

CAN Executive Meeting Minutes

14 January 2016 @ 10:30 am
London Borough of Camden Town Hall

Present:

Aidan Davis	(AD)	National CAN Secretariat
Paul Hinsley	(PH)	Chair, HECA East
Hazel Hill	(HH)	Vice Chair, South East CAN
Rachel Jones	(RJ)	Chair, West Midlands CAN
John Kolm-Murray (Chair)	(JKM)	National CAN Chair & Vice Chair, London HECA
Rob Leeson	(RL)	National CAN Secretariat
Karen Lond	(KL)	Chair, East Midlands CAN
Carol White	(CW)	Chair, South East CAN

Guest, arriving at lunch:

Jeremy Nesbitt	(JN)	Managing Director National Grid Affordable Warmth
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Apologies:

David Colbourne	(DCo)	Chair of London HECA
Darsh Chauhan	(DCh)	CAN National Secretariat & Vice Chair, East Midlands CAN
Emma Quest	(EQ)	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 (15 October 2015):

- 2.2 (Item 2.3) FPAG have recruited, but members are still unknown. It might include Jenny Saunders. JN might have more information.
- 2.3 (Item 4.12) OVO sponsorship proposal – We've not yet heard back, but will wait for the rebrand to be carried out to chase up.
- 2.4 (Item 4.13) HECA report list - No additions were sent. DCo has informed RL that he knows of some, but is yet to send the information through. RJ has asked her councils for a response. KL said some were published after the list was made. The responsibility to produce reports should be LAs' but DECC are not enforcing. RL will send the list to the Chairs once more, before sending to the full Network.
- 2.5 (Item 4.14) Regional updates - Three have been received, more would be better, as it makes the website look more active and it's useful for the minutes. It is also useful for those not attending the meetings. RJ said she would send WM CAN's through soon, as will HH for SE CAN in February, following a local meeting.
- 2.6 (Item 4.15) The company accounts and assurance report are in hand.
- 2.7 (Item 5.7) Regional sponsorship - Regions should continue to inform RL of changes to sponsorship details, regional contact details, etc, for updates to the website.
- 2.8 (Item 5.8) CAN Reboot Consultation changes - JKM added the line, as per the minutes.
- 2.9 (Item 5.9) CAN Reboot Consultation responses - Item is on the agenda (see item 5).
- 2.10 (Items 9.20 to 9.23) Details on representation, consultations and policy - These have all been done.
- 2.11 (Item 10.4) Regional updates - This has already been discussed.

2.12 (Item 12.45) Barriers to local delivery feedback. This was done, RL thanked all for comments.

ONGOING ACTIONS:

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

2.14 RL to send HECA List to the Chairs once more, before sending out to all LA members.

2.15 All to send regional updates reports for every Executive meeting.

3. Chair's Update

- 3.1 JKM is now acting chair of London HECA once again. Robert Ballington resigned his position as Newham Council removed their domestic energy team. Hopefully their Healthy Homes scheme will be taken over by another team and continue. A number of other boroughs have cut their domestic energy teams, although some others are expanding theirs. London HECA has now had to replace three chairs, and finding a new one may be difficult. London HECA's AGM is in May, where they will look for a new chair, unfortunately many of the lost members were the most active.
- 3.2 The Spending Review has now been released, including news that ECO funding will be reduced by over 40%; £640m is remaining, which will be focussed on the fuel poor. There will be an expansion of the Affordable Warmth Obligation. The Warm Homes Discount will be maintained at its current level for five years at current spend of £320m. There will be changes to the structure, and there will be a core group only. People will not have to apply for it. Changes won't come in until 2017, so this year it will be the same as previously.
- 3.3 The ring-fenced £1bn budget for CCS has been abolished. FIT cuts have been limited to around 60%, instead of the proposed 80%. DECC says this will provide a rate of return of 4.8%. This reduction has already killed many schemes, and the future looks bad. RHI is, in practice, being reduced, despite the government's claim that this is not the case. £300m has been allocated for heat networks and £295m has been earmarked for unknown public sector energy efficiency programmes. Lots of money is being invested in nuclear power.
- 3.4 In all, things don't look good for domestic energy, despite reaching 200,000 homes a year being a Conservative manifesto commitment. They will each have an allocation of around £3,000, which includes administration costs. The government says they say that they intend to address fuel poverty, although it is difficult to see how this will be achieved.
- 3.5 JKM attended an ECO workshop on 13 January, organised by DECC, looking at the future of local agencies delivery of ECO beyond 2017. It included a selection of LAs invited by DECC, with more representation of core cities, and a lack of non-core and rural areas represented. KL worries that the views of non-core areas will not be taken into account, even though their circumstances are very different.
- 3.6 It is unclear why some LAs were invited, as they have relatively little experience in domestic energy programmes, or little housing responsibility. It was felt that the meeting was not well organised or run.
- 3.7 DECC is planning a transition to a new ECO model in the 2017/18 period, with the full changes implemented from 2018 onwards. The Affordable Warmth Obligation will be the entire obligation, and they want it to be better targeted to the fuel poor. They want a 'flex' target, where suppliers can reach targets with local agencies, using discretionary eligibility criteria. LAs will be able to use their data to target those who may not currently be eligible. The government intends to target the 'working poor' and pensioners not on benefits.
- 3.8 DECC have still not decided if social housing will be included, as they do not consider them to have high levels of need.
- 3.9 JKM said that he reminded them of HHSRS and the fact that we should ideally be enforcing this rather than subsidising landlords with grants. HHSRS is far stronger than the 2018 private rented sector regulations.
- 3.10 There was discussion on how to engage the 'Able to Pay' with energy efficiency schemes. Green Deal was not mentioned. There was talk of regulations on the private rented sector and more enforcement of EPCs.

