

Gordon Brown's plan for energy is half-baked, at best

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I posted this on Twitter last night:

<https://twitter.com/RichardJMurphy/status/1557471343561654272>

The Tweet was in response to an article [in the Guardian](#).

This morning there are quite a number on Twitter saying this is the plan that has long been waited for on how to tackle the cost of living crisis, but I have to disagree.

Sure, Brown is saying tariffs have to be looked at and I agree. But right now whatever is done with tariffs in the way he suggests will not bring the level of payments owing by many people down to a level they can afford, and so the ambition is far too small.

And in any event, the focus of this is on letting the energy companies survive and not on letting people still live in their homes with heat, food and their bills paid and credit record intact, which is important in the modern world.

To cap all that, what Brown is saying is that the state should absorb energy company losses, and then restore them to private control when profits return. That is madness: the state needs the upside too if it is to provide support or take social advantage of ownership to deliver long-term gains from ownership for the benefit of society as a whole.

So, as I have suggested:

- * Change the tariffs by cutting out standing charges and making the charge for consumption progressive, increasing as usage does;
- * Put pre-paid meters on the lowest tariff automatically
- * Require tariffs to be cut so that if each household paid the same proportion of its income in energy cost none would be in fuel poverty
- * Then let the energy companies squeal if they wish if they cannot afford that, and

take them into public ownership at rock bottom prices if their business model has failed as a result.

I will have more to say on this later today, but this is a half-baked plan from Brown, at best, not least because it focuses on handouts for energy companies, and that is not what we need right now.