

How do you get to net zero

Yesterday the government launched its strategy for cutting the carbon dioxide output caused by heating buildings. They wish to promote heat pumps, and will offer grants of £5000 to people willing to install these devices who meet their criteria. The details of the scheme will be announced prior to a launch in the spring of next year.

They also reiterated their strategy of banning all new petrol and diesel cars from sale in the UK after 2030, preferring universal adoption of new electric vehicles where people are buying new.

I pointed out that for this strategy to work the UK would need to generate all its electricity by approved green means, as otherwise we would simply burn the fossil fuel in the power stations prior to running homes and cars on electricity. As we are often still relying for 60% of our electricity on fossil fuels when the wind does not blow and there is not much sun that is going to take a major investment in new green capacity that will work when the weather is not helpful to certain renewables.

The Minister in reply did not promise a major expansion of green generation from reliable power sources. He did not comment on the possible shortfall in electrical power if the government is successful in getting widespread adoption of fuel pumps and electric cars. He did say the government sees gas as a transition fuel which clearly will do a lot of the work in generating power and heating buildings for at least this decade. Nor did the Minister answer those who asked when it was going to commission more nuclear power. This is reliable carbon free power, but we face the reduction in the amount of nuclear produced over the rest of this decade as old nuclear power stations are closed. down. This will add to the difficulties of supplying enough green power this decade.

Tomorrow I will set out again more of the ways the government can act now to ensure we have sufficient generating capacity and sufficient access to gas as transition fuel for this decade, whilst they put in place the major investments in reliable green electricity they will need for the next decade and beyond. They need to announce new nuclear, new small nuclear, more biomass more hydro and pump storage and more battery storage and hydrogen conversion for wind energy when the wind does blow well.