

**ALEO South East: Winter Forum
Thursday 2nd February 2017**

Kindly hosted by Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council

Attendees

Justin	Bailey	Wealden District Council
Chris	Chapman	SSE
Susan	Day	SGN
Sharon	Dorrington	Happy Energy
Cath	Geoghegan	West Sussex
Dan	Goodchild	West Sussex County Council
Giles	Gooding	Eastleigh Borough Council
Debbie	Haynes	Oxford City Council
Hazel	Hill	Bracknell Forest Council (Chair)
Jon	Kimber	Agility ECO
Rachel	Lambert	East Hampshire District Council
Robert	Marjoram	Scottish Power
Amanda	Martin	Dover District Council
Rachael	Mills	SE ² Ltd (Secretariat)
Sarah	Muskett	Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council
Katherine	Shadwell	Portsmouth City Council
Sam	Thomas	Cherwell District Council
Debbie	Vincent	Test Valley Borough Council
Andrew	Waggott	Portsmouth City Council
Evangeline	Wood	West Berkshire Council

Apologies

William	Bickers-Jones	Gosport Borough Council
Verena	Boxall	Runnymede Borough Council
Beatrice	Hubert-Price	East Hampshire District Council
Marie	Jones	East Sussex
Les	Murrell	Rushmoor Borough Council
Joanne	Williams	Runnymede Borough Council

1. Welcome and introductions

Hazel Hill welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council for being our hosts.

2. Minutes from the last meeting and actions arising

There were two actions arising from the last:

- Smart meter data: consider lobbying the DCC as ALEO SE or National to have access to this data: HH to follow up
- Housing Health Cost Calculator: share case study with BRE about how research and rationale behind the tool to help secure £300k of public health funding: MJ to follow up

The minutes were approved.

3. National and Regional Update

- 3.1. The next ALEO SE meeting will be the AGM and we are keen to recruit new members to the Executive Committee. The Committee meets immediately after each Forum meeting, which is the only other face-to-face meeting; other business is done by email. We are also looking for a new Treasurer, which again is quite a light role. For more information please contact Hazel Hill.
- 3.2. ALEO SE finances are quite healthy compared to other ALEOs, but we need to maintain the position. The Exec Committee will be reviewing our sponsorship levels.
- 3.3. This week the Government published their response to the ECO Help to Heat consultation, which will now run for 18 months to September 2018. For more information see <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/energy-company-obligation-eco-help-to-heat>. Local authorities need to help energy suppliers and installers find eligible householders. BEIS is holding a meeting about the local authority flexible eligibility criteria (LA flex) on 7th February. **Action:** RM to circulate details.
- 3.4. The Warm Homes Discount is now available to park homes.
- 3.5. HH is continuing to chase DCLG for an update on when EPC data will be released by Landmark to local authorities: ECO3 makes it imperative that this happens soon. It will also be useful for HECA reporting.

Post-meeting note: HH received the following response from DCLG on 3.2.17: “We are at a testing phase with both the data and the access tools and are working to finalise the release. I’m afraid I cannot provide you with a specific date as I’m sure you’ll understand given the nature of development and testing. As I have mentioned previously, the department no longer has the regulatory powers to provide data using the bulk data service. Were the department to process this request and provide the data we would be in breach of our own regulations.”

- 3.6. One of our members has asked if a new template would be provided for this year’s HECA reporting. Rob Leeson from ALEO National has advised: “A BEIS representative presented at the last ALEO East Midlands meetings on HECA. He said that there would be no new template released this time, as they want to keep things flexible, but you should feel free to adapt the one from 2015 and use that if it helps”. **Action:** RM to circulate the 2015 template.
- 3.7. Gill Daniel at Horsham District Council has asked if members are able to recommend any software for capturing domestic energy efficiency information as result of a home visit. Please email Gill.Daniel@horsham.gov.uk with your thoughts.
- 3.8. NEA are hosting a number of meetings in the coming weeks that may be of interest to members. **Action:** RM to circulate details.
 - Fuel poverty training meeting in Maidenhead on 9th February: a good opportunity to network and share ideas.

- With British Gas, a roadshow of 'Keeping Warm in Winter' events to help introduce community groups and those interested in assisting people in fuel poverty to the new Community Action Partnership website and encourage them to utilise its resources.
- An energy networks meeting on 2nd March in London

4. Energy Switching: Andrew Waggott, Portsmouth City Council

See slides

4.1 About 12.5% of Portsmouth residents are in fuel poverty. It's also believed a high proportion of residents are on high standard tariffs but 70% of people don't switch.

