



More in
Common

Local Elections

What to expect

April 2025

Methodology

Polling of areas with local elections this week

Fieldwork: 17-21 April

N: 1,780

Mayoral Combined Authority polling:

Fieldwork: 15-21 April

N: Greater Lincolnshire Combined Authority (N = 1,001), Hull and East Yorkshire Combined Authority (N = 963), Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (N = 997), and West of England Combined Authority (N = 998)

Nationally-representative polling

Fieldwork: Weekly

N: 2,000

Eleven focus groups:

Runcorn

Cambridgeshire villages

Peterborough (x2)

Hull (x3)

Bath and Bristol

Lincolnshire

Beverley

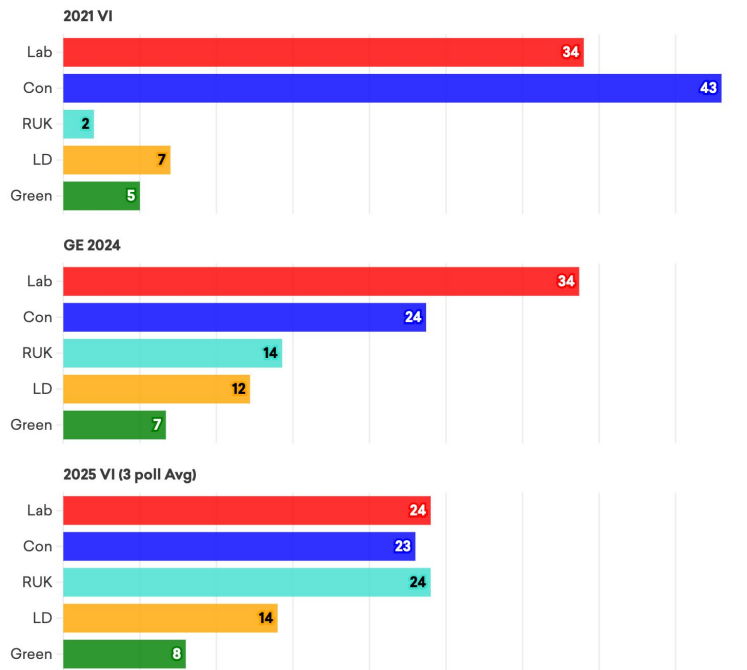
Scunthorpe



Council elections

Changes since May 2021, and July 2024

Change in Nationwide voting intentions since May 2021 and July 2024



Both the Conservatives and Labour have seen their support in national voting intention fall since the last time since many of these elections were fought. Since May 2021 support for the Conservatives has fallen by ~20 per cent, support for Labour has fallen by ~10 per cent.

The drop in support for these parties before and after the General Election makes it very difficult to read too much into how Labour will do in the Local Elections based on the General Election. However we can be certain the Conservatives will have a difficult night.

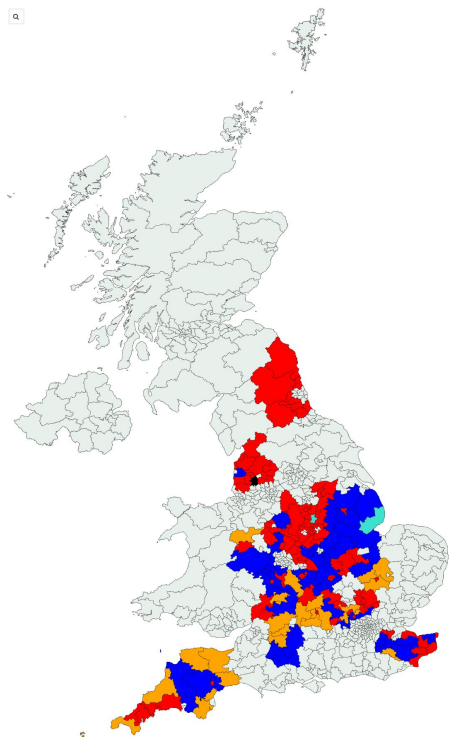
Reform UK have been the main beneficiaries of this drop in support, Reform were polling at just ~2 per cent in voting intention prior to the 2021 elections. They now enjoy the support of roughly one in four voters, vying for poll-position with Labour and the Conservatives.

The Liberal Democrats and Greens have also both seen improvements in their polling, including a doubling of support for the Liberal Democrats in voting intention.

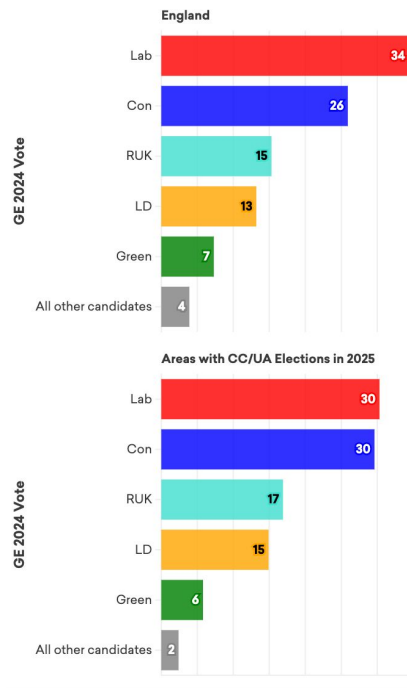
The baseline

2024 General Election results in areas with County Council or Unitary Authority Elections in 2025

Lab RUK Con LD Spkr



GE 2024 vote in England as a whole, and in areas with local elections in 2025



The Conservatives start this election from a high-water mark - the 2021 Local Elections took place during their “vaccine bounce” under Boris Johnson at the same time as the Hartlepool by-election.

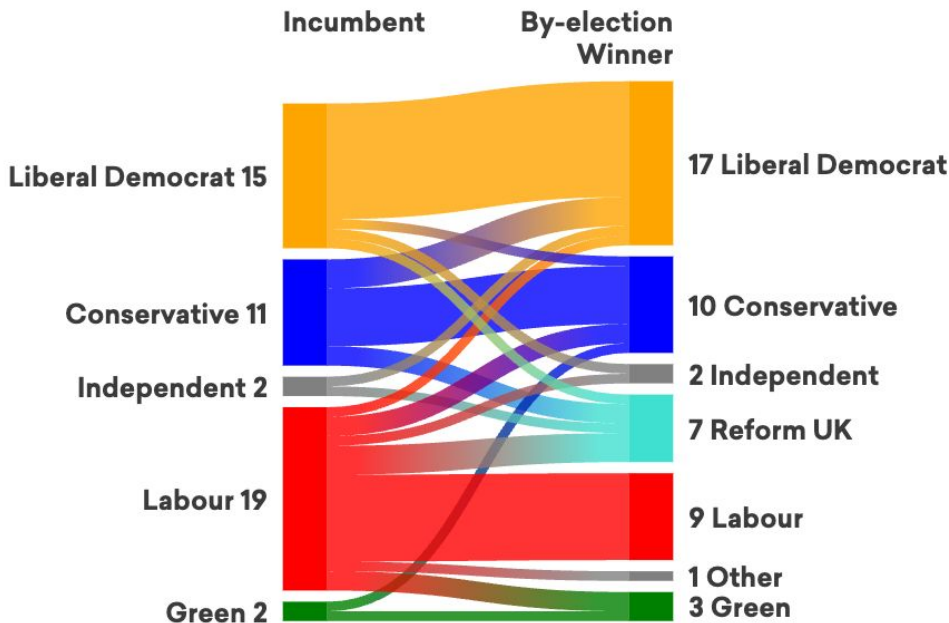
The last time these seats were up for election in 2021, the Conservatives enjoyed a lead in the national polls of 10 per cent over Labour.

The areas up for election are more traditionally Conservative than the nation as a whole too - most of them also do not include the large towns and cities in each county, which are generally areas of weakness for the Conservatives.

In the 2024 General Election, these areas were comparatively more Conservative than the rest of England.

The story from by-elections

Local by-election results in 2025



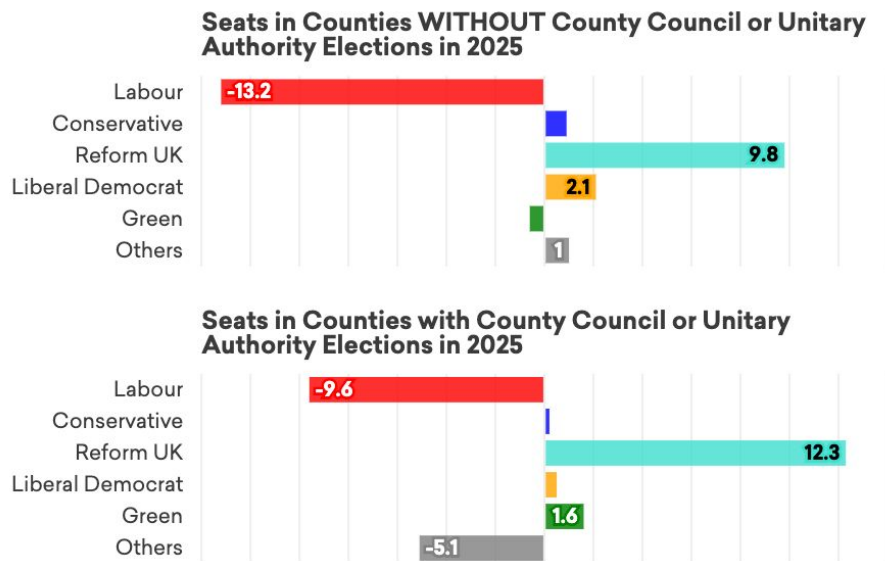
In 2025, there have been council by-elections in 48 wards for 49 councillors across Great Britain, of which 15 have been in areas with Local Elections this year.

For Labour, the story of these by-elections is one of anti-incumbency: Labour has lost more than half of the by-elections where they were defending the seat.

However, it is worth noting that Labour has had the disadvantage of having to defend more seats in by-elections than any other party.

The story from by-elections

Reform swings higher in recent council by-elections in areas of England with elections in 2025



Though local by-election swings since the General Election in areas with local elections this year and in those without tell a similar story, the swing towards Reform is notably larger in areas with elections this year, while the average swing against Labour is noticeably lower. There is no significant difference in the number of by-elections in areas where Reform did or didn't field a candidate, or which were held in 2025 rather than 2024.

In the case of the Labour swing, this is likely because the swing against them is becoming less uniform and more proportional, meaning larger swings in areas of strength that aren't up for election this year. The swing towards Reform suggests that Reform's improving support since the General Election is concentrated in areas with elections this year.

