**London HECA Forum**

**Committee Meeting**

**Tuesday 8 April, 10.30, Café 171, Jerwood Space**

Present: Rob Ballington (Newham), Jo Gill (Hillingdon), Irene Fernow (Westminster), Hannah Barrett-Duckett (Secreteriat)

Apologies: John Davies (Hammersmith and Fulham), Natalie Morgans (Harrow), Steve Nottage (Merton), John Kolm Murray (Islington)

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| **1. Regional update**  The GLA have been awarded ELENA funding to maintain a RE:NEW support team over a three year period, and are looking to procure a partner in the next few months. JG gave feedback to the GLA as to what the funding should be used for/ the role that the support team should play.  In her feedback, JG emphasised that Local Authorities need support with procurement, GD, ECO, specifications for works, and assistance talking to energy suppliers. She also suggested that the funding should be used to aid delivery of bigger schemes, such as decentralised energy projects.  IF asked funding can be used for site surveys; it can’t but instead will provide desktop support.  It was also pointed out that, in exchange for any support given, the GLA are going to want to claim carbon from projects, and this could cause issues with ECO. Would there be a double count of carbon?  Successful Green Deal Communities bids were announced last week; Hillingdon, Lewisham, Haringey and Harrow all successfully secured funding.  Newham are currently working on procuring an ECO partner, and tidying up the East London Renewal Partnership. They also submitted a Green Deal Communities bid, as did Westminster.  IF and RB both attended the NEA event on improving the energy efficiency of London’s private rented sector on 26 March. The event was co-hosted by Npower, who are looking to pursue further work in the private sector and have been working with NEA, DECC and local authorities to do so. It was suggested at the event that there is further scope for engagement with smaller landlords (i.e. owner occupiers with a second property) | JG to circulate response to GLA |
| **2. AGM and elections**  The forum needs to appoint a new interim Vice Chair (or a permanent vice chair, depending on when Zuzana is back from maternity leave), and a new Treasurer as JD will be stepping down after the AGM.  Both RB and IF offered to come forward as a new Vice Chair if no one else was interested; RB said that he could possibly take up the Treasurer’s position but wanted to know more about the duties, and whether there would be a financial risk to Newham if he did so. It was also suggested that the Secretariat might take on the role of Treasurer, but further clarification of constitutional rules is needed. | HBD to check constitutional rules on elections, and provide further information.  JD to clarify duties of Treasurer, and whether there is a financial risk attached to the position.  Committee to express interest in vacancies, HBD to open up vacancies to rest of forum |
| **3. Next forum – speakers**  It was agreed that the next forum should be on Thursday 15 or 22May if possible, in order to avoid bank holidays.  JG suggested that it would be good to combine the next meeting with a site visit, and that it might be interesting to visit the hard to treat cavity wall project on St George’s estate; IF said that the estate may be installing solar panels too so that could be of interest. JG also suggested that a visit to an energy efficient showhome of some kind might be of interest – RB thought that EST might be doing something in this area, otherwise it might be possible to visit a Superhome.  It was agreed that there should be a focus on the private sector at the next forum, and that as a follow on from the NEA event, Peter Sumby or Fiona Hart from NEA could provide more detail on the findings of their work in this area. It was also suggested that Allison Oliver from NEA could talk about minimum standards for the private rented sector.  Having an update from all members at the last meeting was interesting and helpful, and this should be done again at May’s meeting.  It would be good to hear more from the GLA on the ELENA funding, and how this is likely to be used.  It was suggested that it might be interesting to hear from a borough who have delivered a project using mapping, but the committee were unsure whether anyone had done this to date.  British Gas, NEA or Consumer Futures could be invited to talk about smart meters.  It would be interesting to have a look at Green Deal or ECO from a practical perspective – for example, to hear from someone who has had a GD report or assessment. JG will cover the Forum’s response to the ECO consultation.  Shadia Rahman from Kingston was supposed to present on the Big Energy Switch at the last forum, but couldn’t make it on the day – she could be asked to present in May instead.  The borough survey (see AOB below) could also provide suggestions for speakers. A look at fuel poverty and health could also be useful (something around the Cold Weather Plan for example). IF mentioned that Westminster are looking at having a dedicated health coordinator scheme, with coordinators tied to local surgeries providing a holistic intervention service for vulnerable patients. | HBD to research possibilities of site visit, and find a venue for the next meeting.  RB to contact EST about site visit  IF to contact St Georges to see if installing solar panels  HBD to contact potential speakers |
