

The message from the marginals

Labour's performance in the
English local elections of 2016

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Executive Summary

Labour averted a poor result in the 2016 local elections, but a lead in national share of the vote of 1 per cent is not enough to inspire confidence.

- There is absolutely nothing to be complacent about. In the last half-century, no opposition party that has been more or less level in the local elections a year into the parliament has gone on to win the general election.
- Turnout in most Labour wards remained poor, often declining since 2012 in the safest areas. There is no sign that the party is mobilising poor and working class electors any better than it has for years.
- Labour's best results were in metropolitan areas, university cities and in some high-growth towns in the south such as Swindon and Milton Keynes which have started to be affected by the political changes that have transformed London.
- Labour's worst results relative to 2012 were mostly in the Midlands, particularly smaller working class towns which have become increasingly car-owning, home-owning and aspirational, like Nuneaton and Rugby. The results in suburban areas of northern cities such as Bury North and Pudsey were also disappointing.
- Labour escaped lightly in terms of net losses in seats and councils. A uniform swing of 3 per cent to the Conservatives since 2012 would have lost the party at least 88 seats. Labour councillors and councils, however, managed to retain many marginal seats. In some areas such as Ipswich Labour managed to make net gains despite a typical-sized pro-Tory swing in voting.
- No party was putting a strong national case in the English local elections that could have generated a strong tide in favour of that party. The result was English local election voting in its default state as Labour and the Conservatives both turned out their habitual voters, the Lib Dems recovered some ground for local reasons or from protest which they would not support as a national government.
- Adding up local results by parliamentary constituency, Labour would still be short of an overall majority even if its best results were repeated everywhere. The gains, however, were patchy with about one target in three being missed.
- Local elections flatter Labour. It is established fact that Labour did better in most areas in the local elections in 2015 than in the general election, and no reason to expect the trend to have weakened this year. Voters are willing to support parties for local reasons or from protest which they would not support as a national government.

Introduction

The 2016 local elections produced curious results that confounded many expectations and were difficult to analyse. In an apparently turbulent political time, with the Conservative government hitting difficulties and Labour taking a new political direction amid divisions of its own, the results showed hardly any change since the local elections of 2012 when most of these seats were last contested. Labour gained Bristol, narrowly lost Dudley; the Lib Dems recovered their majority in Watford which they had lost a year earlier. The Conservatives saw Worcester slip to no overall control. It was undramatic. There was no UKIP breakthrough, no Tory recovery from the low point they reached in 2012, no Labour meltdown or surge. This last surprised many commentators and indeed many Labour councillors who turned up to their counts with little hope in their hearts but ended up re-elected. Partly because of Bristol's leisurely count that concluded on Sunday evening, Labour's relative success in holding nearly everything it had gained in 2012 was less recognised than it might have been.

But it would be a serious mistake to regard the 2016 local elections as anything other than worrying – not because of the rather artificial gain/ loss count of seats, but because the pattern of the votes showed that the party is still nowhere near a parliamentary majority and has at best a weak grasp on some English marginal seats. Its weakness in crucial types of constituencies in 2016, such as unpretentious midlands towns (Nuneaton, Cannock) and big city suburbs (Bury, Bolton), is ominous, while its stronger showings were in affluent seats that are either already Labour or require large swings to be sustained through to May 2020.

Above all, the headline result of the local elections, in terms of where the parties stand nationally, is not good enough to promise a path to victory in 2020. These are early days but if the party fails to make any progress in 2017 and 2018 from its disappointing local elections of 2013 and 2014, it would be a very alarming development.

1. The results in marginal constituencies

The following table is of the party shares of the vote in Labour's target parliamentary seats in the 2016 local elections.

Target seats where there were no local government elections (e.g. Broxtowe) are omitted.

Target seats where only a minority of the seat had local elections (e.g. Norwich North) are also omitted. In constituencies where the bulk of the seat does have elections (e.g. Lincoln), results have been modelled for the missing bits, and the figures are therefore not given to the decimal point in the table.