Benchmarks for a good or bad night for Reform

At its peak in 2015, UKIP gained 176 councillors

Change in number of UKIP councillors



One prediction that can be made with confidence in this election is that Reform are set to make hundreds of gains. Having stood in very few seats, and won none in 2021, Reform's gains are certain to be measured in the hundreds regardless of whether they have a good or bad night.

On a good night, one where their performance is in line with, or exceeds, the level of support indicated by their current performance in the polls, Reform could hope to gain more than 500 seats (making them the largest party).

A bad night (one which shows they have made progress since the General Election, but not as much as currently suggested by the polls), sees them winning fewer than 350 seats.

The rise of Reform - likely successes

Doncaster

Reform should hope to do very well in Doncaster. UKIP regularly performed at 30 per cent locally during their peak, while Doncaster was an area of strength for the Brexit Party in the 2019 General Election.

Though Reform stood aside in Doncaster North last year, MRP models suggest they would take all three Doncaster seats at the next General Election. If Reform fail to do well here, it should indicate they have made less progress than expected.

Kent

The Kent coast and Thames Estuary are another area where UKIP did well during their height, including in local elections. Five of Reform's 15 local by-election victories since the General Election have come from the area covered by Kent CC and Medway, and Reform are likely to enjoy a continuation of these victories on Thursday. Large levels of voter fragmentation in Kent also means there are opportunities for Labour, Lib Dems, Greens and Reform to win on a small share of the vote in a county which still remains strongly Conservative.

Durham

Although not a place of strength for UKIP in the 2013 Local Elections, Reform did well in the north and east of the county in the last General Election, and should benefit from drifting support from Conservative voters, and a strong Liberal Democrat and Independent presence on the council. Reform doing well in Durham suggests they are performing in line with the level of support currently implied by nationwide voting intention.

The rise of Reform - competitive councils

Lincolnshire

Reform won one of their five seats (Boston and Skegness) at the General Election here last year. Although the County Council does not cover the “Red Wall” areas on the North Lincolnshire/Humberside Coast, the remainder of the county should be very tightly contested between the Conservatives and Reform.

Lancashire

Likely to be competitive between Reform, the Conservatives, and Labour across the county, as well as the Greens and Liberal Democrats in some areas, Reform could do well in divisions in areas such as Morecambe, Preston, and the South East of the County, and on a good night, in the rural centre of the county.

Nottinghamshire

Nottinghamshire is home to one of Reform’s other parliamentary seats (Ashfield), but again contains areas of strength for Labour, and the Conservatives. The strength of the local Ashfield Independents means that while this might be an area for Reform to be expected to do well in easily, it may face some competition for protest voters from localist candidates.

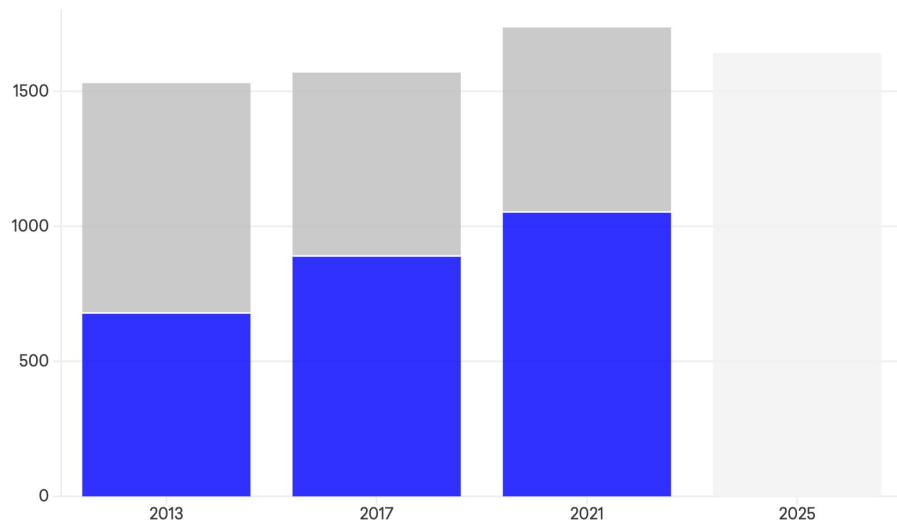
Staffordshire


Possibly the clearest direct Conservative-Reform competition of this year’s councils. In 2021 the Conservatives won 57 of the 62 seats on this council, with 56.7 per cent of the vote, but Labour won over half of the seats in Staffordshire at the 2024 General Election. Given lower support for Labour, Reform represent the main competition for the Conservatives this year.

Benchmarks for Conservative Renewal

Councils to watch

Conservative seats in Borough and County Council and Unitary Authority elections in areas with elections in 2025



 **More in Common** Note: Exact values vary election to election partly due to boundary changes. Doncaster did not have council elections in 2013.

We can also confidently say the Conservatives are set to lose seats at this election, the question is how many they will lose, and where they will lose them.

The Conservatives may find it easier to stem losses in Staffordshire and Worcestershire, where they mainly face a threat from just one direction (Reform).

Elsewhere, in Lancashire, Derbyshire, and Hertfordshire, the Conservatives have made by-election gains since the General Election (though with a mixed record in by-elections where Reform stood candidates).

A good night for the Conservatives would see them win 460 seats (losses of less than 600, ~550 when accounting for boundary changes), roughly in line with level of support they enjoyed during their post General Election peak.

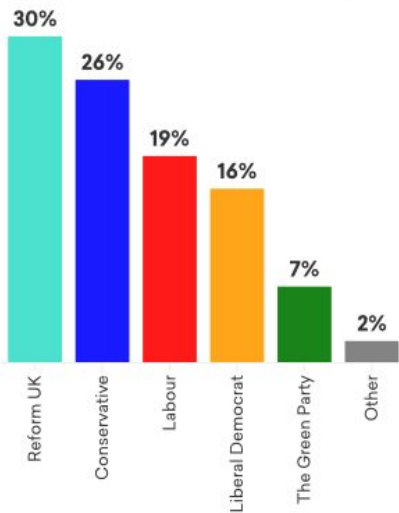
A bad night sees them win less than 380, (losses of more than 670, 620 accounting for boundary changes).

Benchmarks for Labour - good night or bad night

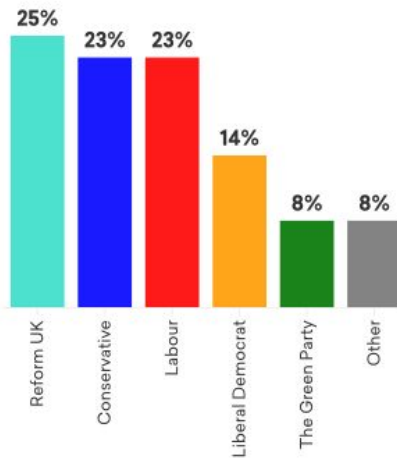
National Voting Intention



Areas with council elections



GB



Fieldwork: 17-24 April (areas with council elections) and 17-21 April (national)

The areas up for election this year are not ones where Labour is traditionally strong, and support for the party has fallen by almost 10 per cent nationally since the 2021 Local Elections.

Their hope to gain seats comes from the collapse of the Conservative Party's support in areas where only Labour or the Conservatives are viable options. Given the re-emergence of more fragmented multi-party politics, there are few of these places.

Labour are likely to lose seats this election, and their hopes to limit these losses depend largely on the geography of tactical voting and falling support for the Conservatives.

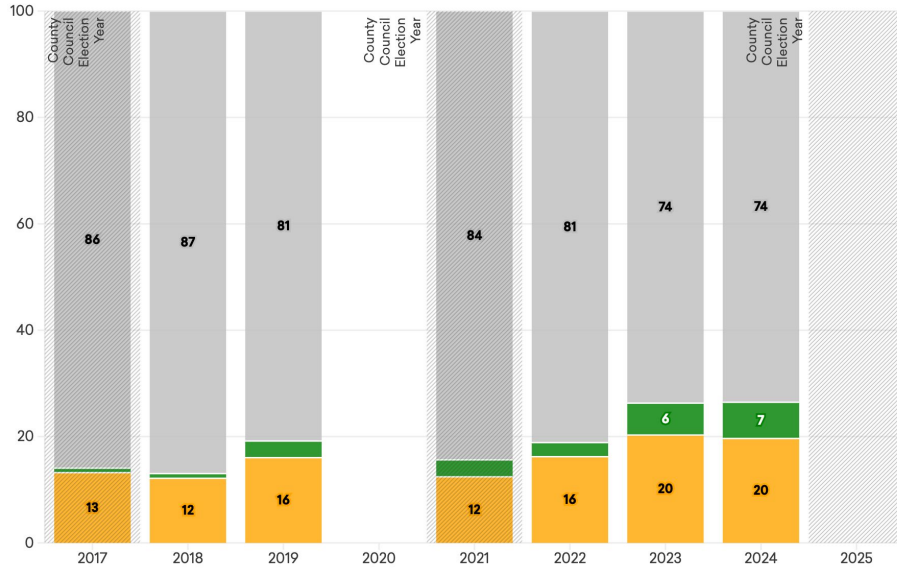
They particularly face challenges from Reform UK in Doncaster and County Durham, and difficult battles to make progress against the Conservatives in Derbyshire, Lancashire, and Northumberland, where Labour success depends on greater Conservative to Reform defections, and reasonable levels of tactical voting.

A good night sees them lose 20 seats or fewer (accounting for boundary changes this is about par with 2021), while a bad night sees them win only 160 seats, down 140 on 2021, or ~120 accounting for seat reductions.

Benchmarks for the Liberal Democrats and Greens

Green and Liberal Democrat share of council seats by election year

The Liberal Democrats and Greens could be poised to make bigger gains this year



Both the Liberal Democrats and Greens have opportunities to do well in these local elections. Both have a strong track record of local campaigns, and may benefit from disillusionment with both Conservatives and Labour - especially in areas where support for Reform is weaker.

A good night for the Liberal Democrats sees them make gains of more than 170 (which would suggest they are outperforming levels of support in the polls), while a bad night sees them make gains of fewer than 60.

A good night for the Greens sees them double their number of seats (from their base of 34) or more, while a bad night sees them make any losses at all.

Liberal Democrats and Greens - expected successes

Hertfordshire

With strong Liberal Democrat performances in the past, alongside Liberal Democrat and Labour gains in Hertfordshire in the General Election, Hertfordshire is an important council to watch for signs of changes or collapses in the left-of-centre tactical vote, with opportunities for the Liberal Democrats to make gains here at the expense of both Labour and the Conservatives.

