



**POLLING
STATION**

A GUIDE TO THE LONDON COUNCIL ELECTIONS 2018

PART 2 – MAY 3RD PREVIEW

NUDGE KNOWLEDGE BRIEFING

APRIL 2018



LONDON COUNCIL ELECTIONS: 3RD MAY 2018 PREVIEW

On 3rd May 2018 there will be local elections held across England. Up for grabs will be seats on 34 metropolitan boroughs, the 32 London boroughs, 68 district/borough councils and 17 unitary authorities. There will also be elections for directly elected Mayors in Hackney, Lewisham, Newham, Tower Hamlets and Watford.

Earlier this year, [we published an historical look at elections in London since 1964](#). That briefing gave details of the best and worst years for each political party in London, in terms of councils controlled, seats won, and vote share, providing a useful baseline to help make predictions for 3rd May, as well as measure this year's actual results against.

This latest briefing focuses on what is likely to happen in the London elections on 3rd May itself. As before, Nudge Factory has worked closely on this project with our colleague from Psephos Consulting, Alex Wilson. We analyse a number of different factors - including recent polling, previous election results, scheduled boundary changes, demographic factors - to make predictions for results on a cross-London basis. Predictions are made on the basis of information available as of 28th March: if more London-specific polls are published before 3rd May we might go back and update this briefing based on the new data.

We will be examining individual borough manifestos, and the policy implications of any likely changes in political or intra-party factional control, in more depth at our breakfast briefing event on Friday 13th April. You can get more information about the briefing, and book tickets, [by clicking here](#).

Finally, this briefing is, for reasons of space, restricted to top-line, London-wide analysis. We can provide much more detailed analysis of likely election results and party manifesto commitments for individual London boroughs. Should you require that more comprehensive service, please do get in touch.

Sources used throughout this briefing include:

- Election results from the [London Data Store](#), which supplement our own datasets of election results;
- Polling data from [YouGov](#) and [Lord Ashcroft Polls](#);
- Political party websites, both local and national;
- Various online local newspapers and political blogs, especially [the ever insightful OnLondon](#) website run by Dave Hill;
- The Local Boundary Commission website.
- We are also grateful to the designers of the [arch diagram](#) and [build a Sankey diagram](#) tools.

We hope you find our latest briefing useful. If you have any questions about this briefing, please contact David Park via david@nudgefactory.co.uk.

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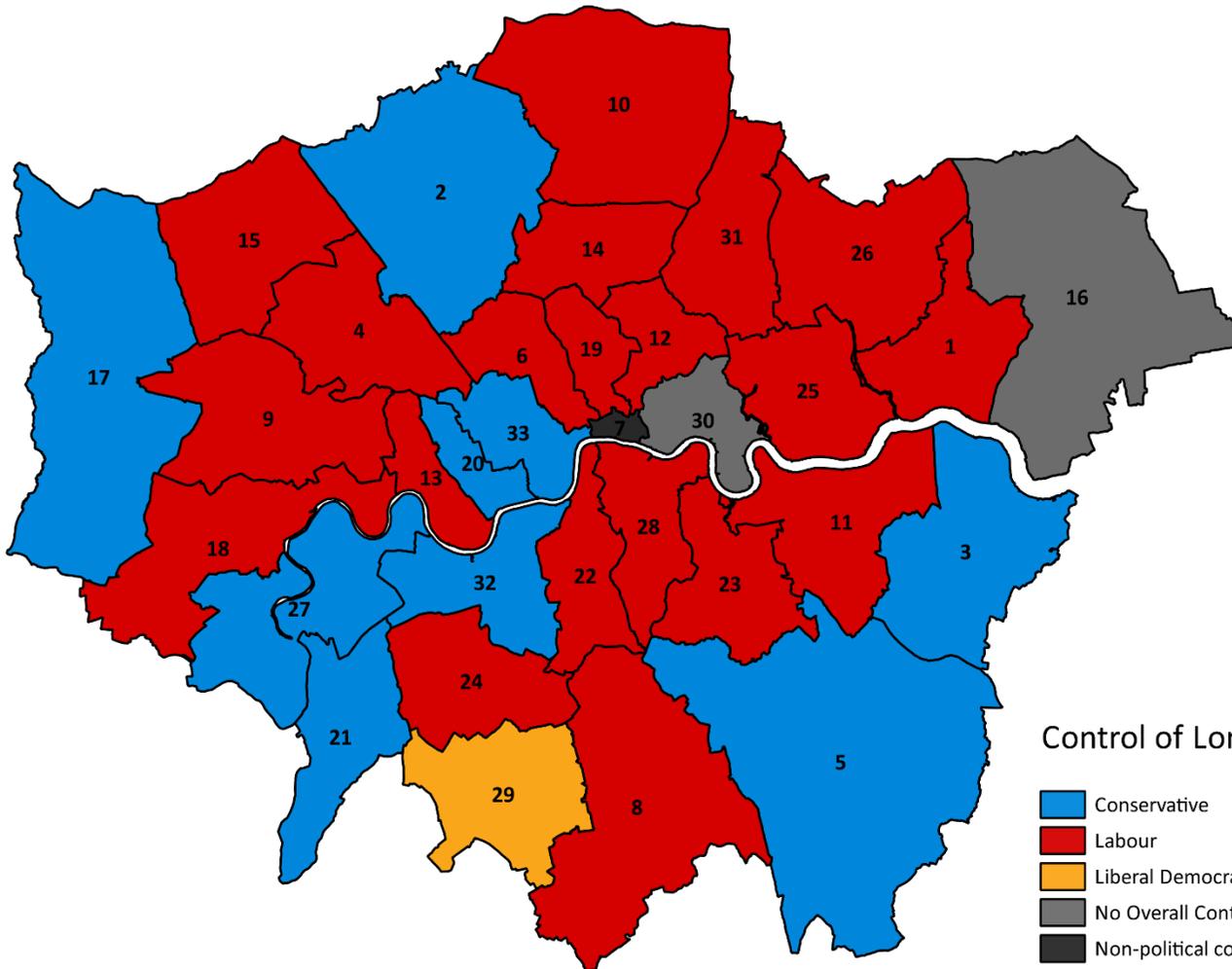
SECTION 1 - THE STATUS QUO

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SECTION 3 - TOP-LINE PREDICTIONS FOR 2018

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THE STATUS QUO - MAP OF COUNCILS WON BY PARTIES AT 2014 ELECTION



1	Barking & Dagenham	18	Hounslow
2	Barnet	19	Islington
3	Bexley	20	Kensington & Chelsea
4	Brent	21	Kingston upon Thames
5	Bromley	22	Lambeth
6	Camden	23	Lewisham
7	City of London	24	Merton
8	Croydon	25	Newham
9	Ealing	26	Redbridge
10	Enfield	27	Richmond upon Thames
11	Greenwich	28	Southwark
12	Hackney	29	Sutton
13	Hammersmith & Fulham	30	Tower Hamlets
14	Haringey	31	Waltham Forest
15	Harrow	32	Wandsworth
16	Havering	33	Westminster
17	Hillingdon		

Control of London Councils

- Conservative
- Labour
- Liberal Democrat
- No Overall Control
- Non-political council

THE STATUS QUO - SUMMARY AND COMMENTARY

2014 was a strange year for local elections in London. Held on the same day as the European elections, this seems to have skewed many results, at least in terms of votes cast and vote share. The 26.6% of the vote for ‘minor’ parties was a record, with the Greens and UKIP doing particularly well. However, those votes did not translate into council seats.

Instead, it was the two main parties that hoovered up the vast majority of councils and council seats. Labour increased its political control of the capital, winning control of 20 councils - its second best result since the local government reorganisation of 1964, only one fewer than its best of 21 councils in 1971. Its total of 1,060 seats was Labour’s fourth best result over the same timeframe, and the largest number of seats since 1974.

By comparison, the Conservatives recorded their worst vote share since 1964, polling just 26.0%, the first time they have dipped below 30%. Despite this they held on to 9 councils and over 600 hundred seats, although there is now an increased number of councils with little or no Conservative presence at all.

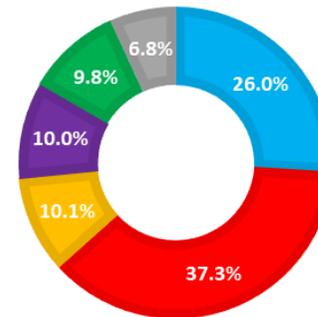
The Lib Dems suffered a double blow: they never do well at European elections; and being in coalition with the Conservatives also hit their vote hard. They lost control of two of the three councils they held, lost over a third of their seats, and were pretty much reduced back to a rump in South West London.

What can we expect the 2018 elections to have in store then? The General Elections of 2015 and 2017, and the Mayor and Assembly elections in 2016, all point to London swinging even further in the direction of Labour. Moreover, the huge majority for Remain in the Capital looks set to be an influencing issue that could help set back the Conservatives still further, with both Labour and the Lib Dems looking to profit. To partly offset that, the almost total demise of UKIP will impact on the outcome in some parts of outer London.

Most commentators agree that Labour will make gains in London on 3rd May, and that could mean a record night for them. It might also mean the worst ever set of results for the Conservatives. However, as we write this note, national issues appear to be pushing the polls back in the direction of the Conservatives and the PM, and away from Labour and Corbyn. Will that filter through in time to impact on the local elections in London?

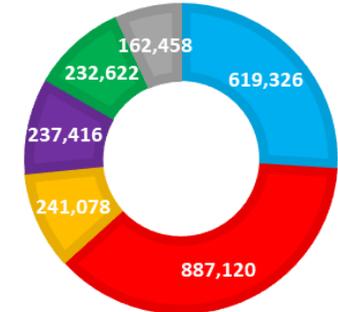
SHARE OF VOTE

■ Con ■ Lab ■ Lib Dem ■ UKIP ■ Green ■ Other



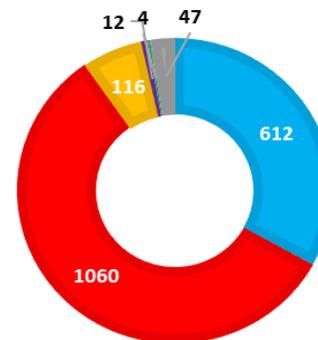
TOTAL VOTES

■ Con ■ Lab ■ Lib Dem ■ UKIP ■ Green ■ Other



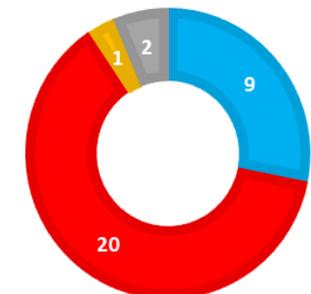
SEATS WON

■ Con ■ Lab ■ Lib Dem ■ UKIP ■ Green ■ Other

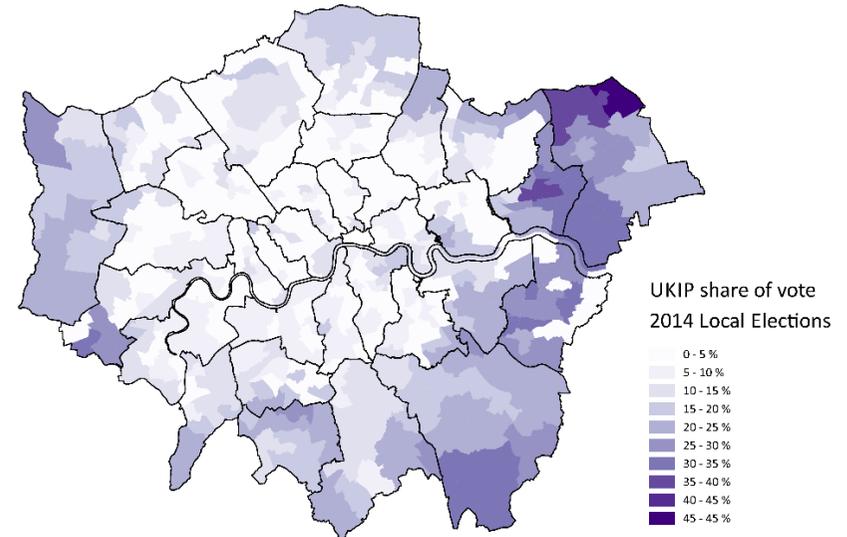
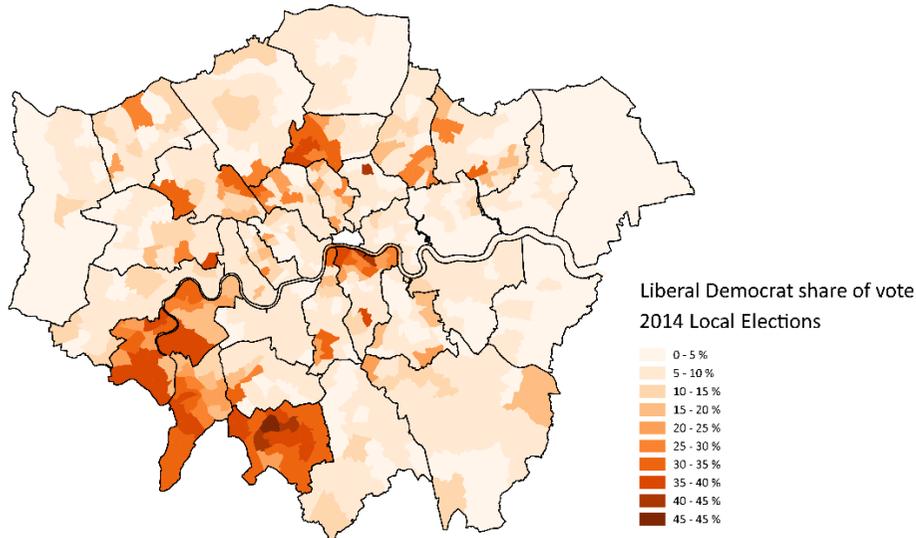
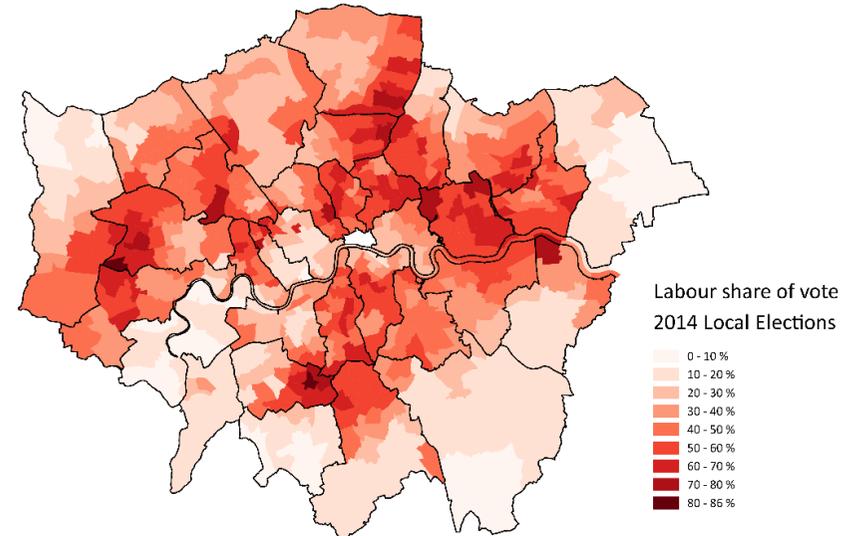
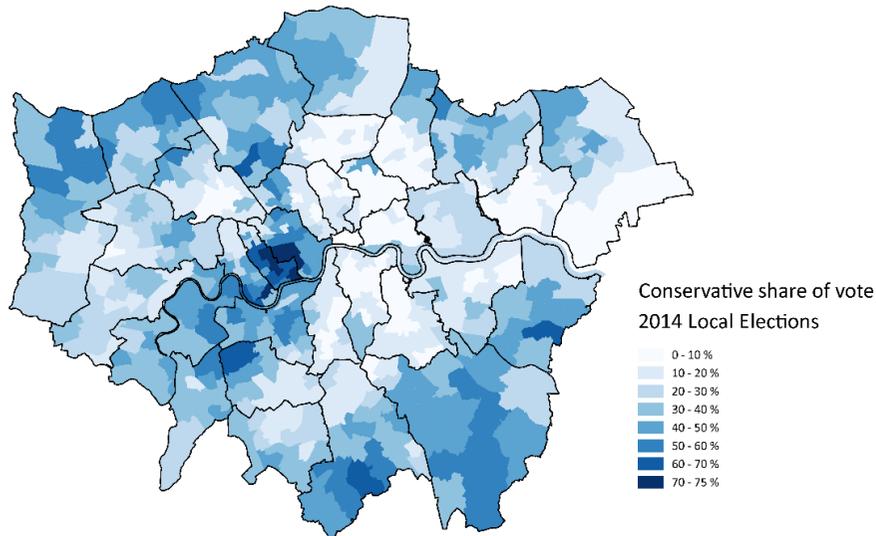


