

**ALEO London: Executive Committee Meeting
Friday 13th March 2020: Telephone Conference**

Minutes

Attendees

Malcolm Bell	Croydon (Treasurer)
Ashwin Patel	Islington
Justine Dornan	Kensington & Chelsea
Martin O'Brien	Lewisham (Chair)
Rachael Mills	SE ² (Secretariat)
Katy Revett	Waltham Forest

1. Coronavirus Impacts

1.1 There's a clear potential risk of us passing the virus on to vulnerable customers through home visits.

- Lewisham has advised delivery partners that they can switch to delivering energy advice by phone and that home visits KPIs will be waived: however, other funders may still require home visits to be carried out. Note, Lewisham's home visit targets for the GLA have already been met.
- Croydon and Islington aren't quite at this stage yet but are in discussions with partners and their position is likely to change very soon. They are both closely monitoring the situation and taking government advice, making sure staff take time off if they feel unwell. Groundwork have issued continuity guidelines

1.2 Another consideration is whether delivery partner staff will get paid: we don't want anyone to miss out financially. Lifting KPI requirements helps to remove the financial driver to make visits when it's not safe to do so.

1.3 It was also pointed out that home visits are about trust – it would be a bit weird if you had to stand 2 meters away! It doesn't serve us well if we try to do visits when people are nervous about coming into contact with others.

MOB to email JKM regarding Lewisham's position on home visits, to lay the ground for other Boroughs to do the same. A consistent approach for our delivery partners would be helpful.

2. National & Regional Updates

2.1 The Future Homes Standard consultation was discussed at the last ALEOL meeting and has since been submitted (available to download [here](#)). The UKGBC followed this up with a letter to MHCLG from Council Leaders and Mayors: we await the outcome.

2.2 Warmer Homes 2 has gone live with Happy Energy as the delivery partners. The headline measures are pretty much the same, with up to £4k of GLA funding for heating, insulation and ventilation (match funding can also be levered in, eg ECO or possible carbon offset funds). No customer contribution is expected.

- The GLA approach is to help people at risk of fuel poverty, but they also want it to deliver on their carbon ambitions so have tightened up the criteria. Gas boilers will be provided but only if other alternatives have been investigated, eg heat pumps and other technologies supported by ECO Innovation funding. It's important the customers aren't left with systems they don't know how to use or are generally more expensive than gas: this is a challenging additional requirement for Happy Energy. It will be interesting what happens for example

with homes with a totally broken boiler: heat pumps need good insulation too in order to be effective, which will be beyond the cost envelope. If the funding gap for ASHP can only be met where local match-funding exists (eg ECO, carbon offset funds), it might mean in those boroughs without match-funding that (cheaper) gas boilers will end up being fitted. It's still unclear in what other circumstances a gas boiler will be fitted.

- Lewisham delivery partners are finding referral process quite slow. Islington is also finding the process cumbersome but hopefully just teething problems. Croydon have experienced fewer teething problems as they are already involved in Heat London. However, a manual checking process for referrals is still in place.
- It would be helpful if leaflets were available in order to help referrals from 3rd parties: at the moment it seems that the GLA is controlling referrals through their advice system. What if customers aren't online? The application process is quite complicated so customers might need support – is this something that Citizens Advice for example would be happy to do?

2.3 Home Upgrade Grant: there was nothing in the budget so it's now expected that BEIS will set this out separately (see [this article](#) for reassurance that it's still happening). After our last meeting, the ALEOL Committee followed up with the GLA regarding the GSEE Hub and sent letter to Kwasi Kwarteng requesting that funds be directed through the GLA to ensure a holistic approach. Shirley Rodriguez has also met with the Minister: **MOB to ask for feedback and to also find out ways in which the GLA is working with the Hub**. The point was also made that even within London, there needs to be a fairer distribution of funds: the GLA Warmer Homes Advice Service favours large contracts and not local services (Boroughs had to bid in consortia of 3 or more). It was agreed that resources need to be matched to need, but that this should be done through the GLA not the Hub (not least because we'll have more influence on how it's spent): it's important that we all have one voice on this.

