

Dear Andrew

Following a presentation at the ESTA conference on the 23rd February, where Ben Smithers spoke about the proposed smart meter roll out, where I voiced some concerns at the time.

Having now read the consultation fully, I now write accordingly;

Firstly, the roll out of smart meters to domestic users does seem a good idea in principle, however, as outlined in your document there are a number of areas of concern regarding Switching from one supplier to another etc.

There are further areas of concern that I would like to raise;-

1. The benefits to consumers are not clear, particularly to the lay-person. It mentions 'time use tariffs', which I assume is a future possibility and not something that will be a quick win for consumers.
2. The fact that there may be loss of information when changing to a new supplier, allows supplier's to use 'scare' tactics when selling to consumers as well as this becoming a barrier to exit for people using the meter effectively. Suppliers must take responsibility for ensuring they work at change of supply and the consumer must be protected by a clause to get out of the contract if the supplier does make good the metering aspect.
3. There should be a pilot scheme which in principle you will be doing through major suppliers, however, this in itself needs to be subject to a 'SMART' process
 - SPECIFIC – TARGET MARKETS TO INCLUDE LOW INCOME FAMILIES AS WELL AS WORKING/MIDDLE CLASS USERS TO ENSURE A BROAD CONSUMER FEEDBACK OPPORTUNITY.(see note below)
 - MEASUREABLE – CREATE A DATABASE OF CUSTOMERS WITH METER'S, WHO CAN THEN BE SURVEYED TO THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE METERS
 - ACHIEVEABLE - IS THERE A STRUCTURE TO ENABLE THE ABOVE 2 POINTS TO BE SUCCESSFUL?
 - REALISTIC – IS IT REALISTIC TO EXPECT AN OUTCOME WITHOUT DEFINING EXACTLY WHAT IT IS TO THE CONSUMER? (see note below)
 - TIMELY – IS THE TIMELINE FOR THE PILOT APPROPRIATE?

Notes;- To help with specific target markets it would be pertinent to include households on benefits, which would be relatively easy to reach, as people on benefits have to sign on, or have income support communication, which would be the ideal opportunity to 'sell the benefits' of the smart meter(assuming a suitable benefit/savings marketing document can be provided ie. TOP TIPS for Savings). As these households would clearly benefit from the potential 'savings that can be made'.

The realistic aspect is that without clearly defining the benefits to the consumer in an 'idiots guide' style, it may well fall flat, and simply be a very expensive exercise that this country cannot afford.

I trust this information is of help to you

Yours sincerely



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