

## CAN Executive Meeting Minutes

15 October 2015 @ 10:30 am  
London Borough of Camden Town Hall

### Present:

|                            |       |  |
|----------------------------|-------|--|
| David Colbourne            | (DCo) | Chair of North West CAN                                    |
| Kim Herivel                | (KH)  | Representative, SW CAN                                     |
| Hazel Hill                 | (HH)  | Vice Chair of South East CAN                               |
| Paul Hinsley               | (PH)  | Chair of HECA East   |
| Leanna Jones               | (LJ)  | Vice Chair of CAN Cymru Housing                            |
| Rachel Jones               | (RJ)  | Chair of West Midlands CAN                                 |
| John Kolm-Murray (Chair)   | (JKM) | National CAN Chair & Vice Chair of London HECA             |
| Rob Leeson                 | (RL)  | National CAN Secretariat                                   |
| Karen Lond                 | (KL)  | Chair of East Midlands CAN                                 |
| Carol White                | (CW)  | Chair of South East CAN                                    |
| David Young                | (DY)  | National CAN & EM CAN Secretariat                          |
| Guests, arriving at lunch: |       |  |
| Craig Anderson             | (CA)  | CEO Warm Wales CIC   |
| Richard Mellish            | (RM)  | Deputy Director – Delivery, Home Energy, DECC              |
| Peter Sumby                | (PS)  | Director of Development & Delivery, National Energy Action |

### Apologies:

|                |       |  |
|----------------|-------|--|
| Rob Ballington |       | Chair, London HECA                                       |
| Darsh Chauhan  | (DCh) | CAN National Secretariat & Vice Chair, East Midlands CAN |
| Peter Gudde    |       | Vice Chair of HECA East                                  |
| Steve Martin   |       | Chair CAN Cymru Housing                                  |
| Jane Mears     |       | Vice Chair, East Pennine CAN                             |
| Stuart Pye     |       | Vice Chair, North West CAN                               |
| Emma Quest     |       | Vice Chair, South West CAN                               |
| Neil Short     | (NS)  | Chair, South West CAN                                    |

### 1. Welcome and Introductions

JKM welcomed the group and introductions were made.

### 2. Minutes from previous meeting and matters arising

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

#### **Matters arising from previous minutes (16 July 2015):**

- 2.2 (Items under 5.1 & 6.11) Re-branding, Chairs update, members survey, letter to government and finances had been added to the Agenda for this meeting.
- 2.3 (Item 6.11) Mark Group – Have now gone into administration, so this cannot be followed up.
- 2.4 (Item under 8.6) Fuel Poverty Advisory Group (FPAG) members have not been announced yet.
- 2.5 (Item under 8.6) DCo was unable to attend the meeting in Flint. CA would be arriving at lunch to give a presentation, instead (see Section 11 below).

#### **Ongoing Actions:**

- 2.6 ALL to let RL know if they hear anything on FPAG members, so he can circulate details.

### 3. Chair's Update

- 3.1 We will soon be told by DECC the full details of the Energy Company Obligation (ECO) beyond 2017. JKM attended a consultation event on this in London, on 6 October. There wasn't a wide circulation list for the invitation. ECO is likely to become a fuel poverty driven obligation, rather than carbon saving, and there is a possibility that CERO will be discontinued.
- 3.2 JKM also wrote up the following notes which were circulated to the Network:  
Key points from the session were:
- A new obligation has not yet been agreed, but DECC are working towards a transition year from April 2017 – March 2018 and a new Obligation from April 2018
  - Final decision is dependent on the Spending Review – but feeling is there will definitely be an obligation
  - The Government are treating the amount that will be added to customers' bills as if it was taxation and it will be subject to the government plan to limit the overall tax burden
  - The focus of a potential supplier obligation will be on fuel poverty alleviation
  - There may also be something put in place for able-to-pay customers but this was not discussed
  - The Government are looking to reduce the cost of delivery and meet Tory Manifesto commitment to insulate 1 million homes by 2020
  - Want to move away from stop / start funding
  - Looking to reduce complexity / cost of delivery / administrative burden
  - Role for local delivery
  - Emphasis on keeping bills low
  - Need to improve fuel poverty targeting – based on low income and least efficient properties (off-gas, older properties, old or no heating systems, no existing insulation). Significant move away from benefits-based criteria to look at building as well as income.
  - Continue with brokerage system
  - Emphasis on off-gas and rural customers
  - Hoping to allow greater access to DWP and HRMC data to help in better targeting – looking at legislation to allow this
  - DECC will provide tools and guidance to suppliers and local authorities
  - Looking to move away from boiler replacement to renewable heat (especially in off-gas areas, more first-time central heating, cavity wall insulation and lofts but also maybe solid wall insulation
  - 2018 legislation requiring Private-Rented properties to be E-rated or above is up in the air, as legislation was dependent on Landlords not facing an upfront cost, which now Green Deal has gone will not be the case. No decision has been made on this yet.
  - Consideration of personal need (e.g. householder health) is not currently in thinking
  - Transition year should include elements of the new obligation
- 3.3 JKM had a meeting with Ofgem about the Redress Funds, most of which weren't available to local authority (LA) bids. British Gas told JKM that this was because of Ofgem's rules; however, Ofgem say they have no problem with this and they have accepted the principle that LAs should be able to bid for any similar funds in the future, with the caveat that the energy companies get to decide where the money goes. Ofgem themselves acknowledge that this is a problem. These fines are punishments and the energy companies should not be dictating how and where they are spent. Their suggestion, in the short term is to look at who is under investigation on the Ofgem website and approach them. This is bit haphazard and LAs are unlikely to have the resources to do this.
- 3.4 JKM met with the LGA recently. Abigail Gallop (nee Burridge) is now back working on fuel poverty. The impression is that energy efficiency and fuel poverty are dropping in priority for the LGA, although this could be helped if they are considered under the remit of social care. The Barnet Graph shows that social care will become a bigger and bigger cost for local authorities in the future as the population ages.
- 3.5 Private Rented Sector (PRS) Regulations: the "right to request" is coming in from 2016 and the ban (subject to many loopholes) on landlords renting out F- and G-rated properties will be coming in from 2018. DECC have said that there will be guidance on this; however, the collapse of Green Deal has meant that they don't know exactly what will happen. These regulations are based on there being no up-front cost to landlords, but without Green Deal to meet these costs, this will be holding things up. Stephen Ryman, who has taken over the PRS Regulations brief at DECC, has said they will share the guidance drafts with us.

