

CAN AGM and Executive Meeting Minutes

10 April 2014 @ 10:30 am
London Borough of Camden Town Hall

Present:

Darsh Chauhan	(DCh)	CAN National Secretariat & Vice Chair, East Midlands CAN
Tina Cowley	(TC)	E.ON
Jo Gill	(JG)	Chair, London HECA Forum
Paul Hinsley	(PH)	Chair, HECA East
John Kolm-Murray	(JKM)	National CAN Deputy Chair
Rob Leeson	(RL)	CAN National Secretariat
Karen Lond	(KL)	Chair, East Midlands CAN
Paul Maplethorpe (Chair)	(PM)	National CAN Chair & Chair of East Pennine CAN
Neil Short	(NS)	Chair, South West CAN
Carol White	(CW)	Chair, South East CAN
Guest, arriving at lunch:		
Marcus Brooks	(MB)	DECC

Apologies:

David Colbourne	(DCo)	Chair, North West CAN
Oliver Myers	(OM)	CAN Representative and Policy Advisor
Steve Martin		Chair, CAN Cymru Housing
Rachel Jones		Chair, West Midlands CAN

1. Welcome and Introductions

PM welcomed the group and introductions were made.

2. (Re) Election of Chair, Deputy Chair

- 2.1 DCh 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 DCh asked if there were any further nominations. No additional nominations were put forward.
- 2.4 PM was, therefore, re-elected to the role of National Chair and JKM was re-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.
- 2.7 PM thanked group for continued support.

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 opted for a full audit report this year.
- 3.2 PM signed the accounts documents in his capacity as Director of the UK Home Energy Conservation Ltd, which have been prepared by Accountants MGC Hayles. These documents will be filed with Companies House.
- 3.3 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.
- 3.4 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.

3.5 DC provided an update on the CAN finances. UK HECA Ltd made a small operating profit over the period 2012/13. E.ON's Sponsorship has been essential to continuing the National CAN Secretariat services.

Action: RL to circulate draft regional update when available.

4. Dates and venues of 201/15 Executive meetings and AGM

4.1 Dates have been confirmed for next year's CAN Executive meetings and rooms booked with OM in Camden Town Hall as follows: 10 July 2014, 9 October 2014, 15 January 2015 and 16 April 2015 (AGM) and 16 July 2015. These dates are all Thursdays.

5. AOB

5.1 There was no other business.

CAN Executive Meeting Minutes

1. Minutes from previous meeting and matters arising

1.1 There were no amendments suggested for the previous Executive meeting minutes.

Matters Arising from previous minutes (9 January 2014):

- 1.2 (Item 1.2): DCo has now sent the briefing note around the Executive
- 1.3 (Item 1.7): RL has sent email on pre-1919 properties. JKM has received an update from DECC. DECC want to make exceptions for pre-1919 properties.
- 1.4 RL asked if the decision to upload regional reports to the CAN web forum was putting people off sending them in, as he had not received many this time. Nobody said they had been put off by this.
- 1.5 EP CAN has sponsorship for two years with Tadea.
- 1.6 RL will forward invites to EP CAN and NW CAN meetings and continue to send updates to NE CAN members

2. Sponsor's Update

- 2.1 Since the autumn statement, E.ON has been looking at continuing under the new rules for ECO. Some contracts have had to be renegotiated such as changing the mix of measures, keeping the spending levels the same.
- 2.2 There are minor changes to CERO with three people leaving E.ON's team.
- 2.3 There has been a minor move around with staff on HHCRO.
- 2.4 E.ON are concerned about the size of customer contributions, as cost of schemes for HHCRO are very low.
- 2.5 E.ON has withdrawn switching stands, meaning they now have no face-to-face sales activity. Marketing is now through direct marketing literature etc, TV ads (although these are expensive), Word of mouth and telesales.
- 2.6 EON is still doing as much work as possible in communities and is working with
 - Nottingham Royal Concert Hall. Changing lighting to LED, saving £16,000 a year - equivalent to 104 tonnes of carbon.
 - Port of Liverpool which has had solar panels and CHP installed and ordered electric vehicles.
 - The Low-Carbon Task Force in Devon, community energy centres, providing heating for 3,500 homes, every home will have E.ON connection and smart metering there.
- 2.7 It was asked whether when the Warm Home Discount will be reopening this year? TC said there was no set date but it is imminent.
- 2.8 It was asked if solar was still a possibility. This is not a key activity, more a one-off.

