

# HAVERING **FABIAN** SOCIETY

## HAVERING FABIAN

Volume 2 Edition 47 September 2021

### **Havering Fabian Society**

Covering:  
Obituaries of Del  
Smith and Dick  
Leonard. Meetings  
with Elly Baker  
and on Local  
Government  
Finance. Jane  
Keane on the end  
of Universal  
Credit, why we  
need more homes.  
and future  
meetings

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# HAVERING FABIAN

VOLUME 2 EDITION 47 September 2021

## Introduction

Welcome to the new edition of the Havering Fabian Newsletter. These are unusual times with the country on partial lockdown, and we have suspended meetings in person until some unknown point in the future. The newsletter will continue to provide updates and an opportunity for those of you confined to home to finalise those articles you always promised to write for us.

This edition contains obituaries of a former Havering Councillor, Del Smith and a former Romford MP, Dick Leonard. Maureen O'Flynn has also died and we offer our sympathies to all their friends and families, RIP.

There are articles on our recent meeting with Elly Baker and the June meeting on local government finance. There is an article by Jane Keane on the end of Universal Credit and another on the need for more Housing, which includes some details on the number of homeless in Havering you may find interesting.

We now have 1,298 followers on twitter. Keep up to date at our twitter site @haveringfabians for the latest news. We have a blog now as well as our website <https://haveringfabians.org/posts/> You will need to follow us to get updates.

We are affiliated to the four local Labour Parties, and will do all we can to support their campaigns. Havering and Dagenham Young Labour are on twitter @HavAndDagYL and hope they reflect a growing interest in Labour politics in Havering.

As opinions are the lifeblood of politics, we welcome a reply to any of the articles. The Fabian Society exists to promote political debate, both within and outside the Labour Party. Progressive politics extends beyond the Labour Party, and contributions from the Labour Movement as a whole are welcome.

With traditional meetings not possible, we have moved discussion online, and have made use of Zoom to host a series of online sessions. Issues with technology have been limited and we have had an interesting range of speakers. We welcomed some interesting visitors from across Europe – Zoom is something we will use in future and is ideal if you cannot get to our meetings in person, which we hope to resume before year end.



Our website address is <http://haveringfabians.org> As you are no doubt aware GDPR means we need to keep our mailing list up to date. If you are not on our mailing list (we use Mailchimp – please check your spam folders!) contact us via the website or email and we will add you in.

## **Maureen O'Flynn**

As we were preparing the newsletter, we were sad to hear of the death of Maureen O'Flynn. Maureen had been Mayoress of Havering when husband Denis was Mayor in 1991-92 and again in 2001-02. Our condolences to Denis and family on the sad news.

## **Obituaries – Del Smith**

David Ainsworth wrote the following about former Havering Councillor Del Smith, who died recently. This was first published on our blog.

### **DEL SMITH R.I.P.**

I first met Del in the mid-60s when working at Lee Cooper's factory in Faringdon Avenue (Harold Hill) Del also worked there. Later, in the '70s/80s/90s I was in Ford's Dagenham Safety Department in which was Del's late father Arthur, so knew the family well. Most of Del's working time was as a self-employed carpenter, a trade in which he was skilled. Much work came by personal reputation and previously satisfied customers' recommendations.

Customers included many from our Labour/Trade Union ranks. Before, during and after his time as a Havering Councillor Del was a committed and enthusiastic Harold Hill community activist and campaigner on numerous issues. That's why, nowadays, he's still so well remembered by many Estate residents, long after his relocation to the village of Inch in Aberdeenshire.

Del made a Council Chamber debut in 1986 when winning in a now defunct Hildene Ward, Labour's other's successful candidates being Dennis Cook & Bessie Whitworth RIP. He didn't contest the 1990 local elections but, perhaps missing municipal action, earned selection for a 1991 Gooshays Ward by-election (caused by resignation of Sean Willis) when he finished streets ahead of an equally hard campaigner in Liberal Democrat Terry Hurlstone RIP. He took the 1994 election in that Ward by storm when topping the poll, with Bill Harrison & Mike Davis also winning seats. Come the 1998 Council election Del was no longer in the Labour Party and stated he'd no wish to stand against former Labour colleagues – as Yve Cornell, Bill Harrison & Kevin Robinson (now Southend's Deputy Mayor) convincingly claimed 3 Gooshays Ward seats. Del did so much for the people of Harold Hill – both as Councillor – and before-and-after his period of elected public service.

In 2003 Del was a founder member of "The Friends of Dagnam Park" and ran their website until his demise on August 2nd. – despite living in Scotland. The group emerged into one of the most effective campaigning organisations in the Borough. What ignited its arrival was the amount of neglect and anti-social behaviour in a large and lovely Dagnam Park.

Del was twice recently a hospital patient for serious illness and a few months' ago requested no further treatment, as it was so painful. He never returned to hospital and accepted his forthcoming demise at home on August 2nd, where he spent most of his time asleep as he was so weak. He knew what was coming his way and accepted it with bravery.

The most controversial time during his year as Havering's Mayor was when appearing at Romford's Remembrance Day Parade in a suit – not in traditional Mayor's robes with pointed hat.

Many wrote to local newspapers stating he'd betrayed those being honoured by not dressing properly. Ex-Service organisations protested. A week after an avalanche of criticism, many wrote to support Del, saying his choice of dress wasn't important as long as he was there to take a salute and show respect. Opinion becomes more modern as years roll by. One critic was another former Havering Mayor, ex-Royal Navy man Conservative Ron Latchford RIP – who incidentally attended Havering Fabian Society 'open' meetings for years. On reading that critics were outnumbered by supporters of Del, Ron wrote to local newspapers stating he'd considered supporters' logic and changed his mind, admitting he'd got his opinion wrong in the first place.

