The wind does not blow enough

In the cold snap we are experiencing demand for electricity has risen as you would expect. There has been some wind, but we have needed to use coal fired power, all our gas availability and the wood burning biomass stations. Typically the fossil fuel fired generators have been supplying well over half, with renewables back down to around a quarter.

This cold snap has reminded us it is not just on windless days we have a problem. Because renewable power often is well below theoretical capacity, and because we are generally short of power when demand is high, we need all the fossil fuel power we can get.

Those who plan a rapid transition to net zero need to recognise that this is the starting position. Were the public to adopt electric heating and electric vehicles in the way the net zero plans require we would need a huge increase in generating capacity to meet all the extra demand. At the moment the bulk of our transport energy requirements are met from diesel, aviation spirit and petrol and the bulk of our home heating and industrial process is provided by gas.

Before we can expect wholesale public conversion to electric vehicles and heating we need reassurance that the large increase in renewable power generation and the accompanying big increase in the grid capacity and street cable networks has been put in to meet all the extra demand that will create.