



## **PCS Submission to a City for all Londoners consultation**

### **Introduction**

The Public and Commercial Services (PCS) trade union represents over 180,000 members in the civil service, public sector and on privatised commercial contracts across the UK. Of this, over 47,300 of our members are based in the London and South East Region.

PCS has a wide policy agenda supporting action on climate change and the environment including both mitigation and adaptation. This includes divestment from fossil fuels and promoting investment in clean renewable energy; restructuring energy dependence away from gas; community and municipal energy under public ownership and democratic control; supporting expansion of a publically owned transport network; creating one million climate jobs; statutory rights for workplace environmental reps; advocating that no community is more adversely impacted by climate change; ensuring a just transition for workers and communities to a zero carbon economy.

PCS welcomes the emphasis in this consultation on affordable housing, public transport, air pollution, energy, and climate change related policies. As a supporter of the Switched on London campaign, we back their calls for a publically owned and democratically controlled energy supplier, and therefore equally welcome reference in the document to “explore the establishment of a not-for-profit energy company to supply cleaner energy in the city” as part of Energy for Londoners (page 61).

### **Energy for Londoners**

Our energy system is in a dual crisis of high energy bills with one million Londoners living in fuel poverty, and dependency on fossil fuels which we urgently need to change if we are to meet the Paris climate agreement targets. The Big Six energy companies have raked off vast profits at the expense of social needs and access to affordable energy which is exacerbated by high housing costs.

PCS support a high level ambition to make London zero carbon by 2050 but it will need to be accompanied with ambitious plans which cannot be left to the market. A programme of retrofitting/insulating homes and public buildings along with a transition to renewable energy based on new models of generation, distribution and supply are key elements of any plan.

As the One Million Climate Jobs pamphlet (see <http://www.climate-change-jobs.org/>) details, jobs which help to lower greenhouse gas emissions in areas such as

retrofitting contribute to the economy. They can also help to develop skills and opportunities for retraining, within both the local and wider London economy. Jobs that will be paid a real London living wage, enjoy good terms and conditions, and are unionised.

Energy permeates every aspect of life from households to business, transport to running our municipal public services such as schools and hospitals. Therefore whilst we acknowledge the centrality of transport to your plans, not least in tackling the deadly air pollution of London, we argue that creating a publically owned, fully licensed public supply company, is an urgent priority in meeting your zero carbon 2050 ambition.

A London company supplying clean, affordable power to households and businesses will address these associated problems whether the nitrous oxide polluting our air from transport, or greenhouse gas emissions from gas for example predominantly used in our space heating. Revenues generated can be reinvested into clean energy solutions such as solar linked to zero carbon construction for buildings reducing both their air quality and greenhouse gas emissions, as well as energy efficiency measures which reduce demand.

But public ownership must also be coupled with democratic participation in the running of any public energy company which itself supports a vision for a “fairer and more equal city”, encouraging “active citizenship” as part of the “democratic governance of our city”. For example, through advisory bodies such as neighbourhood assemblies to having elected members on the board drawn from the workforce and energy users.

Public energy supply with decentralised models of generation is not just an idea whose time has come but an idea which is growing in practice. Bristol and Nottingham already provide positive examples, whilst Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) is looking to establish a publically owned energy company next year.

## **Conclusion**

In summary, establishing a publically owned energy company that works for all Londoners is an imperative in addressing climate change, providing secure and affordable energy, ending fuel poverty, and creating good living wage job opportunities as part of the foundation for a zero carbon city. This should be central to an ambitious plan particularly if we don't want London to be left behind.

## **Contact:**

Sam Mason – Policy Officer  
Assistant General Secretary's Office  
Email: [sam@pcs.org.uk](mailto:sam@pcs.org.uk)  
8 December 2016