

CAN Executive Meeting Minutes

18 October 2012 @ 10:30 am
London Borough of Camden Town Hall

Present:

Colin Anderson (Chair)	(CA)	CAN National Chair & Chair, South West CAN
Abigail Burrige	(AB)	LGA
David Colbourne	(DCo)	Chair, North West CAN
Nigel Dewbery	(ND)	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	(PM)	Chair, East Pennine CAN
Oliver Myers	(OM)	CAN Representative and Policy Advisor
Carol White	(CW)	Acting Chair, South East CAN

Apologies:

Darsh Chauhan	(DC)	CAN National Secretariat & Vice Chair, East Midlands CAN
Crispin Jones		E.ON
Steve Ives		DECC

Welcome and Introductions

CA welcomed the group and introductions were made.

OM and AB to join the meeting after lunch.

1. Minutes from previous meeting and matters arising

1.1 The minutes of the Executive meeting on 12/07/2012 were approved as a true record.

Matters Arising from 12/07/12 minutes:

1.2 CAN's response on the HECA guidance was sent to DECC and circulated to the Executive.

1.3 A letter has been sent to Climate Energy thanking them for their sponsorship on behalf of the Executive.

1.4 DC is looking into the Executive training day and has included some proposals in his Secretariat Report which RL forwarded to the Executive prior to the meeting.

Based on previous discussions DC has proposed the following:

"We are aiming to hold the Chairs Training Day in February 2013 in London. We are likely to use either the Directory for Social Change or National Council of Voluntary Organisations. They are both close to Kings Cross and St Pancras stations.

As requested, the day will be in two parts. The first part will focus on the network and the aims and objectives and how the network can best support members. The second part will look at the opportunities with the Green Deal, HECA etc.

We have had two potential facilitators: Peter Chisnall from Climate Energy or Julia Barratt from Wilmot Dixon.

Once we have a firm idea of dates, number of people attending and the focus of the day then we will be able to invite quotes and select the best provider."

The group felt that Julia Barratt would not be an appropriate facilitator as she is from a main-stream housing developer.

Peter Woodward, a professional, independent facilitator based in Coventry and Helena Poldervaart were suggested.

There were no objections to using Peter Chisnall as a facilitator if the two suggestions turned out not to be viable

The group would prefer a date in January rather than February, particularly since HECA reports are due in March. It was suggested it might be an option to swap the date with the next Executive meeting.

- 1.5 The Scottish Green Deal paper recommended by Hilary Tanner at the last Executive meeting has been forwarded to the Network.
- 1.6 Steve Ives was also invited but was not available to attend and sent his apologies. AB will be arriving after lunch to represent the LGA.

Action: DC to contact Peter Woodward and Helena Podervaart for quotes and suggest dates.

2. Sponsorship update

- 2.1 The National Carbon Action Network is now sponsored by E.ON. We have signed a two-year contract starting at the beginning of October 2012.
- 2.2 ND is Head of Obligation at E.ON which has a remit covering CESP, CERT, Warm Homes Discount and ECO. Crispin Jones will be the usual attendee at the Executive meetings on behalf of E.ON. Jon Kirby, E.ON's Carbon Savings Manager and will also be working closely with CAN.
- 2.3 E.ON feel that LA officers will play a big role in the delivery of ECO across the industry and they want to make sure that there is a high level of communication and education with LA officers on ECO. E.ON see this as a key avenue for delivery.
- 2.4 RL confirmed that the sponsorship should cover the main requirements of National CAN as opposed to CAN's previous sponsorship contract where there was a shortfall in the budget which was made up for in other ways. ND said that if CAN required any more funding for anything that would be of benefit to CAN and E.ON then please let them know.

3. DECC Fuel Poverty Consultation

- 3.1 The morning of the meeting, William Baker of Consumer Focus had sent RL a draft of their proposals for changes to the Hills fuel poverty measure that they will be discussing at their seminar on 31 October. OM has agreed to attend this meeting to represent CAN's views on this. RL has forwarded this to the group.
- 3.2 The changes proposed by the document seem to capture the problem of FP better than the original Hills measure. However, from a first reading of the documents, it looks as if the proposed changes would require more details to be known about a household before it can be determined whether or not they are in fuel poverty, i.e. household size and dwelling size rather than just property type, although the proposals would need to be looked at in more detail to determine whether this is the case. This is something which could be clarified at the seminar.
- 3.3 CA felt that Professor Hills' work was very detailed and a lot of modelling had been done. A large number of options for the measure were worked through and rejected, which is why CA is always slightly concerned when alternatives are proposed which Professor Hills' team will almost certainly have already considered and rejected.
- 3.4 Each of the regional representative were asked by CA to give their thoughts on the consultation proposals and briefly summarise what was happening in their region on this.
- 3.5 Islington plan to send a response. Speaking to other Boroughs, they are much of a similar view and it might be that they will be submitting a combined response. There are certain things about the Hills' proposals that they find problematic. What they do welcome is the recognition that the problem of fuel poverty in London is a lot higher than previously believed. Islington has gone from the second lowest to the second highest area of fuel poverty as housing costs have been taken into account for the first time. They believe the estimated fuel poverty rate of around 14% is still too low but at least there is progress.
They accept the low-income side of the definition, however, they have a problem with the belief that an average bill is reasonable when bills in this country are too high because of poor energy efficiency.
- 3.6 The Hills definition will mean that fuel poverty will essentially become impossible to eradicate. It seems to give the excuse to the Government to say that nothing can be done about it. If you look at the projections, fuel poverty numbers are likely to flatline. They believe there should be

more sensitivity to fuel price rises as this does have an impact on people when their bills go up, which leads to people getting into debt and self-disconnecting.