- 3.11 JKM asked that, if LAs will not be given money to run referral networks, could they be paid for referrals. The other options were having a third party agency run the scheme, such as the NEA, or thirdly to use other local actors. All those attending made it clear that LAs should lead on for ECO. LAs would likely contract out, but they would still retain ultimate responsibility for the scheme in their area. JKM suggested LAs could be given a legal role to deliver the obligation, as this is what separates them from other actors.
- 3.12 JKM will send out a scan of the handout, but it did not contain a great deal of information.
- 3.13 Procurement is a big issue for LAs and delivery, as there are complications due to EU regulations, varying procurement frameworks for all LAs and demands from development to use local contractors. It would be easier to have a single national partner for delivery. Many features will be similar to the current ECO, including the supplier obligation, mechanics and back office functions.
- 3.14 It was agreed that all need to keep encouraging DECC on these points whilst they are still deciding. This workshop was dominated by larger authorities with more resources. Variance among LAs and the inability of small authorities are often given as reasons to avoid LA delivery, but there are many options for collaboration among small LAs and many are already doing this. It was noted that there is a much greater variability in competency levels within third-sector and community energy organisations than there is with LAs.

ACTION:

- 3.15 **JKM to circulate handout from meeting to the Executive.**

4. Secretariat Update

- 4.1 Since the last meeting, the latest issue of CAN News has been published and printed. RL thanked DCh for providing the funding for this. It included the London CAN conference and awards report.
- 4.2 The e-bulletin has been released as usual, and RL encouraged people to send in any appropriate articles they'd like to see included or Tweeted.
- 4.3 CAN submitted a response to the FITs proposal, which was produced by DCo, and a response to the NICE consultation, produced by JKM.
- 4.4 A response was sent to Richard Mellish at DECC, following his request at the last CAN Executive meeting, for information on barriers to local delivery, which incorporated the comments emailed through by the Executive.
- 4.5 National CAN is still without sponsorship, although we need to know the direction of the Network and rebrand before pursuing this further. CAN has enough reserve funding to carry it through the next few months, but we will need further sponsorship / funding soon.
- 4.6 David Young of the CAN National Secretariat has been chasing outstanding invoices, and all money owed for the 2015 London conference has now been successfully received, with the exception of one "no-show".
- 4.7 National CAN hopes to hold two one-day conferences this year, one in spring and one in autumn, incorporating the CAN awards. If sponsorship becomes available this plan may change, possibly to include a two-day conference. If no sponsor is found for the spring conference, then CAN will look for a free venue, and hope to generate income from exhibitors.
- 4.8 It was agreed that a Chairs' Away Day will take place in London, with JKM able to offer a free venue. It was decided to hold the meeting in early February, with the one of the main topics being the Memorandum of Understanding. RL and JKM will look into possible dates and notify the Executive.
- 4.9 The website is designed to allow regions to do their own updates, and some have been doing this for meetings. However the news feed is mostly updated by RL. Regular updates are good for the network, and RL has asked for more of these.
- 4.10 The Secretariat is moving office on Monday 18 January, so the address for the National CAN secretariat will change to '1st Floor, Phoenix House, King Street, Leicester, LE1 6RN.' Please note that the phone number remains the same.

