

CAN AGM and Executive Meeting Minutes

11 April 2013 @ 10:30 am
London Borough of Camden Town Hall

Present:

Darsh Chauhan	(DC)	CAN National Secretariat & Vice Chair, East Midlands CAN
Tina Cowley	(TC)	E.ON
Rachel Jones	(RJ)	Chair, West Midlands CAN
John Kolm-Murray	(JKM)	Chair, London CAN
Rob Leeson	(RL)	CAN National Secretariat
Karen Lond	(KL)	Chair, East Midlands CAN
Paul Maplethorpe (Chair)	(PM)	Chair, East Pennine CAN
Amy Ingham	(AI)	Fuel Poverty Team, DECC (afternoon session)
Stuart Pye	(SP)	Vice Chair, North West CAN
Carol White	(CW)	Chair, South East CAN

Apologies:

David Colbourne		Chair, North West CAN
Oliver Myers	(OM)	CAN Representative and Policy Advisor
Jane Mears		Vice Chair, East Pennine CAN

1. Welcome and Introductions

PM welcomed the group and introductions were made.

2. (Re) Election of Chair, Deputy Chair

- 2.1 DC Chaired the elections process.
- 2.2 RL confirmed that nominations had been received for PM to continue in the role of National Chair and JKM for the role of National Deputy Chair.
- 2.3 DC asked if there were any further nominations. No additional nominations were put forward.
- 2.4 PM was, therefore, elected to the role of National Chair and JKM was elected to the role of National Deputy Chair.
- 2.5 It was agreed that David T Langman & Co will carry on as the paid Treasurer who co-signs all cheques. CAN are happy to continue to pay him the fee of £85 per month for his services.
- 2.6 There were no objections to OM continuing in the role of Representative & Policy Advisor.

Action: RL will confirm with OM if he wishes to continue as Representative & Policy Advisor.

3. Accounts Sign Off and Annual Report

- 3.1 As agreed by the Executive, CAN has not opted for a full audit report this year to save on costs. Instead we have opted for an assurance report.
- 3.2 A copy of the annual report had been circulated by RL prior to the meeting and will be included in the summer edition of CANews. All comments are due for the end of June.
- 3.3 A regional report will also be included in the next edition of the CAN magazine. This will be based on the regional updates from the Executive meeting minutes and will be circulated to the Executive for comments prior to publication.
- 3.4 DC provided an update on the CAN finances. UK HECA Ltd made a small operating loss over the period 2011/12, demonstrating that the National Secretariat's budgeting estimates had been very accurate. In the previous year, there had been a significant profit, however, this was mainly because there were no salary expenses for several months. We had expected to break even with Climate Energy sponsorship and income from conferences. We are now receiving higher levels of sponsorship from E.ON, so the outlook is good.

- 3.5 PM signed off the accounts in his capacity of Director of the UK Home Energy Conservation Association Ltd.
- 3.6 The Group decided to commission a full audit for this year, while money is available and as sponsorship has changed.

Actions: RL to circulate draft regional update when available.

RL to inform Accountants that we require a full audit report for the financial year 2012/13.

