



12.30-14.00 13 March 2015

Committee Room 2, Scottish Parliament

Fuel Poverty – fuel poverty and health, and rural fuel poverty

Convenor: Jim Eadie MSP

Joint meeting of the Cross Party group on Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency and the Cross Party Group on Housing

1. Attendees

A provisional list of attendees is attached to the end of this note. If you attended and are not shown on the list, please email Elaine Waterson (Elaine.waterson@est.org.uk).

2. Introduction

Jim Eadie MSP welcomed everyone to the meeting and provided an introduction to the meeting's topic and an introduction to the speakers.

3. Presentation: Fuel Poverty and Health, Scott Restrict (Energy Action Scotland)

Scott's presentation began by considering what fuel poverty is and its causes and effects. He went on to discuss fuel poverty statistics for Scotland, excess winter mortality and the health impacts of cold weather. He then spent some time discussing the recent (March 2015) guideline from NICE entitled '*Excess winter deaths and morbidity and the risks associated with cold homes*'. This guideline makes recommendations on how to reduce the risk of death and ill health associated with living in a cold home and aims to help meet a range of public health and other goals. Scott's presentation concluded by considering the available support programmes in Scotland and other sources of help, and with an interesting statistic - for the current winter period to 6th March 2015, Scotland had 10% of those eligible for Cold Weather Payments and received 65% of the total GB expenditure (£6,705,000).

4. Presentation: Rural Fuel Poverty, Teresa Bray (Changeworks)

Teresa began by highlighting a fourth element of fuel poverty – people. She emphasised that it is people who are suffering from fuel poverty not houses, and it is important that people maximise the benefits from their home's heating and electricity (or heat) generating systems– particularly those living with new technologies. She went on to outline the extent of fuel poverty in rural areas (35% of those living in urban areas are fuel poor, 44% of those in accessible rural areas are fuel poor, and 61% of those living in remote rural areas are fuel poor), and consider fuel poverty rates by local

authority area. She then went on to discuss the housing stock and fuel sources (and the costs associated with these) in rural areas. She then discussed a number of other relevant issues including: transmission charges, available tariffs, supply competition etc. Finally she re-emphasised the importance of supporting people to get the best out of their heating systems, and recommended the development of a specific rural fuel poverty strategy, the need for rural proofing Scottish Government programmes, and suggested that a 'postage stamp' approach to fuel poverty might be appropriate.

5. Presentation: The Passivhaus Approach, Jamie Carruthers (Dormont Estate)

Jamie introduced himself as a rural landlord of mostly pre-1919 stock, with first-hand knowledge of fuel poverty in an area of low median incomes and high fuel costs. He then described how, as a result of a 2004 study of the energy efficiency of his Estate's stock, a series of energy efficiency and heating measures were retrofitted. He outlined the impacts of this work (in terms the EPC ratings of properties) and provided some insight into his motivations for undertaking this work (long term stewardship of land (incl. property, reduction in long term maintenance costs, improved let-ability, improved rent security etc.) as well as the energy savings and improved health outcomes experienced by the occupants. He then talked about his Passivhaus development of 8 new homes. He wanted to future proof these houses forever which is why he built them to the Passivhaus standard. He went on to outline the results of monitoring work that has been undertaken in these properties (which was shared publicly for the first time at this meeting). The energy consumption of these homes is around one tenth that of an average UK home, and the costs of space and water heating and lighting is less than £100 per year. There is evidence, too, of occupants experiencing better health from living in a fresh, warm and dry living environment

6. Questions

The first set of questions was as follows:

- **Stephen Young** asked about the extent to which it was a problem that rural handy people tended to be jacks of all trades and often had no formal construction qualifications.
- **Sarah Boyack MSP**, commented that all the presentations had been excellent and asked 2 questions:
 - Whether the panel could comment on the trade-off between upgrading homes and abandoning homes.
 - The extent to which the initial cost of kit is prohibitive.
- **John McKinney (NRFC)** highlighted the need for properties to be wind and water tight and asked how we can empower property owners to make properties wind and water tight before making other 'improvements' to their homes such as improving bathrooms and kitchens.