- 4.11 Little is happening in East Pennine. They still have a Vice Chair, but they are unable to get very involved.
- 4.12 In the North East, Cliff Duff may be interested in helping to bring the network back, but probably not as Chair. There is another group of LA officers meeting to discuss internal council energy issues who may be interested in getting involved. An email has also been received from Ian Bartlet at Citizen's Advice Stockton asking if the region is looking for a Chair or Facilitator. They have a funded manager and premises for the next 12 months. A reply was sent to say it will be considered.

ACTIONS:

- 4.13 **JKM to look into meeting room availability for Chairs' Away Day.**
- 4.14 **RL to liaise with JKM and to send details of Chairs' Away Day to the Executive.**

5. Rebranding - Members consultation paper

- 5.1 RL sent out the summary of responses. In total, 41 responses were received, although it should be noted that some were group responses whilst others were individual.
- 5.2 *Q1. Do you support the reasoning behind a reboot of the network?* There was a high level of support for the proposals of the consultation paper, with 90% of the 41 respondents expressing support, only two respondents saying no, and two expressing no clear view.
- 5.3 *Q2. Do you support the change of our operating name to the 'Association of Local Energy Officers'? If not, do you have an alternative suggestion?* Support for the name ALEO was more split, with 56% in favour and 44% expressing some level of concern over the name. However, a number of responses were hard to quantify. Objections included people not liking the term 'officers', feeling it was not inclusive enough, others thought the name should include the term 'energy efficiency' or explicitly mention domestic energy efficiency. Some suggestions were made, but none of these solved the problem. It was agreed that ensuring the network has a strong and unified voice is more important than the name. It is also important to emphasise the role of LAs to DECC.
- 5.4 *Q3. What role do you believe housing associations should play in the network?* 95% of respondents expressed support for the presence of Housing Associations (HAs) in CAN / ALEO, with the remaining 5% giving no firm view. However, there was a split over the level of their involvement, with 34% saying HAs should have the same level of membership as LAs. It was agreed that the Executive needs to set guidelines for their membership, but needs to make sure there is a distinction between LAs and other members. It was stated that there is a benefit from working with HAs, in feeding into government policy and having a strong voice.
- 5.5 *Q4. What role do you believe community energy organisations should play in the network?* 83% of respondents thought that Community Energy Organisations should have some role within the Network, with 12% being particularly supportive or suggesting full membership. 12% suggested associate or non-voting membership, and only 5% said they should have no role, with 12% giving no definite response. It was agreed that the Executive needs to set guidelines for their membership, as for Housing Associations.
- 5.6 *Q5. Do you have any comments on the role of colleagues working in the devolved nations?* 37% of respondents agreed that the devolved nations should be involved, with 61% unsure and only one respondent saying they should have no role. Wales is represented currently. Northern Ireland is currently considered to be an "Associate Member", although the Northern Ireland Housing Executive has expressed interest in the proposed changes to CAN. More is happening in Scotland, but CAN has little contact with them, and they do not seem particularly interested.
- 5.7 Taking into account these responses, a vote was proposed by HH to change the name of the network from 'Carbon Action Network (CAN)' to 'Association of Local Energy Officers (ALEO)', and seconded by JKM. The motion was carried, with four votes for, and one against.
- 5.8 JKM suggested that the regional fora also change their names in line with the national network, but it will be up to them to vote on whether to do so.
- 5.9 The legal name of the network could be changed, although it may be simpler to leave it as UK HECA Ltd. This will be discussed at the Chairs Away Day, along with the Memorandum of Association.

- 5.10 RL will start on the other necessary actions needed as part of the name change, including a new URL and logos.

ACTION:

- 5.11 **RL to look at options for a new domain names for the ALEO website and National Secretariat email address, as well as circulating ALEO logo options to the Executive.**

6. Memorandum and Articles of Association

- 6.1 It was decided that this should be discussed at the Chairs Away Day in February.