In March 1996 Del took centre stage. along with fellow Harold Hill Councillors Dennis Cook (Hilldene Ward), Mike Davis (Gooshays Ward) & Tony Hunt RIP (Hilldene Ward). They were at loggerheads with Council leader Arthur Latham (a former MP) over a number of issues mainly affecting Harold Hill and his alleged dictatorial control. The "Gang of Four" as they became known – and still are to this day – broke from Labour to form "The Socialist Group" which reduced the Party's presence in the Chamber to 26. All 4 were suspended from Labour membership. Soon afterwards another Labour Councillor resigned the whip but pledged to continue voting with Labour. Their defection was enough to tilt the scales against Labour. Reaction split both ways. Some never forgave the quartet for dumping Labour out of power, but as all were so popular, many remained friends for all time. One of Del's biggest critics was former Council leader Wilf Mills RIP who wanted nothing to do with him – but buried the hatchet before his own fairly recent departure. When Tony was at death's door, in a now-demolished Oldchurch Hospital for months after contracting legionnaire's disease, he was a recipient of Arthur's get-well message. Tony recovered but still died at a young age, his popularity shown by a standing-room only funeral at Corbet's Tey Crematorium, followed by a full-house gathering in "The Railway" public house near Hornchurch Underground Station. At his funeral a eulogist stated that Tony often regretted taking the action he did. Arthur Latham had the good grace to write kind words for an obituary for a local newspaper, in which he described Tony as "the least culpable of the four". Mike went on to work hard for the Labour Party in election campaigns, and when readmitted stood for them.

Dennis has always been supportive of Labour Party activities/campaigns and frequently attends Havering Fabian Society meetings. As for Del, he was one of many who returned to Labour when Jeremy Corbyn was elected Party Leader but resigned when Bro. Corbyn was forced to continue his political career as an Independent. Soon after re-joining he went to his first Labour Party function – a West Aberdeenshire & Kincardine CLP Christmas social. What a coincidence as he met that CLP's former Vice Chairman Harry Bygate – another former Havering Labour Councillor who'd headed north after retirement. Harry, a then National Union of Seamen full-time Officer, topped the 1971 poll in South Hornchurch Ward with fellow elected colleagues Harry Rivers & John Whysall (who stood twice for Parliament at both 1974 General Elections in a newly created Upminster Constituency). Sadly Harry Bygate left us in April 2019.

Del loved local history and wrote articles at length about Harold Hill on the Friends of Dagnam Park website. He wrote the history of St. George's Church in Chippenham Road. On Harold Hill he resided in Edenhall Road for years just a few doors away from Hildene Ward Councillor Reg Whiting RIP, who he always got on with very well, before moving to Tring Gardens near a now boarded-up Havering College Quarles Campus. Years after settling in Scotland he appeared, by telephone, in an hour-long 'live' show on a now defunct Link FM radio station – hosted by Roni O'Brien (now broadcasting on Time FM). She asked him about many local issues and, such was his knowledge of Havering, he proved he knew as much while off our scene as when part of it. That's because so many of his friends kept in contact, and he read a Romford Recorder every Friday on their free website. Del was a critic of the infamous Gallows Corner roundabout – his last public quote in the Recorder was earlier this year when they featured the 50th anniversary of a "temporary" flyover erected for 15 years' use in 1971. Del said it'd been up so long it should be "*listed*".

To his widow Gaynor and 3 offspring sincere condolence is expressed by so many. We say farewell to one of Harold Hill's best known residents – and one who leaves us with many memories of a life so well spent.

*Dave Ainsworth*

On a personal level, Del was very helpful in providing information for the review of Havering elections (See the link below)

[Havering Elections 1964-2018 – Havering Fabian Society](#)

with a good insight into some of the less obvious matters (such as why there was a “Dwarf Party” candidate in a by election in the late 1960’s -a long forgotten campaign against the Vietnam war). Del also posted regularly on various social media sites, and followed Havering politics with interest and insight.

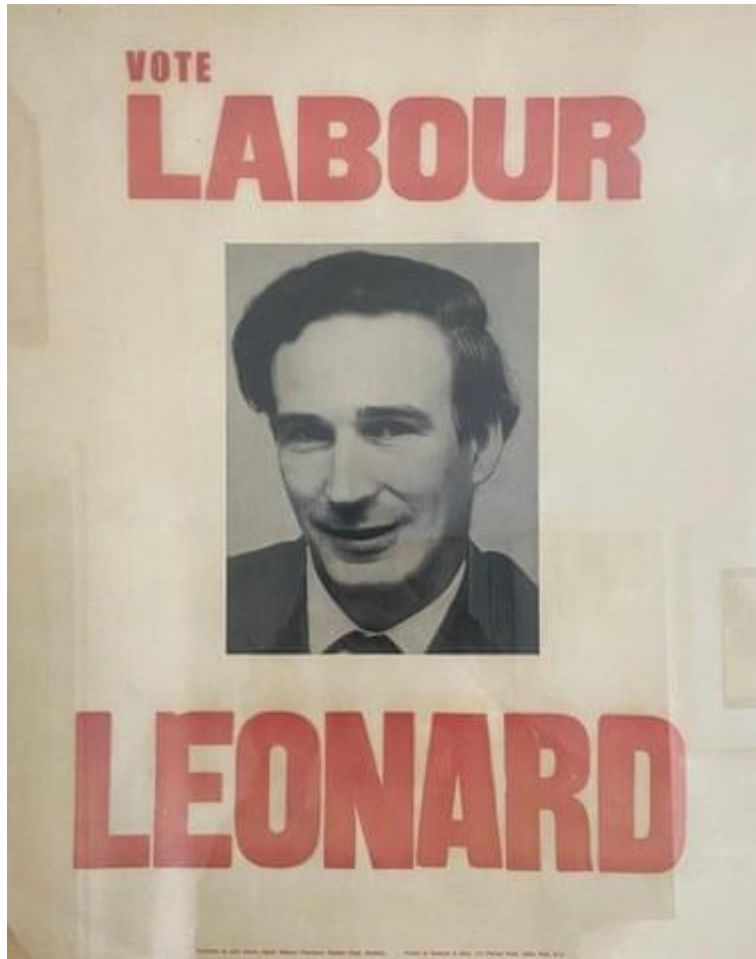
For someone who left the Labour Party and ceded control of the Council to the “rainbow alliance” of non-Labour councillors, he commands great affection from those in the Party who knew him. It was a pleasure to know him if only vaguely, and for those who were closer to him, the loss must be greater.

