

Southern discomfort and northern soul

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Last week's local elections were the most significant for half a decade. It was the first time since 2017 that there were local elections throughout the UK (although in Northern Ireland they were for the Assembly and not for local councils.) They gave the best snapshot of electoral opinion outside a general election or referendum for years. Inevitably, they were interpreted in the context of what would have happened if there had been a general election on Thursday 5 May 2022. The result was pretty close to a You Gov poll that came out yesterday. Labour were two percentage points ahead in the local elections and one point ahead in yesterday's poll.

Yet the local elections were not a general election, and in analysing them and making any predictions about a general election that could still be two years off we need to keep in mind certain caveats. Firstly, although the elections took place in all the countries of the UK, they did not take place evenly everywhere. There were no elections in most of the English shire counties. There were a couple of counties that had just completed local government reorganisation to become unitary authorities and a small number of non-metropolitan district councils also went to the polls, but in a majority of the Tory heartland, the 'Blue wall' seats that the party must retain to win a general election, there were no elections. If there had have been, Tory losses might well have been greater and Liberal Democrat and Green gains bigger. This election was fought largely in Labour's heartlands, or what were its heartlands until the SNP and the Tories took great chunks of the 'Red wall' seats at recent elections. In local election terms, Labour already held many of the seats being contested and there was little low-hanging fruit for them to pick up.

Turnout in local elections is much lower than in general elections. Most of those who vote in a general election can't be bothered to go to the polls for local elections. Local elections therefore see a larger proportion of voters who strongly support a party mobilised than will be the case in a general election when turnout will be two or three times as high as last Thursday. There are also a lot of independent and local party candidates that stand, and in some cases get elected, in local elections. There were 611 of them elected in top tier authorities, which is 69 more than there were the day before the elections. These are not a factor in a general election.

The seats that were fought over last Thursday were last contested in a number of different years, which has an impact on gains and losses. Strictly speaking, you are not comparing like with like. And finally, elections in Scotland and Wales (and the Assembly elections in Northern Ireland) are fought on a different voting system than that used in England. The result of using proportional representation is that more minor parties and independents get elected and it is extremely difficult for a single party to win outright control. This is not the case for UK general elections in Scotland and Wales. In addition, 16 and 17-year-olds have the vote in local elections in Scotland and Wales, but not in England or in UK general elections.

When *Education Journal* started analysing local government elections a quarter of a century ago the whole country swung pretty uniformly. Those days have long gone. All the parties made gains in some areas and lost seats and sometimes councils in others. This happened within regions as well as between them. In London, for example, where Labour did particularly well gaining three councils including the totemic Wandsworth and Westminster, it still lost Harrow to the Conservatives and Tower Hamlets to Aspire. At one time Tower Hamlets returned Labour councillors for every seat in the borough for decades. It fell to an uprising by its formerly loyal Bangladeshi supporters who flocked to the new Aspire party formed by former disgraced Mayor Lutfur Rahman.

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LONDON BOROUGH COUNCIL ELECTION RESULTS 2022

| | Control | Seats won in 2018/New council | | | | | | Gains and losses | | | | | | |
|------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------|--------------|------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------------|-------------|-------------|------------|------------|------------|---|
| | | Con | Lab | LDP | Green | Ind | Other | Con | Lab | LDP | Green | Ind | Other | |
| Barking & Dagenham * | Lab hold | 0 | 51 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Barnet * | Lab gain from Con | 22 | 41 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | -12 | +12 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Bexley | Con hold | 33 | 12 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | -1 | +1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Brent * | Lab hold | 5 | 49 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | +2 | -5 | +3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Bromley * | Con hold | 36 | 12 | 5 | 0 | 2 | 3 | -12 | +2 | +5 | 0 | +2 | +3 | |
| Camden * | Lab hold | 3 | 47 | 4 | 1 | 0 | 0 | -5 | +3 | +2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| City of London | No elections | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Croydon | Lab loss to NOC | 33 | 34 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 | +4 | -7 | +1 | +2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Ealing * | Lab hold | 5 | 59 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 0 | -3 | +1 | +2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Enfield * | Lab hold | 25 | 38 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | +8 | -8 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Greenwich * | Lab hold | 3 | 52 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | -7 | +7 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Hackney | Lab hold | 5 | 50 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | -2 | 0 | +2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Hammersmith & Fulham * | Lab hold | 10 | 40 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Haringey * | Lab hold | 0 | 50 | 7 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | +6 | -6 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Harrow | Con gain from Lab | 31 | 24 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | +8 | -8 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Havering * | NOC no change | 20 | 9 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 23 | -6 | +4 | 0 | 0 | -2 | +4 | |
| Hillingdon * | Con hold | 30 | 23 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | -4 | +4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Hounslow * | Lab hold | 10 | 52 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | +1 | -1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Islington * | Lab hold | 0 | 48 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | -2 | 0 | +2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Kensington & Chelsea | Con hold | 35 | 13 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | -1 | 0 | +1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Kingston-upon-Thames * | LDP hold | 3 | 0 | 41 | 0 | 0 | 4 | -19 | -2 | +21 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Lambeth * | Lab hold | 0 | 58 | 3 | 2 | 0 | 0 | -2 | +2 | +3 | -3 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Lewisham * | Lab hold | 0 | 54 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Merton * | Lab hold | 7 | 31 | 17 | 0 | 0 | 2 | -8 | -4 | +12 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Newham * | Lab hold | 0 | 64 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | -2 | 0 | +2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Redbridge | Lab hold | 5 | 55 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | -7 | +7 | 0 | 0 | 0 | +3 | |
| Richmond-upon-Thames * | LDP hold | 1 | 0 | 48 | 5 | 0 | 0 | -10 | 0 | +9 | +1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Southwark | Lab hold | 0 | 52 | 11 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | +3 | -3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Sutton | LDP hold | 20 | 3 | 29 | 0 | 0 | 3 | +1 | +1 | -2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Tower Hamlets | Asp gain from Lab | 1 | 19 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 24 | -1 | -23 | 0 | 0 | 0 | +23 | |
| Waltham Forest * | Lab hold | 13 | 47 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | -2 | +2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Wandsworth | Lab gain from Con | 22 | 35 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | -8 | +8 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Westminster | Lab gain from Con | 23 | 31 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | -13 | +13 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total 2022 | (32 councils) | 440 | 1,194 | 177 | 17 | 3 | 59 | -99 | +12 | +58 | +6 | 0 | +33 | |
| Total 2018 | (32 councils) | 489 | 1,142 | 151 | 11 | 0 | 34 | -90 | +65 | +40 | +7 | -9 | -13 | |
| Total 2014 | (32 councils) | 612 | 1,060 | 116 | 4 | 12 | 47 | -105 | +185 | -130 | +2 | +12 | +26 | |
| Total 2010 | (32 councils) | 717 | 875 | 246 | 2 | 0 | 2 | -68 | +191 | -71 | -10 | -10 | -42 | |