Exact figures should not be taken too seriously. There are several things that can make them misleading:

- People may vote differently in local and general elections and there may be year-to-year variations caused by local issues. This factor is discussed in detail below.
- These are observations, not predictions – things will change before 2020. This is a snapshot, albeit a fairly detailed one.
- The candidates available to choose from may differ – not all parties put up full slates of candidates everywhere, and this will affect the shares of the vote. Liberal Democrat shares of 0 per cent in Lab/Con marginals mean that no Lib Dems stood for the council, and are definitely not a prediction that they will get zero votes in a parliamentary election. No adjustment is made for missing local candidates, even from the major parties.
- Turnout is considerably lower than in general elections. It is probable that the more politically-engaged electorate who vote in local elections (25-40 per cent) are different from the 20-35 per cent who only come out to vote in general elections. They may also respond differently to political developments and arguments.

Looking down the chart in the Appendix, Labour can take comfort in not 'losing' any seats to the Conservatives with the exception of Wirral West, where the Tories usually do better in local elections. But the Conservatives 'hold' a sprinkling of seats all the way to the most vulnerable they are defending, Derby North – in which they would increase their majority. They also 'lose' some highly marginal seats by such small margins that on a like-with-like comparison with the 2015 local elections the Tories are still ahead – as in Bury North. But there are some solid Labour gains on respectable swings in some more difficult targets – Reading East, Swindon South, Hastings & Rye – and a few narrow wins in some seats requiring quite large

movements of opinion such as Redditch and Crawley. Labour hits about two-thirds of its target seats down to Redditch (which requires an 8 per cent swing).

The ominous fact is that to win an overall majority the party would have to win every single seat in the list down to somewhere about Basingstoke (10 point swing). Although the detailed figures are not available yet, London cannot be expected to provide many more gains because even on the most favourable basis (comparison with the constituency Assembly Member ballot) the swing to Labour in London since 2015 has only been about 1.8 per cent. In Wales Labour hit its three easiest target seats (Gower, Vale of Clwyd, Cardiff North) and one harder seat (Vale of Glamorgan), in line with the size and pattern of the swing in England. There is obviously little comfort from Scotland. The 'gains' among the English marginals are insufficient, and also mostly not well enough established, to give any confidence that they could lead to a respectable performance in a general election.

The forthcoming boundary changes will make the task even more difficult. Future research will have to examine the effect on the electoral map of the combination between the likely boundary changes and the pattern of support in 2016.

Before taking the swing figures too literally, one should remember that local and national voting can be different and this affects a realistic calculation of who would 'win' a seat. The 2015 local elections, translated into constituencies, would not have produced an overall Conservative majority. There were seven seats the Lib Dems won locally but the Tories won nationally, and at least nine where Labour won locally and the Tories did nationally. The Tories were ahead locally in at least 4four where they lagged nationally. This effect would more than wipe out their parliamentary majority itself. In assessing change since the 2015 general election, it is important to take this factor into account.

For local political reasons, Labour's support in local elections in Wirral, Wolverhampton and Birmingham often runs behind where the party can poll in general elections. In rather more areas, Labour tends to do systematically better in local elections – several of these were marginal seats that Labour 'won' on the 2015 local elections but not in the parliamentary election, such as Bolton West and Lincoln. Among some of the other constituencies in the table, there were big differences as well. In Elmet & Rothwell the Conservatives were 2.8 points ahead of Labour in the local elections in 2015, but won the parliamentary seat by 14.7 points. Labour having 'won' the constituency by 1.8 percentage points in 2016 suggests that the Conservatives would still be ahead if people were voting for MP.

The pattern of swing in the 2016 elections is distinctive, and contrasts

with what happened in the first year of Ed Miliband's leadership in 2011 when the Labour vote spiked in the big northern metropolitan centres but went nowhere much in the south and midlands.

Just taking the marginal seats in the table – not the whole regions – the change in vote share between the 2015 general election and the 2016 local election is as follows:

%	Con	Lab	LD	UKIP	Green	Swing Lab/ Con	Con + UKIP	Lab + LD +Green
South	-11.1	3.3	6.4	-3.1	5.6	-7.2	-14.2	+15.4
Midlands	-7.1	2.2	2.0	-0.8	5.2	-4.6	-7.9	+9.4
North	-10.4	-1.8	9.0	-3.0	4.8	-4.3	-13.4	+12.0

In 2016, the swing to Labour was much stronger in the southern marginal seats than the midlands and northern marginals. Labour's increase since the 2015 general election was not stunning, even in the south – an advance of 3.3 per cent, but vote share went backwards in the north. Some of this will be differential local/ general election voting in seats where the Lib Dems have a presence in local elections but fared poorly last May, as in Colne Valley.

