

Stop the net zero policies that will add to CO2 and damage the UK economy

I have long been arguing that the UK government should not be taxing, regulating and banning its way to net zero, as that will collapse business here, lead to more imports, and fail to save the world as they wish. I have argued that the Green revolution can only work when it is a popular revolution, with people rushing to buy its products because they are better and more affordable. The government needs to back off from its expensive and often self defeating ideas, and listen to the public. The innovators need to find the ways in which their products can be cheaper and better as well as greener.

My critics here want me to take on the scientists over global warming which I have no wish or need to do. I accept that CO₂ like methane and water vapour is a greenhouse gas and I understand that governments and many scientists want a bit less of it. The case I am making is their policy proposals are wrong in their own terms, and damaging to economies and lifestyles for no good reason. Cutting CO₂ here to import more from somewhere else is stupid. Some of the green products fail to cut CO₂ despite the claims. So what is the point of them unless they are better and cheaper?

Yesterday I pointed out that it is the undue haste to make people buy electric vehicles that is doing grave damage to our car industry. Despite subsidies to buy, subsidies to install chargers, and plenty of publicity battery cars still only account for 15% of the UK industry's sales. I have not myself bought an EV, yet I have usually been an early adopter of new technologies. I had one of the first mobile phones, took to the internet early, moved from maps to sat navs and the rest. So why do I not buy an EV?

I would suffer badly from range worry. My modern clean diesel car went 630 miles on the last tank full of fuel and still said it could do another 55 miles when I filled it up. It means I can go anywhere in England from my home and return without needing to refuel. I read test reports of EVs where journalists sympathetic to the new vehicles have to report problems finding the right kind of charger with the right kind of payment system available and ready to use when they go longer distances and need to recharge.

I would suffer from impatience waiting for the recharge. I can refuel at any one of thousands of diesel stations, pay and exit in less than five minutes. That's good service.

I would worry about the costs of refuelling. Electricity is mainly a secondary fuel, made from burning gas or biomass or coal. We are a long way from most electricity reliably coming from renewables. With all the generation and transmission losses it will be dearer than simply burning a primary fuel in your engine. In due course the government is bound to put a tax on it, as they cannot afford the loss of fuel duties and VAT as and when more people switch from petrol and diesel. If they put a similar level of

tax on electricity for cars as they do on diesel it would be very expensive to run.

I would worry about possible damage to the battery should someone run into my vehicle. It must be dearer and more hazardous to repair an EV given the way the battery is part of the chassis and vulnerable in a shunt.

I would worry about weight and tyre wear, as these vehicles are heavier.

I would dislike the way they are trying to be mobile phones on wheels, with too many things controlled through a touch screen. Touchscreens in cars get clouded from fingers touching, are difficult to read when the sun is shining on them and often do not respond to your first or second touch. Switches are easier to see, always work and are more positive generally.

I am told they are fast. The truth is you cannot use extra speed these days as all roads are speed controlled and frequently heavy traffic usually impedes even reaching the permitted speed. My current car is potentially faster and more powerful than I could ever use on our roads.

I am told they cut CO₂ substantially. I do not think so. On a typical day only 20% of our electricity comes from wind and solar, with no solar at night. Most EVs on many occasions are mainly refuelling using electricity generated from fossil fuels. Scrapping a diesel car with some life left in it and buying an EV adds to world CO₂ because of the amount generated when making the new car and destroying the old.

I am not surprised that EVs are still only 15% of sales. They have only been high in countries with large subsidies to boost purchases. Contrast that with the pads, laptops and mobile phones that fly off the shelves with no subsidy and no government urging. They are part of a popular revolution. I will look at other green products in future pieces. I await an electric car that I would like to buy.