



More in  
Common

# Local Elections

## What happened?

May 2025

# Top lines

Further fragmentation means that the era of multi-party politics has well and truly arrived - but with a clear winner of that era this week in Reform UK - capitalising on both disillusionment and frustrations on cost of living and immigration

Reform is advancing on Tory and Labour territory. Just 42% of Reform's current voters came from their 2024 voter base - beyond this they have gained support from the Tories and Labour.

The Liberal Democrats continue to advance into blue wall seats in the south - particularly in areas they gained in the General Election. Their vote continues to be concentrated and efficient.

The Tories are subject to a devastating pincer movement losing to Reform across the country and the Liberal Democrats in the South. One former leader could help them regain lost ground.

The public are losing faith in Labour's ability to deliver change and voters wanted to give them a 'kick up the bum'. Without a split on the right the results could have been worse. There is appetite for a reversal on winter fuel allowance.

The public think neither Starmer or Badenoch will be leading their parties into the next General Election. A third of the country now expect Reform to be in Government in some form after the election.



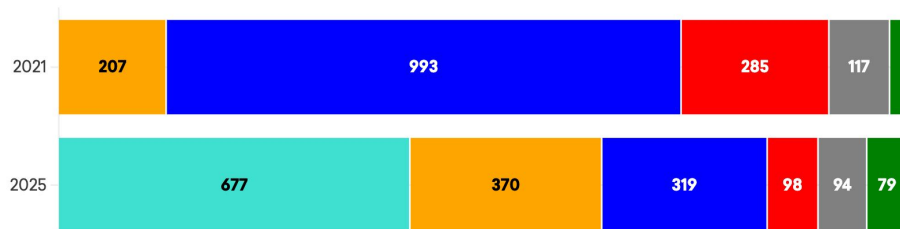
# The context

# What happened?

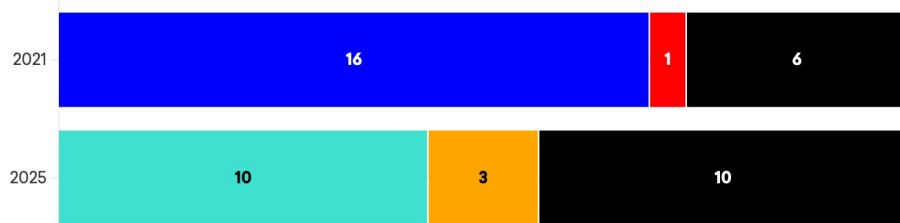
## 2025 Local Election results

Reform UK Liberal Democrat Conservative Labour Others Green  
● No overall control

### Council seats



### Councils

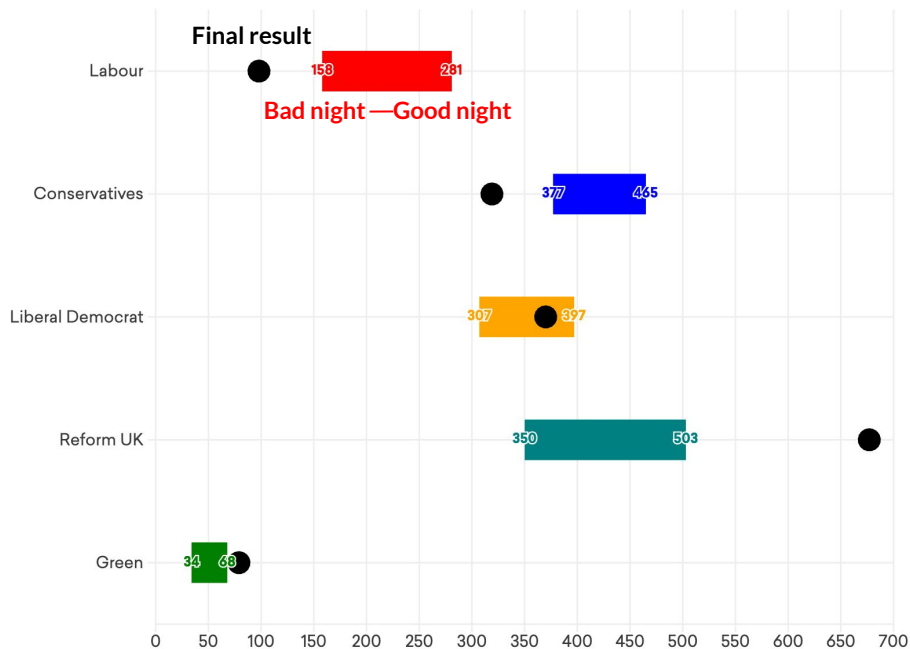


This week's local elections saw a dramatic shift away from Britain's largest parties and towards Reform UK and the Liberal Democrats. These county elections were held in more traditionally-Conservative areas and the Conservatives suffered historic and dramatic defeats - losing all sixteen of the councils they controlled going into the election.



# Who under- and over-performed?

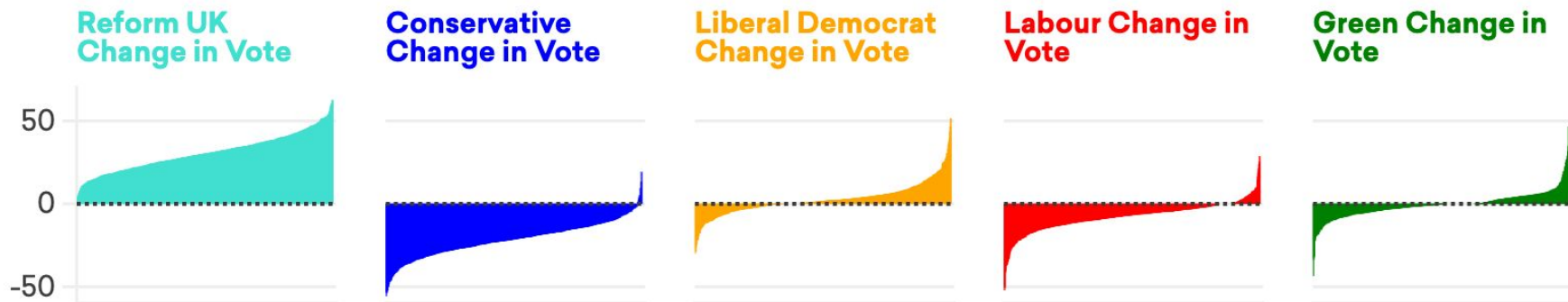
## Local Elections 2025 seat projections



Reform UK overperformed most expectations in these elections, winning 677 council seats, making gains from both the Conservatives and Labour.

On the other hand, the Conservatives lost 674 seats and the Labour Party lost 187 - both performing worse than the 'bad night' threshold we set for them.

# The big picture



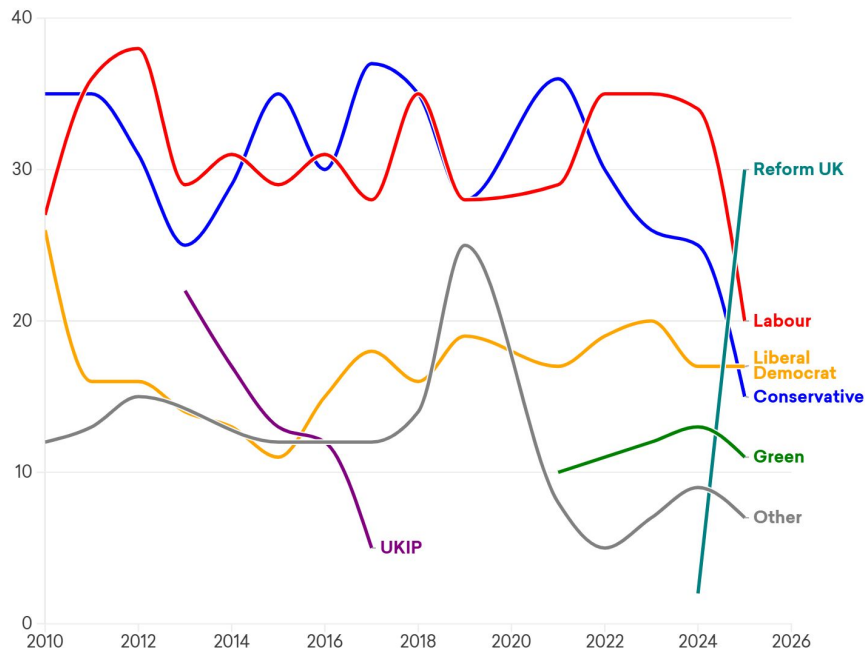
Source: More in Common Analysis (May, 2025) • Note: This is exclusively data for Electoral Divisions in the 12 councils whose boundaries remained the same between 2021 and 2025

Reform had a breakthrough set of results, starting from a baseline of zero in almost every electoral division, they made major progress across councils. Both the Conservatives and Labour had a terrible night, with the Conservatives seeing comparatively worse swings, but starting from a stronger position than Labour. In terms of swing, it was a mixed night for the Greens, who managed to grow their number of councillors despite losing votes in some places. The Liberal Democrats also had a good night, seeing generally strong swings towards them in the areas they needed to gain seats.

# What does this tell us about the national picture?

## Reform UK won the Projected National Vote Share

BBC / Curtice Projected National Share (PNS)



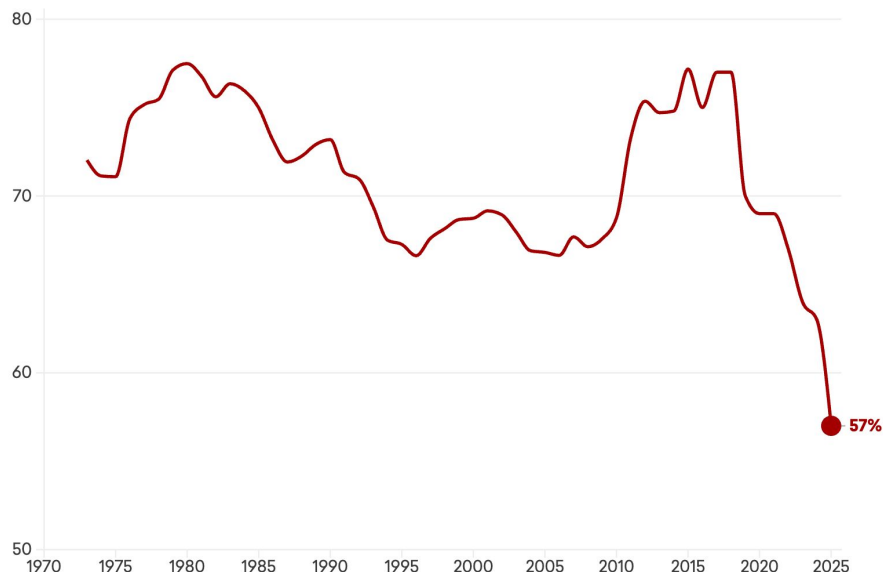
These local elections mark the first year that neither the Conservatives nor Labour have come first on the Projected National Vote share, with Reform in first place, and the Conservatives falling to fourth place - their worst result in history.

Similarly, on the National Equivalent Vote Share measure, Reform UK are on a sizeable 32 per cent, 13 points ahead of Labour on 19 per cent and the Conservatives on 18 per cent.

# Fragmentation

## Lowest proportion of seats controlled by Labour or the Conservatives since at least the 1970s

Proportion of council seats controlled by Labour or the Conservatives



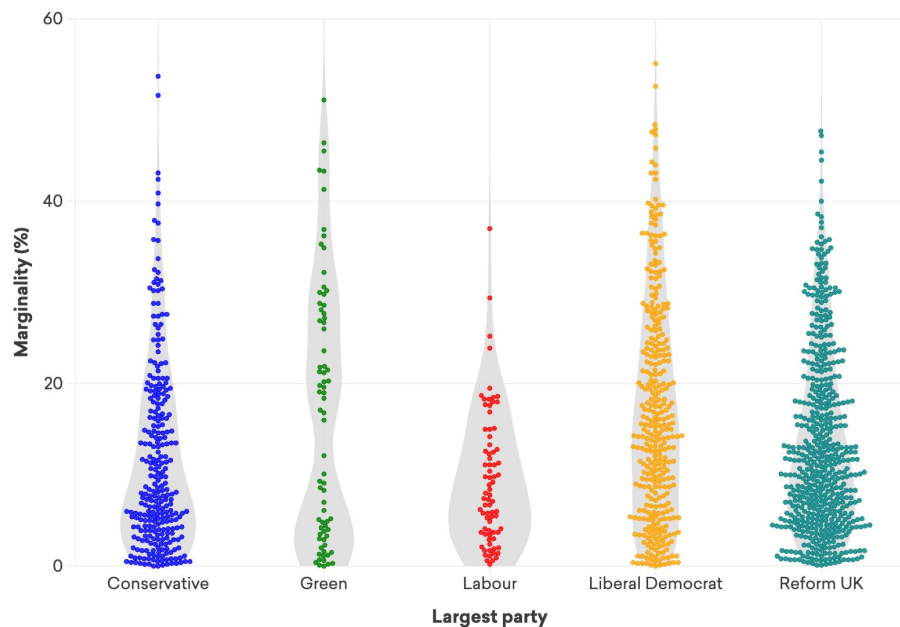
The elections continue a trend seen at last year's General Election - extreme fragmentation of the vote and of political control away from Britain's two main parties.

After this week's elections, just 57 per cent of council seats in Great Britain are controlled by Labour or the Conservatives, the lowest proportion since at least the 1970s.

# An extremely marginal set of results

## Labour's victories are more marginal than other parties'

Ward-level margin of victory



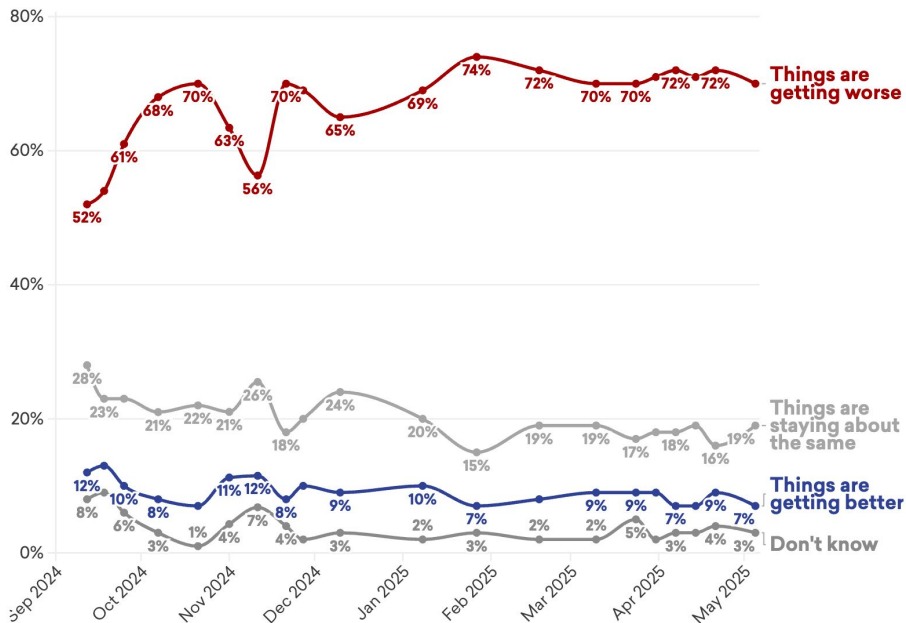
These local elections also produced an extremely marginal set of results: in 2021, 65 per cent of seats were won on a more than 50 per cent vote share; this year, just 16 per cent were.

This presents a larger danger for Labour and the Conservatives, whose seats were won most marginally - suggesting that they could suffer further damage if current trends continue. For both Labour and the Conservatives, the median seat was won on an 8 per cent margin, compared to 11 per cent for Reform UK, 15 per cent for the Liberal Democrats, and 17 per cent for the Greens.

# Disillusionment

## Most think things are getting worse

Thinking about the UK today, would you say...