- 3.7 The proposal not to equalise the definition based on the number of people in the property will have a big impact on the numbers of pensioners defined as fuel poor. This suggests a disconnect with the health agenda. Pensioners are less likely to be defined as fuel poor under the Hills definition, however, the mortality and morbidity statistics show that they are the people whose health is most likely to be impacted by fuel poverty.
- 3.8 They welcome that there are more families included in the definition but not at the expense of the inclusion of pensioners. Whilst there is recognition of the impacts on children, they are worried that this is actually going in the wrong direction, at a time when FP officers are trying to strengthen the links between fuel poverty and health.
- 3.9 RJ broadly agrees with JKM, particularly with regard to pensioners in the rural shires. They are proposing to discuss this with Steve Ives of DECC who will be attending the WM CAN forum meeting on 6 November. A lot of officers will not have had the time to read the consultation documents yet. This will be a good way for them to get an overview and to feedback directly. A number of affordable warmth groups and the councils which sit on them will be responding and they are led by the NHS which will be an important area to focus on.
- 3.10 It was noted that the urban and rural definitions of fuel poverty are the same. There are some significant issues around rural areas, park homes etc, which aren't addressed.
- 3.11 Regionally, there hasn't been much of a response from EP CAN members; people seem to think that it's a bit onerous and a bit vague. Rotherham has a health authority officer who is keen to work together to send a response. There is concern that the consultation proposals do not do for fuel poverty everything they should be.
- 3.12 Many LA officers will not have an opportunity to read it as they are prioritising CESP and CERT schemes at the moment. There is a feeling that it is a bit of a fait accompli and the Government want to move the goalposts in order to hit the target.
- 3.13 It was also felt to be perfect timing to launch the proposals if you don't want to get a response.
- 3.14 DC would be surprised if more than one or two of the LAs in their region submitted a response, not through lack of interest but lack of time and prioritisation.
- 3.15 Although the proposals could be a good way of measuring the depth and extent of fuel poverty, if you take the 18%, say, in a Super-Output Area out of fuel poverty, in two years' time there will still be 18% in fuel poverty, just a different group of people. The problem is that this is just a snapshot in time and it doesn't necessarily look at the fact that fuel poverty will be concentrated in certain neighbourhoods and in a certain property types. You need to target the whole area, rather than just individuals.
- 3.16 Many LAs have never actually measured fuel poverty, so this only makes things more complicated for them. Proxies or DECC data are used instead. To identify households in fuel poverty you need to know their income and what they need to spend on fuel - not their actual spend.
- 3.17 Those in owner-occupation are in FP but they can disproportionately affect the FP statistics, because the need to spend on a six-bedroom house, for example, could be very high, but a single old lady might only heat the ground floor and refuses to move on. This is her choice, of course.
- 3.18 People can easily understand the 10% definition. Words like median and equivalisation are not readily understood. It's a bit like trying to explain Green Deal to people. DECC should continue to report on the 10% definition in their annual report.
- 3.19 Loren Probert, who has completed a doctorate on the Hills' review gave an overview at the recent EM CAN meeting. East Midlands' officers are generally happy to answer questions 1 and 9 however, most feel they are not expert enough in the methodology to answer questions 2 to 8. Loren has said she will be able to provide advice on this.
- 3.20 There is a feeling that the consultation is far too big for individual officers to respond to and it would be welcomed if CAN could respond. There is a need for CAN to respond at a national level.
- 3.21 The reporting mechanisms are quite confusing. Will HECA and Climate Local targets be linked to the new definition or the old one? It is normal to still use the old measures for comparison to the new, however.
- 3.22 It might be worth sending round some deliberately provocative viewpoints in order to get a response. If we can connect the issues with HECA reporting, it might stir officers into responding.