2. The broader pattern

The Conservative vote was in best shape in the midlands. The lifestyles and attitudes that caused Labour such 'southern discomfort' in the 1980s and in 1992 are spreading outwards into the more distant parts of the south and into the midlands, particularly towns such as Tamworth and Cannock, and undermined Labour's performance in the midlands in 2015 and 2016. The thesis I outlined in September 2015 in *Is 'Southern Discomfort' Spreading?*¹ about the outward ripples of London in the south of England, and the 'south' into the midlands, is supported by the pattern of the 2016 elections.

By contrast, the best Labour results were in some of the most modern bits of England, in London and its hinterland. Swindon, Milton Keynes, Reading and Crawley, and the leafy London suburbs, are what used to be regarded as classic New Labour territory, but now seem oddly fond of New Old Labour; a more traditional socialist appeal seems to go over better with these voters than with the traditional working class.

The 2014 local elections showed a similar pattern, with Labour's performance being strongest in London and the urban bits of its hinterland. Southern towns are starting to resemble London, as working people on modest earnings are forced outward by London's escalating cost of living, commuting in on public transport and worried about the quality of public services. Back in the 1980s the new towns were bastions of the skilled white working class, but some of them such as Crawley and Milton Keynes are rapidly becoming as diverse as any other type of urban environment. Economic uncertainties and leadership worries drove many of these voters back to the Conservatives in the 2015 but these people are not 'Tories' in any meaningful sense. Without the general election context, these voters either did not turn out or felt able to choose on the basis of local issues and the record of their incumbent councillors. This would help explain the very small scale of change in seats that took place in the 2016 council elections.

Labour dodged a bullet in the 2016 local elections in terms of seat losses. The national outcome in seats should in theory have been much worse because there was a significant (3 per cent or so) swing from Labour to the Conservatives nationally since most of the seats were last contested in 2012. On a uniform swing, in strictly comparable authorities without boundary changes, the swing should have cost Labour 88 council seats. Some of the individual escapes were remarkable. Of all the wards in Dudley, Kingswinford North & Wall Heath was the most obvious loss, having been a surprise Labour gain in 2012 and then voting Conservative by majorities

1 <http://www.progressionline.org.uk/pamphlets/is-southern-discomfort-spreading/>

of 16 points in 2014 and 23 points in 2015. Yet Labour held the seat with an increased majority in 2016.

The following table shows the swing since 2012 and the change in seats in a number of local authorities. Labour got off lightly from several large swings, while gaining seats against a weaker Tory swing in places such as Crawley and Ipswich.

	Swing to Con 2012-2016 %	Net change in seats (Con) 2012-16	Net change in seats (Lab) 2012-16
Derby	+11.0	+3	-2
Nuneaton & Bedworth	+7.8	+3	-3
Carlisle	+6.8	0	-1
Bury	+6.3	+3	-4
Cannock Chase	+6.2	0	-1
Plymouth	+5.9	+1	-1
Great Yarmouth	+5.0	0	-4
Tamworth	+4.4	+2	-4
Sunderland	+4.3	0	+1
Bolton	+4.0	0	-2
Dudley	+3.2	+3	-3
Ipswich	+3.2	-1	+1
Harlow	+2.9	0	0
Thurrock	+2.8	0	-4
Reading	+0.8	0	0
Crawley	+0.8	-1	+1
Swindon	+0.7	-2	+2
Birmingham	-0.3	0	0
Southampton	-1.5	0	-1
Cambridge	-3.3	-1	+1

There is a political trap in doing well in local elections in areas where there are target parliamentary seats. For decades the Liberal Democrats did well in local elections without seeing that support translate into general election voting behaviour. During the 2010-15 parliament the leadership tried to argue that 'where we work, we win' and pointed to good performances in local elections in a swathe of constituencies as pointing to the survival of a considerable parliamentary party after 2015. But winning local elections in Hazel Grove, Birmingham Yardley, Yeovil, Cheltenham and so on just gave the party a false sense of security that

lasted, in Paddy Ashdown's case, even after that exit poll was published on 7 May 2015. Parties can do well in local elections on the basis of protest, good campaigning, hard-working incumbent councillors and popular local decisions – and find that people who like them locally won't entrust them with national government when it comes to it, and that success has not involved mobilising the lower-information voters who turn out only for general elections.

