

London Borough of  
Havering

Liberal  
Democrats



# Manifesto for Havering 2018

# A Better Deal for Havering

Liberal  
Democrats



Open, Tolerant and United

## **Havering Liberal Democrats**

# **A Manifesto for Havering 2018 - A Better Deal for Havering**

### **Police and Crime**

Crime, including violent crime, has continued to increase, and we have seen continued cuts to our local police force, severely limiting the amount of crime prevention and investigation they can perform.

- We **strongly oppose cuts** to local police and PCSO numbers and the closure of local police stations.
- We will use every opportunity to **press for more effective police / community liaison** to better understand, prevent and investigate the increasing levels of crime locally.
- We will seek the re-introduction and growth of **better community policing strategies** after the continued cuts to local community policing teams.
- We will seek to **build strong, collaborative ties** between the Council, the police and community groups who seek to work to build a safer society for us all.

### **Youth and Community Services**

Local youth services, new parenting services and countless community and public groups (including our valuable library services) have already been decimated with terrible consequences for our community.

- We will **urgently review those services that are still holding on** and ensure the important work they perform can be supported.

- **Rebuild links** with current and new community groups and learn from elsewhere on what further can be provided and **seek funding where necessary**.
- We will **establish a “best practice sharing group”** to help local community groups learn from others on how best to secure the vital funding they need from the Big Lottery Fund and other grant-giving bodies.

## Environment

We are currently one of London’s greenest Boroughs and a number of our parklands are recognised for their great facilities and important roles they provide in terms of protecting wildlife, the environment and providing leisure facilities. But these facilities are increasingly coming under threat from development and commercial exploitation.

- We **support the London National Park** campaign.
- We **support the local parks’ Friends groups** and the vital work they do to maintain and support our parks for us all to benefit from.
- We **support Campaign to Protect Rural England’s (CPRE) campaigns** to safeguard our valuable greenbelt by stating in our Borough Development Plan that development on brownfield sites should come in preference to greenfield.
- We **support London Cycling Campaign and Living Streets’ joint campaign** for a **more Liveable London**.
- We will develop a **plan for installation of electric vehicle charging points**, in car parks, etc. This will continue to help provide encouragement to local drivers to switch and hence **improve our air quality**.
- We will put Havering Council at the front of the air quality debate by **converting the vehicle fleet to electric vehicles** as early as possible.

## Local Democracy and Accountability

Councillors have become increasingly distant from the people they represent – us, the residents of Havering. They are running the council without properly taking into consideration the views of local people. Separately, the planning application process is becoming bottle-necked and an increasing number of Council-issued refusals are being overturned on appeal.

- We will **re-establish Area Committees and local Forums** to bring Councillors much closer to the people they represent and shorten the

planning cycle (thereby reducing costs to the Council and hence us as Council Tax payers, and the planning applicants).

## Household Waste

Recycling in Havering is at about 37% of household waste, putting Havering Council in the bottom third of all English councils. This is against the background of a 25 year contract that the Council has signed for waste service provision which we believe does not provide effective market forces to ensure good value for money to tax payers.

- We will **review what significant improvements can be made within the confines of the current recycling contract** and seek to renegotiate where required, working with Central Government and other stakeholders where required.
- We will **take immediate steps to introduce kerb-side collection of used glass bottles** as has been performed in many parts of the country for many years – an easy win to increase recycling levels.

## Council Tax

Our Council Tax in Havering is one of the highest in London. Despite this, we are seeing continued cuts to the local services we need and deserve. A recent budget consultation drew in a tiny level of public response, showing a dis-engaged public body. Where residents have proposed areas that are less of a priority and could be considered for cuts, these have too often been brushed aside by the Council and not taken in to account.

- **Urgent review on spending** - is what is currently collected spent as we need it to be?
- **Ensure effective consultation and representation of residents' views** when passing the budget – no more brushing aside the views and voice of the Council Tax-paying public.
- **Determine the real level of funding required** for the services that we need and deserve.

## Roads and Paths

Local drivers and path users (for example those who are blind or partially sighted, pram and pushchair users, mobility scooter users, those with walking frames or

other mobility aids, etc) are faced with daily and worsening pothole hazards right now.

- We would **prioritise repairs and act now** to save them getting worse, not wait to address them over the coming 4 years.