Gains and losses are in comparison to 2018, when these seats were last fought.

* Boundary changes, sometimes resulting in a change in the number of seats compared to 2018.

Minor party results

Bromley: Chislehurst Matters gain 3. New council: Chislehurst Matters 3. **Havering:** Residents' Association gain 4. New council: Residents' Association 23. **Kingston-upon-Thames.** Kingston Independent Residents Group gain 1. New council: Kingston Independent Residents Group 1. 3 seats vacant due to death of a candidate in New Malden Village ward leading to a new election for the three seats in the ward. **Merton:** Residents Association retain 2. New council: Residents Association 2.

Redbridge: 3 seats vacant due to death of a candidate in the Mayfield ward leading to a new election for the three seats in the ward. **Sutton:** Ind. hold 3. New council: Ind. 3. **Tower Hamlets:** Aspire gain 23 and control of the council. New council: Aspire 24.

Wandsworth: Ind. retain 1. New council: Ind. 1.

METROPOLITAN DISTRICT COUNCIL ELECTION RESULTS 2022

| Council | Control | Seats won in 2022 | | | | Gains and losses | | | | Total new council | | | |
|-------------------------|---------------|-------------------|-----|-----|-------|------------------|------|-----|-------|-------------------|-------|-----|-------|
| | | Con | Lab | LDP | Other | Con | Lab | LDP | Other | Con | Lab | LDP | Other |
| Barnsley | Lab hold | 2 | 16 | 3 | 0 | -1 | -3 | +2 | 0 | 4 | 46 | 9 | 4 |
| Birmingham | Lab hold | 22 | 65 | 12 | 2 | -3 | -2 | +4 | +1 | 22 | 65 | 12 | 2 |
| Bolton | NOC no change | 9 | 8 | 2 | 1 | +1 | 0 | 0 | -1 | 22 | 17 | 5 | 16 |
| Bradford | Lab hold | 6 | 19 | 1 | 4 | -2 | -1 | -1 | +4 | 21 | 52 | 6 | 11 |
| Bury * | Lab hold | 12 | 29 | 1 | 9 | -4 | +1 | -3 | +6 | 12 | 29 | 1 | 9 |
| Calderdale | Lab hold | 4 | 11 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 15 | 28 | 6 | 2 |
| Coventry | Lab hold | 1 | 13 | 0 | 1 | -1 | 0 | 0 | +1 | 14 | 39 | 0 | 1 |
| Doncaster | No elections | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Dudley | Con hold | 13 | 12 | 0 | 0 | -2 | +2 | 0 | 0 | 46 | 26 | 0 | 0 |
| Gateshead | Lab hold | 0 | 17 | 5 | 0 | 0 | -1 | +1 | 0 | 0 | 51 | 15 | 0 |
| Kirklees | Lab gain NOC | 5 | 14 | 3 | 1 | -1 | +2 | 0 | -1 | 18 | 36 | 8 | 7 |
| Knowsley | Lab hold | 0 | 10 | 1 | 4 | 0 | -2 | 0 | +2 | 0 | 32 | 3 | 10 |
| Leeds | Lab hold | 6 | 22 | 2 | 5 | -3 | +3 | -1 | +1 | 21 | 58 | 7 | 13 |
| Liverpool | No elections | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Manchester | Lab hold | 0 | 30 | 1 | 1 | 0 | -1 | 0 | +1 | 0 | 92 | 2 | 2 |
| Newcastle/Tyne | Lab hold | 0 | 19 | 7 | 1 | 0 | -1 | +1 | 0 | 0 | 51 | 21 | 6 |
| North Tyneside | Lab hold | 2 | 18 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 9 | 51 | 0 | 0 |
| Oldham | Lab hold | 4 | 11 | 3 | 3 | +1 | -5 | +1 | +3 | 9 | 35 | 9 | 7 |
| Rochdale * | Lab hold | 10 | 42 | 3 | 5 | +1 | -6 | 0 | +5 | 10 | 42 | 3 | 5 |
| Rotherham | No elections | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| St Helens * | Lab hold | 2 | 29 | 4 | 13 | 0 | -4 | +1 | +7 | 2 | 29 | 4 | 13 |
| Salford | Lab hold | 2 | 15 | 2 | 1 | +1 | -3 | +1 | +1 | 8 | 49 | 2 | 1 |
| Sandwell | Lab hold | 3 | 21 | 0 | 0 | +3 | -3 | 0 | 0 | 9 | 61 | 0 | 2 |
| Sefton | Lab hold | 3 | 17 | 2 | 0 | -1 | +1 | 0 | 0 | 7 | 48 | 8 | 3 |
| Sheffield | NOC no change | 0 | 15 | 9 | 4 | 0 | -1 | 0 | +1 | 1 | 39 | 29 | 15 |
| Solihull | Con hold | 9 | 0 | 3 | 5 | -1 | -1 | +2 | 0 | 28 | 0 | 3 | 18 |
| South Tyneside | Lab hold | 0 | 14 | 0 | 5 | -1 | -4 | 0 | +5 | 1 | 41 | 0 | 12 |
| Stockport | NOC no change | 0 | 9 | 10 | 2 | -3 | 0 | +2 | +1 | 5 | 25 | 28 | 5 |
| Sunderland | Lab hold | 4 | 15 | 5 | 0 | -1 | -1 | +2 | - | 18 | 41 | 14 | 2 |
| Tameside | Lab hold | 4 | 15 | 0 | 0 | +2 | -2 | 0 | - | 8 | 48 | 0 | 1 |
| Trafford | Lab hold | 3 | 15 | 2 | 2 | -4 | +1 | -1 | +1 | 13 | 41 | 5 | 4 |
| Wakefield | Lab hold | 3 | 17 | 1 | 0 | -2 | +1 | +1 | - | 13 | 45 | 3 | 2 |
| Walsall | Con hold | 13 | 8 | 0 | 0 | +1 | +1 | 0 | -2 | 38 | 20 | 0 | 2 |
| Wigan | Lab hold | 2 | 22 | 0 | 2 | -1 | +3 | 0 | -2 | 7 | 61 | 0 | 7 |
| Wirral | NOC no change | 8 | 9 | 2 | 4 | +1 | -3 | 0 | +2 | 24 | 26 | 6 | 10 |
| Wolverhampton | Lab hold | 3 | 17 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 16 | 44 | 0 | 0 |
| Total 2022: 33 councils | | 155 | 594 | 86 | 76 | -20 | -29 | +12 | +36 | 449 | 1,368 | 209 | 192 |
| Total 2021: 35 councils | | 219 | 573 | 70 | 65 | +82 | -287 | +1 | +6 | 439 | 1,484 | 202 | 169 |
| Total 2019: 33 councils | | 116 | 476 | 80 | 61 | -22 | -51 | +34 | +41 | 350 | 1,450 | 204 | 268 |
| Total 2018: 34 councils | | 175 | 723 | 83 | 42 | +18 | -18 | -3 | -17 | 411 | 1,695 | 173 | 117 |