Labour picked up in areas and wards where there is a large student population, academic and liberal professionals and high-income educated voters. The party produced its best results in recent years in authorities such as Bristol, Norwich, Cambridge and Exeter. A higher proportion of the Labour vote and potential Labour vote in the south comes from this sort of demographic, as does a high proportion of newly active party members who can boost a campaign on the ground. While Labour did not suffer many losses in the north, the turnout and share of the vote in safe Labour working class wards was limp. In Sunderland, turnout across the city was the same as in 2012 but in the safest Labour wards it fell. There is no sign that working class core voters are any more willing to turn out than they were in the last parliament.

These trends are in part a reflection of the current political strategy pursued by the Labour leadership, but they also fit into the longer term trends of support for Labour and to some extent social democratic parties elsewhere. Labour's vulnerability to a loss of working class votes to abstention and UKIP and defeat in the battle for the floating vote in the middle with the Tories were more powerful influences on the result than the rallying of the progressive metropolitan middle class and ethnic minority votes that were already heading Labour's way in 2010 and 2015. There is a limit to how much further the electoral gains from this movement can go. There are only so many Latin Quarter constituencies to go round, and Labour already has nearly all of them outside Scotland. While Labour celebrated big gains from the Greens in Norwich, this was a city already under majority Labour control and with a Labour MP in Norwich South so it is questionable how much further forward the party is as a result. To win the Conservative-held marginal seat of Norwich North, most of which lies outside the city boundary, Labour has to win over a belt of ordinary suburbs that spurned the party in the last two general elections.

3. Perspective and conclusion

The National Equivalent Vote (NEV), and at what stage of the parliament the elections take place, is by far the most valid comparison between party performance in different years. The proportion of votes cast or councillors won is practically meaningless, given that it depends what sort of area is being contested. It is more impressive for Labour to win lots of seats in rural shire district councils in 1995 – or 2019 – than it is in elections for the metropolitan boroughs in 2016. Conversely, the Tories can take more heart from getting 30 per cent of councillors in the metropolitan boroughs than getting 60 per cent in the shires.

The number of gains and losses of seats for each party is a widely-used but severely flawed measure. Given that the number of seats available will vary year by year from around 2,500 as in 2016 and nearly 10,000, the scale is inconsistent from year to year. The baseline is also different. Mild slippage from a high point in the mid-term of the previous parliament (as in 2016) cannot be compared directly to massive gains from a party's lowest ebb (like the Conservatives in 1999 or Labour in 2012). To do this exercise fairly, one needs a consistent reference point, which the compilers of NEV can provide and which is possible at a more local level by comparing vote shares in wards and groups of wards.

Labour enjoyed a narrow lead in the 2016 election, outpolling the Conservatives by 1 percentage point. This was considerably better than had been predicted from the run of local by-elections and some national polls, but it was still far from overwhelming. Given the stuttering economy, a mismanaged budget, a cabinet resignation, retreats on several policy issues and the spectacle of a bad-tempered argument between cabinet colleagues over Europe, one might have hoped for a more decisive verdict. Local elections are decided by turnout; most of the Labour tribe turned out in 2016 but so did a fairly large chunk of the Tory tribe given the unpromising background.

Table: Local elections National Equivalent Vote a year on from general elections

Previous general election government lead %	Local elections government lead NEV %	Next election outcome	
1980	7.1	-2	Government win
1984	15.2	+1	Government win
1988	11.8	+1	Government win
1993	7.6	-8	Opposition win
1998	12.8	+4	Government win
2002	9.3	-1	Government win
2006	2.9	-13	Opposition 'win'
2011	7.2	+1	Government win
2016	6.6	-1	

(Source: Rallings & Thrasher British Electoral Facts 1832-2012)

Substantial leads for the opposition in 1993 under John Smith and 2006 under David Cameron were followed by changes in government. Smaller opposition leads, or government leads, were followed by the incumbent government retaining power. The pattern is as simple as that. The NEV calculation has only been made since 1980. It is worth noting that in the large sets of local elections in 1976, 1971 and 1967 the opposition had comfortable leads, made sweeping gains and went on to win the next general election, and in the relatively small number of elections in 1975 the Conservatives also did well.