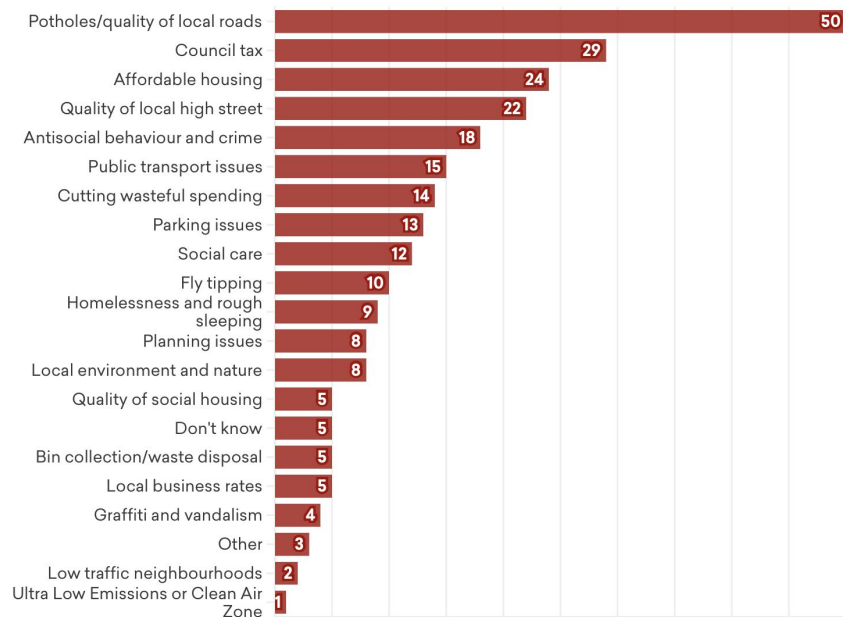
The results come at a time when the public mood is extremely grim - most think that things in the country are getting worse, and these numbers have not got better since the Labour Government were elected in July. In this context of deep disillusionment, the public are turning away from the traditional mainstream.

*"I've actually given up on the system, if I'm being totally open and honest with you. Yeah, nothing really changes ever. You go from one bunch of lying so-and-so's to the next lot it would seem, even locally (...). It's almost, this is going to sound really extreme, but the country almost needs a coup-d'etat and it needs somebody to almost come in and say, 'right, this is what we're doing and you will conform' (...) There's no proper leadership by anybody. Nobody likes any of the candidates. Nobody really trusts any of them."*

Gary, sales manager, Bourne

# Voters' top local issues - a potholes election

Thinking about issues directly under local authority control, which of these - if any - are the biggest local issues in your area?



When asked which local issues matter most to, **over half of people living in areas with elections said potholes.**

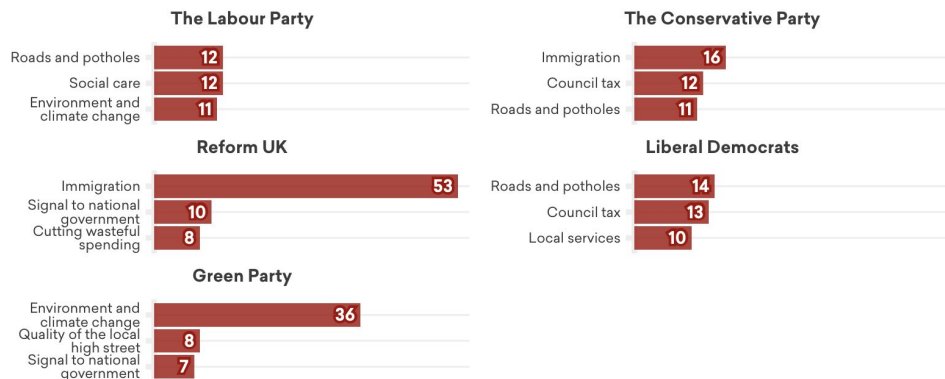
Other important local issues include council tax, housing and the quality of local high street. Issues like bin collections, low traffic neighbourhoods (LTNs), low emissions zones and business rates are less of a priority.

*"South Cambs is horrific for potholes."*  
Beverly, night care assistant, Melbourn

# Labour and Lib Dems voted more on local issues, Reform and the Greens voted more on national issues

**Greens and Reform voters prioritise national issues, while Labour and Liberal Democrat voters focus on local ones.**

Voters' top three issues (when asked to pick their number one priority) by their 2025 local elections voting intention



Voters had distinct issue priorities in their voting habits for 1 May.

Those who voted Labour and the Liberal Democrats tend to choose issues that fall under the remit of local government as their priorities – potholes, social care and council tax.

Those who voted Green or Reform UK have a higher likelihood of choosing issues that are more the purview of national government.

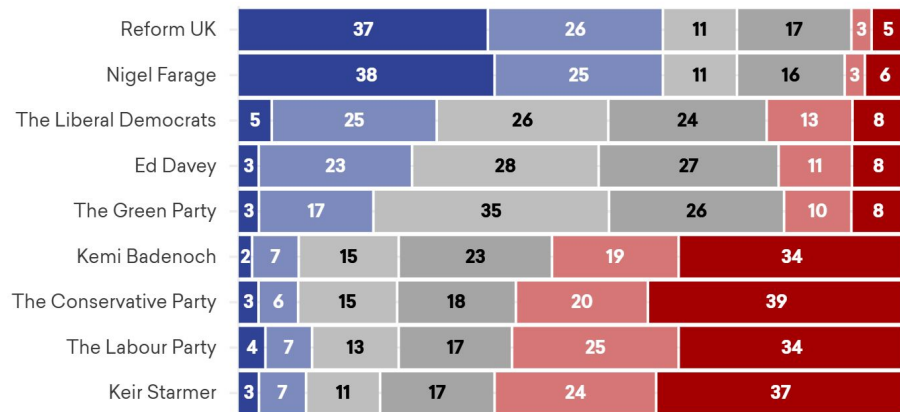


# How have the public seen the results?

## Most Britons think the Local Elections were bad for both main parties

For each of the following, please indicate whether you think the results of Thursday's local elections were good or bad for:

Very good   Somewhat good   Neither good nor bad   Don't know   Somewhat bad   Very bad



People have paid attention to the results of the election, and offer similar verdicts.

More than half say that the elections gave a were a good result for Reform UK and Nigel Farage, whereas most also say that the results were bad for the Conservatives and Kemi Badenoch, and Labour and Keir Starmer.

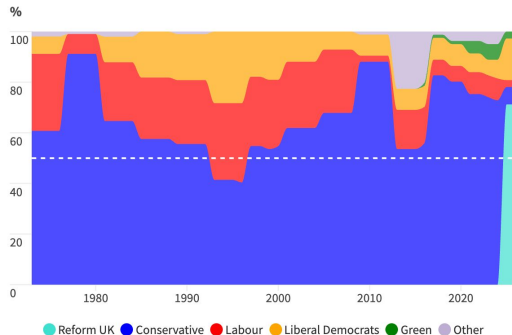
The public are more split on the Liberal Democrats and Greens.



# The rise of Reform

# Historic results for Reform

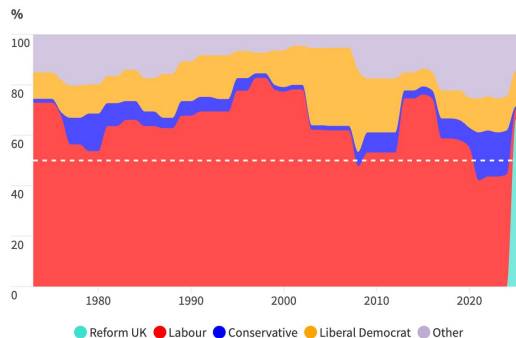
Kent Council Composition



## Supplanting the Conservatives

These council elections were mostly held on Conservative territory - and the Conservatives lost all of the sixteen councils they controlled going into this election, mostly due to Reform winning large numbers of seats and in many cases decimating the Conservatives.

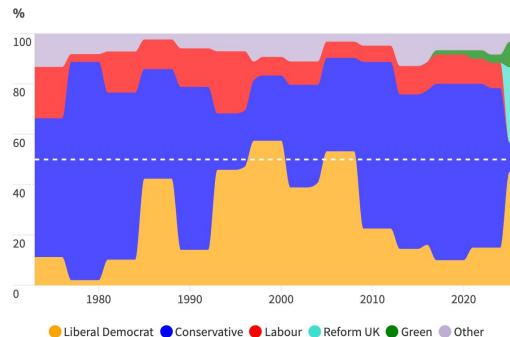
Durham Council Composition



## Supplanting Labour

Few councils up for election this year were controlled by Labour, but Reform made significant gains in the Labour heartlands that were - such as in Durham where the council had been run by Labour for 100 years up to 2021 and Doncaster.

Devon Council Composition

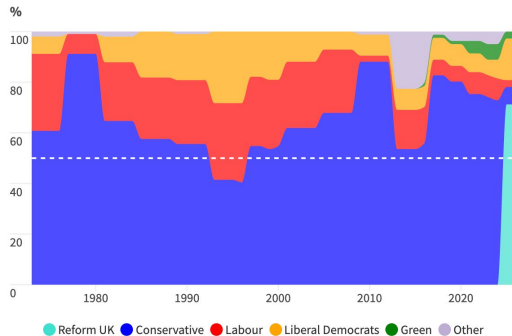


## Pincer movement with the Liberal Democrats

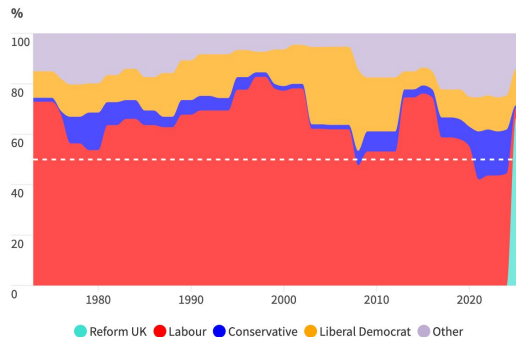
In some councils, the Conservatives faced threat from the right and left, with strong performance from Reform UK and the Liberal Democrats pushing councils into No Overall Control and squashing the Conservatives.

# Historic results for Reform - patterns repeating nationally

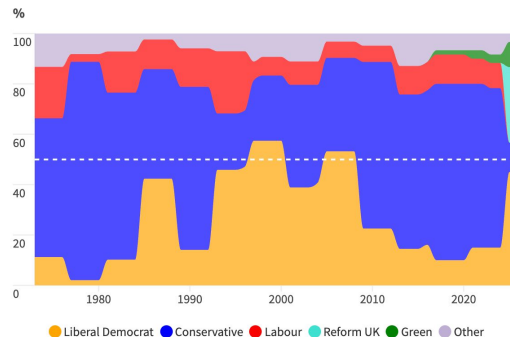
**Kent Council Composition**



**Durham Council Composition**

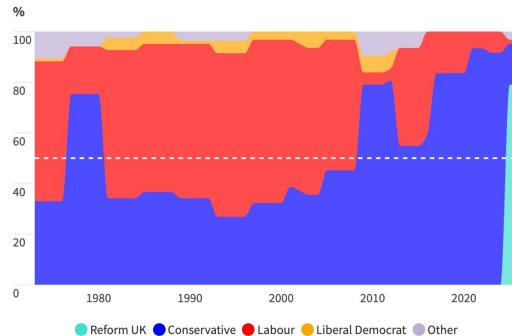


**Devon Council Composition**



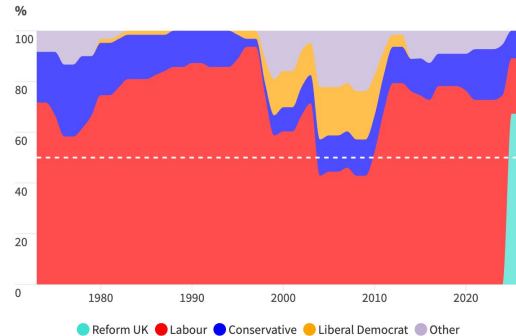
## Supplanting the Conservatives

**Staffordshire Council Composition**



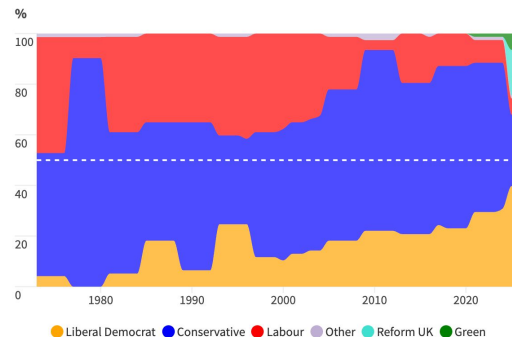
## Supplanting Labour

**Doncaster Council Composition**



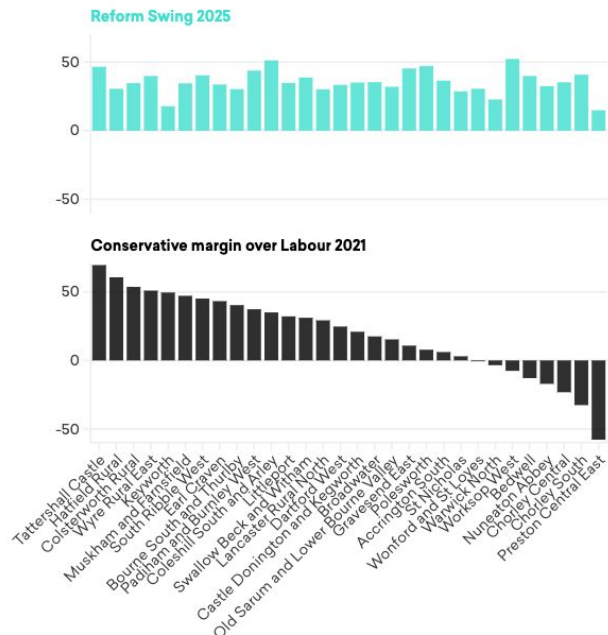
## Pincer movement with the Liberal Democrats

**Hertfordshire Council Composition**



# How well did Reform do?

## Reform saw relatively even swing across both Conservative and Labour held seats



Source: More in Common Analysis (May 2025) • Reform swing in a range of seats where Labour and the Conservatives were the top two parties, sharing more than 70% of the vote, with less than 20% support for the Liberal Democrats, in 2021

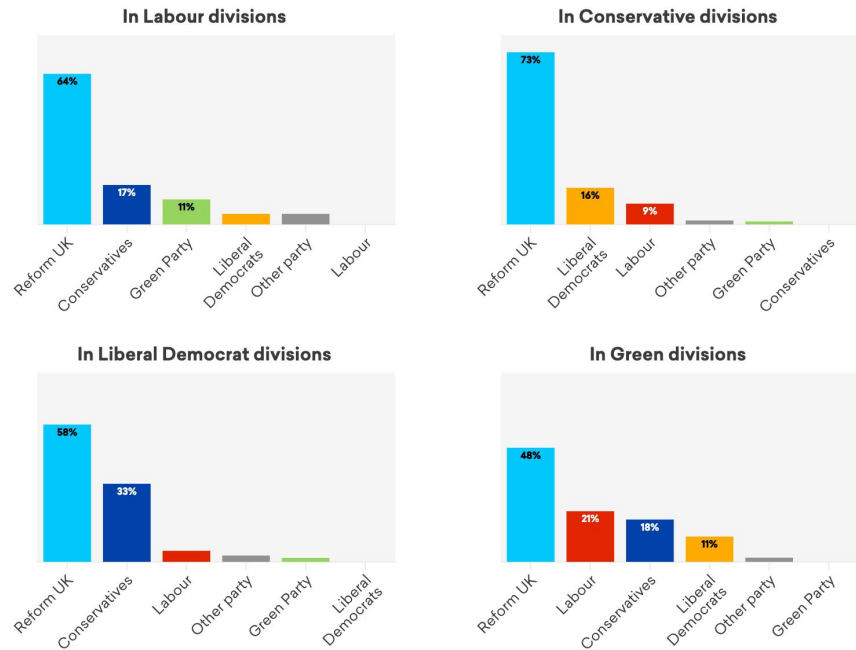
Reform performed exceptionally well across the country gaining 677 seats, surpassing already high expectations. Reform took control of 10 councils in both places where they were expected to do well (such as Durham, Doncaster, and Kent), and out-performed expectations in others which were expected to be more competitive (winning, for example, Staffordshire, Lincolnshire, Nottinghamshire, and Lancashire with ease).

