

Local Elections 2024: The Impact.

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Context and impact

These elections were the last big set of simultaneous, country-wide electoral tests before the General Election – that turned out to be a disaster for the Conservatives.

Not only did the Tories lose almost half the council seats they fought, but the manner of the third-term win in London for Sadiq Khan and the extraordinarily tight margin of the upset win for Labour's Richard Parker over Andy Street in the West Midlands exemplified the extent of Labour's dominance over their Conservative counterparts. The Conservatives were widely expected to lose hundreds of council seats and control of a number of councils, but results reflecting a near worst-case scenario expectation have now put Rishi Sunak in a very uncomfortable position looking ahead to the General Election later this year.

The impact of Reform will be debated keenly in the coming months. While they won only two seats (both in Havant), and stood in only one-sixth of wards, the Party had an impact on the Conservatives' performance – particularly in the Brexit heartlands. In Sunderland, for example, Reform finished ahead of the Conservatives in 16 out of 25 seats and in the North East mayoral race. Expect the Conservative message that "a vote for Reform is a vote for Labour" to continue in the media cycles.

The Conservative Party will now be re-grouping – and the parliamentary party will be invited to a series of 'election presentations' to allow a partial post-mortem and discuss next steps heading into the summer.

Conversely, the Labour Party can prepare for the General Election with its eyes firmly on taking the keys to No10 – particularly the policies the Party can implement not only via new MPs in Parliament, but also through regional and local leaders across the country. Labour will also take some comfort that, while gains were not quite as high as expected, the Labour vote increased in key target areas. While some post-election analysis (in particular regarding the BBC's Projected National Share and Sky's National Equivalent Vote) suggested that the results pointed to Labour being short of a majority, post-election polls (which show Labour holding a significant lead) will give Keir Starmer much comfort that things will be different come the General Election. Don't expect that to mean that the Prime Minister and other Conservative MPs won't be pushing the line that we are heading for a hung parliament though.

The devolution agenda will be an interesting point to watch across the Metro Mayor tier of government over the coming months, as new Labour Mayors flesh out the implementation of their plans and the manifestos that they ran on. New and existing Labour Mayors will begin their terms under a national Government run by the Conservatives and will therefore want power over as much policy and funding as possible devolved down to them. But they'll also need to be clear about what their role may look like, and how it may change (possibly for the better) under a new Labour Government later this year.

A snapshot:

Key Mayoral results:

- In the West Midlands, Richard Parker was elected as the new Mayor, beating the incumbent Andy Street by just 1,508 votes out of an electorate of c. 3,000,000.
- In the three newly created metro mayoral seats, Labour candidates Claire Ward, David Skaith and Kim McGuinness were elected as Mayors of the East Midlands, York and North Yorkshire, and the North East respectively.
- In Tees Valley, Conservative Ben Houchen was re-elected, winning 53.6% of the vote. That's down 19% from the 2019 result, when Houchen romped home with 72.8%, but still more than 12 points clear of his Labour rival.
- Similarly, in London, Sadiq Kahn was re-elected for his third term, taking over a million votes in the capital and increasing his share of the vote to 43.8%.
- In Manchester, incumbent Andy Burnham was re-elected with 420,749 votes, almost two-thirds of those available.
- In Liverpool, like Tees Valley, only one person has held the post of Mayor of the Liverpool City Region since the post's creation in 2017 – Steve Rotheram. Rotheram gained a massive 71% of the vote in this set of elections. His next closest rival – Tim Crone of the Green Party - only managed a 10% vote share.

Number of Mayors:

Labour	Cons
10	1

Key local election results:

- The Conservatives fared particularly badly in Essex. In Basildon, the party saw its number of councillors fall by 13, with Labour up nine and Independents up four, while in Castle Point, they were wiped out entirely, losing every seat they were contesting.
- Despite losing the Hartlepool Parliamentary by-election three years ago, Labour won control of the council for the first time since 2019 thanks to a net gain of seven seats, while the Tories lost six.
- Although overall, the local elections produced positive results for the Labour Party, they lost control of the councils in Oldham, South Tyneside and Kirklees, as well as losing four seats in Newcastle. This was largely a result of the party's stance on Gaza, as well local issues weighing heavily on voters' minds.
- The trend of gains for the Lib Dems, Greens and Independent councillors continued across the weekend. These are the sixth elections in a row where the Lib Dems and Greens have made gains, with the two parties now holding more than 20% of seats across the country. In particular, the Lib Dems took control of Dorset while the Greens took control of Bristol City Council from Labour.