ACTION:

- 6.2 **RL to add the Memorandum and Articles of Association to the agenda for the Chairs Away Day.**

7. Follow-up letter to new government and devolved regions

- 7.1 It may be better to wait for the rebrand to send this, although it should be noted that government will enter purdah in advance of the local elections in March. The letter will also be sent out to the devolved national governments.

ACTION:

- 7.2 **RL to add the letter to the agenda for the Chairs' Away Day.**

8. Representation, consultations and policy

Warm Homes Discount

- 8.1 The Warm Homes Discount is changing in order to take account of those on tax credits, and there are delays involving HMRC. They are looking at aiming at those on low incomes with high energy costs. It will use council tax data from the Valuation Office Agency, and be applied automatically. There will either be fewer numbers receiving it, or the amount will be lower.
- 8.2 It was suggested that households already receiving the Winter Fuel Allowance should be ineligible to receive the Warm Homes Discount in order to make more effective use of the funds. Once details on the new proposals are received, members should feed back their views to the Network.

Redress Fines

- 8.3 Coventry have sent an email expressing their unhappiness with LAs exclusion from redress funding. Ofgem have stated that there is no objection to LAs receiving money in principal, but it is left to suppliers to choose, and they generally avoid LAs.
- 8.4 Ofgem are due to consult on redress fines, and it was agreed that CAN / ALEO should make it clear to them that utilities should not be allowed to control the money from their own fines.

9. Regional Updates

- 9.1 Due to lack of time, regional updates were not given at the meeting.
- 9.2 Three written updates were received by the Secretariat, prior to the meeting. RL asked that regions try to send updates as it helps to make the network look active, and is useful for those not attending meetings, as well as for the minutes.
- 9.3 RJ said that SE CAN will be sending in their update after the meeting, as their regional meetings are out of sync with the executive meetings. HH also said that WM CAN will be sending an update soon.

ACTION:

9.4 ALL regions that have not already done so to forward a written update to RL.

9.5 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 Friday 27th November at NCVS, Nottingham. Pick Everard stepped in at the last minute and provided sponsorship for lunch (our original sponsor had unfortunately gone into receivership). Presentations included:

- Chair's Update, Karen Lond
- A Brief Update on Current and Forthcoming Policies Affecting Energy Efficiency, Jose Hernandez, Pick Everard - which was really interesting.
- Setting Up a Local Energy Company – Robin Hood Energy, Gail Scholes, Nottingham City Council - which informed about Robin Hood Energy from its inception to launch and what this involved for the council and officers
- An afternoon workshop on Rebooting the Network where the views of EMCAN were gathered; and the responses were subsequently fed into the national CAN consultation.
- After lunch the afternoon training session was led by Andy Stephenson and looked at a different way of approaching projects to access funding in these challenging times which was very thought provoking for a Friday afternoon.

The meeting was well attended and delegates actively engaged with the speakers, workshop and training.

The next EMCAN meeting will be held on Thursday March 3rd, at Corby Borough Council, The Cube, Corby. This meeting will include presentations from Hillary Tanner – LGA and Sara Earl – Corby Borough Council. No sponsorship for this meeting has been secured as yet.

Details of any other events held and/or forthcoming:

The last NEA East Midlands Fuel Poverty forum was held on 16th October at Ellipse Energy in Leicester; presentations included NEA Policy Update, Ellipse Energy, Warm Homes Healthy Homes in Leicestershire and Greater Nottingham Healthy Housing Service.

The next NEA East Midlands Fuel Poverty Forum is taking place on 25th February at Ellipse Energy in Leicester.

9.6 HECA EAST

Written update from: PH, Chair of HECA East

Details of any meetings held and/or forthcoming:

HECA East held a meeting on 22 Oct 2015 in partnership with NEA. Our next meeting which will be our AGM will be held in early March 2016, again in conjunction with NEA.

Details of any current projects:

Brentwood Borough Council: We work with Aran Services. We produce leaflet insulation offers which we give out at our community safety meetings and road shows which is aimed at the elderly in Brentwood. We also get Aran to leaflet homes in fuel poor areas offering insulation and advice to save energy. Brentwood BC also promotes ECC's Energy Switch Scheme.

