



## Committee on Fuel Poverty

### **Minutes of Committee on Fuel Poverty (CFP) Meeting, 3rd May 2018**

1. The Chairman and following members of the Committee were present: David Blakemore (Chair), Alice Maynard, Jenny Saunders, Liz Bisset, and Lawrence Slade. Apologies were received from Paul Massara. Representatives of Citizens Advice attended to discuss their workplan for 2018/19. A BEIS colleague from the Science & Innovation team attended for a discussion on the thermal efficiency of cavity and solid walls. Also from BEIS, the Sponsor and Secretariat were present.

#### Minutes of last meeting and actions

2. The minutes of the meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> March were approved and were subsequently [published](#) on the CFP web pages on 31 May.
3. The majority of actions from the last meeting had been completed and members were content that remaining actions were being progressed.

#### Members' Interests

4. No potential conflicts of interest specific to the meeting's agenda were declared.

#### Research Projects

5. The Committee discussed the research project commissioned jointly with the Committee on Climate Change, which was nearing completion. The project was examining the synergies, tensions and trade-offs that currently exist in household energy policies, along with potential policy changes that could help to increase synergies and reduce the tensions. Members discussed some final comments to be made to Centre for Sustainable Energy who were commissioned to undertake the research plus the Committee's own proposed response to the research, following publication.
6. Members also discussed initial thoughts on further research projects for the 2018-19 financial year.

#### Follow up to consultation responses

7. The Committee had recently responded to BEIS consultations on the Energy Company Obligation (ECO), Warm Home Discount (WHD) and the minimum level of energy efficiency in the domestic private rented sector. Members discussed the responses, the possible outcomes of the consultations and what these might mean for progress towards the fuel poverty target and milestones. A key concern was regarding the proposal in the ECO consultation to increase the eligibility pool to 6.5 million households, as this would dilute the focus on

households in fuel poverty, despite the Government's previously-stated intention to improve the focus. Members agreed to write to the Minister for Energy & Clean Growth to underline the main points from their responses. The Committee's responses to these consultations can be found [here](#).

### Citizens Advice Workplan

8. Two representatives of Citizens Advice attended to discuss their workplan for 2018/19, plus potential future research projects. Areas of focus included heat in homes and future protection for customers. Citizens Advice also provided an update on their current fuel poverty research, which was due to be completed soon (and to which CFP had provided input).

### Cavity/Solid walls

9. At their March meeting, the Committee had discussed the impact of recent changes in the Reduced Data Standard Assessment Procedure (RdSAP) for the thermal efficiency of solid and cavity walls. An official from BEIS's Science and Innovation team attended to explain more about the changes and the potential impact on the ratings provided. The main factor had been that hidden gaps in the mortar between bricks left during construction had the effect of providing an insulation effect, meaning that on average solid walls had lower "U values" (the measurement of how much heat is lost through a particular material) than previously thought (meaning they lost less heat).
10. Members were also advised that the department's current detailed Energy Follow Up Survey (EFUS) to Ministry Housing, Communities and Local Government's annual English Household Survey (EHS) would have a strong fuel poverty focus this year, increasing the proportion of households in fuel poverty surveyed to 30% of the total.

### Other discussion

11. Members also:
  - discussed recent and forthcoming stakeholder engagement;
  - noted that the "Tailored Review" of the Committee was due in the current quarter;
  - Noted the current BEIS Call for Evidence on heat in buildings;
  - Discussed possible next steps on the Government's Clean Growth Strategy.

### Dates of future CFP Meetings

12. Dates for forthcoming meetings are:
  - 11<sup>th</sup> July 2018
  - 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2018
  - 13<sup>th</sup> September 2018
  - 7<sup>th</sup> November 2018