Oxfordshire

Oxfordshire County Council has been jointly run by the Greens and Liberal Democrats since the 2021 Local Elections. A good night for the Liberal Democrats could see them take control of the council outright with gains from the Conservatives, but there are opportunities for the Greens to gain in some of the county's towns, especially among the students in Oxford itself.

Gloucestershire

An area of some strength already for the Liberal Democrats and Greens, both can hope to make good progress this year, with hopes of running the council independently, or more likely jointly. The Liberal Democrats will hope to make gains at the expense of the Conservatives in the Cotswolds, and Labour elsewhere, while the Greens can hope to build on strong performances on borough council elections in Stroud, the Forest of Dean, and Tewkesbury.

Liberal Democrats and Greens - potential progress

Kent

Unlike other parts of the Home Counties, Kent has not seen as strong support for the Liberal Democrats in recent decades, having only won one parliamentary seat in Kent since the 1960s. Despite enjoying higher support in Kent's affluent areas and commuter towns recently, the Liberal Democrats were outperformed by the Greens in 2021. Alongside reasonable by-election results, the Greens and Liberal Democrats could both make gains in Kent, though they are unlikely to take control of the council.

Buckinghamshire

The Conservatives dominated here in 2021, winning three quarters of the seats on the Unitary Authority with 40 per cent of the vote, though the Liberal Democrats and Greens did well with 19 per cent and 11 per cent each. With extensive boundary changes, a halving of Conservative support in the national polls, and pre-existing support for the Liberal Democrats and Greens, they are both well placed to make significant gains.

Devon

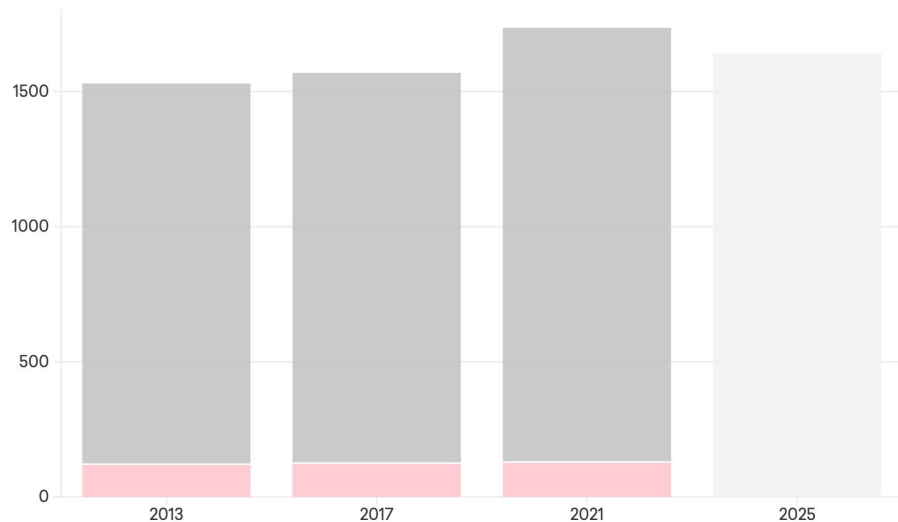
Despite historic strength, the success of the Liberal Democrats was muted by strong Conservative support in the last County Council election in 2021. A swathe of Liberal Democrat victories in the General Election likely heralds a good performance this year, while the Greens should hope to turn their 11.4 per cent of the vote at the last local elections into a larger number of seats, possibly at the expense of Labour in Exeter. The Liberal Democrats could become the largest party on the council.

Lancashire

Lancashire has traditionally been a two-horse race between Labour and the Conservatives, with some support for UKIP and Reform, in recent years, but retains some potential for the Liberal Democrats rurally, and around Burnley and Preston. Importantly for the Greens, there is ample room for gains in Preston, and especially Lancaster (where they have seen huge swings in local by-elections, and which they currently administer on the district level). Unlikely to fall under Liberal Democrat or Green administration, but certainly potential to gains, though both face some competition from pro-Palestine independents in Preston and the South East of the county.

Independents and Localists

Despite spikes in support for independent and localist candidates in other local elections, the number of independent and localist councillors has remained flat in these areas across recent years



Note: Exact values vary election to election partly due to boundary changes. Doncaster did not have council elections in 2013.

In any local election disillusionment with major parties means opportunity for independent and localist candidates. Though impossible to place an exact number on, some areas have histories of electing localist or independent candidates.

Lincolnshire, Cornwall, Nottinghamshire, Durham, and Buckinghamshire each have either significant groups of localist or independent councillors, or both, each of which are well placed to do well this year.

Independent candidates made significant gains last year, in no small part due to significant support for pro-Palestine independents in areas significant Muslim populations. Such areas are few and far between in this set of elections, with only 16 MSOAs (middle super output area - an area slightly smaller than County and Unitary Electoral Divisions) covering possibly a dozen divisions containing a population of more than 30 per cent Muslims, largely concentrated in the Lancashire towns of Preston, Burnley, Nelson, Colne, Brierfield, and Accrington. There is unlikely to be a major “Gaza Effect” outside of Lancashire in this election.

No Overall Control - The Biggest Winner?

Given the fragmentation of political allegiances, the most likely outcome for every councils up for election this year is that no party will command a majority on each council.

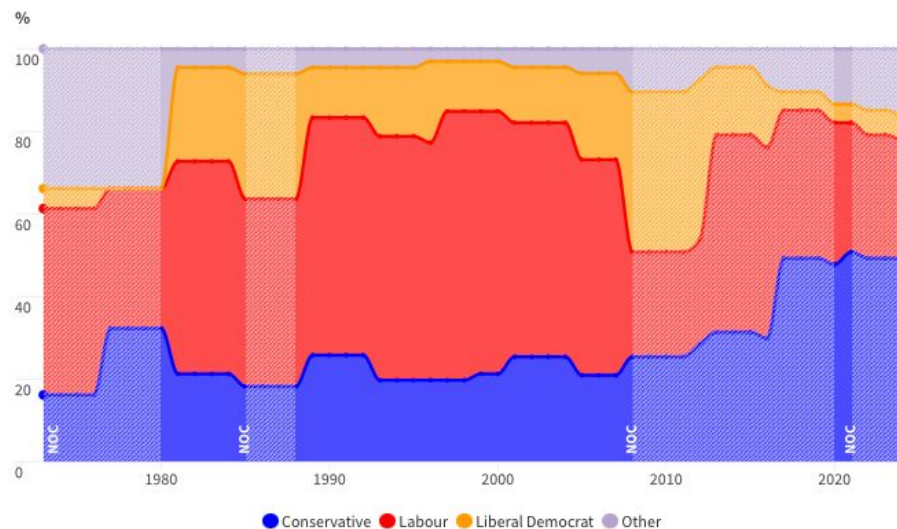
That is not to say that no party will control any county outright, but that No Overall Control is the most likely outcome for each.

This means that in many councils (if not all) local groups will be forced to cut deals with each other to form a majority.

The question this raises - in light of speculation around possible coalition arrangements at the next General Election - is **will local groups of Reform and Conservative councillors cooperate in counties in NOC?**

Alternatively, independent and localist councillors could hold the balance of power in a number of councils.

Northumberland Council Composition





**What's driving votes in
this week's local
elections?**

People's local areas in a word

In a word or two, what is the BEST thing about your local area?



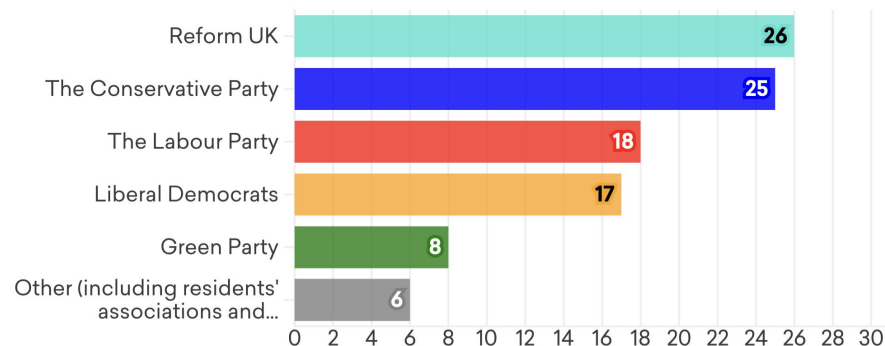
In a word or two, what is the WORST thing about your local area?



People are generally much more positive about their local area than about the country as a whole. But ask about the biggest issues in their area and potholes easily emerge as the biggest problem.

Voting intention in areas with local elections

Voting intention for England's 2025 local elections



Source: More in Common, April 2025 • Representative of areas voting in local elections this year
Voters only included if they give their likelihood of voting at 9 or above out of ten, and say they tend to vote in most or all local elections in their area/ Black boxes indicate margin of error.

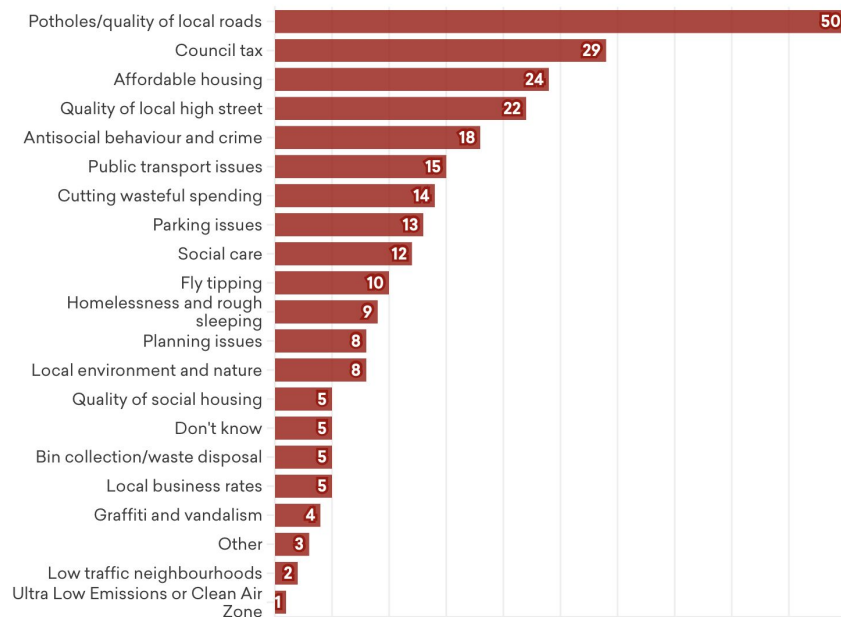
More in Common polling of those who are able and intending to vote in this year's local elections suggests Reform UK are set to narrowly receive the most votes on 1 May, in a close race with the Conservative Party.