Condolences to family and friends RIP.



## Obituary -Dick Leonard

Dick Leonard was the Labour MP for Romford from 1970 to 1974.



Below is a link to the Guardian Obituary.

[Dick Leonard obituary | Labour | The Guardian](#)

Dick was very pro Europe, and was one of a small number of Labour MPs who voted against the whip for British membership of the European Union (a group that included John Smith and Roy Hattersley).

There were a number of leading members of the local Labour parties at the time who were anti-EEC and were involved in the “No” campaign. This must have made CLP meetings very interesting!

The Romford Constituency in 1970 included the Harold Hill estate, and was a relatively safe Labour seat. The boundary changes that were due to

come into place in 1974 would see the estate move into the newly formed Upminster. Both would be notional Conservative marginal seats. Dick announced soon after being elected he would not be standing in Romford; this meant Labour would not benefit from any personal vote in 1974, reducing the prospect of holding the seat.

This did not play well with the local Party, and Dick is not remembered with affection by some local activists. However, he was a local MP and we send condolences to friends and family.

### **The Cruellest Cut of All Delivered by Out of Touch Tories - the loss of £20 a week Universal Credit**

The St Alban's Labour Action Team (Jane Keane and Hope Mendy) have been campaigning to persuade the Government to retain the £20 Universal Credit rise - given during the first lockdown. Why? Because, we know, if that money is snatched away, Romford parents who care for their children will become distressed. Those parents may feel shame when they cannot feed their kids properly - or heat their homes. Not being able to provide often leads to poor physical and mental health. Worse, not being fed properly makes children hungry, tired and unable to concentrate. They underachieve at school. The poverty cycle continues.

And it's not that people on Universal Credit are not working. Universal Credit is an "in work benefit". Before the uplift many working parents were unable to feed their kids properly on Universal Credit. Just imagine how bad that is. You are in work. You still cannot make your wages cover the basics, housing costs, council tax, utility bills, transport costs, insurances, food, childcare costs, school meals and uniform, debt repayment. The extra £20 a week makes an enormous difference to those parents. It makes it possible to make ends meet. To feed children every week of the month.

The situation is now about to get much worse. The Tories are about to take away £20 a week from Universal Credit claimants. That it was ever given to claimants by the Tories was an admission that the level of wages in key sectors of the economy was too low and that the benefits offered by the Government were kept deliberately low to "make work pay". But the plain truth is work did not pay. Many claimants in work, including nurses, health care workers, retail workers, delivery drivers and warehouse workers were

making ends meet by taking out expensive debt and using food banks. That is why Labour nationally are campaigning for £10 minimum wage.

The Tories knew that during the pandemic it would be precisely these poorly paid people on whom the nation's economic survival rested. And so, the £20 a week uplift was given. It was a lifeline. Our team were told that money was spent on food, nappies and bills. And the money was mainly spent in local shops. However, eighteen months later, the Government wants to rip that lifeline out of the hands of over 18,000 claimants in Havering.

Even more obscene, the cut is coming while local council tax has been increased by 4.5%, national insurance – an income tax – is being increased by 1.25% and fuel bills are to be hiked for many people by £153 per year on a pre-payment meter. With inflation running at 3.2% that is much more than a triple whammy. It could be a knockout blow to Romford's poorest families!

The St Alban's Labour Action Team think this is the cruellest of cuts – to give something and then take it away is cruel. In opposing the cut, we are pleased we stand in good company with Labour's Jon Cruddas, the Dagenham & Rainham MP. Just like him, the St Alban's Team think that the loss of £20 a week will send many parents back into the food banks. It will strip away the new-found dignity that the uplift gave poorer families. It is yet another piece of Conservative nastiness, like not feeding poor kids during the school holidays during the pandemic. And you can guess which local Tory MPs voted for that – yes that's right the Hornchurch and Upminster MP, Julia Lopez and Romford MP, Andrew Rosindell. Both very out of touch. Well, £20 may be nothing to them with their tax-payer funded expense claims, but £20 a week loss is a massive deal to people with not much.



Photo Credit: Katharine Haynes, Upminster and Hornchurch Labour Member

***Jane Keane Romford Labour Party***

## Local Government Finance

The subject of the June meeting was Local Government Finance, with a panel made up of Havering Labour Group Leader Keith Darvill, Barking and Dagenham Councillor Sanchia Alasia and Dave Baldock.

The session started with a review of the current position. Council Tax was becoming a more important element in Local Government finance generally. The following provide national context;

- In 2016/17, the first year of the introduction of the adult social care precept, the average national Band D council tax was £1,530
- By 2021/22 the average Band D council tax has risen to £1,884.30
- This is an increase of 23% against what would have been a 9% rise to £1,666 had it kept pace with inflation
- The greatest percentage rises are in Greater London
- Council tax rise in the North East was 1.8% less than Greater London.
- But taxpayers in the North East are paying on average £2,029.90 in comparison to £1,616.10 in Greater London.
- Issue of increasing divergence is driving pressure for change and will be part of the Government levelling up agenda

## Funding Gap

The Local Government finance settlement for 2021/22 included the ‘Council Tax requirement’ for each local authority in that year.

The total Council Tax requirement of £31bn was based on assumptions around the level of increase in council tax and the tax base growth.

In 2021/22, these maximums were 1.99% for council tax and 2.99% for the adult social care precept.

A recent CIPFA<sup>1</sup> council tax survey estimates that the council tax increases are lower than assumed and this will create a funding gap nationally of approximately £217m.

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<sup>1</sup> CIPFA – The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy – the accountancy body for Local Government

This is before further pressures caused by Social Care and an ageing population, and before medium to long term Covid pressures impact.