Given past precedents, Labour's showing in 2016 promises a further defeat, but the performance is a long way from disastrous or presaging a landslide. It is just average, while one has to do significantly better than average to be on course to take power. The worst opposition performance in the first set of local elections after a general election year was William Hague's in 1998, not Jeremy Corbyn's in 2016. It is even possible to do worse than this and still go on to win, but to find an example one has to look back to 1960 and the turbulent political changes and modernisation of Labour's image that happened in the years before Labour's narrow win in 1964.

Labour's performance in 2016 is therefore squarely in line with what one might expect a year in to a parliament where the opposition is not going to win the general election.

Appendix

	2015 GE	2015 LG	Con lead over Lab 2015 GE	2016 LG	Con	Lab	LD	UKIP	Green	Others	Swing 2015/16	Lab change 2015/16
Batley & Spenn	Lab	Lab	-12.0%	Lab	23.7%	42.0%	13.1%	15.7%	3.5%	1.9%	-3.2%	-1.2%
Dudley North	Lab	Lab	-11.0%	Lab	25.9%	43.7%	0.0%	28.8%	1.3%	0.3%	-3.4%	1.9%
Wirral South	Lab	Lab	-11.0%	Lab	32.7%	37.5%	17.8%	2.5%	4.4%	5.0%	3.1%	-10.7%
Bury South	Lab	Lab	-10.4%	Lab	27.4%	45.6%	14.1%	7.8%	4.1%	1.0%	-3.9%	0.6%
Bolton North East	Lab	Lab	-10.1%	Lab	31.8%	39.7%	6.5%	18.7%	2.6%	0.8%	1.1%	-3.3%
Coventry North West	Lab	Lab	-10.0%	Lab	31.6%	44.5%	3.4%	8.0%	7.4%	5.2%	-1.5%	3.5%
Southampton Test	Lab	Lab	-8.7%	Lab	23.6%	44.3%	7.4%	10.1%	5.4%	9.1%	-6.0%	3.0%
Bristol East	Lab	Lab	-8.6%	Lab	24.9%	42.0%	13.1%	1.9%	14.1%	4.0%	-4.2%	2.7%
Coventry South	Lab	Lab	-7.3%	Lab	37.7%	44.3%	1.9%	3.1%	7.4%	5.8%	0.3%	2.0%
Birmingham Edgbaston	Lab	Con	-6.6%	Lab	40.2%	40.9%	3.6%	9.5%	5.4%	0.4%	2.9%	-3.9%
Wakefield	Lab	Lab	-6.1%	Lab	25.7%	44.5%	6.9%	11.2%	3.8%	7.9%	-6.4%	4.3%
Birmingham Northfield	Lab	Lab	-5.9%	Lab	35.4%	39.5%	3.5%	15.8%	5.4%	0.2%	0.9%	-2.1%
Walsall North	Lab	Lab	-5.3%	Lab	24.8%	47.3%	11.8%	11.3%	0.0%	4.9%	-8.6%	8.2%
Dewsbury	Lab	Lab	-2.7%	Lab	35.5%	42.6%	7.1%	4.2%	10.6%	0.0%	-2.2%	0.9%
Wolverhampton South West	Lab	Con	-2.0%	Lab	37.6%	46.6%	4.7%	4.3%	4.7%	2.0%	-3.5%	3.4%
Newcastle-under- Lyme	Lab	Lab	-1.5%	Lab	29%	39%	13%	14%	3%	3%	-4%	0%
Wirral West	Lab	Con	-1.0%	Con	43.9%	39.0%	8.5%	2.0%	6.2%	0.4%	3.0%	-6.2%
Halifax	Lab	Lab	-1.0%	Lab	28.4%	46.5%	11.7%	7.9%	4.3%	1.3%	-8.5%	6.4%
Derby North	Con	Lab	0.1%	Con	31.1%	29.7%	21.1%	14.5%	2.5%	1.0%	0.7%	-6.9%
Bury North	Con	Lab	0.8%	Lab	42.0%	42.5%	2.2%	7.1%	6.1%	0.0%	-0.7%	1.4%
Morley & Outwood	Con	Lab	0.9%	Lab	20.2%	36.3%	3.0%	17.0%	1.7%	21.8%	-8.5%	-1.8%
Thurrock	Con	UKIP	1.1%	UKIP	24%	36%	0%	38%	0%	1%	-6%	4%
Plymouth Sutton & Devonport	Con	Lab	1.1%	Lab	31.4%	41.8%	8.8%	8.8%	3.7%	5.5%	-5.7%	5.1%
Bolton West	Con	Lab	1.6%	Lab	26.7%	32.2%	17.3%	14.5%	2.6%	6.6%	-3.6%	-6.7%
Plymouth Moor View	Con	Con	2.4%	Lab	30.7%	38.4%	3.1%	22.6%	1.5%	3.7%	-5.0%	3.2%