Though the swing against the Conservatives was generally larger than against Labour, the relative strength of their starting positions disguises the fact that Reform made gains at the expense of both Labour and the Conservatives this election, and are competing for both parties votes.

Now they have overtaken both the Conservatives and Labour in nationwide support, they have also begun to benefit from the historic handicap that their support is reasonable evenly distributed across the country, which has helped to deliver an outsized set of gains in this election and was foreshadowed in our April MRP.

# Room to grow for Reform

## Who is coming second place around the country?



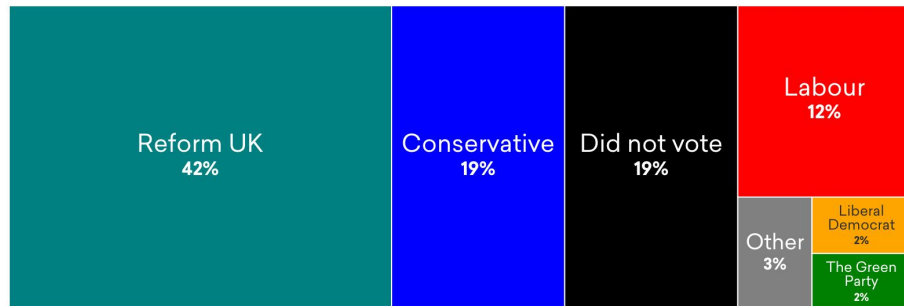
Beyond Reform's sizeable wins, Reform was also runner up in the vast majority of seats contested last week.

This means they have ample opportunities for further expansion the next time these councils are contested, can portray themselves as 'the real opposition' and further squeeze other parties votes.

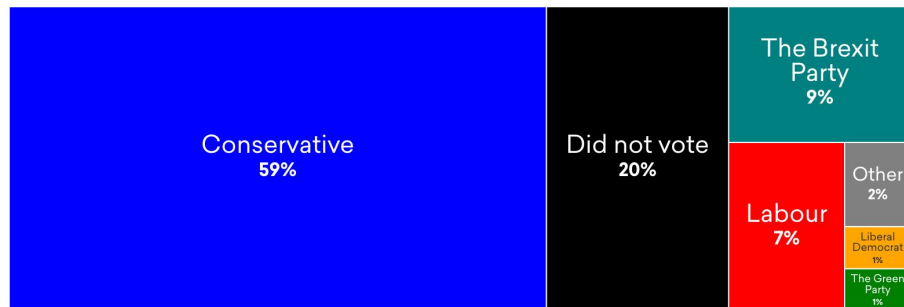
2025 should not be assumed to be the Reform UK high point.

# Who is voting for Reform?

Reform UK voters by 2024 vote



Reform UK voters by 2019 vote



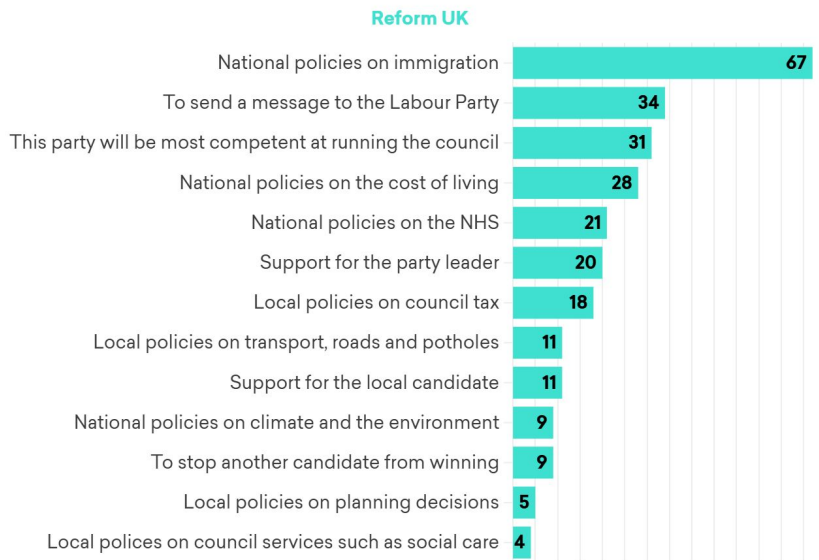
Reform's vote share has grown so much since the General Election that now fewer than half of those intending to vote Reform voted for the party in 2024. 19 per cent voted for the Conservatives and 12 per cent for Labour.

Looking further back, Reform's current coalition of voters closely resembles a portion of the coalition which support Boris Johnson in 2019 - almost two thirds of Reform's current supporters voted for Johnson in 2019.

# Drivers of the Reform vote

## Why people are voting for Reform UK

You said that you plan to vote for the [party name] in this year's Local Elections. What are the reasons for that? Select your top three.



Unlike other parties, where people are more likely to have backed them for a range of reasons, Reform's supporters are attracted to that party primarily because of immigration.

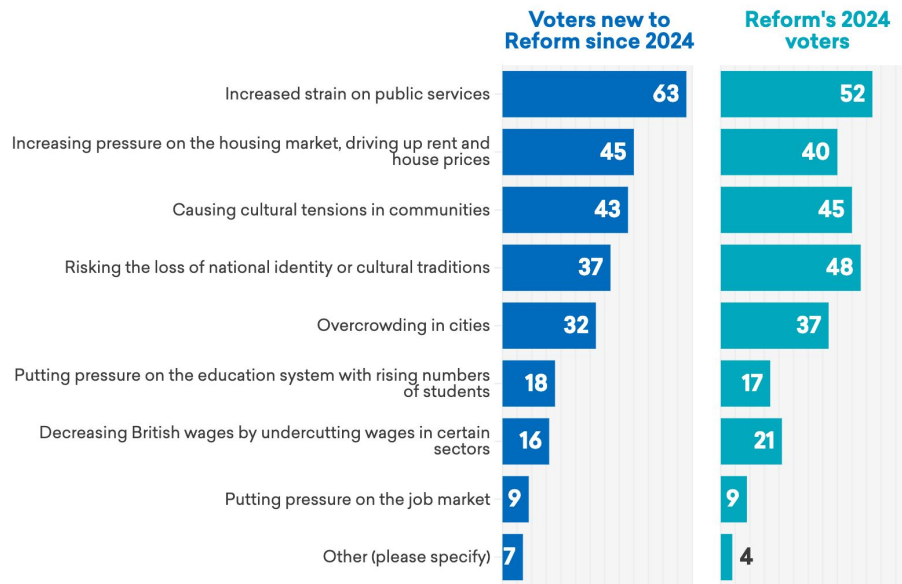
In general, Reform voters are more likely to be supporting Reform in order to send a signal about national policies rather than expressing preferences about their preferred local leaders. 46 per cent of Reform voters said their vote was mainly to send a signal to the national government, compared to 28 per cent for the average voter in last week's elections.



# What drives frustration towards immigration?

## Reform voters' top concerns about immigration

Which of the following would you say are the main disadvantages of immigration to the UK? Select up to three.



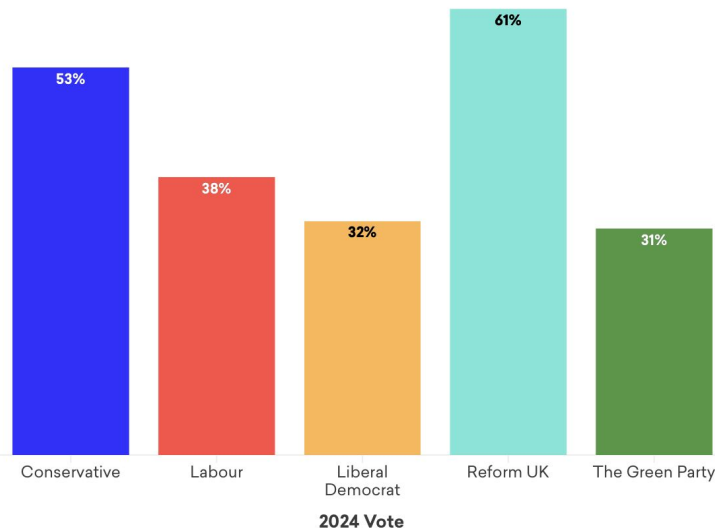
Reform supporters list a range of reasons why they are opposed to immigration - but there is an interesting split between Reform's new supporters and their 2024 base.

Across the board, Reform voters are worried about the strain placed on public services by immigration, however the new Reform voters are, more concerned about economic impacts such as pressure on the housing market, whereas Reform's 2024 supporters are more concerned about social impacts such as cultural tensions in communities and the loss of national identity.

# Legal versus illegal immigration

## More than 60% of 2024 Reform voters believe that illegal immigration accounts for the majority of immigration into the UK

Proportion of each group which believes that 50%+ of immigration to the UK is illegal



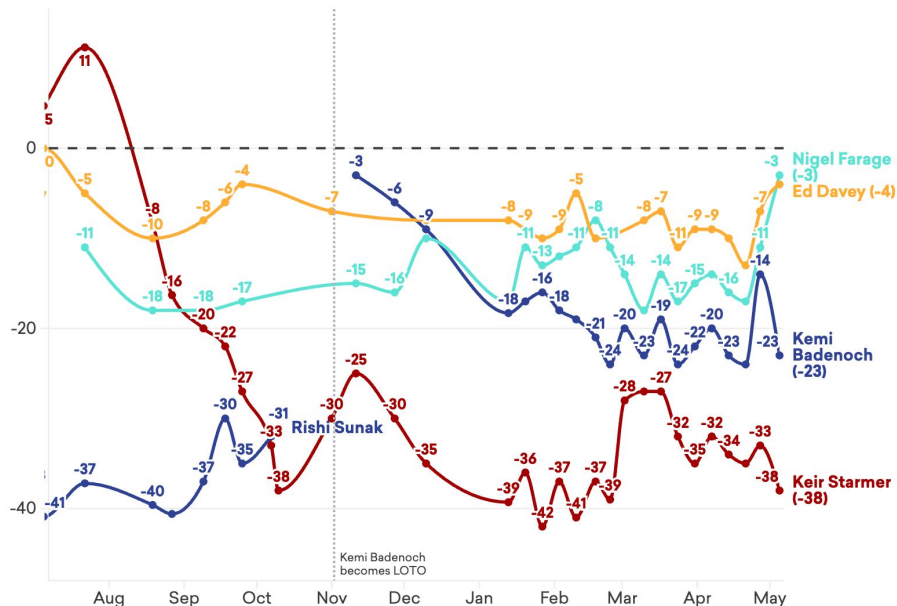
While supporters of all party overestimate the proportion of migration to the UK that is illegal (approximately 10%), Reform UK voters are particularly likely to do so.

However, for many, their frustration is not just those arriving on small boats, but those who don't work or learn English, and are perceived to take advantage of British generosity- ideas of fairness, contribution, and threat to already scarce resources are key to understanding why migration is such a big issue for this group. In contrast migrants that are seen to 'contribute' are welcomed even by Reform voters.

# Nigel Farage at his most popular

## Party Leader approval tracker

Net approval rating



Source: More in Common • Proportion who think each leader is doing a "somewhat good" or "very good" job, minus those who think they are doing a "somewhat bad" or "very bad" job  
Last fieldwork: 3-5 May 2025



Reform's leader this week recorded his highest approval rating since we started tracking his leader approval.

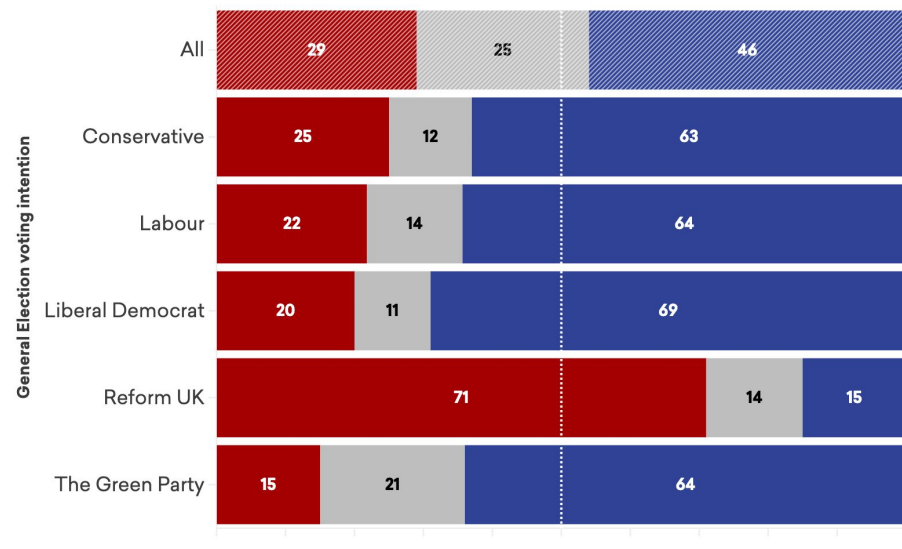
While still receiving a net negative rating, he is now more popular than any other UK party leader, with 32 per cent saying he is doing a good job and 35 per cent saying he is doing a bad job.

Asked whether they have a positive or negative view of Farage, 31 per cent have a positive view and 42 per cent have a negative view.

# A protest vote?

## Reform voters are the only group who don't see the party as a protest party

- Reform UK is mainly a protest party
- Reform UK is mainly a potential party of government
- Don't know



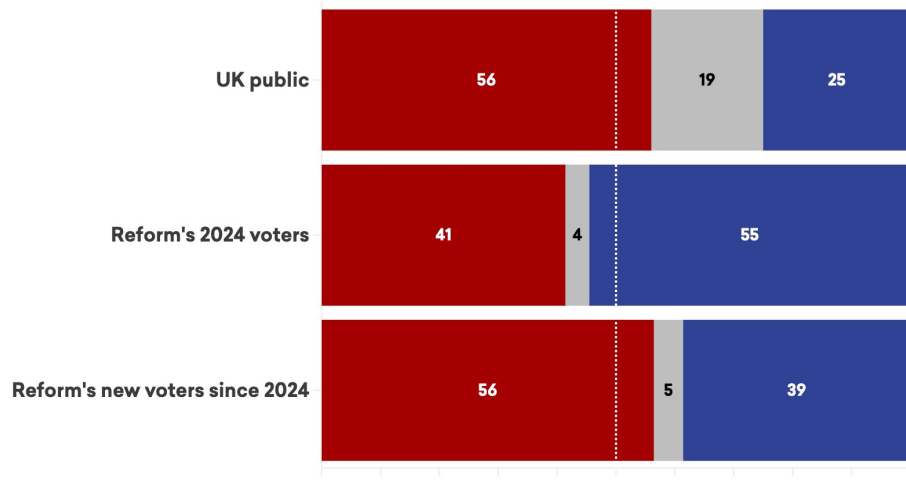
Across the country, a plurality think that Reform UK is mainly a protest party, with just 29 per cent saying that Reform UK is a potential party of government.

However, among Reform UK's supporters these numbers are reversed, with 71 per cent saying the party is a potential party of government and just 15 per cent calling it a protest party.

# A pull towards Reform, or a push away from the others?

## Reform's 2024 voters are attracted to their policies, Reform's new voters are more repelled by other parties

- People are voting for Reform UK because they like their policies and leadership
- Don't know
- People are voting for Reform UK because they dislike the policies and leadership of other parties



Source: More in Common, May 2025

Those who voted for Reform in 2024 are more likely than not to say that they are voting for Reform for their policies and leadership, whereas the supporters who are new to the party since the General Election are much more likely to say they are doing so because they dislike the policies and leadership of other parties. For this group, it is disillusionment with the mainstream that is driving them to reform.

