

MINUTES of a meeting of the COMMUNITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Coalville on WEDNESDAY, 23 NOVEMBER 2022

Present: Councillor J Hault (Chairman)

Councillors R L Morris, C C Benfield, T Eynon, J Geary, M D Hay, G Hault, J G Simmons and M B Wyatt

In Attendance: Councillors R Johnson

Portfolio Holders: Councillors R D Bayliss and A C Woodman

Officers: Mr J Arnold, K Hiller and Mrs R Wallace

62. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

63. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest.

64. PUBLIC QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

None.

65. MINUTES

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meetings held on 7 and 21 September 2022.

It was moved by Councillor J Geary, seconded by Councillor T Eynon and

RESOLVED THAT:

The minutes of the meeting held on 7 and 21 September 2022 be approved as a correct record.

66. ITEMS FOR INCLUSION IN THE FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME

The Chair referred to the Committee's Work Programme and invited Members to make requests for any additional items.

By affirmation of the meeting, it was

RESOLVED THAT:

The future work programme be noted.

67. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE FUEL POVERTY TASK AND FINISH GROUP

Councillor T Eynon, addressed the Committee as the Chair of the Fuel Poverty Task and Finish Group to present the recommendations as detailed within the report. She thanked all officers and representatives from Community and Partnership Groups for coming along to give evidence, as well as the Members of the group who had worked well together. The Committee were urged to support the recommendations for Cabinet.

Chairman's initials

The Committee commended the work of the Group and were in support of the recommendations. During discussions a number of concerns were raised, firstly that the review focused mainly on rented properties, and it was felt that there were also people in the District dealing with fuel poverty who owned their homes, such as elderly people in very old properties. Councillor T Eynon explained that privately owned homes were discussed by the Group, and it was felt that communication was key to inform all residents what support was available. Members were signposted to section eight of the report. A Member requested that the new Customer Service Centre have all the relevant information available, and it be clearly advertised.

The second concern was that if a local measure was adopted, there could be a disconnect of terminology when bidding for national funding which could cause difficulties. Councillor T Eynon explained that the Group did discuss the definition of fuel poverty and it was felt that no matter an individual's background or circumstances, if they could not afford to pay for their fuel then they were fuel poor. It was acknowledged that there were lots of different channels of support available which was why the focus on communication and making sure staff had the right data to support people was very important, particularly when they need to make every contact count.

Members that took part in the review addressed the Committee on how they felt the work undertaken was successful and that it was a good opportunity to highlight potential improvement areas within the Council. It was felt that the review was worthwhile and the recommendations, if supported, were a good start in addressing the areas that the Council could have the most impact.

It was moved by Cllr R Morris, seconded by Cllr T Eynon and

RESOLVED THAT:

The recommendations of the Fuel Poverty Task and Finish Group as detailed within the report be put to Cabinet.

The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm

The Chairman closed the meeting at 6.52 pm

Chairman's initials