4.2 PCC considered a number of options to address this:

- Collective switching hasn't been as successful as everyone hoped and the drop out rates are quite high. It doesn't tend to reach those that most need to switch.
- White label was considered a reputational risk as you can't offer the cheapest tariff for everyone by partnering with one supplier.
- Full licence is very expensive, risky and resource intensive. There was no political will for this at PCC.

4.3 PCC therefore decided to set up a white labelled comparison/switching site PCC can hold the switching company (UK Power) to KPIs through contractual obligations. UK Power is Ofgem accredited and offer all tariff options (even if you can't switch through their site or they don't receive a commission. Client support is provided by Agility ECO. PCC receive a commission which is invested back into the community and used to help cover officer staff time costs.

4.4 The website (<http://switch.portsmouth.gov.uk>) was very quick to set up but the legals took a while to sort. It was launched mid-October and is promoted through existing PCC communication channels (although we're not allowed to promote through Council Tax bills, email signatures, etc). Key to it's ongoing success will be its adoption by housing officers. The site is initially being run as a 1 year trial.

4.5 More enquiries are being made by phone than was expected (rather than online) but all calls are dealt with by UK Power so it's required minimal PCC officer time. PCC have access to an online portal showing how much people save in each switch. Agility ECO provide monthly reports which helps further promotion internally and to Elected Members.

4.6 There have been 150 switches so far. The average savings are about £230, ranging from £900 to £2.15. Customers have switched to 12 companies: 98% of these have been dual fuel. We're looking at developing different incentives with UK Power (eg competitions / awards / prize draws) to encourage more take-up.

4.7 Key lessons learnt:

- We're still to be convinced that white label energy supply is a good alternative so this is the best value advice we can give.
- Vulnerable householders need one-to-one support with their switch, which we have to be careful about: the actual switch must be up to them. Have to be realistic about how much officer time is available to support this: it takes time to build (financial) trust.
- The social media campaign has been very successful and lots of people have clicked through from Facebook adverts.

Q: How do you know you're reaching the fuel poor?

A: We're targeting our advertising using post code areas / super output areas. We appreciate this is a blunt instrument.

Q: Do many people look and then don't switch?

A: Yes lots and it's very frustrating! Some may then go on to switch via another switching sites (eg to get a Meerkat toy) which we should embrace as it's the same outcome.

Q: Do you have any future plans after pilot?

A: We'd have to go to procurement after a year, but we haven't seen the offer anywhere else so may be able to procure as single source. Agility ECO have 8 other local authorities who are very interested. PCC are also looking at a pilot void energy switching service with Robin Hood Energy.

Q: What community outreach work have you done?

A: We do website demonstrations but people tend to go home and try it themselves. We're hoping to get extra officer support to support multi-cultural groups. We've also visited sheltered housing blocks to target more vulnerable residents

5. Smart Energy in Communities Case Study: Justin Bailey, Wealden District Council

See slides

5.1 WDC already had lots of energy efficiency programmes in place, including a collective switching programme, trialling Dimplex Quantum heaters and a Citizens Advice project to trial central point of contact for fuel poverty.

5.2 WDC was one of eighteen organisations to win funding under the Smart Energy Parishes Project. WDC defined a Smart Energy Parish as an area that buys into the idea of getting smart meters and becomes energy aware at large.

5.3 The project was a smart meter roadshow and education campaign, followed by an evaluation, working on the principle that people have to see something 3 times before they are engaged

5.4 WDC hosted 11 events (mainly talks to rural community groups) with leaflet drops and articles, using the Gaz and Leccy logos. The Council used the non-gas map to help identify which areas to target, but with 80% of their area classified as rural they weren't short of areas. 50% of the events took place in communities WDC had engaged with before, but they wanted to go to new areas too on the edge of the District (seen more as wildcards where they didn't know what the response would be).

5.5 Using mainly village halls, the events had demo smart meters, free refreshments, energy goodie bags (for the first 15 people at each event), bill checking and general one-to-one advice. About 400 people attended the events in total, with an average of 40-60 people per event. At one event they managed to save a local Councillor £800!

5.6 The education campaign comprised of a social media campaign, a local working group, a hotline (which just went to Justin's landline), a guide and a website - all of which worked well. The local working group has been useful to discuss technology and also forward plans to 2020.

Action: RM to circulate an electronic copy of the guide.

5.7 The evaluation is now taking place and will include Writing report now what did/didn't work, outcomes, mapping, case studies and forward plans

Q: How did you encourage such a good turnout at the events?

A: We often have success where lots of rural community groups already exist: the Parish Council website has lists and we did a ring round of the groups. We also talked to Parish Clerks, although Smart Energy GB took removed our proposed engagement with Parish Councillors from our project. We noticed a trend in the sort of people who were attending: they tended to be elderly, struggling with their bills and interested in saving money.