### **Reform of the system**

To be sustainable, there is a need for cross party support. The Community Charge (Poll Tax) was introduced in England in 1990 and did not have this, and was rapidly (in Government terms) reformed, being replaced by the current system in 1993. There is a need to avoid history repeating itself as the costs of introducing a new system are considerable.

Reform of Council tax needs to be part of a wider solution to sustainable funding for Local Government. This links to business rates in particular. Covid had meant Central Government had provided a subsidy to ensure that Local Government could continue to operate; progress on longer term reform was delayed, but will return as an issue.

Shadow Chancellor Rachel Reeves announced the intention to replace business rates during Labour Party conference, although did not provide details of the replacement. Business rates provide a significant source of funding, so the replacement will need to generate at least as much – the large and growing online providers can expect significantly larger taxes, which will attempt to rebalance the differential between high street and on line businesses.

### **Issues to address for Council tax**

**Removal of referendum principles** – currently an increase above the Government-approved level requires a referendum. No Council has undertaken one, effectively capping the annual increase. Government now assumes Council tax increases have taken place in the following year's settlement, so a failure to increase council tax will reduce the following year's allocation. Central Government effectively sets Council tax as a result, which hardly delivers the localism agenda.

**Revaluation** – current valuations for Council Tax are based on valuations undertaken in 1990. Any change will create winners and losers at both individual household and council level.



Arguably the change in Valuations as part of the Community Charge\ Poll tax pilot in 1989 (prior to the introduction in the rest of the UK) was so unpopular in Scotland that it led to the elimination of Conservative MPs from the Country during the 1990s

- **Exemptions and discounts** – these favour single person households, students etc. There are some local Council Tax support schemes which provide local relief. All welcome but inconsistent across the country.

### **Considerations for the longer term**

- **Proportionate property tax** – this could be based on land and property values (or a combination of the two). The issue would be asset-rich cash-poor families. so such an approach may require a support mechanism; one reason for taxes is to discourage consumption – in this case encouraging downsizing to smaller homes

- **Income tax** – this would base taxes on income, although would be complicated in respect of the self-employed or those outside of the PAYE system.

These are likely to link into any changes to tax generally introduced to fund social care.

### **Council tax during the COVID-19 crisis**

Councils have generally weathered the storm better than initially expected with few issuing S114 notices<sup>2</sup>. However, the medium to long term implications are not apparent.

Increases in Council tax can be seen as a solution to rising spending pressures, but this will impact on poorer people and places.

Alongside funding reform, changes in Council Tax can contribute to ‘levelling up’ across the country if regional differences in resources are reduced.

Council tax revenues have been hit by COVID-19 crisis.

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<sup>2</sup> Section 114 notices are issued by Councils where they are in financial distress such that the Statutory Finance officer has to intervene to ensure financial sustainability of the organisation.

The impact has been less hard than initially expected and Government will cover 75% of the shortfall; this is intended to ensure councils still have an incentive to collect arrears. The biggest shortfalls in revenue have been in poorer areas.

Council tax will raise less next year than the government has assumed, as many councils are increasing the tax rate by less than the maximum.

- There are now more Council Tax Support claimants, and more non-payment: tax base set to fall 0.5%, not grow 1.7%, a different of around £700m
- Council tax will be 61% of core spending power in 2021-22, up from 49% in 2015-16, and around 40% in 2009-10
- 85% of the (over-optimistic) assumed funding increase in 2021-22
- The spending envelope set out in the Budget implies councils could be even more reliant on council tax in 2022-23 and beyond

## **Government should revalue and reform council tax**

There are several key things to consider in taking reform forward;

1. The extent to which government funding should be adjusted alongside reform
  - a. Partial adjustment would temper changes in bills, particularly increases in London
  - b. Full adjustment would redistribute more funding to Midlands and North, allowing bigger cuts to bills in these areas
2. The transitional and mitigation measures to put in place will dampen the impact and any redistributive effect
3. The way up-to-date valuations will be estimated and updated on an ongoing basis

## **Business rate reform**

This will have to address similar issues;

The basis of current arrangements is valuations in 1990 and there have been significant regional variations since. These are likely to continue particularly if levelling up actually happens.



The move from shopping on the high street to on line has altered the tax base. Taxing on line purchases may reduce the disadvantage that high street business has.

Allowing greater freedom for each Council to set its own rate is possible and would encourage local decision making, although there is always a danger of seeking to attract businesses to an area by ever lower taxes offered by competing authorities.

Keith and Sanchia set out the various initiatives Havering and Barking and Dagenham Council had put in place to support communities during Covid. Both Councils were faced with limited and reducing resources, and reform is needed to ensure long term sustainability against rising demographic pressures arising from an ageing population.

## **Elly Baker Greater London Authority List member**



Elly Baker was elected to the GLA, having the number one position on the Labour list for the May 2021 election. She holds the Transport portfolio on the Labour Group, which includes the current “hot topic” of Transport for London (TFL) funding,

This was Elly’s first visit to us, and was again a zoom meeting as the main larger venues we visit were all being used. We hope to resume in-person meetings soon.

The funding for TFL is different to other capital cities across Europe with 72% being raised by fares compared with the European average of 40%.

This gap had increased- in part a legacy from the previous Mayor- and so was problematic even before Covid, leading to fare increases to balance the budget. Covid had led to a 97% reduction in passenger numbers, which was catastrophic for TFL and transport operators across the Country.

TFL had been treated differently from operators outside London; they had been given 18 months funding with few if any strings attached. TFL had been given a series of 6 month settlements with a string of conditions as Government sought to control TFL actions. There was a requirement to make regular reports to Government with little clarity of how they would be used.

The current deal ends in December and there is no indication of what the outcome may be or whether conditions will be extended or relaxed. There is no medium-to-long term thinking, and the Government remains on the attack.

Government had pushed for a service review in July, before the return to work. Sadiq Khan had negotiated a delay until September, although even this may be too soon. Currently tube use is 45% of former levels, buses 60%. The long-term impact of working from home is unclear and there is no basis to determine whether this is a permanent change.

Elly made the point that service reductions, while they may achieve a balanced budget, could have an adverse impact on people's lives, reducing mobility and social interaction. So an approach is required that is based on more than achieving a balanced budget at all costs.