4. Discussion on reverting to the identity of UK HECA

- 4.1 The group agreed that CAN members should be consulted before we decide whether to revert back to the identity of UK HECA.
- 4.2 KL has consulted a quick poll of EM CAN members via email. Of around 10 returns, there were 60% to 40% in favour of the name CAN. There were strong views both ways and it seemed to relate to job title.
- 4.3 The name was originally changed as there were plans to repeal the Home Energy Conservation Act but HECA has now been refreshed with new guidance. However, the name was also changed so as to include as many people as possible. How inclusive should the network be? If it is changed will this exclude people and reduce our membership? Although areas such as planning, waste and climate change are still related to home energy conservation.
- 4.4 It was suggested that the question of identity should be on the CAN members survey, which will be conducted later this summer.
- 4.5 Some felt that CAN had built up a strong brand identity. There might also be costs implications of changing it. RL noted that on a national level, at least, there would be very few costs in reverting back to the UK HECA identity as he would carry out most of this, making use of existing materials where possible. We will also have to have the CAN display stand reprinted at some point, anyway, as we have now changed address. Also, the company name was never officially changed and we are still the Home Energy Conservation Association trading as the Carbon Action Network.
- 4.6 However, E.ON have invested in CAN-branded material and have already raised concerns with the Secretariat that this will be wasted if we revert to the HECA identity. They have no preference in terms of the name and would be happy if National CAN were to undertake a period of dual CAN/HECA branding for the term of the current E.ON sponsorship contract, which finishes at the end of September 2014.
- 4.7 Locally there are also sponsors and bank accounts, etc, which could cause problems for some regions.
- 4.8 JKM said that London will be likely to change their name. JKM finds that he always has to explain to people in London what we do. It might also be easier to persuade people to pay membership fees if our name reflects a piece of legislation. Carbon saving has also slipped down the agenda recently. It would help links with the GLA in London.
- 4.9 Some of the group prefer the national CAN branding and some would prefer to revert to HECA., reflecting the differences across the regions. Each region could choose the most relevant identity for them but it was felt to be important that they should stick to either HECA or CAN so there is still some coherence. Although it would be better to all stay as CAN or all rebrand to HECA.
- 4.10 "Home Energy Carbon Action Network" was suggested to combine the two brands, incorporating Carbon Action Network but abbreviating to UK HECA. However it was felt that we shouldn't be considering new ideas as this will just complicate things further.
- 4.11 HECA is a statutory duty so there is leverage for funding, although HECA might be short lived. Governments may change legislation although home energy will always exist.
- 4.12 Home energy is a massive subject and could also include things like waste etc. The focus is perhaps more important than the name. It was noted that we often talk about domestic energy efficiency in a broad sense. This is not about semantics, when we are engaging with new partners or representatives from bodies like DECC and new public health partners, for example, who are not familiar with us it needs to be immediately clear what we do.
- 4.13 We do need to make sure we put forward both cases when consulting.
- 4.14 KL didn't want to influence when asking in the East Midlands. Those who made comments were quite clear with their views.
- 4.15 We could agree on wording of a straightforward question without leading members?
- 4.16 We also need a firm set of priorities which is updated year by year.

4.17 A simple question in the members survey along the lines of “Do we remain as we are or revert to our legal name of UK HECA?” will be used in the members survey, with an explanatory statement letting them know that the official company name is still the Home Energy Conservation Association Ltd. We will then make decisions based on the results, although if we do decide to change, we will undertake a period of dual branding for at least the term of the current contract with E.ON.

4.18 In the meantime, members can be asked for their views at regional meetings.

Action: Secretariat to incorporate a question on UK HECA vs CAN identity in forthcoming members survey.

5. Dates and venues of 2013/14 Executive meetings and AGM

5.1 RL will liaise with OM to book rooms in Camden Town Hall for the proposed meeting dates of 10 October 2013, 9 January 2014, 10 April 2014 and 10 July 2014. These dates are all Thursdays.

Action: RL to liaise with OM to book rooms and confirm dates with Executive when set.

6. AOB

6.1 There was no other business.

CAN Executive Meeting Minutes

1. Minutes from previous meeting and matters arising

- 1.1 Item 1.1 - RL was unable to find much from emails etc on OM's comments on the Consumer Focus meeting. Consumer Focus are rebranding to Consumer Futures and moving into the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) next year. There is concern that they might lose some of their independence. They are also moving to the voluntary sector which is under pressure. We need to engage with local CABs. We could invite a CAB representative to a future exec meeting.
- 1.2 Item 1.2 - There are still concerns about quality of EPC Data. RL will chase Colin Anderson for University of Exeter's opinion on quality and usefulness of data.
- 1.3 Item 4.20 - LGA fuel poverty Round Table: The email isn't particular informative. LGA are shifting priorities but where it is going is unclear. The meeting felt like they were gathering information. It will be useful if they can quantify the money LAs spend supporting schemes. It is often forgotten by DECC that LAs put in a lot of their own money into schemes like CERT / CESP. It's not just money in subsidies, but officer time and LAs branding is very important. Hillary Tanner should be invited to a future exec meeting to feed back on the meeting. Possibly someone on welfare reform could be invited as well.
- 1.4 Item 3.5 - DECC's draft Fuel Poverty consultation response should be out in summer. The consultation response on the definition should be out at the end of spring.
- 1.5 Item 4.17 - JKM to forward his presentation from the London and South East NEA Forum to the rest of the group.
- 1.6 Item 3.13 - Steve Fields declined the invitation to speak at the CAN conference. Kevin Fenton Director of Population Health is a key person to invite to future conferences or Executive meetings, although he works for Public Health England so he is not so appropriate for Wales.
- 1.7 Item 7.1 - Unfortunately we didn't have the resources to respond to the consultation on Energy Crisis, Profits and Poverty by the Energy and Climate Change Committee, particularly with the change of CAN National Chair and the short timescale.
- 1.8 Item 4.1 - The letter has been sent to DECC asking for clarification on the Warm Front data.