Q: What did you do if people wanted a smart meter once you'd told them about them?

A: We had to handle it delicately, and told them the technology is developing and will be coming soon. It's important that people know the technology IS coming (especially as they're paying for it anyway!)

6. Dementia Training: Susan Day, SGN

See slides

- 6.1. We were increasingly getting feedback from our frontline staff who respond to emergencies that they sometimes have to deal with customers who are aggressive, awkward or who don't understand what's happening. So we carried out some research with health authorities and realised that our customers could potentially be suffering from dementia.
- 6.2. By 2050, 1 in 85 people globally by 2050 will have some form of dementia. 800,000 people in the UK are suffering with some form of the condition today. Dementia presents in different ways, but involves an ongoing decline in the brain.
- 6.3. To help our frontline staff become more aware of dementia, we partnered with Tutor Care to provide training for our staff (Tutor Care are accredited by the Care Quality Commission). About 85% of all our frontline staff have attended a course and the rest will do it online.
- 6.4. SGN purchased more training certificates than they need and so now have some free opportunities for local authorities to offer the training to their frontline staff. However, they must be used by mid-March 2017. The online course takes 1-2 hours, is interactive and you can go back to it if you don't finish it all in one go. If anyone is interested please contact pamela.goe@sgn.co.uk: all we need is a spreadsheet with the names of everyone in your organisation who'd like to participate.
- 6.5. SGN are also providing and fitting locking cooking valves free of charge to vulnerable customers, enabling carers to simply isolate gas cookers when they leave the building. This also allows people to stay in their homes for longer. For further details please contact susan.day@sgn.co.uk

Q: I'm increasingly hearing from some professionals (eg occupational health therapists) that some people are 'allergic' to gas and so can't have it fitted into their homes. Is this right?

A: **Action:** SDA to find out

Response to action:

Having consulted experts, I have been reassured that overall gas combustion is safe and the emissions levels are low for modern, well-maintained appliances. Unfortunately, there may be some people that are very sensitive to some of the minor components present in the combustion products, but characterising these is very difficult as we have to consider the effects of the ambient air, other emissions in the home (eg. Some furniture products can emit trace components that lead to asthma attacks), paints, cleaning products, general health issues and more.

7. Home Energy Action Taskforce (HEAT): Sharon Dorrington, Happy Energy

See slides

- 7.1. Happy Energy is an award-winning national energy efficiency delivery business, based in Cornwall. They've managed projects under all the supplier obligations, as well as in Ireland and Australia. They run fully endorsed projects for 116 local authorities, Tesco's and M&S, and have been responsible for the upgrade of over 300,000 homes.
- 7.2. Home Energy Action Taskforce (HEAT) is a free of charge service to LAs which comprises:
 - o One stop shop for residents for all things relating to reducing energy bills
 - o Information, assistance, grants and financial incentives
 - o Help to Heat and Able to Pay offerings, with works including insulation, heating upgrades and renewable heating

- 7.3. Innovative new projects are also being developed for 2017 which include:
- Interest-free pay-as-you-go finance
 - No upfront-cost PV with battery storage and LEDs
 - **Action:** SDo to provide further details
- 7.4. Participating in HEAT frees up staff time, helps to meet the NICE guidance to have a single point of contact, users local installers (and so stimulates the local economy and helps tackle fuel poverty. LAs also have full access to all project data alongside an annual savings report.
- 7.5. To participate, LAs sign a memorandum of understanding for Happy Energy to use the Council logo, although nothing is used without LA sign off. You are provided with fully funded marketing campaigns and literature and access to multi-supplier ECO funding. It's quick to set up: there's even still time to do it this winter. For further information call 0800 0246 234 or visit www.heatproject.co.uk.

A discussion on the ECO LA Flexibility Criteria followed:

- A lot will depend on what energy suppliers are comfortable with.
- Voluntary approach for Suppliers - capped at 10% (disappointed it's not 20% as originally proposed)
- One criteria nationally would be helpful, but flexibility allows local issues to be addressed (eg PRS)
- Ofgem want to see a statement of intent and declaration from LAs, but we need to be clear what this means. How do we demonstrate what we're happy to sign off against? There needs to be clarity so we don't let residents down. With opportunity comes responsibility
- BEIS are holding workshops around the guidance for invited stakeholders: they have limited resource so are unable to offer the opportunity to respond to the guidelines to all ALEO members. However, colleagues attending the meeting will carefully consider the LA Flex options on our behalf and summarise process/discussions at a later date.
- If BEIS/Ofgem are happy, then the Suppliers will be happy

