



WM HECA Forum Steering Group

Minutes – 6 September 2005

Present: Ellie Cooper, Hestia (Secretariat)
Graham Jones, South Shropshire DC (Chair)
Keith Bennett, Hestia (Secretary)
Neil Morton, Birmingham City Council (Vice Chair)
Steve Rowley, Wolverhampton City Council
Tracy Troiolo, Warwickshire EEAC

1) Apologies

Received from Angie Madden, Chris Winter and Les Craggs.

2) Minutes of last meeting

Accepted as an accurate record. Points raised as follow up to previous discussions:

- Neil Morton happy to attend UK HECA Executive meetings on Chairs behalf, as required. GJ currently happy with this arrangement but may need to revise his Chair commitments in the future (see item 6, below)
- EC has sent information for posting up on the West Midlands regional pages of the UK HECA website. EC and GJ to attend training on 7 October. Each region will be able to manage website pages themselves.
- Enact – some members have been approached since the last meeting in June.
- EnergyWise – currently on hold as with changes to signposting vulnerable customers and contributions towards installations for Able to Pay, scheme may not be viable. Hestia currently under negotiations with energy supplier and hope to be able to continue with planned mailing later in the year. All partners to be updated as soon as there is any movement on EEC rates.

3) Financial position

The UK HECA Chair, Bruce Pittingale has indicated that there may be some EEC funding available from npower to support the Forum this coming year. However, there are some queries regarding when this money must be spent, the conditions the Forum will be required to meet, and how the money will be managed. Steering group agreed Hestia should manage the funding, should it be available.

GJ to contact Mike Lock at npower to clarify.

Action: GJ & Hestia

4) Steering Group membership

The steering group always welcomes new members from the West Midlands HECA Officer network. Please contact either Graham Jones or Ellie Cooper for further information.

Tracy Troiolo will be on maternity leave from 30 September. Rachel Ford from the Warwickshire EEAC will be attending steering group meetings in Tracy's stead.

5) Planning issues

11th Conference

Themes:

- Fuel poverty, rising fuel prices, effect on technology and grants etc. How does this impact on the solutions LAs can use to eradicate fuel poverty and promote sustainable energy use?
- Alternative solutions to reaching the fuel poor, focus on rural HTTHs.
- To consider a speaker on long term energy services contracts (through relaxation of the 28 day rule) and fuel supplier switching.

Structure:

- Suggested fewer formal presentations and more time provided for workshops.
- A 'trial room' scenario could be used? NB: Tracy Troiolo used the services of Helen Salisbury (freelance journalist) at a launch event with an MP.

Venue:

- Black Country Museum in Dudley is the favoured option. EC/KB to contact HECA Officer Athol MacDonald to discuss Dudley's interest in being the 11th conference local authority sponsor. **Action: EC/KB**

Proposed dates: (pending discussions with npower)

- Before 31 March – 28 February
- After 31 March – 26 April. April is the preferred month.

6) The Future of the West Midlands HECA Forum

Chair of the WM HECA Forum

Having Chaired the WM HECA Forum for two years and also because of growing work commitments, GJ would like WM HECA Officers to consider the opportunity of becoming Chair of the Forum from April 2006. He is happy to talk through what is involved with any interested parties.

Action: All WM

HECA Officers

Regional agency engagement

Following discussions at the last meeting around regional agency engagement, GJ and EC will be meeting up with Paul Cobbing on 3 October to discuss how the Forum can re-establish its links with Government Office. Date of next steering group meeting to be confirmed following this meeting.

Action: EC

7) UK HECA Forum update

New name for the UK HECA Forum

The UK HECA Forum is now a not for profit limited company - the Home Energy Conservation *Association*. The name was adapted from the familiar HECA title in order to embrace the wider home energy agenda, not just HECA. The UK HECA Steering Group has been renamed the HECA Executive. The Association receives £25,000 funding from EST.

UK Conference – 2005 and 2006

The 2005 conference made a profit of £10,000 – this will feed into supporting the 2006 event. Enact is unlikely to sponsor the 2006 conference although others have expressed interest. The Conference will take place on 16 and 17 May 2006 and be held in Blackpool.

Regional HECA Forum web pages

The Association will be running a series of training courses for Chair's and Secretariats in October in order to enable each region to manage their own pages. Transport expenses to be covered by the Association.

EST HEED database

Andrew Amato from EST has sent a request to all Chairs asking if he can attend a forthcoming event and launch the new HEED database. HEED provides area-based statistics such as average SAP, postcode level EEC data etc. which can be used to help set marketing plans and targets for programmes/schemes.

Some queries were raised regarding the commonality of information, particularly as local authorities that do/do not own their own housing stock collect information in different ways. The steering group suggested that the database would be of significant value if housing associations were involved in providing data and there were links into planning/building control.

GJ has passed his request to EC and TT as secretariats for the sub-regional SHOPAR and WEEAC Consortium. Andrew attended the recent WEEAC meeting, EC to organise presentation at forthcoming SHOPAR event. **Action: EC**

8) Any other business

- EEC2 contributions for the non-vulnerable – possible issue for local authority proposed EEC funded schemes? Is this a problem being experienced across the country? GJ to take as a query for the next UK meeting. **Action: GJ**

NB: LEO scheme in Solihull pulls in all EEC funding into a single fund. Grants are then allocated on a fixed rate basis e.g. vulnerable get 100% grants, down to 25% for those able to pay. The scheme also included central heating measures. The council has developed a set policy for the scheme and it works well.

9) Date of next meeting

Tuesday, 17 January 2006 at Hestia's Aquinas House offices.