- 3.6 JKM is a trustee of the British Gas Energy Trust, which has decided who will receive money from the Heathy Homes Fund.
- 3.7 The End Fuel Poverty Coalition will be relaunching soon, and has a meeting later in the day to discuss this. Lisa Nandy, the new Labour Shadow Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change, might be there.

**Questions:**

- 3.8 The role of local delivery stands out from the ECO workshop notes. We might be able to use this to get more activity for LAs. One of the difficulties with ECO is that the energy companies pick the low-hanging fruit, and the worst properties are ignored.
- 3.9 At the meeting, there were the usual warm words about LAs but detail was lacking. It didn't help that there weren't many LA representatives at the workshop. What is the role of LAs within the constraints of a supplier obligation, which is an imperfect system? We would argue that we want something more like the Scottish system, where LAs receive fuel poverty funding based on a formula for need in their area, or at least a levy on the energy companies that is passed down to LAs as ministers see fit.
- 3.10 DECC now has a devolution lead, who JKM intends to make contact with.
- 3.11 DECC are quite open about the fact that they don't see LAs as particularly efficient. Brenda Boardman had a meeting a few weeks ago where she raised the issue of LAs delivering fuel poverty programmes and DECC said that our administration costs are too high. According to DECC, LAs' admin costs are 10% whereas energy suppliers' cost are 6%. Brenda asked whether the cost of finding residents had been taken into account and they said no. It is likely that the figure of 6% is exclusive of all the work LAs do engaging with residents, which has an important role in delivering successful energy efficiency programmes.
- 3.12 It might be possible to survey LAs to find which ones are most active. There might be a correlation between ECO, CERT and CESP activity and active HECA Officers, for example. The LGA concede that they have never done any work to prove how much LAs have done in this area, mainly because it would require a lot of resources. We need this sort of data. There has been a survey with a mix of 28 random LAs, although this misses many of the most active LAs.

#### 4. Secretariat Update

- 4.1 There has been no progress with finding sponsorship. We are hoping that any announcements in the Chancellor's Autumn Statement, potentially about a replacement for Green Deal, might help with this. We have had small offers for magazine sponsorship, but these wouldn't have covered the cost of printing.
- 4.2 It was pointed out that OVO Energy has just had its obligation for the Warm Homes Discount confirmed, so the Secretariat will send them a sponsorship proposal, as they might want to promote this through CAN.
- 4.3 We have had an offer from British Gas to provide venues, which we might take them up on. However, the Secretariat will need money to continue.
- 4.4 RL will be on leave from 13 November to 2 December, so DY will be covering his work during this period.
- 4.5 The London Conference, on 2 September, went well. The slides, photos, etc are on the conference website.
- 4.6 Aidan Davis, who attended the last Executive meeting with DCh, has produced a list of HECA reports that he could find links to online. There are quite a few missing, as web pages have been changed since the last HECA reporting round. RL will send this around again, for the Executive to add any they know of, before sending it round to the Network to ask members to add their own.
- 4.7 The next edition of the CAN magazine will be published at the beginning of November.
- 4.8 It would be useful if all regions could provide a written update for each Executive meeting. This is useful for the minutes, particularly if there isn't time to give oral updates. RL will also put these on the CAN regional news feeds, in addition to them being included in the minutes, which are also uploaded to the CAN website.

- 4.9 Regarding EP CAN, the Vice Chair says she doesn't have the resources to do anything at the moment. In the NE CAN region, there is a group of 12 or so LA energy / sustainability / environment officers who have been meeting. The contact for this group is Jonathan.Seymour from Durham. Cliff Duff has also expressed interest in restarting the Network. It would be good if we could convince these two groups to combine under the NE CAN identity, or our new identity, if we do decide to rebrand the Network. JKM spoke to Cliff Duff, who attended the CAN workshop in Durham on 7 October. Cliff is hesitant about it being a formal grouping. There aren't that many LAs in the region anyway, as a number of them were combined recently. However, there are quite a few housing associations, which we need to consider too. CAN is currently still holding some funding from the old NE CAN secretariat, which we have earmarked for re-establishing NE CAN, if possible.
- 4.10 DY gave an update on the outstanding invoices from previous National CAN conferences. The group agreed to write off the three unpaid invoices from the Manchester conference.
- 4.11 The group decided that UK HECA Ltd (National CAN's parent company) should instruct its accountants to carry out an assurance report, for this year's company accounts, rather than a full audit report or basic unchecked accounts. This is a cheaper option than the full audit, and is less thorough, but still provides some checks of the figures, which can be useful.

