

COUNCILLOR ILLINGWORTH: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I speak also on Minute 199 page 56. I am very disappointed with the draft plan because it is very much business as usual and it puts me in mind of St Augustine - "Lord, give me chastity, but not yet."

Business as usual will not deal with global warming and much more radical measures are necessary. Lord Mayor, starting from a pre-industrial level of 284 parts per million, atmospheric CO₂ is now 384 parts per million, which is a 35% increase in less than 200 years. The earth responds slowly and so far this CO₂ has produced a rise of about 0.7°C in global temperatures. Even if human production ceased tomorrow, the most recent figures suggest that there is at least another one and a half degrees Centigrade already in the pipeline.

The current European target is to stabilise CO₂ levels around 450 parts per million, but the latest scientific data based on Antarctic ice scores and deep sea sediment suggest that 450 parts per million CO₂ corresponds to a completely ice free world with the complete melting of both polar icecaps.

Melting of the Greenland icecap is estimated to raise sea level by about seven metres, inundating many of the world's capital cities and destroying much of the best agricultural land. Complete melting of the Antarctic icecap would raise sea level by a further 61m, flooding Leeds City Centre. The shoreline would be in Kirkstall and the Abbey would be under water. Long before we reach this point economic collapse, mass migration, starvation, warfare and disease would have seen the end of civilisation as we know it.

Lord Mayor, I believe the following propositions are beyond dispute. One, existing global CO₂ production is already much too high and this has caused the present problems which are rapidly getting worse. Two, carbon dioxide output is likely to rise still further with industrialisation in China, India, South America and the Pacific Rim. Three, if nothing is done, climate change will lead to widespread crop failures, mass starvation, migration, war and disease. Four, we cannot exhort others to show restraint while continuing to offend ourselves. Five, most of the oil will be gone by 2050 although coal will last rather longer and coal has double the carbon dioxide output compared with oil or gas. Seven, Leeds and the UK cannot insulate themselves from global events and, finally, energy costs will rise very considerably during the plan period.

Lord Mayor, our local use of fossil fuels must fall by 90% by 2050 and this can be achieved in two ways - planned or unplanned. If we do nothing, natural forces will bring us back into balance through a steep decline in living standards and through large and brutal reductions in the global population. Alternatively, we could plan for it.

We could and should achieve a 5% annual reduction in fossil fuel use by the Leeds City region year on year for the next century. This means everybody - not just the Council, the public sector. That equates to 45% reduction in CO₂ output by 2020, assuming compound interest. If we miss our target one year, the short falls will be added to the next. Growth in one area must be balanced by increased savings elsewhere.

I believe it is achievable through planning. If it is not planned, it will happen anyway and this will be extremely unpleasant for our children, even if we ourselves are dead.

The 5% annual reduction must be written into the Leeds Strategic Plan, into the Leeds Development Framework and retrospectively added to the Community Development Plan so it can have an immediate effect on planning policies. This would require the Secretary of

State's approval but I do not anticipate that he would refuse. We must ask our partners at the Leeds Initiative to adopt the same policy. I believe that many are already waiting for a lead and there will actually be little dissent.

Lord Mayor, this target can be achieved by a systematic attention to detail, by new buildings, better insulation and building design, by combined heat and power, more efficient equipment, greater use of public transport and sustainable transport modes, reducing the need to travel by house or job swaps, sustainable energy, heat pumps and so forth.

We can either achieve this in a planned way and thereby create a city that is fit for the 21st century, or in an unplanned way which will be a thoroughly miserable experience for all concerned. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (Applause)