These seats were last contested in 2018.

Minor party results

Barnsley: Ind 0. New council: Ind 4. **Birmingham:** Greens 1. Greens gain 1. New council: Greens 2. **Bolton:** One Kearnley hold 1. Farnworth & Kearsley First Party lose 1. New council: Ind 8, Horwick Blackrod First 2, Bolton for Change Party 1, Farnworth and Kearsley First 4, One Kearsley 1, . **Bradford:** Ind 1, Green 3. Ind gain 1, Green gain 3. New council: Green 6, Ind Socialist 1, Ind 4. **Bury:** Radcliffe First 8, Ind 1. Radcliffe First gain 6. New council: Radcliffe First 8, Ind. 1. **Calderdale:** Green 1. Green gain 1, Ind lose 1. New council: Greens 1, Ind 1. **Coventry:** Greens 1. Greens gain 1. New council: Greens 1. **Doncaster:** Ind 4. Ind lose 1. New council: Ind 4. **Kirklees:** Green 1. Ind lose 1. New council: Ind 4, Greens 3. **Knowsley:** Greens 2, Ind 2. Greens gain 1, Ind gain 1. New council: Greens 5, Ind 5. **Leeds:** Ind 4, Greens 1. Ind gain 1. New council: Ind 10, Greens 3. **Liverpool:** Greens 1, Liberals 1. New council: Greens 4, Liberals 3, Ind 1. **Manchester:** Greens 1. Greens gain 1. New council: Greens 2. **Newcastle-upon-Tyne:** Ind 1. New council: Ind 6. **Oldham:** Failsworth Independent Party 2, Ind 1. Failsworth Independent Party gain 2, Ind gain 1. New council: Failsworth Independent Party 5, Ind 2. **Rochdale:** Middleton Independents Party 5. Middleton Independents Party gain

(Continued on page 20.)