3. Secretariat update

- 3.1 The London CAN Conference went successfully and was attended by over 100 delegates, who all gave good feedback.
- 3.2 The Conference report has been published in the latest CAN Magazine.
- 3.3 At the London Conference there was a large turnout from LA's, including smaller LA's.
- 3.4 The next National Training-day Conference is in Manchester on 9 May at the Park Inn hotel. It was originally to be held at the Manchester Mechanics but this was changed as they received a block booking covering CAN's conference date and it was felt it would be unfair to hold them to it.
- 3.5 Manchester Victoria Metrolink Station is closed during the Conference but there is another Metrolink station nearby.
- 3.6 The July Conference will take place in Taunton or Bristol. RL and DC will check out venues.
- 3.7 The Coventry Conference is booked for 7 October at RICOH and will include the CAN award ceremony although this might be during the day without a Gala Dinner this time. This is to be discussed with E.ON. There was a lot of good feedback from awards last year.
- 3.8 The latest CAN Magazine has been published electronically and hardcopies are currently being printed.
- 3.9 The CAN accounts are good as they show a small profit. The Secretariat has been chasing up debts and this is paying off. The accounts will be submitted to Companies House.
- 3.10 The Chairs Away Day was good but still waiting for notes from Colin.

- 3.11 The annual report will be included in the summer edition of the CAN Magazine
- 3.12 DC and RL had a meeting with E.ON last week. CAN are contractually obliged to offer E.ON sponsorship continuation. E.ON has circulated the proposal and will come back to us in two to three weeks.
- 3.13 The current sponsorship ends in September but the final E.ON sponsored conference is planned for 7 October due to a clash with the original date. CAN prefers this date as long as E.ON are okay with it. If E.ON are unable to continue then we wouldn't contract a new sponsor until the October conference is over.

4. Representation, consultations and policy

Public Health:

- 4.1 JKM reported that the NICE committee have completed their guidance. They are planning to consult on this from 13 June to 25 July. JKM said he couldn't say too much but suggests we should be pleasantly surprised with the content. It was influenced by York University, NEA and others. There will be some things that are missing or not appropriate but there has to be some compromise.
- 4.2 Their final meeting will be in September to consider responses and guidelines will then be published.
- 4.3 They are proposing a cold weather single extreme temperatures plan, although that is a working title. They considered whether the issue could be weather rather than temperatures, to include flooding etc but they wanted to focus on temperatures. There should be a consultation on this at some point.

Big Energy Saving Network Meeting

- 4.4 DCo attended the Big Energy Saving Network Meeting on Tuesday, although he was not present to give feedback. PH heard that the first phase has ended and there would be a phase 2 but this has not been confirmed. There is concern where it will go, as it seems like a dead end.

Warm Front:

- 4.5 RL has emailed DECC proposing that the Environmental Regulations 2004 provide a reason to share the Warm Front data in the absence of a requirement under the Home Energy Conservation Act guidance and that this, along with a data sharing agreement, could allow them to share the data with LAs. This was suggested by the group at the last Executive meeting. RL has not yet received a response from DECC on this.

DECC Domestic Private Rented Sector Working Group:

- 4.6 There has been an updated version of the regulations released and questions were asked in parliament last week.
- 4.7 As agreed with the Executive via email, CAN has put its name to a joint statement, signed by 28 organisations, sent by the Association of the Conservation of Energy to the Prime Minister and other relevant ministers. The statement expresses concerns about the delays to implementing a minimum standard in the private rented sector and ask for a commitment that this standard should be set as a minimum to EPC band 'E'.

