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ALEO South East: Spring Forum Tuesday 22nd May 2018

Kindly hosted by Woking Borough Council

Attendees

Helen Cooper	Arun District Council
Hazel Hill	Bracknell Forest Council
John Caine	Chiltern District Council
Amanda Martin	Dover District Council
Steve Nottage	Elmbridge Borough Council
Adrian Wright	Happy Energy – sponsor
Ed Gunn	Moixa – speaker
Harrison Brock	Moixa
Debbie Haynes	Oxford City Council
Andrew Waggott	Portsmouth City Council
Emma Slade	Portsmouth City Council
Joanne Williams	Runnymede Borough Council
Verena Boxall	Runnymede Borough Council
Robbie Marjoram	Scottish Power – sponsor
Catriona Reaby	SE ² – secretariat
Marie Jones	SGN – sponsor
Charlie Edwards	SSE – speaker
Cliff Darby	Tandridge District Council
Deborah Vincent	Test Valley Borough Council
Evangeline Haggarty	West Berkshire Council
Dan Goodchild	West Sussex County Council
Lara Beattie	Woking Borough Council (host)

Dialling in

Sandra Woodfall	Dartford Borough Council
Sam Simmonds	Kent County Council
Matthew Bird	Mid Sussex
Louise Croot	West Oxfordshire DC

Apologies

Catherine Geoghegan	Arun District Council
Lucy Martins	Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council
Sarah Muskett	Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council
Jane Devlin	East Hampshire District Council
Cati Smith	Guildford Borough Council
Louise Lyons	Hart District Council
Mark Rachwal	Spelthorne Borough Council
Janet Hill	Swale Borough Council
Justin Bailey	Wealden District Council

All presentations from the meeting are available to download at
https://www.aleo.org.uk/se/meetings/index.php?i=i&event_id=20050704224011

1. Welcome, introductions and minutes of the last meeting.

- Hazel welcomed everyone and thanked Woking Borough Council for hosting the meeting. The minutes of the last meeting – 1 February 2018 - were reviewed. See:

https://aleo.org.uk/downloads/root/regions/se/meetings/ALEO_SE_Winter_Forum_-_010218_-_Minutes.pdf.

There were only two actions – for members to provide information to the National ALEO. Actions complete, minutes approved.

2. ALEO SE AGM

- Election of Committee Members: Hazel proposed that the existing committee, who were all willing to re-stand, be re-elected. This was seconded by Verena Boxall (Runnymede) and agreed. Marie Jones has left Hastings Council and so a position is vacant on the Committee. Andrew Waggott (Portsmouth) proposed Emma Slade (Portsmouth) join the Committee. This was agreed. Two members of the Committee volunteered to stand as Vice-Chair: Amanda Martin (Dover) and Debbie Haynes (Oxford), and so a vote was carried out with SE² as returning officer. Both members gave a short briefing on their views for the role prior to the vote. The votes were counted, and Amanda Martin was elected. Hazel thanked both Amanda and Debbie for their support.

Committee Members:

Hazel Hill	Bracknell-Forest Council	Chair
Cati Smith	Guildford Borough Council	Treasurer
Amanda Martin	Dover District Council	Vice-Chair
Justin Bailey	Wealden District Council	
Debbie Haynes	Oxford City Council	
Catherine Geoghegan	Arun District Council	
Matthew Bird	Mid Sussex District Council	
Emma Slade	Portsmouth City Council	

- Treasurer's Report: Hazel gave a brief overview of ALEO SE's financial position, in the Treasurer's absence. Happy Energy has joined Scottish Power and SGN as the group's third main sponsor. Hazel thanked Happy Energy for becoming a sponsor.

Action: SE² to circulate the Treasurer's report to members with the minutes (attached – Appendix 1).

