4 However, there remain significant uncertainties and unresolved challenges which impact on our plans. These range from the further work needed to fully quantify our emissions and model in detail what is needed for the Council to achieve net zero, to understanding what investment and policy support will be available nationally and how technology and the supply chain will develop to support implementation. The specific implications and costs of committing to becoming carbon neutral from all the Council's activities within the next eight and a half years are unknown, but it is evident that they would be substantial and almost certainly unachievable.

24.5 Given the major financial and technological hurdles outlined above, there is no realistic prospect of achieving a target date of 2030. Attempting to accelerate the timescale previously agreed by the Council at a time when our Medium Term Financial Plan shows a significant deficit would have major consequences, including the likely closure of some services. Whilst the Notice of Motion sets out a welcome ambition, it is important that the targets set by the Council are evidence-based and challenging but also realistically achievable

and therefore meaningful in terms creating public expectation, tracking our progress and being held to account in terms of its delivery.

24.6 Work is already underway to look at whether and how the potential carbon emission impacts of decisions could be assessed and reflected in reports where relevant and material and progress will be reported to scrutiny in the autumn.