- 3.23 The situation is similar in the South East. There is an issue with time and getting others to comment. There is an executive phone meeting planned for next week and a Hampshire Energy Partnership meeting coming up, where this will be discussed.
- 3.24 It's very easy to get bogged down in the detail and methodology. CA would like to start at the top level as CAN and ask basic questions for example "is the new definition of FP better or worse than the old definition?", "Is it possible to have a definition of anything – whether it is a poverty, fuel poverty or poor health that will capture everybody?". We can hopefully agree on these points and then drill down further.
- 3.25 CA attended Professor Hills' very detailed launch presentation in London. CA considers this to be one of the best presentations he has been to. It seems to be that there is a gap between the opinions of people who were there and those who weren't.
- 3.26 There is perhaps a need to explain the proposals in lay-persons terms to the membership. This hasn't really been done yet and it can be simplified so it's easier to understand i.e "They are now considering those in FP as those who are on below 60% median income, spending more than the average bill, equivalised to the size of the household type".
- 3.27 CA's opinion is that the new definition is hugely superior to the old definition. Like any definition of this kind it isn't perfect and it's not going to capture everyone - this is inevitable.
- 3.28 When Gareth Baynham-Hughes' attended the executive meeting he said that the first question they were asking was, "is FP distinctive from general poverty?".
- 3.29 The issue of energy bills confuses things and is largely about general poverty. FP is about the energy efficiency of the home. For years, Brenda Boardman has been trying to get policy makers to focus on getting the SAP rating of homes up to a minimum level. CA believes that this thesis is correct in that you can make a property fuel poverty proof by increasing the SAP rating. The fact that someone might live in a home with a SAP rating of 72 but is still fuel poor, is obviously nonsense. General poverty is the issue there.
- 3.30 Some agreed that you can eliminate the vast majority of fuel poverty by bringing SAP ratings up to 81 for example, as proposed by Brenda Boardman. However, this doesn't mean you can separate poverty from fuel poverty entirely, although there are specific causes and impacts. In London there are many that are in FP because their income is low and their housing and fuel cost are high although their accommodation is fairly energy efficient. The fuel poverty proofing idea is very important but unfortunately they don't have the money to do it.
- 3.31 A lot of the issues are poverty issues, e.g. where residents need to use pre-payment meters because they can't get bank account so they can't pay by direct debit in order to get the better tariffs. The Hills' definition is very good but in practice officers go out and see whether someone has central heating, cavity wall and loft insulation etc.
- 3.32 By bringing the SAP rating of a property up we are offering the opportunity of affordable warmth. If their income is so low that even with these measures they can't afford their fuel bills, then this is an issue of poverty generally rather than FP and needs to be addressed in a different way.
- 3.33 There is a danger under this definition that it is vulnerable to taxes being spent on discounts, etc. There is a lot of talk about market reform at the minute and very little focus on energy efficiency, which doesn't solve the problem in the long term. The new definition tends to mould to that argument.
- 3.34 Some believe the new definition is the best we're likely to get. There are going to be issues, or course, with finding people in FP and we'll have to continue to use proxies. Broadly the definition is more about energy efficiency than before and is less distracted by changes in fuel prices, which is a good thing. This leads to focussing on what needs doing, i.e. improving the SAP rating of the poorest properties.
- 3.35 There is a worry about whether those close to the threshold will be neglected but it is most important to focus on those in the depths of FP, which is what the Hills definition highlights.
- 3.36 It was noted that the Hills definition effectively says that FP will stay the same forever, so it's not actually addressing that hard-core. It's a marketing device with no real significance.
- 3.37 It is welcomed by most that housing costs are included and the 60% median income threshold is an accepted definition of poverty. However, taking an average bill as reasonable is unacceptable. If they were to change that part of the definition, it would be more acceptable to some.
- 3.38 EPCs have their flaws but this is what they are using. There may be some issues around that which need tweaking.

- 3.39 One of the main advantages with the current definition is that it is easy to understand and explain to people like councillors, MPs and the public. It will be very difficult to explain the Hills definition.
- 3.40 There are also problems with the equivalisation used in Hills if it detaches from the health agenda, although this is more about policy than the definition. Excess winter deaths are two connected but not identical problems.
- 3.41 There are many health schemes to tackle COPD (Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease) etc around the country which are not fuel poverty schemes. As an organisation we would probably want to say something about excess winter mortality and COPD in our response but accept that this wasn't part of the remit that was given to Professor Hills.
- 3.42 Apparently, there was a chapter on Health which was taken out of the Hills Report. The fact that Professor Hills keeps talking about morbidity and cold related deaths suggests that he accepts the link.
- 3.43 The new fuel poverty strategy has to be linked to winter mortality strategy.
- 3.44 It is not clear that it will be possible to modify the definition to include people with cold related medical conditions. However, policy must be aware of the problem and cannot ignore this. It must be considered in policy such as the future development of ECO. The ECO affordable warmth criteria are sufficiently narrow that it excludes many in fuel poverty.
- 3.45 JKM has monitored their excess winter death figures as well as their fuel poverty figures. The excess winter deaths have dropped substantially recently but this has not been reflected in the fuel poverty figures, however there is a good correlation with SAP figures. As SAP ratings have improved, excess winter deaths have dropped. This might be something that the Hills definition misses, although the fuel poverty gap is a useful measurement, it could lead to perverse policy decisions which won't deal with the problem.
- 3.46 The Hills review team did not visit any fuel poor households. Officers know from experience if someone is fuel poor within 30 seconds of walking into a property. Definitions miss this key point.
- 3.47 It is important that there is a link with strategies such as cold weather plans, which is currently one of the only areas where LAs can access funds. Public health will now sit within top-tier authorities, which is a key opportunity for linking areas of work and resources.
- 3.48 The problem is that we need to agree a definition and move on but the next phase is the strategy that arises from it. The Government is likely to introduce policies which tinker around the boundaries of the graph and not address the real issues. We need to persuade the Government to target those who are in the bottom left of the graph. It is not clear whether we can engineer an indicator that will force the Government to develop a particular kind of policy.
- 3.49 There is concern that, from the rural aspect, there will be a big drop in the number of pensioners defined as fuel poor under the new definition. This is due to equivalisation and, if that's the case, we'll need to raise a problem with this.
- 3.50 Under the Warm Homes Discount they have moved from allowing energy companies to give people good social tariffs and equalised it over a boarder number of people but with a shallower level of assistance. Social tariffs are no longer allowed under the obligation next year and have to be closed. This will have a huge impact, E.ON might need to do things that they are not obligated to do.
- 3.51 The biggest Government policy on fuel poverty is the winter fuel payment. Then there is Warm Front and CERT. On the Hills graph these policies are off target – particularly the winter fuel payment. Government policy has always been wrong if the goal is to take people out of fuel poverty. No doubt it will continue to be wrong. Once we have settled the definition we will then need to tackle policy.
- 3.52 The definition needs to be right before we take on that argument. Many feel there needs to be something stronger in at the definition stage to influence policy. We can always have an addendum about this, although it is not strictly to do with the definition. It was noted that the consultation document states clearly that it is about realigning government policy so we have to say something about this as policy success will be tested against the new definition.
- 3.53 Although there are some good parts to the Hills definition, it will make fuel poverty even lower on the agenda for rural authorities, due to the reduction in numbers from the change in definition. The issue could be ignored. It looks like they haven't really considered rural areas.
- 3.54 The current definition disadvantages London whereas the new definition disadvantages rural areas.
- 3.55 Everyone agreed that the 60% median income level was a good thing and agreed that housing costs should be included in the definition.