Actions: RL to invite CAB representative, Hillary Tanner, Kevin Fenton and speaker on welfare reform to future Exec meetings and/or conferences.

RL to ask Colin Anderson for University of Exeter opinion on quality of EPC data.

JKM to forward presentation to rest of Executive

2. Sponsor's Update

- 2.1 E.ON have started banking measures under ECO. There are lots of schemes in the pipeline.
- 2.2 Hopefully E.ON reps have been responsive re request for meetings etc. Please feel free to use TC's contact details.
- 2.3 TC asked if there was any feedback on the ECO quiz in Brighton and whether it an updated version would be appropriate for Wales? The group thought the Quiz had been good as it was interactive and fun, although some of the content could have been more specific. It should work well in Cardiff with a Welsh angle. Rural aspects of ECO are not easily understood, so it would be good to cover this as well as community whole-street approaches. DECC has useful software where you can put in a postcode in and it will tell you whether it is defined as being in a "rural" area. Please email Tina if anyone has any other ideas.
- 2.4 There is a project in Wales with Corebuild which has a good community feel. There is also one in Scotland, involving schools. E.ON are keen to engage with communities.

3. Secretariat update

- 3.1 During the last three months we have had the Executive meeting, the Chair's away-day, the conference in Brighton and the accounts have been completed.

- 3.2 The Brighton conference was very successful and attracted around 120 delegates. There weren't too many feedback forms but those we did receive were very positive.
- 3.3 The latest edition of the CAN Magazine has been circulated via email. The printed version will follow soon.
- 3.4 So far we have around 70 delegates registered for the Cardiff conference.
- 3.5 The event after that will be held in Newcastle in July then Coventry in September, which will include an awards ceremony and possibly an evening meal.
- 3.6 The Secretariat are holding regular progress meetings with E.ON prior to the Executive meetings.
- 3.7 The summer edition of CANews will contain the annual report and regional reports.
- 3.8 The Secretariat would like feedback on possible questions and topics for the forthcoming members' questionnaire.
- 3.9 The National Secretariat will be moving offices shortly, so contact details will be changing.

4. Representation, consultations, policy and public health

Public Health:

- 4.1 NICE have consulted on the scope for guidance on Excess winter deaths and morbidity. If you have any relevant evidence, they want to see it. JKM recommends that the group register as stakeholders.
- 4.2 They are excluding people between the ages of 25 and 60. JKM felt this was ill-advised as there are lots of people between these ages who are affected. Hopefully they will change their minds on this. It makes sense to focus on the elderly and the young people but they shouldn't exclude everyone else entirely.
- 4.3 JKM has been accepted onto the advisory committee and the first meeting will be in October.
- 4.4 Public Health England is now up and running. They will be responsible for the work that used to be done by the Health Protection Agency. They will also be covering heat waves.
- 4.5 A Cold Weather Plan seminar will be held in the first week of July in London.
- 4.6 Public Health is now in local government. Strategies should have been published. It's worth checking them for anything significant to you.
- 4.7 PM will ask health officer to consider sending data on take-up of offers for preventing fuel poverty to the call for evidence
- 4.8 It will be interesting to see final figures for excess winter deaths when they are published. Figures published so far say there have been 5,000 excess winter deaths in March.
- 4.9 DECC will be doing a cost benefit analysis of Energy Efficiency measures.

Warm Front:

- 4.10 CAN have sent a letter to DECC asking whether Warm Front data for the 2011/12 and 2012/13 period will be made available. Our letter asked for a response either way by the end of April. DECC have acknowledged receipt and will try to get back to us by this date.
- 4.11 RJ has contacts at Carillion and will be meeting with them on Monday. RJ will ask what has happened to the data. Carillion have been absent from some regions, but Birmingham seems to be a priority for them.

Powerline:

- 4.12 An email has been circulated regarding a new lobby group called Powerline, which claims to be an alliance of energy industry players and consumer groups aiming to undermine the Energy Bill, arguing that we need to oppose 'green energy' in order to avoid higher fuel bills. The group felt that this was possible a publicity stunt and might even be an April fools hoax. It was agreed, however, that should this prove not to be the case then we would support Fuel Poverty Action's proposal to show, publically, that attempts to divide environmentalists and consumer groups, who have so far effectively worked together to tackle fuel poverty, will not succeed. However, it was acknowledged by the group that mechanisms of funding green energy through utility bills do affect the fuel poor disproportionately, while they are also less likely to benefit from them.