COUNCILS WON

■ Con ■ Lab ■ Lib Dem ■ NOC



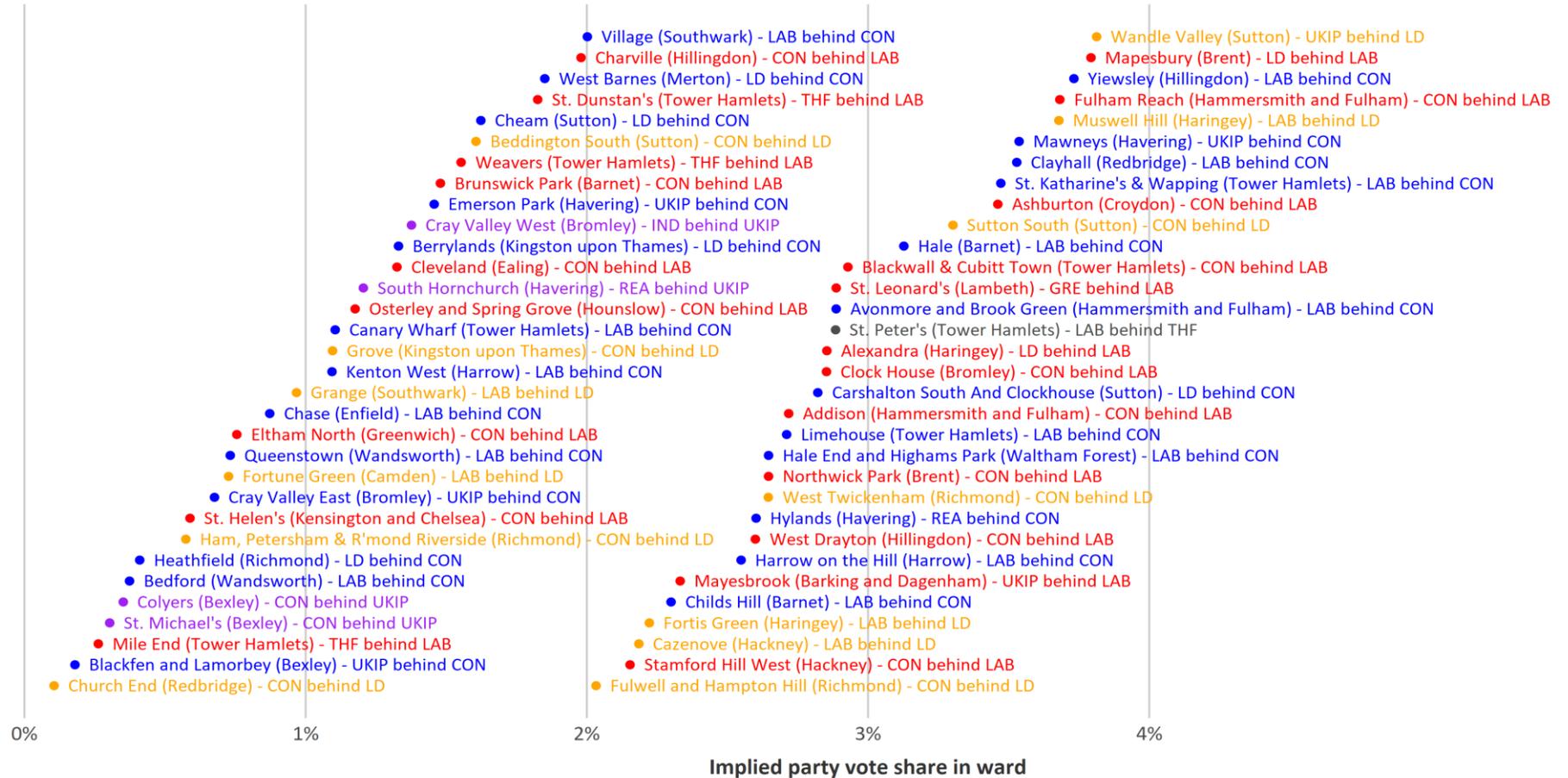
THE STATUS QUO - VISUAL REPRESENTATION OF PARTY VOTE SHARE BY WARD IN 2014



THE STATUS QUO - LONDON'S MOST MARGINAL WARDS

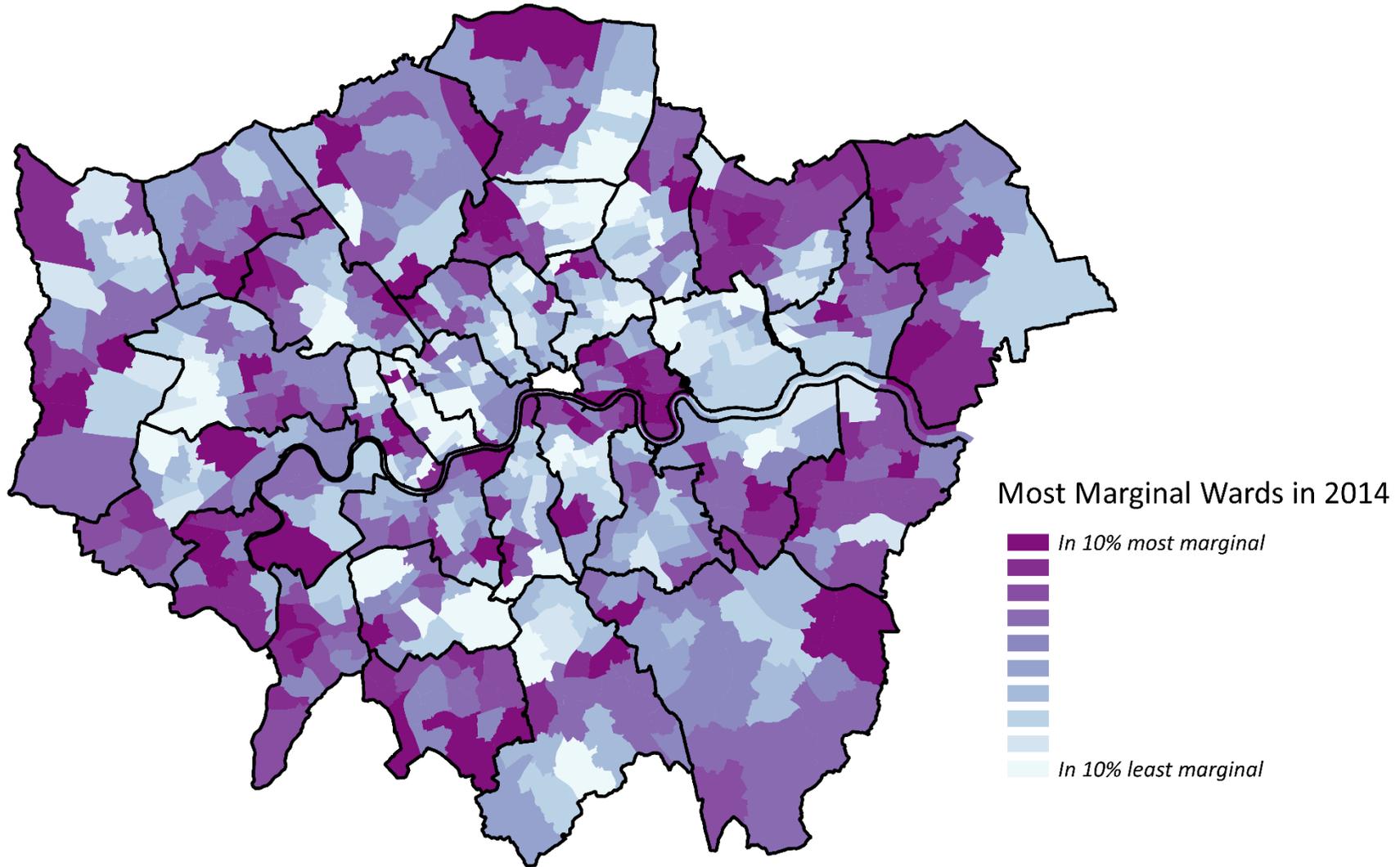
Closest Wards at London 2014 Local Election

Top 10% of wards with smallest difference in vote share



Colour represents party which won seat in 2014

THE STATUS QUO - LONDON WARDS MAPPED BY MARGINALITY

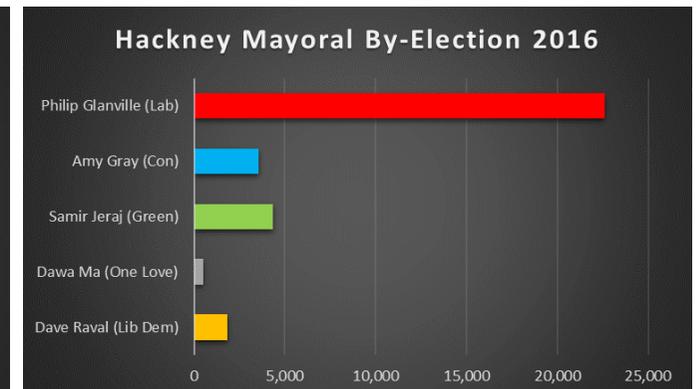
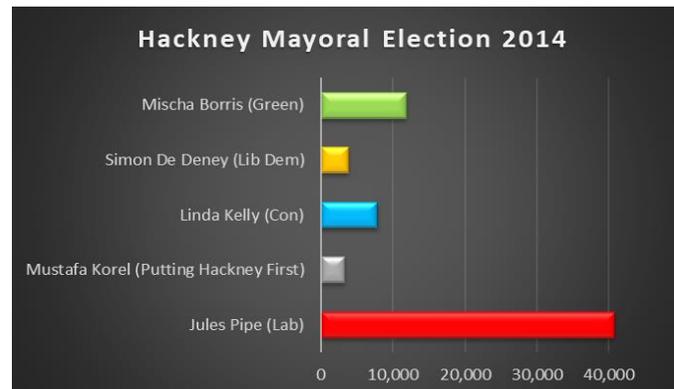
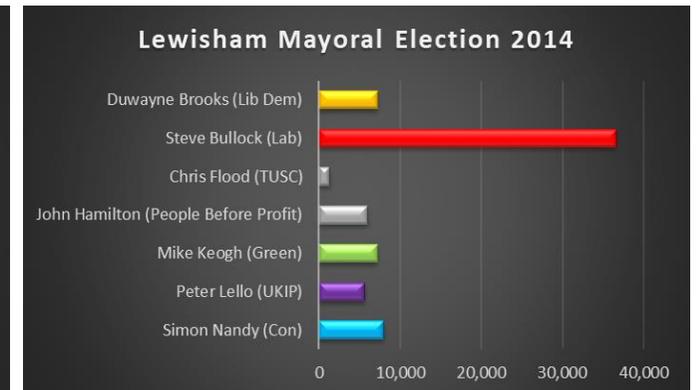
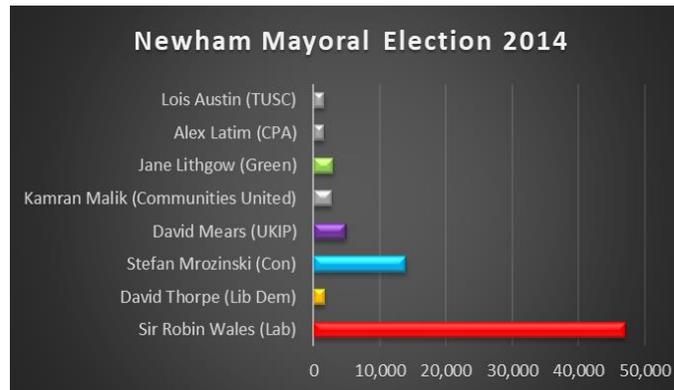


THE STATUS QUO - LONDON'S DIRECTLY ELECTED MAYORS

As well as elections for councils, there are also elections for directly elected Mayors in four London boroughs on 3rd May - Hackney, Lewisham, Newham and Tower Hamlets. All are Labour-held and, apart from Tower Hamlets, have been solidly so since directly elected Mayors were first introduced. We take a look at the (much) more complicated picture in Tower Hamlets on the next page but start with a summary of the other three here.

Mayoral elections are run under the supplementary vote (SV) system, [which we produced a detailed Nudge Knowledge note on last year](#). Under the SV system the elector picks their first and second choice candidate. When the votes are tallied, if one candidate gains more than 50% of first preference votes, they are elected straight away. If nobody receives more than 50% of the first preference votes, then the two candidates with the highest share of the vote go into a second round and the other candidates are eliminated. The second preference votes from the eliminated candidates are added to those of the remaining two candidates, and whoever has the largest number of votes from the two rounds combined is elected.

As you can see from the charts on the right, at the 2014 Mayoral elections in Newham, Lewisham and Hackney - and in the Hackney by-election caused when the sitting Mayor resigned to take up a post in Sadiq Khan's administration - that second round was not required.



Philip Glanville is the only incumbent Mayor from this trio of boroughs who is standing again. Sir Robin Wales was deselected by Labour after a quarter of a century running the borough as either council leader or Mayor: Rokhsana Fiaz will replace him on the ballot paper. Sir Steve Bullock is standing down as Mayor of Lewisham, a role he has held since 2002 when the post was first created. Labour have selected Damien Egan to stand for them on 3rd May. All of these Mayoral elections are likely to be won again easily by Labour but the change in personnel, and the rise of Momentum in the Labour movement, mean there could well be some major changes in how those boroughs will be run in future.

THE STATUS QUO - LONDON'S DIRECTLY ELECTED MAYORS CONT...

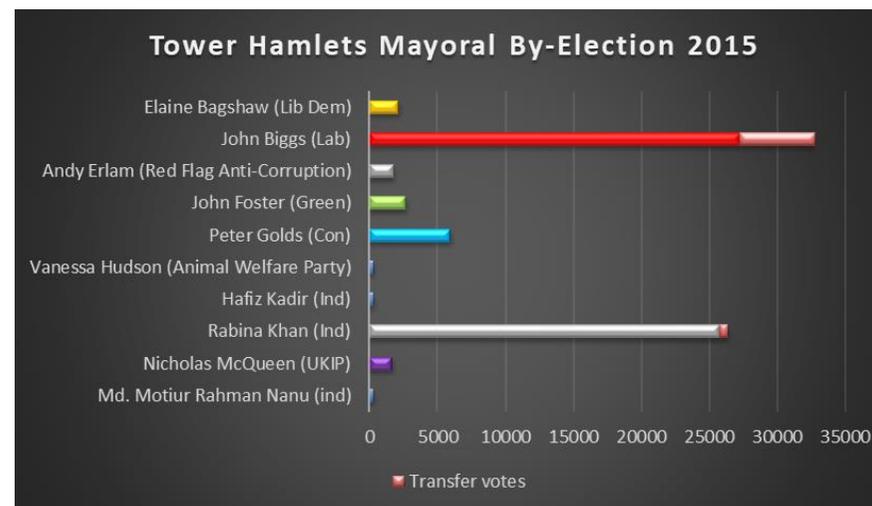
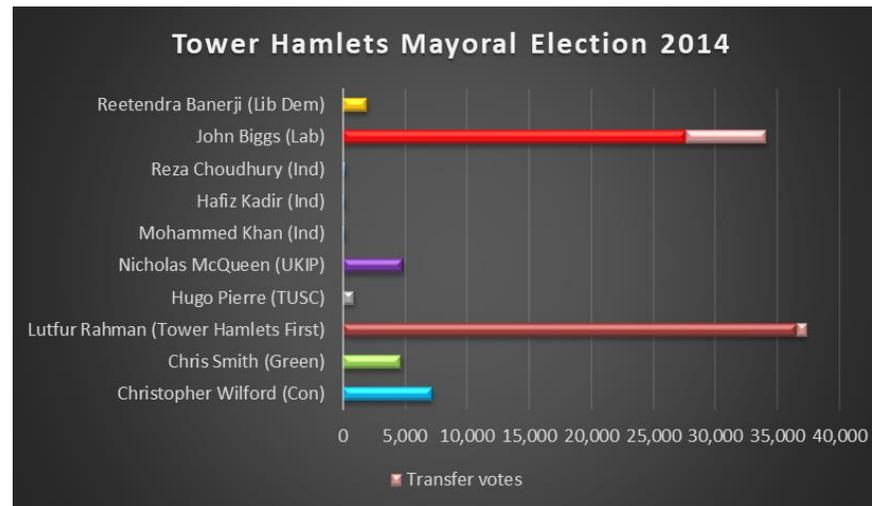
The Mayoral elections in Tower Hamlets are a more complicated story due to intra-party factionalism and the politics of the diverse communities in the borough. The first Mayoral election in 2010 was won by Lutfur Rahman, standing as an independent candidate. Rahman had previously been the Labour leader of the council and had originally been selected as the Labour Party candidate. However, after allegations made about his links to an extremist group, as well as claims surrounding his win in the Labour selection process, he was deselected. He went on to win the 2010 election on the first ballot with a resounding 52% of the vote. This was the first time a non-Labour candidate had won a directly elected Mayoral election in London.

By the time the 2014 election came along, Rahman had had time to organise and had set up his own political party, Tower Hamlets First. What followed was a bitter and divisive campaign, with Labour London Assembly Member John Biggs running against Rahman. In what was always going to be a close campaign there were many reported instances of intimidation, threats and even violence, ensuring that the campaign made national headlines. On polling day, Rahman won after second preference votes were counted, with 52% of the vote, and Biggs coming second on 48%.

That was not the end of the matter though. There had been many reports of illegal election practices during the 2014 campaign and, in 2015, after an investigation by the Election Court, the result was declared null and void due to breaches of the Representation of the People Act. Rahman was removed from office and barred from standing for office until 2021. This initiated a by-election.

Cllr Rabina Khan announced she would contest the by-election as the Tower Hamlets First candidate, but the Party was removed from the register of political parties due to irregularities. She ended up running as an independent and ultimately lost to John Biggs on the second ballot. Biggs has been the Labour Party Mayor of Tower Hamlets since, whilst the council remained No Overall Control with Labour the largest party on 22 seats, Tower Hamlets First on 18, and the Conservatives on five.

It is fair to say that politics in the borough remains fraught and that both the Mayoral and council elections in Tower Hamlets will again be close, and bitterly fought, on 3rd May.



FACTORS TO CONSIDER FOR 2018 - BOUNDARY CHANGES

The last comprehensive set of ward-level boundary changes in London, affecting all 32 boroughs simultaneously, took place in 2002. More recent changes took place in 2014 in the boroughs of Hackney, Newham, Tower Hamlets and Kensington & Chelsea. They cannot be said to have fundamentally changed the overall results, except perhaps in Tower Hamlets where there were a large number of split wards and there was a NOC outcome - although that perhaps says more about the nature of politics in Tower Hamlets than it does of the boundary changes.

2018 is set to see changes to ward boundaries in another four boroughs, as summarised below.

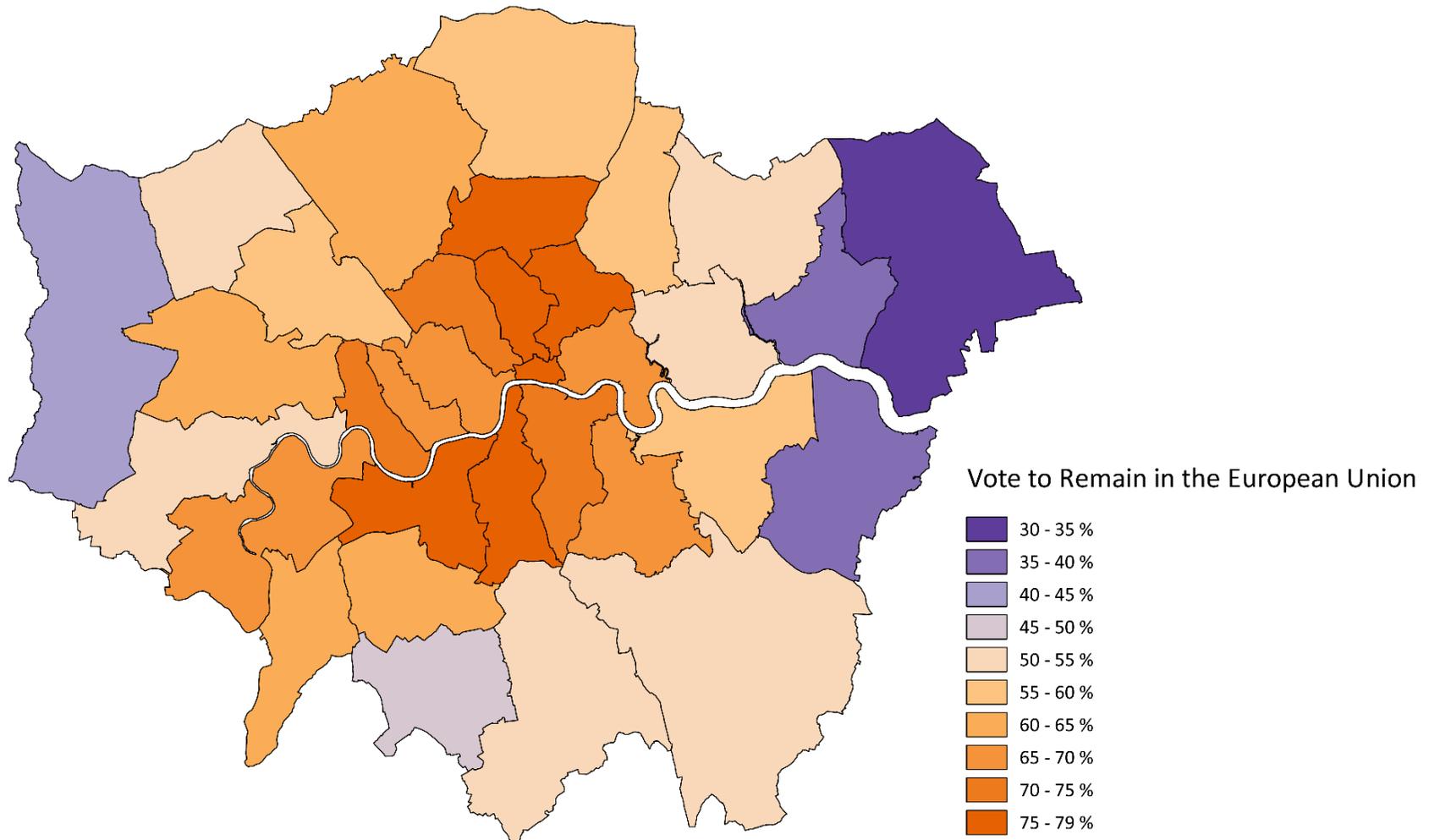
Borough	Number of Councillors New (Old)	Number of Wards New (Old)	New ward make-up
Bexley	45 (63)	17 (21)	6 two-member wards, 11 three-member
Croydon	70 (70)	28 (24)	1 one-member ward, 12 two-member wards, 15 three-member wards
Redbridge	63 (63)	22 (21)	3 two-member wards, 19 three-member wards.
Southwark	63 (63)	23 (21)	6 two-member wards, 17 three-member wards

We don't consider any of these councils as likely to change hands on 3rd May. However, the boundary changes could have an impact on the number of seats each party wins. For instance, in Southwark the Conservatives only have two councillors, both in Village Ward. It is currently a three-member ward, with Labour holding the third seat. The boundary changes reduce Village Ward to a two-member ward, with relatively minor changes to the ward boundaries.