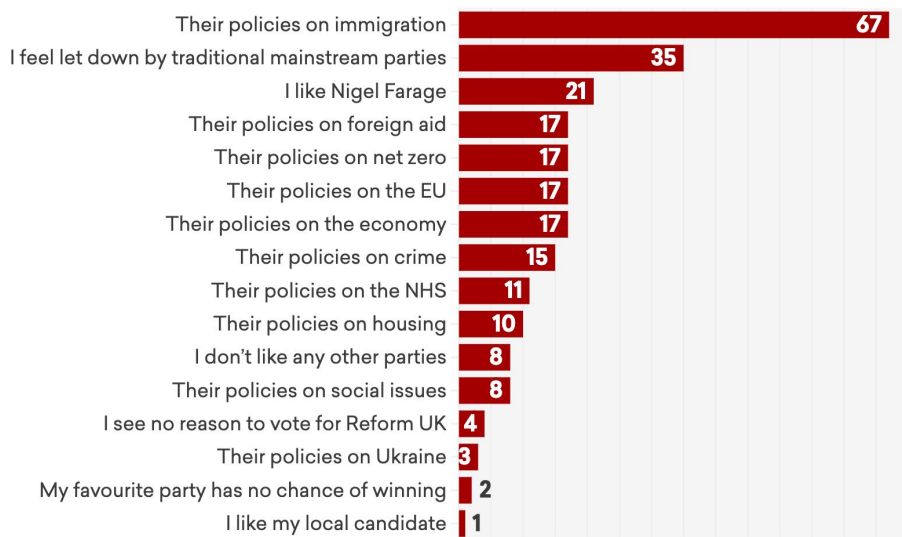
*"I think the Conservatives have been in, Labour's now in, can (Farage) do any better? I think so. I think he should have a go. Why not give him a go at the end of day? Can you trust any politician? No, you can't. You can't trust them, but end of the day you need to give somebody a run at it."*

Jeff, business development manager, Doncaster

# Disillusionment and migration driving votes to Reform

## Immigration and disillusionment with other parties is a driving support for Reform

In your view which of the following, if any, are the main reasons to vote for Reform UK? [Reform UK supporters only]



On a national level, votes for Reform are being driven by three major factors: policies on immigration, and support for Nigel Farage.

Only 3 per cent of Reform voters say they are doing so because of Ukraine, and despite its higher profile in the Reform platform, fewer than 1 in 5 say their net zero stance is a reason.

# Reform's new voters are driven more by disillusionment with the mainstream

## For Reform's new voters, disillusionment with other parties is a bigger driver of support

In your view which of the following, if any, are the main reasons to vote for Reform UK?

### Reform's 2024 voters



### Voters new to Reform since 2024

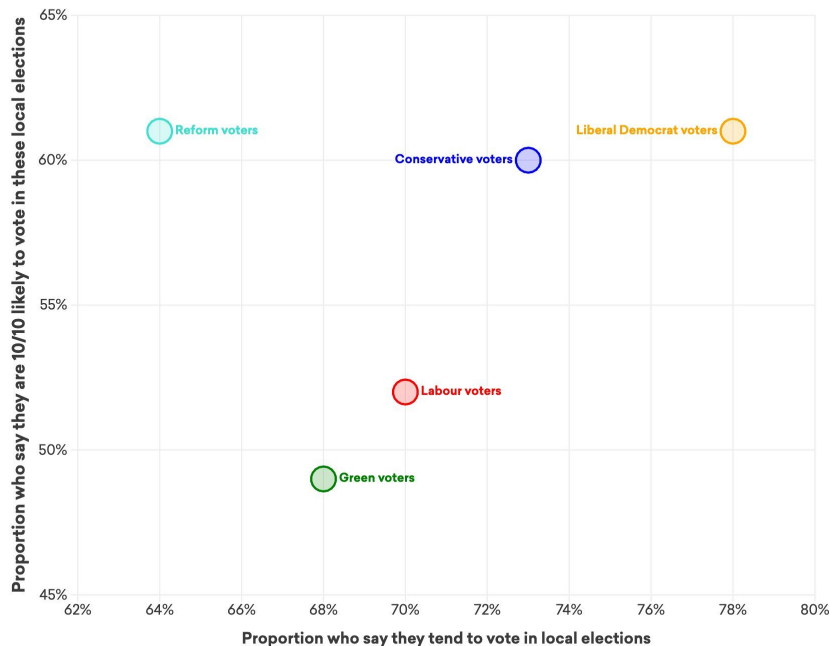


The differences between Reform's new supporters and their 2024 voters are also visible when asking Reform voters the main reasons for voting for that party.

In both cases, Reform voters list immigration as by far the most important issue. However, their new voters are almost twice as likely to say they are voting for Reform because they feel let down by other parties.

# Reform UK proved they can run a difficult get-out-the vote operation

Reform's vote at these local elections is driven by people who don't tend to vote in local elections, but say they are very likely to this time



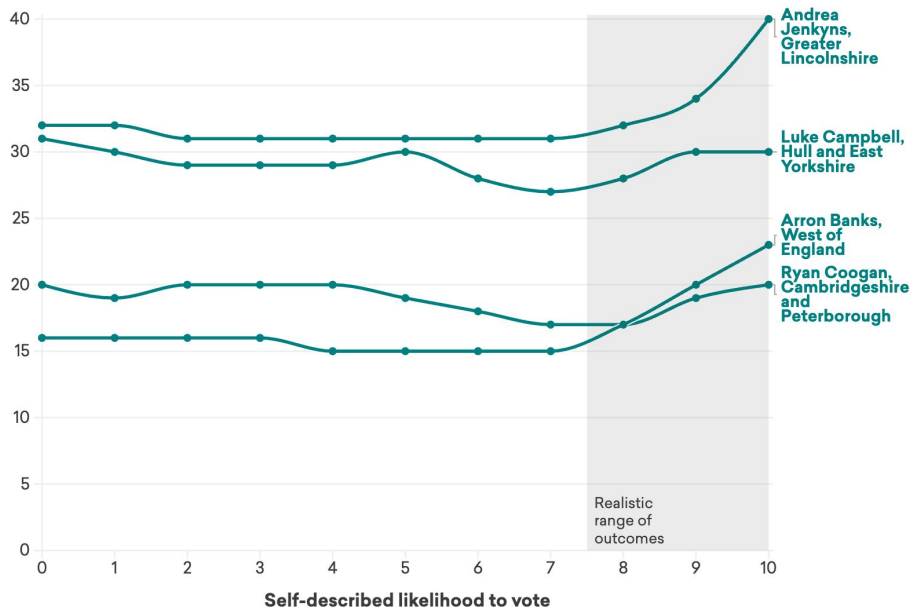
Going into these local elections, one of the biggest open questions was whether Reform could translate their support in national opinion polls into votes. Reform supporters were the most likely to say they would vote, but the least likely to say they normally vote in local elections.

Reform UK's performance in these elections proves that the party's is - either through their own infrastructure, or the enthusiasm of their supporters - able to match the GOTV of the established parties.



# High turnout of engaged Reform supporters led to Reform outperforming our predictions

## Engaging high-enthusiasm voters allowed Reform to outperform predictions



This unusually strong get-out-the-vote operation led us to under-predict how well Reform would do in these local elections. In our mayoral election predictions, we only include people who give a nine out of ten likelihood to vote or above. However, our predictions would have been almost entirely accurate if we only included the most enthusiastic voters who gave their likelihood to vote at ten out of ten, significantly boosting Reform's vote share.

# Barriers for future Reform voters

## Connections with Trump top the list of reasons people would not vote Reform

In your view which of the following, if any, are the main reasons to not vote for Reform UK?



What are the barriers to voting Reform? Top of this list is Farage's relationship with Donald Trump, which also emerges often in focus group discussions - even from people more sympathetic to the party.

Among those who now intend to vote for Reform UK, the other top concerns about the party are that they have no experience in government, that some candidates are racist, and that they won't stand up for Russia against Ukraine.

*"I think he wants to be the British Trump (...) Again, it's just, yeah, scaremongering and he just wants to be in power and that's a dangerous thing when he doesn't really."*

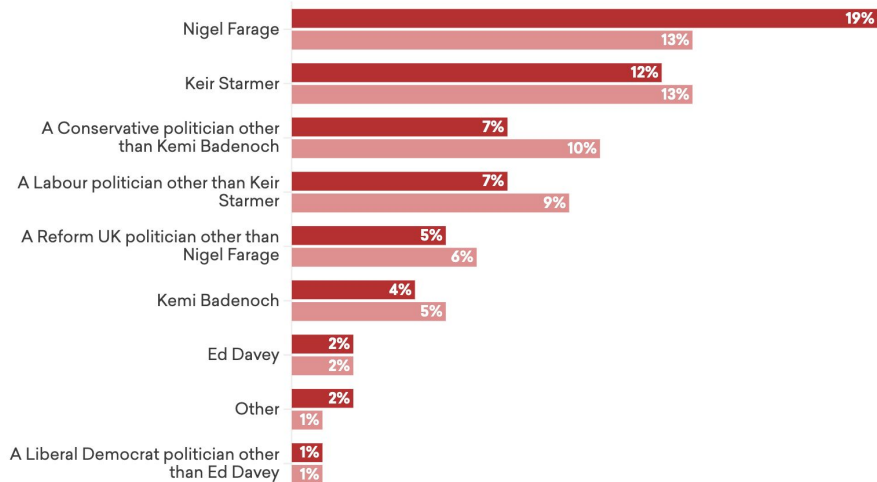
Georgia, dance teacher, Bath

# Is Nigel Farage a Prime Minister in waiting?

## Nigel Farage is now much more likely to be seen as Britain's next Prime Minister

The next General Election is due to take place in 2029. Who do you think will be Prime Minister after the next election?

● May 2025 ● April 2025



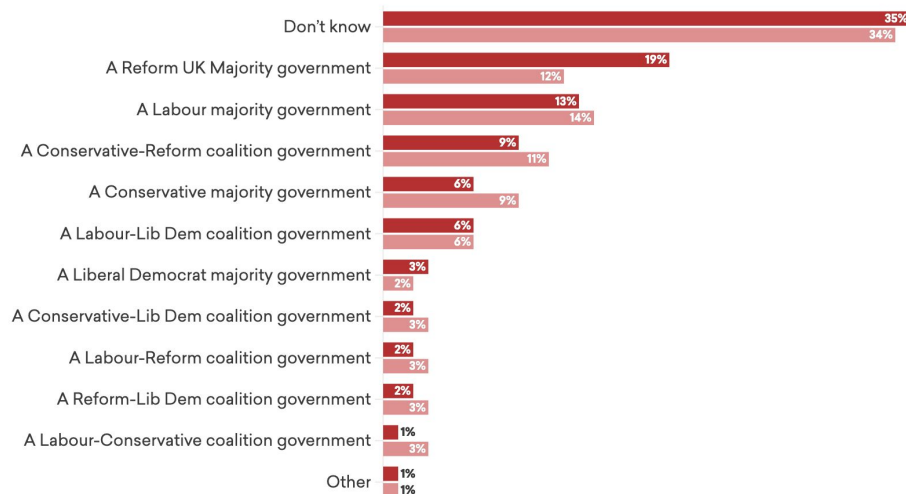
Since the Local Elections, people are now much more likely to see Farage as Britain's next Prime Minister. While around 40 per cent say they don't know who our next Prime Minister will be, the number saying it will be Nigel Farage has risen from 13 per cent last month to 19 per cent now.

# Who will form the next government?

## The public are now most likely to predict a Reform majority for the next government

The next General Election is due to take place in 2029. Which of the following outcomes do you think is most likely at the next election?

● May 2025 ● April 2025



At the same time, a Reform UK majority is now the top prediction from the public for Britain's next government, with almost one in five (19%) now saying that is the most likely option. A further 13 per cent think we are most likely to see a Reform minority government.

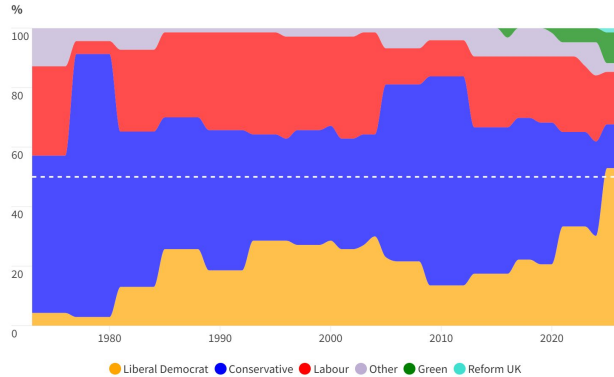
The notion that people are voting for Reform but do not expect them to ultimately form a Government seems to be fading.



# **Liberal Democrats and the Greens**

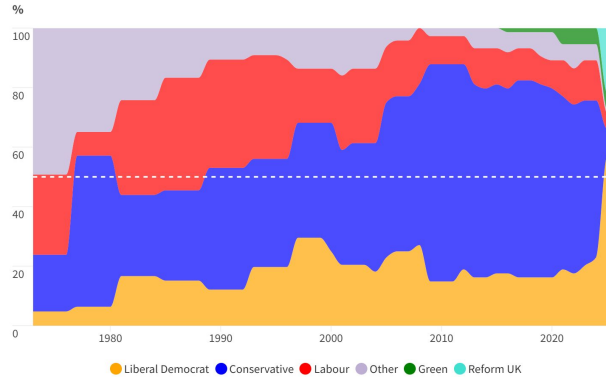
# The Liberal Democrats won three councils: Oxfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Shropshire

Oxfordshire County Council



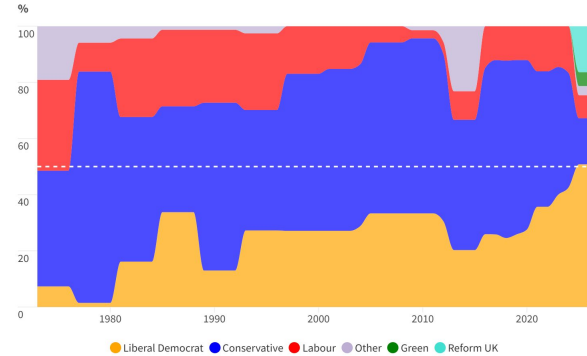
Source: Open Council Data UK

Shropshire County Council



Source: Open Council Data UK

Cambridgeshire County Council



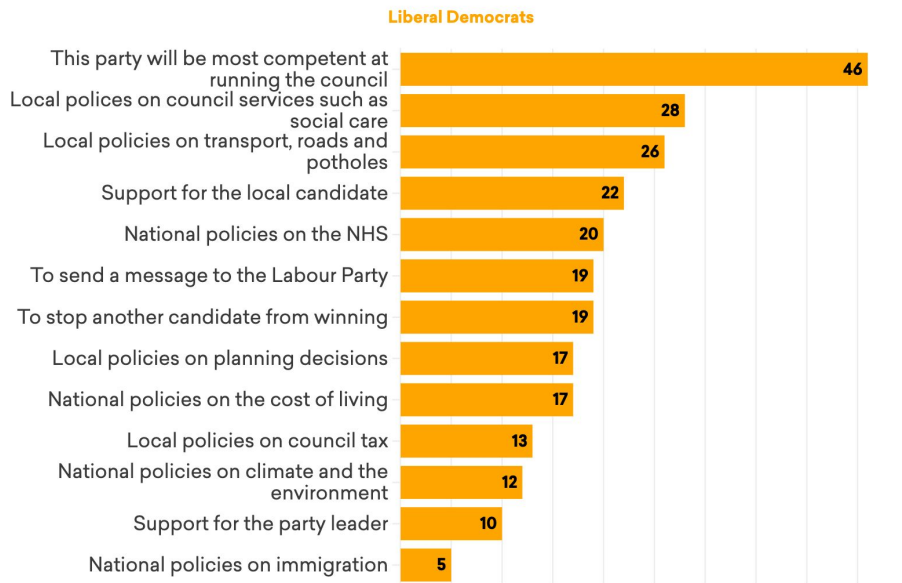
Source: Open Council Data UK

The Lib Dems gained 163 seats leaving them on 370 by the end of the night, with control of three councils in Shropshire, Oxfordshire, Cambridgeshire. They ended the night with 42, 36 and 31 seats respectively across these councils. Shropshire had previously been a Conservative council, with Oxfordshire and Cambridgeshire being under no majority control.