There is a need to raise the profile on these issues and campaign to maintain services.

Transport for London has responsibility for much of the capital's highways network, so the collapse in fare income has a wider impact – funding for maintenance and new projects has been under pressure. The GLA Conservatives have been critical on this point, although the lack of resources stems from Central government and the level and conditions within the funding settlement.

Elly then dealt with a number of questions from the audience. The first related to the lack of river crossings in East London, and issues with the Woolwich Ferry – frequently there was one Ferry out of action with the explanation of “technical issues”.

TFL now has control of Ferry operations after insourcing the operation.

The business case for dealing with Gallows Corner was work in progress, and Elly would pursue within TFL for an update.

There were issues with Town Centres which were in decline – Romford in particular was suffering. With almost all local buses passing through Romford there was a need to ensure Romford returned to being a thriving centre to ensure the network remained viable, with the knock-on impact on social interaction, as Elly had mentioned in her talk. The approach of “15 minute” neighbourhoods was relevant – promoting local businesses and reducing travel. Permitted development allowed more housing in traditional business centres. So a number of competing pressures and a need for consultation to ensure community engagement.

There were no toilets on the Queen Elizabeth Line trains – these will (eventually) run from Shenfield to Reading. While it may not be practical to modify the trains there is a strong case for toilets on stations. Elly was able to confirm after the meeting that TFL intend that all Crossrail stations will have toilets. The current indication is the work on Crossrail will be completed in the first half of 2022, although caution was required as the project has had several issues.

Cycling numbers had increased, and a future GLA transport committee was designated to look at Death on the Roads and how safety could be improved. Level crossings are checked daily to ensure they work and a similar level of oversight of the cycling network is required to ensure it remains safe.

The Silvertown Tunnel had been the subject of some controversy, although tunnelling had now started.

Low-Traffic neighbourhoods had a mixed reception; there have been bad schemes that Councils were defending and good schemes that had been removed. Cars were not bad per se and Elly recounted that when she lived in Hackney, the need for a car was less given the good public transport links. In rural Havering this was not the case and there needed to be sensitivity as to how the public were consulted on future schemes. The issues differ in Inner and Outer London and the approach should reflect this.

Car clubs were a viable alternative.

They require infrastructure that needs to be in place (when Leonie Cooper visited us, she described how Wandsworth had a car club with 50,000 members, so this is possible). There is high car ownership in both Havering and Redbridge, and potential for a lot of resistance to changes, however environmentally friendly. This requires positive engagement, and if necessary well-funded car scrappage schemes to encourage use of more environmentally friendly cars.

Confidence in public transport is vital and mask wearing provides this – there was a general consensus that mask use was less frequent. Bus drivers were understandably reluctant to confront those not wearing masks given the likely reaction. On a similar point it appeared the 86 bus route was an outlier in respect of “free rides” – again exposing the bus drivers if they try to collect the fare.

So, a wide variety of issues within the session. Elly is also a Member of the Housing and Planning committee, but we did not discuss the many issues in this area, which we will no doubt revisit in future,

Elly can be contacted via e-mail at [Elly.Baker@london.gov.uk](mailto:Elly.Baker@london.gov.uk)

## **Why London – including Havering - needs new homes**

There is a chronic need for housing in London. All London Councils have significant waiting lists with large numbers of families in temporary accommodation.

Properties can be obtained on the private sector rental market and the shortage of supply and profit driven landlords means creates upward pressure on rents and affordability issues. Many families- including a number that in receipt of benefit- so the housing benefit system meets a lot of the cost, transferring funds to private landlords.

The long-term solutions are either

- Reduce demand- not very likely with an increasing population, and not deliverable in the medium term

or

- increase supply

This will require building significant numbers of homes, which requires social infrastructure (schools, hospitals transport links}.

These require land. There is a reluctance to build on the green belt, leaving the development to take place on the remaining brownfield sites, regenerating existing (often ageing stock) or converting land from other uses, such as former industrial sites.

Homes have to be built somewhere, and go through the planning process, giving plenty of opportunity for opposition to any proposals. Major developments are determined by the Greater London Authority or the Secretary of State. So plenty of opportunity for vested interest to oppose, lobby and cajole for planning permission to be refused.

### **Homelessness and Temporary Accommodation**

There are consequences when this happens as these homes are needed – the following is from London Councils;<sup>3</sup>



The existence of a housing crisis in England has been widely accepted for some time. Nowhere is this crisis more acute than in London, with its combination of rapid population growth and churn, high levels of deprivation, and significant constraints on providing additional accommodation.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> [Homelessness | London Councils](#)

In 2017 London had 55,000 households in Temporary Accommodation (68 per cent of the UK total). This has risen by 19,000 (52 per cent) since 2010. London has 15,000 people classed as homeless and in priority need (27 per cent of the national total). The number has risen by 5,000 (52 per cent) since 2010.

The underfunding of homelessness and Temporary Accommodation creates a cost shunt to the general fund of over £170 million a year.

### **The number of households in temporary accommodation<sup>5</sup>**

Authorities use a range of types of temporary accommodation, the most controversial of which is bed and breakfast (B&B) accommodation. The number of homeless households placed in B&B accommodation by English local authorities reached 13,550 in September 1991. This figure fell during the early to mid-1990s to less than 5,000 by the end of 1993. The numbers started rising again after 1996, prompting the Labour Government to announce specific initiatives to tackle this issue.

Official statistics published in December 2011 marked the end of the long-term downward trend in the number of households in temporary accommodation; seasonally-adjusted figures had fallen in each successive quarter since peaking in 2004. By the end of March 2021, there were 95,450 households in temporary accommodation, a rise of 3.5% on 31 March 2020. This rise was primarily driven by an increase in single adult households placed in temporary accommodation during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Of the 95,450 households in temporary accommodation on 31 March 2021, 61.9% included dependent children. A total of 119,830 children were placed in temporary accommodation. The number of families with dependent children placed in B&B-style accommodation increased from 630 at the end of March 2010 to 1,350 at the end of March 2021, although this figure represents a decrease of 11.8% on the end of March 2020.

