



Eich cyf/Your ref
Ein cyf/Our ref SF/JG/01903/12
Edward Davey MP
Department of Energy and Climate Change
3 Whitehall Place
London
SW1A 2HH
PS.edward.davey@decc.gsi.gov.uk

15 June 2012

Dear Ed,

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the Department of Energy and Climate Change consultation on the consumer engagement strategy for the Smart Meter Implementation Programme.

The Welsh Government's Climate Change Strategy places an emphasis on enabling individuals and communities to make different choices that can help reduce emissions. Communication and engagement programmes form an important part of delivering the emissions reductions across the sectors covered by the Strategy. We welcome the development of a consumer engagement strategy to support the smart meter roll-out and believe it could be very helpful in triggering behavioural change and emissions reductions.

Engagement activities & Central Delivery Body

The Welsh Government believes that consumer engagement activities on the smart meter roll-out should be designed to be complementary to Government communications on climate change and the Green Deal. Government may wish to look at ways in which the engagement activities led by the Central Delivery Body and the Energy Saving Advice Service could be coordinated. This would ensure clear and consistent messages about the benefits of energy efficiency, and interventions designed to deliver demand side responses such as smart meters and in home displays (IHDs). It is also important to recognise that, to avoid individuals putting themselves at risk through cold homes, some groups of consumers will need support to understand the information being provided by smart meters and IHDs.

The Welsh Government has developed two complementary programmes to improve energy efficiency of dwellings and tackle fuel poverty. The Nest programme enables us to respond to demands for support from those likely to be in fuel poverty wherever they live in Wales. The complimentary programme, arbed, provides intensive, targeted improvements for whole

communities in the most deprived communities in Wales. We would be keen to look at how the smart meter consumer engagement strategy could link with our consumer engagement activities, Nest and arbed. We may even consider the possibility of trialing delivery of smart meters through our energy efficiency programmes.

There is an argument that consumer engagement activities on smart metering might be more effectively delivered through integration with other related public funded programmes (e.g. climate change engagement, energy efficiency advice, regeneration and fuel poverty programmes). However, should UK Government have a strong preference for consumer engagement activities to be funded by the private sector, we agree that suppliers should be obliged through licence conditions to establish and fund a Central Delivery Body.

Micro-businesses

A recent report to the Welsh Government estimated that micro-businesses account for almost 95% of all businesses in Wales. We suggest that centralised consumer engagement activities aimed at domestic customers should also cover micro-businesses. Micro-businesses often pay a domestic tariff and the two groups behave in similar ways in respect of their energy consumption.

I would be happy for liaison to continue at official level between Welsh Government and DECC to support development and delivery of the consumer engagement strategy. My officials can provide further background on our consumer engagement activities should this be useful.

Yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'John Griffiths', written in a cursive style.

John Griffiths AC / AM

Gweinidog yr Amgylchedd a Datblygu Cynaliadwy
Minister for Environment and Sustainable Development