# What drove the Liberal Democrat vote?

## Why people are voting for the Liberal Democrats

You said that you plan to vote for [party name] in this year's Local Elections. What are the reasons for that? Select your top three.

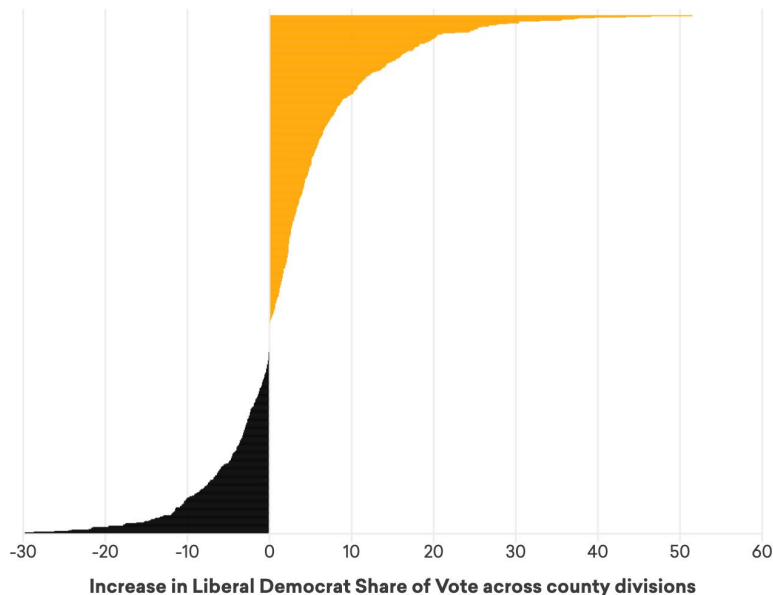


As with Labour and Conservative voters, competence at running the local council drove Liberal Democrat voters towards the party.

Social care matters to Liberal Democrat voters more than voters of other parties in determining their vote (and has been a key part of Ed Davey's platform) more so than Labour voters. Potholes and road quality was also a top issue.

# Liberal Democrats approaching current ceiling

**The Liberal Democrats' impressive gains in some places, were matched by significant collapses in others**



Despite making an impressive number of gains outright, there is some evidence to suggest that as the Liberal Democrats become more successful at stacking their votes in strategic locations - rather than growing vote share across the country, they become closer to hitting an electoral ceiling.

In the General Election the Liberal Democrats gained a number of seats by concentrating their efforts in the most winnable seats. In these local elections, support for the Liberal Democrats was also concentrated, but they did not achieve, for the Liberal Democrats, a particularly high PNS.

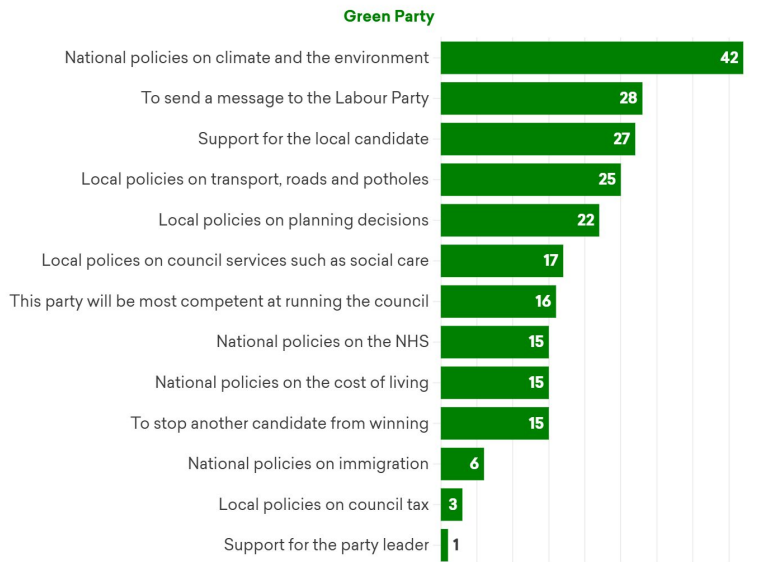
As their vote becomes more efficiently distributed the Liberal Democrats may find themselves 'maxed out' in terms of potential seat gains.



# Drivers of the Green vote

## Why people are voting for the Greens

You said that you plan to vote for the [party name] in this year's Local Elections. What are the reasons for that? Select your top three.



Similar to Reform voters, Green voters are more driven by issues typically in the purview of national government. However, the top issue for Green voters is unsurprisingly the climate and environment.

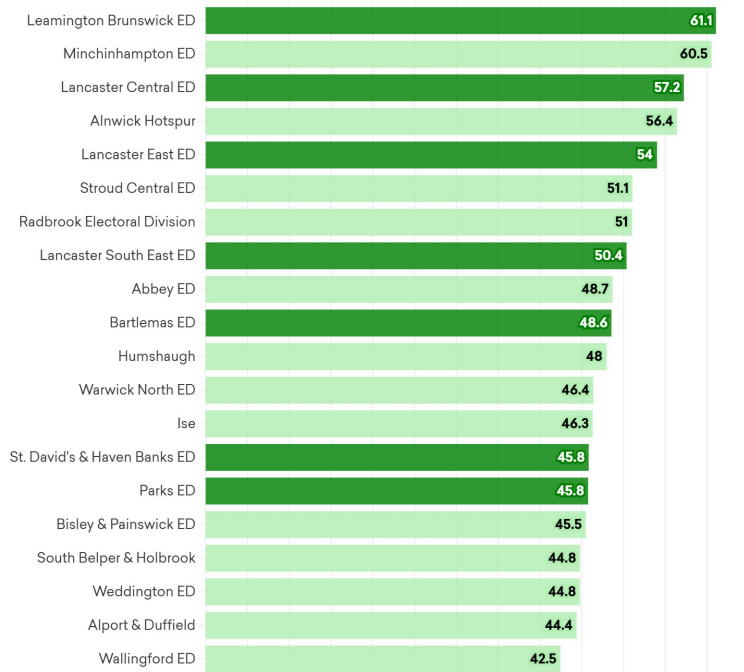
Sending a message to the Labour party was again a top reason for the Green vote, displaying the further fragmentation of the traditional Left.

Local policies such as transport and pot holes polled highly, while competence in running the council ranks relatively low.

# Greens did well in the West, in Worcestershire, Warwickshire and Gloucestershire.

## Top 20 Green Electoral Divisions

Dark green - student areas



The Greens claimed 45 more seats, leaving them with 80 by the end of the night. The largest wins were seen in Worcestershire, Gloucestershire and North Northamptonshire.

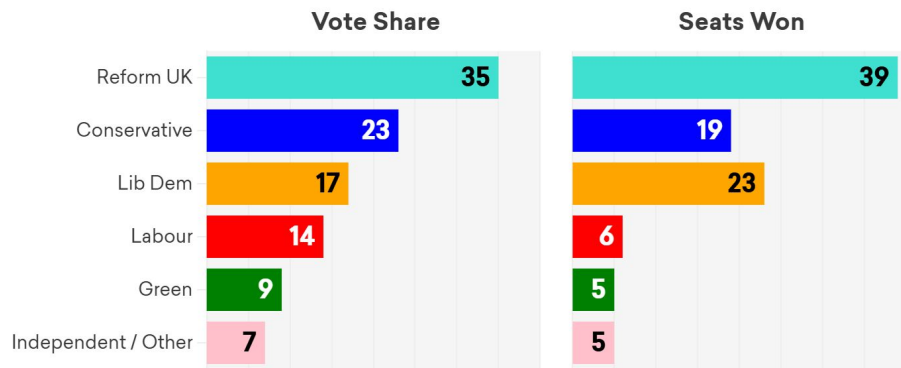
Many of these wins were in the Shires and student areas of Cambridgeshire and Oxfordshire where their major competition are the Liberal Democrats.

There was a strong performance by the Greens in student areas, with seven of their top twenty results coming in areas with large student populations.

# Greens struggling to convert votes into seats

## The Greens are struggling to convert their vote share into seats won

Vote share vs number of seats won in the 2025 Local Election



The Greens took nine per cent of the vote in this Local Election, however they converted that into just five per cent of the seats - suggesting they are struggling to ensure an efficient distribution of votes.

Despite gaining 45 seats on the day, there is a question around why the Greens didn't better capture the wandering voters of two major parties - particularly progressive defectors.

North Northamptonshire Council was one of the Green Party's areas of success, winning eight council seats with 15 per cent vote share. However, in the same council Reform won 39 seats with just 35 per cent of the vote share. The Greens therefore needed twice as many votes to secure a seat.

# Greens failing to convert votes into seats

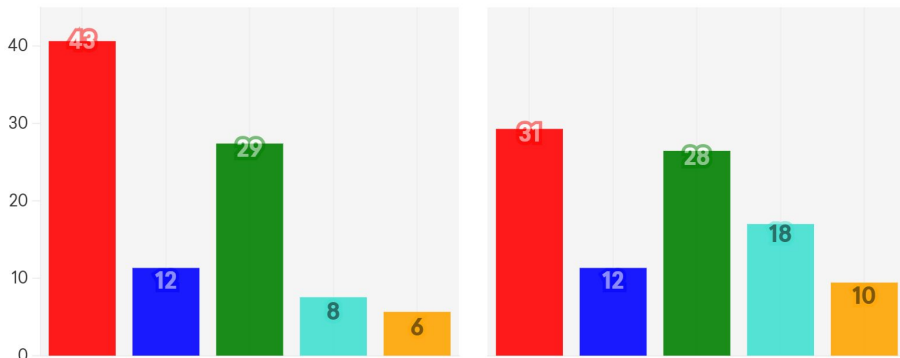
## ... And they haven't built upon their 2024 General Election results in the West of England Mayoral Election (Bristol voting area)

Comparing results of the General Election 2024 and Local Election

● Labour ● Conservative ● Green ● Reform UK ● Liberal Democrats

General Election 2024

Local Election 2025



At the same time, the Greens had a good result in the General Election 2024 in the Bristol voting area, however failed to build upon this in the mayoral election.

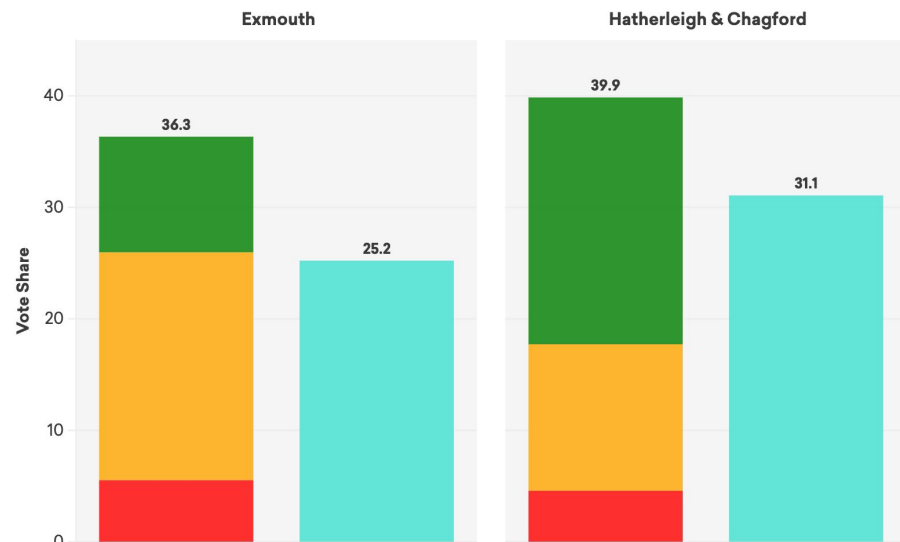
Instead, their vote share in this mayoral election roughly matched their performance at the General Election, whereas Reform UK were able to increase their vote share by ten per cent.

# A lack of tactical voting did cost the left in some elections

## A failure to vote tactically on the left gave Reform the victory in these two Devon wards

Total vote share between Labour, Lib Dem and Greens against Reform UK

Reform Labour Lib Dem Green



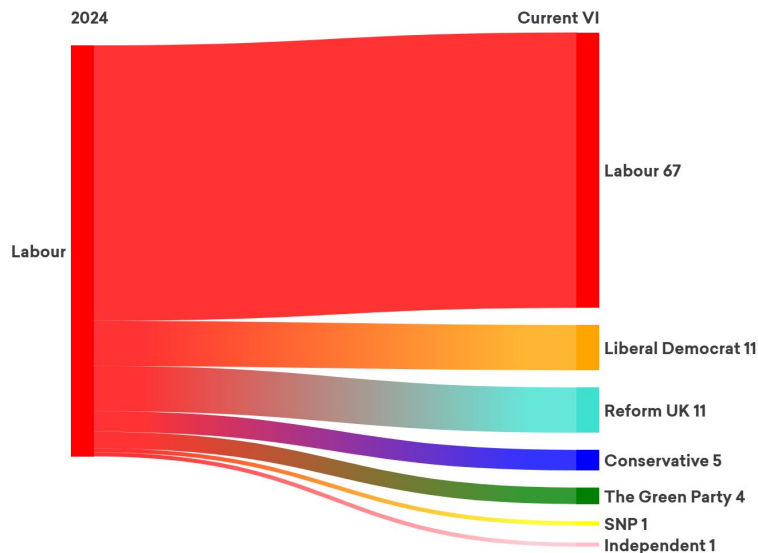
At these local elections there were hundreds of wards across the UK that could have been won by a left-coalition against Reform UK.

This calls into question assumptions that left-leaning voters would definitely vote tactically to keep out Reform UK. This could change when the stakes are higher in a General Election.

# Together, Greens and the Liberal Democrats pose a threat to Labour from the left

## Labour are losing their voters in two directions Reform UK on the right and Lib Dems and the Greens on the left

Of voters who voted Labour in the 2024 General Election, who are they voting for now?



Despite the clear emergence of a threat to Labour from Reform UK, they are currently losing more of their 2024 vote base to the Greens and Lib Dems than to Reform.

Combined, the Greens and Liberal Democrats are taking 15 per cent of Labour voters from the 2024 General Election.

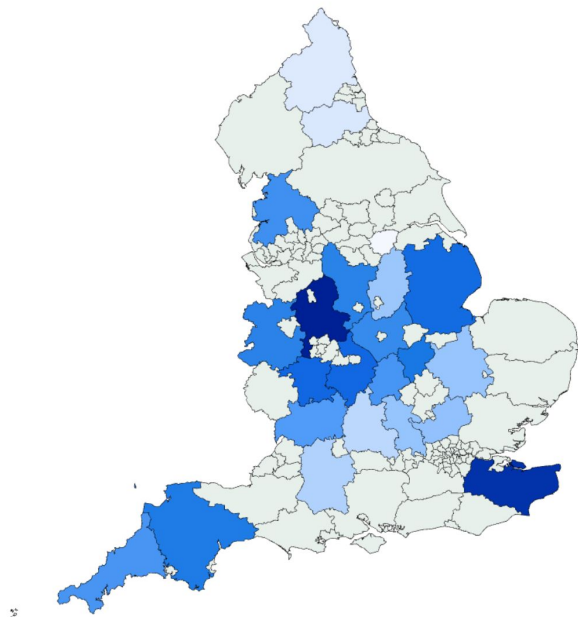


# Conservative collapse

# Where does it hurt?

## Share of seats lost by the Conservatives on each council

-74% -9%



The Conservatives' night was worse than most expected. They lost 674 seats (more than two-thirds of the seats they were defending), and lost control of all 16 councils they entered the election with.

Conservative losses were to Reform UK across the country, and the Liberal Democrats across much of the South, each of which either won enough seats from the Conservatives to put themselves into control of a council, or to deprive the Conservatives of a majority.