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<sup>5</sup> [Boroughs fear summer of soaring homelessness | London Councils](#)

## Uncertainty over homelessness funding<sup>6</sup>

- Boroughs' spending on homelessness and rough sleeping rose by £107 million last year (2020/21) due to Covid-19. In response to Covid-19 and the government's 'Everyone In' directive, boroughs are providing emergency accommodation for 2,659 rough sleepers, and together with the GLA have arranged 'move on' accommodation for more than 4,597 former rough sleepers since March 2020.
- Although the government provided emergency funding for supporting rough sleepers and covering these additional homelessness costs during the pandemic, there is little clarity over what funding will be available beyond June 2021. This undermines councils' ability to plan service provision.
- Even before the pandemic, London Councils highlighted the unsustainable growth of homelessness costs in the capital. Boroughs spent £1.1 billion on homelessness services in 2019/20.

London faces the most severe homelessness crisis in the country. London Councils estimates there are currently 165,000 homeless Londoners living in borough-provided temporary accommodation, accounting for two-thirds of England's homelessness total and more than the entire population of cities such as Norwich (143,000), Lancaster (146,000), or Oxford (152,400).

Almost 70% of London households in temporary accommodation have at least one child, with the most recent figures estimating 90,000 children in total.

Homelessness in London previously peaked in 2005, when there were 63,800 households in temporary accommodation. With 60,680 London households in temporary accommodation today, boroughs fear new records could be set this year unless the government increases investment in homelessness prevention.

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<sup>6</sup> London Councils press release 20 May 2021

## Children living with their parents longer

So Housing is needed to address homelessness. It is also needed so that children can at some point leave the family home. This is addressed in detail in by the Office of National Statistics – link below

[Why are more young people living with their parents? - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/childpopulationandchildren/articles/whyaremoreyoungpeoplelivingwiththeirparents/2016-02-22)<sup>7</sup>

## Implications

So there is clear pressure. Homes are needed and have to be built somewhere. Families are housed in sub-optimal locations; children are staying with their parents longer than either party wants. This leads to overcrowding and has an adverse impact on family life and individual aspirations.

These homes have to be built somewhere. Schools and health facilities are needed and transport links need to be able to cope.

Arguments about overdevelopment, developments “that are too high, too dense, will generate traffic, don’t fit the character of the area, are ideal but not here”...can be valid but often are reasons why new homes should not be built near those complaining.

There is a need for difficult and often unpopular decisions if the housing shortage is to be addressed. If there is a desire to end the homeless problem, these have to be taken. If homes are to be at affordable rents (meaning rents that people can afford, not the definition always used) public subsidy is needed and that means higher taxes or tough choices in the next Comprehensive Spending Review.

As this is currently a Council responsibility, the financial impact will mean cuts in other services, higher Council tax or a combination of the two.

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<sup>7</sup> *Why are more young people living with their parents? ONS 22 February 2016*



The numbers of families in Temporary Accommodation in Havering, like every other Borough varies on a daily basis as people move in and out of homes. The tables in Appendix 1 give the position as shown on the MHCLG website at 20<sup>th</sup> September 2021.

There are a variety of reasons why people become homeless, life events which can happen at any time to almost anyone. So there will always be a need for temporary accommodation while people rearrange their living arrangements, but in excess of 1,700 (see below for Havering) indicates a wider problem.

A further issue is the length of time people stay in temporary accommodation. While there is a statutory requirement to rehouse in 56 days, it is not unknown that families can stay in accommodation for much longer – the London Borough of Barnet have families in TA after 7 years and this is not untypical<sup>8</sup>. The MHCLG<sup>9</sup> survey in 2018 found that in England, 43% stayed in TA for at least 6 months, and 28% of cases remained in TA for over a year<sup>10</sup>

So next time there is a Planning Application for homes to help address the homeless issue, the consequence of rejection is to extend the use of temporary accommodation, extend the time children must stay with their parents, and put upward pressure on rents (demand exceeds supply).

There are often plausible sounding reasons to reject an application. These need to be balanced against the on-going consequences. Havering Council cannot bury its head in the sand – failure to approve developments will leave 1,700 families in temporary accommodation and who knows how many adult children destined to live with their parents – while the shortage of supply drives up rents in the private rented sector, closing that off as an option.

The issue for Labour is to ensure that homes are built to an acceptable standard, with the infrastructure needed to support them in place.

Subsidy needs to be enough to allow rents that can be afforded and do not leave families struggling each week to pay the rent. The alternative is more families in Temporary Accommodation – which has no upside.

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<sup>8</sup> [Effectiveness of the private landlords incentive scheme Appendix1.pdf \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#)

<sup>9</sup> Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government – recently replaced by The Department for Levelling Up, Housing **and** Communities

<sup>10</sup> [UK homelessness - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](#)

## Links

Blog	<a href="http://haveringfabians.wordpress.com/">http://haveringfabians.wordpress.com/</a>
Website	<a href="https://haveringfabians.org/">https://haveringfabians.org/</a>
Twitter	<a href="https://twitter.com/HaveringFabians">https://twitter.com/HaveringFabians</a>
Facebook	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/havering.fabians">https://www.facebook.com/havering.fabians</a>
LinkedIn	<a href="https://uk.linkedin.com/in/havering-fabians">https://uk.linkedin.com/in/havering-fabians</a>

## Online payment

Thanks to the many of you that have paid for 2021 – *and to those of you that are about to...* There was a positive response to paying annual subscriptions on line with 70 % of those responding willing to pay on line. Details will be included in all the Havering Fabians emails. Contact us for further details if you are not on the current mailing list.

## Future Meetings

The indications around the vaccine are positive, but it will be some time before we can resume meetings in person. We will keep this under review and hope to meet at some point during 2021. We may start with hybrid meetings to allow those who want to participate remotely to do so.

We hope to have Jon Cruddas on the recent Beam park announcement before the end of 2021; watch the emails for details.