Appendix

	2015 GE	2015 LG	Con lead over Lab 2015 GE	2016 LG	Con	Lab	LD	UKIP	Green	Others	Swing 2015/16	Lab change 2015/16
Lincoln	Con	Lab	3.1%	Lab	30%	39%	8%	13%	5%	4%	-6%	0%
Peterborough	Con	Con	4.1%	Con	30.8%	29.5%	6.9%	16.7%	5.4%	10.7%	-1.4%	-6.1%
Warrington South	Con	Lab	4.6%	Lab	24.8%	36.9%	29.9%	3.4%	3.8%	1.4%	-8.4%	-2.2%
Southampton Itchen	Con	Con	5.2%	Lab	36.0%	41.3%	5.9%	7.1%	6.0%	3.7%	-5.3%	4.7%
Keighley	Con	Con	6.2%	Lab	25.0%	34.0%	2.9%	10.7%	3.5%	23.8%	-7.6%	-4.1%
Carlisle	Con	Lab	6.5%	Lab	34%	40%	9%	10%	3%	4%	-6%	2%
Halesowen & Rowley Regis	Con	Lab	7.0%	Lab	39.0%	44.3%	0.8%	10.8%	5.0%	0.0%	-6.2%	8.1%
Ipswich	Con	Con	7.7%	Lab	33.5%	48.3%	9.8%	3.4%	5.0%	0.0%	-11.2%	11.2%
Stroud	Con	Con	8.0%	Lab	31.5%	32.5%	4.2%	1.9%	24.9%	5.0%	-4.5%	-5.2%
Calder Valley	Con	Con	8.3%	TIE	32.1%	32.1%	18.9%	6.3%	5.9%	4.7%	-4.1%	-3.3%
Pudsey	Con	Con	8.8%	Con	39.5%	33.4%	11.3%	8.6%	3.8%	3.4%	-1.4%	-4.2%
Amber Valley	Con	X	9.2%	Lab	37%	39%	3%	17%	3%	1%	-6%	5%
Hastings & Rye	Con	X	9.4%	Lab	35%	45%	9%	4%	5%	1%	-10%	10%
Colne Valley	Con	Con	9.5%	Lab	24.7%	30.9%	21.1%	9.8%	5.3%	8.3%	-7.8%	-4.1%
Bristol North West	Con	X	9.5%	Con	34.6%	30.0%	16.9%	5.0%	11.3%	2.2%	-2.5%	-4.4%
Stevenage	Con	Con	10.4%	Lab	36%	40%	12%	4%	6%	3%	-7%	6%
Cannock Chase	Con	Con	10.5%	Lab	27.2%	37.1%	3.1%	26.1%	6.2%	0.4%	-10.2%	3.3%
Nuneaton	Con	X	10.7%	Con	36%	35%	0%	15%	15%	0%	-5%	0%
Dudley South	Con	Con	11.2%	Lab	28.6%	40.1%	0.0%	26.2%	5.1%	0.0%	-11.3%	7.5%
Worcester	Con	Con	11.4%	Lab	33%	34%	4%	14%	15%	0%	-6%	0%
Rossendale & Darwen	Con	Con	11.5%	Lab	36%	42%	8%	8%	1%	7%	-9%	6%
Swindon South	Con	Con	11.7%	Lab	34%	42%	11%	8%	5%	0%	-10%	8%
Pendle	Con	Con	12.3%	Con	43%	34%	19%	2%	1%	2%	-2%	-1%
Reading East	Con	Con	12.9%	Lab	35%	40%	15%	2%	14%	-6%	-9%	7%
Crawley	Con	Con	13.4%	Lab	42%	44%	3%	8%	3%	0%	-8%	11%
Reading West	Con	Con	13.7%	Lab	35%	42%	14%	4%	4%	0%	-10%	8%
Gloucester	Con	Con	13.8%	Con	37.2%	26.2%	17.2%	10.3%	7.4%	1.7%	-1.4%	-5.4%
Great Yarmouth	Con	Con	13.8%	Lab	33%	34%	0%	30%	3%	0%	-7%	4%