These trends were clearest in, for example, Devon, Staffordshire, and Oxfordshire. In Devon the Conservatives lost seats on both flanks, being reduced to just 7 (down 32), with the council in no overall control. In Staffordshire, the Conservatives were beaten by Reform, from 57/62 seats in the 2021 elections, to just 10 (with Reform gaining 49). In Oxfordshire, 15 Conservative losses enabled the Liberal Democrats to take outright control of the council, having previously run it alongside the Greens.

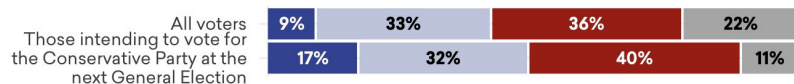
The Conservatives were also punished by the even distribution of their support - a benefit where a party commands a significant share of the vote, but which is less useful at lower levels - similar to Reform UK in the General Election and a testament to how the two parties' roles have reversed.



# Expectation versus reality

## 40% of Conservative supporters say the results of local elections were worse than they had anticipated.

● Much/somewhat better than expected ● About as expected  
● Somewhat/much worse than expected ● Don't know

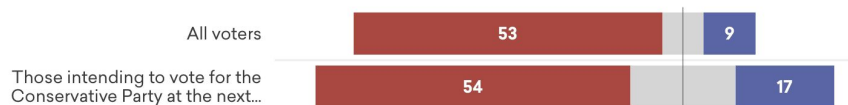


Source: More in Common, May 2025 • N= 2212

## Over half of Conservative supporters say Thursday was a bad night for Kemi Badenoch

Please indicate whether you think the results of Thursday's local elections were good or bad for Kemi Badenoch

● Very/somewhat bad ● Very/somewhat good



Source: More in Common, May 2025 • N=2212

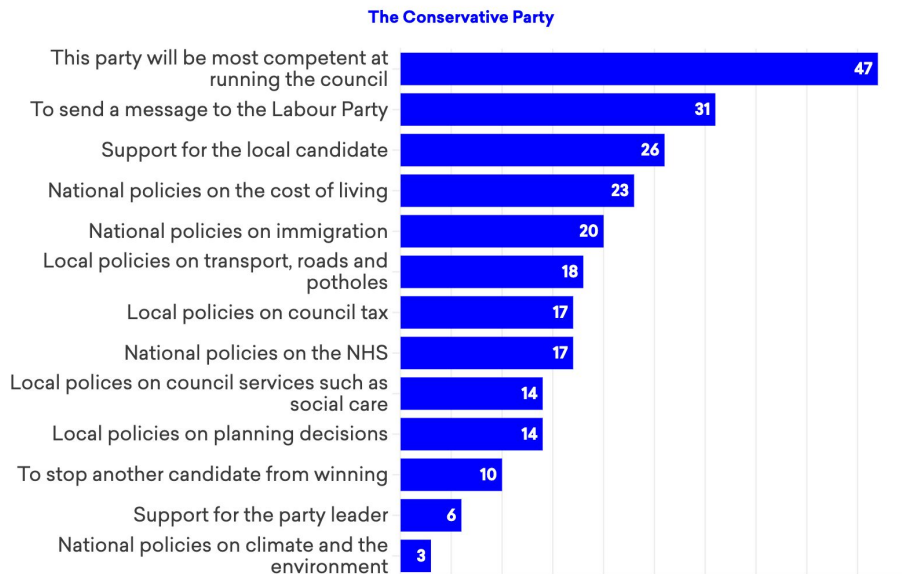
Losing 676 councillors and control of 16 local authorities, the Conservatives had a terrible night and the public agree.

While current Conservative supporters still tend to be more positive about Thursday's results than the public as a whole, 40% say the they were worse than they expected, and over half say party leader Kemi Badenoch had a bad night.

# What drove the Conservative vote?

## Why people are voting for the Conservatives

You said that you plan to vote for [party name] in this year's Local Elections. What are the reasons for that? Select your top three.



As with Labour and Liberal Democrat voters, competence in running the local council was the most important driver for the Conservative vote.

Conservative voters were also more likely than most other parties to use their vote to send a message to the Labour government.

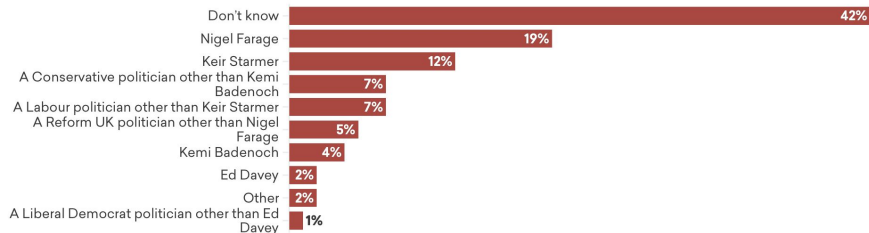
*"(Rob Waltham)'s got experience, he's got a history, not, it's not in that role, but he's got a history as leader of the council. He's got quite a lot already."*

Debbie, retired, Scunthorpe

# The future of the Conservative leadership

## People are more likely to say Keir Starmer or Nigel Farage will be PM in 2029 than Kemi Badenoch

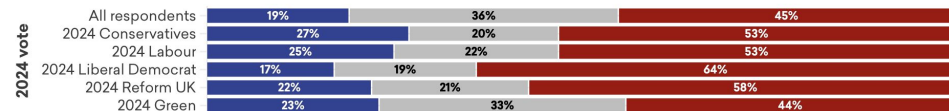
The next General Election is due to take place in 2029. Who do you think will be Prime Minister after the next election?



## Almost half of people- including 53% of Conservative supporters- think the party will have a new leader by 2029

Which of the following comes closest to your view? Kemi Badenoch...

● WILL still be Leader of the Conservative Party at the time of the next General Election ● Don't know  
 ● WILL NOT still be Leader of the Conservative Party at the time of the next General Election



The night's results generated some uncertainty about Kemi Badenoch future as Conservative leader. Just 4% of voters think Badenoch will be PM after the next election- 45% don't think she'll still be Tory leader at the next election (though this is fewer than think Starmer will not be leader at that time)

46% of Conservative supporters think Badenoch is doing a worse job as party leader than Boris Johnson, while 42% think she is worse than Rishi Sunak.

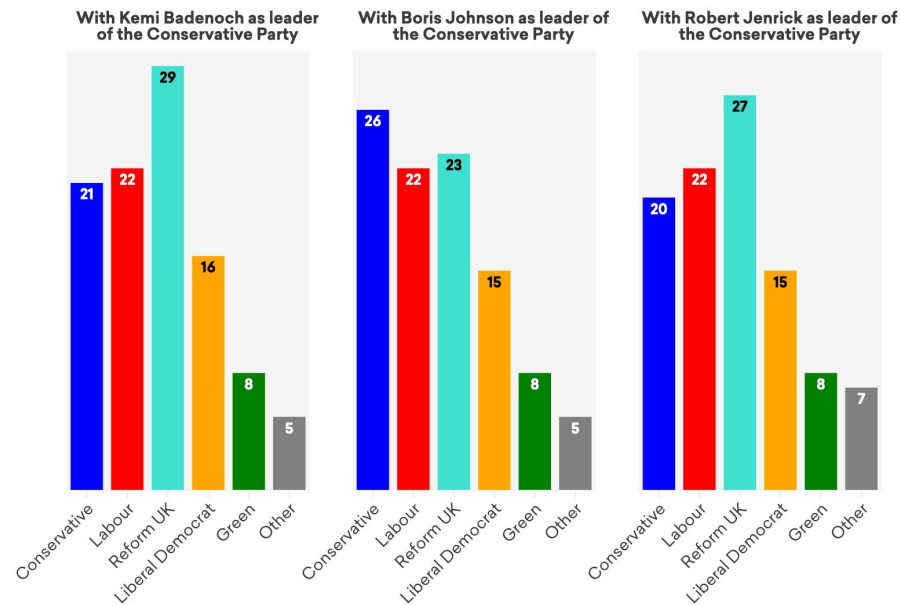
However Badenoch's 'don't knows' remain high across poll questions and focus groups suggest her underperformance is largely a product of being unknown/not cutting through than dislike of the leader.

*"I wouldn't know her if I fell over her."*

Helen, Shop Manager, Hull

# People would be more likely to vote Conservative with Johnson as leader

## Voting intention shifts in the Conservatives' favour with Boris Johnson as leader of the party

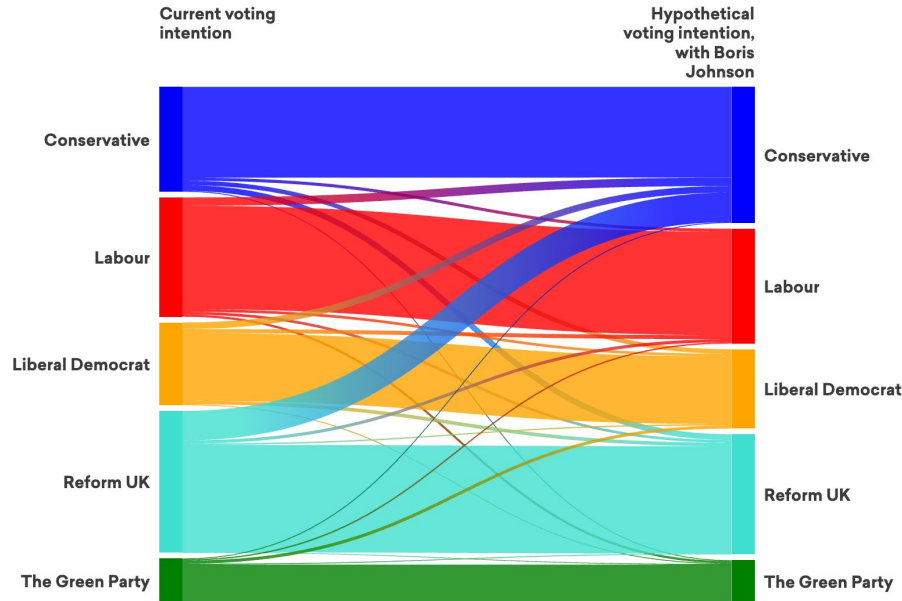


In hypothetical polling Boris Johnson increases the Conservative vote by 5 points and reduces the Reform vote by 6 points. This converts an 8 point lead for Reform over the Tories into a 3 point Conservative lead.

In contrast in polling with Robert Jenrick as leader the Conservative vote falls by 1 point and Reform by 2 points. An 8 point lead for Reform over the Conservatives becomes a 7 point one - statistically the same as Badenoch's performance.

# Where does Johnson's appeal come from?

## How voting intention would change with Boris Johnson as Conservative Leader



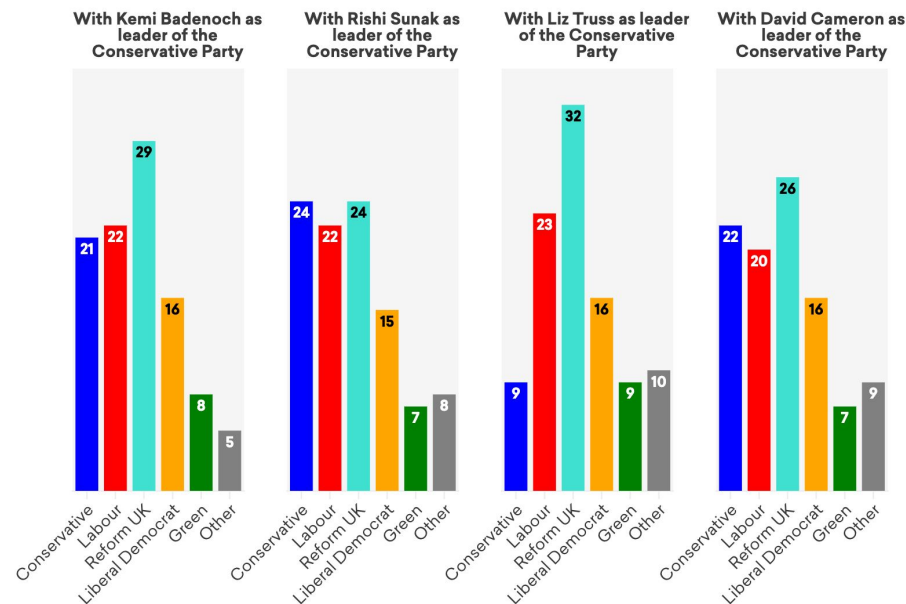
Boris Johnson's success in this hypothetical polling derives from the fact that he is able to attract a fifth (19 per cent) of those currently planning on voting for Reform UK back to the Conservative Party, while keeping an even share of Labour and Liberal Democrat voters.

"I like Boris Johnson. At least you knew what you'd got with Boris. You got a blooming idiot who just said it how he saw it. He didn't spend time preening himself, obviously. And I actually liked that about him. I think who we've got now, she just in the background somewhere."

Kim, retired teacher, Doncaster

# Badenoch's performance versus other former leaders

## Voting intention with various recent Conservative leaders



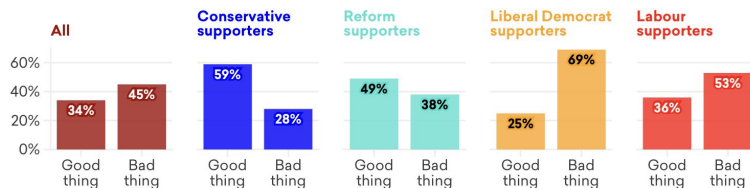
Compared to hypothetical polling of previous Conservative leaders other than Johnson, Rishi Sunak would see the Conservatives tie with Reform UK, while David Cameron would reduce the lead to 4 points.

In contrast, with Liz Truss as Conservative leader, the hypothetical polling shows Conservative support drops to 9% while Reform UK support surges to 32%.

# BoJo 2.0

## About one in three people believe a Johnson comeback would benefit the Conservative Party

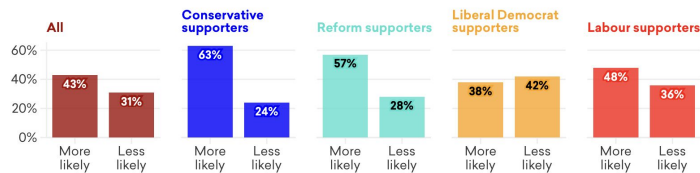
Some have suggested that Boris Johnson could return as Leader of the Conservative Party. Which of the following comes closest to your view?: "This would be a [X] for the Conservative Party"



Source: More in Common, May 2025 • N=2212

## A plurality of people believe Boris Johnson is more likely than Kemi Badenoch to win the next election, regardless of their party affiliation

Which of the following comes closest to your view?: "The Conservative Party would be [X] to win the next election with Boris Johnson as their Leader rather than Kemi Badenoch"



Source: More in Common, May 2025 • N=2212

Almost 60% of Conservative supporters- and half of those who say they will vote Reform UK at the next election- say that bringing back Boris Johnson would be a good thing for the Conservative Party. Even a third of Labour voters agree.

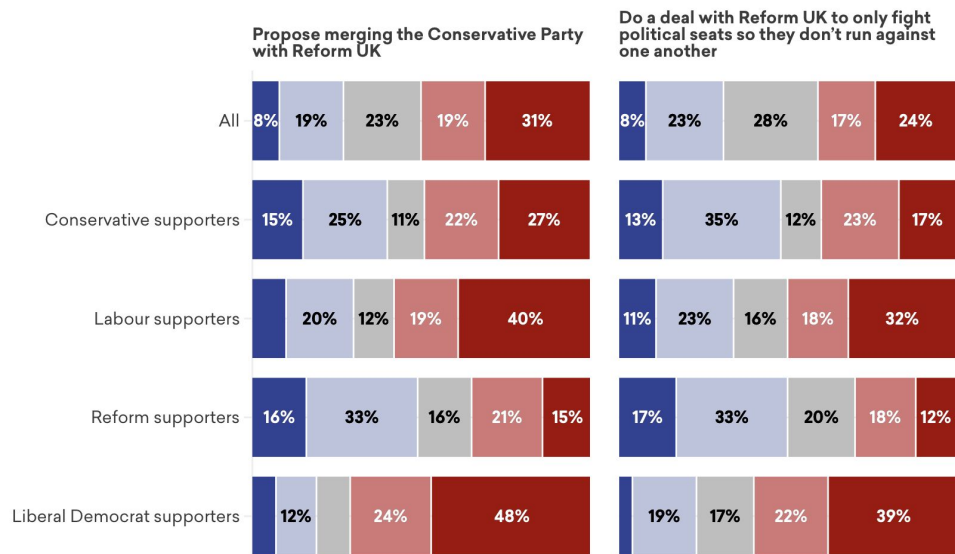
Johnson's appeal is much weaker among Liberal Democrat voters- it's possible any return to the helm may help the party against Reform but do less well against Lib Dems in the East and South West of England.