#### **ACTIONS:**

- 4.12 RL / DC to send a sponsorship proposal to OVO Energy.**
- 4.13 RL to send HECA reports to the Executive for additions before sending to all members.**
- 4.14 All to provide written updates for CAN Executive meetings, which RL will also put in the regional website news feeds.**
- 4.15 RL to instruct auditors to carry out an assurance report, for this year's accounts.**

## **5. Rebranding - Members consultation paper**

- 5.1 JKM has circulated a members consultation document on "Rebooting the Network" to the Executive for comments.
- 5.2 Should we consider charging membership fees? Generally, the Executive are weary of this. It has previously been discussed, and there were concerns that it could exclude people from the Network. London HECA charge regional membership fees by invoicing all members, but don't exclude those who don't pay. This model could be considered nationally in the future, although it is uncertain whether this approach would raise enough to support the Network, without sponsorship. If this were to be introduced, the suggested approach is to invoice all 348 energy conservation authorities for membership, with the fees from those that did pay to go directly to National CAN, which would then pass a proportion down to the regional bodies. It was felt by some that this approach might not work as well nationally as it does in London. The other CAN / HECA regional bodies are currently funded through sponsorship, although most only receive enough to cover lunch and venue costs for their meetings. It was decided that we shouldn't consult members on charging fees, and we should aim to keep membership free, at least for the time being, although the option could perhaps be revisited in the future.
- 5.3 If regions have sponsorship, but the details are not on their regional website pages on the CAN website, please let RL know and he will add a logo and link to the sponsor's website.
- 5.4 DCh has asked if the consultation document is suggesting a broadening of CAN's remit from its current main focus on domestic energy to cover the work of all local government energy officers and, if so, do we need to add something asking about this? It was felt that we should keep our options open and recognise that many of our members work on both domestic and non-domestic energy efficiency, and there will be a substantial overlap. However, the focus of the Network, for the time being at least, should remain on domestic energy efficiency, but we should not restrict membership because of this. JKM will add a line to the consultation document clarifying this. This will then be circulated to LA members and the responses reviewed at the

January Executive meeting. In the future, if we have a lot of interest from non-domestic energy officers, and if this were to bring in sponsorship, we could even consider having two branches of the Network to cover domestic and non-domestic energy.

5.5 It was also noted that, at the moment we don't know what the autumn statement will say and we shouldn't "chase legislation", we should decide ourselves what we want the Network to be. JKM has visited several regional Network meetings to explain the reasoning behind the consultation, and there have been no major objections so far.

5.6 Should we consider an identity which includes a mention of health, since there are many LAs who aren't considering energy and carbon but are focussing on links of fuel poverty and health? It was suggested that, while we need to make it clear that energy is important to health and social care, we need to do it in a way that is explicit to what we do, i.e. energy officers. It wouldn't be possible to craft an identity that covered everything. We need to make the case clearly that what we do, as energy officers, is really important to a lot of different priorities, although most of these are already well covered, individually, by other bodies.

#### **ACTIONS:**

**5.7 ALL to keep RL up to date with their regional sponsorship details, so that he can change sponsors' logos and links on the regional websites.**

**5.8 JKM to add a line to the consultation document clarifying that the focus of the Network is to remain on domestic energy efficiency and send to RL for distribution to members.**

**5.9 RL to collate responses to the consultation and circulate before the January Executive meeting.**

## **6. Follow-up Letter to Government**

6.1 In the run-up to the election, we sent an open letter to all political party members stating what we would like to see from them on domestic energy efficiency policy. At the April Executive meeting it was suggested that we could send a follow-up letter to the new Government consolidating our views.

6.2 The views expressed in the old letter still apply, but we could update it and talk about live topics such as devolution, as well as writing to the Shadow Secretary of State.

6.3 The elections for the devolved administrations are coming up next year. We should also write to them.

6.4 It was suggested that the letter to the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change should include an invitation to meet with us.

#### **ACTIONS:**

**6.5 RL to include the letter to government, as well as devolved regions, as an item on the January Executive meeting agenda.**

## **7. Members survey**

7.1 Since we have already had two small surveys this year, this will be deferred until a later date.

## **8. Memorandum and Articles of Association**

8.1 Notes have been collated on the current Memorandum; however, there was insufficient time available to discuss this. A lot will depend on the results of the Network Reboot Consultation anyway, so it was decided that this would be discussed again at a later date, perhaps by email.

### Engaging with the public health agenda

- 9.1 JKM chaired a CAN event in Durham on 7 October, titled Bringing Together Two Worlds: Health and Fuel Poverty. There were speakers from Durham County Council, Wigan Council, Keepmoat and NEA. JKM will forward the slides to RL for the website.

### Local delivery and Community Energy

- 9.2 DECC now have a devolution lead, who JKM will try to make contact with.

