

The Energy Bill

Last night just 19 of us voted against the Energy Bill. The Bill was supported by Labour, SNP, Lib Dems , and the Green MP. These parties tried to amend it to stop UK oil and gas earlier and to increase the costs on UK business more. The Conservative government voted these unhelpful amendments down with large majorities but stuck with a Bill which intervenes too much with people's preferences and with an energy market already distorted by windfall taxes, subsidies and complex rules.

We had too little time to debate it as the united parties stuck with a timetable motion that allowed backbenchers around just 2 hours to discuss 426 pages of law and 146 amendments. Because there were 6 votes there was no time for any debate on Third reading which would have provided chance to review the Bill as amended.

In my time restricted remarks I stressed the need to carbon account more realistically. As energy policy is driven by net zero rather than by affordability and availability it is important to count carbon sensibly. It makes no sense for the UK to tax and price and regulate the end of high CO₂ activities here if we simply import the high energy goods from somewhere else adding to world CO₂ totals. It makes no sense to dump your petrol car early to buy an electric car if you do not do a high mileage as the CO₂ generated by making the EV and destroying the petrol car will be greater than the savings in use. When looking at CO₂ outcomes you cannot assume all UK electricity is green when we often generate more than half from gas. When assessing the electrical revolution you need to include all the CO₂ generated by making steel for new pylons, by smelting new copper for cables, making new bitumen to repair the roads after digging them up to put in cables, all the CO₂ in mining the materials for batteries and fabricating them.