NIA Solid Wall Insulation Group

- 4.8 CAN has been invited to take a place on NIA's Solid Wall Insulation Group. PM will take up the role. The group has yet to have a meeting but PM will give feedback once this meeting has taken place.

Annual Work Programme:

Responding to DECC's Consultations on the Changes to ECO and their Fuel Poverty Strategy are a priority. The ECO Consultation deadline is 16 April and the FP strategy consultation is expecting to be out before Easter on 24 March. Rita Wadley will be speaking at CAN's Manchester conference.

Last year, CAN focussed on links with public health and are making good inroads.

End Fuel Poverty Coalition Affiliation Fee

4.9 JKM has been asked to be a trustee and is unable to say too much at the moment.

Follow-up from Chairs' away day and ECO consultation

- 4.10 National CAN intend to respond to DECC's ECO consultation. The response will be drawn from the afternoon's discussion with Marcus Brooks, and RL's notes from the Chair's Away Day as Colin Anderson has not yet come back to us with his notes on this. PH will try to contact Colin Anderson and ask him to contact the National Secretariat.
- 4.11 Most of the points on the ECO consultation were covered in the Chairs Away Day notes.
- 4.12 So far, Ofgem and NEA have responded. Some CAN / HECA regions will also be responding individually.

Off Gas Grid Working Group Meeting

- 4.13 Stakeholder input was mentioned at the Off Gas Grid Working Group Meeting that KL attended.
- 4.14 The key thing for people on the ground is the top-up funding issue. This is stopping work happening and funding is sought for top ups at local level.
- 4.15 We feel we shouldn't be asking for top ups and E.ON are looking to reduce this. This defeats the object and is the only thing that helps fuel poor directly. If it is not free we should have more clarity about what is being offered.
- 4.16 PM's Local MP has surgeries and people are getting caught out as they are often asked for several hundred pounds. There needs to be a proper pricing structure.
- 4.17 E.ON insists that, at the point of the technical survey, a full quote is generated and it's only if the extra work is not absolutely necessary then the option to continue and pay goes to the customer. E.ON actively look for additional grants etc, available in local communities to pay the difference. There is an argument that this process is time consuming and costs are attached, so why not just fund it in the first place.
- 4.18 It was asked how much the average boiler replacement costs? This depends on the installer and can be up to £2,500. Some utilities say they are not paying more than £1,400. E.ON will pay for full central heating systems, if necessary, but this is difficult to balance with keeping costs down. This is because it's a carbon reduction scheme pretending to be fuel poverty scheme.
- 4.19 How could ECO be changed to make it more accessible to sparsely populated rural areas?
- 4.20 Could reduce the 'rural' definition which is based on ordnance survey.
- 4.21 DECC says the first year has been successful. Two week ago DECC said they expect to target more off-gas areas.
- 4.22 How will they do this?
- 4.23 People still pay for ECO on fuel bills but never get work in their areas and this is exacerbating their fuel poverty. Individuals do qualify for ECO but, in such a rural area, they are ignored.

ECO discussion prior to Marcus Brooks' arrival

- 4.24 Because of the changes to ECO, utilities have to reassess everything. We are dependent on signing contracts, which take forever and this is all wasted as we will have to restart the procurement process. Even with the contracts in place they are having to renegotiate.
- 4.25 DECC will not admit that GD is failing, let alone ECO. How can LAs put a business case to management when it can't guarantee anything. Will it change again?
- 4.26 We are saving less than a pound a week off energy bills because of cuts to ECO. It's destabilised the market and contracts aren't even being honoured.
- 4.27 London already lost out on CESP but some boroughs were lucky to sign contracts in time for the cuts to ECO, otherwise they would have lost out.
- 4.28 Procurement is costly and time consuming and losing LAs millions of pounds. Is DECC aware of the timelines of LA procurement and is there anything they could do to support LAs and make procurement easier?
- 4.29 DECC can't do anything and can't even give us stability. The only option is to ask DECC to speak to DCLG about LA procurement.
- 4.30 The GD Communities Fund was meant to help but it is a poisoned chalice and many are staying away from it.
- 4.31 DECC are selling GD stats as a success, without any evidence, saying people have done the measures without GD finance.
- 4.32 Apparently the day that the GD communities funding was announced, GD staff were sent a letter telling them they needed to reapply for their jobs.
- 4.33 The election next year could change things again. They should not be dramatically changing schemes in this way.
- 4.34 PM asked if anyone had the impression that GD Assessors are in short supply and if people are having to get assessors to travel across regions? Others were not aware of a problem with this.
- 4.35 CW and JG received more money than they asked for from GD Communities fund.

