

From: John Mason, Machynlleth, Wales **Sent:** 09 October 2009 08:55
To: Ian Marlee
Cc: Kersti Berge
Subject: Discovery Scenarios - consultation document

Hi Ian, Kersti,

Just been reading through the PDF of Project Discovery's Energy Market Scenarios and I have a few immediate questions.

In recent years, I've been looking hard at energy issues myself as an early member of the Transition Towns Movement, so I have a reasonable working knowledge of the factors involved. I wonder if you have given oil supply security sufficient consideration here (or more precisely, coverage in the document)?

Depending on whose view you accept, the global supply of all liquids in terms of oil peaked in 2008 (ASPO), or will "come to a plateau" (IEA) by 2020. Although oil is a relatively small piece in our energy generation jigsaw here in the UK, it accounts for ~95% of transport globally: although I do not have a UK figure I would assume it is similar. It follows that oil is a necessity at present for keeping much of our infrastructure going, including energy generation. Have you given consideration to a fifth scenario, which might appropriately be called "Running into the Brick Wall"? This is akin to the Dash for Energy scenario, but in which we are post-peak and into an oil depletion situation, where each attempt to escape from recession into growth comes against an ever-lowered ceiling of oil supply, creating a succession of price spikes followed by recession and demand destruction - in other words a perpetual downward string of W-shaped recessions with severe societal consequences. This is the scenario I envisage if a "business as usual" approach is taken. Others prefer the complete collapse of industrial civilisation, of course (too many Internet sources to even begin citing)!

It is to be hoped, of course, that we do change direction in recognition of this threat: both the major political parties seem to recognise it (Labour's Low Carbon Transition, 2009, and an email to me from Alan Duncan in 2008 stating the need to transition to a low-carbon economy - interesting how the "T-word" keeps cropping up!). But surely, despite its gas/electricity primary remits, Ofgem needs to consider oil (and, critically, near- to middle-term future oil supply depletion) too, as much with respect to its infrastructural support role as to its role in electricity generation?

Would be interested to read your views.

Best regards,

John

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