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	2015 GE	2015 LG	Con lead over Lab 2015 GE	2016 LG	Con	Lab	LD	UKIP	Green	Others	Swing 2015/16	Lab change 2015/16
Stourbridge	Con	Con	14.5%	Con	36.6%	35.4%	4.0%	19.9%	4.0%	0.1%	-6.6%	3.9%
Elmet & Rothwell	Con	Con	14.7%	Lab	35.2%	37.0%	9.6%	14.3%	3.9%	0.0%	-8.2%	3.3%
Milton Keynes South	Con	Con	14.7%	Lab	35.5%	39.6%	13.2%	11.6%	0.0%	0.0%	-9.4%	7.5%
Portsmouth South	Con	LD	15.3%	LD	20.1%	21.8%	38.2%	11.8%	8.1%	0.0%	-8.5%	2.3%
Redditch	Con	Con	16.0%	Lab	33%	35%	3%	23%	4%	2%	-9%	3%
Milton Keynes North	Con	Con	16.9%	Con	33.2%	31.2%	26.9%	4.7%	3.4%	0.6%	-7.5%	0.9%
Watford	Con	Con	17.9%	LD	21.4%	24.8%	39.4%	7.0%	6.4%	1.0%	-10.6%	-2.0%
Basildon South & Thurrock East	Con	X	18.2%	UKIP	32.3%	25.2%	2.7%	36.0%	0.6%	3.2%	-5.5%	-0.1%
Harlow	Con	Con	18.9%	Con	40%	38%	1%	20%	0%	2%	-9%	8%
Shipley	Con	Con	19.6%	Con	37.1%	29.0%	9.1%	11.3%	13.5%	0.0%	-5.8%	-1.7%
Basingstoke	Con	Con	20.8%	Con	36%	31%	12%	17%	0%	3%	-8%	3%
Rugby	Con	Con	21.1%	Con	39.1%	28.4%	17.3%	9.2%	4.5%	1.5%	-5.2%	0.5%
Rochford & Southend East	Con	Con	21.7%	Con	25.3%	22.5%	2.6%	17.2%	4.3%	28.1%	-9.4%	-2.2%
Swindon North	Con	Con	22.6%	Con	43.0%	35.8%	3.9%	11.5%	4.2%	1.6%	-7.7%	8.0%
Colchester	Con	Con	22.8%	LD	25.3%	23.8%	28.4%	7.0%	11.0%	4.5%	-10.6%	7.6%
Portsmouth North	Con	Con	23.2%	Con	35.4%	26.1%	19.9%	18.4%	0.0%	0.1%	-7.0%	2.3%
St Albans	Con	Con	23.4%	LD	28%	23%	34%	7%	8%	0%	-9%	0%
Hazel Grove	Con	Con	23.8%	LD	28.4%	16.0%	41.3%	9.7%	3.3%	1.2%	-5.7%	-1.6%
Tamworth	Con	Con	24.0%	Con	45%	32%	0%	20%	1%	3%	-5%	6%
Welwyn Hatfield	Con	Con	24.2%	Con	39.3%	28.4%	18.2%	4.3%	5.1%	4.8%	-6.7%	2.2%