- 4.36 Reporting was meant to be monthly, then it was quarterly then six monthly. Reporting could end up being just as loose as for the FP fund a few years ago.
- 4.37 There is an issue with accuracy of EPCs data.
- 4.38 Photos of work are not needed for EPCs and they are audited every quarter on just one job. It can almost be guaranteed that it will be the last EPC they have carried out that will be audited, so they can play the system as they will know within a week when the audit will be.
- 4.39 EPC quality can be good, bad or indifferent. EPCs do not often show measures such as cavity wall insulation that has already been carried out. Lots of assessors are deliberately bending the rules.
- 4.40 It would be interesting to ask MB what DECC want from next round of HECA reporting and
- 4.41 DECC think ECO delivers better than CERT or Warm Front against reducing fuel poverty.
- 4.42 EON are still installing boilers. Most utilities are a lot further behind but British Gas have just stopped everything. It's not clear how they are getting away with this as they still have targets.
- 4.43 It seems as if some bidders are not sure whether they will be able to spend their GD Communities money because of the changes to ECO. Those that received funding were meant to be ready to go but it's not clear if this is the case. Some areas will never get any help from ECO and GD. Some people don't meet the golden rule because they can't even afford to put their heating on at the moment.

Actions:

PH to contact Colin Anderson and ask him to provide his notes from the Chairs Away day.

RL to put the Fuel Poverty consultation on the agenda for July's Executive meeting.

TC to find out if there is an opportunity for EON to work with LAs on collective switching.

5. Regional Updates

5.1 PM for East Pennine CAN

The last meeting was in February. The NEA announced they had no sponsorship in the region, so it will be some time until the next NEA forum meeting. CAN will do their own meetings as they have sponsorship. PM asked for updates from members.

Sheffield got hit with ECO procurement and Rotherham has deferred doing anything until after the consultation period as utilities don't know what they can offer. The Barnsley's scheme ground to a halt because of funding issues.

5.2 London HECA

December was the last meeting, so there are no individual borough updates this time but the picture is similar to East Pennine CAN. Some boroughs will be retendering in April.

Harrow and Hillingdon's were the only successful GD Communities funding bids. GLA have not been successful but have secured funding from Europe for around £2.8 million over 2 to 3 years. GLA are currently tendering decentralised energy schemes.

London HECA wrote a letter to Boris Johnson regarding a budget amendment calling for funding for a pan-London advice network. They have not had a response from the mayor yet.

Everyone has been complaining about ECO.

5.3 East Midlands CAN

The last meeting was at Ashfield Council, on 6 March.

E.ON gave an update on how to interpret changes to ECO.

Ashfield Council gave a presentation on ECO/GD and were successful with their GD Communities funding bid. It seems that if LAs were successful bidding the first time they were successful again.

Flourish provide the Secretariat for the region, therefore they also presented.

The next meeting will be 10 June in Grantham.

The Collective switching projects have gone through. There has been disappointing numbers of registrations but switching levels are high. KL's district saw a 30% switching level. Conversion rate is over 27%. The average saving is £162 per year in Lincolnshire for all registrants. The region has been looking for sponsorship but has not found any yet.

KL Will try to get an update on GD communities and email her report to RL.

5.4 South West CAN

The last forum meeting was in December, where they discussed ECO targeting some post codes in Super Output Areas that are not recognised. The switching scheme has been successful.

The next SW CAN meeting is on 23 April and will have speakers on Smart Grids / Smart Metering and public health.