- **Membership and sponsorship:** A paper was circulated prior to the meeting outlining a variety of options to reduce ALEO SE's costs and / or generate more revenue. Options included: charging LA members, securing a third sponsor (already achieved), increasing the membership to include other appropriate organisations, charging ad hoc commercial speakers, and bringing the secretariat back in-house.
There was a discussion with feedback from a range of LA members. Most felt that LAs would struggle to provide the secretariat in-house, and many LAs were concerned about being charged a membership fee. The financial constraint on ALEO SE has been mitigated by Happy Energy becoming a third sponsor. Some LAs felt that sponsorship from commercial partners impacted on the group's perceived impartiality.
It was agreed that:
 - The secretariat should continue to be delivered by a paid provider (currently SE²) rather than the burden falling to a LA member.
 - Sponsorship provides useful funding to ALEO SE, but there should be a maximum of 3 main sponsors.
 - ALEO SE will continue to be free of charge to LA members.
 - The group will allow 1 additional commercial speaker per meeting, for a modest charge (as long as it fits with LA members' interest and agenda allowing). The commercial speakers should be guided by what the LA members want, rather than first come first served.

3. Update

- Hazel outlined the impact of GDPR and how this may impact on LAs. Councils are currently setting up new systems and working practices to comply with GDPR.

4. Sponsor update: Rob Marjoram, Scottish Power (see slides)

- Rob gave an update on ECO3 and Warm Homes Discount.
- 3.5 year obligation: Oct 2018 – Mar 2022. 100% Affordable Warmth with focus on private sector. Solid walled homes min £0.73bn (circa 60,000 homes treated). 15% rural minimum, and first time central heating.
- Targeting 6.5m affordable warmth group (benefits and means tested). LA Flex Households (up to 25%). Focus on worst social housing (EPC E, F and G).
- Measures: cavity wall and loft insulation, internal and external wall insulation, first time central heating, emergency gas boiler replacement. Some funding available for innovation.

5. Sponsor update: Marie Jones, SGN (see slides)

- Marie gave an overview of how SGN is expanding the gas network to fuel poor areas. SGN's Help to Heat scheme covers the cost of a new gas connection (not the heating system). Residents are automatically eligible if they live in the 25% most deprived postcode areas (IMD) but this is ending in June, so apply quickly. SGN are actively looking for local authority partners, and councils can contact Jennifer.Armstrong@sgn.co.uk if they know of potential customers who would benefit from a new gas connection.
- SGN has created a £10m fund - "SGN Central Heating Grant Scheme" - to help the fuel poor access gas central heating. Councils can apply. SGN will fund up to 50% of the cost of first time central heating, provided the household is also taking a first-time gas connection through Help to Heat. The other 50% will come from other organisations – social landlords, ECO, Warm Homes, Councils, charities etc (not from the fuel poor). For more information contact marie.jones@sgn.co.uk.
- Marie also showed members the SGN "Locking cooker valve" aimed at reducing the gas and fire safety risks to vulnerable people living at home. Visit www.sgn.co.uk/LCV for more information.

- Q1: Can connections be ad hoc, with one property connected at a time?
A1: Yes. Contact Marie.
- Q2: If LAs want to help their residents apply before the June change (for IMD eligibility) where should they send their IMD postcode lists to?
A2: Send IMD lists to Jennifer Armstrong (above). SGN will try to move quickly to pre-approve them before the June deadline.
- Q3: Can the scheme include blocks of flats (as only 1 meter point)? What if the council is looking into a district heating scheme?
A3: Marie to look into it. She thinks it is counted as 1 connection / meter point, so funding could be limited.

6. New sponsor update: Adrian Wright, Happy Energy (see slides)

- Happy Energy have been working with LAs for many years. Based in the south west they are one of the UK's largest deliverers of LA Flex funding. They deliver a range of measures through a network of installers. Adrian is a member of the Ofgem / BEIS working group.
- Happy Energy provides LA endorsed energy efficiency and renewable energy services, blending funds from a variety of sources. They have partnered with many different LAs to deliver their Heat Project, including Heat Devon, Heat Cornwall and Heat Sussex.
- The Heat Project is free for LAs. It is targeted at private owner occupiers and private rented sectors, offering a range of insulation, heating and renewable upgrades. Heat is open to park homes, district heating, HMOs and sheltered housing. They link to SGN for new gas connections. Happy Energy do proactive marketing in partnership with the LA, full management and generation of LA Flex declarations. They are working with Runnymede BC, Spelthorne BC and Bracknell Forest Council.
- For further information or to start up a local Heat Project, contact adrian@happyenergy.co.uk