2.4 Heat Trust has just closed a consultation on customer vulnerability, to help bring its rules in line with Ofgem. BEIS has a live consultation on the [Heat Network Market Framework](#), readying the sector for Ofgem regulation: the closing date is 1st May.

2.5 Ofgem has a consultation out on [protecting PPM customers](#), to discuss what will happen when the current PPM price caps end in December. The closing date is 8th April.

2.6 The BEIS ECO Flex team attended the National ALEO Exec meeting in January. They are anxious about the variety of ways ECO Flex is administered by LAs across the country, including some scare stories about some LAs being lax / charging fees for declarations. Evidence seems to very low, and if it's happening at all it's only a very small minority. Nevertheless, Ofgem are looking if quality needs to be improved across the piece with increased scrutiny. We should all consider how we quality assure our ECO Flex schemes in order to prepare ourselves. Tighter scrutiny will cost money: the reason ECO Flex has been cheap to deliver is because of the lighter touch applied by Ofgem – a delicate balance needs to be struck.

2.7 The Energy White Paper is due soon (maybe now May or June?), which may include something about the direction of ECO generally, and also possibly ECO Flex scrutiny. The Fuel Poverty update is expected to be published at the same time.

2.8 EST has sent a letter to Elected Members asking them to sign up to a 'compact', which includes housing stock meeting EPC C by 2030. However, the London Councils pledge (EPC B by 2030) and Borough's individual climate emergency commitments may already be stronger than this, so there's clearly some discrepancy.

3. Membership and Finances

- 3.1 Malcolm has now been added as a signatory to the bank account so cheques can be signed.
MOB and MB to sort out cheque for SE2.
- 3.2 **Malcolm to visit a branch and request a bank statement in time for the AGM.** In due course, we also need to update the address on the account and investigate online banking.
- 3.3 **RM to check if any members want to be invoiced for next year before the end of March.**

4. Joint meetings

- 4.1 Gary Braybrook of the Energy Efficiency Association pitched to the National ALEO Exec about running a joint conference on a not-for-profit basis, free for ALEO members to attend. It would use the EEA (industry based) structure but with closer links to the public sector and use of the ALEO branding. EEA would carry the risk and organise the venue, catering etc but there would be a joint process for the programme. It's likely that it would take place in London: ALEOSE and ALEONE are keen. **MOB to feedback that we're willing in principle as long as someone from the ALEO network helps to shape the programme: we need to avoid it being just a sales pitch from contractors.**
- 4.2 A joint ALEOL/LECF/LBEG meeting on the climate emergency has been proposed. It was agreed it would be good to bring everyone together, with support from GLA and London Councils. The meeting needs a clear purpose: a September event would help us to sharpen our lobbying position as a sector pre COP26 (taking place in November), and we could develop a position statement of our key asks and update each other on progress. **MOB to contact Kate Hand to take forward.**

5. Next meeting – Tuesday 23rd June @ Newham

5.1 AGM:

- All 5 current committee members agreed they'd stand again. However, we'd like to have a 6th member if possible. **RM to find out if Shadia's back and also reach out to other members to join the committee.**
- **MB and RM to prepare the Treasurer's report.**

5.2 Meeting agenda

- Warmer Homes 2: Adrian Wright, Happy Energy (and maybe JKM?)
 - Position from GLA on carbon offset fund to match?
 - How it's working in practice – really ground level
 - How you get it through procurement
- Update from BEIS (Energy White Paper, Fuel Poverty, HUG) – Olivia Haslam
- Decarbonisation of heat: alternatives to gas heating
 - Strategic view: Charlotte Owen, ADE
 - Member case study: Providing central heating in Waltham Forest – Katy Revett & Tom Ruxton