Bournemouth secured funding to work with public health people. GPs have pledged money for topping up ECO schemes.

Working with NEA was very good on engaging communities on bill management sessions, how to switch, and understanding bills etc. They are regularly identifying people who can save £200 to £300, but whether the processes is quick and whether they are actually switching and actually making the savings is unknown.

Cornwall and Stroud are starting loan schemes as an alternative to GD.

North Somerset affordable warmth group regularly holds events.

Swindon have a good home check scheme and mailed out to COPD patients. They had to find the funding but they had a good response because the letter was from GPs.

The region's sponsorship hasn't run out yet.

Emailed report:

Name: Neil Short

CAN Position: Chair

Details of any meetings held and/or forthcoming:

- The South West CAN is sponsored by British Gas.
- The Last Forum meeting was held on 3 December 2013. Items covered included: Big Energy Saving Network, ECO targeting, Swindon Home Check scheme and the NEA Warm homes campaign.
- The next forum meeting is to be held in Taunton on 23 April 2014. Agenda includes Smart Grids and Public Health action to tackle health inequalities.

Details of any current projects:

North Somerset Council:

Affordable Warmth group looking to hold safe and warm events, such as electric blanket testing

Bournemouth Borough Council:

Working with Public Health and local GPs to fund an insulation scheme to top-up ECO

Stroud District Council:

Agreeing final details of forthcoming loan scheme

National Energy Action:

Programmes funded by DECC have enabled bill management sessions in Torbay and Bournemouth and work with health and well-being boards in Bournemouth and Poole

Cornwall Council

Loan scheme currently operating

Swindon Borough Council

Mailout to patients with COPD and heart conditions got a good response for information on a variety of topics, including health, benefit checks and falls

5.5 South East CAN

SE CAN held their last meeting on 18 March, at which Matt Cotton from the National Energy Foundation presented.

The next meeting is on 5 June, which will also be the AGM. There will be a presentation on Solent GD for all of Hampshire. CW and three or four others have GD Communities funding. Most other updates were from people waiting to hear whether they were successful or not.

Emailed report:

Name: Carol White

CAN Position: Chair

Details of any meetings held and/or forthcoming:

Last meeting held on: 18/03/14

Next meeting is on 05/06/14 – To be held at GreenWatt Way, Holding a workshop and tour, plus incorporating AGM.

Matters Arising: Cliff Darby is stepping down as Vice chair.

Presentations:

- Part L 2013 Building Regulations - An overview by Matt Cotton MSc BEng CEng (Technical Director, National Energy Foundation)
- Solent Green Deal – Hampshire-wide scheme developed from the “Pioneer Places” Fund. Project managed by Gill Flaherty from Portsmouth City Council. Carol White presented.

Details of any current projects:

Dan Hewitt Centrica/British Gas

Willing to discuss with partners looking for ECO and CERO offers

Ian Gough Wokingham Borough Council

Corporate stock work ongoing

Joanna Faul South Bucks District Council

Awaiting to hear from DECC £2.5 million; providing advice; part of Green deal consortium launch June 2014.

Francesca Nesbitt Spelthorne Borough Council

Awaiting to hear from DECC

Graciela Melitsko Reading Borough Council

Awaiting to hear from DECC; affordable warmth network is active; unsuccessful with HHCRO; doing better with Eon – some 90+ residents waiting for boilers; trial with English heritage how to make it insulation heritage compatible

Michelle Cheeseman West Sussex Councils

Sussex Energy Saving Partnership – customer offer will be firmed up by Spring working with Carillion. Working on HHCRO – set up scheme but having to fund shortfalls. Has start up funding towards this – residents told 100% funding then being asked to pay £1200 working with installer in Hove; installed a handful under HHCRO 40/50 referrals pending; will add insulation into it. Schools programme being delivered

Susie Phillips Winchester Action on Climate Change

Just finished promoting ECO, able to pay boiler replacements; not achieved much. Moving towards solar Green Deal. Working to identify properties which are off gas and upgrading heating system.