However polling of local elections is significantly harder than polling in General Elections because of low and variable turnout and these numbers should be seen as indicative rather than definitive.

Nevertheless if this polling is close to the mark, the Conservatives will end up with significantly fewer council seats — and control fewer councils — compared to May 2021.

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 them, **over half of people living in areas with elections say potholes.**

Other important local issues include council tax, housing and the quality of local high street.

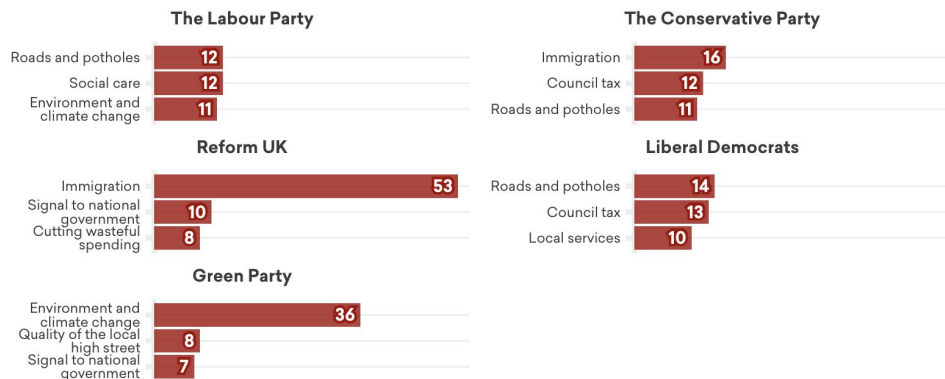
Issues like bin collections, low traffic neighbourhoods (LTNs), low emissions zones and business rates are less of a priority.

“South Cambs is horrific for potholes.”
Beverly, night care assistant, Melbourn

Labour and Lib Dems vote more on local issues, Reform and the Greens vote 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



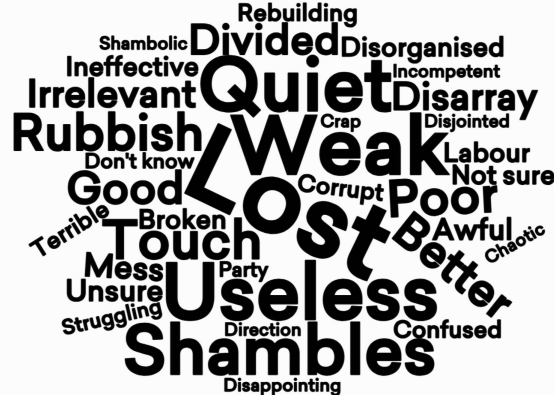
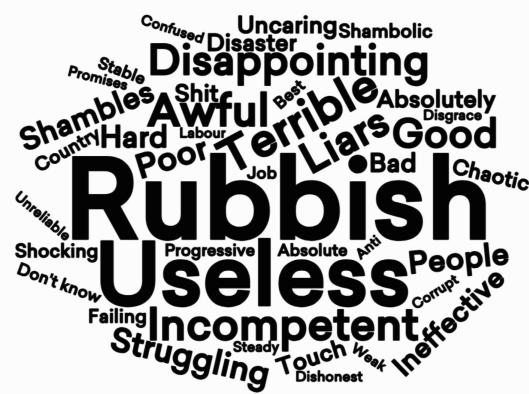
Source: More in Common, April 2025 • Representative of areas voting in local elections this year

Voters have distinct issue priorities based on who they are planning to vote for on 1 May.

Those planning to vote for 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 planning to vote Green or Reform UK have a higher likelihood of choosing issues usually the purview of national government.

What do voters in local elections council areas think of the parties?



What do voters in local elections council areas think of the parties?

Labour

A word cloud of negative adjectives describing the Labour government. The words are arranged in a circular pattern, with 'Rubbish' and 'Useless' being the largest and most prominent. Other large words include 'Terrible', 'Incompetent', 'Shambles', 'Awful', and 'Disappointing'. Smaller words include 'Shocking', 'Failing', 'Struggling', 'Steady', 'Touch', 'Weak', 'Dishonest', 'Ineffective', 'Corrupt', 'People', 'Absolute', 'Anti', 'Progressive', 'Don't know', 'Unreliable', 'Country', 'Hard', 'Poor', 'Job', 'Bad', 'Chaotic', 'Good', 'Disgrace', 'Absolutely', 'Best', 'Shit', 'Labour', 'Promises', 'Stable', 'Confused', 'Disaster', 'Uncaring', 'Shambolic', and 'Our' (partially visible on the left).

Reform UK

A word cloud featuring the word "Racist" in the largest font. Other prominent words include "Dangerous", "Don't know", "Strong", "Not sure", "Party", "Good", "People", "Right wing", "Awful", "Scary", "Bad", "Idea", "Best", "Poor", "Leader", "Growing", "Change", "Upcoming", "Better", "Racists", "Immigration", "Extreme", "Unsure", "Touch", "Fascist", "Coming", "Terrible", "Fresh", "Useless", "Unknown", and "UK". The words are arranged in a circular pattern around the central "Racist" word.

Liberal Democrats

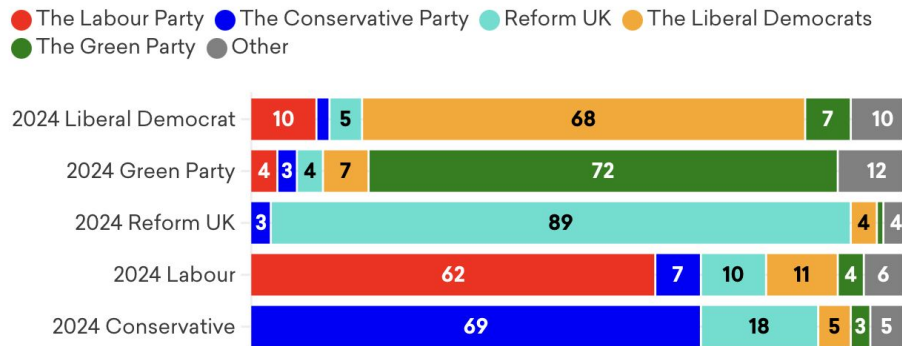
A word cloud of negative words describing the Labour government. The words are arranged in a circular pattern, with 'Lost' and 'Weak' being the most prominent. Other words include 'Shambles', 'Useless', 'Disorganised', 'Quiet', 'Rubbish', 'Ineffective', 'Divided', 'Disarray', 'Corrupt', 'Poor', 'Awful', 'Chaos', 'Confused', 'Disappointing', 'Struggling', 'Unsure', 'Mess', 'Touch', 'Party', 'Direction', 'Better', 'Labour', 'Not sure', 'Crap', 'Disjointed', 'Incompetent', 'Shambolic', 'Irrelevant', 'Terrible', 'Good', 'Broken', 'Don't know', 'Rebuilding', and 'Co'.

Conservative

Two in five 2024 Labour voters plan to vote for a different party on Thursday

Almost 40% of 2024 Labour voters are planning 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).



Source: More in Common, April 2025 • Representative of areas voting in local elections this year. Voters only included if they give their likelihood of voting at 9 or above out of ten, and say they tend to vote in most or all local elections in their area.



In line with national trends, Labour is set to lose a significant share of the support it secured in July 2024 at the upcoming local elections.

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

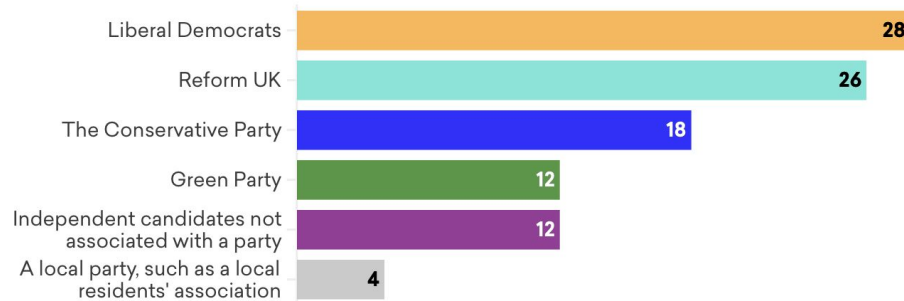
Support for Reform UK among this group of voters has held up well, the main parties are not yet winning back Reform defectors.

'Labour switchers': vote intention

'Labour switchers' voting at the 2025 local elections are most likely to vote either for the Lib Dems or Reform

Voting intention of Labour Voters who are not voting 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



Source: More in Common, April 2025 • Representative of areas voting in local elections this year. Voters only included if they give their likelihood of voting at 9 or above out of ten, and say they tend to vote in most or all local elections in their area.

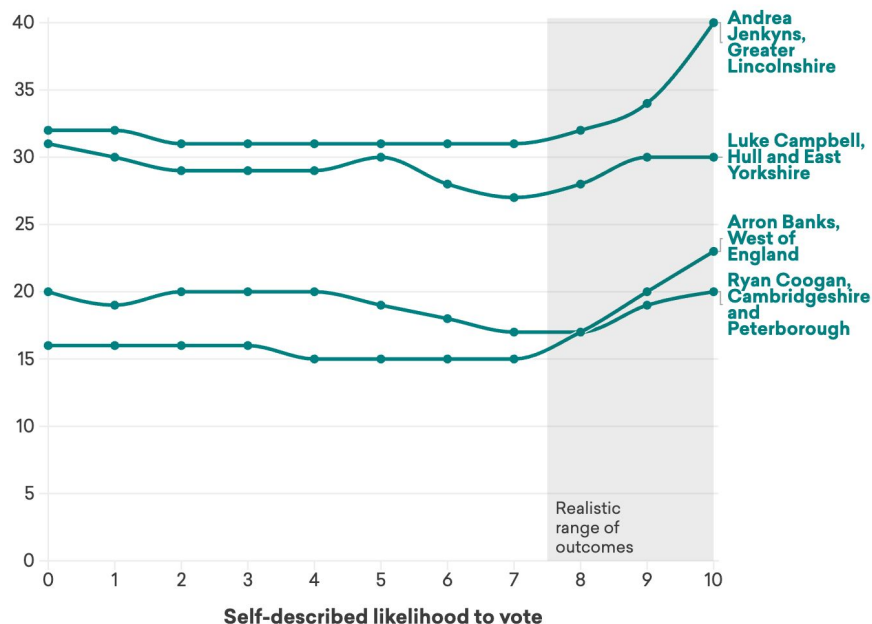


“Labour switchers” — voters who backed Labour in July 2024 but now appear set to support a different party in May’s local elections — have drifted away in two different directions.