National Energy Network: Schemes include; project elements that offer funding streams for energy-efficiency improvements through the Affordable Warmth Network for Oxfordshire (and is very similar for the Buckinghamshire network also). The 'Better Housing, Better Health' project for example (which gains referrals from healthcare professionals for preventative works to reduce pressures on the Clinical Commissioning Group) came about through a successful bid of £412,500 to British Gas Energy Trust (via Charis Grants). The Green Deal Communities project gained funding in excess of £1 million from the Department of Energy & Climate Change, and now has a changed focus to deliver energy efficiency improvements to fuel poor residents. Please let me know if you need details of where other projects have gained funding from and I will forward details.

Broadland District Council and South Norfolk Council: Main project is Green Deal Communities (in partnership between Broadland, South Norfolk and Norwich City councils) offered grants towards solid wall insulation, loft insulation, cavity wall insulation and replacement heating systems. In October adjusted focus for fuel poverty, then also offered larger grants for qualifying households for replacement heating systems or first time installation of central heating.

- Norfolk Big Switch and Save – Norfolk wide scheme to help people to switch their energy company to save money. Ongoing scheme with auctions advertised two/three times per year. Mainly an online scheme but assistance is available to register by phone for those without the internet. Online map of all oil buying groups in Norfolk.
- In the Norfolk Warm and Well partnership – collaboration of local organisations to raise awareness of staying warm and well. Working with Community Action Norfolk to deliver a warm and well project funded by the British Gas healthy homes fund.
- Fuel Poverty alleviation schemes – have available winter warm packs, emergency heaters to loan, presentations to community groups and attending community events.
- Boiler Servicing grants- offering grants to qualifying residents to fund a boiler service.

Braintree District Council:

- Working with Aran Services on energy efficiency Programmes promoting insulation, replacement boilers etc.
- Offered residents an additional opportunity to register for Essex Energy Switch for October's auction, 1,700 residents signed up and 57% switched
- Currently promoting Essex Energy Switch
- Completed solar panel installations at the Discovery Centre, Great Notley, Unit 9, Lakes Road, Braintree and Witham Leisure Centre, Witham. Making a total of 6 BDC owned installations
- Signed up and submitted Strategy/Action Plan on Climate Local and featured in their latest update!
- Targeting fuel poor, low income households using data from House Condition Survey completed earlier last year

Uttlesford District Council:

- Working with Aran Services on energy efficiency Programmes promoting insulation, replacement boilers etc.
- Signed up and submitted Strategy/Action Plan on Climate Local
- Completed solar PV installation at Shire Hill depot, Saffron Walden
- Attempting to complete 1,800 solar PV installations on housing stock (third party funded), but likely to only complete 500 due to Government changes to FIT
- Currently promoting Essex Energy Switch
- On-going programme of external wall insulation installations on housing stock, hoping to complete another 60 by April 2016

Watford Borough Council:

- Externally Insulated circa 160 houses and flats shared over two LA areas (with Three Rivers DC) which were around a 50% mix of privately owned and a Housing Association - as the second phase of a project called Boundary Way.
- Externally insulated 50 private houses on a project called the Harebreaks.
- Both projects were delivered through the DECC Green Deal Communities funding.

Essex County Council:

- Running round 3 of its Community Energy Switch. This round has focused upon those in fuel poverty by engaging with CAB's and promotional material in Doctors Surgeries.

9.7 LONDON

Written update from: JKM, Acting Chair of London HECA

Details of any meetings held and/or forthcoming:

Joint meeting held with London Boroughs Energy Group on 1st December. It was well-attended, with 53 people present. Presentations on RE:NEW, the BRE Home Quality Mark, a solar PV battery storage project, behaviour change in the health sector, demand response in local authorities, and the circular economy.

We expect the AGM to take place in May.

Details of any current projects:

Waltham Forest Council is working together with local charity The HEET Project to deliver the 'Healthy Boilers, Healthy Bodies' project. This involves fixing broken boilers in 20 – 30 privately owned properties in the borough. The householders have been identified by HEET as vulnerable to the effects of fuel poverty. They are also unable to afford the repair work themselves or access any grants for boiler repairs or replacements. A key purpose of the project is to assess the impact of the repair work on the people's health. The work is due to commence in mid-January 2016.

Enfield Council has been working closely with National Energy Action for the past 18 months, in order to create 'Warmer Homes', a sustainable strategy for tackling fuel poverty across the borough. A strategy was launched in November 2015 and significant progress has been made in a number of areas, with a significant amount of community outreach and almost 300 grants approved for private sector households.

