

Climate realism

The Prime Minister and Energy Secretary have changed the language about net zero. In her most recent speech she wisely points out that you cannot get to net zero without the active co operation and spending by consumers who would need to change their way of life. This policy has been a top down legally driven process run by governments and big business. It cannot work unless it comes up with affordable and popular products, services and vehicles.

The government now needs to modify more of its policies to bring them in line with this realism. They have delayed the ending of petrol and diesel cars, recognising that many do not want one of the current models or find them too expensive.

I have raised with them the need to cancel the proposed fines on car manufacturers who sell too many petrol and diesel vehicles. It is an absurd and potentially damaging tax.

They need to confirm gas boilers will remain available until better affordable alternatives are available. More work needs to be done on whether it will be better to produce enough low carbon gas instead of pulling out all the gas boilers.

They need to do a lot more work on how more electricity can be generated from low carbon sources, how the grid can be expanded, how surplus power can be stored and how demand can be met when the wind does not blow and the sun does not shine.

It remains a bad idea to get our CO₂ emissions down by importing high energy using products and energy itself. There is more work to do to produce more affordable energy at home and to get energy costs down to improve industrial competitiveness.