UNITARY COUNCIL ELECTION RESULTS 2022

| Council | Control | Seats won in 2022 | | | | Gains and losses | | | | Total new council | | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-----|-----|-------|------------------|-----|------|-------|-------------------|-----|-----|-------|
| | | Con | Lab | LDP | Other | Con | Lab | LDP | Other | Con | Lab | LDP | Other |
| Blackburn with Darwen | Lab hold | 4 | 14 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 13 | 36 | 1 | 1 |
| Cumberland * | Lab, new council | 7 | 30 | 4 | 5 | ... | ... | ... | ... | 7 | 30 | 4 | 5 |
| Derby | NOC no change | 5 | 7 | 2 | 3 | -3 | +2 | 0 | +1 | 18 | 16 | 8 | 9 |
| Halton | Lab hold | 1 | 16 | 1 | 0 | +1 | 0 | 0 | -1 | 3 | 48 | 3 | 0 |
| Hartlepool | NOC no change | 5 | 7 | 0 | 1 | +10 | -3 | 0 | -7 | 15 | 11 | 0 | 10 |
| Kingston-upon-Hull | LDP gain from Lab | 0 | 9 | 10 | 0 | -1 | -2 | +3 | 0 | 0 | 27 | 29 | 1 |
| Milton Keynes | NOC no change | 4 | 9 | 6 | 1 | -2 | +1 | +1 | +1 | 23 | 19 | 14 | 1 |
| North East Lincolnshire | Con hold | 9 | 4 | 2 | 1 | -1 | 0 | 0 | +1 | 30 | 8 | 3 | 1 |
| North Yorkshire * | Con win | 47 | 12 | 12 | 19 | ... | ... | ... | ... | 47 | 12 | 12 | 19 |
| Peterborough | NOC no change | 7 | 6 | 4 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 28 | 17 | 8 | 7 |
| Plymouth | NOC no change | 7 | 11 | 0 | 1 | -1 | 0 | 0 | +1 | 24 | 24 | 0 | 9 |
| Portsmouth | NOC no change | 2 | 5 | 5 | 2 | -4 | +1 | +1 | +2 | 13 | 9 | 17 | 3 |
| Reading * | Lab hold | 6 | 32 | 3 | 7 | -6 | +3 | +1 | +2 | 6 | 32 | 3 | 7 |
| Slough | Lab hold | 2 | 12 | 0 | 0 | +1 | -1 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 35 | 0 | 1 |
| Somerset * | LDP new council | 36 | 5 | 61 | 8 | ... | ... | ... | ... | 36 | 5 | 61 | 8 |
| Southampton | Lab gain Con | 3 | 13 | 1 | 0 | -4 | +4 | +1 | -1 | 21 | 26 | 1 | 0 |
| Southend-on-Sea | NOC no change | 6 | 8 | 2 | 2 | -2 | +2 | +1 | -1 | 21 | 16 | 6 | 8 |
| Swindon | Con hold | 7 | 12 | 0 | 0 | -3 | +3 | 0 | 0 | 34 | 23 | 0 | 0 |
| Thurrock | Con hold | 9 | 6 | 0 | 1 | +3 | -3 | 0 | 0 | 30 | 14 | 0 | 5 |
| Westmorland & Furness | LDP new council | 11 | 15 | 36 | 3 | ... | .. | | ... | 11 | 15 | 36 | 3 |
| Wokingham | NOC from Con | 6 | 2 | 9 | 1 | -5 | 0 | +5 | 0 | 26 | 3 | 23 | 2 |
| Total 2022: 21 councils | | 184 | 240 | 158 | 57 | -14 | +7 | +13 | -2 | 412 | 426 | 229 | 100 |
| Total 2021: 28 councils | | 648 | 465 | 146 | 168 | +65 | -72 | -12 | +22 | 816 | 538 | 213 | 214 |
| Total 2019: 43 councils | | 636 | 526 | 260 | 274 | -224 | -27 | +132 | +116 | 833 | 809 | 322 | 311 |
| Total 2018: 17 councils | | 108 | 187 | 54 | 16 | +14 | +3 | +8 | -23 | 316 | 409 | 73 | 55 |

These seats were last contested either in 2018 or 2021.

Minor party results

Blackburn with Darwen: New council: Ind. 1. **Cumberland.** This is a new council following local government reorganisation. All seats were fought for the first time, so there were no gains or losses as there was no previous election to compare results with. Ind. 3, Greens 2. **Derby:** Ind 1, Reform UK 2. Reform UK gain 2, UKIP lose 2, Ind. gain 1. New council: Reform UK 6, UKIP 0, Ind. 3. **Halton:** Greens lose 1. New council: Greens 0. **Hartlepool:** Ind 1. Ind lose 2. New council: Ind 10. **Kingston-upon-Hull:** New council: Ind. 1. **Milton Keynes:** Vacancy 1. **North East Lincolnshire:** Ind. 1. Ind gain 1. New council: Ind. 1. **North Yorkshire.** New council due to local government reorganisation. All seats were fought for the first time, so there were no gains or losses as there was no previous election to compare results with. Ind. 13, Greens 5, Liberal Party 1. New council: Ind. 13, Greens 5, Liberal Party **Peterborough:** Ind 1, Greens 1. New council: Ind 4, Greens 3. **Plymouth:** Greens 1. Greens gain 1. New council: Ind 8, Greens 1. **Portsmouth:** Ind 2. Ind gain 2. New council: Ind 3. **Reading:** Greens 7. Greens gain 2. New council: Greens 7. **Slough:** New council: Ind 1. **Somerset:** This is a new council following local government reorganisation. All seats were fought for the first time, so there were no gains or losses as there was no previous election to compare results with. Greens 5, Ind. 3. New council: Greens 5, Ind. 3. **Southampton:** Ind lose 1. New council: Ind 0. **Southend-on-Sea:** Ind 2. Ind lose 1. New council: Ind 8. **Thurrock:** Ind. 1. New council: Ind 5. **Westmorland & Furness:** This is a new council following local government reorganisation. All seats were fought for the first time, so there were no gains or losses as there was no previous election to compare results with. Ind. 2, Greens 1. New council: Ind. 2, Greens 1. **Wokingham:** Ind. 1. New council: Ind 2.