Islington Council was one of the UK winners of a fuel poverty competition run across six EU member states by Ashoka and Schneider Electric for their SHINE project. The announcement was made at COP21 in Paris in December and the team will receive business support from prominent consultants to further develop their project. Islington SHINE celebrated both its fifth anniversary and 10,000th client in December.

Islington Council will shortly begin developing the extension to their Bunhill Heat Network. It will extend the network from over 700 homes to around 1,300 and will significantly be using waste heat from the Northern Line of the London Underground to heat these homes and other buildings. The extended network will also have capacity for a further 1,000 homes.

Camden Council has won funding through NEA's redress technical innovation fund to trial battery storage with solar PV in 40 homes in partnership with Islington, Waltham Forest and Haringey. Northstar Solar are providing a finance model, which they've had to adapt with the changes to FiTs. Camden is particularly interested in the impact of battery storage on fuel poor households and hope to build an evidence base to guide future policy development. The batteries will mean residents can use the electricity produced by the PV in the evening and night-time, and also tailor their consumption (e.g. by running their washing machine at 2pm when the battery is full). The batteries are sized and selected specifically for each family situation. By using optimised solar panels generation is expected to be increased by about 20%. Residents will also receive a free LED lighting upgrade, an in-home display and access to an online portal, to help them track energy usage.

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

Sadly the previous Chair, Rob Ballington, resigned in December as his team at Newham Council was due to be deleted. Vice Chair, John Kolm-Murray, will be Acting Chair until the 2016 AGM.

9.8 South West

Written update from: Neil Short, Chair of South West CAN

The next SW CAN forum & AGM takes place on 19 January in Taunton.

- 10.1 JN introduced himself, and described his role as the Managing Director of National Grid Affordable Warmth Solutions. His role is to provide services to those delivering fuel poverty programmes, looking at the extension of gas networks to deprived areas. The company is a community interest company. The company makes money; however it is reinvested back into various non-commercial programmes to carry out pilots and research in energy and fuel poverty.
- 10.2 They are soon to publish a study on heating replacements for children and young families in Tamworth in a number of private and council houses, which will analyse the impacts of the programme. This should act as a basis for future initiatives as it provides real data on the impacts of heating replacement.
- 10.3 JN has been a member of FPAG for the last few years and has been leading on off-gas-grid work, especially on data sharing, development of a single database and broader policy issues. FPAG was disbanded in June.
- 10.4 National Grid Affordable Warmth Solutions have launched a self-funded, publically available, off gas grid database, with data from DECC, looking at all off-gas properties in the UK (www.nongasmaps.org.uk). There were challenges with data protection from DECC, and as a result the data is only available at a postcode level, and at a lower super output area (LSOA) level for LAs. The maps can be used by LAs for targeting investment. Access can be gained to LSAO level by applying through the website. It is currently funded for three years.
- 10.5 It is being used by a number of LAs, who have found it helpful. It took a lot of collaboration between gas networks and DECC to create. It is still missing some data and features, such as the ability to download maps, but this will be delivered in the future.

