***Forth Valley College***

***Grangemouth Road***

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**RESPONSE TO RIIO-ED2 DRAFT DETERMINATIONS**

[Forth Valley College](http://www.forthvalley.ac.uk/) (FVC) plays a significant and transformational role in the lives of thousands of learners from across the Forth Valley area and beyond. Established in 2005 as Scotland’s first regional college, our state-of-the art campus facilities based across three local authority areas in Falkirk, Alloa and Stirling welcome more than 14,500 students per academic session - with 94% progressing to employment or further studies on completion of their course.

Through our mission of “Making Learning Work”, we aim to offer the highest quality learning experiences working collaboratively with organisations across public, business, education and third sectors. We have learning provision from access to degree level across three diverse teaching departments: *Care, Sport, Business and Communities; Creative, Digital and Leisure Indsutries; STEM and construction.*

*As an organisation, FVC has been proactive and sector leading in our response to meeting NetZero ambitions and addressing the climate emergency. We are doing this in a number of ways including:*

* *delivery of new skills, upskilling and retraining required for the emerging Green Economy and greening of current industry;*
* *STEM engagement and outreach through schools; focusing on issues such as energy, climate change and the wider environment,*
* *actively involving young people in developing real business solutions to climate change through our highly successful “Fuel Change” movement. Fuel Change is a national initiative that provides a platform for young people to become involved in supporting business to finding solutions to real business problems – galvanizing a network to enable drive and change required to achieve a NetZero future*

*In addition, as a sector in Scotland, t*he College Development Network (CDN), together with the Energy Skills Partnership, have recently published a “Statement of Commitment on the Climate Emergency” that establishes 10 key actions which colleges have committed to delivering with the aim of speeding up efforts to achieve NetZero gas emission.

Please find below our response to Q6 regarding the Bespoke Uncertainty Mechanism, specifically the proposal for a Net Zero Fund.  
  
**SPEN-Q6: What are your views on our proposals for SPEN’s bespoke UMs?**

Forth Valley College has been fortunate to access funding through SPEN’s Green Economy Fund. The funding available enabled the College to develop a specific programme of outreach and engagement on STEM (with a focus on NetZero related issues) to primary schools across the Forth Valley area. In the academic session leading up to the March 2020 lockdown, this project had delivered 109 sessions of STEM outreach with a total of 72 participants.

Without funding from SPEN as the DNO, the project would not have taken place as there was no additional resources available to run this. The additional funding through the DNO provided a fantastic opportunity to develop a new approach, engage with new audiences and raise awareness within the wider community.

Working with the DNO as the funder also gave an invaluable opportunity to work in partnership with industry – gaining an insight into the issues they are facing around the drive towards NetZero and how we can work together to involve communities in finding solutions. We were also able to utilise their expertise, knowledge and support both at the project development and delivery stage – raising our awareness of the challenges they face as an industry but also the benefits of working together as we transition to NetZero.

The drive towards NetZero and the ambitions to achieve this, require specific funding programmes that encourage collaboration, shared learning and an inclusive approach. The DNO is in a unique position to do this in terms of expert knowledge, working across communities and sectors.

Demand on resources, budgets and the pressure on other grant making organisations will only continue to increase which could mean projects seeking to take forward NetZero ambitions have more limited access to funds.

The partnership and collaborative approach developed through the funding from the DNO has been invaluable and potentially could not be replicated if the funding was not available in the future.

Not having access to this funding from the DNO in future would risk losing the momentum gained over the previous years, minimises impact across communities, limits partnership working and innovation. Engaging with the DNO as the fund operator also gives the fund added credibility – enabling projects to work directly work with industry experts.

This provides additional reassurance to communities and those involved in projects that the network operator is actively seeking collaborative solutions to NetZero issues and willing to support these financially.