

Boris Johnson

Mayor of London
City Hall
The Queens Walk
London
SE1 2AA

23 November 2012**Fuel poverty action in London**

The Health and Environment Committee met last week with your Deputy for Housing, Land and Property, as well as other expert guests from government and energy sectors, to discuss issues around fuel poverty and domestic energy efficiency retrofit, including the continuation of the GLA's RE:NEW programme.

As it has in the past, the Committee commends the work of the RE:NEW programme, and is pleased to hear that there are plans for RE:NEW to continue to operate in 2013 and beyond, within the Green Deal and ECO context, and for RE:NEW to act as a portal for any London householder to access the Green Deal or ECO via a very simple front end, able to connect the householder to the market so as to give confidence in the value for money of the works. The Committee was also pleased to hear that there is an intention to assemble a substantial pipeline of projects to secure London's share of the ECO fund – about £340 million annually – in particular by working with large social landlords.

The Committee would be very pleased to hear more detail about how these extensions of the RE:NEW programme will work in practice, and how they will be resourced. As the Committee heard from the industry, it will be important for retrofit under the new framework to get going quickly, to maintain capacity in the retrofit installers currently doing work under the existing system.

However, the Committee would like information on whether and how the plans it has heard are compatible with any further down-scaling of the annual GLA resource allocated to the programme. Your Deputy referred the Committee to the ECO funding stream but this is, we understand, for the retrofitting work itself. Is it expected to support GLA front-end activity, promotion or pipeline assembly? He also referred to a team of 90 staff within the Housing and Land Directorate, including staff transferring from the Homes and Communities Agency. The Committee would be interested to hear what quantum of staff time, and what other resource, will be allocated to RE:NEW work in 2013/14.

On other aspects of tackling fuel poverty, the Committee welcomes the use and updating of the fuel poverty risk mapping tool developed during the recent work by the former Health and Public Services Committee, and especially welcomes the intention to share it more widely. The Committee urges that any data licensing issues standing in the way of this be speedily resolved.

The Committee also welcomes engagement with boroughs on fuel poverty. We urge that the GLA should also work on engagement with public health services and the NHS, and help boroughs engage as well. The thousands of excess winter deaths annually suggest that fuel poverty and cold homes should be a public health priority, which is an area where the Mayor should be able to offer strategic leadership.

I very much look forward to receiving your response, and the Committee would be grateful if this can be provided by Friday 14 December. It would be helpful if you could copy your reply electronically to the Committee's scrutiny manager Ian Williamson on ian.williamson@london.gov.uk.

Yours sincerely,

Murad Qureshi AM

Chair of the Health and Environment Committee