Power outages

I am glad there will be an urgent review of what went wrong with the power system.

It appears from the records that there was a 740 MW drop in gas generated power supply (Little Barford) and a 1000 MW fall in wind supply (Hornsea) in quick succession. This was followed five minutes later by a 1000 MW increase in pumped storage supply, presumably the quickest acting power that could be brought on. This all took place against the background of relatively low summer demand for electric power which meant there was plenty of potential capacity available. It is also interesting that though we are using well below domestic capacity levels of electricity we are tending to import power from France, Belgium and the Netherlands anyway.

Questions for the review should include

1. Now the system is running on high percentages of renewables when the weather permits, does it have enough quick acting stand by plant for when the wind drops or sun goes in? If not can we rapidly remedy this defect?
2. Why do we continue to import when we are well below capacity? What account is taken of the different fuel mixes and subsidy patterns for continental power which includes fossil fuel power in its mix?
3. Given the use of pump storage, how long did the outages last and why did they last as long as they did?
4. Why did the wind power fail, given the current size and the planned large expansion of this new plant?

The government also needs to ask the railway industry why it was unable to quickly adjust services and get trains running as soon as the power was restored.