- 3.56 Some think that the Hills definition is an improvement over the previous definition, however, others wouldn't even go that far. The need to look at the definition is recognised but the advantage of the old one was its simplicity, although it has flaws. The new definition does not have this simplicity.
- 3.57 It was suggested that the old definition could just have been kept at the old 2001 fuel price so progress could be measured, although it wouldn't have been reflective of the real world.
- 3.58 We need to mention the 2016 target. Under the new definition, fuel poverty is not eradicable.
- 3.59 The new definition changes from year to year, which most people seem to think is a good thing as poverty is relative, although it was pointed out that the old definition was also relative, since income varies from year to year.
- 3.60 The definition, like any, is imperfect. As long as the politicians understand that there will always be off-target kills.
- 3.61 The sticking points seem to be equalisation and the reasonable level of costs. We also need to emphasise rurality and health.
- 3.62 It is also a concern that the Hills review seems to be an academic point of view. Officers know what needs to be done, they just need to be given the money to get on with things. Given whatever definition, officers will do what they like anyway. Hills doesn't seem to have spoken to any people in fuel poverty.
- 3.63 Young people are unlikely to understand the Hills definition which will disengage an important proportion of the population.
- 3.64 LAs are currently putting together the plans for HECA based on an unknown definition of fuel poverty. We should raise this as an issue and some suggested that the plans should be based on the old definition.
- 3.65 Many officers never talk about definitions; they just offer services and schemes to the people who need them. It is felt that officers will carry on targeting those they think need assistance regardless of definition, although policy makers need a definition and this definition will determine what money is available to whom.

Actions:

RL to circulate discussion notes.

RL & CA to draft National CAN's consultation response and circulate to the Executive for comments before submission to DECC.

4. Secretariat Update

4.1 Due to DC's absence from the meeting he had prepared the following report, which was emailed to the Executive prior to the meeting:

4.2 Sponsorship

We are pleased to announce that E.ON have begun a two-year sponsorship deal with National CAN. We are grateful to E.ON for their support – past, present and future. We have a clean end with Climate Energy and all funding amounts owed to the network have been paid fully. The National Secretariat would like to note their thanks to Climate Energy for stepping in at the time. If it were not for their sponsorship then maybe the network would have ceased to function.

4.3 Accounts

We have now submitted all the paperwork to Hayles to prepare the annual accounts from Aug 2011 to July 2012. After speaking to the Chair and Directors an assurance report has been chosen instead of a full audit report, as with last year.

4.4 Money in the bank

National CAN has a total of £29,622.31 as at 12 October 2012. Salary and other monthly costs (e.g. web services, stationery, travel costs, treasurer fees etc) are paid from this. CAN does not owe any money to any external organisation. There is £2,589.85 in the Current account: and £27,032.46 in the savings account. We are also expecting a payment of £1,700 for some graphics works done by CAN for an external European project to come in.

4.5 Debt collection

We have spent a lot of time chasing payments for non payment of conference fees (delegate and exhibitor).

We have had to write off two as the organisations are no longer functioning and the delegates have left the organisations.

We are owed approximately £700 in delegate fees, which we are in the process of chasing. £162.16 is from Oct 2010 and so it seems unlikely that we will recover this money.

4.6 Chairs Training Day

We are aiming to hold the Chairs Training Day in February 2013 in London. We are likely to use either the Directory for Social Change or National Council of Voluntary Organisations. They are both close to Kings Cross and St Pancras stations.

As requested, the day will be in two parts. The first part will focus on the network and the aims and objectives and how the network can best support members.

The second part will look at the opportunities with the Green Deal, HECA etc.

We have had two potential facilitators:

Peter Chisnall from Climate Energy

Julia Barratt from Wilmot Dixon

Once we have a firm idea of dates, number of people attending and the focus of the day then we will be able to invite quotes and select the best provider.

4.7 East of England update

On 11 Sept Darsh Chauhan went to Cambridge to facilitate the first meeting of the East of England Officers since the Chelmsford CAN national conference. The meeting was held at the Smartlife centre. The meeting was well attended with almost 30 delegates. Since the Chelmsford conference, Peter Chisnall from Climate Energy has been providing an intermediate Secretariat function for the region. At the meeting the following was decided:

- 1) A draft terms of reference were produced which will be taken back to each LA for comments. The main points of the ToR are that: membership is by opt in, no power to enter into any financial or contractual obligations without the express written consent of members, full transparency, 1 vote per LA, must be one LA office bearer.*
- 2) A further meeting will be held in December which will be facilitated by British Gas. At this meeting, the Terms of Reference will be adopted and elections for the roles will be held (Chair, Vice Chair, Secretariat)*
- 3) The new Network will be called HECA East and will use the previous blue house logo.*
- 4) The new Network will not enter into any sponsorship contracts. Instead potential sponsors will register their interest with the Secretariat and they will sponsor one meeting (Venue, refreshments and lunch). The sponsor will pay for these items themselves, they will not make any payment to the Network.*
- 5) The Network will have no capacity at present to hold or manage funds.*
- 6) The AGM will be in December each year.*

4.8 RL added that in addition to the above he had been working on the CAN website, including combining the news page with the forum pages so it can be subscribed to as a feed and web forum members will be able to comment on news stories should they wish to.