DECC Domestic Private Rented Sector Working Group:

- 4.13 We are still looking for a volunteer to represent CAN on this group. JKM attends the meetings but has been told that he cannot represent Islington Council and CAN at the same time.
- 4.14 The main topics of discussion have been EPCs, the minimum energy efficiency standard and Homes of Multiple Occupation (HMO)

- 4.15 It is not yet specified in legislation that the minimum energy efficiency standard for rented properties should be band E, even though this is what everyone has been assuming. The Residential Landlords Association have backed E as the minimum standard.
- 4.16 There have been discussions and disagreement on whether EPCs and RD SAP are sufficiently robust for Green Deal (GD) assessments. Although EPCs are deeply flawed they are a recognised standard until we come up with something better.
- 4.17 Apparently, the Consumer Credit Act check process stops landlords getting GDs at the moment.
- 4.18 Landlords are saying that there should be no up-front cost to them, which is not workable. Landlords are trying to introduce dozens of exemptions which would exclude many tenants from the GD.
- 4.19 There is a problem with using EPCs to assess HMOs. Some people are proposing SBEN, which is mainly used for commercial properties and compared to an EPC would be very costly. EU regulations do not exclude HMOs from EPCs; this was a UK decision. There will be a private members bill to get HMOs included.
- 4.20 It is unworkable to expect all properties must be up to minimum standards by 1 April 2018, so there will probably be a staggered start so all new tenancies would have to be up to standard by this deadline, with a further deadline of 2020 for other properties.
- 4.21 Landlords want to exclude state properties but this should not be the case.
- 4.22 There is also discussion of what should happen if energy efficiency improvements decrease the rental value. There are very few instances of this and it is felt that Landlords could “bully” tenants into refusing on these grounds.
- 4.23 Most of arguments for landlords’ objections to GD were poor and were rejected by DECC.
- 4.24 It was noted that low-rent models don’t stack up in regions where properties are changing hands for as little as £5-15 thousand. This will need a different approach.
- 4.25 Dave Shiner from Coventry CC will be going to the next meeting which is being held next Monday 15 April in London.
- 4.26 It was noted that it shouldn’t be too difficult to get properties up to an E rating if on gas, however, LPG and Electricity-only properties will be challenging. This is where the worst fuel poverty is.

Annual Work Programme:

- 4.27 It was agreed that we would come back to this at a later date.

Home Energy Conservation Act (HECA):

- 4.28 There have been discussions on a joint freedom of information report on HECA. There is a parliamentary question on this. CAN are happy to support this.
- 4.29 There is no punishment for non-compliance with HECA. Some regions couldn’t agree, so they didn’t do a collective report.
- 4.30 It was asked whether DECC will be responding to HECA reports? DECC is hoping to respond and to use CAN to do so. They might highlight a few of the reports.

Actions:

- RJ to feedback on talks with Warm Front at upcoming meeting.**
- RL to ask again for volunteers to represent CAN on the PRS group.**

5. Regional Updates

5.1 PM for East Pennine CAN

PM has not asked for updates from EP CAN members this time due to the changes with the regional secretariat and sponsorship.

PM is pleased that the region has attracted new funding and a new secretariat. PM was quite impressed by the responses received from potential sponsors.

South Yorkshire have funding for research work for a united approach to GD and ECO, with all four LAs represented.

RJ said that the Black Country have done something similar so it might be worth talking to them.

SP said that the North West were also interested as going down a similar path. Directors of public health were going to fund the study, with several stages, e.g. marketing analysis, developing a community interest group. It would be good to share ideas on this.

5.2 KL for East Midlands CAN

The last EM CAN meeting was held on 14 March. Speakers included Pete Smith on East Midlands Green and Jenny Holland of ACE.

KL recommended Jenny Holland as a potential conference speaker.

The next meeting will be held on 6 June in Corby.

KL will feed back any more responses on the potential name change.

The East Midlands secured £6.5m of funding from the DECC competitions.

KL attended the NEA fuel poverty forum on behalf of CAN.

DECC did not schedule any of their roadshows in the East Midlands, so KL will be attending the nearest in Sheffield.

5.3 JKM for London CAN:

Details of any meetings held and/or forthcoming:

The AGM will be held on 16 May. As mentioned, they will be proposing to change their name to the London HECA Forum.

