



A City for All Londoners: Feedback from [Power Up North London](#)

11th December 2016

Introduction

At this moment of political turbulence at national and international levels, the landmark achievement of the Paris Agreement on climate change a year ago risks being undermined. There is however huge potential and reason for optimism stemming from the agency of cities and citizens. We are encouraged by the progressive direction of travel and integrated approach laid out by the Mayor in A City for All Londoners and would like to offer the following feedback.

On Part 4: Environment, transport and public space

We are pleased to note that the Mayor will be 'supporting solar and local community energy enterprises'.

Ways that the Mayor can support community energy enterprises – technical, legal and finance expertise is needed, before and after raising community investment. Since the Urban Community Energy Fund (UCEF) was withdrawn schemes can fail to get off the starting blocks, whereas provision of 'pipe priming' funds and/or access to expertise and resources (such as templates and best case examples) from the GLA could greatly increase the number of new renewable energy schemes.

Ways that community energy enterprises can support the Mayor – if a GLA/TfL Community Energy team was in place, community energy enterprises would be able to supply intelligence on potential schemes and provide trusted local two-way communication channels.

'I will also explore the establishment of a **not-for-profit energy company** to supply cleaner energy in the city'. We would like to see this strengthened beyond exploration to a *commitment* to establish this following the precedents of [Bristol Energy](#) and [Robin Hood Energy](#) (Nottingham). Londoners can and should expect not just 'cleaner' but 'clean' energy.

The best way to **move to clean, locally produced electricity** is for [Energy for Londoners](#) to aim to buy surplus renewable electricity from community energy (and other) installations at a price that is guaranteed in advance to pay back investors in a reasonable timeframe. The Government is doing this for EDF and the Chinese Government for Hinkley new capacity, so it should be possible for small-scale projects. This could be through the Licence Lite body if it is quicker to use this than a new Energy for Londoners – or by partnering with a company such as [Mongoose](#) that wants to get into this market.

Clean electricity, clean vehicles, clean air

The plan to **discourage toxic vehicles** by charging them more in the congestion zone is a good step forward, but it is equally important to achieve a massive take-up of clean (electric) vehicles (EVs), powered by a huge increase of easy to access EV charging points, using a large increase of clean (renewable) electricity.



Community groups across London have a legacy of 'shovel ready' **solar schemes**, in limbo since the Government slashed its support. These projects, as well as the GLA/TfL roofs, could be mobilised to sell electricity to Energy for Londoners very quickly. There is also huge potential for sites, such as car parks, conservatories and public spaces to increase renewable electricity, and these would all benefit from working with EVs to use and store peaks of power. The [National Infrastructure Commission](#) has made it clear that the UK/London power grid is due for a fundamental upgrade and evolution to two-way power flows and their natural partner would be Energy for Londoners.

Although the current EV charging network is patchy and problematic, the lessons from the [Go Ultra Low Programme](#), and Department of Transport grants mean that the TfL Transport Environment Committee is in a good position to get local authorities to work together to deliver a **London-wide network of EV charging points** in a short timeframe, as recommended in [October 2016](#).

Londoners are largely unaware of the range of electric cars, bikes, motorbikes and vans available already, so a marketing campaign to **promote the benefits of clean vehicles**, using sunshine instead of oil, would encourage vehicle purchasers to spend money on clean vehicles rather than dirty.

In these Paris Agreement times there is an exciting pace of innovation, such as lamp-post charging, roadway generation, Tesla roofs/batteries/cars, car park generation/charging and multiple methods of storing energy peaks - so it is important to have a **dedicated Mayoral post** to track and support new opportunities.

Clean taxis

TfL's target of putting 9,000 **zero emission capable taxis** on the capital's streets by 2020 is a very good step, and working with the [Department of Transport](#) on their scheme to increase charging points for taxis, cars, motorbikes etc is progress. If the new all-electric [Metrocab](#) is widely adopted, again there will be the need for London to have a much cleaner electricity supply to avoid using fossil fuel power.

Discouraging toxic vehicles

Every action that the Mayor of London takes to discourage toxic vehicles helps to reduce both air pollution and carbon emissions and will increase the uptake of clean vehicles/bikes/motorbikes. The actions to hold car manufacturers to account for false emission claims and to support **legal action** against the Government for poor air quality results are excellent. Lobbying the Government, as suggested, to revert to charging high Vehicle Excise Duty for high emitters (explained by [Money Expert](#)) and to allow London to set and collect its own VED is also important.

Another simple way in which the Government could stop encouraging diesel vehicles would be to increasing **fuel duty on diesel** models to be at least the same cost per mile as petrol. However it is important to focus on the most polluting vehicles and [Emissions Analytics](#), which measures models using **real-world testing** methods, shows that some diesels are not too bad whilst some hybrids are bad. The RAC [is of the view](#) that a diesel scrappage scheme, similar to the ten-year-old car scrappage scheme of 2009/10, would be likely to only save about 3.2% of emissions and that scheme cost



£400m from Government plus £400m from car manufacturers. A similar level of spend could be better targeted to transition motorists from toxic to clean travel.

