

EXTRACT of the MINUTES of a meeting of the POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Coalville on WEDNESDAY, 9 JANUARY 2019

Present: Councillor M Specht (Chairman)

Councillors R Ashman, T Eynon, J Geary (Substitute for Councillor N Clarke), G Hoult, P Purver, V Richichi, A C Saffell, S Sheahan and N Smith

In Attendance: Councillors R Adams, J Clarke, R Johnson and J Legrys

Portfolio Holders: Councillors R Blunt and N J Rushton

Officers: Mr J Arnold, Mrs T Bingham, Mr M Fiander, Mr G Jones, Mrs B Smith, Mrs R Wallace and Miss A Wright

41. 2019/20 HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA) BUDGET PROPOSALS

The Head of Finance presented the report to Members.

In response to a question from Councillor J Geary, the Strategic Director of Housing Customer Services explained that the laundry room service charges had been increased, as they had been very low for some time and previously did not recover the costs being incurred. He added that new equipment had been installed and a consultation carried out with the users indicated that they were willing to pay the increase in charges for improved facilities. Councillor T Eynon believed that there was an acceptance from residents in sheltered schemes as they were happy to pay more for better facilities.

Councillor J Geary did not agree with the increase in shop leases at a time when the Council should be encouraging small businesses to remain open. The Portfolio Holder stated that the increase was to gradually bring the charges in line with the market rate. The Strategic Director of Housing and Customer Services added that the leases had been frozen at the previous rate for decades and was not near the market rate. There had been no objection from the business owners to the increases, which have been phased in since 2015.

Councillor S Sheahan was disappointed with the decision to increase the shop leases. He understood that the Council was a business but felt that these small shops should be supported as much as possible, especially as some of these businesses were the only local shops available to residents in some areas.

It was moved by Councillor P Purver, seconded by Council G Hoult and

RESOLVED THAT:

Comments made by the Policy Development Group be provided to Cabinet when it meets on 5 February to consider the 2019/20 Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget Proposals.

The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm

The Chairman closed the meeting at 9.15 pm