We are looking to arrange a showing of Nick West's film on Drug Policy, and also a speaker on Autism.

We will again have a panel of Council candidates in the lead-up to the Borough elections in May 2022.

Wes Streeting had agreed to speak when we returned, however he has now recovered from illness and is provisionally booked in as speaker at our AGM in February 2022.

The MP for Ilford South Sam Tarry has also agreed to come to a future meeting, and we look forward to being able to welcome Barking and Dagenham Cabinet member Saima Ashraf who has also agreed to speak. We will arrange dates shortly.

## Politics in Havering

Many of you will already be aware of the excellent Politics in Havering Blog, which we repost via our twitter feed. This gives a regular update on politics within the borough – a link is below, please follow them (and our blog!) for regular updates!

<https://havering.blog/>

## We value your input!

The Society invites speakers on a range of subjects; if you would like us to invite speakers on a particular subject let us know and we will try to oblige. The Society has a policy of rotating meetings around the Borough; if you need or can offer a lift or if you know of any suitable venues we could use, contact David Marshall.

## Local Fabian Society Contacts

		Contact
<b>Chair</b> Councillor Keith Darvill	<b>Secretary</b> David Marshall	David Marshall
<b>Membership Secretary</b>		31 Vicarage Road Hornchurch RM12 4AS 01708 441189 <a href="mailto:david.c.marshall@talk21com">david.c.marshall@talk21com</a>
<b>Vice Chair</b> Sam Gould		
<b>Treasurer</b> Dave Baldock		



*Chair Keith Darvill reports ...*

## **Future Editions**

Contributions to the newsletter are always welcome. The Fabian Society exists to promote progressive ideas from within and outside of the Labour movement. As such we are happy to publish articles in keeping with this broad ethos, but reserve the right not to include all or part of any material which falls outside of this parameter. Our next edition will be in December 2021 and will hopefully reflect being ever nearer to a return to something like normality, and we can stop looking at screens all day.

## **Havering Fabian Society is affiliated to**

- National Fabian Society
- Dagenham and Rainham Labour Party
- Romford Labour Party
- Upminster and Hornchurch Labour Party
- Barking Labour Party
- Havering and Dagenham Young Labour

## **Havering Fabian Membership**

To join Havering Fabian Society, please complete the form below and send to David Marshall. You can also join the Society nationally; David has more details. You do not have to be a member of the Labour Party to join Havering Fabians, but you will need to be a Labour Party member to take part in Labour Party selections and elections.



## **Havering Fabian Society**

Founded in 1974, the Society promotes progressive political thought in Havering and beyond. Membership of the Society is not necessary to attend meetings, and neither is membership of the Labour Party.

However, to participate in nominations to the Local Labour Parties or in selection conferences, membership of both is required. The Society meets regularly throughout the year, apart from the summer and during election campaigns. Local Membership is currently £10 waged, £5 unwaged.

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I\ we wish to join Havering Fabians

Name .....

Address .....

.....

.....

.....postcode.....

E-mail.....

Phone number .....

Waged (£10) unwaged £5 .....

## Appendix 1 Havering figures – extracted from MHCLG Website 17-9-2021

### Statutory homelessness: Detailed local authority-level tables<sup>11</sup>

April 2020 to March 2021

England

	<i>Number and % of households</i>	
<b>Total number of households assessed<sup>1,2</sup></b>	<b>1,837</b>	
<b>Total households assessed as owed a duty</b>	<b>1,732</b>	<b>94.3%</b>

#### Households assessed and duty owed:

Threatened with homelessness - Prevention duty owed	977	53.2%
<i>Of which:</i> due to service of valid Section 21 Notice	49	2.7%
Homeless - Relief duty owed	755	41.1%
Not threatened with homelessness within 56 days - no duty owed	105	5.7%

#### Reason for loss of last settled home for households owed a prevention duty:

Family or friends no longer willing or able to accommodate	483	27.9%
End of private rented tenancy - assured shorthold	177	10.2%
Domestic abuse	118	6.8%
Non-violent relationship breakdown with partner	58	3.3%
End of social rented tenancy	20	1.2%
Eviction from supported housing	4	0.2%
End of private rented tenancy - not assured shorthold	43	2.5%
Other violence or harassment	18	1.0%
Left institution with no accommodation available	15	0.9%
Required to leave accommodation provided by Home Office as asylum support	7	0.4%
Other reasons / not known <sup>6</sup>	34	2.0%

#### Reason for loss of last settled home for households owed a relief duty:

Family or friends no longer willing or able to accommodate	357	20.6%
End of private rented tenancy - assured shorthold	81	4.7%
Domestic abuse	99	5.7%

<sup>11</sup> [Live tables on homelessness - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/live-tables-on-homelessness)

Non-violent relationship breakdown with partner	63	0.9%
End of social rented tenancy	15	0.5%
Eviction from supported housing	8	1.7%
End of private rented tenancy - not assured shorthold	29	0.8%
Other violence or harassment	13	2.9%
Left institution with no accommodation available	50	1.0%
Required to leave accommodation provided by Home Office as asylum support	18	1.3%
Other reasons / not known <sup>6</sup>	22	0.0%

### Accommodation at time of application for those owed a prevention duty:

Private rented sector	298	17.2%
Living with family	514	29.7%
No fixed abode <sup>3</sup>	0	0.0%
Social rented sector	51	2.9%
Living with friends	67	3.9%
Homeless on departure from institution	16	0.9%
Rough sleeping	0	0.0%
Owner-occupier / shared ownership	10	0.6%
Temporary accommodation	0	0.0%
National Asylum Seeker Support (NASS) accommodation	7	0.4%
Refuge	6	0.3%
Other / not known <sup>4</sup>	8	0.5%



### Household type of households owed a prevention duty<sup>7</sup>:

Single parent with dependent children - Male	30	3.1%
- Female	309	31.6%
- Other / gender not known	0	0.0%
Single adult - Male	303	31.0%
- Female	236	24.2%
- Other / gender not known	1	0.1%
Couple with dependent children	49	5.0%
Couple / two adults without dependent children	28	2.9%
Three or more adults with dependent children	11	1.1%
Three or more adults without dependent children	10	1.0%
Not known <sup>8</sup>	0	0.0%