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.

All about turnout

Reform UK is likely to do better if turnout is restricted to the most enthusiastic voters only



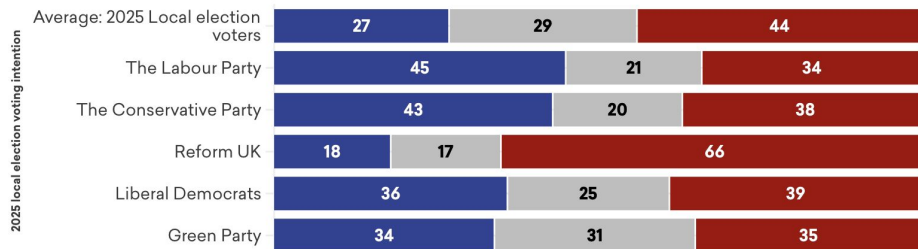
A large determinant of the election result will not be which party people vote for, but whether people turnout to vote at all.

In a low-turnout election, if only the most enthusiastic voters turnout, it is likely that Reform UK will do considerably better. For example in Greater Lincolnshire, Andrea Jenkyns would receive 40% of the vote among just people who give their likelihood to vote at ten out of ten, but this falls to 31% if including people who give their likelihood to vote at seven or above.

Most Reform voters think councils spend money badly

People intending to vote for Reform UK are particularly negative about their council's ability to manage its finances

● My local council generally spends money well ● Don't know ● My local council generally spends money badly



Source: More in Common, April 2025 • Representative of areas voting in local elections this year. Voters only included if they give their likelihood of voting at 9 or above out of ten, and say they tend to vote in most or all local elections in their area.

Voters supporting Reform UK on 1 May tend to have a notably poor opinion of how effectively their local council manages its finances.

Those planning to vote Labour or Conservative have a more positive view of their local authorities' spending habits.

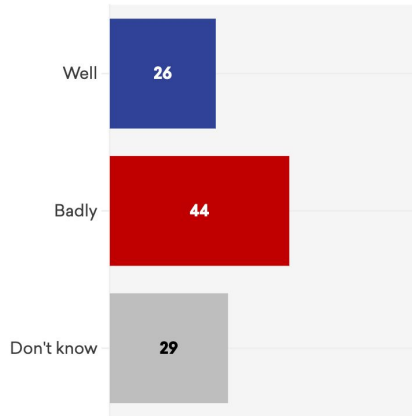
"We all pay our council tax (...) It's all about where the money goes."

Chris, mechanic, Hull

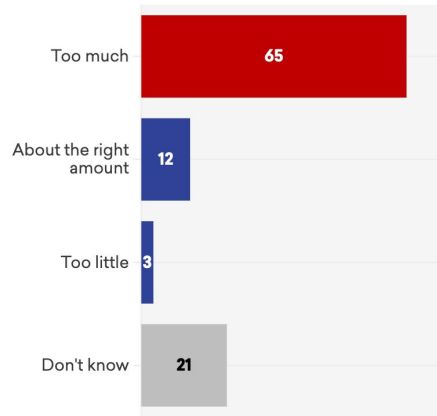
Scepticism about council finances and senior officials' pay

People able to vote at the 2025 local elections are often sceptical of council leaders' pay and financial management

My council generally spends money...



Senior officials in the council are paid...



A large portion of those able to vote on 1 May say that their local council spends money badly, albeit a significant number also say they are unsure of their local authority's spending habits.

Voters do make a distinction between the pay of senior council officials- such as chief executives- and councillors themselves.

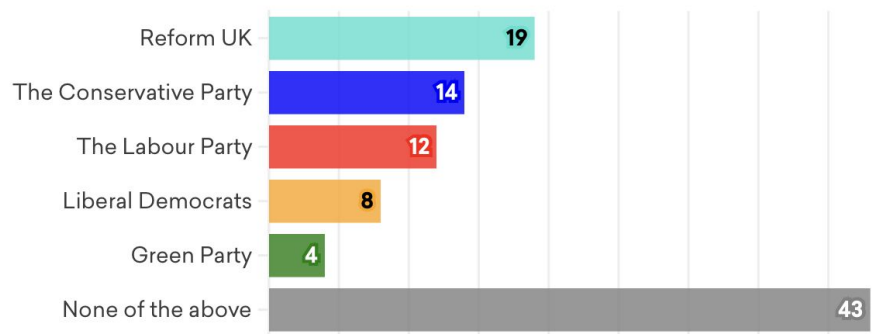
While a majority say senior officials are paid too much, over half of the public say councillors allowances are either just right, or too low.

"In terms of money and stuff, be it at a local or national level, but I think it's either not there or it's not being spent wisely."

Urfan, team manager, Peterborough

Few trust major parties to fix council finances

Over 90% of surveyed County Councils & Unitary Authorities face raising council tax to the maximum 4.99% while simultaneously having to cut services. Which of these parties do you trust most to solve this issue?



Source: More in Common, April 2025 • Representative of areas voting in local elections this year

More than four in ten of those able to vote in this year's local elections do not have any faith in the main political parties to solve the issues of local council finances.

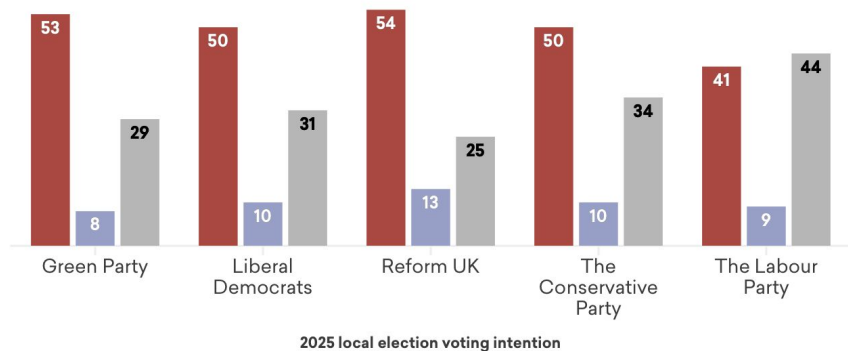
Among the main political parties, Reform UK is the one most people trust to take control of council finances. However even Reform in the lead is selected by fewer than one in five people.

Broad support for further devolution

Those planning to vote Reform are particularly unhappy with the current balance of power between Westminster and local government

More things should be decided by...

- My local council rather than the national Government in Westminster
- The national Government in Westminster rather than my local council
- Happy with current balance



There is broad support among all parties for a devolution settlement which gives more powers from Westminster to local councils.

Reform voters and Green voters are most likely to back further devolution of powers, while Labour voters are most likely to be happy with the current balance of power between local councils and Westminster.



**How views on national
politics might shape local
election results**

A despondency election

"I think the world is effed up, and I feel sorry for the kids growing up in it."

Chelsea, social worker, Hull

"For me, homelessness is quite an issue, housing is quite an issue. There's always been homelessness in the centre, but I think there's been an increase recently."

Urfan, team manager, Peterborough

"I think really overall we are in a very poor state to what we used to be. I mean just due to little things that count (...) councils going bust. Why are they going bust? Why are children not being fed at school? I think overall we are poor compared to where we used to be."

Suzie, customer support manager, Cambridgeshire

"I've actually given up on the system, if I'm being totally open and honest with you. Yeah, nothing really changes ever. (...) this is going to sound really extreme, but the country almost needs a coup-d'état and it needs somebody to almost come in and say, 'right, this is what we're doing and you will conform'."

Gary, sales manager, Bourne

While people will be voting for local candidates at this election, the deep sense of pessimism about the state of the country and the world will undoubtedly shape how they vote - or whether they even bother to.

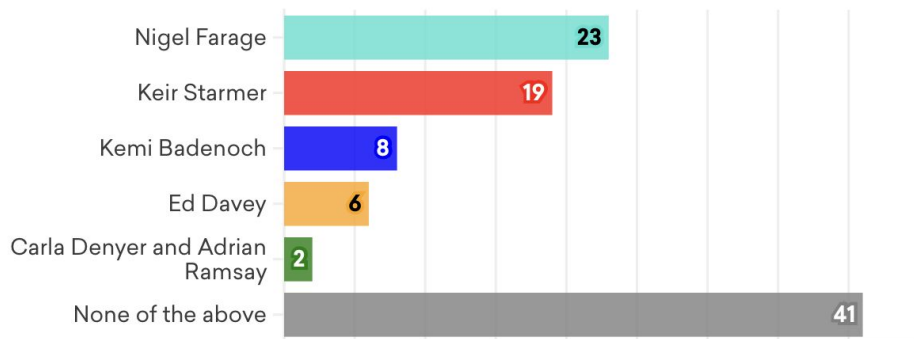
In the focus groups conversations conducted in recent days and weeks, the mood has ranged from resigned to apocalyptic. Participants cite local signs of decline - from potholes to homelessness - as symptoms of a wider and deeper problem with Britain.

While some think it is too early to make a judgement about the new Labour government, many across the country seem ready to give up on politics altogether.

A 'none of the above' election

A 'none of the above' election

Which of these party leaders do you think would be most effective in governing the country?



Source: More in Common, April 2025 • Representative of areas voting in local elections this year

Of all the main party leaders, Nigel Farage remains the most popular among voters living in areas where locals are being held this year.

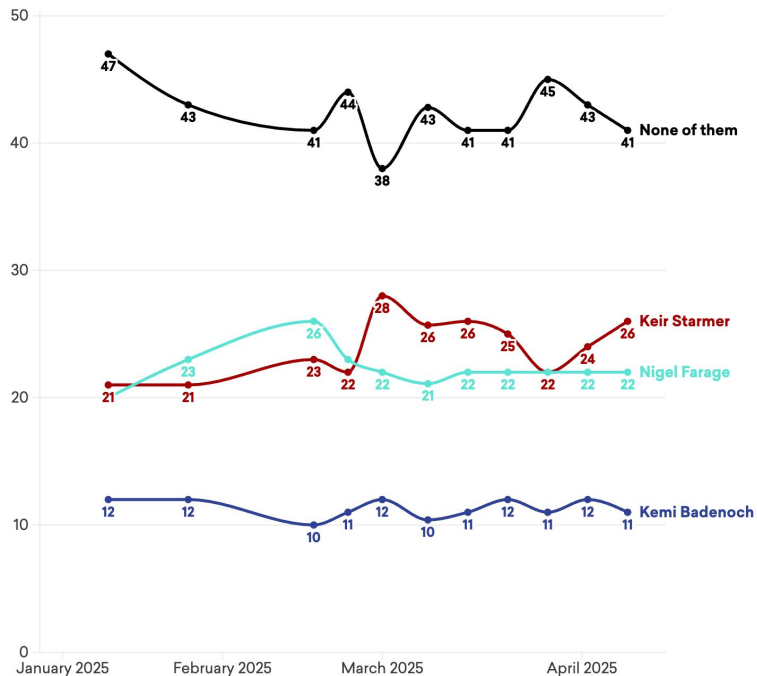
However, he remains 18 points behind 'none of the above' - the most popular option with voting public.