SCOTTISH UNITARY COUNCIL ELECTION RESULTS 2022

| | Control | Seats won in 2022 | | | | | | | Gains and losses | | | | | |
|--|------------------|-------------------|-----|-----|-----|--------|-----|-------|------------------|------|-----|------|--------|-----|
| | | Con | Lab | LDP | SNP | Greens | Ind | Other | Con | Lab | LDP | SNP | Greens | Ind |
| Aberdeen | NOC, no change | 8 | 11 | 9 | 20 | 4 | 2 | 0 | -3 | +2 | 0 | +2 | 0 | 0 |
| Aberdeenshire | NOC, no change | 26 | 0 | 14 | 21 | 0 | 9 | 0 | +3 | -1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | -1 |
| Angus | NOC, no change | 7 | 1 | 0 | 13 | 0 | 7 | 0 | -1 | +1 | -2 | +4 | 0 | -2 |
| Argyll and Bute | NOC, no change | 10 | 1 | 5 | 12 | 1 | 7 | 0 | +1 | +1 | -1 | +1 | +1 | -3 |
| Clackmannanshire | NOC, no change | 3 | 5 | 0 | 9 | 1 | 0 | 0 | -2 | 0 | 0 | +1 | +1 | 0 |
| Dumfries & Galloway | NOC, no change | 16 | 9 | 1 | 11 | 0 | 6 | 0 | 0 | -2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | +2 |
| Dundee | SNP gain was NOC | 1 | 9 | 4 | 15 | 0 | 0 | 0 | -2 | 0 | +2 | +1 | 0 | -1 |
| East Ayrshire | NOC, no change | 4 | 10 | 0 | 14 | 0 | 4 | 0 | -2 | +1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| East | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Dunbartonshire | NOC, no change | 3 | 4 | 6 | 8 | 0 | 0 | 0 | -3 | +2 | 0 | +1 | 0 | 0 |
| East Lothian | NOC, no change | 4 | 10 | 0 | 7 | 1 | 0 | 0 | -3 | +1 | 0 | +1 | +1 | 0 |
| East Renfrewshire | NOC, no change | 5 | 5 | 0 | 6 | 0 | 2 | 0 | -2 | +1 | 0 | +1 | 0 | 0 |
| Edinburgh | NOC, no change | 9 | 13 | 12 | 19 | 10 | 0 | 0 | -9 | +1 | +6 | 0 | +2 | 0 |
| Falkirk | NOC, no change | 5 | 9 | 0 | 12 | 0 | 4 | 0 | -2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Fife | NOC, no change | 8 | 20 | 13 | 34 | 0 | 0 | 0 | -7 | -4 | +6 | +5 | 0 | 0 |
| Glasgow | NOC, no change | 2 | 36 | 0 | 37 | 10 | 0 | 0 | -6 | +5 | 0 | -2 | +3 | 0 |
| Highland | NOC, no change | 10 | 2 | 15 | 22 | 4 | 21 | 0 | 0 | -1 | +5 | 0 | +3 | -7 |
| Inverclyde | NOC, no change | 2 | 9 | 0 | 8 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | +1 | -1 | +1 | 0 | -1 |
| Midlothian | NOC, no change | 3 | 7 | 0 | 8 | 0 | 0 | 0 | -2 | 0 | 0 | +2 | 0 | 0 |
| Moray | NOC, no change | 11 | 3 | 1 | 8 | 1 | 2 | 0 | +3 | +2 | +1 | -1 | +1 | -6 |
| North Ayrshire * | NOC, no change | 10 | 9 | 0 | 12 | 0 | 2 | 0 | +2 | -2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| North Lanarkshire | NOC, no change | 5 | 32 | 0 | 36 | 1 | 3 | 0 | -5 | 0 | 0 | +3 | +1 | +1 |
| Orkney Islands * | Ind, no change | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 19 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | +1 | -1 |
| Perth and Kinross | NOC, no change | 14 | 2 | 4 | 16 | 0 | 4 | 0 | -3 | +1 | 0 | +1 | 0 | +1 |
| Renfrewshire | NOC, no change | 5 | 15 | 1 | 21 | 0 | 1 | 0 | -3 | +2 | 0 | +2 | 0 | -1 |
| Scottish Borders | NOC, no change | 14 | 0 | 3 | 9 | 1 | 7 | 0 | -1 | 0 | +1 | 0 | +1 | -1 |
| Shetland | Ind, no change | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 19 | 1 | 0 | +1 | 0 | 0 | +1 | -2 |
| South Ayrshire | NOC, no change | 10 | 5 | 0 | 9 | 0 | 4 | 0 | -2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | +2 |
| South Lanarkshire | NOC, no change | 7 | 24 | 3 | 27 | 1 | 2 | 0 | -7 | +2 | +2 | 0 | +1 | +2 |
| Stirling | NOC, no change | 7 | 6 | 0 | 8 | 1 | 1 | 0 | -2 | +2 | 0 | -1 | 0 | +1 |
| West | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Dunbartonshire | Lab gain was NOC | 0 | 12 | 0 | 9 | 0 | 1 | 0 | -2 | +4 | 0 | -1 | 0 | -1 |
| West Lothian | NOC, no change | 4 | 12 | 1 | 15 | 0 | 1 | 0 | -3 | 0 | +1 | +2 | 0 | 0 |
| Western Isles * | Ind, no change | 1 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 0 | 20 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| (Western Isles is also known by its Gaelic name of Comhairle nan Eilean Siar.) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Total 2022 | 32 councils | 214 | 282 | 87 | 453 | 35 | 152 | 3 | -63 | +20 | +20 | +22 | +16 | -15 |
| Total 2017 | 32 councils | 276 | 262 | 67 | 431 | 0 | 191 | 0 | +164 | -133 | -3 | -7 | 0 | 21 |
| Total 2012 | 32 councils | 115 | 394 | 71 | 425 | 0 | 218 | 0 | -28 | +46 | -95 | +62 | 0 | +16 |
| Total 2007 | 32 councils | 143 | 348 | 166 | 363 | 0 | 202 | 0 | +21 | -161 | -9 | +182 | 0 | -32 |
| Total 2003 | 32 councils | 122 | 509 | 175 | 181 | 0 | 234 | 0 | +14 | -42 | +18 | -23 | 0 | +33 |
| Total 1999 | 32 councils | 108 | 550 | 156 | 204 | 0 | 200 | 0 | +26 | -63 | +35 | +23 | 0 | +42 |

These seats were last contested in 2017.