### Households assessed as a result of a referral, including under the Duty to Refer

Total households assessed as a result of a referral	236	100.0%
Total households referred under the Duty to Refer	158	66.9%
Adult Secure Estate (prison)	32	13.6%
Youth Secure Estate	1	0.4%
National Probation Service	38	16.1%
Community Rehabilitation Company	3	1.3%
Hospital A&E, Urgent Treatment Centres or in-patient care	37	15.7%
Mental Health in-patient care	0	0.0%
Jobcentre Plus	23	9.7%
Adult Social Services	19	8.1%
Children's Social Services	5	2.1%
Nil Recourse Team	0	0.0%
Secretary of State for defence in relation to members of the armed forces	0	0.0%
Other / not known	0	0.0%
Households referred by an agency (not subject to the Duty to Refer)	73	30.9%
Households referred by another local authority	5	2.1%

### Ethnicity of main applicants owed a prevention or relief duty<sup>7</sup>:

White	1,250	72.2%
Black / African / Caribbean / Black British	257	14.8%
Asian / Asian British	128	7.4%
Mixed / Multiple ethnic groups	55	3.2%
Other ethnic groups	38	2.2%
Not known <sup>8</sup>	4	0.2%

### Sexual identification of main applicants owed a duty<sup>7</sup>:

Heterosexual	1,690	97.6%
Homosexual (Gay/Lesbian)	16	0.9%
Other	15	0.9%
Prefer not to say	11	0.6%
Not known	0	0.0%

### *Number and % of households*

<b>Total households with support need(s) owed a duty</b>	<b>522</b>	<b>30.1%</b>
<b>Total number of support needs for those owed a duty<sup>5</sup></b>	<b>755</b>	

### Support needs of households owed a prevention or relief duty<sup>7</sup>:

History of mental health problems	192	11.1%
Physical ill health and disability	101	5.8%
At risk of / has experienced domestic abuse	141	8.1%
Offending history	66	3.8%
History of repeat homelessness	11	0.6%
Drug dependency needs	47	2.7%
History of rough sleeping	24	1.4%
Alcohol dependency needs	40	2.3%
Learning disability	26	1.5%
Young person aged 18-25 years requiring support to manage independently	17	1.0%
Access to education, employment or training	29	1.7%
At risk of / has experienced abuse (non-domestic abuse)	10	0.6%
At risk of / has experienced sexual abuse / exploitation	16	0.9%
Old age	11	0.6%
Care leaver aged 21+ years	6	0.3%
Care leaver aged 18-20 years	5	0.3%
Young person aged 16-17 years	2	0.1%
Young parent requiring support to manage independently	3	0.2%
Former asylum seeker	7	0.4%
Served in HM Forces	1	0.1%

**Age of main applicants owed a prevention or relief duty<sup>7</sup>:**

16-17	0	0.0%
18-24	390	22.5%
25-34	547	31.6%
35-44	392	22.6%
45-54	242	14.0%
55-64	112	6.5%
65-74	35	2.0%
75+	14	0.8%
Not known <sup>8</sup>	0	0.0%

**Accommodation at time of application for those owed a relief duty:**

Private rented sector	162	9.4%
Living with family	371	21.4%
No fixed abode <sup>3</sup>	33	1.9%
Social rented sector	39	2.3%
Living with friends	66	3.8%
Homeless on departure from institution	32	1.8%
Rough sleeping	4	0.2%
Owner-occupier / shared ownership	7	0.4%
Temporary accommodation	0	0.0%
National Asylum Seeker Support (NASS) accommodation	17	1.0%
Refuge	10	0.6%
Other / not known <sup>4</sup>	14	0.8%

**Household type of households owed a relief duty<sup>7</sup>:**

Single parent with dependent children - Male	10	1.0%
- Female	136	13.9%
- Other / gender not known	0	0.0%
Single adult - Male	410	42.0%
- Female	155	15.9%
- Other / gender not known	0	0.0%
Couple with dependent children	24	2.5%
Couple / two adults without dependent children	14	1.4%
Three or more adults with dependent children	2	0.2%
Three or more adults without dependent children	4	0.4%
Not known <sup>8</sup>	0	0.0%

### Nationality of main applicants owed a prevention or relief duty<sup>7</sup>:

UK	1,586	91.6%
Non-EEA	64	3.7%
A8, A2 & Croatia <sup>9</sup>	35	2.0%
Other EEA <sup>10</sup>	38	2.2%
Ireland	750	0.3%
Not known <sup>8</sup>	0	0.0%

### Employment status of main applicants owed a duty<sup>7</sup>:

Registered unemployed	1,006	58.1%
Not working due to long-term illness / disability	103	5.9%
Full-time work	183	10.6%
Part-time work	161	9.3%
Not seeking work / at home	129	7.4%
Not registered unemployed but seeking work	87	5.0%
Retired	29	1.7%
Student / training	21	1.2%
Other	3	0.2%
Not known <sup>8</sup>	10	0.6%

### Reason for eligibility of main applicants owed a duty<sup>7</sup>:

British or Irish citizen, or habitually resident	12	0.7%
EEA citizen: Worker	3	0.2%
Non-UK/-EEA citizen: Indefinite Leave to Remain	44	2.5%
Non-UK/-EEA citizen: Limited Leave to Remain	21	1.2%
Non-UK/-EEA citizen: Granted refugee status	7	0.4%
EEA citizen: Other	21	1.2%
EEA citizen: Permanent right to reside	12	0.7%
Non-UK/-EEA citizen: Other protection (e.g. humanitarian, discretionary)	0	0.0%
EEA citizen: Eligible family member	3	0.2%
EEA citizen: Self-employed	1	0.1%
Non-UK/-EEA citizen: Exceptional Leave to Remain	0	0.0%
Not known <sup>8</sup>	9	0.5%