Disillusionment is the most clear marker of public attitudes heading into this election.

A 'none of the above' election

Better PM tracker

Who do you think would make a better Prime Minister?



Across the country, “none of the above” has been easily winning on our tracker of who the best party leader is since the start of the year.

For many voters in these locals, the choice will be for the least bad option, rather than for parties that people are genuinely enthusiastic about.

“I think the government, when they're looking to be elected, they promise you the world (...) And I think for me, I think it's about what I take home in my pay packet and there's nothing really that I see any difference with the previous government and this government.”

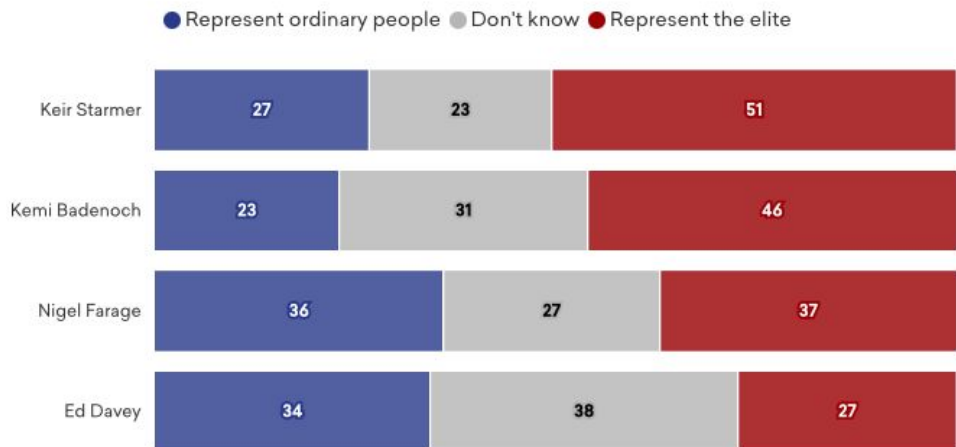
Rachel, office manager, Scunthorpe

“Even locally, nobody likes any of the candidates. Nobody really trusts any of them.”

Gary, sales manager, Bourne

Farage is most widely seen to represent ordinary Britons

For each of the following political leaders, would you say they represent ordinary people, or do they represent the elite?



In focus group Nigel Farage often wins plaudits for being 'more in touch' than other politicians, although the country at large are more split on whether Farage represents the elite or ordinary people (37 per cent to 36 per cent). Though Reform voters almost overwhelmingly say he represents ordinary people.

In contrast voters are more likely to say that Keir Starmer and Kemi Badenoch represent the elite, while more narrowly say Ed Davey represents ordinary people - but in his case a plurality say they don't know.

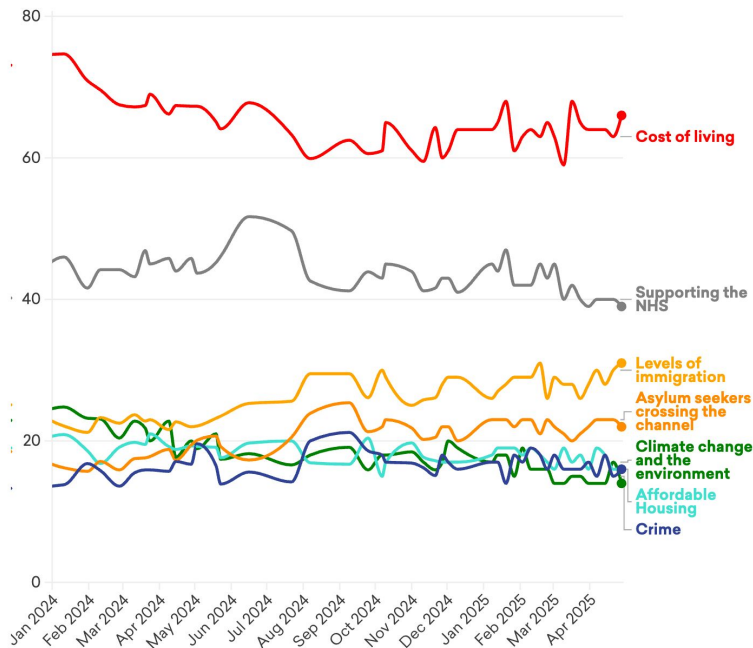
(On Ed Davey): "I voted for him last time. To me he's just normal. There's no science to him."
Janet, retired, Beverley

"Farage comes across as being a man of the people and he'll make Britain great again and all the rest of it, but can come across as a bit of a bigot at times."
Gary, sales manager, Bourne

Cost of living and immigration are top concerns

Britons' big issues over time

In your opinion, which are the most IMPORTANT issues facing the country today?
Please select up to three



At a national level, two issues dominate public perceptions of the country's challenges - cost of living and immigration.

Cost of living is the top issue for all voter groups except Reform UK voters, who are more likely to say levels of immigration are an important issue.

"For me personally, the cost of living, it just seems to be increasing all the time. We don't seem to get any reprieve from it."

Bernadette, customer service, Scunthorpe

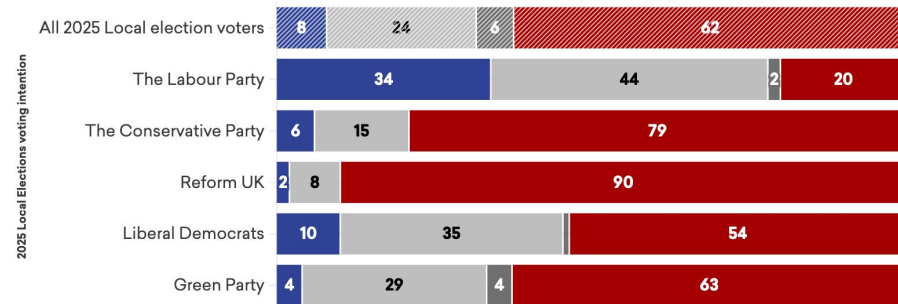
Labour's 2024 voters are more likely than others to select the NHS and climate change as top issues, compared to other parties.

Broad negativity about Labour's performance in government

Voters supporting parties other than Labour in this year's locals hold negative views of the government's performance

The Labour Party have now been in government for almost a year. In that time, would you say they have done...

● Much/slightly better than expected ● About the same as expected ● Don't know
● Much/slightly worse than expected



Source: More in Common, April 2025 • Representative of areas voting in local elections this year
Voters only included if they give their likelihood of voting at 9 or above out of ten, and say they tend to vote in most or all local elections in their area



Among those able to vote in this week's council elections, evaluations of Labour's time in government so far are relatively negative.

However, the most unfavourable views are found among those planning to vote for a party other than Labour - in particular Conservative and Reform UK supporters.

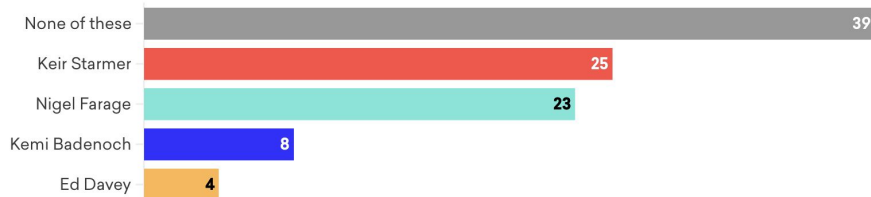
"think they haven't lived up to that unfortunately, especially with the older generation and the cost of living (...) I was a bit disappointed really, on how they've gone about things. It's early days, but yeah, disappointed."

Beverly, night care assistant, Cambridgeshire

A potential Trump effect?

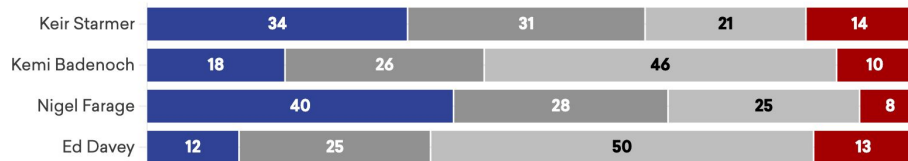
Which of these leaders do you trust the most to handle our relationship with Donald Trump?

● Keir Starmer ● Kemi Badenoch ● Nigel Farage ● Ed Davey ● None of these



For these leaders, would you say they are too friendly or too hostile to Donald Trump, or getting the balance about right?

● Far too friendly/too friendly ● Getting the balance about right ● Don't know ● Far too hostile/too hostile



While national politics and local issues are likely to dominate on Thursday, a potential sign of hope for the Prime Minister is the public's views on his handling of President Trump.

Keir Starmer is most trusted to deal with President Trump - though public confidences in all leaders' ability to handle the US President is low with 'none of these' beating all the party leaders.

The public is broadly split on whether Starmer is too soft or gets the balance right in his dealings with President Trump - though he is the leader most likely to say he gets the balance right.

"Forget Trump, it's the president of the United States. You play the position not the man. You can't cut your nose off to spite your face. Trump won't be there in three or four years because he can't be."