Solar PV and battery storage

7. Managing demand with battery storage: Charlie Edwards, Scottish & Southern Electricity Networks - SSEN, (see slides)

- Charlie outlined the challenge for the electricity network to continue to meet peak demand. SSEN wants to manage and reduce peak electricity demand and so has tested a range of energy storage systems and other technologies.
- In the Thames Valley area there is a new vision, with a specific focus on the low voltage network, to facilitate the transition to low carbon technologies. This looks to reduce the need for traditional reinforcement of the existing electricity network.
- Smart solutions include: Energy Storage and Management Units (ESMU), hot thermal storage, cold thermal storage and energy efficiency measures.
- The ESMU systems trialled (batteries with intelligent control) were able to provide 12 – 36 kWh energy at individual street level to communities. The SAVE energy efficiency project in Solent also demonstrated peak demand savings of around 8% through DNO led installation of LED lights. It is anticipated these types of technologies will help SSEN to manage and reduce peak demand in future.

- Q4 Portsmouth CC is doing a PV project with social housing. Can SSEN work with them to link to battery storage?
A4 Charlie to find out and liaise with Portsmouth CC.
- Q5 With the LED lighting rollout (as per SAVE in Solent), will SSEN approach LAs or can LAs

contact SSEN if they are keen to take part? When SSEN starts to roll out programmes (like SAVE or EV charging) how will they communicate effectively with LAs e.g. via ALEO?

A5 The SAVE trials are still taking place so SSEN needs to do the project evaluation. However, SSEN are starting to have conversations with potential partners, particularly in network constrained areas where peak demand is a challenge. Charlie noted the comment about the need for effective communication with LAs.

Q6 Is LED innovation linked to LA Flex?

A6 Not yet but Charlie will look into this.

8. Project ERIC: Ed Gunn, Moixa (see slides – note the updated presentation on the website)

- Moixa has developed a range of electric storage batteries for small-scale & domestic use (2, 3 and 5 kWh). They are compact modular batteries that can be installed quickly and retro-fitted to properties with solar PV.
- The smart batteries come with a user-friendly customer interface, Grid Share (linking to the local network) and a range of services.
- Project ERIC was a 2-year project on the Rose Hill council estate in Oxford – one of the 10% most deprived areas in England. 82 households took part having 2kWh batteries installed along with solar PV. The 2.5kW solar panels (per dwelling) charged the battery during the day and discharged during the evening peak period. The project demonstrated that this approach significantly reduced the amount of electricity required from the grid, with the battery storage smoothing the typical evening peak demand (reduced by 8%).
- The batteries allow you to discharge from the tenants' and community batteries into the local network at times of peak demand. This is then repaid or re-charged back to the tenants. Grid Participation events helped build a local community network.
- Lessons:
 - You need at least 3-6 months to engage tenants and manage their expectation (don't over-promise).
 - Listen to customer & user feedback (e.g. fan noise of batteries).
 - Correct battery sizing is critical, so it is best to actively data monitor a home before battery sizing. In Oxford the DLO were trained to maintain the batteries (successful).
 - You need a long-term relationship with a supplier as the equipment lasts 20 years.
 - Traditional engagement methods (mail, print, phone, in person) worked better than on-line communication with this fuel poor group.
 - Early engagement of technology partner essential for best practices and success: Project ERIC was a success because Moixa were engaged with Oxford City Council before any project cost was incurred.
- Moixa are now developing funded models to roll out. Contact Ed for more information.

Q7 Did the fuel poor tenants get the electricity for free?

A7 All electricity generated from the roof panels was free to the tenant. The tenants still needed to pay for any excess electricity they needed (from their existing electricity retailer) but that was a lot less. Also, there was no power purchase agreement between tenants and Project ERIC as it was too off-putting for tenants.