In Croydon, where the north of the Borough is solidly Labour and the south is solidly Conservative, the changes to the ward boundaries across the centre of the borough make a number of seats competitive, although overall we don't expect the changes to favour one party or another. In Redbridge, the boundary changes tip the balance further in Labour's direction by adding two seats in that party's south Ilford heartland and subtracting two seats from the more Tory-inclined Woodford and Wanstead area in the west.

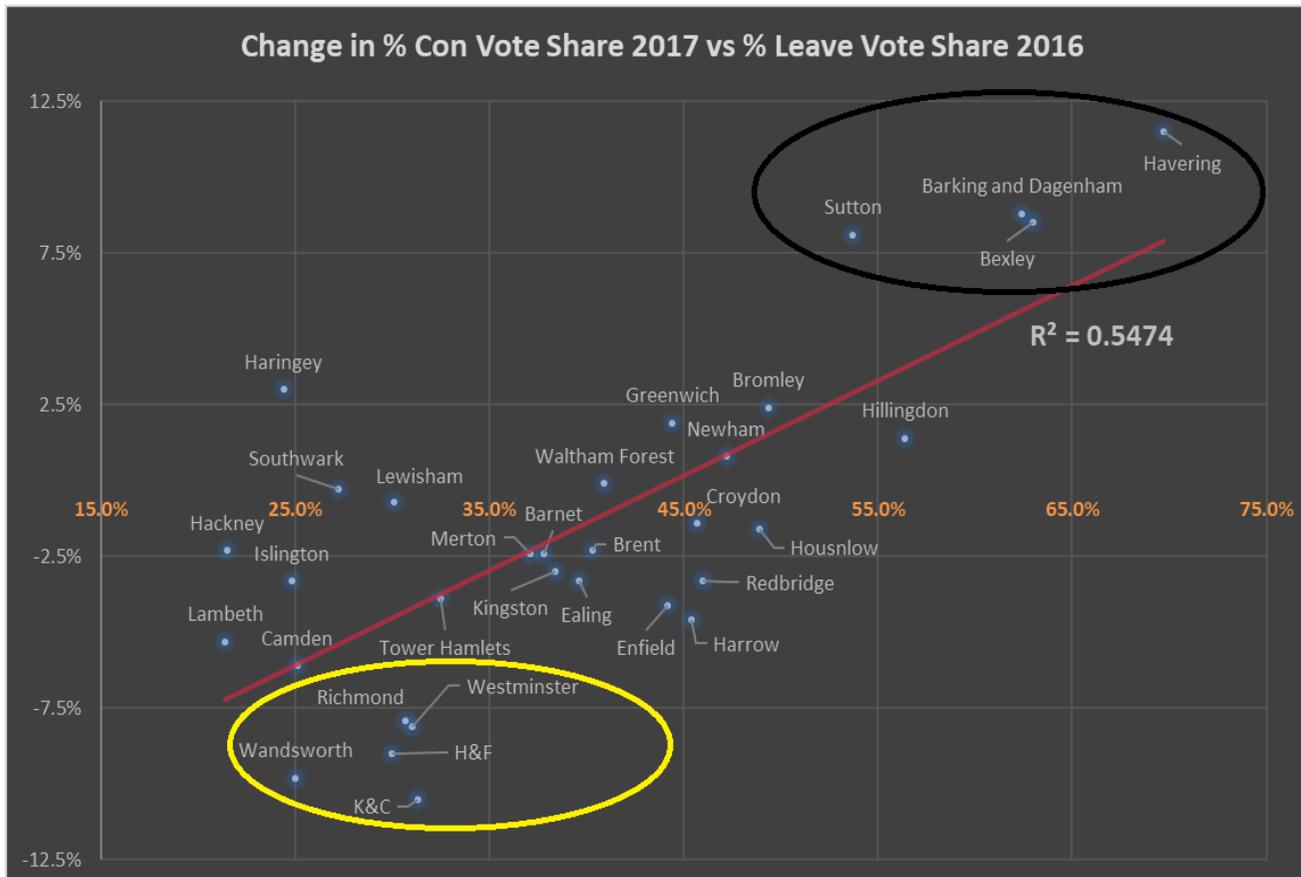
It is also worth highlighting that Bexley is the only council to have a reduced number of wards and, more importantly, councillors as part of the review. As Bexley has a large number of Conservative councillors, this will have a small effect on reducing the number of seats the Party can win on 3rd May: in short, they cannot win as many seats in Bexley as they did before and that will impact on the total number of council seats they record across the capital.

FACTORS TO CONSIDER FOR 2018 - THE BREXIT EFFECT



FACTORS TO CONSIDER FOR 2018 - THE BREXIT EFFECT CONT...

London voted heavily in favour of remaining in the EU in 2016. It was the only English region to back Remain, with nearly 60% of the capital voting to stay. Not surprisingly, the Europe issue played heavily at the 2017 General Election: all six of the Conservative Party losses were in Remain voting areas. However, the link is much stronger than that, as is made clear in the chart below, which shows the relationship between the Leave vote in 2016 and the change in the Conservative Party vote share in the 2017 General Election: the higher the Leave vote, the higher the increase in the Conservative vote share; and vice-versa. (In boroughs with cross-border parliamentary constituencies we have estimated the General Election vote share).



It is a fair bet that Brexit will continue to play a role in the upcoming local elections in London too. In fact, as EU citizens are entitled to vote in local elections, (they cannot vote in General Elections) it could be even more of an issue, despite the increased time since the referendum. Recent polling (see below) suggests that Brexit, whether the respondent voted Remain or Leave, is likely to be a consideration for about one in five voters on 3rd May.

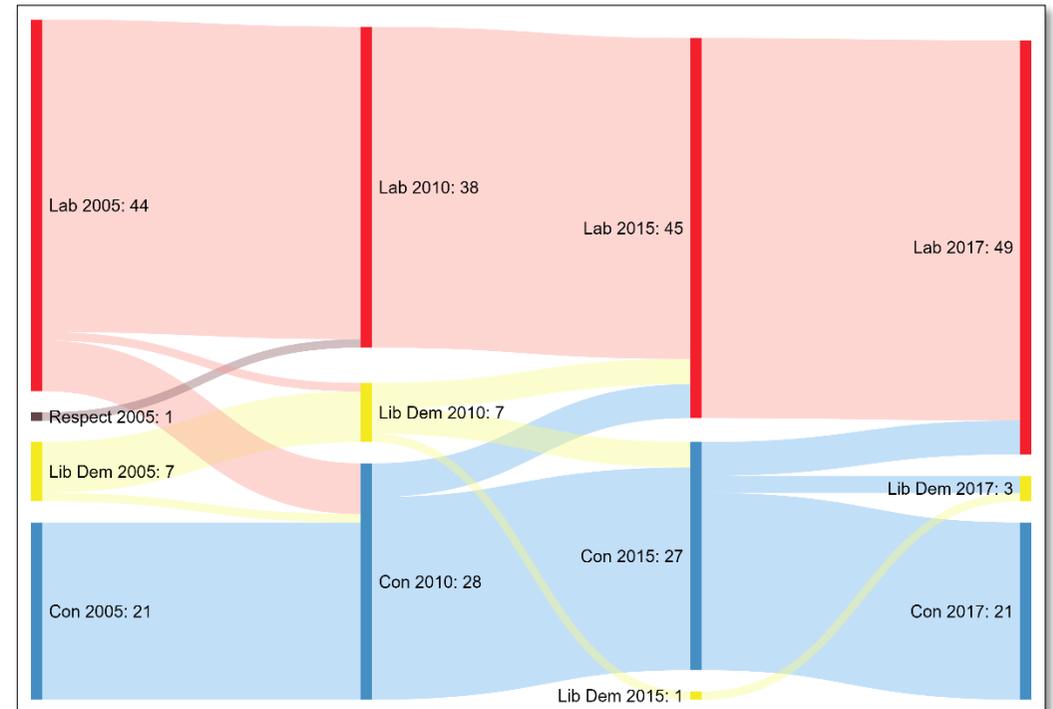
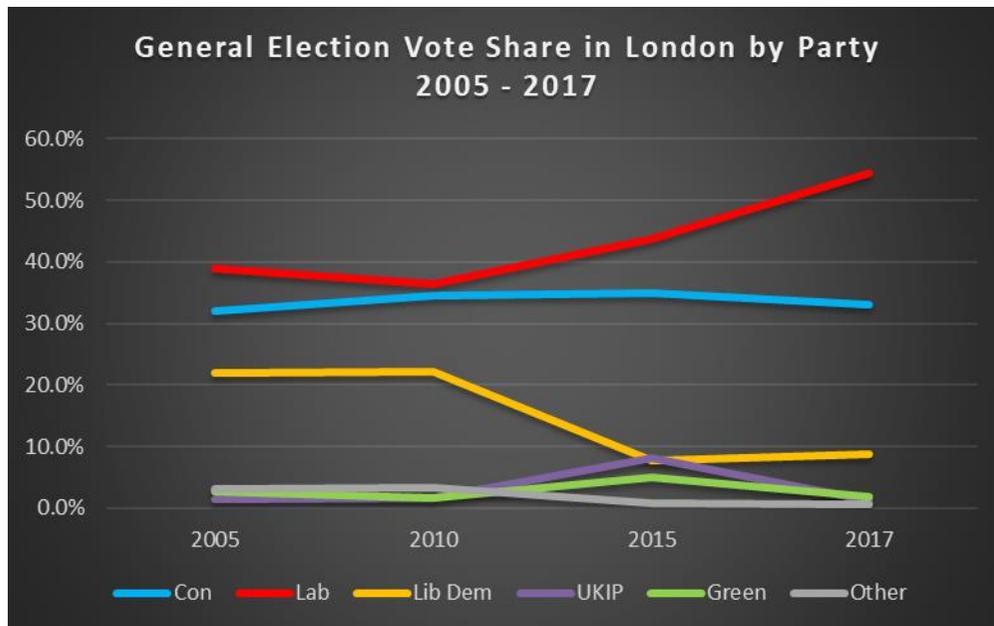
Which boroughs is this most likely to affect? Clustered together in the high Remain vote, big drop in Conservative vote share region of the chart (marked in yellow) are the key battlegrounds of Wandsworth, Kensington and Chelsea and Westminster – all targeted by Labour, and Richmond – where the Lib Dems are trying to regain the council. The former three have hitherto been Conservative strongholds but are now under threat. If any one of those do change hands, residual anger over the Brexit vote is likely to have been a key reason. This is why Vince Cable has recently been making outspoken comments about Leave voters, trying to ensure that Brexit is still on people’s minds when they go to vote in places like Richmond.

Conversely, we might expect Leave-voting areas to be safer territory for the Conservatives. Will we see an increase in the Conservative vote on 3rd May in places like Sutton (currently Lib Dem controlled), Barking and Dagenham (where Labour hold every single council seat), Havering (currently NOC), and Bexley (Con)? Might this also suggest that the Conservative-held borough of Hillingdon, further down the correlation line, will be a harder nut for Labour to crack than other councils that past electoral performances suggest should be safer for the Conservatives?

FACTORS TO CONSIDER FOR 2018 - RECENT GENERAL ELECTION RESULTS

In recent history, London has been a solidly Labour-voting part of the UK. Even in 2010, when the Conservatives won more seats in the capital since 1992 and formed a coalition Government with the Lib Dems, and in 2015, when they won an outright parliamentary majority of their own, the Party failed to win a majority of seats in the capital, and polled fewer votes than Labour.

The graph below shows party votes shares in London since 2005. The Conservatives have flatlined at between 30% and 35% (a situation going back to at least 1997 in fact), with Labour recovering strongly since 2010, taking more than 50% of the vote in 2017. The collapse of the Lib Dems following their spell in government has contributed to this, and that drop in Lib Dem support has also hit the Conservatives in terms of seats won, as the anti-Conservative vote has stopped splitting (although the three gains the Conservatives made in 2015 were at the Lib Dems' expense).



That change in parliamentary seats in London between 2005 and 2017 is summarised in the above diagram. (2005 seat numbers are based on notional results for the 2005 election as if contested on the 2010 parliamentary boundaries.) As with percentage vote share, the story of recent years is one of a resurgent Labour Party, and the decline of the Conservatives.

The picture is complicated, though, by where those votes stack up. There are clearly solid Labour, Conservative and even Lib Dem parts of London. We need to look at the more competitive, or marginal, parts of the capital to get a feeling for how these recent General Election results can help us understand what is likely to happen at the London council elections on 3rd May this year.

FACTORS TO CONSIDER FOR 2018 - RECENT GENERAL ELECTION RESULTS CONT...

The Conservatives lost six seats to Labour and the Lib Dems at the 2017 General Election. Three of those, at least, can be categorised as ‘surprise’ wins, with very few commentators, ourselves included, expecting Labour to win Enfield Southgate, Battersea, and especially Kensington. The latter two can, in part, be attributed to anti-Brexit feeling (see the scatter diagram on p13), although other issues were clearly also at play, and we look at some of these later in this document.

Those Conservative losses are summarised in the table below.

Seats changing hands 2017				
Constituency	Borough	Party Control	New Majority	Swing 2015 - 2017
Battersea	Wandsworth	Lab GAIN from Con	2,416	10.0% Con to Lab
Croydon Central	Croydon	Lab GAIN from Con	5,652	5.2% Con to Lab
Enfield Southgate	Enfield	Lab GAIN from Con	4,355	9.7% Con to Lab
Kensington	Kensington & Chelsea	Lab GAIN from Con	20	10.6% Con to Lab
Kingston and Surbiton	Kingston	LD GAIN from Con	4,124	5.7% Con to LD
Twickenham	Kingston/Richmond	LD GAIN from Con	9,762	9.0% Con to LD

Looking at those losses, it suggests that the Conservatives may have something to worry about in Wandsworth, Kensington & Chelsea, Kingston and Richmond, and that any hopes they may harbour of winning back Croydon will not be fulfilled.

However, those losses do not tell the whole story. There were a number of Labour ‘near-misses’ in 2017, and large swings in a number of other seats. These could also be indicators for the 2018 council elections in London.

The table to the right shows some selected 2017 General Election results, with large swings from Con to Lab in Westminster and Wandsworth, and also a large Con to Lib Dem swing in Richmond and Kingston. Again, these seem likely to be linked in large part to anti-Brexit sentiment.

Smaller, but still substantial Con to Lab swings occurred in both Hillingdon and Barnet, the latter a council the Conservatives won in 2014 by just one seat. Although the swings are smaller, they indicate that the Conservatives will likely have a fight on their hands to hold onto those seats on 3rd May.

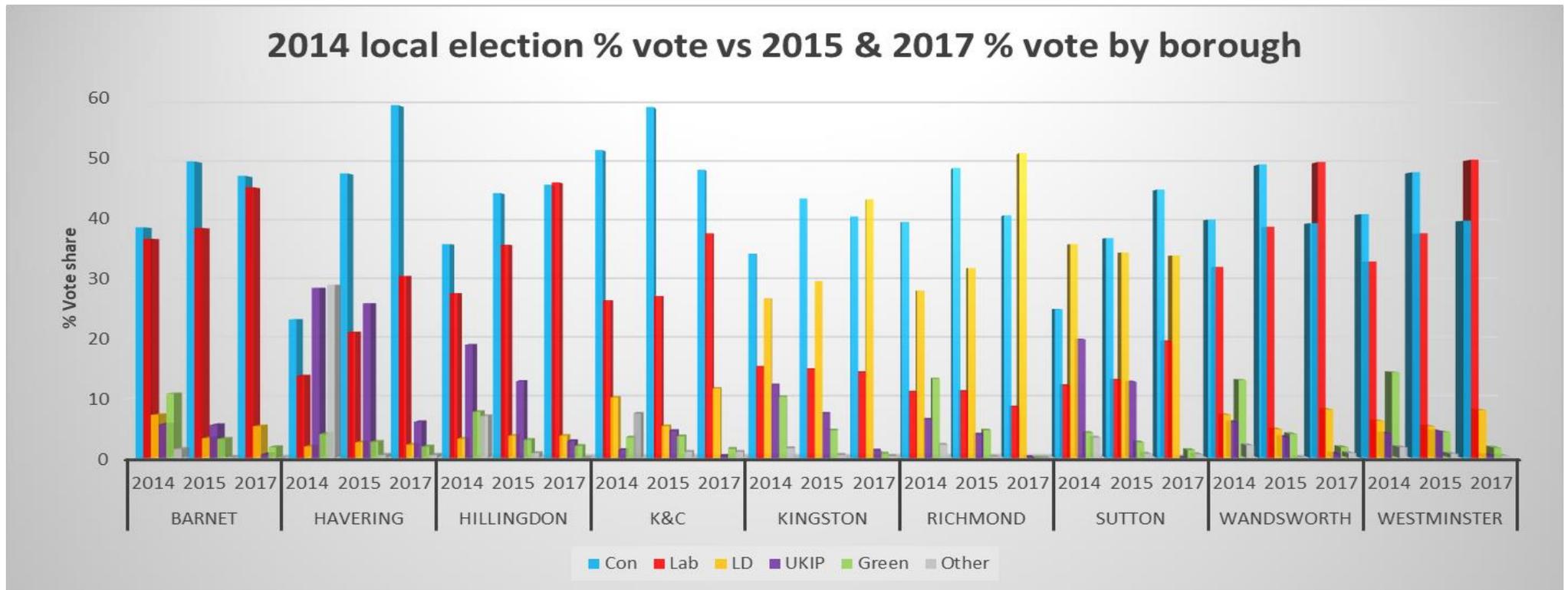
The only real significant movement to the Conservatives occurred in Sutton and Havering. The latter situation is complicated by historical high levels of support for Residents candidates at local elections, but that trend to the Conservatives, probably yet again linked to the EU Referendum vote, this time pro-Brexit, is still clearly there.

Other swings in key boroughs				
Constituency	Borough	Party Control	New Majority	Swing 2015 - 2017
Uxbridge and Ruislip South	Hillingdon	Con	5,034	7.1% Con to Lab
Ruislip, Northwood & Pinner	Hillingdon/Harrow	Con	13,980	6.6% Con to Lab
Hayes & Harlington	Hillingdon	Lab	18,115	1.5% Con to Lab
Finchley & Golders Green	Barnet	Con	1,657	4.0% Con to Lab
Hendon	Barnet	Con	1,072	2.8% Con to Lab
Chipping Barnet	Barnet	Con	353	6.9% Con to Lab
Cities of London & Westminster	Westminster	Con	3,148	9.3% Con to Lab
Westminster North	Westminster	Lab	11,512	10.8% Con to Lab
Richmond Park	Richmond/Kingston	Con	45	19.5% Con to LD
Putney	Wandsworth	Con	1,554	10.3% Con to Lab
Tooting	Wandsworth	Lab	15,458	10.6% Con to Lab
Sutton & Cheam	Sutton	Con	12,698	8.3% LD to Con
Carshalton & Wallington	Sutton	LD	1,369	0.3% LD to Con
Romford	Havering	Con	13,778	1.3% Con to Lab
Homchurch & Upminster	Havering	Con	17,723	1.4% Lab to Con
Dagenham & Rainham	Havering/Barking & Dagenham	Lab	4,652	3.5% Lab to Con

FACTORS TO CONSIDER FOR 2018 - RECENT GENERAL ELECTION RESULTS CONT...