Number of councillors:

Labour	Lib Dems	Cons	Ind	Green	Residents	Reform	Workers
1,158	522	515	228	181	48	2	4
+186	+104	-474	+93	+74	+11	+2	+4

Key PCC election results:

- Whilst the Conservatives were able to hold onto most of their Police and Crime Commissioners, Labour made some gains including Avon and Somerset, Bedfordshire, Cheshire, Cleveland, Cumbria, Derbyshire, Norfolk, Northamptonshire and Nottinghamshire.
- The elected PCCs will now work on drafting their Police and Crime Plans. These will set out the Commissioners' plans and vision for policing crime across their area. The plans will be built on their manifesto and the priorities and commitments made to the electorate.

Number of Police and Crime Commissioners

Labour	Cons
14	19
+7	-7

Meet the Metro Mayors

This election saw three new Mayoralties up for contest; in York and North Yorkshire, the East Midlands and the North East. Elections for mayoral posts already created in London, the West Midlands, Tees Valley, Greater Manchester, South Yorkshire, West Yorkshire and Liverpool City Region were also held.

Richard Parker.

West Midlands Mayor



(Source: [Richard Parker for West Mids Mayor](#))

Background:

Former PwC Partner who led the team that helped set up the West Midlands Combined Authority.

Term of office:

First term – selected in April 2023 as Labour's candidate, standing for the first time in this role.

Key pledges:

- Create 150,00 jobs and training opportunities across the West Midlands.
- Fund new market stalls for traders and introduce banking hubs whilst giving councils powers on empty shops.
- Introduce town centre police patrols and recruit an additional 650 police officers.
- Bring buses back into public control, following Andy Burnham's model in Manchester.
- Build 20,000 more homes in the West Midlands by 2031 and introduce a landlords register.

Click for more:

- [Manifesto](#)
- [X](#), [LinkedIn](#)

Claire Ward.

East Midlands Mayor



(Source: [Claire Ward](#))

Background:

Former Labour MP for Watford (1997-2010). During her time in Parliament, she served as Government Whip from 2005 to 2009 and a Justice Minister from 2009 to 2010.

Term of office:

First term – East Midlands Mayor was a newly created position for the 2024 Mayoral elections. She was selected as the Labour candidate in August 2023.

Key pledges:

- Work with bus companies to increase services and routes.
- Roll out more charging points to encourage EV use.
- Support green industry growth through hydrogen, nuclear and fusion sectors.
- Invest in childcare to get talent working.
- Invest in digital skills across the community.
- Set up a good employment charter.
- Build more homes on brownfield sites.

Click for more:

- [Manifesto](#)
- [X](#), [LinkedIn](#)

Ben Houchen.

Tees Valley Mayor



(Source: [Ben Houchen](#))

Background:

Former Leader of the Conservative Group on Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council and Chief Executive Officer at BLK Sport UK. Member of the House of Lords.

Term of office:

Third term – Houchen is the only person who’s held the position of Tees Valley Mayor since the post was created in 2017.

Key pledges:

- To continue his 10-year plan for Teesside International Airport – including scrapping the £6 passenger fee.
- 18,000 “skilled, good-quality, well paid jobs” through the Teesside Freeport.
- Bringing forward thousands of jobs at Teesworks.
- Continuing to deliver better transport across the region.
- Bringing hundreds of Government jobs to the region through the relocation of some of HMT to Darlington.

Click for more:

- [Ben’s plan for jobs](#)
- [X](#), [LinkedIn](#)

Andy Burnham.

Greater Manchester Mayor



(Source: [Andy Burnham](#))

Background:

Former MP for Leigh from '01 - '17. Served in Gordon Brown's Cabinet as Chief Secretary to the Treasury '07 - '08, Culture Secretary '08 - '09 and Health Secretary '09 - '10.

Term of office:

Third term - Burnham is the only person who's held the position of Greater Manchester Mayor since the post was created in 2017.

Key pledges:

- Establish a powerful new multi-agency GM Housing First unit within the Greater Manchester Combined Authority.
- Introduce a new right for all GM residents in rented accommodation to be able to request a property check.
- Introduce the MBacc (Greater Manchester Baccalaureate) - a new technical education pathway starting at age 14.
- Establish a Liverpool-Manchester Railway Board to oversee the creation of a publicly operated railway - the Liverpool and Manchester Railway - serving the North West of England.
- Continue to resist the introduction of a charging Clean Air Zone.

Click for more:

- [Manifesto](#)
- [X](#)



(Source: [Penistone and Stocksbridge Labour](#))

Background:

Coppard volunteered for the Obama campaign for the 2012 US presidential election. He was director of the Remain campaign in Yorkshire, the Humber and Lincolnshire for the 2016 European Union referendum.

Coppard stood in Sheffield Hallam at the 2015 general election, against then Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg.

Term of office:

Second term – Coppard previously won the 2022 election for the position.