Dipna Pattni Gravesham Borough Council

Two demo homes completed under pioneer places fund; 1000 pv installation social housing scheme; pilot homes warm homes 200 properties to be completed; mainly CISCO and cero. HTT cavities on 2 social housing block confirming funding. Collective switching campaign. Just drafted first fuel poverty

strategy. Looking at funding for eco top ups – good connection with public health team at Kent for opportunities; Providing fuel poverty update to councillors

Stephanie Beggs East Hampshire District Council

Assessors Green Deal Assessors are being trained; awaiting for DECC bid outcome; have boiler scrap page scheme; interest free loan scheme; 4k new homes being developed and considering how to supply energy to their homes; looking at setting up a multi utility services company.

Amanda Martin Dover District Council

Dover looking at system built properties to upgrade with SWI; project at early stages with Amy (know in the air) using cashback scheme, putting funding for social housing; will help private sector vulnerable householders to get affordable heat in the area.

Cati Smith Guildford Borough Council

They have two bids with DECC regarding mobile homes & private sector housing
Thermal imaging course proved popular buying 2nd camera. Running food bank/fuel poverty workshop in coming weeks. Looking at Southampton social housing

Hazel Hill Bracknell Forest Council

Awarded DECC money for £1.8 million; focusing on one area Bracknell and Sandhurst; still awaiting for final confirmation Ts and Cs. They have announced it to press.

Carol White Gosport

Waiting for DECC; in partnership Southampton, Eastleigh, Portsmouth 600 home identified SWI. £2.3 million. Energy expert working with on CISCO areas – scaffolding required on properties; scaffolding costs not available post April. Collective switching just finished. Warmer Homes Healthy People funding money left over, public health put £50k in to top up.

Sara Winnington Action Surrey

Action Surrey awaiting DECC bid; undertaking housing stock condition survey with BRE; looking at social housing project with some local authorities; ECO funding through installers presently suspended; highly vulnerable customers been let down and trying to find funds to assist them as some now have boilers which have broken down.

5.6 HECA East

The region had its last meeting in February, which was a joint meeting with NEA. Even the NEA chair left for HECA part of meeting in afternoon so no cross-fertilisation. The next regional meeting will be in July, with Suffolk emergency planners and housing providers to present.

There are a lot of people waiting for the results of ECO consultation in the region. The switching scheme has seen 4,000 registrations, the last confirmed number of switches is 1,260. On average £160 to £190 has been saved per year. This has been done online so far, and will be doing libraries in August. The key for the region is raising awareness.

Emailed Report

Name: Paul Hinsley

CAN Position: Chair

Details of any meetings held and/or forthcoming:

HECA East's next meeting will be held on 17 June 2014

Working title: "Vulnerable households, energy supply and extreme weather - What happens when the lights go out."

Provisional programme:

- The role of emergency planning – Andy Osman, Head of Emergency Planning
- The National Grid response – National Grid speaker
- The Distribution Network Operator response – UK Power Networks speaker
- A housing provider perspective – Amanda Ashley-Smith, Estuary Housing

20 minutes per speaker. Break after UKPN. Then Ashley followed by a workshop on how we can improve the communications between professionals.

Target audience:

Energy efficiency Officers

Housing Officers

Sustainability Officers

Social Workers

Target sectors:

Public authorities

Registered housing providers

Geography:

East of England covering Suffolk, Norfolk, Essex, Herts, Beds, Unitaries in locality.

Details of any current projects:

Suffolk Area:

Warm Homes Healthy People - Continuing project for third year, despite no formal funding stream from the Department of Health. We have sourced funding from a variety of streams, including engaging with the newly formed Public Health Suffolk.

The project employs a full time project officer and a Health Liaison Officer, who is developing links and referrals from all areas of the health service. During this winter the project has visited 328 homes, assisted 275 homes with fuels payments totalling £28k, and identified and implemented hundreds of energy efficiency upgrades, including lofts, cavities, EWI and boilers.

