

EXTRACT of the DRAFT MINUTES of a meeting of the POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Coalville on WEDNESDAY, 30 SEPTEMBER 2015

Present: Councillor M Specht (Chairman)

Councillors J Cotterill, J G Coxon, T Eynon, J Geary, D Harrison, S McKendrick (Substitute for Councillor N Clarke), V Richichi, A C Saffell and N Smith

In Attendance: Councillors R D Bayliss and J Legrys

Officers: Mr R Bowmer, Ms L Cotton, Mr D Gill, Mr M Harding, Mr G Jones, Mr C Lambert, Mrs C Macrory, Mrs R Wallace and Miss A Wright

14. HOUSING ASSET MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

The Head of Housing presented the report to Members, highlighting the key outcomes and key issues.

The meeting was adjourned at 7.35pm for a brief comfort break and re-convened at 7.40pm.

Councillor S McKendrick and J Geary commented that a number of properties still had solid fuel heating systems with the occupant's receiving concessionary coal allowance and expressed concerns regarding the villages that were not connected to the main national gas network. The Head of Housing responded that there was no plan to immediately replace the systems but they would be replaced as part of a programme or as they broke down with a target of having them all replaced by 2025. He added that there were a reducing number of tenants in receipt of the solid fuel allowance but this would be taken into consideration. The suggestion to include reference in the strategy to the small number of properties with oil based systems was agreed.

Councillor T Eynon commented that she would like to see the strategy include worst case, middle case and best case scenarios for comparison purposes and stressed that it was not all about corporate viability. However, she did request that different financial assumptions be looked at and that the future inflation assumption of 2.5 per cent for income may be too optimistic. She also added that she would like to know more about the breakdown of bids for empty properties in her Ward. Regarding the summary of the investment needs and the potential disposal value of the sheltered schemes detailed within section nine of the report, Councillor T Eynon expressed concerns regarding the loss of housing and the cost of building new flats; she felt this cost should be included within the strategy.

Councillor J Coxon commented that there were many garage sites that were in a dilapidated condition and asked if these sites could be used for development of new affordable housing. The Head of Housing explained that sometimes sites were not viable for redevelopment due to their location or size but when they were, redevelopment was something they absolutely wanted to proceed with. Councillor T Eynon referred to the garage site at the end of Wyggeston Road and hoped that something would be done to improve sites such as those. The Head of Housing explained that they were trying to strike a balance between selling the land without any conditions and putting restrictions on them as it reduces the monetary value.

Councillor S McKendrick asked if the change from lifetime tenancies to five year tenancies had been taken into account when drafting the strategy. The Head of Housing responded that it had been considered in terms of rental income. He added that it would be difficult

Chairman's initials

to predict what the affect of the fixed term tenancies would be until they have ended and this would be 2022 at the earliest.

Councillor S McKendrick thanked the officers for the work undertaken to produce the strategy.

RESOLVED THAT:

The comments provided by the Committee be considered by Cabinet when it meets on 20 October to discuss the Housing Asset Management Strategy.