| **4. Response to ECO Consultation**  Responses to the ECO Consultation are due in by 16 April. IF has been working on Westminster’s response and will circulate what they’ve already done, and the rest of the committee should make contributions by this Friday, 11 April. A final response can then be circulated for the approval of the Forum at the beginning of next week and submitted.  It was agreed that the revised ECO is not geared towards the fuel poor. Only a small proportion of fuel poor households will qualify for works under the new scheme, and it was felt to be especially unhelpful for this group that eligibility assessments are based on income, not stock quality.  It was felt that including loft and easy to treat cavity wall insulation as allowable primary measures under CERO would also disadvantage the fuel poor, as most council houses already have loft or cavity wall insulation – other measures are now required.  The proposed solid wall minima is too low. There is concern over how much will be available for householders living in SW properties when the Green Deal cashback offer ends on 30 June.  It was felt that safeguarding ESAS is important, and that the government should provide funding for the service. The need for a clear referral route was emphasised – people need to know who they can call for help and advice. However, JG also pointed out that she doesn’t currently feel comfortable referring people to ESAS as they are unsure as to the quality of the service for vulnerable residents in particular.  Following on from this, it was suggested that ESAS could play an important role in quality assurance, providing residents with reassurance that tradespeople and funding offers are legitimate. There is concern that if ESAS is taken away, local authorities would be required to fill its role, and are not qualified to do so.  It was strongly felt that Utilities shouldn’t be able to pick and choose properties – the Government need to back the scheme and ensure that funding is available for the vulnerable.  It was suggested that the uplift for ECO/GD blending could help the vulnerable, as it could reduce the amount that they were asked to pay back. However, it was also pointed out that there is a lack of market confidence in Green Deal and even middle income groups are not choosing to take it up.  It was questioned whether customers are really being made aware of their different finance options. Are people who are being asked to make contributions being told about Green Deal finance? The fuel poor can’t normally afford to contribute, so might be turning down offers, but the Green Deal Finance Company can lend to people who wouldn’t normally be eligible for other types of loans, including those with bad credit. Is this a training issue – are assessors not comfortable advising on finance? DECC could produce guides for householders on their options once they’ve had an assessment.  It is important for Boroughs to be notified when residents are being offered HHCRO, especially if the resident is being asked to contribute, as they might be able to help with a contribution (e.g. through a credit union arrangement/ discretionary grants etc). ESAS could also notify boroughs when residents have called them for help.  A centralised Affordable Warmth scheme is needed.  Targets for CERO could include an uplift for tackling properties whose residents are fuel poor.  It’s felt that the suggested carbon savings for boiler repair have been calculated incorrectly.  The suggested penalty rate of 1.1 is too low. IF’s colleague made the suggestion that a fixed price per undelivered tonne of carbon could be established – this would stabilised the price of carbon and ensure delivery of measures.  NCAN are making a response to the consultation, and it was suggested that the Forum’s response could be included in this. However, it was felt that London is at a disproportionate disadvantage under the proposed changes, due to the high number of solid wall and smaller properties in the capital, and so a London HECA Forum response should be issued separately. | Committee to send responses to JG by Friday 11 April, HBD to circulate final response to members at the beginning of next week and collate responses. JG to submit final response by 16 April. |
| **6. Any other business**  JG suggested that it might be good to have ‘member updates’ page on the website, so that boroughs can see what each other is doing. The page could be updated quarterly.  It would also be useful to find out what members are involved/ interested in so that the Forum’s aims for 2014/2014 can be refreshed, and to get suggestions for further speakers. | JG to draft a survey email, HBD to circulate and collate responses  HBD to coordinate quarterly members’ update of website |