### Off Gas Grid meetings

- 9.3 There have not been any Off Gas Grid meeting since the last Executive meeting. This is a subgroup of FPAG, which is currently reforming, so this might be the reason that no meetings have been arranged. The Chair has sent the link for the Off Gas Grid Database. It is unclear whether this group will continue or whether it has been decided that it is not necessary now DECC have introduced the Central Heating Fund.
- 9.4 There have been meetings in Cardiff to discuss off-gas properties in Wales.
- 9.5 They want a census data check for off-gas databases. There have been some gas infill schemes involving more and more private-sector properties. Some of these areas they have been trying to get connected to the gas grid for 30 years. It's quite rare that LAs are involved in this way.
- 9.6 National grid would have liked us to give them a list of exactly which properties we wanted to connect to the gas grid before October. Lincolnshire has tried to use off gas grid tools to identify homes. A few councils have a full database of properties in their areas. It would be interesting to compare notes with the Welsh group.
- 9.7 West Midland put in a bid for the Central Heating Fund, based on rural areas, but wasn't successful. They have received no feedback from DECC, which is frustrating. Walsall did get funding, although it is a town and is not particularly rural. A lot of time goes into bids, but we often receive no feedback. It is public money so it should be accountable. DECC have given feedback on bids in the North West. KL is involved with a West Lindsey bid and did receive feedback, but this could have been because another bid was successful. DECC should give feedback on all bids.

### Flintshire Fuel Poverty Forum

- 9.8 Craig will give an overview of the Flintshire Fuel Poverty Forum, held on 22 September, later in the meeting. In Flintshire they have had an Affordable Warmth Partnership for five years. CAN Cymru Housing has not been as active lately. There were subgroups in North and South Wales but both have gone quiet. NEA have regional fuel poverty events in the North and South, which used to link to the CAN Forum. Multiagency partnership groups for Flintshire in Wales have a consortium for non-domestic focussed groups, which occasionally overlap with domestic, and vice versa. They have looked at fuel poverty type hubs with six-monthly, Wales-wide meetings. In Flintshire and Cardiff, local groups and local charities are meeting. They have an Affordable Warmth crisis fund in Wales. Even though they have the Nest and Arbed schemes, there is a need for this discretionally fund for the vulnerable. The 10 per cent fuel poverty definition is still used in Wales. They are working with Warm Wales to unify these 'competing' groups. Not all LAs can attend all meetings, and they are trying to address this.
- 9.9 The two affordable warmth partnerships in Wales have been successful in bidding for the NEA Redressing the Balance funding. This covers the link between energy efficiency and health. There will be a launch event on 6 November.

### Current Consultations

- 9.10 JKM will be doing a response to the NICE Preventing Excess Winter Deaths and Morbidity: Quality Standard Consultation.
- 9.11 DECC's FITS consultation doesn't affect us directly, but it's part of a long line of cuts. Unless we start shouting, more will go. We need to get involved and add to the general noise, to say that the Government needs to pay more attention to domestic energy. There is a Keep FITs campaign, run by 10:10, with an online portal for lay-people to contribute to the consultation as well as an online e-petition. RL will circulate details. The funding model for FITs is not ideal as it is through energy bills, rather than direct taxation, meaning that the fuel poor are paying

disproportionality more, although they are the least likely to benefit. However, we need to stress renewables over fossil fuels, fracking and nuclear. The Government are choosing to support nuclear power and fracking.

- 9.12 We could reference the Paris climate talks in December in our consultation response and in our letter to the Secretary of State.

Mark Group and Climate Energy have both gone bust as well as lots of smaller firms. Because of this there has been a loss of expertise and quality is dropping off. Mark Group was a big loss for the East Midlands as they were involved in delivery of lots of schemes. Climate Energy was the agent for Warm Up Bristol, Warm Up East Somerset and there have been lots of job losses. It's about drawing a line in the sand. It seems that the government are driven by ideology and not evidence-based policies. We don't wish to be ideological, as they are being, but it's just a start, so we need to oppose this.

- 9.13 The recent Energy Bill Revolution report has clearly demonstrated that the economy would benefit greatly from government investment in domestic energy efficiency.
- 9.14 The Confederation of British Industry (CBI) has publically attacked the Government's energy policy, and the former Chief Executive of SSE has said that they are "institutionally incapable" of delivering energy policy. Austerity is not turning out to be good for the environment.
- 9.15 DCo will produce the FITs consultation response, but there won't be much time for comments.

#### **Other discussions**

- 9.16 The Wellbeing of Future Generations Act in Wales is worth looking at, as it is fairly progressive. It includes climate change and fuel poverty.
- 9.17 It's also worth looking at the Scottish Climate Change Act 2008.
- 9.18 The Care Act holds some hope. This requires councils to have due regard for housing quality. This could be a useful tool and we should do a specific piece of work on that. The first part has come in force, but the Government now wants to review it, so some LAs are deferring any more work on this. What could have been a hugely progressive document might not be. The first part is really working well. Taken literally it would lead to a lot of progress, but require a lot of work, which is why they are reviewing it.
- 9.19 In Wales, the Arbed spend profile had to take a broad-based sustainability view. Twenty two spending profiles were rejected as they had to include climate change and fuel poverty, not just waste and recycling.

#### **ACTIONS:**

- 9.20 JKM to forward the Durham event presentation slides to RL for the website.**
- 9.21 JKM to produce response to the NICE Consultation.**
- 9.22 DCo to produce response to the FITs consultation and email to the Executive for comments.**
- 9.23 RL to circulate details of the Keep FITs campaign consultation portal as well as the e-petition.**

## **10. Regional Updates**

- 10.1 Due to lack of time, regional updates were not given at the meeting.
- 10.2 Four written regional updates were received by the CAN Secretariat prior to the meeting. Two of these have been included on the news feeds of the corresponding regional CAN websites. RL will also be posting details of CAN regional meetings when they are announced and when presentation slides / minutes are uploaded. This is to make sure that there are regular updates on the regional news pages, which otherwise are not generally used.
- 10.3 Chairs and secretariats should also feel free to make their own use of the regional news web forums, as well as the other pages of their regional websites. The website is currently set up so that posts made in the news section of the CAN regional forums are also listed on the relevant regional news feed pages. Posts and updates to these pages are *not* automatically emailed out to subscribers. Chairs or secretariats who do not currently have the correct permission to post in their region's news forum, or those who would like more information on how to do this, should contact RL.