Questions

- 10.6 CAN – As the Tamworth project was successful, are you planning to roll it out elsewhere?
JN – National Grid Affordable Warmth Solutions have done around 30,000 houses since 2006, largely in collaboration with LAs, and will look to fund upstream gas connections projects again in the future, as long as there is funding for downstream heating measures available. JN also has access to funding to partner with LAs for projects to address private housing, which other gas networks are not offering. National Grid covers a large area of the UK, so a lot of LAs fall within that.
- 10.7 CAN – How favourable are you to biogas in rural fuel poor areas?
JN – National Grid supports biogas and is actively pursuing projects. JN would like to carry out an exemplar project with an off gas grid community to connect them to biogas. A connection to the national grid is still needed though, for continuity purposes. Generally the areas with the best biogas potential tend not to be in the most deprived areas. Some of the deprived areas are unconnected due to the very high cost of connecting them to the grid, and it's unlikely that they will ever be connected, particularly considering efforts to reduce UK carbon emissions. There are many smaller areas that can and should be targeted. DECCs recent £25m Central Heating Fund was oversubscribed, but progress is very slow. If the scheme is not successful then it is unlikely they will fund a programme like this again. The bids DECC received often didn't reflect the reality of the situation, and the LAs didn't know where to deliver the measures. It's unlikely the programme will be delivered unless there is a rethink and other areas are given the remaining money to deliver projects that are ready to go. Many LA's have problems with finding the right homes.
- 10.9 CAN – What message would you give to LAs about what they should do differently?
JN – National Grid won't have trouble meeting their targets for the next few years. The challenge is around data sharing with LAs. Some are unwilling to share information, or the information is very out of date. LAs need to keep data up to date.
- 10.10 CAN – not all LAs have access to data or means to collect it, especially for private housing.
JKM agreed that there are problems with data, especially with senior figures in LAs not valuing it as highly. Energy officers in LAs need to make the case internally and externally for up to date, useful information. HH raised the point that LAs are not able to access EPC data, which would be very useful.
- 10.11 JN – LAs need to be prepared to share the data. The data protection act says that it is ok to share it if it is to improve people's situations.
- 10.12 CAN – Departments within LAs don't usually agree with this, for example benefits data isn't shared in HH's council. JKM stated that the Welfare Reform Act prevents the sharing of this data, under his council's legal department's interpretation of the rules. Other boroughs interpret it differently. This should be discussed with DECC and the Data Protection Commissioner, as central government needs to provide clearer guidance.

- 10.13 JN – LAs need to take steps to deal with these issues, such as asking people if they are happy to have their data shared.
- 10.14 CAN – EPC data in her borough is shared with the permission of residents.
- 10.15 JN – The Data Commissioner has said that data should be shared if it is in residents' interests. Someone needs to own programmes within this sector, and be prepared to work with others to share data.
- 10.16 CAN – LAs are often too worried about the political risk of bad press.
- 10.17 JN – National Grid Affordable Warmth Solutions is also working on pulling together all policy in the sector to see what needs to change in order to bring all of the schemes in line with each other to make them, work better together. They have presented a policy paper to this effect for the ECO consultation. They are also working on consumer protection for off gas grid homes, buying oil and other fuels.
- 10.18 CAN – Who is in the new FPAG group, and will it continue?
- 10.19 JN – FPAG now has a Chair. There is no-one else yet, but FPAG is continuing. It will have six independent members and a number of subgroups with industry leads looking at each policy area. JN will be leading the Off Gas Grid Group. Members have been interviewed, but not yet appointed.
- 10.20 CAN – LAs need to have input into these issues, but also need more contact, for example guidance on data sharing, so they are able to provide feedback, but also to find out what they need to do better. This will enable officers to feed back to their management.
- 10.21 JN – There is an issue with meeting target in London, the forecasts were wrong, making the targets wrong. National Grid Affordable Warmth Solutions wrote to all London borough chief execs to ask about this, and only received three replies. This is a reflection of how these issues are prioritised in LAs.
- 10.22 CAN – There are problems with filtering stuff down to officers.
- 10.23 JN – They engaged through RENWE, and there was no demand in London.
- 10.24 CAN – Most of London is on mains, but the areas without it are very densely populated. CHP is a popular idea in some boroughs. Some boroughs are not as concerned, it needs someone within them to champion the issue, but they are still losing energy officers. DECC do not seem to care about HECA or enforcing it. PH – One of the problems with non-delivery is that it is not energy teams bidding for funds, but economic development. LAs need to work better internally and with each other, and DECC and others need to work with the right people.
- 10.25 JN – National Grid Affordable Warmth Solutions was set up in order to understand customer needs, as it required taking out of the National Grid's structure to work well. As a specialist organisation they are able to accomplish a lot more. LA's also need to set up appropriate structures to deliver programmes.
- 10.26 CAN – DECC has EPC data, but LAs are required to pay for it.
- 10.27 JN – DECC's contract with energy suppliers didn't allow for EPC sharing. JN will check if this information is included with the Off Gas Grid data.
- 10.28 JKM requested JN send something that can be sent out to CAN/ALEO members. This needs to include all of the distribution networks and include a map of where these lie.
- 10.29 JN said to get in touch with him if they had any further thoughts or questions.

11. AOB

- 11.1 There was no other business.

12. Date of next meeting

- 12.1 The next meeting will be the Chairs Away Day, in early February.
- 12.2 The next Executive meeting will be held on 14 April, 2016. This will also include the AGM.