# A merger made in heaven?

## Conservative voters are split over whether the party should cooperate with Reform

● Definitely should do it ● Probably should do it ● Don't know ● Probably should not do it ● Definitely should not do it



Conservative supporters are divided on the idea of cooperating with Reform UK, though they show less opposition to an electoral pact than to a complete merger. Reform supporters are less opposed to both proposals.

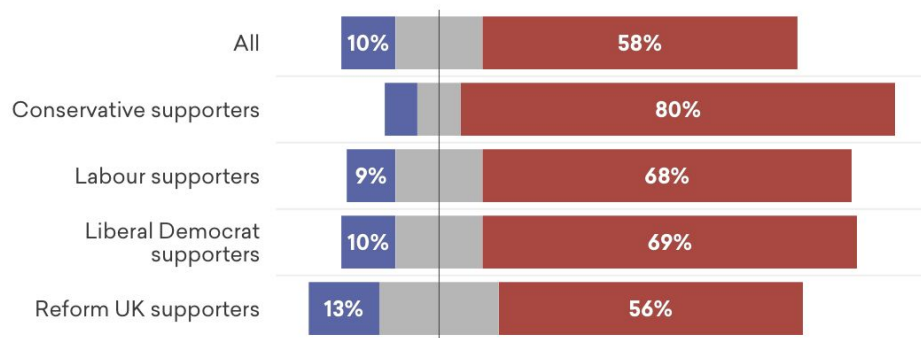
A merger does not go down as well with the public as a whole- 43% of people say such a deal would make the Conservatives look weak.



# The party's over?

## How likely do you think it is that the Conservative Party will exist after the next General Election?

● Unlikely (net) ● Neither likely nor unlikely ● Likely (net)



This was always bound to be a difficult election for the Conservatives. However, the party's dramatic fall in support compared to 2021 was steeper than many had predicted.

The good news for the Conservatives is that most voters do not see the threat of Reform as existential - yet. A majority of all party supporters believe the party will exist after the next election. But just 12% of people think there will be a Conservative majority government, while 19% foresee one governed by Reform UK.



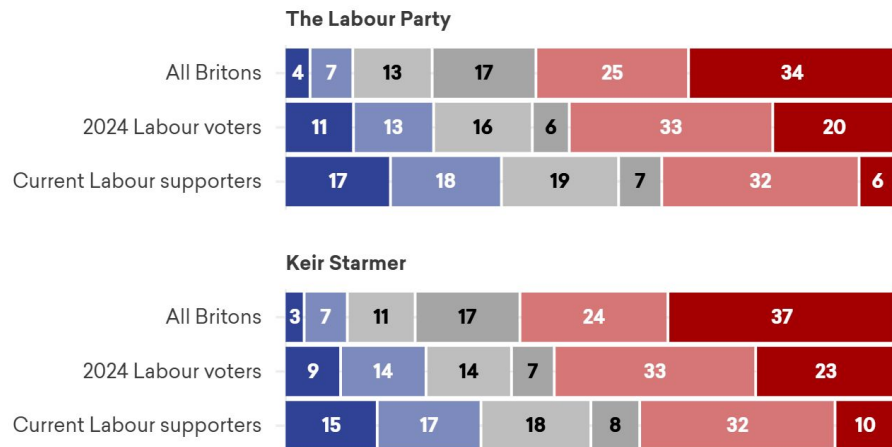
**What can Labour do now?**

# A bad night for Labour

## 3 in 5 Britons think the Local Elections were bad for the Labour Party and Keir Starmer

For each of the following, please indicate whether you think the results of Thursday's local elections were good or bad for:

● Very good ● Somewhat good ● Neither good nor bad ● Don't know ● Somewhat bad ● Very bad

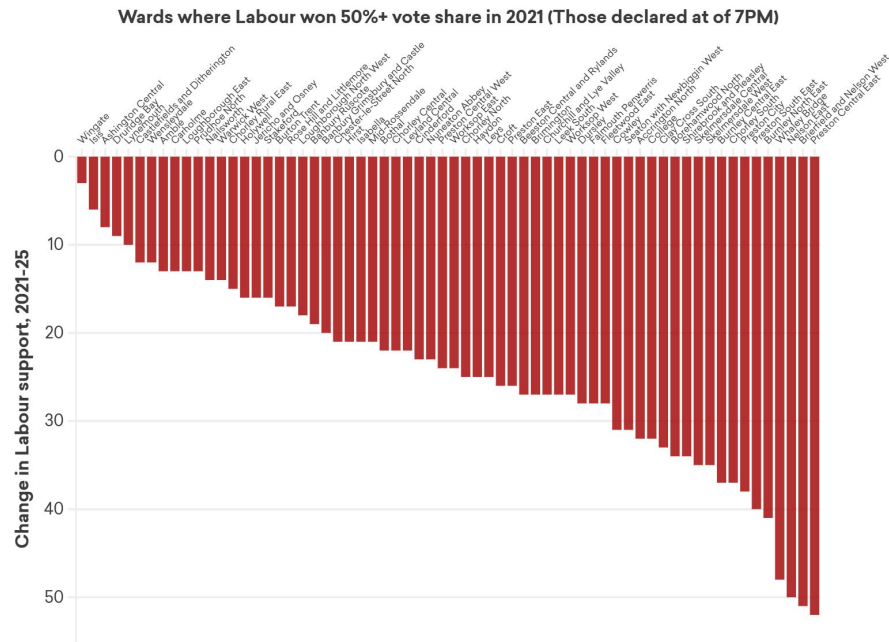


**Labour's projected national share (PNS) from this round of local elections is on-par with the party's worst ever result in 2009 - the year before it was ousted from Downing Street for 14 years.**

Unsurprisingly, three in five Britons see this as a bad outcome for the party and its leader. While current Labour supporters are slightly more positive, most 2024 voters see the results negatively.

## Losses in Labour's heartlands

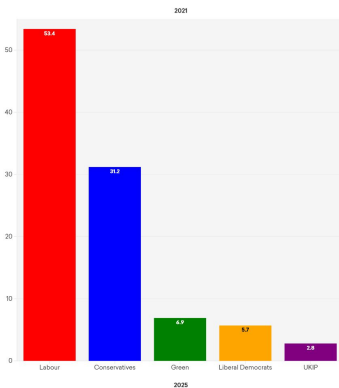
**Labour has seen a sharp drop in support in areas where it had won half or more of the vote in 2021.**



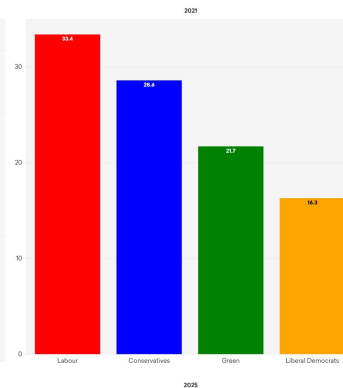
**Labour's losses were particularly pronounced in some of its historic heartlands:** Labour's vote share declined in each of the 77 wards where the party won more than half of the vote in 2021.

# Labour's Mayoral Mirage

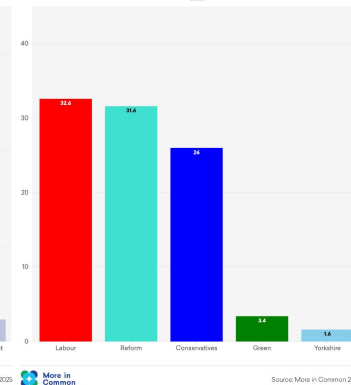
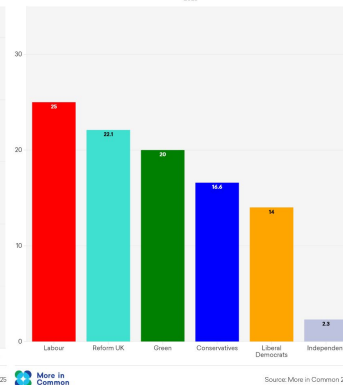
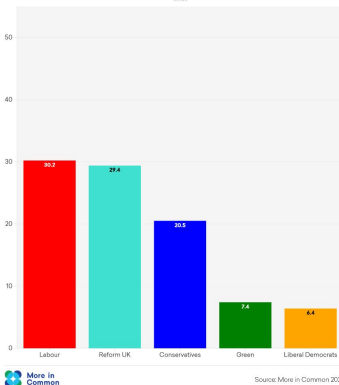
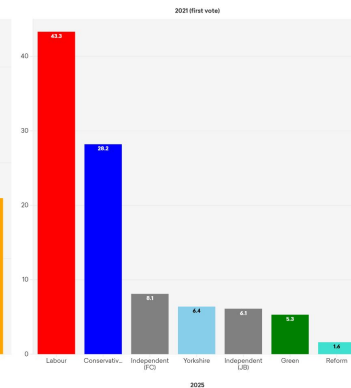
North Tyneside - Change in vote share since 2021



West of England - Change in vote share since 2021



Doncaster - Change in vote share since 2021



While the Labour Party's victories in three mayoralalties may look like a win for the party, they disguise dramatic swings away from Labour.

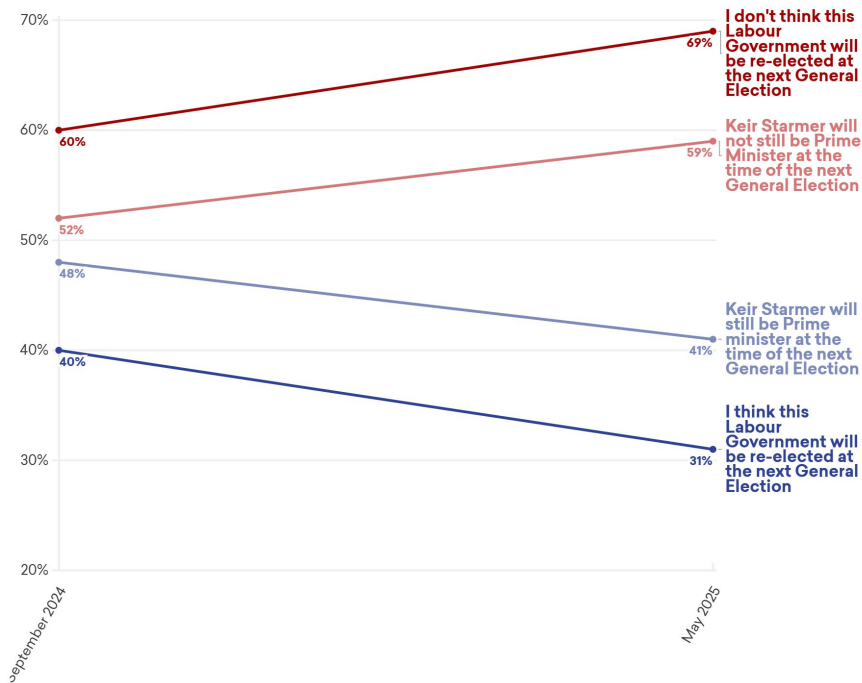
The smallest margin of victory was 1 per cent, while the greatest margin was just 3 per cent.

Reform UK finished second in all three Mayoralalties won by Labour.

# The future of the Labour Party

## 7 in 10 now think Labour will lose the next election

Which of the following comes closest to your view?



For some, Labour's performance at the local elections has reduced confidence in their future electoral success.

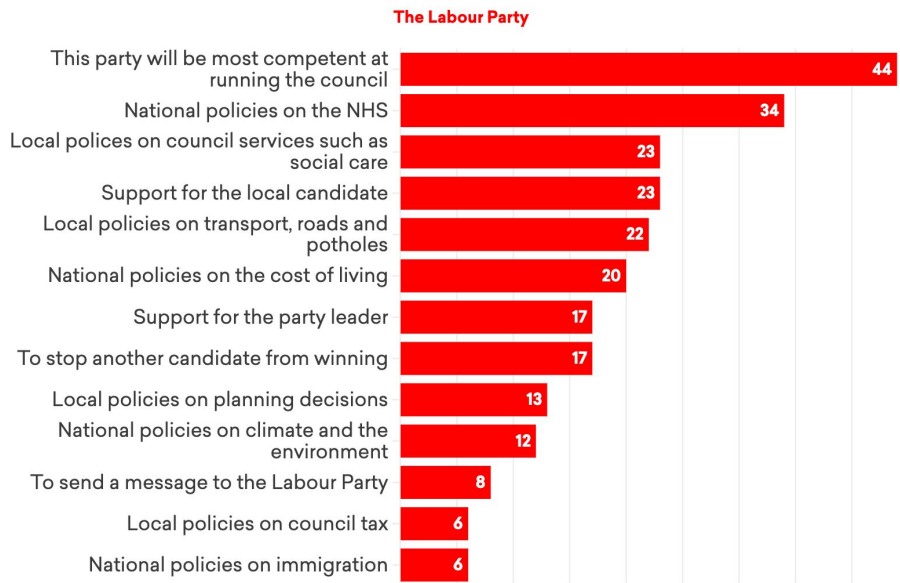
Asked about the most likely outcome of the next election, Nigel Farage has surpassed Labour as the public's most probably Prime Minister, and a third (33 per cent) now expect Reform UK to be in government.

Nearly 6 in 10 do not now expect Keir Starmer to be Prime Minister by the time of the next General Election and only 31 per cent expect the Government to be re-elected.

# What drove the vote for Labour?

## Why people are voting for Labour

You said that you plan to vote for [party name] in this year's Local Elections. What are the reasons for that? Select your top three.



Competence in running the local council is the main reason that people who voted for Labour gave as the reason for their vote in these local elections.

Compared to most other parties, Labour voters are more likely to also vote due to the party's national policies on the NHS and local plans for social care.

In focus groups in Labour-Reform contests, people cite concern for the NHS as a reason to remain loyal to Labour rather than switching to Reform.

*"The NHS is one of the best things this country's got. It needs to be fixed drastically, but privatising it isn't going to make that fix."*

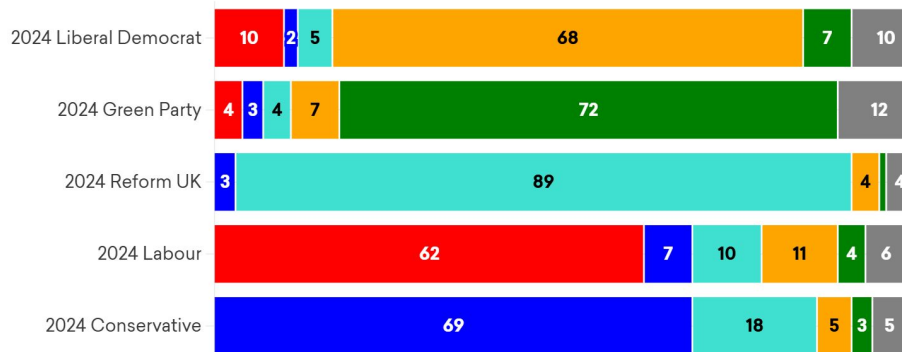
Kate, retired radiographer

# Two in five 2024 Labour voters voted for a different party on Thursday

## Almost 40% of 2024 Labour voters planned to vote for another party in this year's local elections

And what is the party of the candidate you plan to vote for at these local elections? (If you have the option to vote for multiple candidates, please select the one you consider to be your main choice).