#### **10.4 ACTION:**

- **ALL regions, that have not already done so, to forward a written update to RL.**

## 10.5 EAST MIDLANDS

**Written update from: KL, Chair of East Midlands CAN**

### **Details of any meetings held and/or forthcoming:**

The last EMCAN meeting was held on Monday 20th July at Ashfield District Council, Kirkby-in-Ashfield, Nottingham with lunch sponsored by Starfish Group. Presentations included:

- Chair's Update, Karen Lond
- Delivering Government and Energy Company supported energy efficiency schemes, Ian Chapman, Ashfield District Council,
- Martin Gerrelli, Starfish Group
- Post-Election Policy Update, Ben Sayah, NEA
- Introduction to PHE, and an overview of air quality issues in the East Midlands, Stuart Aldridge, PHE;
- And an afternoon Site visit to Green Deal Communities funded properties – escorted by Starfish Group and officers from Ashfield DC

The meeting was well attended and delegates actively engaged with the speakers, asking interesting questions.

The next EMCAN meeting will be held on Friday 27th November at NVAC, Nottingham: sponsorship for this meeting has been secured from HeatSeekers. This meeting will be a full day with speakers from HeatSeekers and Robin Hood Energy in the morning followed by a training session in the afternoon.

To download the agenda for the 27 November meeting, and presentation slides from the previous meetings, visit:

[http://www.can.uk.net/em/meetings/index ... 0704223511](http://www.can.uk.net/em/meetings/index...0704223511)

### **Details of any other events held and/or forthcoming:**

The last NEA East Midlands Fuel Poverty forum was held on 25th June at Ellipse Energy in Leicester; presentations included Derbyshire Healthy Homes Project, E.ON Energy Fund, Ellipse Energy, NEA's policy update and details of their Redressing the Balance Programme.

The next NEA East Midlands Fuel Poverty Forum will take place on 16th October at Ellipse Energy in Leicester.

Climate Just are providing introductory and intermediate training on 16th December at University of Nottingham. These are free, three-hour introductory training workshops from Climate UK, in partnership with the Environment Agency's Climate Ready support service, for those interested in learning how to use the Climate Just tool in practice.

See [http://www.can.uk.net/uk/event\\_item/ind ... 0928104611](http://www.can.uk.net/uk/event_item/ind...0928104611)

### **Details of any current projects:**

Successful DECC CHF bids in the East Midlands were:-

- Lincolnshire County Council - £570,000  
Consortium bid with Boston Borough Council, East Lindsey DC, North Kesteven DC, South Holland DC, South Kesteven DC and West Lindsey DC
- Bolsover District Council - £117,800  
Consortium bid with North East Derbyshire District Council
- North East Derbyshire District Council - £637,625  
Consortium bid with Bolsover District Council

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

Trying to arrange free quality training for EMCAN members is very difficult with a limited budget.

## **10.6 WEST MIDLANDS**

**Written update from: RJ, Chair of West Midlands CAN**

### **Details of any meetings held and/or forthcoming:**

Next Meeting will be held in November, LA's are keen for this to be after the Autumn statement to allow discussion.

Sub regional local authority and housing association meeting July 30th

This meeting was held at Ettington chase conference centre, near Stratford on Avon. The initial part of the meeting was an update on current LA and housing projects and how we can work closer in partnership. The group discussed existing challenges with GD communities and the stop start funding regime we are currently working in. The second part of the session was two presentations, one from Western Power Distribution looking at their social obligations and the Eon to discuss Smart Meters and Affinity Deals for social housing. Eon are offering trials for PPM Smart Meter roll out and have developed a tariff stream the same as any other householder would be able to access.

September 22<sup>nd</sup> Ricoh - Coventry

Warwickshire and Coventry held a fuel poverty conference in September to look at how partnerships could work together to deliver better outcomes for residents and how local health data could be utilised to show the need for works in this area. It illustrated the importance of comparing like for like council's not just neighbours, so that a more appropriate picture could be put forward to members etc.

### **Details of any other events held and/or forthcoming:**

We have a CAN update session at the West Midland Fuel Poverty Forum on the 20<sup>th</sup> October in Birmingham

### **Details of any current projects:**

West Midlands authorities were very disappointed with the outcome of the Gas Central Heating Fund as one the bids was a consortium of 20+ authorities and it was felt offered good value for monies and had a strong rural focus which was a key DECC criteria. The only successful West Midlands Authority was Walsall. Councils are still awaiting feedback from DECC on the bids.

At least five authorities have also put bids in to NEA's fund a couple of which are joint bids this was narrowed down to two West Midland applications of which the consortium of Warwickshire, Worcestershire and Solihull was successful.

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

Delivering the Green Deal Communities bid has been helped by the extension of timescales by DECC.

Lack of funding and policy changes at DECC – one of the LEP felt that due to DECC's changes to renewables that it shouldn't be pursued as a priority for the area anymore!