Suffolk Energy Action - Following a local government tendering exercise, Suffolk selected an ECO partner and a Green Deal partner in December 2013 to promote and deliver both programmes. Promotional materials were inserted in every council tax bill across the county and Climate Energy surveyors are now busy visiting homes. To date contact has been made with over 500 homes interested in energy efficiency upgrades.

DECC Community Energy Fund - Suffolk has just been awarded £5.5 million from DECC to deliver green deal plans through a street by street approach and by working with private sector landlords. The award was only confirmed last week so we are now in the process of designing the delivery mechanism.

Essex Area:

Community Energy Switch - A successful Community switching auction was held for residents throughout Essex. Over 1260 accepted cheaper quotes provided by iChoosr. A key element of the scheme has been the promotion of energy saving and efficiency measures.

Details of any other events held and/or forthcoming:

- Colchester Green Open Homes throughout May (poster attached)
- Organising 'Healthy Homes, Healthy People' event to be held in Colchester, at the Western Homes Stadium on 9th October 14 – need 3 x sponsors please see attached
- Colchester looking at Power Networks funding for new project with partner En-form (Colchester based Environmental Charity)
- Launch of Colchester's next Big Community Switch will be on the 15th April – 9th June 14

Details of any current projects:

- Colchester based Community Energy project in early stages of discussion but looking to help with viability study for this over the coming months.
- Rapid charger installation on strategic network near Colchester A12 (part of the ECC led initiative)
- Colchester BC are hoping to get Housing Stock survey updated so we can identify focus project areas.

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

A consolidated response on behalf of all HECA East members has been submitted to DECC on the ECO Consultation.

6. Guest: Marcus Brooks, DECC

- 6.1 The group introduced themselves to MB
- 6.2 MB gave a presentation on the Future of the Energy Company Obligation Consultation. See presentation slides for details.

Questions:

- 6.3 Q: Boilers and cavity and loft insulation should be free under ECO however customers are asked to contribute to essential extras. For example, having to be part L compliant means that customers have to pay for TRVs. There is a lot of time involved in finding funding for this, we would like to see this addressed.
- 6.4 A: Some companies will fund this but not all. It is something DECC are looking at.
- 6.5 Q: There are a lot of boiler replacements, but we should look at a whole house approach. Is the data being recorded as to what other measures the properties need? Sometimes the work is already done.
- 6.6 A: This isn't recorded.
- 6.7 Q: Customers are less than happy with the amount of paperwork.
- 6.8 A: This goes with the simplification measures we are considering. Sometimes people are making things more complicated than they need to be, under Ofgem's requirements. DECC are looking at how the energy companies can simplify and adopt a standardised set of reporting templates and reducing the amount of information companies are requiring without changing the rules.
- 6.9 TC: Disagreed with this. Because they have just had an Ofgem audit, the amount of additional details E.ON now need have increased, for example asking for marriage certificates.
- 6.10 A: It will hopefully be much clearer in the future what is required so paperwork should be cut down.
- 6.11 Q: How will they incentivise work to off-gas properties?
- 6.12 A: With scoring uplift.
- 6.13 Q: Why not just set a target to deliver off-gas grid properties. It costs more and they go for the cheaper option of gas boilers. They could still get their measures though gas boilers.
- 6.14 A: At some point, with the uplift, it will become attractive and it should be already.
- 6.15 Q: It's not, and the fact that there are hardly any measures installed reflects this.
- 6.16 A: We do set out a sub target but they tend to introduce complexity and cost, which is a key consideration.
- 6.17 Q: It won't increase the total amount spent, it will always be more expensive.
- 6.18 A: We are hoping to achieve the same result with scoring uplift.
- 6.19 Q: There is evidence that providers are walking away from rural areas because the properties are more expensive to provide measures for.
- 6.20 A: There is a CISCO rural areas target.
- 6.21 Q: Price of carbon is down at 6 pence which means that a lot of contracts that had reached the signing stage have been lost.
- 6.22 A: They are not making any changes to HHCRO, which is a success story. A lot are close to the target already.
- 6.23 Q: We are worried that there will be a need and a demand but are targets reached?
- 6.24 A: The customers intended to benefit under the target, will do so. Obviously CERO has been cut and this has had an effect.
- 6.25 Q: Is this a concern?
- 6.26 A: It was taken into consideration when the changes were made.
- 6.27 Q: The qualities of EPCs are not good in many case, some see this as a serious issue.
- 6.28 A: There is a need to have some form of assessment for qualities of assessors. That is a separate issue. No system will ever be perfect but we look at what we can do to improve it where we can.
- 6.29 Q: Is ECO doing better than CERT?
- 6.30 A: What do you mean by better? They were very successful schemes and therefore there are very few loft and cavities left. Successes can be measured by whether companies meet targets and this will not be known until the deadlines. In CERT SPG there were problems and ECO might be more successful in helping vulnerable customers.