Minor party results. Shetland: 1 Vacant seat. **Western Isles:** 2 vacant seats.

WELSH UNITARY COUNCIL ELECTION RESULTS 2022

| | Control | Seats won in 2022 | | | | | | | Gains and losses | | | | | |
|---------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-----|-----|-----|--------|-----|-------|------------------|------|-----|-----|--------|-----|
| | | Con | Lab | LDP | PC | Greens | Ind | Other | Con | Lab | LDP | PC | Greens | Ind |
| Anglesey * | PC gain from NOC | 0 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | +1 | 0 | +5 | 0 | -6 |
| Blaenau Gwent * | Lab gain from Ind | 0 | 21 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 12 | 0 | 0 | +12 | 0 | -1 | 0 | -11 |
| Bridgend * | Lab gain from NOC | 1 | 27 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 21 | 0 | 0 | +10 | -2 | -2 | 0 | +6 |
| Caerphilly * | Lab hold | 0 | 45 | 0 | 18 | 0 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | -1 | 0 | +1 |
| Cardiff * | Lab hold | 11 | 55 | 10 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 0 | -11 | +13 | -1 | -1 | 0 | 0 |
| Carmarthenshire * | PC gain from NOC | 0 | 23 | 0 | 38 | 0 | 14 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | +2 | 0 | -2 |
| Ceredigion * | PC gain from NOC | 0 | 1 | 7 | 20 | 0 | 10 | 0 | 0 | 0 | +1 | 0 | 0 | -1 |
| Conwy * | NOC, no change | 10 | 11 | 4 | 7 | 1 | 22 | 0 | -6 | +4 | 0 | -3 | +1 | +4 |
| Denbighshire * | NOC, no change | 6 | 19 | 1 | 8 | 2 | 12 | 0 | -9 | +3 | 1 | 8 | +2 | +4 |
| Flintshire * | NOC, no change | 2 | 31 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 30 | 0 | -5 | -2 | -1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Gwynedd * | PC hold | 0 | 1 | 1 | 44 | 0 | 23 | 0 | 0 | -1 | 0 | +4 | 0 | -3 |
| Merthyr Tydfil * | Ind loss to NOC | 0 | 15 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 15 | 0 | 0 | +2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | -2 |
| Monmouthshire * | Con loss to NOC | 18 | 22 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 5 | 0 | -12 | +12 | -2 | 0 | +1 | +1 |
| Neath Port Talbot * | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Lab loss to NOC | 0 | 25 | 2 | 12 | 1 | 18 | 2 | 0 | -13 | 0 | -5 | +1 | +2 |
| Newport * | Lab hold | 7 | 35 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 7 | 0 | -5 | +3 | -1 | -1 | +1 | +3 |
| Pembrokeshire * | NOC, no change | 11 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 35 | 0 | 0 | +2 | +2 | -4 | 0 | 0 |
| Powys * | NOC, no change | 14 | 9 | 24 | 3 | 1 | 17 | 0 | -4 | +1 | +10 | +1 | +1 | -9 |
| Rhondda Cynon Taf * | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Lab, no change | 2 | 59 | 0 | 8 | 0 | 6 | 0 | 0 | +8 | -1 | -9 | 0 | +2 |
| Swansea * | Lab, no change | 7 | 45 | 11 | 0 | 1 | 11 | 0 | -1 | -4 | +6 | 0 | +1 | -2 |
| Torfaen * | Lab, no change | 0 | 30 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 10 | 0 | -4 | +2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | +2 |
| Vale of Glamorgan * | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | NOC, no change | 13 | 25 | 0 | 8 | 0 | 8 | 0 | -14 | +10 | 0 | +3 | 0 | +1 |
| Wrexham * | NOC, no change | 9 | 14 | 1 | 9 | 0 | 23 | 0 | -3 | +3 | -1 | +6 | 0 | -5 |
| Total 2022 | 22 councils | 111 | 526 | 69 | 202 | 8 | 316 | 2 | -86 | +66 | +10 | -6 | +8 | +8 |
| Total 2017 | 22 councils | 184 | 472 | 62 | 202 | 0 | 329 | 0 | +80 | -107 | -11 | +33 | -2 | +7 |
| Total 2012 | 21 councils | 105 | 577 | 72 | 158 | 0 | 325 | 0 | -66 | +237 | -91 | -41 | 0 | -39 |
| Total 2008 | 22 councils | 174 | 345 | 165 | 206 | 0 | 374 | 0 | +67 | -134 | +19 | +31 | 0 | +17 |
| Total 2004 | 22 councils | 107 | 479 | 146 | 175 | 0 | 356 | 0 | +32 | -84 | +48 | -30 | 0 | +27 |
| Total 1999 | 22 councils | 75 | 563 | 98 | 205 | 0 | 329 | 0 | +33 | -163 | +19 | +92 | 0 | +17 |

These seats were last contested in 2017.

Minor party results and vacancies. Neath Port Talbot: Vacancies 2.

TOTALS FOR 2022 - TOP TIER AUTHORITIES

| No. of councils | Total number of seats won in 2022 | | | | | | | Gains and losses in 2022 | | | | |
|-----------------|-----------------------------------|-------|-----|-------|-----|-----|--------------|--------------------------|-----|------|-------|-------------|
| | Con | Lab | LDP | Green | SNP | PC | Ind & others | Con | Lab | LDP | Green | Ind & other |
| 140 | 1,104 | 2,836 | 577 | 117 | 453 | 202 | 611 | -110 | +76 | +113 | +62 | +63 |

(Continued from page 12.)