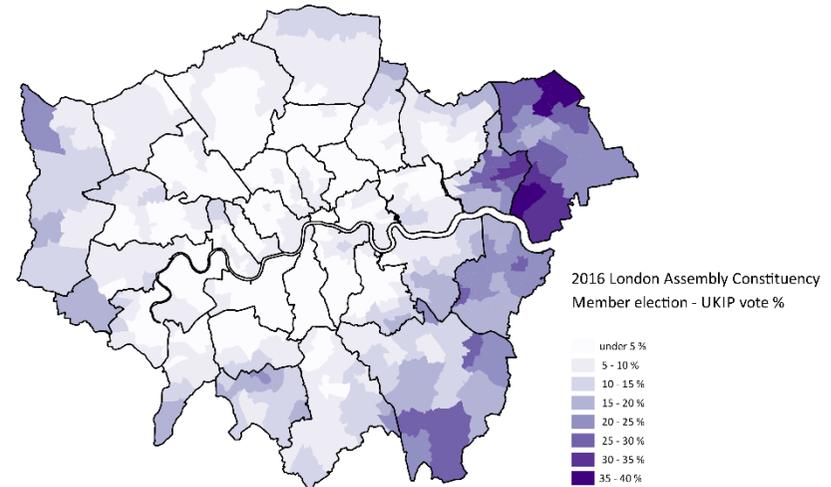
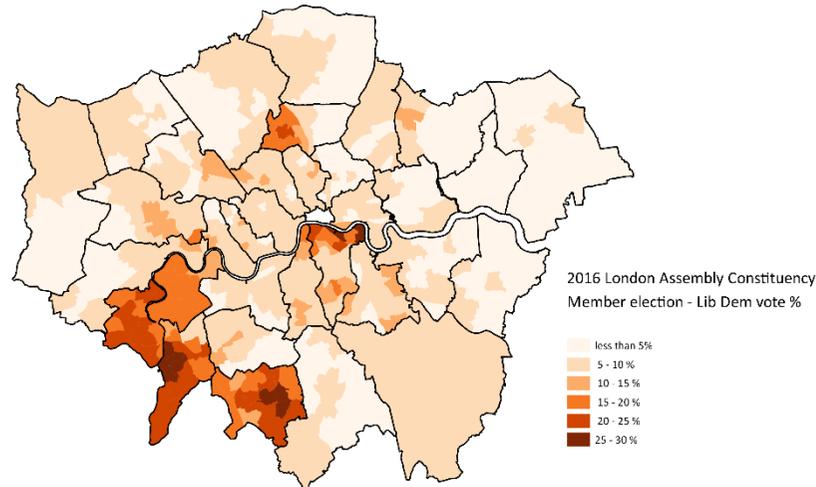
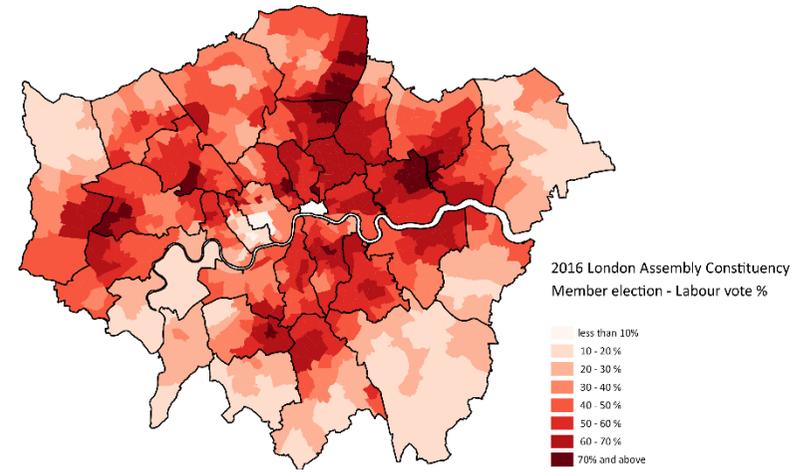
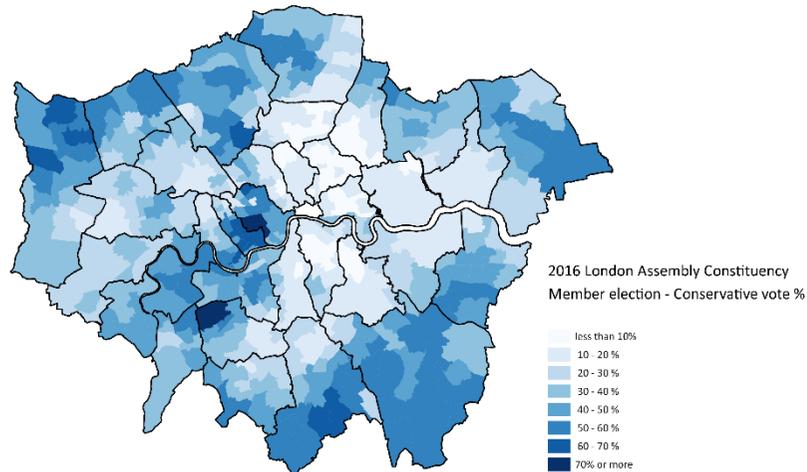
You get a clearer picture when you translate those General Election results to a borough-level for comparison. Some of these need to be taken with caution, as certain constituencies cross borough boundaries and so borough totals have to be estimated. In the chart below - showing selected results from the 2014 local election, and the 2015 and 2017 General Elections - Havering, Hillingdon, Kensington & Chelsea, Kingston and Richmond contain cross-border constituencies. For those boroughs with cross-border constituencies, this is an estimate.

This exercise suggests that the Conservative-held boroughs of Westminster, Wandsworth and Richmond are all under threat, with large Labour or Lib Dem leads at the 2017 General Election. The data for Kingston, Hillingdon and Barnet all suggests much closer fights. Kensington and Chelsea retains a substantial Conservative lead, although politics there is extremely complicated in the aftermath of the Grenfell Tower fire, and there is a growing Labour vote to deal with. Again, Sutton and Havering seem to be the two boroughs where there might be some scope for the Conservatives to make gains.



FACTORS TO CONSIDER FOR 2018 - RECENT MAYOR AND ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS

The heatmaps below show the share of the vote achieved by Conservative, Labour, Lib Dem and UKIP candidates in the Constituency Member elections for the London Assembly in 2016. Constituency Member elections have been chosen as a comparator because they are conducted under the first-past-the-post system and therefore more closely resemble local elections. They mirror closely the 2014 local and 2015/17 General Elections, although the Labour vote is more substantial for the Assembly.



FACTORS TO CONSIDER FOR 2018 - RECENT MAYOR AND ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS CONT...

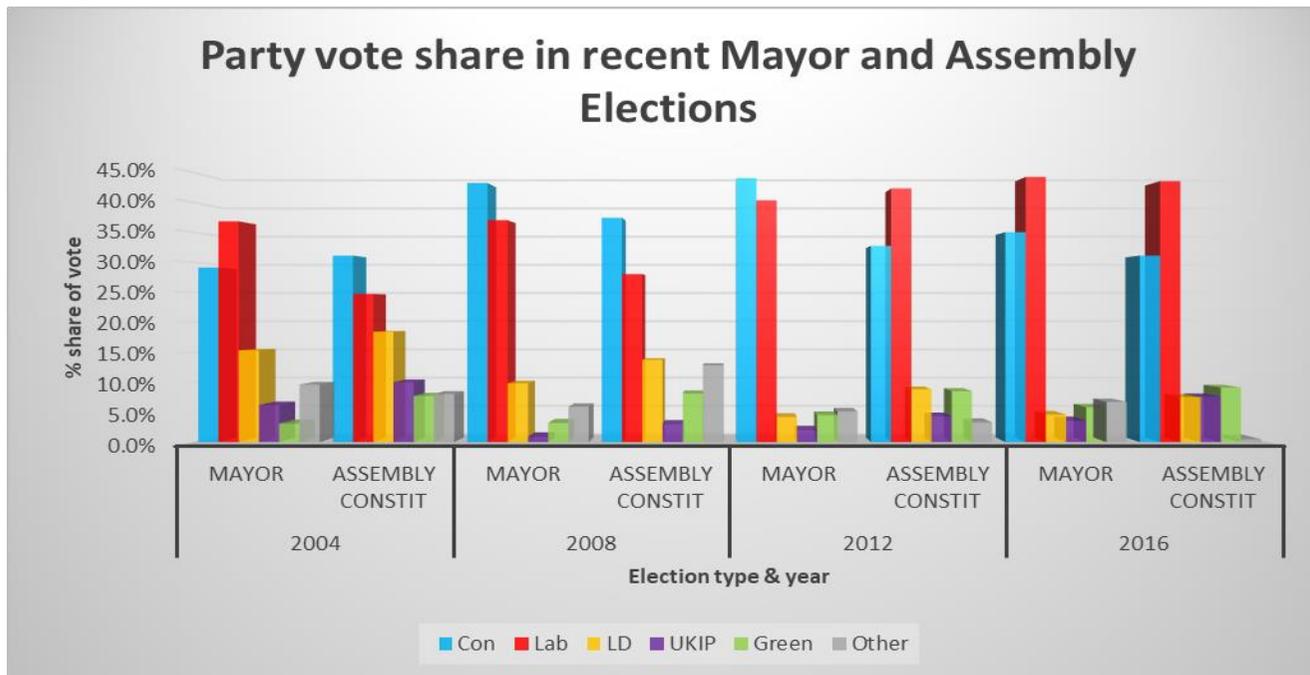
Looking at voting patterns at the recent Mayoral and Constituency Member Assembly elections reinforces the trend seen in other polls: a move back towards Labour in the capital. Likewise, the 2004 elections saw the minor parties poll well at both Mayoral and Assembly elections; since then their vote share has declined and increasingly we have seen a straightforward contest between Labour and the Conservatives.

In the latest set of elections in 2016, the Labour Party polled its best set of results at these elections since they started in 2000. Sadiq Khan won the Mayoral race decisively, defeating the Conservative candidate, Zac Goldsmith. In the Assembly elections, the Labour Party won a record number of seats, 12 out of 25, nearly gaining a majority in a system designed to try and ensure that no one party can win more than 50% of the seats. That total of 12 included winning 9 out of the 14 first-past-the-post constituency seats: the Conservatives picked up the remaining 5 constituency seats.

YouGov/Queen Mary University Survey – 12-15 Feb 2018			
	Livingstone	Johnson	Khan
A very good job	17	10	15
A fairly good job	30	36	43
TOTAL GOOD JOB	47	46	58
A fairly bad job	16	22	14
A very bad job	11	18	10
TOTAL BAD JOB	27	40	24
Don't know	26	13	17
NET GOOD JOB	+20	+6	+32

Since his election as Mayor, Sadiq Khan has seen particularly high approval ratings in opinion polls. The above table shows the responses given to a recent YouGov poll asking Londoners whether they think Khan and the past Mayors - Johnson and Livingstone - did a good or bad job. Khan comes out on top by some margin, although it is worth noting that both Johnson and Livingstone polled higher in polls taken whilst they were in office, to levels similar Khan now enjoys.

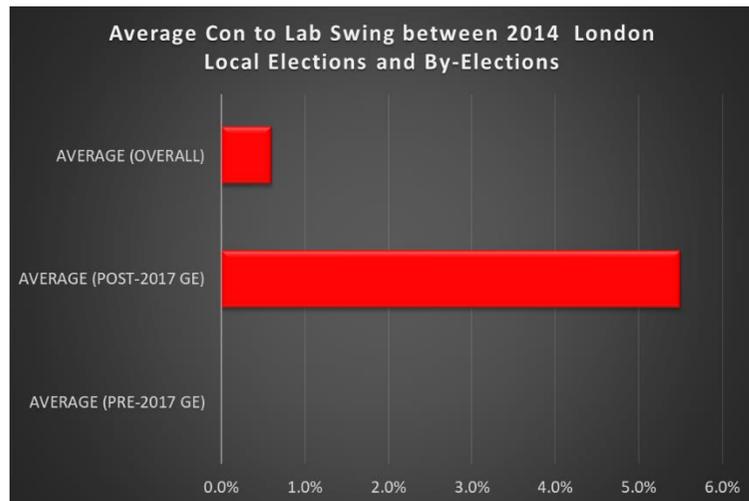
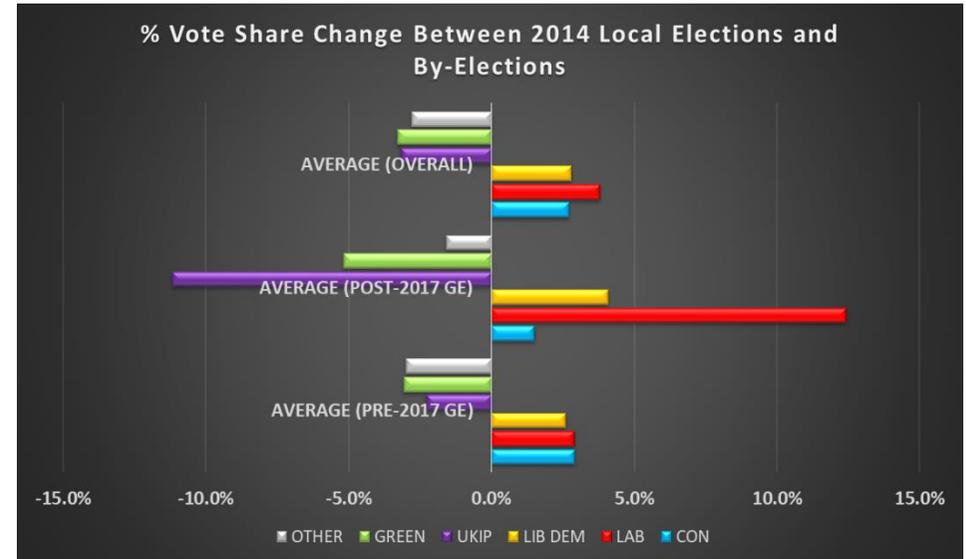
In any event, Khan seems to be an electoral asset for the Labour party in the capital, in a way that Johnson arguably was for the Conservatives at the 2010 General Election. It will be interesting to see how high a profile he has, or is allowed by Labour HQ, during the local elections. In particular, might he help push Labour over the winning line in Wandsworth, where he was previously the Labour MP in Tooting?



FACTORS TO CONSIDER FOR 2018 - COUNCIL BY-ELECTIONS IN LONDON SINCE 2014

Since the local elections in 2014, all but two London Boroughs - Barking and Dagenham and Bromley - have seen by-elections held. There have been 80 by-elections in total, with Southwark having the most contests, with six.

Number of By-Elections	Boroughs
0	Barking & Dagenham, Bromley
1	Bexley, Ealing, Havering, Hillingdon, Islington, Redbridge, Richmond, Waltham Forest.
2	Barnet, Hammersmith & Fulham, Harrow, Hounslow, Sutton, Tower Hamlets.
3	Brent, Croydon, Enfield, Greenwich, Kensington & Chelsea, Lambeth, Lewisham, Merton.
4	Camden, Hackney, Newham, Wandsworth, Westminster.
5	Haringey, Kingston.
6	Southwark



Looking at all 80 results across London, there were near similar increases in vote shares for all the main parties - around 3% to 4% - at the expense of the minor parties and others. This is to be expected as the 2014 local elections were held on the same day as the European elections and UKIP and the Greens perhaps overperformed as a result. Those 80 results in total saw a small swing of 0.6% from Lab to Con. However, eight of those by-elections were held after the General Election of 2017 and, although that is a small sample, there is a clear improvement for Labour, and a lesser improvement for the Lib Dems, after that date. Labour's vote increased by an average of 12.4% in those eight by-elections, with a swing from the Conservatives of 5.5%.

Only seven of those 80 contests saw seats actually change hands though. The Conservatives gained two from Labour (in Greenwich and Harrow), and lost two, one to Labour in Redbridge and one to the Lib Dems in Richmond. Labour gained another two, from UKIP in Havering and from Tower Hamlets First, and an Independent also took a seat from Tower Hamlets First.

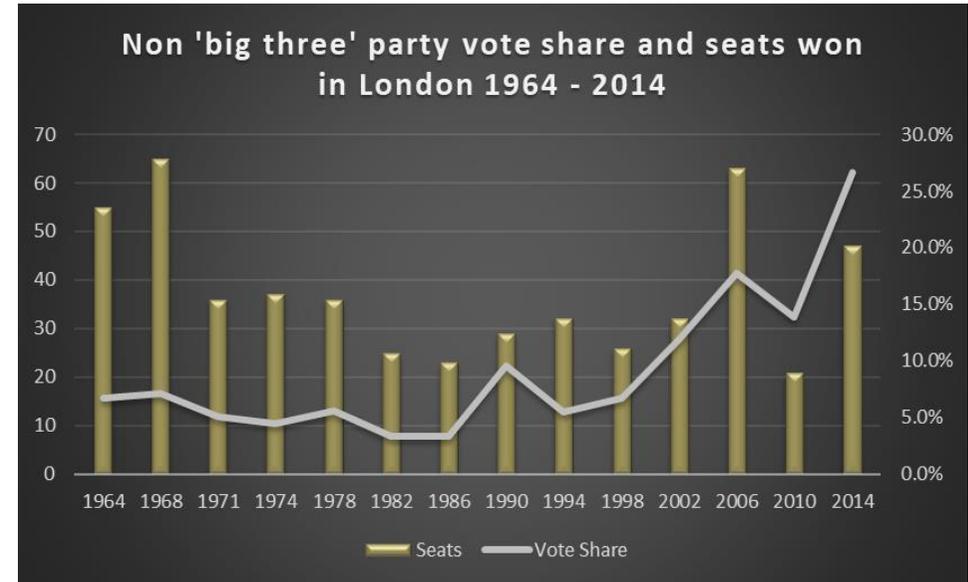
All in all, there is little to glean from by-elections, other than to note the post General Election swing to Labour.

FACTORS TO CONSIDER FOR 2018 - DEMISE OF THE MINOR PARTIES?

As already noted, the local elections in 2014 were held on the same day as the European elections. This helped to reinforce the already emerging trend in London of people voting in ever greater numbers for political parties other than the Conservatives, Labour and the Lib Dems.

With a focus on EU issues in the run up to polling day, and possibly because of extra freepost resources and Party Political Broadcast slots for minor parties as part of the European elections, UKIP and the Greens did exceptionally well across London. The result was the highest vote share recorded by minor parties and 'others' since the last major local government reorganisation in London in 1964. All in all, 26.6% of the votes cast at the local elections in London in 2014 went to non-big three parties.

2017 saw the opposite effect: Labour and the Conservatives saw their biggest combined vote share in a General election since 1979, with minor parties' vote shares dropping accordingly. And, as we commented in the previous section, the unwind from minor party voting in London council by-elections since 2014 is substantial. All the big three parties have seen an increase in their vote at the expense of minor parties.



Top ten boroughs with largest non 'big three' party % vote				
Borough	UKIP	Green	Other	Total
Havering	28.4%	4.0%	28.9%	61.3%
Tower Hamlets	5.4%	9.1%	34.4%	48.9%
Lewisham	6.8%	13.9%	17.2%	37.9%
Barking & Dagenham	27.9%	3.1%	4.8%	35.7%
Bexley	23.0%	1.5%	11.0%	35.6%
Bromley	20.2%	12.1%	1.7%	34.1%
Greenwich	15.0%	14.0%	4.8%	33.8%
Hillingdon	18.9%	7.7%	7.0%	33.7%
Enfield	11.6%	11.9%	5.8%	29.3%
Sutton	19.8%	4.2%	3.4%	27.4%

In short, the 26.6% polled by minor parties at the 2014 local elections looks likely to unwind on 3rd May. It's possible the Greens might still pick up a decent share of the vote in some places - like Lewisham - but not be able to translate that into seats.