Details of any current projects

Boroughs received £3,357,018 from the Warm Homes Healthy People Fund, with every borough receiving some funding. They also received £700,000 from the DECC collective switching fund and the GLA received £5,000,000 from the DECC fuel poverty fund.

26,435 people are registered for the Big London Energy Switch.

Any other comments, e.g. issues or barriers:

The Greater London Authority ran a series of workshops on barriers to energy efficiency improvements such as planning, parking and access, and access to benefits data. They are seeking legal advice on the latter issue as many benefits sections are proving obstructive due to changes in the law. They are also looking to support the implementation of environmental public health strategies, including those relating to energy and fuel poverty.

The Chair has been appointed to the NICE Public Health Advisory Committee on Excess Winter Deaths and Illness.

The Committee will be proposing at the AGM to revert our name to the London Home Energy Conservation Association.

The Chair attended a fuel poverty round table at the LGA in February.

5.4 RJ for West Midlands CAN

Details of any meetings held and/or forthcoming:

Next sub-regional meeting will be held on the 17 April to discuss further options on GD specifically local provider option and Birmingham Energy Savers/Carillion. Also look at initial finding form Pioneer places projects. Aim to host wider meeting at end of April/early May

Sub regional meeting held in December looking at HECA reporting and Green Deal/ECO deliver across Warwickshire, Worcestershire, Coventry and Solihull. Meeting also looked at how renewable technology installations had benefited housing association/council tenants after a full heating season, eg running costs, practicality of technologies etc.

Last Full Meeting Tuesday 6 November. This was hosted by CEF and held at Tamlite Lighting in Redditch. DECC attended the meeting to discuss the Fuel Poverty Consultation, plus speakers on Green Deal, ECO and Redditch Borough Council presented on their Crematorium Project to heat the local pool, which is due to be operational this month.

Details of any other events held and/or forthcoming:

Regional GD/ECO event on the 9 April hosted by DECC. A number of LA's are attending.

Details of any current projects:

Most projects are focusing on ECO and GD delivery options. Birmingham have started there delivery process with Carillion utilising local supply chain. As of end of Feb 250 surveys had been undertaken Still early days and problems with software (affecting all) and the finance through the GDFC is still not available.

A number of LA's in the West Midlands had DECC Pioneer funding projects included fuel switching, Students Properties and the GD, Offering free GD assessments to landlords, accessing rural areas, community insulation projects focus on solid wall in rural areas, GD for SME, show buildings. Below are the West Midlands funding amounts.

Local Authority/ Community Group	Fuel Poverty	Green Deal Pioneer Places	Collective Energy Switch	Total
Birmingham City Council	1,973,625	N/A	312,000	2,285,625
Coventry				
Dudley MBC	100,000		Applied – not granted	100,000
Herefordshire Council with Telford and Wrekin and Shropshire Council		450,639		450,639
Lichfield District Council	59,300	87,300		146,600
Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council	74,500	Applied – not granted	Applied – not granted	74,500
Solihull MBC		295,800	With BCC	295,800
Stoke on Trent City Council	290,000	32,000		
Walsall MBC	349,880			349,880
Warwickshire County Council with Rugby Borough Council	387,000	Applied – not granted		387,000
Worcestershire County Council with Worcester City Council	Applied – not granted	297,822		297,822
Cheshire East Council	181,400	197,500	71,000	449,900
Cheshire West and Chester BC and partner in collective energy switch led by Oldham	278,500	27,500	Working with Oldham	306,000
People's Power – areas including: Tamworth,				178,400

Other LA's are deciding on options; some are in negotiations through the BES/Carillion partnerships while others are waiting to find out more. Worcestershire have been engaging with LA's to investigate the options they e.g Cornwall. Challenges are variable but the common areas are off gas properties, areas with no CSCO's, two tier working structures, LA's with no housing stock.

5.5 CW for SE CAN:

Details of any meetings held and/or forthcoming:

Last meeting was held on 7/1/13 at Woking BC.

Details of any other events held and/or forthcoming:

SE CAN workshop – being held at Bracknell Forest Council, Berkshire on 23 May, 2013, 10 - 16.30.

- Visits to CHP plant and Energy Matters shop (run by Bracknell DC)
- Key speaker will be Debbie Cantley from Instagroup (tbc)
- Abdul Hussain, home energy officer at Wealden DC will give a presentation on the Green Deal Assessment journey from start to finish (with GD measures installed).
- Speaker: Cathy Foyle Park homes Chassis Services Ltd – who will give a presentation on insulating park home flooring - infor@parkhomeschassis.co.uk
- Workshop session will be from Lucy Pedler who has 24 years professional experience in the UK & USA in sustainable architecture practice and has created the Green Register in 2000 as part of her lifelong commitment to the promotion of sustainable building.
- We will end with a round-up from our sponsors.