4.9 The Secretariat is also starting to plan the next round of conference. Dates and venues for the next 12 months will be set shortly. RL is also currently working on the theme graphics and conference website.

4.10 Article requests for the next issue of Carbon Action News have also been sent and this will be published in mid to late November.

5. Representation at Meetings

5.1 OM has been to the second meeting of the Climate Local steering group at the LGA. AB presented the LGAs new priorities. Climate Change has made it through as a priority but it is tacked on to the growth agenda, which might cause some conflict. Climate Local provides an outlet for adaptation strategies. Climate Local fills the gap left by the abolition of the National Indicators although there is some doubt over the value of Climate Local.

- 5.2 Steve Ives talked on the new HECA Guidance. He was saying the focus is now on delivering, not reporting, and the localism agenda. DECC want HECA reports to be seen as Green Deal / ECO calling cards to suppliers.
- 5.3 There was talk about Manchester and core cities receiving go-early money to start off the Green Deal. They will be focussing on small scale work to get around procurement issues.
- 5.4 There is a view that energy suppliers are keen to fast track spending on ECO so they can make the case to the Government that they are best placed to take charge of the ECO brokerage system and become the only bodies able to access it. ND said that he wasn't aware of anything like that and E.ON is not interested in managing ECO brokerage. They see it as a good mechanism to get to the market.
- 5.5 We need to consider whether LAs should be able to access ECO brokerage directly as, at the moment, only Green Deal providers will be able to access ECO.
- 5.6 The aims of LAs on the whole will be different to those of energy companies. LAs want to minimise the amount of money that comes from ECO Carbon, maximise the money that comes from the loan and steer the ECO Carbon money towards the fuel poor. The brokerage scheme interferes with that. LAs would also like to use it to top up local funds, as with CERT.
- 5.7 Clarity on ECO will be released on 31 November and will now be based on the in-use metrics. There are five evidence letters that are currently available. This will shortly be put into consultation for 10 to 12 weeks and the final guidance will be available around February / March. In the meantime any work done under the evidence letters will not be retrospectively affected by any changes, so work can start on ECO immediately.
- 5.8 CA asked if there was anything like the old illustrative mix tables. ND said that DECC have done one and they have built their budgets around it but have not published it. E.ON knows some of the criteria but have not been able to replicate them with the same solutions. Most utilities are coming up with their own estimates for pounds per tonnes of carbon and pounds per pound saved through affordable warmth.
- 5.9 DECC's impact assessment is built around an assumption that 57% of ECO measures will be put into electrically or coal/oil heated houses, which is how they get down to 1.3 billion. This will likely benefit rural areas and old coal mining areas.
- 5.10 Defra have confirmed that the National Adaptation Plan will be published next summer.
- 5.11 There was a presentation from the LG Inform project which is making available all data sets, which are useful in informing local policy, to LAs and the public. This can be found by googling LG Inform. This sounds like a very clever system and they are looking for suggestions on other datasets to add.
- 5.12 The issues of paying for EPCs came up at the LG Group meeting. Landmark are asking LAs to pay for EPC data before they have received them, which is against their purchase rules. LAs should be provided with data for free. There are also serious problems with the datasets and the data has to be checked. The files also only work with the latest version of Excel. CAN could put an official request in to DECC that LAs are given free access to the data.
- 5.13 It was noted that Greg Barker has again referred to the HECA making things "non-optional" for LAs. However, it's only the reporting that is non-optional and all LAs would need to say is that they don't have any plans.

6. Discussions with guest Abigail Burridge of the LGA

- 6.1 There have been some changes at the LGA. AB's new Head of Programmes is Paul Raynes. He is responsible for finance, localism, culture, tourism, planning, housing and the environment. Caroline Green is also new to the team. AB is currently still working on energy, climate change and waste with Hilary Tanner on fuel poverty (N.B. since the meeting AB is no longer working on this and Hilary Tanner will continue to be the main contact.)
- 6.2 The LGA are continuing to prioritise fuel poverty but are prioritising "living within environmental limits" rather than climate change. Climate Local is still a priority, which of course includes climate change. Anything they do on carbon reduction has to be linked to the growth agenda, e.g. jobs, etc. Green Deal, fuel poverty and energy efficiency are priorities in their own right. CA asked if the prioritisation of fuel poverty includes health and cold related medical conditions. AB said no, but the priorities are very "broad brush".
- 6.3 LGA will be developing proposals for tackling fuel poverty from a local perspective. Instead of responding in detail to the current consultation, LGA will be coming up with their own locally-led definition of FP and their own proposals of how to tackle it from a LA perspective. They don't want a "this is what the Government thinks. What do you think?" approach. They want to be on the front foot

and say that they don't think the Government is getting it right; here are some proposals from local authorities on how we should actually be tackling fuel poverty.