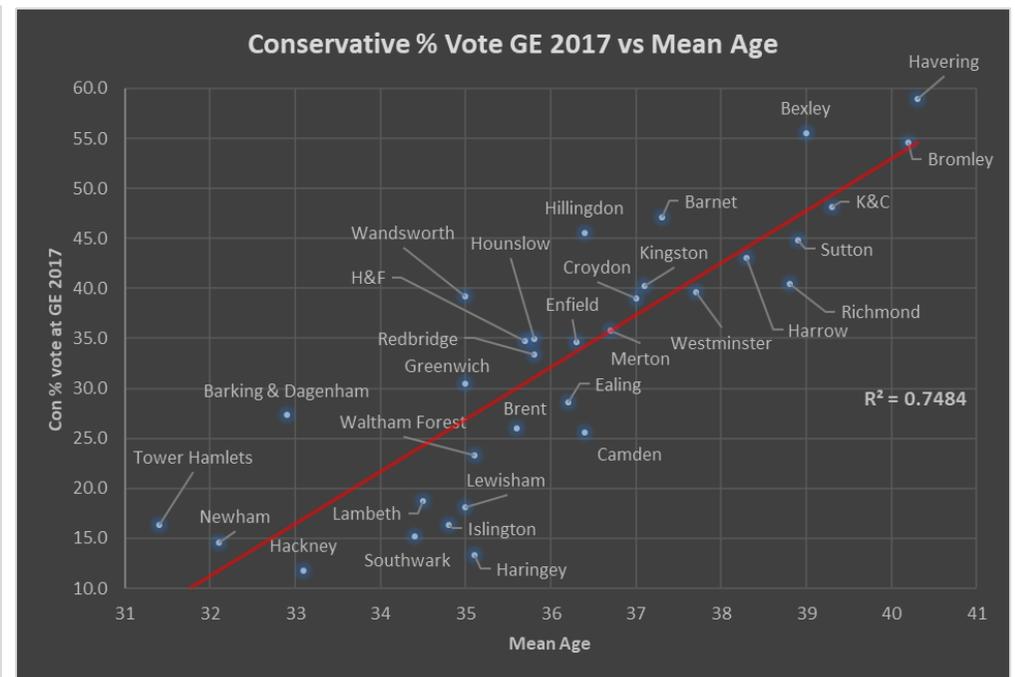
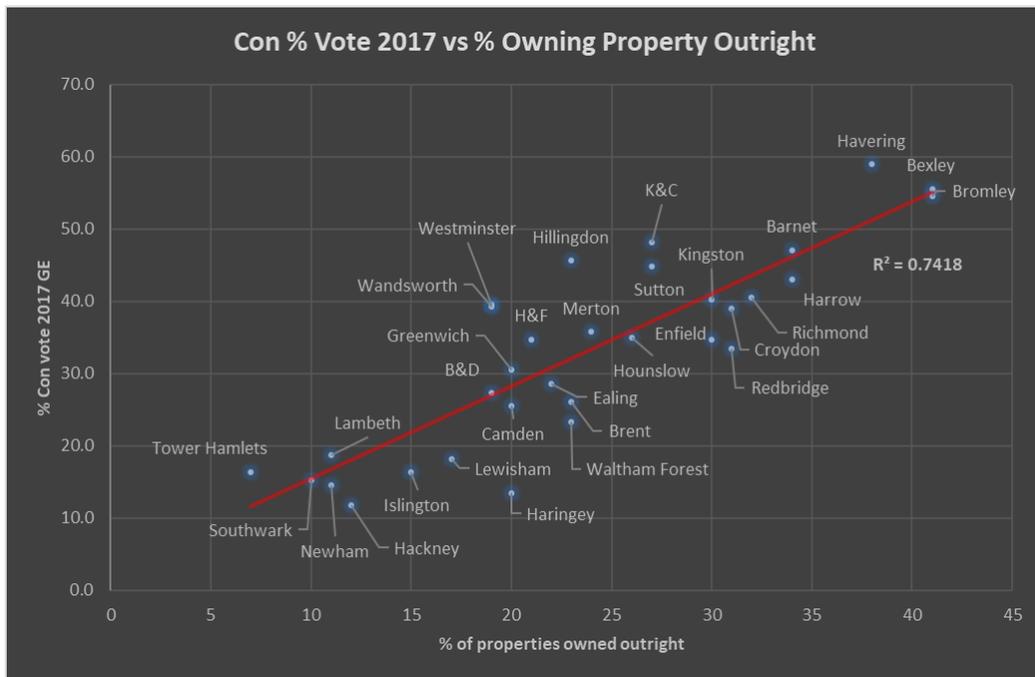
The table on the left shows the ten boroughs with the largest non-big three vote share in 2014. Havering and Tower Hamlets are special cases, as the former has a history of a large vote for Residents candidates which is unlikely to unravel much, and Lutfur Rahman's Tower Hamlets First party, whilst technically disbanded, has resurrected in the guise of two new parties and will also poll strongly this year.

However, there is still a very large UKIP vote for the main parties to fight over in Havering, and substantial UKIP votes to unwind in Bexley, Bromley, Hillingdon and Sutton, all of which might be expected to help the Conservatives. The large UKIP vote in Barking and Dagenham, a council which is currently made up solely of Labour party councillors, might perhaps give the Conservatives a small hope they might be able to break their duck and win their first seat on that council since 2006.

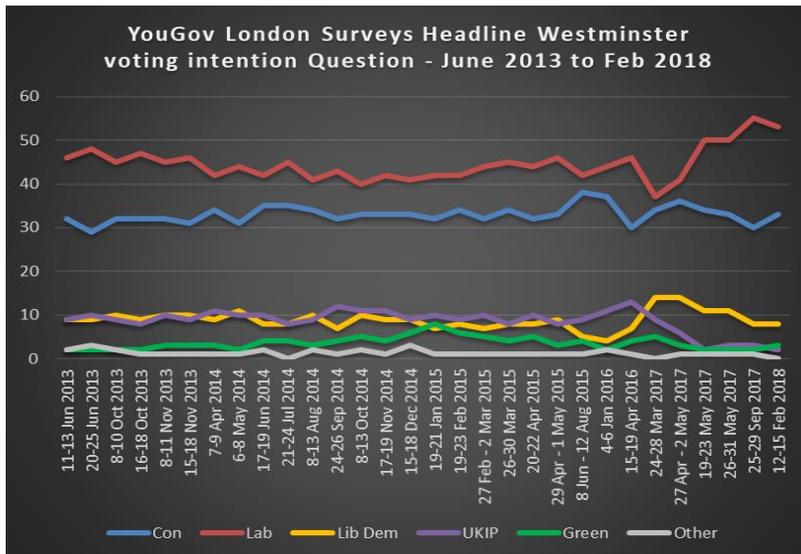
FACTORS TO CONSIDER FOR 2018 - DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS

There are clear correlations between voting patterns at the last General Election and some key demographic data from the most recent (2011) census, and from the London Datastore borough atlases. These trends were also apparent at the 2015 General Election but became more pronounced at the 2017 election.

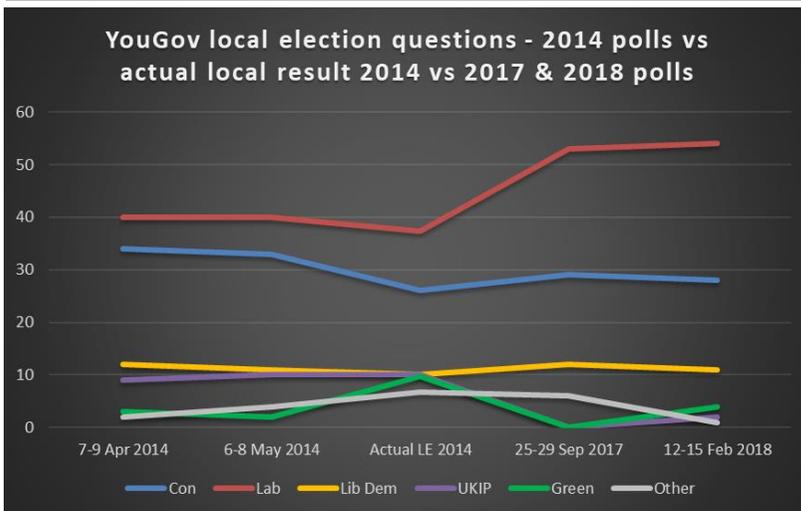
The two charts below show the strong relationship between the Conservative share of the vote in the 2017 General Election, combined to borough level, and the age profile and the percentage of property owners in each borough. The R^2 value of 0.75 and 0.74 respectively is extremely strong. Whilst there is inevitably a link between age and property owning, there is enough of a difference between the two sets of census data to make the results individually relevant. There are other, but less clear, relationships in play as well - for example, the Conservative vote at the 2017 General Election was lower in areas with larger BAME populations (R^2 -0.39) and where census respondents did not declare themselves to be 'White British' (R^2 -0.54). The opposite, inevitably, holds true for Labour - they poll better in areas with younger voters, where there is more private-renting and social housing, and where there are higher numbers of voters from BAME backgrounds.



FACTORS TO CONSIDER FOR 2018 - WHAT THE POLLING SAYS



The polling company [YouGov](#) has an excellent set of polling data going back a number of years. In particular, they periodically produce London-specific surveys with good sample sizes for the capital as a whole. In those surveys the questions vary but there is always a ‘headline voting figure’ for Westminster elections asking respondents ‘*If there were a general election held tomorrow, which party would you vote for?*’ We have collated the data from those London-specific polls since June 2013 and the trend can be seen in the graph on the left. As can be seen, Labour has been polling consistently ahead of the Conservatives, with the gap widening since the 2017 General Election. The most recent poll in February 2018 showed a slight closing of the gap and it will be interesting to see the next London-specific poll to see whether that was a blip or the start of a trend.

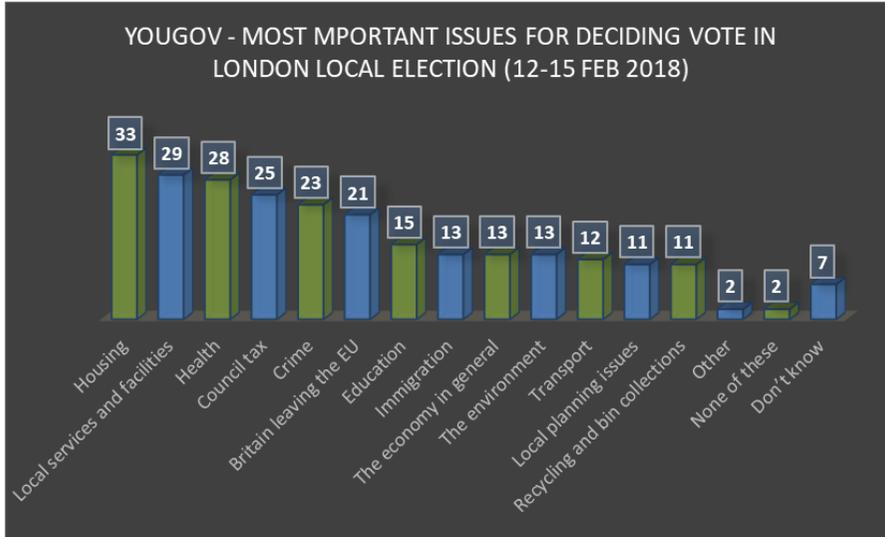


The same London-specific polls also sometimes include questions about how people will vote in upcoming council elections. Again, we have tracked the trend in those polls over time, and mapped against the actual 2014 local election results in London. There is a clear lead for Labour of over 20 points in the latest poll, where the survey work was carried out between 12th - 15th February. It is perhaps worth noting that the same questions asked ahead of the 2014 elections actually over-estimated the level of support for the main parties and especially for the Conservatives. As we have noted elsewhere, the fact the locals in 2014 were held on the same day as the European Parliament elections may well have had an impact, as minor parties had access to freepost resources and extra Party Political Broadcasts ahead of the combined polling day. If that over-estimation is repeated on 3rd May this year, however, it is likely to be very bad news indeed for the Conservatives.

One other detail to draw out of these YouGov London polls is the response to the question ‘*Which of the following do you think would make the best Prime Minister?*’ In the survey carried out between 27th September and 3rd October 2016, May led Corbyn 42-23. In the latest London-wide poll carried out between [12th-15th February](#) Corbyn led May 31-24. If Corbyn manages to hold a lead ahead of 3rd May, that will clearly have an impact.

All in all, the recent trend emerging from the London-specific polls conducted by YouGov, is a hugely positive one for Labour, and a worrying one for the Conservatives. It would suggest the former are on course for their best set of results in London since 1964 and that the Conservatives will be battling to avoid their worst results - in terms of seats won and councils controlled - over the same period.

FACTORS TO CONSIDER FOR 2018 - WHAT THE POLLING SAYS



Two recent London-specific polls also asked Londoners about which issues were most important to them in helping them decide how to vote in the local elections in May. These are the aforementioned [YouGov/QMUL London survey](#) carried out between 12th to 15th February, and the [Lord Ashcroft Polls paper, Capital Punishment](#), which polled Londoners between 1st and 8th February. We have summarised those issue questions in the charts on the left.

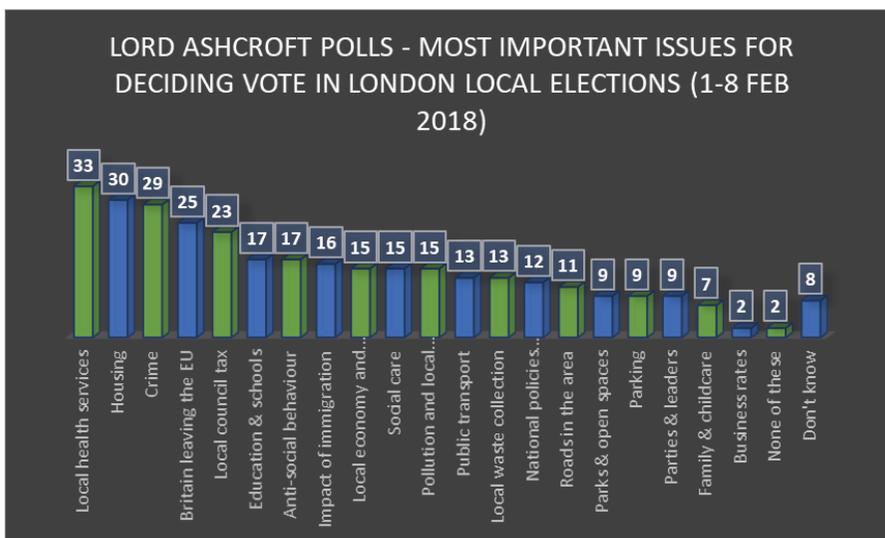
There is a reassuring consistency between the two sets of data, with Londoners' responses falling into three broad tiers of importance. The first, with around a third of respondents citing the issues, seems to be made up of housing, health, and 'local services and facilities.' There will be some overlap between these issues as the two polls are worded slightly differently.

The second tier would appear to include crime, Britain leaving the EU, and council tax, with around one in four or five saying those issues are important to them. The third tier then includes a range of issues, from education to immigration to transport and parking, with a range of around 10% to 15% raising those areas of concern.

Overall, this election seems to be more about what could be described as 'core services' than in recent years. Health services are clearly important, and housing is a growing concern for voters in London. If we track back and look at other London-specific YouGov polls since 2013, there is an upward trend of housing being cited as one of the top three responses to the question, 'Thinking about the administration of London more generally, which areas do you think should be the greatest priority for the Mayor and city government?' In December 2013 53% of respondents listed housing as a priority: by July 2016 (the last time the question was asked) the figure had risen to 66%. We suspect, if anything, that figure may have risen since.

Education is ranked relatively low-down yet this is likely to be because not everyone has a child at school. For those parents that do, it is perhaps likely to disproportionately affect how they vote, although that is just supposition on our part. Leaving the EU will apparently affect the way one in five Londoners cast their ballot, and the detailed data tables in the Lord Ashcroft Poll suggests that is true for both Leave and Remain voters. The Lib Dems will be hoping this will push them over the winning line in remain-backing South West London boroughs like Richmond and Kingston.

Council tax is cited as an issue by around one in four voters, although what that balance will be between low council tax and service provision is moot. Have the capped council tax increases of recent years taken away one of the Conservative Party's prime local election weapons?



FACTORS TO CONSIDER FOR 2018 - WHAT THE POLLING SAYS CONT...

There is clearly not uniform agreement on which issues are important, though, and the Lord Ashcroft Poll's data splits are particularly useful in breaking down voters' preferences and inclinations to a more granular level. The tables on p36 of Ashcroft's [Capital Punishment](#) report are of particular interest. They allow us to compare which issues are most important among respondents who voted for the Conservatives, Labour and Lib Dems, respectively, at the 2017 General Election. We have summarised the top half dozen issues in the graphic below.

It is interesting to note that local health services are a top-two concern for Conservative voters, as well as for voters of the other two parties. Britain leaving the EU is a much more important issue to Lib Dem voters, and this explains why Vince Cable is so keen to keep the issue in the press ahead of the local elections, to help motivate his base vote in South West London on 3rd May.



Con voters 2017 GE

- Crime (36%)
- Local health services (32%)
- Local council tax (32%)
- Impact of immigration (32%)
- Britain leaving the EU (25%)
- Anti-social behaviour (25%)

Lab voters 2017 GE

- Local health services (38%)
- Housing (37%)
- Crime (28%)
- Britain leaving the EU (25%)
- Local council tax (21%)
- Education and local schools (20%)

Lib Dem voters 2017

- Local health services (34%)
- Britain leaving the EU (33%)
- Housing (27%)
- Crime (25%)
- Local council tax (24%)
- Pollution & local environment (23%)

Also of interest is that housing does not appear in the top six issues for 2017 Conservative voters: this perhaps links back to the previously noted trend of Conservative vote share vs owning property outright. It might also suggest problems for the Conservative party in the boroughs they control with lower home ownership rates, and younger populations with more private sector renters, like Westminster and Wandsworth.

It is less of a surprise that levels of Council Tax are more frequently cited as an important issue for Conservative (32%) than for Lib Dem (24%) or Labour (21%) voters. Two Conservative-held boroughs, Hillingdon and Kingston, have decided to freeze their Council Tax for the coming year: in an election year you might normally have expected more to opt for this tactic. This could simply be that councils are cash-strapped, although it might also indicate council leaders expect this to be an election more about service provision than tax.

The Lord Ashcroft Poll also makes the interesting observation that *'Conservative voters who voted Leave in the referendum were more likely to name Council Tax as an important issue than previous Conservative voters who voted Remain.'* That perhaps suggests difficulties for the Conservatives in places like Wandsworth, where their record of low Council Tax has contributed to them staying in power for so long, but where there was a high Remain vote in 2016.

TOP-LINE PREDICTIONS FOR 2018 - NOTE ON METHODOLOGY

This paper has looked at various factors and issues that might influence the local council election results in London on 3rd May. Taking all those factors into account, we have come up with a set of top-line predictions, setting out who we think will win each borough, as well as how many seats each party will win at a London and a borough level.

To make our projections for each borough, we took the 2014 local election results as our starting point. We then analysed a range of more recent electoral data, applying vote share changes recorded at the 2017 General Election, 2016 London Assembly Election and 2016 London Mayoral Election - as well as published London opinion polling - to generate a set of potential scenarios for each ward. Supplementing the raw figures with our own detailed 'on the ground' knowledge and political judgment, we allocated each ward to the party most likely to win on 3rd May and from that, created aggregate results for each borough. All numerical comparisons are with councillors elected in 2014 and do not take note of subsequent by-elections or defections. These figures represent our current most confident expectations as to what will take place as of information available as of 28th March. Of course, events may take a different course between now and polling day and if more London-specific polls are published before 3rd May we might go back and update this briefing based on any significant new data.

