



## WM HECA Forum Steering Group

### Minutes – 27 June 2006

**Present:** Chris Winter, Borough of Telford & Wrekin  
Denise Bradley-Lloyd, Herefordshire Council  
Ellie Cooper, Hestia (Secretariat)  
Graham Jones, South Shropshire DC (Chair)  
Rachel Ford, WEEAC

#### 1) Apologies

Received from Angie Madden, Jayne Corson, Karen Gilliatt, Keith Bennett, Neil Morton and Robin Dunlevy.

#### 2) Minutes of last meeting

Apologies from EC as a formal record of the previous steering group meeting is not available. It was noted however, that the meeting was mainly focused on planning for the 2006 conference and therefore all actions were completed.

Other discussion topics included:

- Chair of the WM HECA Forum: Graham Jones is still happy to remain Chair of the Forum; although Neil Morton (vice-Chair) has agreed to attend London based UK HECA meetings. The steering group welcomes expressions of interest from members in the position. Please contact Graham Jones for an informal discussion about duties/ level of commitment required.
- UK HECA: please see the HECA website <http://www.hecafora.com> for minutes of UK HECA Executive meetings.

#### 3) Steering Group membership

Herefordshire Council have appointed a new HECA Officer, Harry Fitch, who will start next week (3 July 2006). DBL will invite Harry to the next steering group meeting. Herefordshire are also interested in Chairing the Forum – to be explored during forthcoming meetings. **Action: Herefordshire & Chair**

Wyre Forest have expressed an interest in joining the steering group - this was welcomed by the Chair and existing members. EC to ensure Lynette Jones and Vicky Dunn are added to the mailing list and invited to attend the next meeting (see 7, below). **Action: EC**

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.

#### 4) Planning issues

*11<sup>th</sup> conference – 25 April 2006*

The 2006 conference was a successful event, with 70 attendees and comments at the end of the day such as "excellent Forum". Conference sponsors Dudley MBC and npower were also pleased.

There had been some concern in the weeks building up to the event regarding number of delegates from local authorities. The local support teams and secretariat called all local authorities to encourage representation from each – this exercise also served to remind those who were planning to attend, to return their sign up form. There was also a clash with a national housing exhibition which means many exhibitors who wished to display at the conference were unable to attend.

Feedback from the event suggested that the programme of speakers/workshops was useful and similar events would be well received by all. An area for improvement was in the venue (comments about public transport links, temperature, facilities and catering). Suggestions for future events included offering CPD certificates for attendance.

Delegate information, presentations, feedback and photos from the event are all available on the West Midlands regional pages of <http://www.hecafora.com> under 'Documents'.

*12<sup>th</sup> conference – proposed April/May 2007*

Possible date(s):

Week commencing either 23 April 2007 or 30 April 2007. RF to speak to Stratford re: Shakespeare's Birthday celebrations and preferred dates, pending their potential sponsorship.

**Action: RF**

Possible sponsors:

- Stratford on Avon District Council: the council expressed an interest in hosting a conference in 2005. RF to raise this at a meeting with the council's Head of Revenue and Housing at meeting in July and feed back to secretariat.

**Action: RF**

- North Staffordshire local authorities (Stoke on Trent, Stafford) were also mentioned in last years conference planning. EC mentioned a new project the local support team at Hestia hope to be working with Stoke on Trent on. Steering group to keep in mind if Stratford are unable to commit to the 2007 event.

Possible themes:

- Energy efficiency and the decent homes agenda:

Issues:

Many homes fail the DHS on thermal efficiency.

Many local authority officers still do not know how to assess a category 1 hazard for excess cold under the HHSRS.

What is a "reasonable degree" of thermal comfort?

Possible topics:

How energy efficiency is being integrated into decent homes programmes.

Delivering decent homes in housing with non-traditional construction, off mains gas/water etc.

Role of tenant choice in meeting decent homes in the social housing sector (e.g. when improvements are refused).  
Delivering decent homes to 'vulnerable' and 'non-vulnerable' residents.

Event will need to have clear outcomes for delegates i.e. what will they get out of the event, as this is a broad subject area.

- Sustainable energy funding event with practical sessions on how to write a funding bid for the LCBP, how to broker an EEC/ Energy Services deal. Presentations could include what funding is available for local authority projects, an outcome from the day could be each delegate having a project profile and idea of who to approach for funding/ how to go about it.
- Microgeneration event which brings together HECA and planning/building control officers. Local support teams held a successful event for planning officers on 8 June (see <http://www.hestiaservices.co.uk> and <http://www.weeac.org> for details) and the event could bring the two key groups together to look at appropriate targets, sites, partnerships to form and funding to access.
- Homeowners and energy efficiency: the role of first time buyers, social home purchasing deals, the home information pack (from June 2007) in the energy efficiency agenda. Homebuyer decision-making etc.
- EcoHomes as a broader housing standard i.e. EcoHomes 2006, EcoHomes XB and the Code for Sustainable Homes.

It was suggested that one or more themes could form the agenda for the 2007 conference. Members to provide comments on topics for 12<sup>th</sup> conference to secretariat for discussion at the next meeting.

**Action: All Forum members**

## **6) UK HECA Forum update**

NM was unable to make meeting in June, , but GJ had minutes.

General - A number of significant changes are currently affecting the UK HECA secretariat, however many issues are confidential. Bruce Pittingale has resigned as chair of the UK Forum. Steve Martin (vice Chair) is currently acting as interim Chair.

Finance - The Energy Saving Trust has withdrawn funding for the UK HECA secretariat. However, the 2006 UK conference has generated enough income to support the secretariat during 2006-07.

Projects – two projects being explored in partnership with the Lighting Association have been dropped due to funding issues.

Energy Saving Week 2006 – the UK HECA has announced that 25 October will be the local authority Energy Day 2006. The day aims to help HECA Officers raise the profile of energy efficiency in their local area/ with councillors. UK HECA is producing a toolkit on how to organise an energy awareness day, this will be available late summer.

2006 UK conference (Blackpool) – raised almost £50,000 revenue for UK HECA secretariat. Over 160 delegates attended the conference. The 2007 conference will be held in Belfast. WM HECA secretariat to consider ways in which group travel

arrangements can be offered to regional delegates, both to reduce the cost of travel to the event and the carbon emissions produced as a result.

**Action: WM secretariat**

## **7) Any other business**

- Sustainable Energy in Housing Expo: Hestia suggested that an event, bringing together manufacturers of sustainable energy technologies/ products and local authorities/housing professionals, could be held in the West Midlands in 06/07. The event would not involve formal presentations, but local authorities would be able to compare/contrast the different energy saving products available and share experiences with other delegates on their effectiveness/ applicability.

Steering group thought it was a good idea but that the following issues/topics should perhaps also be considered in its planning:

- Open debates on the range of products would be useful – but consideration would need to be given to competition between manufacturers.
  - A directory/guide to the various products available would be useful – expo's can be tiring events to walk around!
  - Product miles – local sourcing NB:
  - Procurement – good practice and ethical purchasing
  - Examples of local business demonstrating good practice e.g. Baggeridge Brick, Chamois Furnishings.
- EC informed steering group members of a recent monitoring report produced by the West Midlands Regional Observatory for Energy West Midlands, reviewing energy consumption and SAP ratings of domestic housing (by local authority area) in the West Midlands. EC to circulate report to the group.

**Action: EC**

## **8) Date of next meeting**

Tuesday, 3 October 2006, 10am at Hestia's Aquinas House offices.