- 6.4 Some members of the CAN executive believe it is critical to get the overall definition of fuel poverty right because the Government have committed to using this to inform their strategies. The role of LAs will follow from that. OM is interested to know if we can come up with an indicator where LAs will feel safe to sign up to for the bits they can actually influence. Some LAs haven't put a target for fuel poverty into their sustainability plan because there is no way they can actually achieve anything. We can do very little about income or fuel prices so we need to frame an indicator for what we *can* do.
- 6.5 AB said that this is what the LGA also want to do. What does FP mean to councils and officers who go out and see people suffering every day? LGA will not be producing a long technical document on this; it will be politically orientated. AB is hoping to have something on this ready for Jan or Feb next year and is hoping to have the sign off from board members to go ahead next week.
- 6.6 The LGA believe the response to FP has become more corporate and centrally lead, in that it is being loaded onto the energy companies. Are they really in the best position to make a difference as they have to rely on proxies and national templates?
- 6.7 CA asked if the LGA have a feel for the level of knowledge amongst councillors on what fuel poverty actually is? AB said there seems to be a much better understanding than with Climate Change and carbon reduction.
- 6.8 LGA want to link FP more to health and social care. Particularly social care, as this is one of the big priorities for the LGA. (N.B They were hoping to be able to do some quantification on this, i.e. if you spend money, what does it mean for council's social care budgets. However, since the meeting it has been confirmed that LGA will not be going ahead with this).
- 6.9 This is also a big driver for CAN. With the emerging health landscape there are opportunities for LA officers to be involved with health and well-being boards etc. There is a lot of money out there that we haven't been very successful in tapping into over the last few decades, although this seems to be changing with the DoH Warm Homes Healthy People fund etc. The health agenda in is one of the most important in terms of funding. There is an increasing recognition, although a lot of has been "bottom up" and it's too inconsistent to rely on from one year to the next. We need to get our agenda in at the moment when things are in a state of flux. If we leave it too long they'll have set the priority for the next four or five years. RJ noted that public health sits with top-tier authorities, which makes it much more difficult for district LAs to engage. NEA are holding an event in January on Health and Wellbeing Boards.
- 6.10 There will be a consultation on ECO brokerage out soon. The first question will be "should ECO brokerage be mandatory", i.e should energy companies be forced to put a certain percentage of their ECO money through the brokerage system. The other question will be how much ECO funding should be put through brokerage.
- 6.11 Green Deal providers, not LAs, are allowed to sell their energy savings on the brokerage system. The proposal is that LAs would have to procure a Green Deal provider to have any work done locally. So, for example, an LA wouldn't be able to get ECO money in, match fund it and then get Green Deal assessors and installers to do the work, although this might be possible on a bilateral agreement rather than through brokerage, but this is yet to be determined. LGA want transparency and DECC appears to be adding red tape at a time when the rest of Government is reducing it. If the issue is about quality of work, and a council is a Green Deal assessor and installer, why do they need to be a Green Deal provider? Larger cities do not necessarily want to use GD finance but could have Green Deal quality installations matched with European funding for example.
- 6.12 Some LAs are setting up interest-free loan schemes, for example, but will be excluded from GD because they don't want to be GD providers. They are making GD more expensive than it could be. There is a commercial risk element that LAs will not want to take on. DECC seem to be saying that the energy companies don't want LAs on the brokerage scheme because they won't have the level of quality assurance of a Green Deal provider. ND said that all the energy companies want is for everything that goes through the brokerage system to be delivered in accordance with the Green Deal specification. As long as installers and assessors are GD certified it shouldn't be a problem if LAs are not GD providers. The LGA will be having a meeting with Energy UK on this. OM proposed a joint letter to DECC from every stakeholder to make this point. There also seems to be concern amongst GD providers that LAs will use up all the money from ECO if they are allowed to access the brokerage scheme, although this isn't the official reason DECC are giving for excluding LAs. The LGA are lobbying to make access to ECO as flexible as possible. (N.B We now know it is because the purpose of the Brokerage is to stimulate and support Green Deal Finance, so only people involved in Green Deal Finance – ie Green Deal Providers – can trade on the Brokerage.)
- 6.13 There seems to be some confusion amongst LAs that some areas won't receive ECO funding whereas they actually mean that they won't receive the Carbon Saving Communities funding. There is also confusion over what constitutes a rural area.