Details of any current projects:

Most members are either working on their fuel poverty DECC funding projects and all awaiting ECO & Affordable Warmth funding.

5.6 SP for NW CAN:

There has been a “beauty parade” of utilities offering on the Green Deal and ECO. There is a conflicting morass of offers.

They have been working with Isotherm on hard to treat cavities.

There have been a lot of cavities filled with foam that shouldn't have been across the region. They have had to take out this out as it was causing damp problems etc.

5.7 DC for HECA East

There was a meeting on 2 March.

Their Memorandum of Understanding is still with the legal department but this will hopefully be approved by the next meeting in June. A Chair and Vice Chair will then be elected.

6. Guest: Amy Ingham, DECC's Fuel Poverty Team

6.1 The group introduced themselves to AI.

6.2 AI gave an overview of the current situation with regard to ECO.

ECO launched formally on 1 January 2013. There have been seven brokerage auctions to date. Four obligated suppliers have details of schemes they have already launched on their websites. Of the three obligations under ECO, the Carbon Emission Reduction Obligation (CERO) is the biggest with about £760m / year to support solid wall and hard to treat cavity insulation. There is also the Carbon Saving Community Obligation CSCO, worth about £190m / year to support areas of low income, and Affordable Warmth / Home Heating Cost Reduction Obligation (HHCRO), which is more of a focus for the fuel poverty programme, targeted to low income, vulnerable consumers, i.e. benefit recipients in private tenure, which is worth around £350m / year. The new Energy Savings Advisory referral service has also been launched to advise the public on where they can get appropriate types of support, specific to them, and to refer them to the energy suppliers for ECO Affordable Warmth. This service has made around 7,000 referrals to the suppliers, so far. There are now seven obligated utilities including First Utility, which is based in Warwick.

6.3 AI then asked the group if they had any questions about ECO or fuel poverty more generally.

6.4 Q: Some of the group had referred people to the advice line but many have come back to them saying they'd been confused by the advice they received. Some said “They didn't understand what I was talking about” and others had said that “they hadn't given them any information.” In one instance a potential GD customer got a list of surveys, he picked one and the survey was carried out. The surveyor then told him that there wasn't any service available. There were also problems with software crashing. He was charged about £100 but got it back because nothing further happened.

A: AI said that she could take back any specific examples to colleagues. Within AI's team they have a weekly three-hour session listing to the types of calls and provide feedback on improvements to the type of advice which is offered. The Green Deal team carry out a similar exercise as well. It is still in its early days though and the Green Deal and ECO are not always the easiest things to explain.

As part of the affordable warmth process, people are asked if they are in receipt of any qualifying benefits and if they are interested in boilers and insulation measures. They then verify this with the Department of Work and Pensions before passing them to the suppliers. Although this is a distinct process for ECO HHCRO because it doesn't interact with the GD process.

6.5 Q: When will DECC be responding to the definition of fuel poverty consultation, as they were originally due to respond on this by the end of February?

A: DECC are considering this and will be publishing a response and a strategy later in the year but AI couldn't yet give a timescale.

6.6 Q: Will DECC be consulting on its fuel poverty strategy and will a new definition of FP be introduced? FP strategy is different from the definition so would be good to consult.

6.7 A: This will depend on the outcome of the consultation exercise and what is in the strategy. If there are any new initiatives, these will probably be consulted on.

