

Dear Ofgem

I am pleased to comment briefly on SPEN community engagement.

Berwickshire Housing Association is a registered social landlord and the principal provider of affordable rented housing in Berwickshire where we house one in every five households.

We have engaged with SPEN through their ARC initiative on two major projects for the Housing Association. The first is the wide scale application of rooftop PV to assist in reducing fuel costs to tenants and the second an income raising development, Hoprigshiels Community Wind Farm, which is a joint venture with fellow charity Community Energy Scotland.

The service provided by SPEN has been exemplary. The ARC team have worked very closely with us and effectively facilitated both projects which otherwise would not have been possible. This means a huge amount to ourselves and the communities we seek to serve. Whenever we build a house for let in accordance with an agreed programme with Scottish Borders Council and the Scottish Government we receive Housing Association Grant towards the capital cost. We also secure borrowing from banks which is repaid from future rental income. However, if we are to keep rents affordable the cost of new construction is such that we are left with a shortfall. The income from the wind farm will provide the resources required to fill this shortfall, sufficient to allow us to build an additional 20 homes for social rent each year for the next 25 years. In an area of severe housing pressure the impact of this is considerable.

Similarly we estimate savings on electricity bills arising from our installation of PVs on tenants' rooftops will be in the region of £1.9 million over twenty years at today's prices. Given that many of our tenants are on low or modest incomes the impact here is very significant.

SPEN have worked very closely with us in facilitating connection for these projects and responded directly and pro-actively to concerns and challenges along the way.

I hope these comments are useful. Please contact me with any queries.

With kind regards

Alan