

Tory Government is not doing enough to ensure young people are on the electoral register – Cat Smith

Cat

Smith MP, Labour's Shadow Minister for Voter Engagement and Youth Affairs, commenting on today's Electoral Registration Statistics, said:

"While the increase in electoral registration numbers following the EU referendum is welcome, this Tory Government is still not doing enough to ensure that young people are on the register.

"That is why the Lords voted in favour of a Labour motion to the Higher Education and Research Bill, requiring universities to give students the option to register to vote when they sign up at university.

"If the Tories are serious about making every voice matter they need to keep this sensible addition when the Bill comes back to the Commons."

Ends

Notes to editors:

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The total number of UK parliamentary electors increased by just over 1 million (2.3%) between December 2015 and December 2016, reflecting the high levels of public engagement with the EU referendum.
<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/elections/electoralregistration/bulletins/electoralstatisticsforuk/2016>

. A study from the Electoral Commission in 2014 found that young people were a particularly under-represented group on the electoral register
http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0005/169889/Completeness-and-accuracy-of-the-2014-electoral-registers-in-Great-Britain.pdf

. Before the Conservatives rushed the introduction of Individual Electoral Registration, students were automatically enrolled by their universities. However, the Electoral Administration Act of 2013 did not provide for a suitable student registration to be put in place when the old system of household registration was

abolished.

· On Monday 7th March the House of Lords voted in favour of Baroness Royall's amendment to the Higher Education and Research Bill. The amendment was passed, defeating the Government, by a majority of 200 to 189. The amendment would require universities to offer students the opportunity to register to vote at the point of enrolment or re-registration as a student at their university, a proposal first made by Paul Blomfield MP in the Commons.

[Press release: £45 million to accelerate 4,500 homes in Cambridgeshire](#)

A key site near Huntingdon that will provide over 4,500 new homes has been given a major boost with a £45 million loan from the Homes and Communities Agency, it has been announced today (16 March 2017).

The investment from the Home Building Fund will help developers Urban&Civic accelerate the delivery of the site by funding the provision of vital infrastructure across the 1400 acre former airfield at Alconbury Weald.

Announcing the deal at international property conference MIPIM HCA Chief Executive Nick Walkley said:

This deal is exactly the sort of thing we are here to do – providing the means to realise the full potential of development sites and provide the impetus to enable a real transformation in local housing markets.

Alconbury Weald is a major development of recognised quality and we will work closely with Urban&Civic to accelerate the new housing and community facilities that this site can delivery for a major growth region of the country.

Alongside thousands of new homes, the former airfield near Huntingdon in Cambridgeshire will provide up to 300,000sq m of floorspace for new businesses within the GCGP LEP's Enterprise Zone and a range of community facilities, including a secondary school and three new primary schools of which the first opened last year, alongside hundreds of acres of green space.

Housing and Planning Minister, Gavin Barwell said:

Speeding up house building is one of the key measures we set out in our Housing White Paper, so that we get the right homes built in the right places. The £3 billion Home Building Fund helps do just that by unlocking large housing sites like Alconbury Weald.

Having visited the development last year, it will not only provide much-needed homes, but also space for new businesses as well as schools and community facilities.

Chief Executive of Urban&Civic plc Nigel Hugill said:

The HCA and Urban&Civic are fully aligned from our experience of large sites to our ambition to accelerate the delivery of housing from them. At Alconbury Weald we have brought forward infrastructure spend as a direct consequence of the HCA's involvement and look forward to working in partnership with Nick and his team over the lifetime of the development.

The government is right to emphasise the importance of large sites in meeting housing demand in areas of strong economic and demographic growth, as well as helping widen the supply chain for faster housing delivery.

The HCA is the government's national housing and regeneration delivery agency for England and manages around 8,900ha of land.

Urban&Civic plc is an established property development and investment company. The delivery of strategic land is at the core of Urban&Civic's business model where, as Master Developer, it owns or has the stewardship of over 4,000 acres across 4 sites located close to Cambridge, Huntingdon, Newark and Rugby.

- Alconbury Weald is located at the former Alconbury Airfield and adjacent land to the North of Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire, approximately 15 miles south of Peterborough; the site is a 1,420 acre predominantly brownfield site
- as a whole, the Alconbury Weald site will support the delivery of 290,000sqm of employment floor space, 5,000 homes, 700 acres of green spaces and an assortment of complementary transport, energy and community facilities
- HCA is lending £45.07m to Urban&Civic Alconbury Ltd (wholly owned subsidiary of Urban&Civic plc) under the Home Building Fund and will accelerate the delivery of 4,507 housing units in Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire
- the HCA funding will help to fund enabling works, road and utility infrastructure and s106 obligations across the wider site; HCA funded infrastructure will also benefit the current housebuilders on site,

particularly Redrow and Morris with the delivery of a secondary road access points onto their respective sites

- currently, Hopkins homes are already on site building homes and Redrow and Morris to have houses built by Summer 2017; the first primary school to support this development was opened in Sept 2016

For further information on Alconbury Weald visit their [website](#).

Press release: New chair appointed to The Pensions Advisory Service

The appointment was made without holding a competition and has been made in agreement with the [Commissioner for Public Appointments](#) who was content given the fact that a new body is to be created that will replace The Pensions Advisory Service (TPAS).

Ann will oversee the continued delivery of free, professional and impartial guidance on pensions and support for people if they have a problem or complaint about their workplace or private pension.