- 6.8 Q: Can we assume there will be a new definition of fuel poverty?
A: This will also depend on the results of the consultation exercise. AI offered to ask colleagues who are leading on this to provide an update.
The group agreed that this would be very useful and noted that it will be local government officers who will have to deliver the strategy so would be useful to talk to us.
- 6.9 Q: There are elements relating to health which should be considered with FP. Jamie Burrens has been working on this. Is there any update on this?
A: It would be best to speak to Jamie for an update on this.
- 6.10 Q: The Golden Rule is about payback of energy bills and doesn't include savings to the NHS etc. It is not possible to improve many properties because of the Golden Rule but this might change if other benefits and savings to the NHS, for example, were taken into account.
A: ECO is based on notional bill savings rather than carbon. Jamie has been working on modelling health benefits which are harder to quantify.
- 6.11 Q: Will DoH be asked to provide money?
A: AI would have to speak to colleagues on this.
- 6.12 Q: Poor housing can relate to poor health but it is often difficult getting the health service to see the link. Is there any way to get better support from the health service? It would be good to have funding targeting this. They can save lots of money and time by making referrals and providing funding to treat the houses, rather than treating people once they are in hospital. This is often to do with timescales – pills and operations act quickly but the benefits of environmental improvements are not always immediately obvious. PCTs would think in longer timescales but there is concern that the move to CCGs under NHS reform will lead to thinking in shorter timescales because they are running a business.
A: It is the challenge of prevention rather than cure. This is why vulnerable groups are targeted.
- 6.13 Q: There is still concern over those on the edge of the fuel poverty definition, but their incomes bar them from help. There is nothing for them.
A: the challenge of providing assistance is that the cost is offset against consumer bills. There is a finite level of support, which is why they target those who need it most.
- 6.14 Q: Is there any further clarity on measures that can be allowed under ECO?
A: Ofgem guidance was published three or four weeks ago. DECC will be looking to provide a quick guide at a higher level. ECO roadshow dates will be set soon.
- 6.15 Q: Since there is no direct treasury funding, everything has to be done very cost effectively and more expensive improvements are very unlikely to happen because of this. This is not particularly useful for helping the most vulnerable.
A: The offers that are emerging at the moment are mainly loft and cavity wall and boiler replacements, which is because these are the most cost effective. DECC is actively monitoring the types of consumers that are helped and works that are carried out.
- 6.16 Q: The Warm Front funding didn't last long. There is a real concern that utilities will hit their targets well before the end of the scheme. There could be a long gap of several months where people with broken boilers will have nowhere to go.
A: DECC will be getting monthly delivery data on ECO, to monitor how quickly suppliers are meeting targets. If there's a shortfall before March 2015, DECC will look at this then. CESP data was not monitored in this way.
- 6.17 Q: Installers were told to gear up for solid wall insulation (SWI) but now it seems that SWI is being avoided. There are a lot of installers that have gone bust or will do. There must be concern that SWI isn't happening.
A: Utilities will have to deliver SWI or hard-to-treat cavity insulation to meet carbon obligations. Other measures could then be available subject to these being delivered, so suppliers will need to deliver these first.
- 6.18 Q: All the low-hanging fruit had been taken. The industry was gearing up in a different direction and there are companies that are suffering from subsequent policy decisions. SWI is too expensive for most. Hard-to-treat includes things where scaffolding is needed, etc, not necessarily addressing FP. Utilities don't really want to do boilers even. Everything used to be free, now a GD loan is needed to do cavity and loft insulation. This is a big turn off for consumers. Only easy targets will be dealt with.
Utilities get the same bill savings from hard-to-treat cavities as they do for regular cavity walls so some are reducing installs to zero and looking for lofts and regular cavities. E.ON has slowed down on boilers installations but this is because they have done so many to start with and there needs to be a balance.
Whereas things used to be funded by Treasury, now utilities have to explain to funding to customers, which is hugely damaging. There have been lots of calls to councils from people who feel let down. They have been waiting on installations or boilers or have cleared out lofts and now they are receiving nothing.
A: There is potentially more value placed on boilers than insulation by consumers. They might be more forthcoming because of this. DECC is trying to encourage a whole house approach.