## **10.7 HECA EAST**

**Written update from: PH, Chair of HECA East**

HECA East held a meeting on 24th March 2015 in partnership with NEA.

An update on the sponsorship and secretariat was given. Aran Services kindly sponsored the meeting. Through the support of our sponsors we aimed to take the HECA network forward:

- Growing the membership
- Improving the meeting programme
- Improving the network especially sharing of information and improving the knowledge transfer between members

A presentation was given by Steve Bacon on Ventive passive ventilation.

## Members' knowledge exchange

Issues covered:

- Cavity wall problems and CIGA-backed guarantees
- Landlord and tenant energy efficiency problems
- Engagement with the owner occupiers
- Engaging with the health professionals to progress improvements to cold homes
- Funding – health on prescription. Gentoo evaluation on prescription report to be published in April
- Warm Homes Healthy People projects
- Age UK study into Health and Wellbeing strategies and fuel poverty
- Solar pv on social housing

## Details of any current projects: Project updates and regional update

Members reported that the following projects were being undertaken by their Authorities in the coming year:

- Park Homes project part funded by National Grid
- Warm Homes Healthy People
- Green Deal Communities projects
- Private sector stock condition survey
- Solar PV on public realm buildings
- Heat Networks feasibility
- Big Energy Switch

## Details of forthcoming events

The next joint meeting with NEA is to be held on 22nd October, The CAN Chair has been invited to give an update to HECA East members as to the proposals and planned direction of CAN in the future.

## Sponsorship secured

HECA East is extremely grateful to Aran Services Limited for agreeing to sponsor the group for the coming year. This has enabled the services of a secretariat to be secured and will ensure the group can meet its objectives of remaining vibrant and relevant, but - most importantly of all – supporting our membership in tackling fuel poverty and energy efficiency within the Eastern area.

## 10.8 SOUTH WEST

**Written update from: NS, Chair of HECA East**

### Details of any meetings held and/or forthcoming:

Next SW CAN meeting & AGM to be in November – date tbc

## 10.9 NORTH WEST

**Written update from: DCo, Chair of North West CAN**

Since losing its sponsorship and secretariat unexpectedly (due to economic pressures of the sponsor) activities have been curtailed. Communication still exists and there will be a meeting a further 2 meetings in the next 12 months at least.

## 11. Guests: Craig Anderson, CEO Warm Wales CIC

See CA's presentation slides: *Warm Wales CIC – Identifying Vulnerable Customers via Effective Surveying – The New FRESH Approach*

### Questions

- 11.1 Q: From experience, in England, it's not too difficult to find the vulnerable, but they don't necessarily qualify for resources. Is there any advice on this?

A: Probably the biggest issue in fuel poverty is resources. Over 80% of properties in fuel poverty are privately owned. We need to redesign the Green Deal, but through a people-centric approach, convincing relatives and carers to accept a LA loan to improve their elderly parents' properties, for example. In November, NEA and Wales & West Utilities will visit Scotland to look at how the LA loan system works, and there are already some LAs in Wales providing low-cost loans. CA has worked for five LAs in his career, and it was very much about managing resources more effectively. He gave the example of chairing the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships and has suggested to DECC that they use a mandate similar to that to pull existing operational resources together, although we still have to come up with loan resources, supplemented by grants for the vulnerable. DECC could target ECO to people who need it most, and blend a bit of ECO with loans secured against property for the private sector. In Wales, we need about £350 million worth of loans, blended with £350 million of grant, to treat 100,000 homes over five years. This compares with the current rate of treating fuel poverty of around 10,000 households per year (still 350,000 households in 10% Fuel Poverty at 2012). The only way we will achieve this is through very low interest rate loans and zero per cent for highly vulnerable households, especially those with cold-related health conditions

11.2 Q: At the moment, you are concentrating on the Cardiff area, which is urban. Will you be able to deliver at a similar rate in more rural areas?

A: We are also working in Flintshire North Wales. Rural area households are more expensive to treat and difficult to penetrate. However, the energy and DNO distribution companies are now under a duty to show what they are doing to help off-gas properties in rural areas. There is a technology platform currently being developed (Futurewave) coming up with cost-effective solutions, but this will still need people on the ground to achieve impact. Unless it comes through LAs, it is unlikely to work. It will have to be determined based on local priorities, where the neediest groups are with related health conditions. This is where FRESH will help identify localised clusters of vulnerable households working with the Affordable Warmth Local Authority chaired groups, including Care & Repair agents.

11.3 Q: It's all very well having data to address the local level telling you who is in need, but if you can't engage with them, it's pointless. LAs are much more trusted than energy suppliers.

A: Totally agree the vital lead role of the LA. This is why we've acknowledged the vital role of Care and Repair as part of the Affordable Warmth Local Partnerships. Care & Repair agents are imbedded with health services and the ones we are dealing with are really passionate about what they do, and they already have DEA Energy Assessors in house.

11.4 Q: A lot of local authorities do this sort of thing too.

A: That's true, but a lot of LAs are devolving over time and budgets are stretched. If anything, our task is how to get closer to the health agenda, get more loans in to supplement grants, use the data most effectively, and how do we look ahead to combine existing local agencies? For example, Three years from now, how do we measure success? We could use three key performance indicators: Fewer GP visits from the very vulnerable groups, fewer unplanned, emergency admissions to hospital and quicker discharges from hospital into warm and healthy homes with care and support. If people are in cold homes, when they leave hospital they are highly likely to get ill again. We need an embedded fuel poverty reduction partnership, with a mandate that requires LAs to act – with LA's best placed at chairing effective partnership action by understanding needs at the local level.