Liberal Democrats and Greens advance

Last Thursday was certainly a good day for the Liberal Democrats, who gained 113 seats in top tier authorities, which are the ones with responsibility for education and children's services which we analyse here. They took control of a number of councils, including Hull and Somerset, taking seats from both the Conservatives and Labour. In the top tier councils that we are looking at, the Lib Dems won 577 seats and, at local level at least, seem to have finally escaped the opprobrium of supporting the Tories in coalition from 2010 to 2015. With a couple of tough by-elections coming up in Tory Westminster seats where the incumbent has resigned in disgrace after scandal, the Lib Dems are certainly more competitive than they have been for years.

The Green Party continued its long hard slog across the country. It won 117 seats in top tier authorities, with support building across all countries of Great Britain. The reality is that British elections are now a six horse race. That's not the case in every seat, but in an increasing number electors have Tory, Labour, Lib Dem, Green and, in Scotland and Wales, the SNP and Plaid Cymru, to choose from.

This is more of a problem for Labour than the Conservatives, as all the smaller parties are centre-left. On the right, UKIP has disappeared and its successor, Reform UK, has failed to take off winning seats in only one of the top tier authorities.

Conservatives

When the BBC's election results programme started on Thursday night Tory commentators seemed fairly sanguine about what looked like only a few losses, while Labour failed to make advances anywhere outside London. As the night wore on, and counting began in Scotland and Wales and some English councils on Friday, things began to change.

As the final votes were counted in Croydon, the last of the 146 authorities that held elections to declare their results, the Conservatives had lost 282 seats in top tier authorities and 485 seats across all types of council across Britain. Privately, the upper end of the losses the Conservatives thought they would suffer was 500. Despite winning Harrow and taking a few seats from Labour across London, it is the capital where the Tory performance was worst. This is a long-term trend that has to do with demographic change as much as any particular policy or partygate type own goals. London is younger, better educated and far more diverse than any other region in the country. These are the demographics that vote Conservative less than any others. The Tory decline in London, especially inner London, has been long term and the results in London will not have come as a surprise to anyone paying attention to politics.

The other area where the Conservatives did particularly badly was Wales. The party lost its one council, Monmouthshire, and there were four of the 22 councils in Wales where the Tories lost around a dozen seats. Advances by the Liberal Democrats and Greens were modest, while Plaid Cymru managed the quite extraordinary feat of winning four councils, three of which were gains, while still clocking up a loss of six seats across the whole of Wales. Labour were the big winners in Wales.

Given the political background to these elections, with the cost of living crisis caused mainly by world events and the war in Ukraine, continuing problems over COVID and demands for more spending that cannot all be met, to say nothing of partygate and the Prime Minister's problems with honesty, results for the Tories could have been a great deal worse. The party was lucky that it did not have to defend many of its Blue Wall heartland seats in the South, as most of the shires did not go to the polls this year, while it also hung on to most of its recent Red Wall seats in the Midlands and North (but not in Wales).

Dissatisfaction with the Prime Minister's behaviour among traditional Tories in the South was palpable, fuelled by a combination of Brexit and partygate. Red Wall voters in the North are different. They like Brexit. Those who voted Conservative for the first time in 2019 and again last week do not consider themselves to be Tories. They have not joined the blue tribe. They are disaffected with Labour and still suspicious of the Conservatives. As for partygate, Boris Johnson's behaviour is no more than they expect from a Tory, so while they don't like it they have not been put off by it sufficiently to return to Labour.

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Labour

Of the six national parties that took part in last week's elections in Great Britain, it is Labour that will be the most disappointed. It did well in some parts of the country, especially London and Wales, but it did not do well enough in the rest of Britain to demonstrate that it is heading to Downing Street at the next general election. Its advance in Wales was not matched by performance in Scotland. Yes, the party beat the Conservatives into third place, but the Tory advance to second place at the last elections in 2017 was the only time since the system of unitary councils was first adopted that this had happened. Labour are still a long way behind the SNP. In a quite extraordinary performance, the SNP, which has been in power at Holyrood for 15 years, advanced still further. It gained another 22 seats to increase its total to 453, far ahead of any other party. It also became the only party in Scotland to win outright control of a council, Dundee, with all the others having independents in the majority or no party in overall control. The SNP continues to dominate politics in Scotland. It is difficult to see any prospect of Labour regaining at the next election the number of Westminster seats that it once took for granted. Without Scotland, it is very difficult although not impossible for Labour to win a majority in a British general election.

What for Labour was the worst part of the election last week was its performance in its English heartland, the cities and large towns of the Midlands and North that are the metropolitan districts. Look at the results tables on page 14. Labour lost 44 seats on these councils. What is worse is that those net losses were spread across most councils. In 18 of the 33 metropolitan district councils Labour lost seats, and failed to make any advance in another six. The party is actually going backwards in these Red Wall areas.

The verdict on the party's performance was pretty similar from Labour politicians, commentators and academics alike. Andrew Fisher, who was Labour Director of Policy from 2016 to 2019, told the BBC: "Does it look like we are on course to win the next general election? Nowhere near. Some fairly modest gains and still going backwards in some parts of the country even from 2018, which was an OK set of election results for Labour, but it wasn't earth-shatteringly good either. It is underwhelming. People are angry with the Conservatives, but are not enthused by Labour at this stage."

Now Andrew Fisher held national office under Jeremy Corbyn, so might be thought to be less than enamoured with Sir Keir Starmer. A Labour insider who is more mainstream told *Education Journal*: "I think it is too early to make judgements about an election to be held two years in the future. ... If I had to make judgements about Labour, I would say it looks likely we will have a different leader for the general election. Kier will need to dramatically improve his polling to change that, as the local results weren't enough to cement his place as leader." Nick Watt, political editor of BBC2's *Newsnight*, and formerly of the *Guardian*, said the results from last Thursday were "OK but not great" for both the Conservatives and Labour. But he went on to say that for Labour it "absolutely does not look like an Opposition party on the point of a breakthrough that would take Keir Starmer into No. 10."

