

“Let them take the bus” says Green enthusiast

In recent discussions I have been having about the costs and timetable for getting to zero net carbon dioxide as various governments now want, I have been asking about who will be paying for the electric vehicles and the heat pumps it will take.

Millions of people in the UK on below average incomes will need to replace their cars and vans with electric versions. They will be expected to replace old gas and oil boilers with heat pumps and new boilers or with all electric systems. How easy will it be for them to afford the new machines and systems?

One person responded to my query by saying buses and trains will all go electric thanks to taxpayer and public sector financed investment. People can then take the bus and dispense with the car they said.

They seem to have in mind a them and us world, where the better off will still be able to afford the new vehicles and the all electric systems, whilst many others will in their view no longer have personal transport. Let them take the bus, is a paraphrase of their position.

This is a poor answer at best, as surely the many should have access to higher living standards and greater convenience. It is no answer to the needs of the small business person who needs a van to get to each appointment, taking the tools and spares needed for the assignment. Everyone from plumber to builder, from delivery business to mobile service provider needs personal transport tailored to their work. Many families need a car to get food back from the shops and to take the children to school as well as to get themselves to work.

For those places wanting zero net carbon as they call it by 2030 it will be soon that people need to spend the money on completely transforming their domestic heating, and to start thinking about new vehicles for the end of the next decade. We are talking about a colossal joint investment, where those just managing on current incomes will find it difficult to find the cash for potentially large expenditures.

I also see there is consumer resistance to some of these changes even where there is no direct additional cost involved. The electricity companies are urging people to allow works in their homes to change over meters. People with busy lives find it difficult to book out a day to supervise the work, and many are apprehensive about works in their home when the current system works just fine. The absence of any perceived personal benefit from the new meters has put lots of people off. Some circulate rumours the firms strenuously deny that there is some ulterior motive on future tariff and supply interruption that the new meters might bring. It will need a stronger case as to the benefits to get more people to allow these installations,.