Ideally, to gain vital public acceptance of a move away from toxic to clean vehicles, pollution scores should be at an **individual vehicle level** if possible - not pegged to complicated and discredited EURO standards. Imminent [changes to MOT testing](#) are due to be approved by May 2017 (see art. 23) and, if the UK incorporates testing of pollutants into the MOT, it would be much simpler, more accurate and much more acceptable to demonstrate that the worst vehicles pay more (or are banned).

If this is impracticable, the London proposal to address air pollution allows diesel models that are supposedly of Euro 4 standard (i.e. [emitting .25g/km of NO2](#)) to drive in the ULEZ (outside of the congestion zone). Just pegging the rules to specified .25g/km for diesel and .08g/km for petrol would be much clearer, and would offer the ability to decouple from Euro standards at any time.

Warm buildings with affordable clean heat

The plan for new and innovative approaches to energy efficiency and net zero energy retrofitting is excellent given that so many Londoners suffer from fuel poverty. **Tackling inefficient buildings** will reduce both carbon and pollution from heating sources.

For **new buildings** the new Zero Carbon regulation is very good, but needs to be for *all* new buildings - not just 'major developments'. Requiring a [BRE Home Quality Mark](#), incorporating features such as renewable electricity and heat would be effective and simple. For new developments lessons need to be learnt about problematic communal heating schemes to ensure only best practice is put in place.

For **retrofit**, community groups in London have a track record of working with the authorities to encourage and deliver Retrofit and Fuel Poverty schemes, such as [Smart Homes](#) and Power Up North London is ready to get involved wherever it can. The [boiler scrappage scheme](#) is good, but there is a great lack of awareness of the danger to health of old boilers to encourage (or mandate) this further. The business case for LED replacement currently means that, with appropriate loans, community groups can implement LED schemes – making substantial savings in electricity. One way to **enable renewable energy projects to be viable** would be to combine them with energy reduction projects such as LEDs so a scheme that used savings from these as part of a project would be win-win.

Attempts such as the over-complicated Green Deal and erratic feed-in tariffs have shown the problems of poorly designed funding schemes, so coming up with an innovative, attractive **funding model** should be given high priority. If the Mayor could influence the Government to put VAT on retrofits in line with new build (i.e. 0%) in the post EU tax system that would increase personal spending on retrofit considerably.

Now that the **Feed-In Tariff Scheme is coming to the end** of its usefulness, an alternative scheme is needed to encourage property owners, community energy groups and commercial concerns to install new renewable electricity capacity. There are segments of investors with different criteria and



these should guide the scheme, as for marketing any new product. But certainty of return and time to tie up funds are critical. London needs a replacement scheme that does not relate back to electricity bill payers and may not need any subsidy at all if purchase prices for surplus energy are sufficient.

On Part 5: A city for all Londoners

Community renewable energy projects offer the potential to bring communities together. Taking ownership of energy **empowers citizens** to be custodians of their own resources. It is a pathway to reducing fuel poverty by reducing the monopoly of the Big Six over energy supplies.

Communities often share environmental values and aspirations but in practice these can manifest themselves in opposition, for example to the development of renewable energy projects in conservation areas in London. The Mayor could help by providing some consistent **planning advice** that weighs the public benefit of climate change measures against aesthetics.

Financing

As we withdraw from the EU, lines of funding from the EU Investment Bank become uncertain, but there are other streams of funding that could come on stream as suggested by a [C40/Siemens/Citi report](#). Tapping into finance such as **green bonds**, municipal low interest loans, equity capital, as well as promoting low carbon/low pollution products for consumers' own spend, would be key to achieving affordable, clean power and transport for London. For instance, a marketing campaign for electric vehicles could trigger a consumer change as dramatic as the recent smart phone explosion.

Concluding remarks

There is no mention of the word 'renewable' in the document. We urge a greater level of **ambition** around climate change, reflected in choice of language.

There is also no mention of the Mayor's [manifesto pledge](#) to 'Take all possible steps to divest the London Pension Fund Authority of its remaining investments in fossil-fuel industries'. We trust that retaining the [new EU directive for pension funds](#) to consider **divestment** will be a catalyst to bring this about by next year.

We welcome the step-change in **leadership** on community energy and environmental issues by the new Mayor. Power Up North London looks forward to playing our part in making this vision for London a reality.



About Power Up North London

Formed in 2014, Power Up North London is a joint project between Transition Dartmouth Park, Transition Tufnell Park and Transition Kentish Town. The Transition Towns movement in the UK aims to make communities stronger, greener and more self-reliant.

After more than two years of work we launched a successful [share offer](#) in August 2016 raising £30,100 for community owned solar panels to be installed at [St. Anne's Church, Highgate](#).

This project is now live providing cheaper, clean energy for the church, creating a fund for community projects, cutting carbon, and enabling us to play an important part in the wider community energy revolution which is happening across the UK.

Implementing this project has opened our eyes to the way a community can pull together to make things happen. For two years a core group of volunteers has been supported by a much wider network of people in the local area. While community energy is not a profession for any of us, having input from local business owners, architects, accountants, engineers, designers, community activists, and more has ensured Power Up North London has had the skills required to launch a community energy project.