- 6.14 ND offered to provide a presentation on ECO or suggested that if the group came up with a set of questions they would answer them.
- 6.15 CSCO maps can be downloaded from CSE. The key for LAs is to try to make ECO Affordable Warmth, Rural, Carbon and CSCO work together. One house can go into all four if they are in the right location; things can be done on a measure-by-measure basis.
- 6.1 The LGA will be providing an independent local government critique on energy efficiency finance, helping councils with a Business Plan for GD, looking at risks and opportunities. There is also a reputational risk to LAs if they are borrowing. Why should public money be the first loss? LGA want LAs to have a better understanding of the risks they are signing up to.
- 6.2 Can understands that there is also a lot of misinformation being provided to LAs by some GD providers.
- 6.3 The LGA have a new GD and ECO knowledge hub on their website.
- 6.4 The LGA were trying to secure funding for HECA reporting, however, CLG decided it wasn't a new burden on LAs. LGA have had a lot of emails for officers about the cost of EPCs, for example, and that LAs need money in order to do the job well.
- 6.5 CAN also feel that it is not acceptable to ask LAs to pay for EPC data, which should belong to them, in order to write a report to give to DECC. We seem to be no nearer to being given this data than we were six months ago. It costs money for officer time to produce HECA reports.
- 6.6 The LGA have a Local Government Inform Team which is their solution to not having National Indicators. It provides spaces for LAs themselves to decide what data they want to collect and lobbies for data which we don't have access to but should have. EPCs are on this list. This also includes data held by EST, for example HEED.
- 6.7 We are still trying to get hold of the latest Warm Front data as well. Warm Front should be able to produce a yearly report very easily, as they have for the last eight or nine years of the scheme. This can be useful for targeting mailshots and identifying customers for ECO Affordable Warmth, for example.
- 6.8 There is also the National Energy Efficiency Database (NEED) to help with "in-use factors". When this was being put together the LGA lobbied for LAs to have access.
- 6.9 DECC don't seem to understand why LAs need to have access. The main issue is that DECC's CO₂ and FP statistics are based on averages whereas the EPC and other data is address specific, so they can identify streets which need measures. We commented on this in CAN's response to the HECA Guidance but did not receive any feedback on this.
- 6.10 A possible boycott of the HECA report was suggested as it is felt by many to be meaningless and a waste of officers' times.
- 6.11 Council tax is such a political issue. It is difficult to imagine how a council tax rebate for Green Deal homes will be possible. Some LAs will require an extra £25 on top of the incentive where they have outsourced the collection of Council Tax. A cheque in the post direct to householders would be a possible way around this.
- 6.12 AB will let RL know if there are any further changes to personnel at the LGA.
- 6.13 There will be an event in March next year on Climate Local. Climate Local was created partly to keep the issue of climate change on councils' agendas. OM asked if there was merit in trying to bring Climate Local signatories together along political party lines. AB said this is something they are trying to do.
- 6.14 The term climate change seems to have fallen out of fashion recently, however, the priorities of fuel poverty, energy efficiency, reducing energy costs and carbon reduction are aligned with tackling climate change.
- 6.15 There will also be an impact report highlighting the business case, as well as the moral case, for acting on Climate Change.
- 6.16 LGA are also currently tendering for leadership training for councillors.
- 6.17 CA thanked AB for attending.

Actions:

RL to liaise with ND to provide an ECO briefing perhaps at the next Executive meeting or at the regional fora.

ND to share E.ON's internal ECO bulletin with the Executive and CAN members if suitable.

RL to draft letter to DECC asking about the Warm Front data

CA to talk to Steve Ives to get feedback on the comments made in CAN's HECA guidance response.

7. Regional updates

7.1 It should be noted that it is still useful for regions to provide written updates after the meeting has taken place, if they have not been able to submit an update beforehand, as these help greatly with minute taking and will be used for future regional annual reports in the CAN Magazine as well as sharing knowledge amongst the Executive and CAN members.

7.2 London CAN

John Kolm-Murray

Details of any meetings held and/or forthcoming:

Autumn Forum meeting held on 20 September at Newham Town Hall. Discussions on HECA, supplier switching and RE:NEW

Winter Forum due to be held on 11 December.

Details of any other events held and/or forthcoming:

First meeting of London Affordable Warmth & Health Forum to be held on 13 November at City Hall. Aim is to bring together domestic energy, public health and environmental health professionals in boroughs and NHS to share best practice and discuss regional strategy.

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

LCAN Committee will be considering the implications of the government's proposed redefinition of fuel poverty. London goes from having second-lowest level of fuel poverty to second-highest, since housing costs are *finally* being taken into account.

7.3 West Midlands

Rachel Jones

Details of any meetings held and/or forthcoming:

Sub regional meeting held in September looking at HECA and Green Deal/ECO deliver across Warwickshire, Worcestershire, Coventry and Solihull. Plus an outline template for HECA delivery.

Next Full meeting will be on Tuesday 6 November. This will be hosted by CEF and held at TamLite Lighting in Redditch. DECC will be attending the meeting to discuss the Fuel Poverty Consultation, plus speakers on Green Deal, ECO and Redditch Borough Council will present on their Crematorium Project to heat the local pool.

Details of any other events held and/or forthcoming:

Multiple Green Deal events are taking place across the region. Worcestershire have recently held a stakeholder event to look at potentially delivery option. Solihull are also due to hold their first GD/ECO event on 19 October to inform members and other stakeholders about the green deal and explore potential ways forward.

Details of any current projects:

Most projects are focusing on ECO and GD delivery. Worcestershire and the Black Country are undertaking option appraisals and stock assessments. Birmingham are advanced in the process and have a preferred delivery partner, which is Carillion. Birmingham Energy Savers / Carillion are in the process of engaging with potential contracting authorities who may wish to utilise the BES framework.

HECA – Sub regional group looking at developing a HECA template.

7.4 South West

Colin Anderson (given at the meeting)

South West CAN will hold a meeting on 31 October 2012. Members have asked for speakers on Health and HECA.

The new EST 0800 Green Deal advice line has been advising customers who phone up for details of renewables, biomass boilers etc to contact their council. CA is, therefore, looking into setting up their own 0800 advice line as they are now receiving a lot of phone calls on this. This is happening in other areas, e.g. Manchester and London.

It was noted that EST have abandoned the old 0800 number which they took on when the ESTACs were formed, which means that 15 years' worth of marketing material is having to be renewed.

There is likely to be a plethora of 0800 numbers set up. It might be better to have the same number set up over larger areas.

7.5 East Pennine

Paul Maplethorpe (given at the meeting)

There was a meeting held on 21 September. SIG Management provided a presentation on the commercial side of Green Deal and ECO.

Sheffield have found funding for a City region ECO Officer post.

Various representatives have also submitted the following reports:

Sally Kelling (Representative) Yorkshire and Humber

Details of any other events held and/or forthcoming:

Kirklees – just carried out two Affordable Warmth Strategy review events – open to partners and public – approx 90 people attended. Also continuing review online with questionnaire.

