About the Chartered Institution of Building Services Engineers (CIBSE)

CIBSE is the primary professional body and learned society for those who design, install, operate and maintain the energy using systems, both mechanical and electrical, which are used in buildings. Our members therefore have a pervasive involvement in the use of energy in all types of buildings the UK. Our focus is on adopting a co-ordinated approach at all stages of the life cycle of buildings, including conception, briefing, design, procurement, construction, operation, maintenance and ultimate disposal.

CIBSE is one of the leading global professional organisations for building performance related knowledge. The Institution and its members are the primary source of professional guidance for the building services sector on the design and installation of energy efficient building services systems to deliver healthy, comfortable and effective building performance.

Response

The Draft Provisions about Energy legislation does absolutely nothing to fundamentally change the efficiency of the UK energy system, nor to encourage investment in measures to improve the efficiency of energy resource usage. By focusing on market transaction mechanisms, it instead risks encouraging gaming by consumers to find the lowest price, rather than creating a true long-term solution to the energy trilemma which is so desperately needed. Greater efficiency in the use of energy resources is the best and most cost effective way to reduce consumer bills, lower carbon emissions and enhance security of supply. Greater efficiency of use will reduce the aggregate cost of investment in new energy generation capacity. These measures are more likely to drive energy cost reductions than the introduction of smart meters, which will be a costly programme taking many years to complete.

There is a history of a disjointed policy landscape when it comes to energy efficiency in the UK which has led to poor outcomes. Coherency is required to provide appropriate market signals to industry and business, and to provide the public with confidence that the Government is taking a long term view. The experience and knowledge to improve the performance of existing building stock exists, but Government needs to provide an appropriate policy and legislative infrastructure to support to implement this on a national scale.

Empowering consumers to improve efficiency of energy use in their properties will reduce energy consumption and therefore aggregate demand, thereby reducing the demand for the highest marginal cost generating plant, and reducing energy costs. Smart meters are a method of making energy consumption more visible, after all you ‘can't manage what you don’t measure’ but the meters by themselves won’t lead to
energy savings, and experience in trials suggests that the impact of smart meters is transient and short lived. Consumers of all types (domestic and non-domestic) need encouragement to take action but this draft legislation may not provide that.

February 2016