From an academic perspective, Professor Sir John Curtis of the University of Strathclyde, who analysed the results for the BBC, thought that Labour's performance did not "indicate a party that is on course for winning a general election. For a party that is trying to regain ground in the so-called Red Wall seats in the Midlands and the North of England, this wasn't quite the progress that they wanted."

As I said at the start of this article, local elections are not general elections. But they are pointers to the future. Normally, the Opposition has to be well ahead in the mid-term period to ride out the trend of support returning to the Government that usually happens the nearer it gets to an election. In 1995, two years before Tony Blair swept New Labour to its crushing victory in 1997, Labour were 22% ahead of the then Conservative government. In 1990, two years before Labour lost the 1992 election to John Major, Labour was 11% ahead in the local elections. On last Thursday's figures, Labour is now 2% ahead, down to 1% in yesterday's YouGov poll. Labour is going to have to do something pretty spectacular over the next couple of years if it is to avoid suffering its fifth general election defeat in a row.

Northern Ireland

There were elections to the Northern Ireland Assembly, which has responsibility for education, but not to local councils in the province. Elections in Northern Ireland are fought on different grounds to local

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(Continued from page 19.)

elections in Great Britain, and we don't include election results from the Assembly in this analysis. However, there were elections there so a brief mention here is included for completeness.

The UK media has made much of the "historic" result of Sinn Fein winning most seats in the Assembly and thus being entitled to take the post of First Minister. It is symbolic, the first time in a century that a Nationalist party has done this. However, the posts of First Minister and Deputy First Minister are joined as one, as part of the power sharing that lies at the heart of the Good Friday Agreement. In practice the two positions act as one, so as Sinn Fein and the DUP remain the two largest parties, and therefore hold the First Minister and Deputy positions again, not much will change.

The election was a lot less seismic in votes than it was in seats. Sinn Fein's vote actually declined slightly, but not enough to cost it seats. The DUP's vote declined by more, as it splintered across three unionist parties (with some votes going to the Alliance) while the nationalist vote was split across only two. Traditional Unionist Voice, a party that thinks that the DUP is too soft, took votes and one seat from the DUP. Sinn Fein did not win a single extra seat, but it retained all the seats that it won at the last elections. It came out on top because the DUP lost more votes and therefore seats than it did. It was the decline of the DUP rather than the rise of Sinn Fein that left the nationalist party with more seats.

There has been speculation that a Sinn Fein First Minister will make a border poll more likely. Yet a border poll is no more likely now than before the election. Only the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland can call a border poll, and only if he believes that there is evidence that a majority of the population want a united Ireland. At present support for a united Ireland is running at 30% to 40% in opinion polls. Sinn Fein will be circumspect about calling for a border poll that, on present figures, would be lost. A more likely outcome of the election is a hardening of the British Government's position on the Irish protocol, and a possible break with the EU if negotiations continue to get nowhere.

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Minor parties in metropolitan districts (continued).

1. New council: Ind 6. **Oldham:** Failsworth Independent Party 2, Ind 1. Failsworth Independent Party gain 2, Ind gain 1. New council: Failsworth Independent Party 5, Ind 2. **Rochdale:** Middleton Independents Party 5. Middleton Independents Party gain 5. New council: Middleton Independents Party 5. **St Helens:** Ind. 7, Greens 6. Ind gain 4, Greens gain 3. New council: Ind 7, Greens 6. **Salford:** Ind. 1. Ind. gain 1. New council: Ind. 1. **Sandwell:** New council: Ind. 2. **Sefton:** New council: Ind 3. **Sheffield:** Greens 4. Greens gain 1, New Council: Greens 14, Ind. 1. **Solihull:** Greens 4, Ind. 1. Greens lose 1, Ind. gain 1. New council: Greens 14, Ind 4. **South Tyneside:** Greens 3, Ind 2. Greens gain 3, Ind gain 2. New council: Ind 6, Green 6. **Stockport:** Greens 1, Ind. 1. Greens gain 1. New council: Greens 2, Ind 3. **Sunderland:** Vacant 1. New council: Ind. 1, Vacant 1. **Tameside:** New council: Greens 1. **Trafford:** Greens 1. Greens gain 1. New council: Greens 4. **Wakefield:** Ind lose 1. New council: Ind 1. **Walsall:** Ind lose 1, Greens lose 1. New council: Ind 2. **Wigan:** The Independent Network 1, Ind 1. New council: The Independent Network 4, Ind. 3. **Wirral:** Greens 4. Greens gain 2. New council: Greens 9, Ind 1. .

Technical details

The data for this supplement was taken from the BBC augmented with information from individual council websites. All data for minor local parties is as described in the electoral returns for the councils where the local parties stood. The BBC calculated notional figures for gains and losses in the case of new local authorities that followed local government reorganisation and the abolition of the previous local authorities. As these figures are purely notional we have not followed this practice. Data for the results of previous years is taken from past issues of *Education Journal*, and originally came from national press reports and, more recently, the BBC.

The following abbreviations have been used:

| | | | | | |
|-----|------------------------|-----|----------------------------|-----|-------------------------|
| Asp | The Aspire Party | Lab | The Labour Party | PC | Plaid Cymru |
| Con | The Conservative Party | LDP | The Liberal Democrat Party | RA | Residents Association |
| Ind | Independent candidates | NOC | No overall control | SNP | Scottish National Party |