Details of any current projects:

Completing four CESP project (two with European funding), two other ERDF funded projects on social housing – all addressing hard to treat.

Pre-Green Deal pilot to start November – DECC funding for Leeds City Region.

Finishing our free insulation scheme post Kirklees Warm Zone.

Just finished a £400 boiler scrappage scheme for any private sector home, which has ran for a year.

Other offers targeted at vulnerable residents – home visits, draught proofing, heating repairs, emergency heating.

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

Resources – human – job cuts and intense scrutiny and review of financial resources within council.

Simon Winch Representative – Yorkshire Energy Partnership (non profit company owned by all North Yorks councils)

Details of any current projects:

- CERT loft and cavity wall domestic insulation programme 'Wrapping up Yorkshire'
- CERT social housing schemes – installing insulation in social housing in a number of districts
- Advice line – we continue to offer an energy efficiency advice line for local residents, continuing the service formerly provided by the EST advice line
- CERT / ECO-funded external wall insulation programme, either fully funded or with customer / council contribution
- Renewables scheme – providing impartial expert advice and a trusted installer service for residents seeking to explore renewable energy options

All of these projects can be replicated in / extended to other local authority areas – just give me a ring to discuss. CERT funding finishes shortly but it's not too late for Yorkshire Energy Partnership to run a final push for CERT-funded loft and cavity wall insulation in your area, although we'll have to move quickly.

Peter Simpson, Representative, Leeds City Council

Details of any current projects:

Leeds City Council have been running a Wrap Up Leeds project offering free loft and cavity wall insulation to private sector homes. Managed by Yorkshire Energy Services, to date 4,326 lofts have been insulated and 3,159 cavity wall insulation jobs have been done.

Under another project about 300 hard to treat properties have come forward and been surveyed and are awaiting the installation of polybead insulation, of which 102 have already been done.

The ERDF EIDC project in New Wortley has just completed the external wall insulation of 121 private sector properties using CESP funding joining the 157 public sector properties that were completed earlier in the year.

The DECC Green Deal Demonstrator project is nearing launch with tenders being invited from installers in the next few weeks.

LCC now have seven solar PV sites installed on corporate buildings and 11 on private domestic properties.

7.6 North West (given at the meeting)

David Colbourne

The next NW CAN forum meeting will be on 31 October. This will probably include a discussion of the fuel poverty consultation. Meetings are held with the NEA fuel poverty forums.

NEA have been asked by DECC to consult with LAs on barriers to CERT and CESP take-up. They will be running a discussion session on this at the meeting.

7.7 East Midlands

Karen Lond

Details of any meetings held and/or forthcoming:

EM CAN held its last meeting on 20 September in Leicester; there were 28 attendees from around the region but no officer representation from Derbyshire or Nottinghamshire. Speakers included Lauren Probert, Loughborough University presenting on the fuel poverty definition, Kamal Panchal, LGA on Climate Local, Daniel Curry, Change Agents on the Rutland Project. Darsh Chauhan, Leicester Energy Agency presented on the Engage Project and sponsored lunch and the venue. Feedback from attendees was very positive. Officers were asked if they would like to accept the sponsorship offer that was on the table from Insta Group (Snug network); officers voted unanimously to accept the deal for 12 months sponsorship subject to them signing our contract. The issue of having a Treasurer was also floated by the Chair, (previously EMCAN has had no money so no need for a treasurer) as there were no volunteers the Vice Chair has agreed to act as Treasurer as well.

The next EM CAN meeting will be on 6 December and will be our AGM and HECA training day and will include speakers from DECC, ACE, EON, Snug and Flourish Partnership.

Details of any other events held and/or forthcoming:

Next NEA Fuel Poverty Forum is on 30 October at Nottingham, EM CAN Chair will be doing an update on CAN at this meeting as requested by NEA..

Details of any current projects:

Lincolnshire County Council; have put together another Responders to Warmth 2, bid for Warm Homes Healthy People Fund.

Northamptonshire; also putting bid in for Warm Homes Healthy People fund.

Rutland; putting together further bid for Warm Homes Healthy People funding.

Leicestershire?

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

Awaiting Insta Group to sign and return sponsorship contract.

We have been liaising with officers from the Notts/Derby Partnership so as to improve attendance of officers from Nottingham and Derbyshire at EM CAN meetings and are intending to hold the next meeting in Nottingham subject to availability of suitable venue.

8. AOB

- 9.1 It is concerning that DECC have asked NEA and not CAN for feedback on CERT and CESP.
- 9.2 CA asked if anyone has heard anything about the Green Deal Affordable Warmth study that NEA were commissioned to do by DECC.
Apparently, DECC didn't like the conclusions that Green Deal would not be an effective solution to fuel poverty, so NEA haven't been allowed to publish it.
- 9.3 OM is attending the Consumer Focus meeting on the CES / ACE proposals for improving the Hill's fuel poverty indicator.
- 9.4 NEA have a Business Supporters Group which Rachel will be attending on behalf of CAN.

- 9.5 It was asked whether CAN are likely to go back to the two-day conference format now that there is full sponsorship. This will be considered, but the feedback from members for now seems to be that the one-day conference format is preferred. The awards are likely to be included in a forthcoming one-day event, perhaps with a gala dinner and ceremony as an evening event at the Midlands conference in September.

Action:

RL to forward notes on the morning's discussions on fuel poverty to OM prior to the Consumer Focus meeting on 31 October.

9. Date of next meeting

- 9.1 The next meeting will be held on 10 January 2013, at Camden Town Hall, London.