

Why make people buy things they do not want?

The row over what kind of car led to the Luton car park fire reveals a deep divide over what cars people want to buy and which they think are good. I have not posted items from people who claim the car was an EV or was a diesel as clearly this is an important contested fact. Some assumed it was an EV, some countered it was a diesel and some now say it was a hybrid with a lithium ion battery. Let us have the truth from some independent authority.

The reason for the row is of course the fact that the establishment wants people to love electric cars, whilst many people do not want one for all sorts of reasons. They are looking for any more bad news to try to put the establishment off its huge support for EVs. If cars with lithium ion batteries do self immolate more often than petrol or diesel then that would be a big negative. Bringing down a whole new car park is not a good look. We must be thankful no one died in the fire. There are worries about newsworthy vehicle fires and about the difficulty in putting out a battery fire, and issues over how common these disasters are.

The underlying problem is the insistence of net zero governments that we should buy or accept products we do not want because we think they are dearer, less convenient, not so fit for purpose. Indeed in one case government wants us to accept a product, the smart meter, which is offered free. We all of course are paying heavily for this through our tax and energy bills. Despite the free offer, years on half of us refuse one. Huge money and effort is being expended on trying to get us to take one. They will not take No for an answer. They should try instead to understand the wide disagreement with these products and produce better ones we do want.

Too many people see EVs as dear, with too limited a range posing big problems to recharge. The refusal of government to say how lost petrol tax will be replaced is also a major worry. Too many people think heat pumps are far too expensive even after a subsidy, and worry they would be dear to run and let us down on temperature on cold days. Smart meters are thought to be a change designed to overcharge or switch off power if supplies become too irregular.

The green revolution needs to take consumers with it to make faster progress. That will require improved products and services that people can afford.