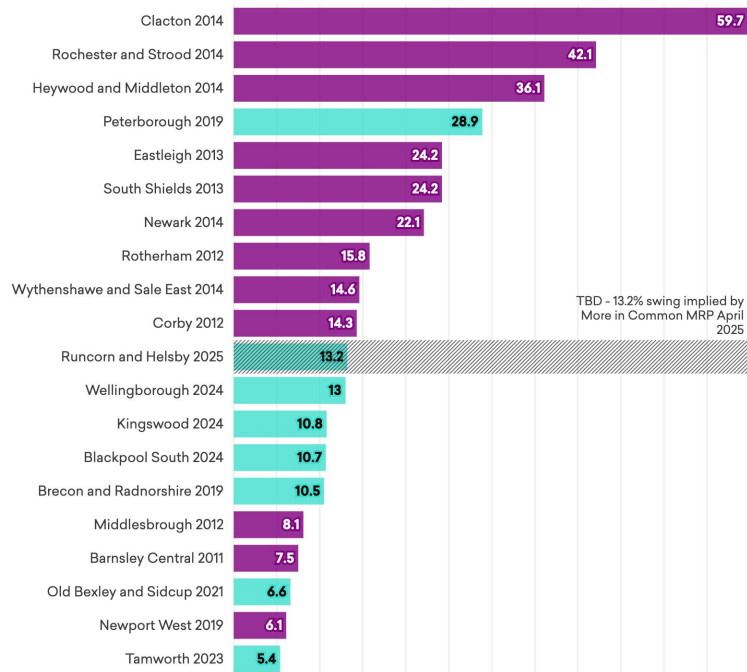
Paul, teacher, Peterborough



Runcorn and Helsby by-election

Runcorn and Helsby by-election

Top 20 UKIP, Brexit Party, and Reform UK by-election Swings since 2010



In a traditional two-party swing, the Labour to Reform swing needed for a Reform victory in this by-election would be 17.4 per cent

However, given that Labour are likely to lose votes in multiple directions including to other left-of-centre and minor parties, Reform will likely need a smaller swing than this – possibly even as low as 10-13 per cent.

This means that Reform could take Runcorn even with a swing that is perfectly in line with the national swing of ~10 per cent implied by current nationwide polls.

Given the circumstances in which the by-election was called and ten tendency for by-elections to magnify challenger party performance, it is also conceivable that Reform's performance could outpace that suggested by nationwide polls.

The by-election will test Reform's ability to translate enthusiasm into votes and also the potential strength of anti Reform tactical voting.

In their own words...voters in Runcorn and Helsby

The trouble with them is that as case, and I said it's immigration that they're playing on, but they don't seem to have any other policies. Having heard of what they're going to do with other things just seems to be immigration

Dave, Builder, Helsby

I dunno a massive amount about Nigel Farage to be honest. Or the reform party. I just know that they're just out there constantly on do, whether that's on adverts or videos on TikTok or whatever, they just seem to be doing a massive amount of advertising and campaigning and I think they're just telling people what they want to hear to start getting obviously start getting their votes coming in. I don't trust them personally

Kurtis, hotel manager, Runcorn

Immigration and the freedom of speech are two of the big things at the moment. So obviously with our round our way, Labour are probably the most popular party where Reform seemed to be rivalry and surpassing the Tories in quite a lot of areas. So I think they're probably getting supported more now than they ever have even around our way

(Farage) is ticking all the right boxes, he's got a great argument at the moment.

Jason, sales manager, Helsby

I think it affects the fun things that you want to do because your money's all going on your bills and all the boring stuff like food and gas and lucky and petrol that come to the end of it and go, well what have we got money to do for ourselves now? Where can we go? What can we do without spending a fortune?

Amy, primary school teacher, Runcorn

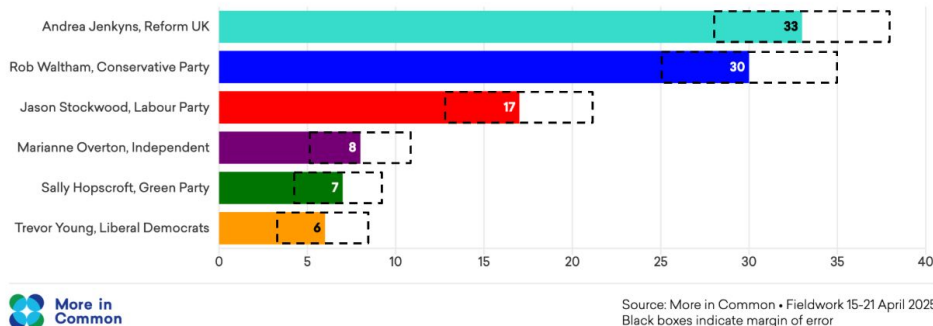


Mayoral races

Insights from polling and
focus groups

Greater Lincolnshire

Greater Lincolnshire mayoral voting intention



"I do kind of like him as a person, and obviously illegal immigration is a massive problem. But that's the main thing that you think of when you think of Nigel Farage, but it's like there's a lot more to running the country than just sorting that out. But is it the shock that everybody would need if a different party got into power to shake things up and make real changes for decent hard-working people?"

Catherine, purchase ledger clerk, Scunthorpe

More in Common's Greater Lincolnshire Combined Authority polling finds the race too close to call. Reform candidate Andrea Jenkyns leads on 33 per cent, followed closely by Conservative Rob Waltham on 30 per cent - both within the margin of error. Meanwhile Labour is in third place - with 17 per cent of the vote.

Immigration is the third top issue for voters in Lincolnshire - and focus groups confirmed that small boats and net migration are key factors in this election, despite them being areas of national control.

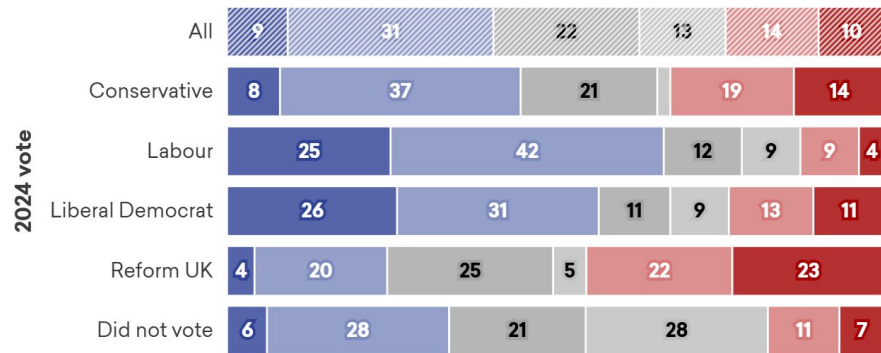
In focus groups, many agreed with Reform on immigration, but were hesitant about Nigel Farage - questioning his connection to Trump and wondering whether Reform has what it takes to be more than a single-issue party.

Support for government's handling of British Steel

People in Greater Lincolnshire tend to think the government handled the Scunthorpe Steelworks well

In general, how well or badly would you say the current Government has responded to recent issues surrounding the British Steel plant in Scunthorpe?

Very well Quite well Neither well nor badly Don't know Quite badly Very badly



Source: More in Common, April 2025 • N = 1,009 adults in Greater Lincolnshire Combined Authority

Unsurprisingly, the crisis at Scunthorpe Steelworks is top of mind for Lincolnshire voters as they go to the polls this Thursday.

In focus groups, participants broadly welcomed the government's intervention, but felt the Government had left it until the last minute, were angry that action hadn't been taken sooner and didn't understand why successive Government's had allowed Chinese involvement.

Many continue to feel uncertain about the future of British Steel, and concerned about the vulnerability of Scunthorpe.

"Subsequent governments keep chucking money at it, but not managing it. There's no interest in it whatsoever. I've worked there all my life, I've seen the demise of it."

Martyn, retired steel worker, Scunthorpe

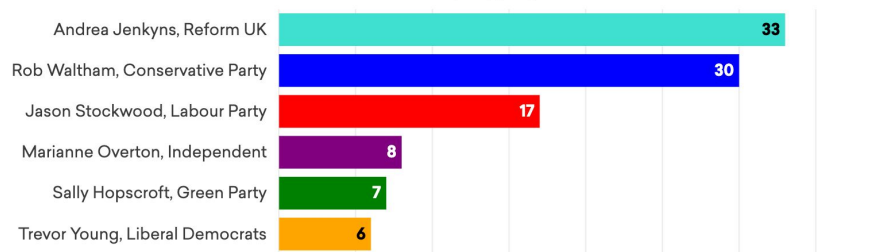
"Why did it take so long for the current government to step in and take any action and as someone else already said, where is the future."

Bernadette, customer service, Scunthorpe

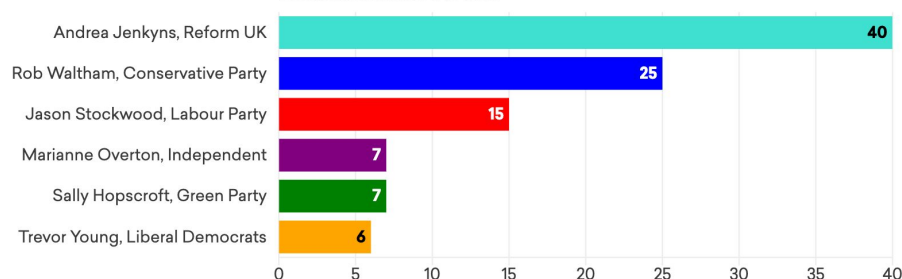
Who will vote? - Greater Lincolnshire

Greater Lincolnshire mayoral voting intention - impact of different turnout models

9/10 likelihood to vote, only people who vote in most local elections



Just 10/10 likelihood to vote

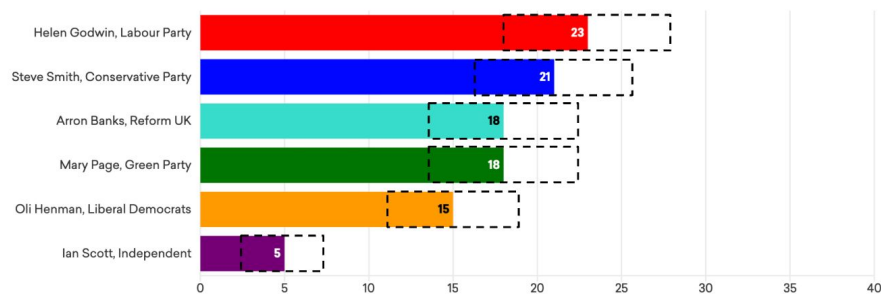


Differential turnout can explain a range of possible outcomes in Greater Lincolnshire.

Using our turnout model, which only includes those with a 9/10 likelihood to vote and people who say they vote in most local elections, Reform has a three point lead over the Conservatives. On a poll which just includes those with a 10/10 likelihood to vote, Reform has a fifteenth point lead over the Conservatives.

The West of England

West of England mayoral voting intention



Source: More in Common • Fieldwork 15-21 April 2025
Black boxes indicate margin of error

“Everything's going up and wages are staying stagnant and there doesn't seem to be any support for anyone.”

Will, insurance broker, Bristol

The West of England mayoral election too close to call, with four parties in the running.

Labour, the Conservatives, Reform UK or the Greens could win this contest. Even the Liberal Democrats in fifth place are in the boundaries of contention - with their 15 per cent within the margin of error of Labour.