The section below starts with our top-line predictions for London as a whole: which party will win each borough and number of seats per party across the capital. We then provide our commentary on likely results in each borough - including how many seats we think parties will get in each - across the following broad categories:

- Labour Clean Sweeps - Where Labour could win every seat on the council.
- Other Safe Labour Boroughs - effectively everything else Labour currently controls, but where there will be some opposition councillors elected on 3rd May.
- Safe Conservative - There are a few Conservative-held boroughs that we feel will almost certainly not change hands.
- Labour Targets - The Party will be fighting hard to win a number of seats and councils from the Conservatives, plus overall control of Tower Hamlets.
- Potential Conservative Gains - In what is likely to be a terrible year for the Conservatives in London, do they have a hope of making any council gains at all?
- Lib Dem Targets - Can they reimpose themselves on parts of South West London?
- Directly Elected Mayor Contests - How will the Mayoral, not council, races pan out in these four boroughs?

As mentioned previously, this briefing is, for reasons of space, restricted to top-line London-wide analysis. We can provide much more detailed analysis of likely election results and party manifesto commitments for individual London boroughs, looking at individual wards and specific policy areas. Should you require that more comprehensive service, please do get in touch.

TOP-LINE PREDICTIONS FOR 2018

So, what does all that analysis and pondering mean?

- We predict that Labour are on course for winning a record number of councils and are likely to also win a record number of council seats. In addition, we expect them to win all four Mayoral races.
- We expect the Conservatives to narrowly avoid their worst ever set of results in terms of councils controlled. However, they will lose councillors all over London to end up with the lowest number of councillors in the capital since 1964.
- The Lib Dems will make some comebacks in South West London but lose ground across the rest of London. As Labour surges, they could also lose seats and see their overall number of councillors in London decrease from 116 won in 2014.
- And whilst Residents and Independents will continue to pick up seats, especially in places like Havering, minor parties like the Greens and UKIP face potential wipe-outs across the capital. They will be doing extremely well to hold on to a handful of councillors between them.

Borough	2014	2018 Prediction
Barking & Dagenham	Lab	Lab
Barnet	Con	Lab
Bexley	Con	Con
Brent	Lab	Lab
Bromley	Con	Con
Camden	Lab	Lab
Croydon	Lab	Lab
Ealing	Lab	Lab
Enfield	Lab	Lab
Greenwich	Lab	Lab
Hackney	Lab	Lab
Hammersmith & Fulham	Lab	Lab
Haringey	Lab	Lab
Harrow	Lab	Lab
Havering	NOC	NOC
Hillingdon	Con	Con

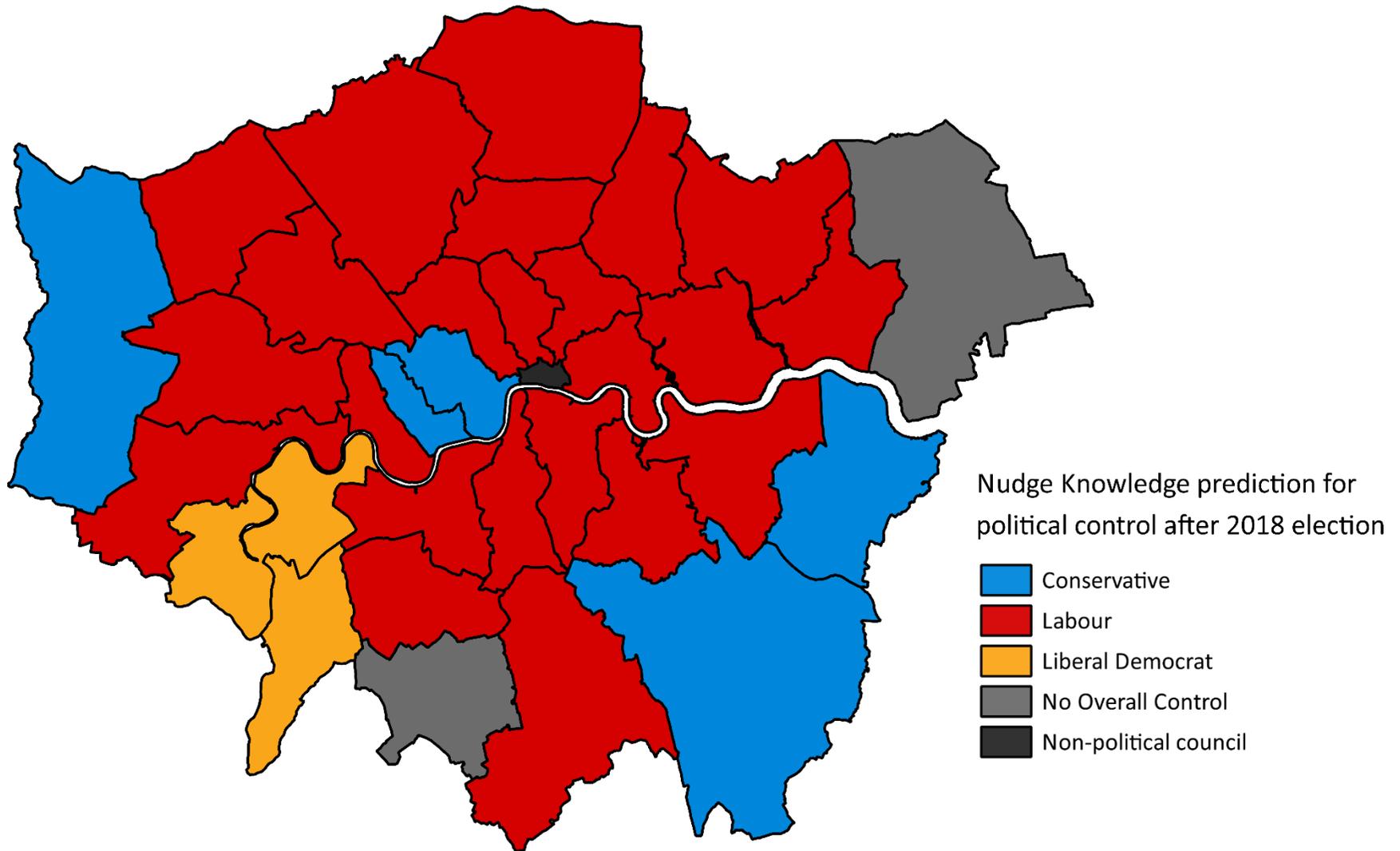
Borough	2014	2018 Prediction
Hounslow	Lab	Lab
Islington	Lab	Lab
Kensington & Chelsea	Con	Con
Kingston upon Thames	Con	Lib Dem
Lambeth	Lab	Lab
Lewisham	Lab	Lab
Merton	Lab	Lab
Newham	Lab	Lab
Redbridge	Lab	Lab
Richmond upon Thames	Con	Lib Dem
Southwark	Lab	Lab
Sutton	Lib Dem	NOC
Tower Hamlets	NOC	Lab
Waltham Forest	Lab	Lab
Wandsworth	Con	Lab
Westminster	Con	Con

The tables to the left show our top-line predictions for council control across London. We predict Labour gains in Barnet, Tower Hamlets and Wandsworth; Lib Dem gains in Kingston and Richmond; and the Lib Dems to lose Sutton to NOC. Some of these contests will be extremely close and we clarify out thinking in the following pages.

The smaller table below summarises our thinking on the races for Mayor across London: we think labour will not just win them all, but that they will win them convincingly.

Borough	2014	2018 Prediction
Hackney	Labour	Labour
Lewisham	Labour	Labour
Newham	Labour	Labour
Tower Hamlets	THF	Labour

TOP-LINE PREDICTIONS FOR 2018 CONT...



TOP-LINE PREDICTIONS FOR 2018 CONT...

Let's look in more detail at what our models project.

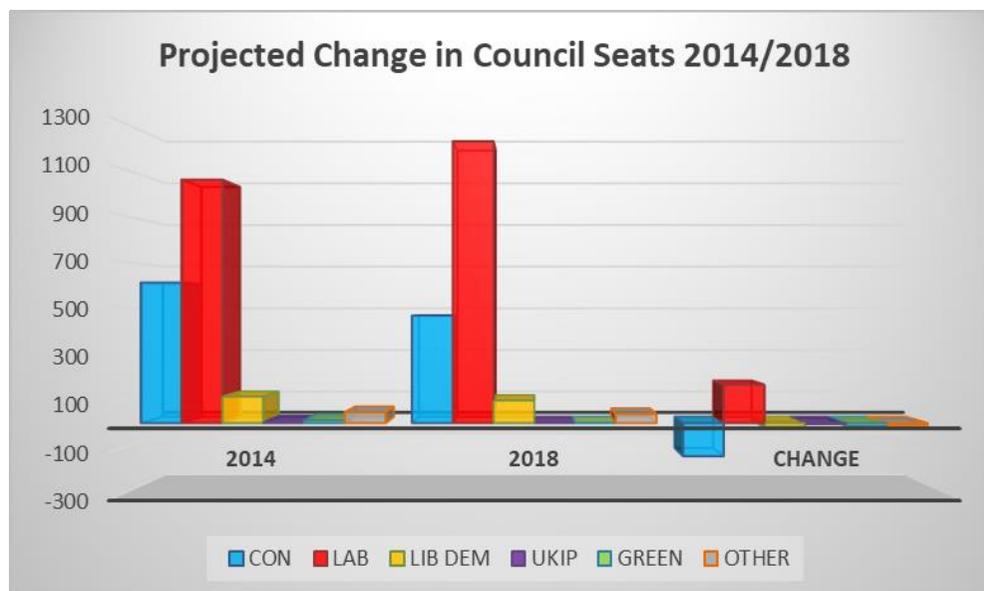
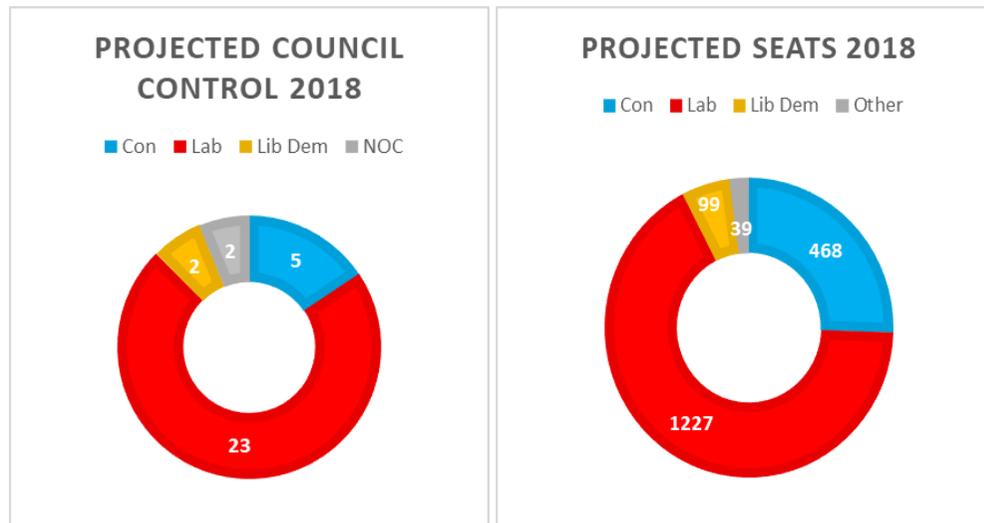
Labour is set to win 23 councils, adding Tower Hamlets, Barnet and their prized target of Wandsworth to the 20 councils they won in 2014. They will pick up seats across London and, whilst it is harder to predict with certainty the number of councillors each party will win, our projections have Labour on course to win 1227, a gain of 167 seats, beating their previous record of 1971 by just six seats. We also suspect they will wipe out all other parties' representation in an increased number of boroughs leaving them with a record number of 'single party' councils as well. London will be redder than ever before.

The Conservatives are set to hang on to just five boroughs - Bexley, Bromley, Kensington & Chelsea, Hillingdon, and Westminster, and only just in the last two cases. That means they would just avoid the ignominy of recording their lowest number of councils, which was 4 (in 1994 and 1998). However, on our current estimates they are set to lose nearly 150 seats, down from 612 in 2014 to just 468 this year. That would be the lowest number of councillors recorded since London government was reorganised in 1964.

The Lib Dems are in for a mixed night on 3rd May: we project that they will gain two councils off the Conservatives in South West London - Richmond and Kingston - but lose Sutton to No Overall Control. However, we expect all of those races to be tight. Despite possibly picking up control of councils, we expect the Lib Dems to actually losing 17 seats overall, down to just 99, as Labour pick them off across other parts of London.

Our projections do not look good for either the Greens or UKIP: we see them both being wiped out by the swings our models suggest. However, it is possible both parties could hang on to a handful of seats.

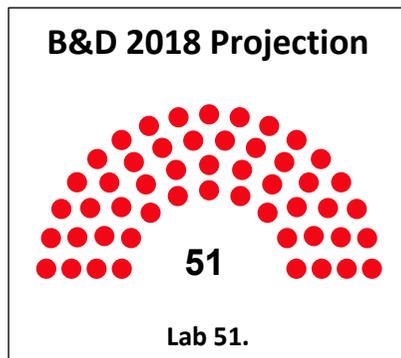
In terms of 'others' we expect the Residents to yet again poll well in Havering. We await confirmation of whether the Independents in Headstone North ward (Harrow) will run again: if they do we have assumed they could win again. We expect the two new parties in Tower Hamlets - filling the gap left by the debarred Tower Hamlets First party - to secure some representation but make a net loss of seats to Labour. Overall, we expect the number of 'other' and minority party councillors to drop by a third.



A CLOSER LOOK - LABOUR CLEAN SWEEPS

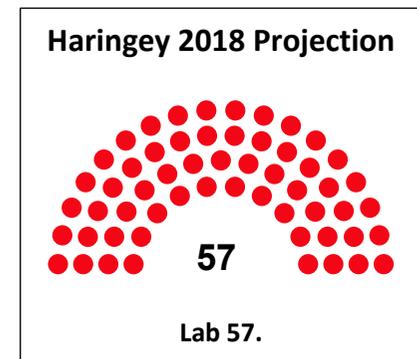
Over the next few pages we look at projections borough by borough, providing some commentary with reasoning for our predictions. Although constrained by space here, we are able to provide more in-depth briefings, looking at ward-level results as well as policies and manifesto commitments in each borough. Should you want these for any part of London or, indeed, any other part of the UK where elections are taking place, please get in touch. We will also be going into greater depth analysis at our [breakfast briefing on 13th April](#). If you are interested in attending, you can get more details of the event, and book tickets, via this link.

We commence our borough analysis with a look at those boroughs where Labour is likely not just to win, but win every seat on the council. There are currently two councils - Barking and Dagenham and Newham - where Labour achieved wipe-outs in 2014. The question is, will a surge for Labour in May lead to hegemony in other boroughs too? In 1964 and 1971 Labour won a clean sweep of councillors in three boroughs, still a record. We predict that number will rise to an unheard of six, with the possibility of even more, where other parties will not manage to win a single seat.



The Conservatives increased their vote share across **Barking and Dagenham**, a Leave-voting borough, at the 2017 General Election, as the UKIP vote collapsed. They therefore might be hoping to pick up a seat or two in wards such as Eastbrook, Longbridge or Whalebone: they last won a seat in Eastbrook in 2006 and also won a by-election in Longbridge in 2003. However, Labour also increased their vote share in the borough at the General Election as the minor parties faltered and the Conservatives are starting from a long way back in each of those wards. As a result, **we think it most likely that Barking and Dagenham will remain a single-party state for Labour on 3rd May.**

In **Haringey**, the Lib Dems will be defending nine seats, holding all three seats in Highgate and with split wards in Alexandra, Fortis Green and Muswell Hill. We think a lot may depend on how locals view the high-profile takeover of the local Labour Party by Momentum, with the sitting council Leader, Claire Kober, and several other moderate councillors, announcing they will be standing down in May. If residents are worried at the prospect of Momentum running the council then we think the Lib Dems could just hold onto Highgate. However, there was a swing of around 15% from the Lib Dems to Labour in the parliamentary seat of Hornsey and Wood Green at the 2017 General Election, the biggest collapse from Lib Dem to Labour in London, and we think that even if residents did have concerns about a Momentum council, it will not be enough to swim against the tide. **We predict a clean sweep for Labour.**

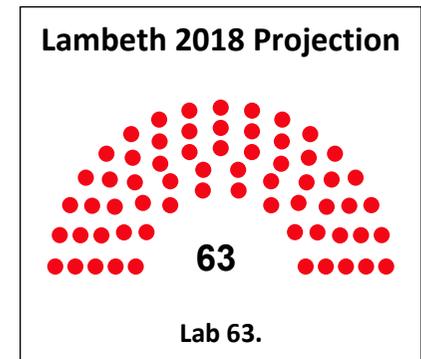


A CLOSER LOOK - LABOUR CLEAN SWEEPS CONT...

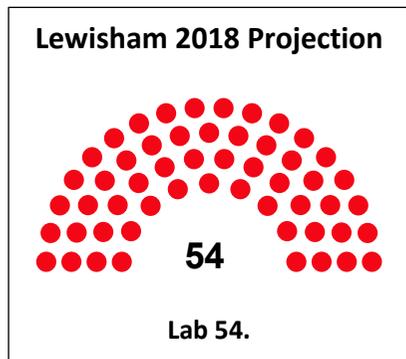


Islington had just a solitary Green elected in opposition to Labour back in 2014. That ward, Highbury East, seems to also be the Lib Dems' best chance of gaining a seat as well. However, partly because of the Greens and Lib Dems potentially splitting each other's vote, and partly because this is Jeremy Corbyn's back yard, **we think Islington will also succumb to one-party politics after the May election.**

The Conservatives managed to hang onto three seats in **Lambeth** in 2014 and a couple of our predictive models suggest they might just hang onto Clapham Common ward by their fingernails on 3rd May. However, other models suggest they will lose and we are inclined to suspect they will narrowly lose the ward and, as a result, get wiped out. The Lib Dems' best hope appears to be in Bishops ward, which our General Election model suggests they will win. However, all our other calculations say the opposite and so

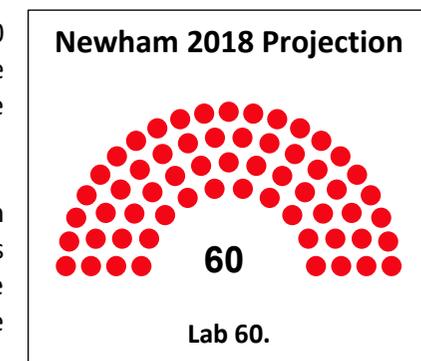


we think the Lib Dems will also end up with no seats. As we also expect the Greens to lose the single seat they won at the last set of local elections, **Lambeth will be yet another borough under Labour Hegemony.**



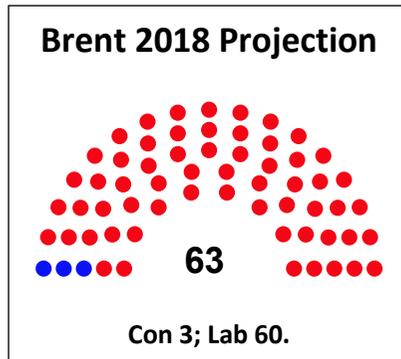
Lewisham has had a Green Party presence for some time and it is possible they may just hang on to their current single seat in Brockley to prevent a Labour wipe-out. However, the Greens lost a by-election in Brockley to Labour back in 2016 and the Labour surge across London since then seems likely to swamp any attempts by the Greens to hold on. **Yet again, we predict a Labour clean sweep.**

Labour already has a clean sweep of councillors in **Newham**, recording a score of 60 out of 60 back in 2014. The recent decision by the local Labour Party to deselect the Mayor of Newham, Sir Robin Wales, does not seem likely to affect the outcome of the council elections and **we therefore see no reason not to expect another whitewash.**



As noted above, to achieve wipe-outs in six boroughs would be unprecedented: the previous highest number of clean sweeps by a party at a single election is three. In all these cases, there may well be strong local factors or personal votes that will see an independent stand and win, or a party candidate hang on to their seats against all odds. From a simple democracy point of view, we firmly believe that having a proper opposition can only be a good thing! We shall have to see how the cards fall on 3rd May.