Responses from the panel:

- **Jamie Carruthers** agreed that a fabric first approach was critical. He emphasised that as a landlord keeping properties wind and water tight was a repairing standard that had to be met in any case. In relation to the skills question he noted that he had never had any problems with finding appropriately skilled contractors. In terms of the trade-off between

upfront costs and the running costs of certain measures Jamie highlighted that it is the tenant who gets all the benefit but that the installation of such measure should improve the let-ability of properties.

- **Teresa Bray** noted that there are issues in terms of the building industry and training in that every day that is taken off to undergo training is a day of lost income. So there are issues around improving skills. She highlighted the importance of the industry knowing what the benefit will be to them, and the importance of undertaking energy efficiency work when other home improvement work is being undertaken. She highlighted that the theoretical savings from renewables systems are not being achieved as people don't know how to use them, and that this is a particular issue in social housing. As a result renewables systems are getting a bad press in certain areas and this could, in the future, lead to a drop in demand for such systems.
- **Scott Restrict** highlighted that it can be a long and expensive process for organisations to gain the necessary standards. He also agreed with the need for properties to be wind and water tight. In terms of the trade-off between upfront costs and running costs he emphasised the role of the Renewable Heat Incentive.

The second set of questions was as follows:

- **Margaret McDougall MSP** noted that not getting the best out of storage heaters was an issue 20 years ago and is still an issue today, and asked how should we get the best out of them and who should be responsible for this?

Responses from the panel:

- **Teresa Bray** answered that for social housing it is the landlord that is responsible, but she also pointed out that as a country as a whole we don't know how to get the best out of our homes.

Jim Eadie MSP asked each of the panellists to provide a 'take-home' message for the audience.

These were as follows:

Teresa Bray - we need an engagement programme with everyone so we can all make the best of living in our home

Jamie Carruthers – the importance of Passivhaus and the savings that can be made when you build to high standards

Scott Restrict – we need a national strategy to bring everything together, starting with the NHS. It is vitally important to have a coherent view.

7. Approval of minutes from the last meeting

Sarah Boyack MSP moved and **Stephen Young** seconded that the minutes represented an accurate description of the last meeting.

8. Conclusion

Jim Eadie MSP concluded the meeting and asked the secretariat to circulate the NICE guideline **Scott Restrict** referenced to the SPREEE group.

7. Date and Topic of Next Meeting

The next meeting will take place on Thursday 18 June 2015 between 12.30pm and 2.00pm. The meeting will focus on local energy.

For suggestions and corrections of this note and to request copies of presentations, please contact the secretariat, Elaine Waterson (Elaine.waterson@est.org.uk).

9. Attendees

Name		Organisation
Neil	Barnes	Mark Group
Claudia	Beamish, MSP	Scottish Parliament
Sarah	Boyack, MSP	Scottish Parliament
Teresa	Bray	Changeworks
Rosemary	Brotchie	Shelter Scotland
Finlay	Buchanan	Church of Scotland
Jamie	Carruthers	Dormont Estate
Katrina	Chalmers	Scottish Government
Katy	Dickson	Scottish Land & Estates
Gavin	Donoghue	Scottish Renewables
Jim	Eadie, MSP	Scottish Parliament
Jill	Fenton	Changeworks
Shona	Fisher	Ofgem
Patrick	Harvie, MSP	Scottish Parliament
Caroline	Henderson	Bellenden
Ray	Horwood	NRFC
Ray	Horwood	NRFC
Patrick	McCarthy	Heriot Watt University
Colin	McCorquodale	NFRC Scotland
Margaret	McDougall, MSP	Scottish Parliament
Ann	McKenzie	Scottish Government
John	McKinney	NRFC
Sam	Mills	Changeworks
Paul	Mullan	Ofgem
Jason	Ormiston	Vattenfall
Sitar	Ramsay	Energy Saving Trust
Scott	Reistrick	Energy Action Scotland
Adrian	Shaw	Church of Scotland

Cheryl	Stallan	
James	Tarrier	
Eileen	Tarrier	
John	Taylor	National Grid
Elaine	Waterson	Energy Saving Trust
Graeme	Wilson	
Stephen	Young	Stephen Young Associates