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[The Green revolution hits a democratic barrier](#)

The Green revolution is a top down revolution. It is invented and enforced by governments and big companies. Whilst a majority of people say they think climate change is an issue, a big majority do not rush to change their own lifestyles in line with the requests and requirements of big government and the green revolutionaries. Most people are happy with gas or oil boilers and or solid fuel fires to heat their homes, and most of us still have diesel or petrol vehicles. Meat eating is still popular and people like flying abroad for their holidays.

Governments have understood that it is easier to force big business to comply with their green agenda than it is to get the public to accept the current approved products and changed lifestyles of green transition. Car companies queue up to undermine their successful past investments in making petrol and diesel vehicles, and to condemn their past products. They do however expect large subsidies to help pay for the very costly investment in making batteries and electric alternatives, and now expect governments to force people to buy these products as not enough want to buy them from free choice. Electricity generators rush to put in wind turbines and solar farms so they can close their cost efficient and reliable gas and coal power stations, but expect priority rules for interruptible renewable power and price structures that favour the new investments. Steel companies plan expensive electric arc recycling works to replace steel production in blast furnaces, but they too need large subsidies to try to get the sums to work.

Governments and companies need to work on how they could create affordable reliable good products that help them in their aim of cutting CO₂. They are going to need much more buy in from consumers to achieve their ambitious targets. Consumers are making it very clear they expect the products to be better and cheaper than they currently are. Government does not have to subsidise or regulate to get people to buy mobile phones or to switch to on line shopping, as those changes are popular with customers at market prices without intervention. Sales of electric vehicles to individual buyers are struggling in many places without large subsidies. Hertz has recently announced difficulties in renting out EVs and decided to sell one third of its present EV fleet to get more in line with public demand.

Worse still for governments and political parties that are keen on the drive to net zero is the growing evidence that parties in government that go too far in forcing unpopular net zero changes lose elections. The Netherlands government lost heavily in the last election because it was trying to cut down animal husbandry and meat eating faster than the public thought acceptable. President Macron's party has had some bruising encounters with public opinion over the level of fossil fuel taxes and diesel prices. The original gilets jaunes protests were about energy taxes which forced a climb down. Recently Macron has had to stop further taxes on agricultural diesel in the face of angry farmers.

When across Europe and the UK fossil fuel energy prices soared, doing the governments' work for them forcing less use, governments rightly saw the need to cushion people from the price impact on this essential. Germany has given into pressure to delay the ending of new diesel and petrol cars. In the US Presidential Candidate Trump is ahead of President Biden in the polls, His policy of withdrawing from the Paris climate change treaty and targets compared to Biden who wants to go further faster is clearly no barrier to his possible victory and may be helping him. Many people do not want to be told by government how to heat their homes, what car to buy, and where to have their holiday.

[My intervention on NHS Dentistry: Recovery and Reform](#)

John Redwood (Wokingham) (Con):

Wokingham has a fast-growing population based on building a lot of new homes. So as the Secretary of State rolls out her new plans, will she also ensure that there are incentives to provide dental services on the NHS in areas where a population is moving in and needs them?

Victoria Atkins, (Secretary of State for Health):

My right hon. Friend raises an interesting point. Indeed, that is exactly the sort of discussion I am having with my right hon. Friend the Levelling Up Secretary, because I am really interested in having that connected and joined-up approach between planning and health. I think it could bring dividends for us all.

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Public sector inflation

The point I am making today is the trading public sector has got a lot dearer over the years. Ministers from governments of all complexions do not seem to exercise much control over costs and productivity of public bodies.

I looked at the 1960 Guidebook to Dover Castle that my family had bought on some long past visit. My computer tells me the Bank of England and successive governments have so devalued our currency that modern prices are 21.5 times higher than they were in 1960 on average. The Ministry of Works government Guidebook gave me some insight into public service inflation since then.

Dover Castle remains owned by the state with its visitor activities run by the charity English Heritage, an evolution from the Ministry of Works. The book says an adult visitor in 1960 would have paid 5p to see the Keep, lighthouse and ramparts, and another 1.25p to go into the tunnels. To do the same today the adult visitor buying a ticket at the site would pay £23.60. That is 377 times the cost in 1960, many times the rate of general inflation.

It is true there are now additional tunnels to see as in 1960 the Second World War tunnels were still out of bounds to visitors. The presentation of the Keep has changed, The collection of medieval armour and weapons adorning part of the interior has been replaced with modern soft furnishings and a bit of wooden furniture with designs taken from contemporary illuminated manuscripts. Whilst as the old Guidebook notes the interiors and their windows had been changed over the centuries the current aim is to present it in its Henry II version as best judged.

The Guidebook itself has experienced a bit less inflation. The old one is considerably smaller with one colour photo and more smaller black and white photos. It cost 10 p compared to £5.50 for its modern and bigger counterpart. That is inflation of 55 times or nearly treble the general inflation rate. There was plenty of good reading material in the 1960 version but the colour photos and art work are much better in the modern one.