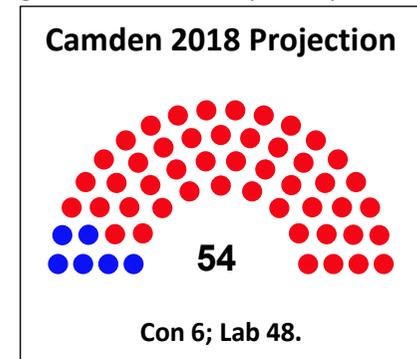
A CLOSER LOOK - OTHER SAFE LABOUR BOROUGHS



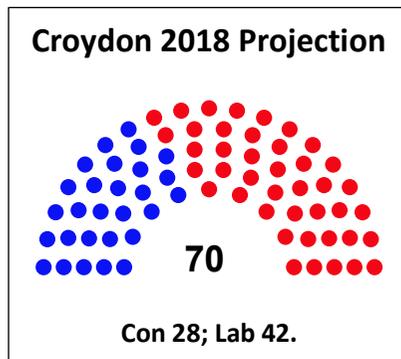
Even where Labour do not wipe-out other parties, we expect them to make gains in all the other boroughs they currently hold.

In Brent, we see only Kenton ward as safe for the Conservatives, where we expect them to retain all three seats in the ward. However, we also expect them to lose Brondesbury Park to Labour, and the Lib Dems to go backwards in Mapesbury, where they won just one seat in 2014. On a really bad night for the Conservatives, Brent could be yet another candidate for a Labour clean sweep **but we expect there to be a very small opposition group once the votes are counted on 3rd May.**

The Conservatives arguably overperformed in **Camden** in 2014, achieving better results than might have been expected on such a poor night for the party London-wide. As a result, we expect them to be losing seats to Labour this year, with just Frogna & Fitzjohns

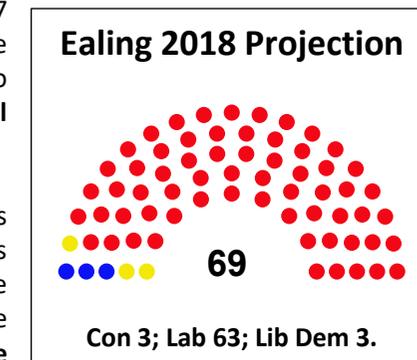


ward safe. We also anticipate the Conservatives retaining Hampstead Town ward, although we expect it will be very close, but predict they will lose Belsize and Swiss Cottage wards. We also believe the Greens and Lib Dems will lose their single seats in the borough, **leaving Labour with 48 seats and the Conservatives just six.**



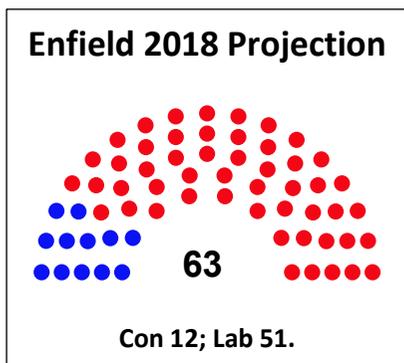
There are boundary changes in **Croydon** this year and although the electoral map has been changed quite significantly, we do not expect a major change in numbers of councillors for each party. The north of the borough is solidly Labour; the south solidly Conservative. The parliamentary seat of Croydon Central was won by Labour at the 2017 General Election with a Con to Lab swing of over 5%, and it is in central Croydon where there are the most marginal wards in the borough, with the new Fairfield ward likely to be the most fought over. **We predict Labour picking up an extra couple of seats overall to improve their position from 2014.**

Ealing has the distinction of being the borough that has changed hands between parties the most times since 1964, without going No Overall Control. However, in recent years the direction of travel has been firmly towards Labour. Our models suggest that the



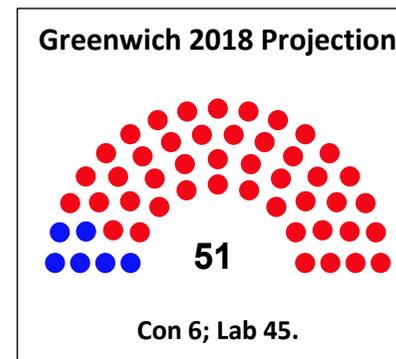
Conservatives will end up losing nine of their current 12 councillors retaining just three in Hanger Hill, although it will be close in Northfield ward. We believe the Lib Dems will hold onto three seats in Southfield ward as well. **Labour look set for a huge majority overall.**

A CLOSER LOOK - OTHER SAFE LABOUR BOROUGHES CONT...

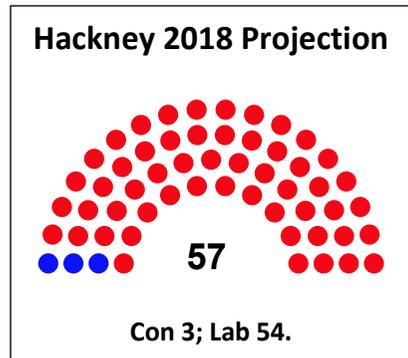


The Conservatives controlled **Enfield** council as recently as 2006. However, since then they have seen their support drop away, with Labour increasing its share of the vote, and their number of councillors in both 2010 and 2014. Labour won the marginal parliamentary seat of Enfield North from the Conservatives at the 2015 General Election, and then the apparently much safer Conservative Enfield Southgate seat in 2017. The direction of travel seems clear. We expect them to hold Cockfosters and Grange wards, hang on Highlands and just, perhaps, cling on to Town ward, although we see that as almost being too close to call. So, **we predict 12 seats for the Conservatives and 51 for Labour**, although it could be a larger margin on a terrible night for the Tories.

nearly 12%. Eltham is likely to be the major battleground in the local elections on 3rd May as well. We predict that the Conservatives will hold Coldharbour and New Eltham and Eltham South wards, but just miss out on Eltham North, despite the fact they won a by-election there in 2016. **Labour will win all other seats, giving them a 45 - 6 majority.**

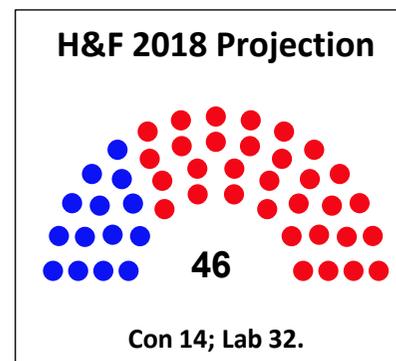


At the 2017 General Election, the Conservatives harboured hopes of winning the Parliamentary seat of Eltham in **Greenwich**. They ended up improving their vote share by over 4% but lost with a larger majority as Labour increased their own vote share by

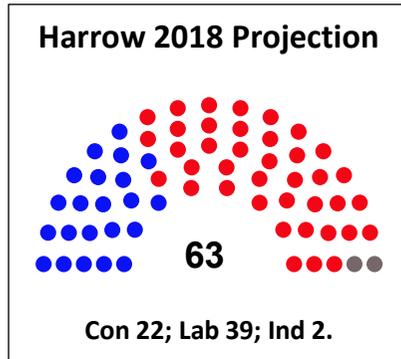


In **Hackney**, Labour will come closest to yet another wipe-out. We expect the Lib Dems to lose their three seats in Cazenove ward and there is a strong possibility Labour will also take all of the seats won by the Conservatives in 2014 as well, with two of our predictive models suggesting that they will. However, the large Jewish community in Springfield ward has, in recent history, voted strongly for the Conservatives and there is a chance that the ward will, just, remain blue and by the slimmest of margins on 3rd May. Whichever way you look at it, though, **Labour will once again be firmly in control of the council in Hackney.**

out of the 'marginal' column, with the Conservatives going backwards as Labour won the seat with a majority of nearly 20,000 with a Con to Lab swing of over 11%. This was possibly helped in large part due to Hammersmith and Fulham being a strong Remain voting borough in the EU Referendum (see graph in the 'Brexit effect' section above). We identify four safe Conservative wards - Minster, Palace Riverside, Parsons Green & Walham, and Town - and they might also just hang on to Sands End ward, although it will be close. **We expect Labour to win in Ravenscourt Park ward to give them a total of 32 seats to the Conservatives 14, which would be the Party's best result since 1998.**

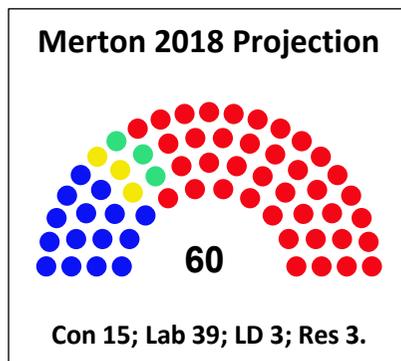
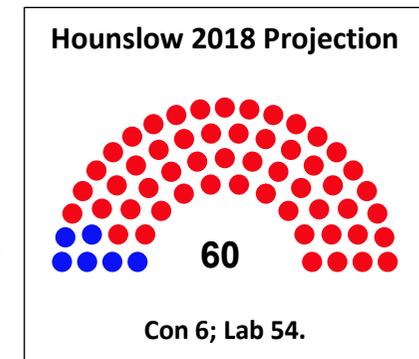


A CLOSER LOOK - OTHER SAFE LABOUR BOROUGHES CONT...



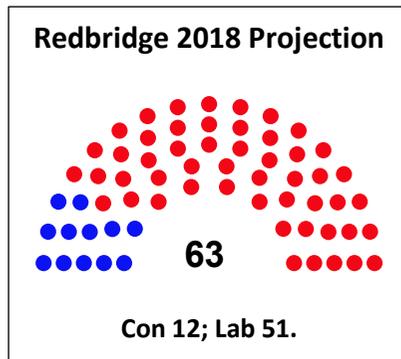
The Conservatives held onto the Parliamentary seat of Harrow East at the 2017 General Election with just a small swing of 3% away from them. However, at the same time, the marginal seat of Harrow West saw an increase in the Labour vote of nearly 14% and their majority increased from just over 2,000 to over 13,000. That should suggest some pretty major losses are in store for them in **Harrow** on 3rd May. However, the Conservatives have a number of safe seats, including in the cross-border constituency of Ruislip, Northwood and Pinner, which remains Conservative-held. We predict that the Conservatives will hold the wards of Canons, Hatch End, Pinner, Pinner South and Stanmore Park, and also manage to retain Belmont and Harrow Weald. If the two Independent councillors run again in Headstone North, we would expect them to win: if not we think the Conservatives will pick those seats up. **All in all, the Conservatives look set to do better in Harrow than in other parts of London, and we are predicting Labour to win 39 seats to the Conservatives 22, and Independents, with the above caveat, to hold two.**

Hounslow is another part of London where the direction of travel has been relentless over the last decade. The Conservatives ran the council in coalition in 2006 and still managed to win 25 seats in 2010, when local elections were held on the same day as the General Election, and when they won the Parliamentary seat of Brentford and Isleworth. They lost that seat in 2015 and in 2017 Labour held it with a majority of over 12,000, and only held 11 council seats in 2014. We expect Labour to make further gains here, with the Conservatives only guaranteed to win Chiswick Riverside. Chiswick Homefields and Turnham Green look almost too close to call and we are splitting the difference and saying one will be a Con hold and the other a Lab gain. **The result - we expect the Conservatives to drop to six seats with Labour on 54.**



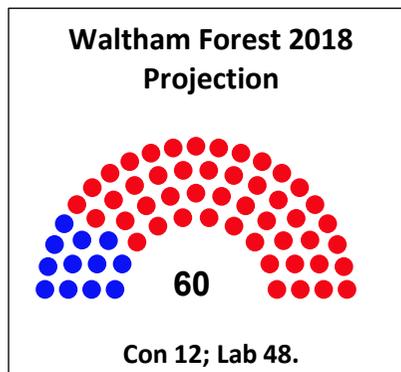
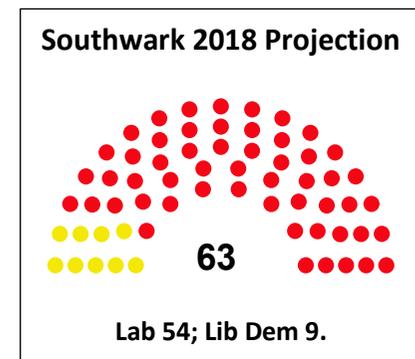
Merton looks to be more interesting, and like Harrow and Croydon we do not expect as much of a shift to Labour in this borough. The Labour council has run into trouble with a new bin collection service, resulting in the hashtag #muckymerton often trending. This might have an impact and we predict the Conservatives will lose just Trinity ward to Labour, and two seats to the Lib Dems in West Barnes. Residents will continue to hold Merton Park **resulting in a council of 39 Labour, 15 Conservatives, 3 Lib Dem and 3 Residents.** So, not as big a majority as other parts of London, but Labour will still emerge with a majority of 18.

A CLOSER LOOK - OTHER SAFE LABOUR BOROUGHES CONT...



Like Enfield, **Redbridge** is a borough where there has been clear direction of travel towards Labour in recent years. The Conservatives last won an overall majority back in 2006 but lost four seats in 2010 and a further five in 2014; a by-election loss in 2016 reduced their total further to 24. The Lib Dems have also seen their support drop since a high of nine councillors in 1994 to just three in 2014. Labour currently hold 35 seats. The Conservatives lost the parliamentary seat of Ilford North to Labour at the 2015 General Election and in 2017 there was a large Con to Lab swing across the whole borough in 2017 General Election too. Redbridge is another borough with boundary changes: we expect the new wards to tip the balance further in Labour's direction by adding two seats in their south Ilford heartland and subtracting two seats from the more Tory-inclined Woodford and Wanstead area in the west. Overall, we can only see the Conservatives guaranteed to win one ward - Monkham's - with fights on their hands in Barkingside, Bridge, Churchfields, Fairlop, South Woodford and Fullwell. **We expect Labour to win half of those battles though, leaving a council-wide total of 12 Conservative seats to Labour's 51.**

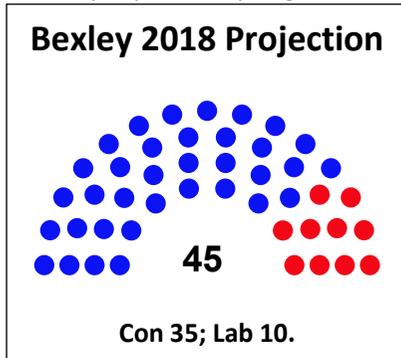
Southwark has been a Lib Dem - Labour battleground over recent years, with political control being balanced by a small Conservative group on a couple of occasions in the early 2000s. However, the Lib Dems have fallen away since 2010, when they entered the coalition Government with the Conservatives, and don't seem to have recovered since. They hold just 13 seats on the council at the present time, and the Conservatives just two. Boundary changes due to take effect do not seem likely to improve the situation for the Lib Dems and we expect Labour to make some gains from them on 3rd May. The Conservatives' only hope is to hang on to two seats of the new Dulwich Village ward but all of our predictive models suggest it will be too much of an uphill battle and that they will be wiped out. End result? **We suggest an outcome of 54 seats for Labour with the Lib Dems managing nine**, winning the wards of Borough and Bankside, London Bridge & West Bermondsey, and Surrey Docks, although the latter two will be extremely close.



The political balance on **Waltham Forest** council remained remarkably consistent between 1986 and 2010. The Conservatives regularly won between 16 and 18 seats, with Labour picking up between 26 and 31, and the Lib Dems nearly always between 10 and 14 seats. The Lib Dems polled their best in 2006 when they won 19 seats, but then got wiped out in 2014, again probably thanks to their coalition with the Conservatives at Westminster. Labour won 44 seats in 2014 and they look set to extend their majority over the Conservatives this year. The latter's strength is in the parliamentary seat of Chingford and Woodford Green, although at the 2017 General Election Iain Duncan Smith saw his majority cut from over 8,000 to just 2,500. We expect the Conservatives to hold Chingford Green and Endlebury on 3rd May. They should also, just, hold onto Hatch Lane and Larkswood, whilst Labour will make gains in Hale End & Highams Park and in Valley wards. **We predict an end state of 48 seats for Labour and 12 for the Conservatives.**

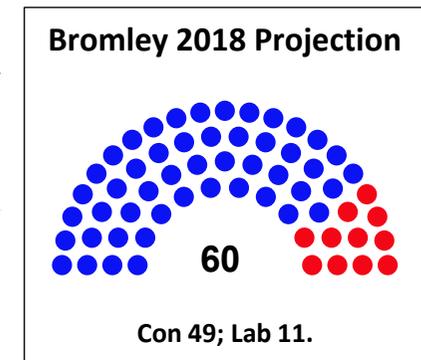
A CLOSER LOOK - SAFE CONSERVATIVE BOROUGHS

The worst set of results for the Conservative Party in London since 1964 occurred in the 90s. They recorded the fewest seats won in 1994, with just 519, and the fewest councils controlled in 1994 and 1998, when they won only four: Westminster, Kensington and Chelsea, Wandsworth, and Bromley. Going into the polls on 3rd May, the Party will be hoping to avoid doing worse than that. Can we give them any comfort and identify four 'safe' boroughs for them? Put simply, we cannot. We can only say with any degree of certainty that they will hold on to three.