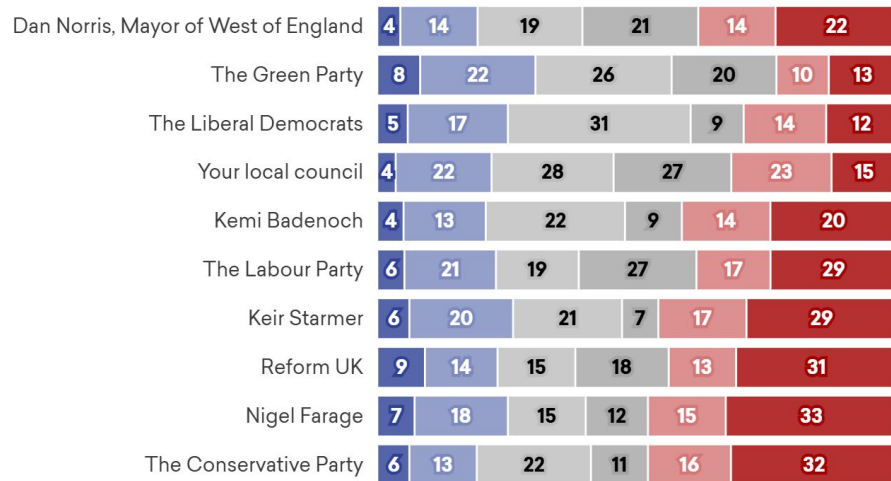
For people in the West of England, the cost of living crisis is top of mind. In our focus groups, participants worried the crisis would never end - with the rising price of essentials and lack of support available for families driving their frustration with the Government and politics in general.

An impatience for change in the West of England

West of England: Approval ratings

For each of the following, please indicate whether you think they are doing a good job or a bad job?

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



In the West of England, the post-election mood is defined by a sense of disappointment with the slow pace of improvement in Labour's first few months.

In this area, the Labour Party has a net approval rating of -18, while Keir Starmer's personal approval rating is -19.

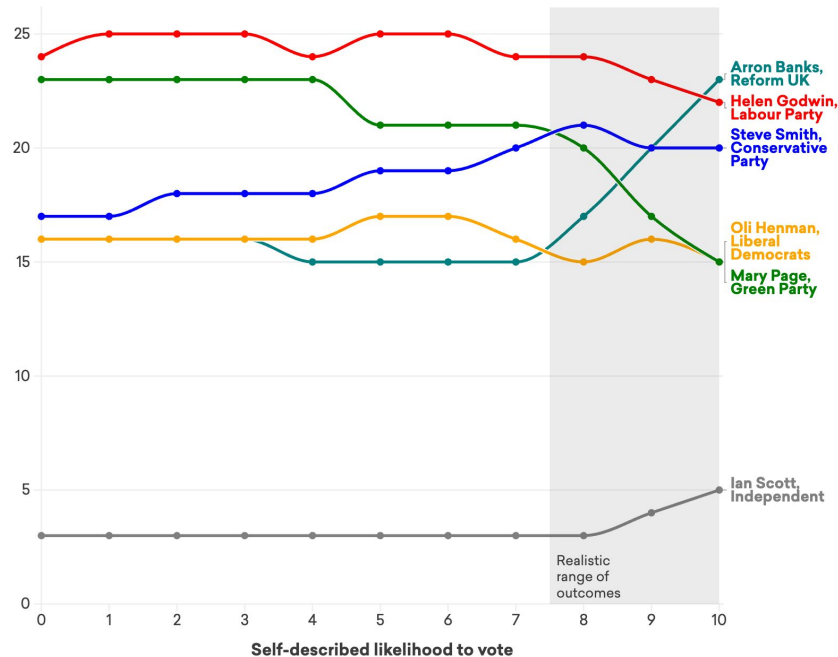
In focus groups, voters felt the government hadn't delivered the scale of change they were expecting. Some felt that Labour's performance in government was symptomatic of a wider problem with politics and politicians.

"It's hard to judge because I don't think he's done anything, but our previous Prime ministers didn't seem to do anything either, so it's like on what basis do we merit a prime minister? They all just seem useless front men for their rich mates."

Will, insurance broker, Bristol

The importance of turnout - West of England

Changes in turnout could have dramatic effects on the results of the West of England mayoral race

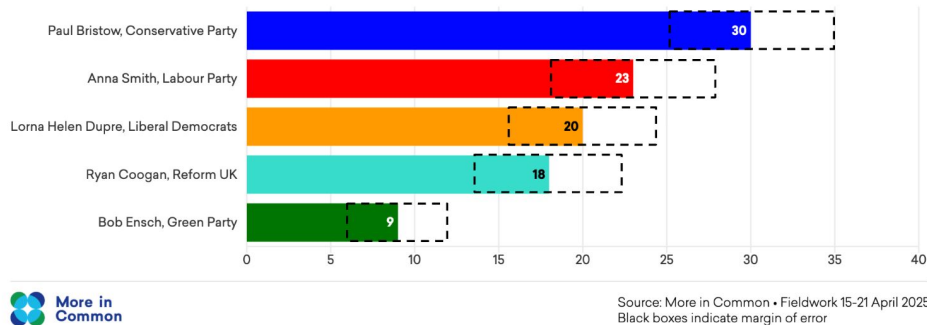


In all of these mayoral races, voters for some parties are more enthusiastic than others - and this means that if turnout is very low, and only them most enthusiastic voters turn out, the results could be dramatically different.

For example, in the West of England, Reform UK would win if only those giving their likelihood to vote at ten out of ten vote/ Conversely, Reform would come in fifth place, if everyone giving their likelihood to vote at seven out of ten voted.

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough mayoral voting intention



"I thought that (Labour) would help the work in class more and obviously maybe tax the super rich or the rich be more for the working class and the poor of society."

Beverly, night care assistant, Melbourn

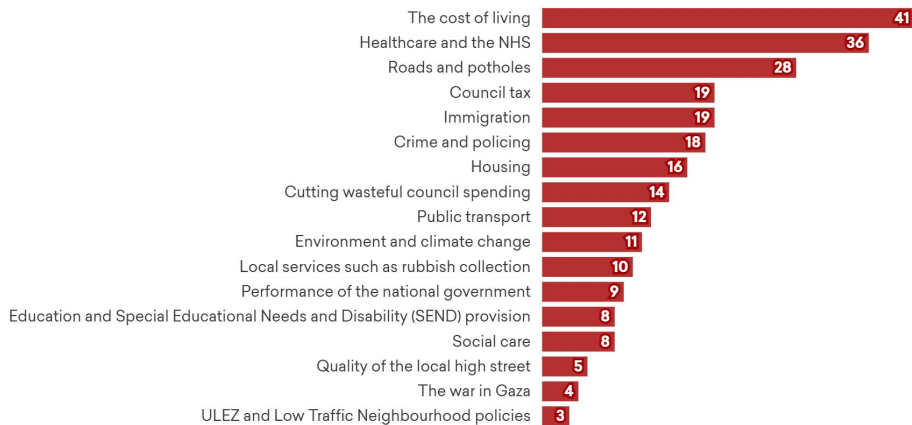
On 30 per cent of the vote, Conservative candidate Paul Bristow is in first place with a lead of seven points in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority. He's followed by Labour's Anna Smith on 23 per cent.

Unlike other areas of the country where the split on the right of politics is more consequential, in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough it is a split on the left that looks set to help the Conservatives take the mayoralty.

Police and potholes

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough: Biggest issues

Which of these issues will most affect your vote in these upcoming local elections? Please select up to three.



Source: More in Common, April 2025 • N = 1,003 adults in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority

“Driving around locally, I feel like the road quality is quite bad. We pay our taxes, but with all the potholes (...) it looks like nothing gets looked after.”

Yaseen, customer advisor, Peterborough

On a local level, disillusionment in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough takes the form of anger about local public services and facilities.

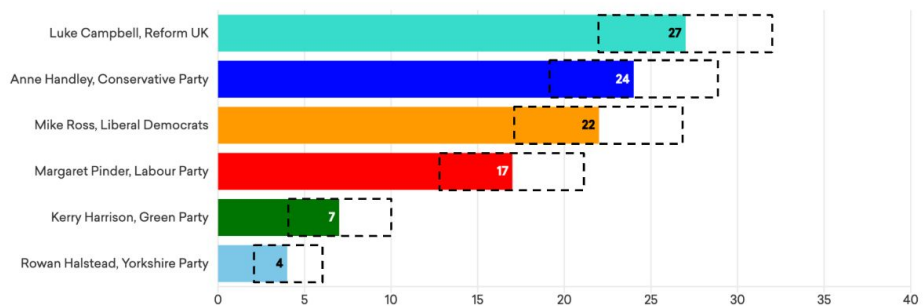
In focus groups, people cite poor roads, a lack of police presence and lacking social facilities as symptoms of the symptoms of the deeper challenges facing the local area and the country as a whole.

“It would be good to give the teenagers and stuff something to do because as I said, a lot of the villages haven't got anything. It would be good to have some sort of leisure facility.”

Suzie, customer support manager, Orwell

Hull and East Yorkshire

Hull and East Yorkshire mayoral voting intention



Source: More in Common • Fieldwork 15-21 April 2025
Black boxes indicate margin of error

*"They're targeting the wrong people.
Pensioners, the disabled. It seems to be the
groups who can't fight back."
Chris, mechanic, Hull*

In Hull and East Yorkshire Combined Authority our polling finds the race is too close to call. Reform candidate Luke Campbell leads with 27 per cent, with the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats also performing strongly.

What was striking from the Hull and East Yorkshire research is the deep sense of disillusionment with the Labour Government, citing their decisions on the Winter Fuel Allowance and PIP cuts.

Fewer than half of 2024 Labour voters (who are likely to vote) plan to vote Labour in the Mayoral Election.

The Luke Campbell effect?

*"It'd be nice to have someone young.
Someone fresh, who doesn't know how
to fiddle the system."*

Angie, housewife, Hull

*"He's a local lad. He's a working class
lad from Hull that I think just genuinely
wants to give back to his area."*

Helen, Shop Manager, Hull

*"Luke was in Beverley the other day (...)
he's a good lad."*

Samantha, employment officer,
Beverley

In our focus group conversations with Reform voters in Hull, it is clear that boxer Luke Campbell's own popularity exceeds that of his party.

With his working class background, local roots and charitable work, voters tended to speak about him with a sense of pride and affection. Even those who were sceptical of Reform and Nigel Farage were far more positive about the mayoral candidate.

While some expressed concern about his lack of experience, it was clear that this was an attraction for others - and a contrast from traditional politicians.

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