11.5 Q: Have you been able to benefit from the energy company redress fines?

A: NEA has been given the funding – and we have applied using the work of the Fuel Poverty Hubs in North and South Wales (Flintshire and Cardiff) as the prototype of the desired Fuel Poverty Reduction Partnerships (CA has subsequently confirmed that they have been successful – with Leanna Jones of Flintshire CC as lead authority). Re resources, CA cited his rule of thumb is to divide the amount of funding available by 1,000 then multiply by 3 to determine the amount of funding that would be available in each local authority area. Each £100m fund devoted to helping the fuel poor roughly equates to £300,000 per LA area, if evenly spread, then an average spend of £10K translates to only 30 households. This is why we need large-scale, low-interest loans to make a meaningful impact on reducing fuel poverty and reducing carbon. The clear message, with the collapse in ECO volume and carbon value is that there is not nearly enough funding available – hence the imperative is to campaign for the zero interest loans, combined with ECO and DECC grants for the cases of vulnerable households.

11.6 CA issued an open invite for CAN members to examine the FRESH work and the example of the new LA-led Fuel Poverty 'Hub' Reduction Partnerships. The FRESH cluster analysis provides all-authority, all-tenure cluster mapping identifying 'cold hazard homes'. The average cost to a LA in purchasing bulk EPC data has reduced to only 4p and the cost of analysis is around £8,000. For those interested, CA can be contacted on 07793369169 and via [craig.anderson@warmwales.org.uk](mailto:craig.anderson@warmwales.org.uk)

- 12.1 ECO is one of the areas RM has responsibility for.
- 12.2 Ministers remain concerned that impacts on energy bills from Government policies is kept to a reasonable minimum. This will be a theme of the Spending Review.
- 12.3 Ministers want the successor to ECO to be focussed on fuel poverty.
- 12.4 The Government said in their manifesto they want to insulate one million homes, and there was a reference to doing so in support of the fuel poverty strategy. Insulating one million homes with low-cost measures will need to be considered alongside taking forward the fuel poverty strategy as the latter requires some more expensive measures, such as solid wall insulation, first-time central heating, heat pumps, etc.
- 12.5 There was an ECO stakeholder engagement event last week. There was consensus on simplification and taking out costs, with a lot of support for deemed scores and the need for a long-term framework.
- 12.6 There is an effect on the supply chain from the stop-start nature of government support, with some companies recently going out of business and job-losses. There also needs to be a long-term framework if engagement at the local level, e.g. health referrals, is to work.
- 12.7 The fuel poverty strategy is aimed at focusing on the worst homes first. If you are going to do things cost effectively, what does this mean for area-based schemes? Do you do target areas where there are people in the worst fuel poverty but also allow others on the margins of fuel poverty and at risk to access the scheme? RM believes there should be some flexibility around this.
- 12.8 There needs to be access to better data. DECC are working with the Department of Work and Pensions, and local authorities, housing associations, to use the data they have to target spending.
- 12.9 There needs to be a framework for moving up standards of homes. Potentially EPC ratings, but there are other ways.
- 12.10 We need to come up with something different for the able-to-pay market, to get them to contribute, but recognise there are people who won't be prepared to do this without an incentive.
- 12.11 We should be joining things up where we can, e.g. when someone services a boiler, they could make referrals about insulation and tariff switching.
- 12.12 There was less of a consensus at the Obligation workshop on how quickly to phase out the carbon-saving element of the Obligation.
- 12.13 There could be pooling of contributions for more expensive measures, e.g. housing association and ECO funding being used together for SWI?.
- 12.14 DECC are looking at low cost, low-interest loans. Is there something within an obligation that could work? What is the role of credit unions?
- 12.15 We need to promote the value of measures, rather than people seeing them as something that should be available to them for free.
- 12.16 What role should third parties, such as LAs have in determining how funding is used?
- 12.17 Should we be technology neutral, as long as homes are moved up EPC bands?
- 12.18 Ministers are keen that we don't just have an ECO extension but that we do start transitioning from 2017. How quickly can we change elements of the current scheme?

**Questions:**

- 12.19 Q: There seems to be a lack of integration between agendas, e.g. with the Department of Health (DH). We should be looking at fuel poverty not just from an energy efficiency or carbon saving perspective. For example, the rising cost of social care needs to be considered in the economic case when looking at return on investment.
- 12.20 A: DECC does want to join up the policy agenda with other departments, not just health but others including DWP and CLG. Engagement has moved up a level in recent months.
- 12.21 Q: Some of the super priority groups have illnesses, such as dementia, but are not on qualifying benefits. Is there any way to help these people? This was talked about in the fuel poverty strategy and would require secondary legislation.
- 12.22 A: About 20% of people in fuel poverty aren't on qualifying benefits and are hard to identify. DECC want to find ways of getting to them and sees local authorities amongst others as having a role to play in doing so.
- 12.23 Q: If the targets are about fuel poverty, why aren't we doing a calculation of whether households are in fuel poverty or not, rather than using benefits as a proxy? An EPC is already required so you have half the information there, all you need is income details, which most people are giving to their LA / Care & Repair anyway.
- 12.24 A: We want to get smarter about how we target people with the focus on people in a Low Income High Cost position. Work is going on with other parts of Government to get the best data on both, e.g. DWP on the people and VOA on the homes. There are data-protection

issues, e.g. we'd need to change primary legislation to access Valuation Office data. DECC are looking at targeting focussed on local and central data, to try to pick up everybody in the bottom left of the fuel poverty quadrant diagram.

