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Submitted to Draft Forward Work Programme 2026/2027 consultation
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Introduction

1 What is your organisation?

Organisation:
Bryson Energy

2 Have we prioritised the right projects?

Yes

Please comment on your response:

Yes, the identified projects are the right ones, aligned to the four strategic objectives.

3 Do you have any objections to our proposed projects?

No

Please comment on any objections:

No, Bryson Energy have no objections to the proposed projects.

4 Do you have any other comments about our proposed projects?

Please provide any comments you have:

The proposed projects are aligned to the Consumer Energy Charter and the overarching principles of financial commitment, pre-payment meter customer commitment, energy debt and communications. Compliance and enforcement remain key, ensuring that electricity and gas suppliers meet their obligations.

In relation to Strategic objective 1: Supporting the Just Transition to Net Zero, this transition needs to be fair to all. The "Worst First" principle should be applied, with consumers living in homes in the worst conditions being prioritised for support.

When establishing the regulatory frameworks required to support the implementation of the DfE's Smart Meter Design Plan decision, consideration needs to be given to vulnerable groups and those living in rural areas. There is a risk rural consumers could lose out on accessing smart meters due to weak or no broadband. Bryson also have 30% of service users in urban areas with no Wi-Fi at home due to cost, or digital exclusion. So, consideration needs to be given to these consumers too.

For Strategic objective 4: Providing the highest level of consumer service and protection- an anticipated outcome is improved energy literacy. Bryson find that consumers still don't understand their energy bills. Education through intensive home visits is required to provide this support, however this is resource intensive. Funding from the Government could support the charity and voluntary sector in rolling out more tailored home visit support. Running programmes, such as the Pathways to Net Zero programme offered by Bryson, will ensure consumers are informed of how to understand their bills, read their meters, change tariffs and reduce their electricity usage.

As noted above, consideration needs to be given to digital exclusion. If consumers don't have a digital device or internet, they cannot access services such as energy literacy information, online banking services and tariff changes. Consumers on our Pathways to Net Zero programme state they switch to a new supplier following a doorstep visit from a cold caller. They have a cheaper offer for up to 6 months, then the price increases and they are locked into a more expensive tariff and don't know how to switch again as the cold caller did it for them. There is therefore a need for education on switching and guidance on how householders can make the changes necessary themselves, when looking for the cheapest tariff. As noted above, not everyone has access to online information around switching tariffs, so this information has been provided to consumers in person through home visits by Bryson staff with the outcome of increased energy literacy.

In addressing digital exclusion, as well as using Libraries, local community centres should also be considered. Consumers generally have access to their local community centre or already have a trusted relationship with them. There isn't a library in all areas, therefore voluntary and charity organisations, with the support of funding, could also roll support out.

In relation to social tariffs, Bryson would support social tariffs for electricity, similar to the broadband social tariff for those on low incomes.

To inform research into consumer issues arising as part of the energy transition, ongoing lived experience is key. This research needs to include focus groups, or in-person sessions with consumers that won't have access to an online survey due to digital exclusion, or for those who face literacy barriers.