8. Sponsors Update: Robert Marjoram, Scottish Power

See slides

8.1. Scottish Power help to fund by Agility ECO and Happy Energy.

8.2. ECO headlines

- Extension is for 18 months (rather than 12)
- Spend envelope is exactly the same per annum (pro rata'd up for 18 months)
- The scheme has been rebalanced to tackle fuel poverty, for example the LA flexibility approach to reach those on low incomes
- Deemed scores have been confirmed (rather than EPCs) and were published by Ofgem at the end of 2016. These will be uplifted by 30% across the board
 - Scottish Power is pushing for guidance on some deemed scores - eg storage heaters, insulation in the roof
 - Park homes insulation has own deemed scores (but small contribution)
- Government is keen to collect more details from Energy Suppliers on the cost of delivery

8.3. Affordable Warmth (ex-HCCRO)

- Increase from 36% to 70% of spend so is the new big focus
- Targets private householders on benefits
- £2.76bn lifetime savings, 4.2m households
- Targeting has been simplified: the sub-criteria are going and income thresholds are changing to better reflect disposable income (eg depending on how many children you've got)
- 0.5m households for social housing, but only E, F & G and pretty much only insulation (RSLs have duty to adequately heat a home so heating covered elsewhere)

- The flexible eligibility gives LAs the opportunity to take control of some of the ECO budget: Scottish Power is very keen to talk to LAs to see how they can assist.
- Gas boiler replacements have been capped at 25,000/year (37,000 total over 18 months) so Suppliers will need to find other measures to deliver their targets
- Modelled uptake of measures in the Impact Assessment shows the potential mix of measures: 80% CWI and LI, 12% gas boilers (was previously delivered by c95% gas boilers before)

8.4. CERO (carbon reduction target)

- Decrease from 34% to 30% of spend
- 7.3m tonnes within the same cost envelope
- 60% increase in insulation (big increase compared to initial consultation document)
- SWI minima of 21,000 measures/year (Scottish Power have met most of their SWI target already)
- 15% rural ringfence
- Modelled uptake of measures in the Impact Assessment shows 90% CWI and LI: low cost CWI has gone up from 17k to 99k in a year! (high cost is defined as hard to access or 3 storeys plus)

8.5. CSCO (post code criteria) finishes at the end of March

9. Roundtable

9.1. SSE

- Still looking at what the new ECO targets will look like - also done most of SWI target
- LA flex will be key: need to work out details but would be interested to have discussions with LAs

9.2. Eastleigh Borough Council

- Have district heating schemes in the pipeline: one is for a small new commercial area with a leisure centre and possible housing. The other is at feasibility stage.

9.3. Oxford City Council

- We are running a private rented energy efficiency grant targeted at the poorer performing properties
- We're looking at ECO 3 for the 'general' ECO, flexible eligibility and for our inhouse social housing

9.4. West Sussex

- We want to improve our data and so are looking at EST Home Analytics. This will also feed into the LA Flexibility targeting

9.5. Dover District Council

- Dover and Shepway District Councils in conjunction with NHS South Kent Coast Commissioning Group and KCC have devised an [Environmental Assessment Form](#) for agencies carrying out home visits to use for vulnerable residents.
- Dover, Dartford, Gravesham, Tonbridge & Malling and Tunbridge Wells run collective energy switching (Energy Deal scheme since 2013). Scheme has been relatively successful, and many residents switch regularly through Energy Deal, however in view of contract renewal/ changes in energy market consideration being given to way forward (Committed to taking part in the 2017 auction rounds)
- Kent Fuel Poverty Strategy workshop took place on 30 November 2016. A report of the outcome from the day is currently being finalised for circulation in the near future. The action plan will be updated and new partnership opportunities pursued to enable better delivery of fuel poverty action across Kent.

9.6 Bracknell Forest Council

- I have moved from the Environmental Health Team (owing to a merge with West Berks and Wokingham across Regulatory services) and am now located within Adult Social Care and Housing which fits with targeting fuel poverty cases.
- Recently attended a meeting at Reading Borough Council with Climate Berkshire, looking to obtain EU funding for housing and/or renewable energy project.
- Attended training with NEA Warm Minds excellent and recommended to others.

10. AOB

10.1 Housing and Planning Act: does this just apply to annual efficiency for commercial properties or also housing? **Action:** we need to urgently find out! RM to make enquiries via DCLG

10.2 Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES)

- Lots of commercial properties owned by LAs are listed and so will be on an exemption list.
- Can use HHSRS powers to enforce in the PRS
- Still unclear whether it applies to social housing, though many are working on identifying stock that has a rating of E or worse
- Who will police it? Trading standards? Already hard pushed
 - District Councils could take it on from County Councils?
 - Show that you've made reasonable efforts to improve?
 - High reputational risk

10.3 Date of next meeting & AGM: Wednesday 26th April at Eastbourne Borough Council