- 12.25 Q: Wales are still using the 10 per cent fuel poverty definition, so would we have to use both definitions?
- 12.26 A: Different definitions in England, Wales and Scotland are a product of devolution.
- 12.27 Q: Targeting is great, but if you improve private-rented properties, the rents can go up and the poorest people have to move. Area-based schemes 'inoculate' a whole area against fuel poverty rather than just moving it around. We often deal with the same person in fuel poverty at different addresses, as they have had to move on as their rent has increased when their property is improved. This hasn't been well studied yet. Since the increase in rent can be higher than the reduction in energy bills, it's possible to put people deeper into fuel poverty by improving their rented property. There are concerns about aligning the new obligation too closely to the Low Income High Cost fuel poverty definition.
- 12.28 A: Any budget will necessarily be constrained and we will have to make choices between tight targeting and the sort of broader-based area approach suggested.
- 12.29 Q: In the rural LAs, off gas is a huge issue and also HHCRO is delivered by the energy companies in the cheapest possible way. From a local delivery perspective it is difficult to say to people that they can't have the same measures as their neighbours, particular if people are on the right benefits but they might be missed out because they have a different boiler, for example. Because of the complexities of Green Deal Communities funding, people couldn't understand why their next-door neighbours qualified but they didn't. It needs to be simpler.
- 12.30 A: This is also about choices around targeting as well as the principle behind a supplier obligation being to deliver with maximum cost-effectiveness.
- 12.31 Q: There are a number of bids for the Central Heating Fund that still haven't had feedback from DECC on why they weren't successful. Feedback is very important, so that we can improve bids that take a lot of time and resources to produce.
- 12.32 A: Main reason for failure of bids was over-subscription. They were generally to a good standard.
- 12.33 We could compile a list of local barriers, such as procurement. LAs are locked into procurement barriers not just from central government but from the EU.
- 12.34 A: This would be helpful.
- 12.35 Q: Why not give LAs the money instead?
- 12.36 A: We are continuing with a supplier obligation because it is a tried and trusted approach since 1994. The costs have come in roughly at the level DECC thought they would
- 12.37 Q: There were actually a lot of positive outcomes from the Green Deal, like external wall insulation that has helped families and even improved things like school attendance. There needs to be continued opportunities for people to access this kind of funding.
- 12.38 A: We have a finite amount of resources, but if you follow through the logic of the fuel poverty strategy, we will be doing fewer replacement boilers and more first-time central heating installations, heat pumps and solid wall insulation.
- 12.39 Q: You could inject a huge amount of cash in to fuel poverty by introducing a way for LAs to join together in partnership, and use some of the ECO money to offset the cost of borrowing.
- 12.40 A: We are keen to see partnerships with LAs and others and increased effectiveness through combinations of funding.
- 12.41 Q: There were rumours that the energy companies were trying to get out of the fuel poverty side of the obligation and get the Treasury to introduce direct funding. Will this not be happening?
- 12.42 A: The option of direct funding exists but there is a big drive to reduce public expenditure.
- 12.43 Q: It's a lot cheaper for energy companies to deliver in urban areas, which is a problem for rural areas.
- 12.44 A: That is something DECC are aware of and are thinking about. DECC are also interested in our views of how to improve quality and standards.

**12.45 ACTION:**

- **RL to ask all to produce a list of barriers to local delivery and ideas on how to improve quality and standards, for feedback to DECC.**

**13. Guests: Peter Sumby, Director of Development and Delivery at NEA**

- 13.1 Please see PS's presentation slides: *Special Projects - the Technical Innovation Warm and Healthy Homes Funds*.

**Questions**

- 13.2 Q: Does the geographical spread mean there is an unequal distribution by area or population?

- 13.3 A: No, because, although we have tried to be geographically equitable, we have also tried to make sure areas where there were higher levels of fuel poverty have benefitted. There will soon be a map available to show the distribution of funding.
- 13.4 Q: Some areas didn't put bids in because they thought there would be too much competition within their region.
- 13.5 A: It was competitive and it was difficult making the decisions. We tried to use a process that was fair and not too onerous.
- 13.6 Q: The guidance said that only existing partnerships could bid; however, the money could have established new partnerships.
- 13.7 A: This might be something to take into account in future programmes, although there was only two years to disperse the funds and barriers from procurement might have meant that the money would have had to go back to the Treasury. There were some intense negotiations prior to establishment of the scheme to ensure that the money would be targeted at fuel poverty and not go straight back to the Treasury.
- 13.8 Q: There were some areas where the CESP obligations were not met that didn't receive funding that they bid for.
- 13.9 A: Part of the agreement specified areas where much of the money had to be targeted. The alternative was that the funds went straight to the Treasury. This has meant that much of the funding went to the North West, plus there were also some very strong bids.
- 13.10 Q: It was not helpful that LAs were excluded from bidding for a lot of the funding. LAs could have put in better bids than the majority of those received.
- 13.11 A: On this one particular scheme LAs were not excluded from bidding. It was also a requirement that we had independent oversight groups helping to allocate funds.

#### 14. **AOB**

- 14.1 There was no other business.

#### 15. **Date of next meeting**

- 15.1 The next meeting will be held on 15 January 2015 at Camden Town Hall, London, WC1H 9JE.