Key pledges:

- Bring buses back under public control within 12 months, reversing the failed experiment of privatised public transport across South Yorkshire.
- Reopen Doncaster Sheffield Airport.
- Establish a South Yorkshire Digital Health Innovation Hub.
- Secure the funding to deliver the next phase of the 'Connected by Water' project, protecting homes across South Yorkshire from flooding.

Click for more:

- [Manifesto](#)
- [X, LinkedIn](#)

Tracy Brabin.

West Yorkshire Mayor



(Source: [Parliament UK](#), [License](#))

Background:

Prior to her career in Politics, Brabin was an actress and TV writer. She was elected as MP for Batley and Spenningsdale in 2016. She was appointed as Shadow Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport by Jeremy Corbyn in January 2020. In 2021 she was elected as the first Mayor of West Yorkshire.

Term of office:

Second term – This is Tracy Brabin's 2nd term as Mayor of West Yorkshire having previously won the 2021 election for the position.

Key pledges:

- 5,000 new affordable homes.
- Local control of all buses by 2028.
- A "region of learning" with new skills and training system.
- A programme to insulate all social homes.
- A new through rail station in Bradford City Centre.

Click for more:

- [Manifesto](#)
- [X](#), [LinkedIn](#)



(Source: [David Skaith](#))

Background:

Small Business Owner and chair of the York High Street Forum.

Term of office:

First term – York and North Yorkshire Mayor was a newly created position for the 2024 Mayoral elections.

Key pledges:

- Deliver a cost-of-living recovery plan by supporting families, building affordable housing and boosting business.
- Fight for more GP and dentist appointments with better healthcare facilities for local neighbourhoods to help tackle soaring NHS waiting lists.
- Tackle crime and antisocial behaviour, investing in police to be tough on crime and tough on its causes across urban, rural and coastal areas alike.
- Connect communities with a new transport system with affordable fares, new bus routes and a Mayor's Pothole Fund to improve roads.
- Champion York and North Yorkshire to attract investment and always fight for the best deal for the region.

Click for more:

- [Manifesto](#)
- [X, LinkedIn](#)



(Source: <https://www.kimmcguinness.org/>)

Background:

Former Labour Councillor and Police and Crime Commissioner for Northumbria. Kim McGuinness was selected to be the Labour candidate for the North East Mayoralty in July 2023.

Term of office:

First term – North East Mayor was a newly created position for the 2024 Mayoral Elections, expanding on the former North East Tyneside region.

Key pledges:

- Introduce a unique North East programme that supports local business, a green jobs revolution and that is built around upskilling local workers.
- Introduce a publicly controlled, green, joined up North East transport network for villages, towns and cities and bring buses back under public control.
- Work with local leaders to set higher standards for new developments, to build the greenest homes using modern methods to improve affordability and reduce emissions.
- Develop a Regional Spatial Plan that maps what housing, transport links, job creation opportunities and green space is needed.
- Lobby hard to ensure the funds controlled by Homes England are handed to the Mayor and elected representatives in the North East.

Click for more:

- [Manifesto](#)
- [X, LinkedIn](#)

Steve Rotheram.

Liverpool City Region Mayor



(Source: [Steve Rotheram](#))

Background:

Former MP for Liverpool Walton '10 – '17. Former Lord Mayor of Liverpool '08 – '09.

Term of office:

Third term – Rotheram has held the post since it was created in 2017.

Key pledges:

- Deliver a childcare guarantee by working with local authorities, trade unions and private providers, launching a commission into childcare and ensuring Combined Authority staff gain flexible, shared parental leave.
- Campaign for full devolution of powers on technical and academic education for 16-19 year olds.
- Lobby to reintroduce Foundation Apprenticeships.
- Build a London-style network to make travel cheaper, quicker and more reliable.
- Examine the potential to establish a housing revenue account or arm's length management organisation to deliver council housing for the region.

Click for more:

- [Manifesto](#)
- [X, LinkedIn](#)



(Source: [Sadiq Khan](#))

Background:

Former solicitor specialising in human rights issues and former chair of the Liberty advocacy group. Sadiq Khan served as a Labour councillor from 1994 to 2006 before being elected MP for Tooting at the 2005 general election.

Term of office:

Third term – Khan was first elected as Mayor of London in 2016.

Key pledges:

- Freeze TfL fares until at least 2025 and continue to freeze fares for as long as economic conditions allow.
- Build 40,000 new council homes by the end of the decade.
- Work with a Labour government to put an extra 1,300 neighbourhood police officers and PCSOs on the streets.
- More support for renters – delivering new affordable 'rent control homes' and empowering Londoners to take on landlords through a New Deal for Renters.
- Deliver a new London Growth Plan, with a target of creating more than 150,000 good jobs by 2028 and increasing living standards for Londoners.

Click for more:

- [Manifesto](#)
- [X, LinkedIn](#)