## Housing

We will all be aware of the national housing shortage crisis. There is a continuing and growing need for housing that is genuinely affordable, without being of poor quality, stigmatised, or simply not being appropriate to the needs of residents here in Havering. Many workers in some of our key services have been forced to endure many years of austerity and zero to very low wage increases. These essential workers are priced out of many local housing options.

- We will **immediately seek to identify and call upon those housing developers who have sought to “land grab”**, and kickstart building of the desperately needed housing that these developers are currently blocking.
- We will **encourage housing development applications which maximise the use of renewable energy and designed-in energy efficiencies** in order to minimise those resident’s energy bills.
- We will **establish a forum to share both best practice and innovative solutions to housing design** from national and international groups.
- We will **work with Housing Associations** so that they can build both council and social housing.
- We will **encourage schemes to help young people** with both ‘tenancy’ and ‘to buy’ deposits to enable them to get on the housing ladder.

## Education

As any parent of school-aged children knows, it is a postcode lottery to get the school place that each child deserves. Great education should not be the preserve of those who can afford the most expensive houses nearest to a few select schools. We strongly believe that every child should have access to the school place which gives that child the best education and growth opportunities possible for their future.

- We will **immediately seek to build stronger links with local schools and their Governing Bodies** and encourage each school to take a local Councillor as a Governor as a short circuit into the Council and to help spread best practice.

- We will **immediately facilitate a best practice sharing forum between all local schools** in order to share what works well for the benefit of all.
- We will provide a **strong voice for local communities** in relation to schools that are not under local control, **by raising any concerns directly with the Department for Education.**
- We will **immediately review the current cycle we have of beloved local schools being forced to close and the land sold off**, only to find a “surprise” demand on school places, requiring the building of new schools at huge cost.

## Health

Continued cuts are felt no more acutely than within our local health services. Access to the services are increasingly becoming a postcode lottery. Recent cuts leading to different levels of service depending on where you live include access to fertility treatment for women and cataract eye surgery.

- We **strongly oppose the continued cuts to the vital local health services which we all deserve.**
- We would **review new housing developments to ensure that adequate local health services are embedded from the outset.**

## Social Care

Those requiring help and support from our Social Services are amongst the most needy in our society, including those requiring dementia support or mental health support in the community. Many of us will have a family relative who has or is currently receiving social care and will know how valuable that support is. However, the level of care in Havering has continually fallen below the level that is needed.

- We will **immediately seek a review of the current level of social care funding** and determine what is the level of funding that is required.
- We will **inform residents of the shortfall** of funding and present a clear plan to incrementally reduce the funding gap and secure the services we all deserve.
- Our **care services need to be able to support the elderly, and other vulnerable patients** and enable them to return to their homes in order to free up hospital beds.

## Jobs and Business

Many of our local workforce are forced to travel outside of Havering to seek work simply because the opportunities required are not available more local to home. Our commuters have little choice but to endure the huge cost and time drain just to get to their place of work. The talent drain stops local businesses from developing and has a direct knock-on effect to support businesses (for example, lunch places, etc). Visitors to our town centres don't have to walk far to find many empty shop units. In terms of Romford, this is despite the market operating under a Royal Charter granted by King Henry III.

- We will **immediately call an end to stop the rot of the decay in our local High Streets** and provide support where possible to independent shops.
- We will **work with landlords of empty properties and business owners to help promote sustainable and growing businesses.**
- We will **work to promote the skills and talents that the local Havering workforce have** in order to **attract larger employers back into our area.**

## Respect for the Individual

As Liberal Democrats and responsible local citizens, we are aware of our country's diverse and mixed history, both in terms of the value our mixed cultural heritage brings as well as acknowledging the challenging aspects of our past mistakes. This is no less true in our local Havering community.

- We will **continue to stand proud with our neighbours and all diverse social groups** who value and seek the best for our local community.

## Contact us

Email: [contact@haveringlibdems.org.uk](mailto:contact@haveringlibdems.org.uk)

Web: [www.haveringlibdems.org.uk](http://www.haveringlibdems.org.uk)

Twitter: [twitter.com/haveringlibdems](https://twitter.com/haveringlibdems)

Facebook: [facebook.com/HaveringLiberalDemocrats](https://facebook.com/HaveringLiberalDemocrats)

Phone: 01708 872101