9. Setting up an energy supply company: Dan Goodchild, West Sussex County Council (see slides)

- West Sussex County Council, along with other authorities from across Sussex, wanted to reduce energy costs for their residents and help stimulate local energy generation. They decided to set up a white label energy company, endorsed by the Councils, to encourage people who had been reluctant to change supplier. A white label energy company is one that

is run and administered by an energy supplier partner, but which is marketed and endorsed by the lead organisation (e.g. Sainsbury's Energy is in partnership with British Gas).

- WSCC are working with Robin Hood Energy to deliver Your Energy Sussex, along with 11 Sussex authorities. The focus is to provide a fair deal on gas and electricity prices and good customer service, while also helping to support residents in fuel poverty. It does not guarantee to be the cheapest, but it aims to provide confidence to the customer, and not to exploit customers. It is a not-for-profit scheme with a strong focus on customer retention.
- The scheme launched recently and already has over 800 new customers. Lessons – take up is highly dependent on resourcing, a good communications plan (it is variable across Sussex) and that many marketing campaigns appear to have a 'long tail', i.e. they are effective long after they stop.

Q8 How did WSCC engage with residents? What if there is a problem with the bill?

A8 We have focused on no- and low-cost engagement through WSCC and other council-owned channels (e.g. resident/tenant newsletters, press releases, social media etc). Support from district / borough councils has seen a significant increase in customer numbers. Robin Hood Energy deal with billing and accounting.

Q9 How much goes into the fuel poverty fund?

A9 The break-even point for the scheme to start making an excess for the FP fund is 4500 customers, so they are not there yet. Above this, all income not used for signing up further customers will go into the fund.

10. Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards – tackling cold homes & commercial properties: Debbie Haynes, Oxford City Council

- All private sector rented properties now have to meet the Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards, of EPC E or above unless they are exempt. It is the landlord's duty to ensure the property complies. It covers all new / renewed tenancies from April 2018, and it will cover all domestic tenancies from April 2020, where an EPC is required.
- The exemptions guidance is now available. **Action:** ALEO SE to circulate.
- Enforcement – Compliance Notices can be issued by a LA where they believe a landlord may be in breach. Following this a Penalty Notice can be issued by the LA if they are satisfied the landlord is in breach - max £5k financial penalty.
- Note – it only applies where an EPC is required, and many HMOs are exempt due to single room tenancies. "Cost effective" improvements will not be enough to get above EPC E for some property types.
- Oxford CC has been informing, advising and sign-posting landlords to help them stay ahead. 121 F&G rated PRS properties were identified and targeted. So far half (59) have been inspected, and those done for full house HHSRS (31) all had a Category 1 hazard for excess cold, and other deficiencies. Notices have been issued to secure improvements.
- The process the Council carried out under HMO Licensing was to cross check the EPC register against HMO records, and filter F&G. They put a condition on each licence to request ECP E or above, and follow up. If an HMO is exempt from EPC then identify any Category 1 hazards and apply HHSRS during normal licensing process.
- Commercial – you need to establish if a commercial building is in scope. If in scope get the EPC and filter F&G. Commissioning work (mainly lighting so far). Many grey areas which OCC is talking to BEIS about regularly.

11. Round the table update

Members from the SE region gave a brief update on areas of activity. Topics included: solar PV & battery storage projects, EV charging, Park Homes, PRS, Warm Homes grants, GDPR, solar PV farms, Heat Projects, Housing Enforcement policies, Commercial EPCs, Housing & Planning Act.

12. AOB

- Hazel thanked all the speakers and sponsors.
- Oxford CC offered to run an additional briefing / training session in December on EPCs for domestic and commercial private rented sector. More information to follow.
- The next meeting will be at Guildford Borough Council on Wednesday 3 October. Following that Runnymede BC have offered to host the Spring meeting.

Appendix 1
Treasurer's Report
See agenda item 2.

The ALEO SE Bank balance is looking healthy at £4035.63 (May 2018). We are expecting £1300 each from Happy Energy, Scottish Power and SGN for the following year.

Other ad hoc sponsors have expressed an interest – see outcome of the “Membership & sponsorship” discussion.

SE2 have yet to invoice for their costs (£3,840 for the year, half in October and half in March).