- Boilers will be repaired or replaced where eligible and insulation installed at the same time, where possible.
- 6.19 Q: Boilers are also popular because there has been a long winter and a gap since Warm Front ended. It was only when the eligibility criteria changed that Warm Front money wasn't spent, which made Warm Front look like it was under spending. The criteria for ECO is relaxed compared to Warm Front so the demand will be huge and targets will be met quickly. Also, many of the boilers installed under Warm Front have failed and will have to be scrapped.
 A: Some Warm Front boilers should be under guarantee.
 Q: The guarantee was for five years on the original installations but many have been replaced already and after that the guarantee was for two years. Companies also tend to pass buck, saying they were installed wrongly.
 A: The utilities seem to have been telling DECC the opposite, that the ECO criteria is too challenging.
 Q: That is utilities point of view they are bound to say that. More cost effective measures than loft and cavities are hard to find among people on benefits. Boilers are not so hard to find but why would utilities want to do them as they are expensive. Utilities are just looking for lofts and cavities. They couldn't find them under CESP so they won't now. The data says they are there but they can't be done as old people won't let you clear their lofts. Only two insulation jobs from the East Midlands region Warm Homes Health People Fund have gone to ECO, the rest have been boilers. The response from the project organisers was either a good job had previously been done finding everyone or the message is not getting across. Priority customers have already been picked up. Practically, the only possible new claimants are the ones who didn't want insulation when it was free.
- 6.20 Q: Carbon tax could be used. This was originally going to be the case, with a payment back from the CRCs but it was taken out of scheme.
- 6.21 Q: Could the data be flawed? It says there are a lot of cavities and lofts available for measures but they are not really there. Often they are there but there are too many problems e.g, when there is no damp proof course fibre can't be put in or the extent of disrepair might be too severe. They might be treatable with other solutions but they are more expensive. It is worrying that strategies are meant to help fuel poverty but this isn't happening.
- 6.22 A: Under CERT there was difficulty delivering against super priority groups and getting people to self-identify as being pension recipients. However, they might have been helped through other parts of the scheme which were not so easy to identify. Some measures could be done under ECO as utilities have to do other work before accessing more cost effective measure. AI said It was interesting to hear that E.ON have already done enough boilers.
 TC clarified that this was just for this year, but the fact that the yearly target had been met by March shows how easy it is to hit targets for boilers.
- 6.23 A: Suppliers are at different stages and a mix of Warm Front closing and the very cold winter has increased demand.
- 6.24 Q: It will be really easy to hit £350m target with boilers included. There could be a difficult time going forward. Will Feedback from roadshows, help determine whether DECC will still do the same next year or learn from it and make alterations.
 A: Legislation is set until March 2015. If we change things mid-scheme it ramps up the cost. There has been a move to potentially more expensive schemes. DECC is monitoring this.
- 6.25 Q: there might be a sudden rush for external wall insulation near the end of the scheme, once utilities realise that targets aren't reached near the end of the scheme. This needs looking at now as some work has been terrible and even dangerous.
- 6.26 A: DECC has only just published guidance. It is new and it is too soon to make changes. Time should be given for this but it is appreciated that DECC need to keep an eye on this.
- 6.27 Q: Lessons need to be learnt from CESP, where last minute work was a problem. Two years is not long. It is easy to see why it ends up being a last minute panic but this is really bad for the industry and for properties.
- 6.28 Q: The standard of SWI is often poor. In some cases internal wall insulation stops at the edge of fitted wardrobes, for example.
- 6.29 A: There should be something in the guidance which specifies how much of a wall needs to be done to comply.
- 6.30 Q: For fibre insulation, BRE says the fill is only 50% of that expected in use. Because of conservatories or other obstacles, for example, there is often just a small area available to insulate. There isn't a whole house approach. Allowing sporadic tackling of low hanging fruit is frustrating to LAs. There isn't a mechanism for reporting back the types of issues we see, and if we do report it then it is often ignored, partly because the people dealing with things move on. Feedback needs to be taken into account early enough in the process. There needs to be a mechanism to report on delivery issues and get together with utilities and installers.
- 6.31 A: DECC have built technical monitoring into the scheme. Ofgem will monitor but this can't be 100% and they have to strike a balance between cost and monitoring enough to get a sense of what is happening on the ground.

- 6.32 Q: It is difficult for local supply chain installers to understand how measures achieve carbon savings or what utilities are looking for. Small business could go out of business because they're not delivering what the utilities want. This was a problem under CESP. Often they don't understand what the utilities want and how carbon savings are offset. The local supply chain needs more support. Even some new properties have been built without cavity wall insulation. There is also a lack of understanding of Code 5. Some successful external wall insulation works have condensation problems because there is no one to advise the occupants on how to avoid this. There are no regional advice centres, despite feedback to DECC that they are preferred.
- 6.33 Q: It would be useful to know GD and ECO data by LA level. They know if the LA has done work but not if it's a utility has, for example. FiTS PV data is available at an LA level, and Warm Front data used to be at LA level. There shouldn't be any commercial sensitivity. It should be like PV data on Ofgem's website, so we can find out our own statistics. This could also show area where GD hasn't been taken up yet.
- 6.34 A: There has been one data publication so far. The first full report for ECO, on the ground, is due in June. AI will feed back these comments.
- 6.35 Q: Will there be any feedback on the DECC competitions?
A: DECC will be carrying out quite a big evaluation exercise on this. AI will check dates with colleagues as DECC is tendering currently.

7. AOB

- 7.1 There was no other business.

8. Date of next meeting

- 8.1 The next meeting will be held on 11 July 2013 at Camden Town Hall, London.