The Pensions Advisory Service delivers its information and guidance service through a variety of channels including telephone, web chat, written and online enquiries, outreach events and on its website. It is also responsible for delivering Pension Wise's telephone services.

Minister of State for Pensions, Richard Harrington said:

Ann Harris brings a wealth of experience and skills to The Pensions Advisory Service which does excellent work in helping the public with pension inquiries.

With more than 178,000 customers, and more than 2.7 million visits to its website in the past year, TPAS' services are very much in demand so it's vital it attracts a senior leader of such high calibre.

Ann Harris OBE said:

I am delighted with my new appointment as TPAS Chair.

This is an exciting time for TPAS, as it prepares for the proposed transition to a new single finance guidance body.

I am determined that it continues to deliver its core business of

giving people professional, independent and impartial help with their private pensions.

About The Pensions Advisory Service

The TPAS service is free to the public. It is delivered by in-house pension specialists and a nationwide network of volunteer advisers who have typically worked in the pensions industry in roles that have required a high level of technical knowledge.

Single finance guidance body

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and HM Treasury have recently [consulted on a single guidance body](#) bringing together:

The consultation sets out a proposal to create a single body providing debt advice, money guidance and pensions information and guidance. The body would complement financial guidance provided by the third sector and industry, provide more targeted support for consumers and generate efficiencies.

This new body will make it easier for consumers to get the guidance they need.

Ann Harris OBE – Biography

Ann previously worked for 40 years as a civil servant, latterly holding senior Civil Service roles in finance and programme management. She was awarded an OBE in 2009, for her services to DWP.

Ann's roles outside DWP include acting in a trustee role for the Civil Service Pension programme, management board and operations committee. Ann is also an audit committee member for the Gambling Commission and volunteers regularly for her local Citizens Advice Bureau, where she is a volunteer trustee. She previously served with TPAS as a non-executive director for 18 months prior to becoming chairperson.

Media enquiries for this press release – 0203 267 5122

Follow DWP on:

[Education Secretary Kirsty Williams praises Wrexham specialist school](#)

The school is one of the leading special needs education facilities in the

country and the Education Secretary toured the classrooms to see the excellent work undertaken there.

St Christopher's is a maintained special school for pupils aged between 6-19 years with a range of special educational needs and was awarded 'Excellent' in their last Estyn inspection in 2014.

In December last year the schools was awarded Welsh Government funding through the Arts Council to allow pupils to access artistic events that would normally be restricted due to the financial costs.

Kirsty Williams said:

"I want to thank everyone for welcoming me here today, I know that a school is a busy place so I appreciate you giving me your time and showing me the facilities.

"St Christopher's inclusive approach to education is to be welcomed and I've been impressed by how they support all learners to gain the qualifications they need for their next stage of learning. Others have much to learn from your approach.

"Within the education system we want to improve the aspirations of those who need extra support. Our Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal Bill, will, if passed, completely overhaul the system for supporting pupils with additional learning needs."

The Welsh Government recently announced £20 million of planned investment to support learners with additional learning needs.

[Green Party names Manchester Gorton by-election candidate](#)



16 March 2017

- * **Jess Mayo announced as Green candidate**
- * **Greens the only party to challenge Labour after record election results**
- * **Jess Mayo: "I will make sure Gorton is not overlooked or left behind"**
- * **Caroline Lucas MP: "Gorton can make history by going Green in this election"**

The Green Party has announced Jess Mayo as its candidate for the Gorton by-election.

Mayo will take on Labour for the seat in a bid to make history and become the first Green MP for Gorton, where the Greens finished second in the last local and General elections.

Caroline Lucas, co-leader of the Green Party, announced Mayo's candidacy at an event at Trinity House Community Resource Centre today, followed by a visit to Shahjalal Mosque and Islamic Centre.

The Green Party came 2nd in Gorton at the last election receiving 4,108 votes, with the Tories in third, followed by UKIP in fourth and the Lib Dems in fifth [1].

Mayo, a 36-year-old entrepreneur and mum-of-two, hopes to build on the record result from 2015 with a campaign targeting voters who value Britain's place in Europe, and those who feeling let down by a Labour Party in disarray and the Lib Dems who are struggling to regain the public's trust.

Jess Mayo said:

"The Greens are the only party to challenge Labour in Gorton and it's a privilege to stand in this by-election and give voters a real alternative. The Green Party has already brought about real change for this community by pushing the council to protect us from flooding and make our roads safer – imagine what we could do with a Green MP fighting Gorton's corner.

"The Green Party will tackle the housing crisis which is leaving people across Manchester on the streets and in poverty, by pushing for better social housing and a renters' charter to improve standards in the private sector. But it won't stop there, and in coming weeks I look forward to campaigning for a better future for Gorton in which it's not overlooked or left behind."

Caroline Lucas MP, Green co-leader, said:

"Gorton can make history by going Green in this election. The Tories are slashing public services. Labour are failing to stand up against an extreme Brexit and the Lib Dems are still struggling to regain the public's trust. The Green Party offers something different – an MP standing up for the people of Gorton, not engaging in the squabbling of the other parties.

"Voting Green in Gorton means electing an MP who opposes a dangerous Brexit, fights for your local schools and hospitals and stands up to the Government."

Notes:

1. http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/politics/constituencies/E14000808#constituency_result_headline

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