

From: RITCHIE, Margaret [margaret.ritchie.mp@parliament.uk]
Sent: 27 January 2015 12:16
To: Tyrie, Briege
Subject: Draft Forward Work Programme 2015-2016

Dear Ms Tyrie

I have been involved for a number of years in the campaign to extend the natural gas pipeline to South Down. I very much welcome the inclusion of the project within your Draft Forward Work Programme to develop and deliver a network implementation plan for Gas to East Down. You will be aware that in recent years the gas network has been extended into southern areas of South Down, Warrenpoint, and that this has been very well received by domestic and business customers. I have had discussions with gas suppliers and am aware of their interest in extending the network further in the southern area of South Down and into East Down, areas such as Crossgar and Downpatrick and further afield.

The East Down areas of Crossgar and Downpatrick would include a very substantial potential customer base in both the private (manufacturing and food production) and public sector. With large scale production in the Crossgar area and at the Down Business Park on the Belfast Road, Downpatrick, along with the large public services estate now located at the Downshire Estate, Ardglass Road Downpatrick and also the Downe Hospital. I would urge that in securing a gas network option for this large private business and public sector base, that residential areas also see benefits from such an extension. There are a number of areas within Downpatrick that have been categorised as areas of deprivation and it would be the hope that the option of a gas supply could go some way in alleviating fuel poverty, not only in these areas but throughout the area and including the large rural elderly population. I am aware from contact with traders in Downpatrick and Crossgar that they would very much welcome the extension of the gas pipeline. There are many large scale farm businesses within the area that would also welcome and benefit from the extension of the gas pipeline.

As such I would urge that this project to develop and deliver a network implementations plan for Gas to East Down be included in your final Future Work Programme.

I look forward to your reply.

Yours sincerely

Margaret Ritchie MP