● The Labour Party ● The Conservative Party ● Reform UK ● The Liberal Democrats  
● The Green Party ● Other



Source: More in Common, April 2025 • Based on polling conducted before the Local Elections

In line with national trends, Labour lost a significant share of the support it secured in July 2024 at the local elections.

Among those eligible to vote on 1 May who backed Labour in the general election, almost two in five (38 per cent) planned to vote for a different party.

Support for Reform UK among this group of voters has held up well: the main parties have not yet won back Reform defectors.

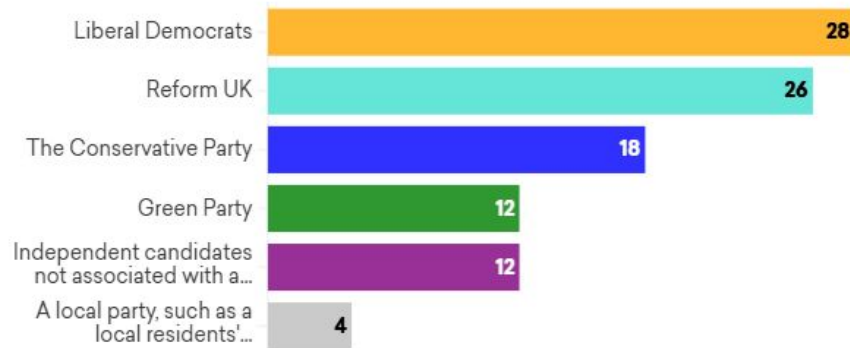


# 'Labour switchers': where are Labour voters going?

## 'Labour switchers' who voted at the 2025 local elections are most likely to have voted for either for the Lib Dems or Reform

Votes of 2024 Labour voters who did not vote for Labour at the 2025 Local Elections

● The Conservative Party ● Reform UK ● Liberal Democrats ● Green Party  
● A local party, such as a local residents' association  
● Independent candidates not associated with a party



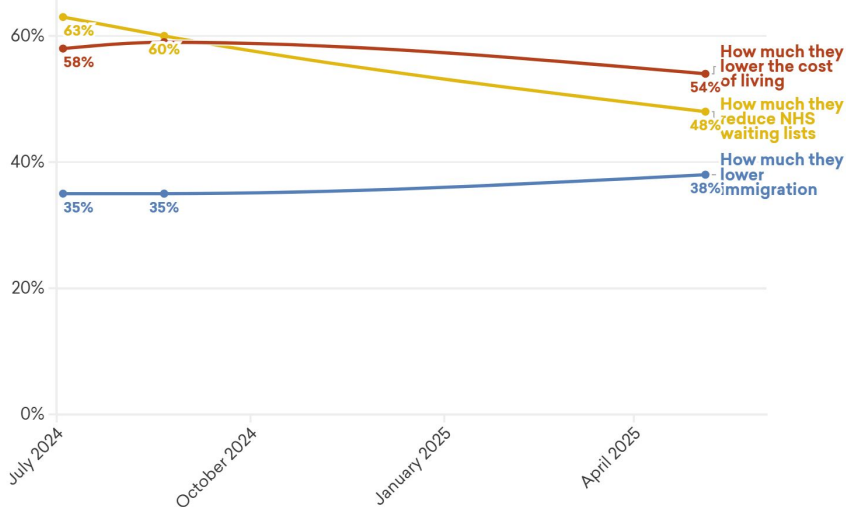
“Labour switchers” — voters who backed Labour in July 2024 but supported a different party in the May local elections — drifted away in two different directions in these local elections: 28 per cent voted Liberal Democrat, while 26 per cent chose Reform UK.

This highlights the challenge Labour faces nationally over the course of this parliament, as it loses support to the Liberal Democrats and Greens on the left, and to Reform UK and the Conservatives on the right.

# Where have things gone wrong for Labour?

## The cost of living, NHS and immigration are the top three tests for the government

Which of the following will be most important to you in judging the success of the Labour Government after 5 years?



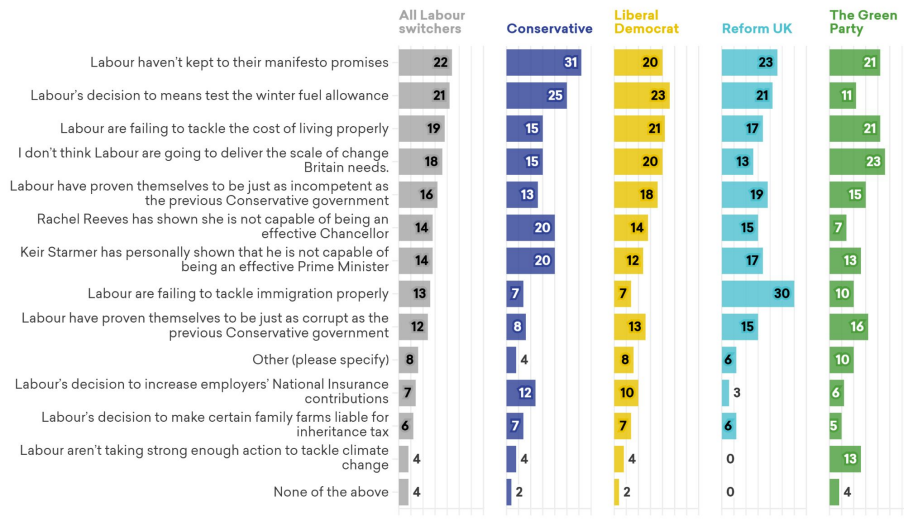
Since July 2024, many Britons have lost faith in the Labour government's ability to deliver real change: seven in ten (72 per cent) now say they do not expect the Labour government to improve their lives.

Asked how they are likely to judge Labour's performance in government, the top answer is how much they lower the cost of living - this has overtaken reducing NHS waiting times as the top metric by which the party will be judged.

# Where have things gone wrong for Labour?

## Top reasons why 2024 Labour voters might switch

You said you voted for the Labour Party at the General Election in July but you would vote for Liberal Democrats in an election tomorrow, why is that?



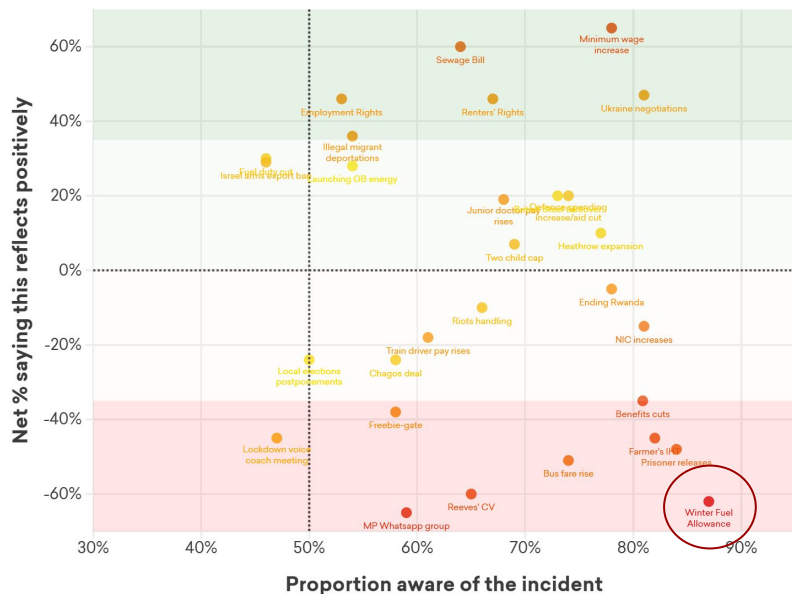
Since the General Election, Labour has shed votes across the left, right and centre.

For those who voted Labour in 2024 but have since switched to Reform, the top reason given is that 'Labour are failing to tackle immigration properly'. Meanwhile Green defectors are most likely to feel disillusioned with the pace of change, while Labour-Conservative switchers are most likely to cite the perception that Labour haven't kept their manifesto promises - and for Liberal Democrats means-testing the Winter Fuel Allowance is the top reason.

# The Winter Fuel Allowance

## Labour's successes and failures

Lighter colours indicate greater ambivalence (more people expressing neither a negative nor positive view of the event)



**The Winter Fuel Allowance is an issue that unites Labour's defectors on the left and the right:** 2024 Labour voters who defected to Conservative, Reform and the Liberal Democrats all list the decision to means-test the benefit as one of the top three reasons for their defection.

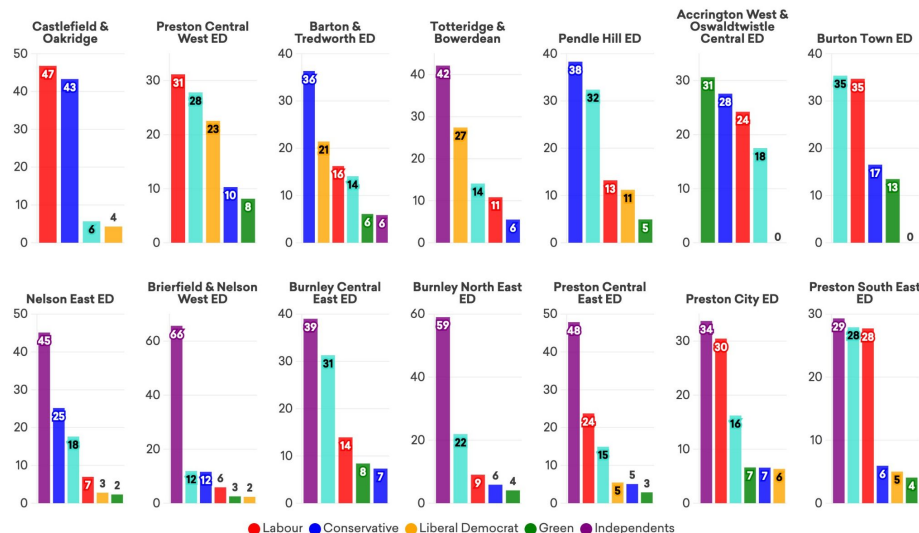
The policy emerges in almost every focus group; many typical Labour voters feel that the decision undermines some of the party's core values.

*"I previously voted Labour in the general election last year, but I just feel very disappointed in what they've done. A lot of the things that they have done with regards to winter fuel payments and things like that, I find that they're typically things that you don't expect from the Labour party."*

Paula, chemical process manager, Runcorn

# The challenge from independents

In electoral divisions where more than 30 per cent of adults are Muslims, independent candidates won in half of them



Source: More in Common, May 2025

This was not an election where many divisions have high Muslim populations, but those that do saw big wins by independent candidates - for example in Burnley and Preston.

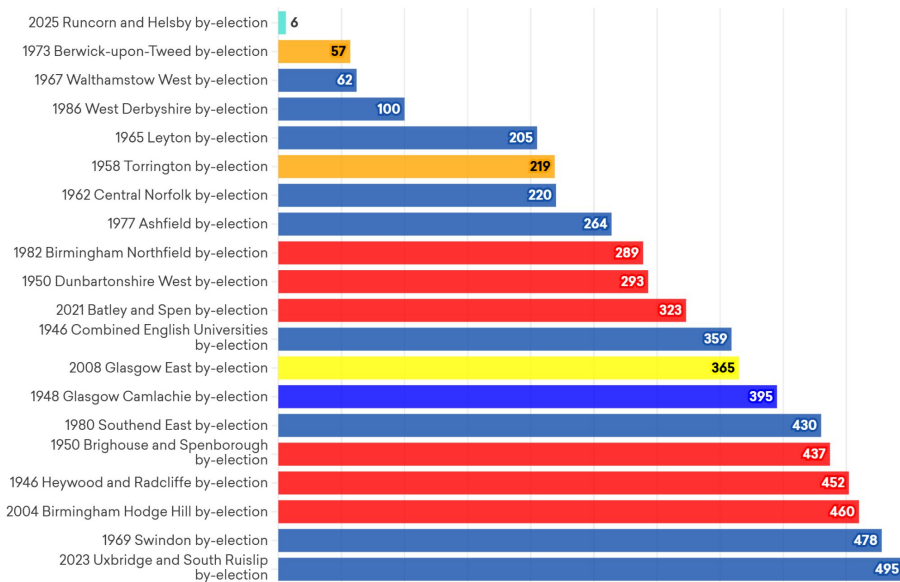
In total, there were 14 divisions with Muslim populations greater than 30 per cent - eight of them went to independent candidates and the Labour vote fell.

In next year's local elections this could be a much bigger factor - as boroughs in Birmingham and London with much more substantial Muslim populations go up for election. Similar to the Conservative pincer movement that finds them squeezed by the Liberal Democrats and Reform, Labour could in these areas find themselves squeezed between independents and Reform.

# Runcorn and Helsby

## Smallest majorities in by-elections since WWI

Size of majority (raw) in by-elections since WWII



The Runcorn and Helsby by-election was defined by the Government's early stumbles, and this manifested itself in Reform's narrow victory.

In focus groups conducted on the day after the by-election, Reform voters spoke of 'tactically' choosing Reform to give labour a “kick up the bum”, while Labour voters had little good to say about the government and were driven by a desire to keep out Reform.

The the cost of living, Winter Fuel Allowance, immigration and the NHS were top of mind to those we spoke with as reasons for switching their vote or staying at home.

*“There was a little bit of tactical voting from my perspective...I think they need a little bit of a kick up the backside.”*

Ste, customer service director, Runcorn

*“I voted Reform, I'm traditionally a labour voter... but it wasn't going to influence much in terms of the way the country's run, but hopefully it will be a little bit of a kick up the bum that changes things. Change is needed.”*

Ste, customer service director, Helsby

*“I've always voted Labour, but this time I felt like I was voting Labour to try and stop Reform getting in rather than really wanting a win.”*

Joe, financial analyst, Runcorn

# Reshuffle imminent?

## Britons across politics tend to support a cabinet reshuffle

Which of the following comes closest to your view?

- Keir Starmer should replace some of his Cabinet Members to try and make his government perform better
- Don't know
- Keir Starmer should not change his Cabinet Members as stability will help the government perform better



Following reports that senior cabinet ministers could be at risk, More in Common found that Britons tend to support a reshuffle.

Half of the public think that Keir Starmer should replace some members of the cabinet in order to make the government perform better, compared to only a fifth (19 per cent) who think he should avoid reshuffling and prioritise stability.

Even among 2024 Labour voters, most (54 per cent) support a reshuffle.

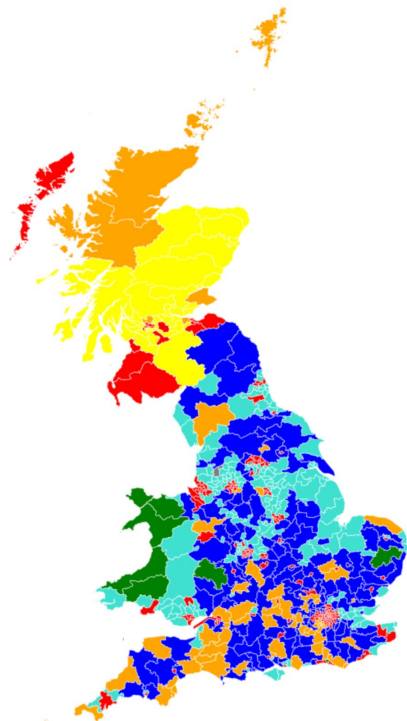


# 2026 - Risks on the horizon for Labour

## More in Common's MRP (April 2025)

Reform UK SNP Labour Conservative Plaid Cymru Liberal Democrat Independent Green

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**2026 is set to be a big electoral year for Labour.**

The Labour government will be tested in the Scottish Parliament elections - where our MRP estimates that Labour could lose much of the Central Belt to the SNP. In Wales, our MRP suggests Labour could lose historic safe seats across the Welsh Valleys to Reform UK.

Meanwhile in London and Birmingham City Council, Labour could face heavy challenges from 'Gaza Independent' candidates.



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