- 6.31 Q: HHRCRO has vastly reduced on what was achieved by Warm Front and CERT. part of the HHRCRO budget was effectively robbed when the government realised that GD wouldn't work for solid wall properties and HHRCRO targets were reduced down at the beginning to prop up GD.
- 6.32 A: CSCO and HHRCRO are targeted at vulnerable customers. This accounts for about 60% of target.
- 6.33 Q : If a boiler doesn't have a 10 year guarantee then they shouldn't be fitting it, if fitting it for vulnerable customers
- 6.34 A: Boilers should last 10 years but guarantees can be lower.
- 6.35 Q: It's an expensive item, many are available with a 10 year guarantee.
- 6.36 Q: It costs more to fit an oil boiler than gas. What about encouragement for things like ASHP GSHP?
- 6.37 A: RHI additional support is available which works well with ECO on this.
- 6.38 Q: CERO was intended to make SWI insulation happen on big scale so why move away from that and allow carbon savings through other means.
- 6.39 A: This was driven by cost concerns is the simple answer. The Government is entitled to change its mind. In an age of austerity it's right that the government should look at options to help reduce bills.
- 6.40 Q: In a case study where ECO EWI insulation was installed prior to December, doing like-for-like fuel-bill assessment we are putting in £60 a week, overall saving £460 per year, so £50 to them is not a great deal of money and those who didn't receive SWI before changes are pretty cheesed off. Particularly those with feed-meters who don't get a bill anyway.
- 6.41 A: Consumers ultimately pay for ECO and the government has taken the view that the balance at this time lies in supporting customers in reducing their bills.
- 6.42 Q: does the government realise the savings from SWI to families in deprivation?
- 6.43 A: Yes, there are immense benefits from this insulation and it needs to be done at some point on a huge scale. The question is when, and how, you do it.
- 6.44 Q: Cutting down the target wasn't the answer. In reality, there was about four months available for installations after people were skilled up and a lot of SMEs are now out of work.
- 6.45 A: There are a lot of benefits but also a lot of concern over consumer bills.
- 6.46 Q: This is a very short-term view. Fuel prices will continue to rise but what will you do if not? It's a bad U-turn and a bad idea. Properties are also consuming energy too and we're supposed to be cutting down energy use.
- 6.47 A: There is the £540m addition funding going into energy efficiency, much of which is targeted at LAs. £4,000 on cashback for SWI, so there is quite a lot of additional money.
- 6.48 Q: Most of this funding is going to those who aren't the most vulnerable. It was all about GD which isn't about vulnerable people in FP. £50 won't make much difference to them if they are paying huge fuel bills because their homes aren't energy efficient. People who don't mind if they take a loan out are the ones that benefit.
- 6.49 Q: One property in Scotland in a rural area qualifies but no one will go and do it.
- 6.50 A: There is no right to ECO. it's an obligation on companies to meet their target. It could be argued for a right but that would be a very different scheme from what we have now. Looking to the future, ECO goes to 2017 but we could have a very different scheme after that and there is a debate to be had on how future schemes can be targeted to help vulnerable people.

7. AOB

One or two companies have funding to put free charging points into peoples' homes for electric cars.

8. Date of next meeting

8.1 The next meeting will be held on 10 July 2014 at Camden Town Hall, London.