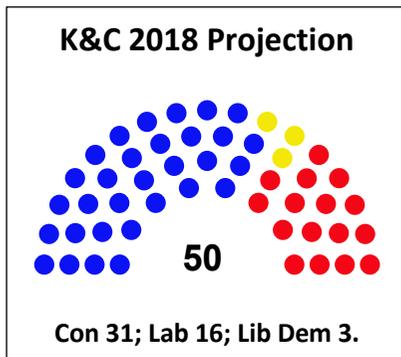
Boundary changes in **Bexley** seem unlikely to dent the large Conservative lead on that council. The borough has only gone Labour three times since 1964, with one stint of NOC. It has been Conservative since 2006. The Party did relatively well in Bexley in the recent General Elections, the borough voted Leave in the EU referendum and, as highlighted in the earlier section on demographics, it hits other key drivers of high Conservative vote shares such as mean age and home ownership rates, and there is a substantial UKIP vote to unwind: we expect to UKIP to lose their three seats. It is likely that Labour might make a few net gains, **but we expect a Conservative win on the day.**

Bromley has been Conservative at every election since 1964, apart from 1998 when it finished with No Overall Control. The same factors described above for Bexley also apply in Bromley, except that it narrowly voted for remain in the EU Referendum in 2016. The Lib Dems have traditionally been the main opposition to the Conservatives in the



borough, although both UKIP and Labour polled higher than them in 2014. As with Bexley, we expect UKIP to lose its representation in the Borough, and it is also likely Labour may pick up a few seats in places like Clockhouse and Cray Valley West. **However, it seems fairly certain that Bromley will remain Conservative on 3rd May.**

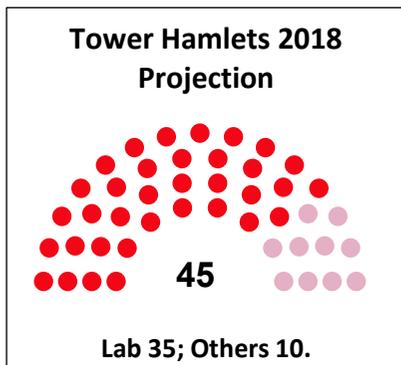
It was a more difficult call regarding **Kensington and Chelsea**. The borough has been rock-solid Conservative since 1964, never being controlled by another party: indeed, the Conservative vote share has only dipped below 50% on three occasions, in 1971,



1990 and 1994. And yet two reasons mean it cannot be automatically be seen as safe

this year. The first was the shock General Election result in 2017 where the parliamentary seat of Kensington was lost to Labour by 20 votes. The borough voted heavily for Remain in the EU referendum, which played a part in that result, although it is highly probable younger voters, concerned about housing and living costs, swung behind Jeremy Corbyn's overall campaign message. The second reason is the tragedy of the Grenfell Tower fire. The council leader had to resign after large-scale criticism of the council's response to the incident and the public inquiry into the actions of the council, and others, in the lead up to the fire, including housing policy across the borough, is ongoing. Both those issues could impact on the Conservative vote. However, we believe that whilst Labour may stack up huge majorities in a few wards, and gain Chelsea Riverside, and the Lib Dems could pick up Earls Court, they will struggle to overcome the 2014 Tory vote shares of 65% plus in the next most vulnerable Conservative-held wards like Pembridge and Norland. If the latter do fall it will have been a genuinely seismic election night. **As such, we see this as still being a safe Conservative borough.**

A CLOSER LOOK - LABOUR TARGETS

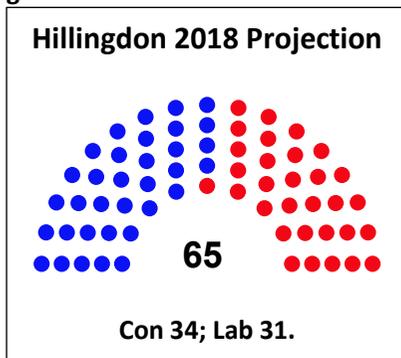
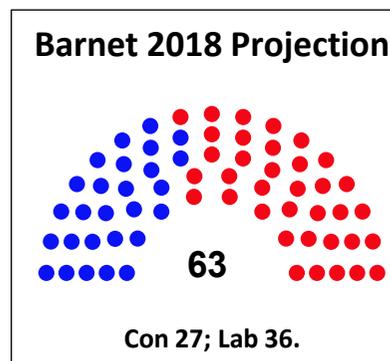


In addition to Kensington and Chelsea (discussed in the previous section), Labour will be targeting Barnet, Hillingdon, Wandsworth and Westminster from the Conservatives, and looking to take full control of the council in Tower Hamlets from its current status of NOC.

Let's begin by looking at **Tower Hamlets** council (the Mayoral race is discussed separately below). We recognise that if trying to predict the outcome of any election seems like a fool's errand since the surprise outright General Election win for the Conservatives in 2015 - followed by Brexit, Trump and the hung-parliament of 2017 - attempting to parse the political situation in Tower Hamlets probably qualifies as certifiable. However, we have given it a go and expect the Labour Party to make gains at the expense of the new Lutfur Rahman-supporting party, Aspire, and the new Rabina Khan party, People's Alliance of Tower Hamlets (PATH): the fact the opposition has now split makes it easier for Labour to win more seats. We also expect the Conservatives to struggle to keep hold of seats, with a possibility of a wipe-out. However, this is based on those two new parties co-operating to some degree in terms of where they run candidates. If they both fight all wards, it is possible they will only

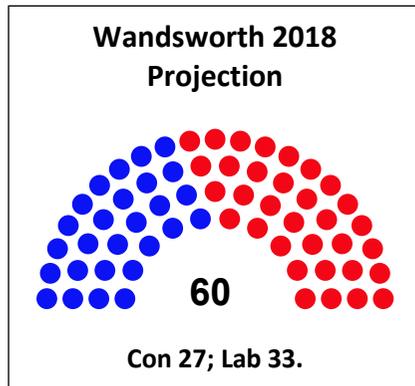
ensure neither of them wins and Labour could conceivably mop up every council seat. **Overall, we predict a comfortable Labour win: it's just a matter of size.**

The Conservatives held **Barnet** with a majority of just one in 2014. Despite a significant swing against the Conservatives at the 2017 General Election, all three of the borough's Conservative MPs just held their seats. The borough is affluent, has high property ownership rates and a higher than average age profile. Moreover, the recent news stories highlighting anti-semitism in the Labour Party could play a role in a borough with a large Jewish population. However, Labour did well at the last London Assembly and Mayoral elections, and a majority of just one seems too hard to defend in the current climate. The battleground appears to be formed of four wards - Brunswick Park, Childs Hill, Hale, and Mill Hill. Of those wards, all will be closely fought but we expect Labour to win three and the Conservatives to retain just Mill Hill. As such, **we predict Barnet will be a Labour gain.**



We expect the contest in **Hillingdon** to be the closest of all the elections in London. The Conservatives currently hold the council with 42 seats to Labour's 23. An outer London borough with an older age profile and a Leave vote in 2016, and, as far as we can see, a decent record of service provision, plus a pledge this year to freeze council tax, it might be considered safe for the Conservatives. However, there were swings away from the Party at the 2017 General Election and Labour polled most votes across the borough. In addition, the borough is home to two of the most controversial MPs in the country: Boris Johnson and John McDonnell. The latter is likely to bring in large numbers of Momentum members to campaign, whilst Boris as a marmite politician will either help or hinder his party's cause locally. We expect Labour to pick up seats in the split wards of Charville and West Drayton, with the true battle taking place in the wards of Brunel, Hillingdon East, South Ruislip, Uxbridge South and Yiewsley. We expect more split wards, the tightest of results that could go either way, but are plumping for a **Conservative hold on 3rd May.**

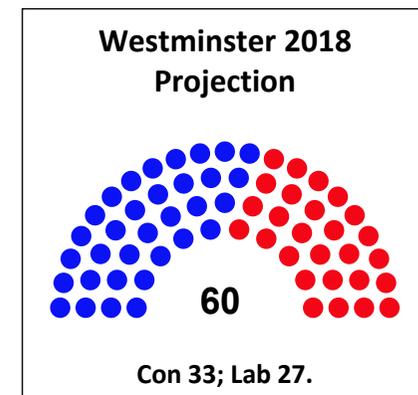
A CLOSER LOOK - LABOUR TARGETS CONT...



We expect the Labour Party to throw the kitchen sink at **Wandsworth** on 3rd May, with its long history as a bastion of Thatcherism, and within the Party's reach for the first time in ages. The borough has been a Conservative stronghold since 1978, not least because it has consistently provided its residents with the lowest, or one of the lowest, council tax rates in the country since the 1990s. However, the Conservatives lost the constituency of Battersea to Labour at the 2017 General Election, and saw their majority slashed in Putney, with swings of around 10% Con to Lab across the borough. The Labour vote rose by a large margin in Tooting, Mayor of London Sadiq Khan's old seat, and he seems likely to be a key campaigner in the borough. Labour also improved its position at the 2016 Mayor and Assembly elections, again probably in part due to Khan running for Mayor. The age-profile of the borough is much younger than most Conservative councils, and issues of housing and anti-Brexit sentiment are likely to come into play. The Conservatives will hope their record of delivery and low council tax will be enough to win through yet again, and recent press stories of Momentum planning to unseat the moderate Labour council group leader might spook some voters into voting Conservative. We expect Labour to pick up seats in the split wards of Bedford, Earlsfield, Queenstown. The wards of

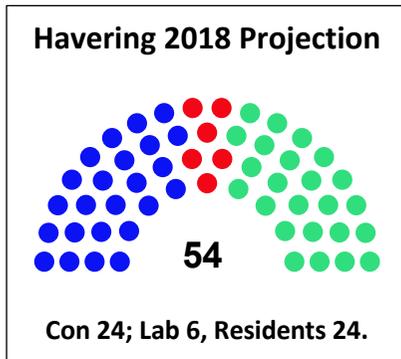
Balham, Fairfield, Wandsworth Common and Nightingale will be close but should just remain Conservative, although some wards may split. We expect Labour to gain Shaftesbury, Southfields and West Hill. **On balance we believe the tidal wave that hit Wandsworth at the 2017 General Election is too strong to resist and that the borough will be turning red this time around.**

Finally, **Westminster** has only ever been controlled by the Conservatives since 1964 and would normally be deemed safe. However, the Conservative vote share has been dropping since 2006. At the 2017 General Election the majority in the hitherto safe Conservative seat of the Cities of London and Westminster dropped from just under 10,000 to just over 3,000, whilst the Labour marginal of Westminster North went in the opposite direction, from just under 2,000 to over 11,000. Like Wandsworth, the borough voted strongly for Remain in 2016. Labour would be coming from a long way back to win and there is the possibility they might stack up votes in the north of the borough but just miss out on taking a number of key wards elsewhere. We think they will come close, probably picking up Bayswater, Little Venice and Vincent Square. The results in Regents Park and St James wards are likely to be deciders and we are predicting they will just break for the Conservatives. If any of those wards end up splitting, it could be closer than we think. **However, we are calling the borough a Conservative hold, with Labour winning 27 seats and the Conservatives 33.**



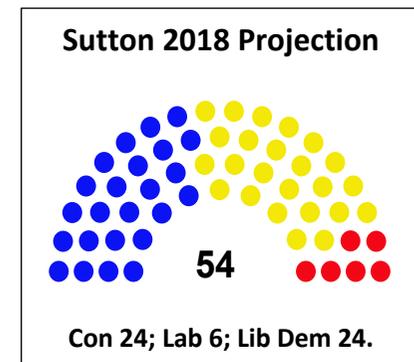
A CLOSER LOOK - POTENTIAL CONSERVATIVE GAINS?

The backdrop to the 2018 local elections is a general expectation that the Conservatives will lose both seats and councils across London. Chances for them to make gains are few and far between. They are defending nine councils and most of their resources will be poured into trying to retain as many of those as possible, as well as trying to avoid wipe-outs in other boroughs. If they are to make gains, providing a sliver of silver lining for Theresa May on what is likely to be a very cloudy night for the Conservatives in London, there are two long shot possibilities in the form of two of the five Leave-voting boroughs in the capital - Havering and Sutton.

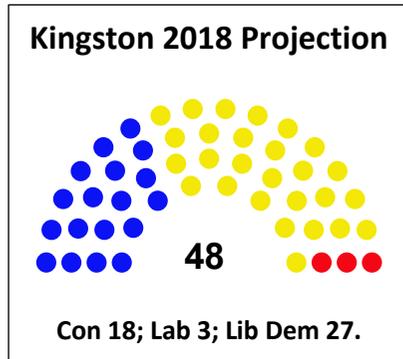


On paper, **Havering** should be a safe, Conservative-held borough. Massive parliamentary majorities in Hornchurch and Upminster and Romford at the 2017 General Election, together with an increased vote share in the cross-borough seat of Dagenham and Rainham, would seem to provide a baseline for the Conservatives winning the council this year. However, there is a strong tradition of Residents candidates running and polling very well at local elections: this is why Havering has recorded an outcome of No Overall Control more times than any other borough in London since 1964. In 2014 various descriptions of 'Residents' won 24 seats but do not together comprise a cohesive political group and declined to form an administration. Instead the council is Conservative-led with the support of one of the Residents groups. UKIP also polled extremely heavily in 2014: it might be expected that as their vote has declined post-referendum that it will be the Conservatives who will benefit. However, at the Heaton Ward by-election, caused by a UKIP Cllr resigning, it was Labour who gained the seat: it is equally possible Labour will be the beneficiaries of the UKIP collapse in May. So, in a Leave-voting borough, with a falling UKIP vote nationally, with a strong parliamentary presence, it seems conceivable that the Conservatives could just scrape together enough seats to win a majority. Elm Park and St Andrews wards might be key to a Con win. **However, on balance, we think it most likely Havering will revert to type and remain No Overall Control come 3rd May.**

When you look at the current political make up of **Sutton**, even thinking of a Conservative gain looks crazy. The Lib Dems hold 45 of the 54 seats, and have controlled the council since 1986, with outright control from 1990: it is the longest continuously-held Lib Dem council in the country. However, the borough voted Leave in 2016, and the General Elections in 2015 and 2017 saw the Conservatives win control of the Sutton and Cheam half of the borough, with swings to the party in the other half of Carshalton and Wallington as well. In the 2017 General Election the Labour vote increased substantially in Sutton and Cheam and it is this threat from Labour on the left, as well as the traditional threat from the Conservatives who will be hunting the substantial UKIP vote from 2014, that means the Lib Dems look more likely to lose control of Sutton than they have for a very long time. This statistical backdrop is combined with recent high profile local policy issues – such as the introduction of a new bin collection service which has seen rubbish remain uncollected (with the birth of another rubbish-related hashtag, #suttonbinshame), a failed SEND OFSTED inspection, and the building of an incinerator in Beddington North. Taken together, it means that after 32 years Sutton cannot be assumed to remain Lib Dem yellow. The Conservatives gaining control of the Council seems a long shot but cannot be ruled out. To do so, in addition to winning all seats in the split wards of Cheam, Sutton South, Carshalton South and Beddington South (which might be harder than it looks), they would need to also pick up the wards of Worcester Park, Nonsuch and Stonecot - which is likely - and probably one or more of either Sutton West, Sutton North, Wallington South or Beddington North, which will be harder. Those latter gains seem like a bridge too far but cannot be totally ruled out. No Overall Control seems a greater possibility if Labour make gains, as well they might in wards like Sutton Central, St Helier and Wandle Valley and maybe even Beddington North themselves. And, of course, the Lib Dems might just hang on in there. **if pushed to make a call, we think No Overall Control is most likely as things stand.**



A CLOSER LOOK - LIB DEM TARGETS

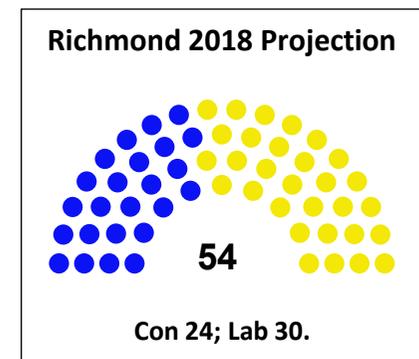


In addition to attempting to retain control of the London Borough of Sutton, the Liberal Democrats will be putting their remaining resources into trying to win back control of the other two South West London boroughs they have historically done extremely well in - Kingston upon Thames and Richmond upon Thames. The 2017 General Election result suggests that both councils are in play.

Let's look at **Kingston** first. The Lib Dems lost control of the borough at the 2014 local elections, having held the council outright, or through minority control, since 1990. Their 18 seats won in 2014 was, in fact, their lowest total since 1982. However, that result came whilst the Lib Dems were in coalition with the Conservatives at Westminster and after the Party had reversed its position on tuition fees. Things have since moved on. The borough voted heavily for Remain at the 2016 EU referendum and this clearly helped the Lib Dems to a resurgence at the 2017 General Election, with Ed Davey winning back the seat of Kingston and Surbiton and Sarah Olney missing out on the seat of Richmond Park (which straddles the boroughs of Kingston and Richmond) by just 45 votes. Vince Cable's approach in recent weeks has been to try and keep Brexit near the top of the political agenda going into the local elections and the Party is clearly going to campaign strongly on the issue across London. Overall, the Lib Dems polled most votes across the borough at

the 2017 General Election. The Party also won heavily at the most recent Grove ward by-election in July 2015. All this suggests that the Conservatives will struggle to hang on to the council on 3rd May. What might save them? As noted earlier, there seems to be an incumbency factor across London, where a majority of people think *their own* council is doing a good job. The Conservatives have also pledged to freeze council tax should they win again and are clearly hoping that promise, combined with their record in the borough over the past four years, will be enough to sneak a win. It is also notable that the two Chessington wards, with five of the six seats held by the Lib Dems, polled a large UKIP vote in 2014 of more than 20%. If the Lib Dems do campaign on a pro-Brexit message across the whole borough it is possible that refrain will backfire in Chessington. If the Conservatives manage to gain those Chessington wards, that might just be enough for them to absorb losses elsewhere and hang on to the council. Norbiton ward will resume a full complement of Labour councillors. **Our best bet though, as things stand, is that the Lib Dems will take back control of Kingston in May.**

On paper, **Richmond** should be a harder mountain to climb for the Lib Dems than Kingston. Despite a long history of controlling the council - five out of the last nine elections - they last won the council back in 2006. Their 2014 score of 15 councillors was their worst since 2002. However, the same broad set of circumstances that apply to Kingston also apply to Richmond: there was a big Remain vote in 2016; Vince Cable won back the parliamentary seat of Twickenham in 2017 and has since become his party's leader; the Lib Dems won most votes across the borough in 2017; and they gained a seat from the Conservatives at the Hampton Wick by-election in July 2015. In fact, at the General Election in 2017, the Lib Dems won the vote across the borough by a larger margin, and with a bigger swing, than they did in Kingston. So, although they are starting from further back, the council is definitely in play and could turn yellow on 3rd May. The Conservatives will, once again, be hoping that their local record is enough for them to hang on although, unlike Kingston, they have not been tempted to freeze council tax going into the election. There were a significant number of split wards in the borough in 2014 and that could well happen again, muddying the potential waters still further: we expect only four wards to be 'safe' for either party across the whole borough; Hampton North, Hampton Wick and South Twickenham for the Conservatives; and St Margarets & North Twickenham for the Lib Dems. **Whilst all three outcomes – Con win, Lib Dem win, or dead heat – are all possible, we think the Lib Dems will emerge as narrow winners on 3rd May, with 30 seats to the Conservatives 24.**



A CLOSER LOOK - DIRECTLY ELECTED MAYOR ELECTIONS

Our look at the Mayoral elections is not so much about who will win each of these contests: as we stated earlier, we think Labour will win them all and win them well. However, we will use this section to have a very brief look at some of the local dynamics at play because all these elections, collectively and individually, raise questions about the direction of policy in their individual boroughs and across London more widely.



It was something of a shock when the Labour Party in **Newham** announced that it was re-opening the selection process for Mayor. Sir Robin Wales had been in charge of Newham - either as leader of the council or, since 2002, as Mayor - for nearly a quarter of a century. However, once the contest was opened up, it was perhaps not as much of a surprise that he lost the contest. Despite running an efficient and progressive administration, delivering that efficiency meant Wales had made enemies during his tenure. Certainly, he was accused of an autocratic style and his opponent in the Mayoral selection and subsequent winner, **Rokhsana Fiaz** (pictured left), based her campaign at least in part around a pledge to open up politics in the borough and to involve the community more in the decision-making process. She has gone so far as to promise to scrap the position of Mayor entirely, although Fiaz is keeping the timetable for this quite broad at the moment: she has pledged there will be a ballot within her first term. If the referendum supports a move back to a council and cabinet model, that in itself will have implications in the borough.

At the very least, whether as Mayor or Council Leader, Fiaz will need to live up to her campaign to run a more inclusive administration, both in terms of councillors and local communities. How that will affect the speed and effectiveness of decision-making will remain to be seen.

So, that's a look a process: what about policy? If Sir Robin was the consummate New Labour moderate, bringing stability to politics in this part of East London, Fiaz seems to promise a more radical approach. A Corbyn backer, she is supported by the local branch of Momentum. A Newham councillor since 2014, she has a background in media and public relations, has worked as an advisor on equalities and campaigned on anti-racism issues. She has criticised the regeneration projects carried out in Newham as part of the Olympic legacy as not benefitting local people enough and has promised that local residents will have more of a say over future regeneration schemes. Housing is at the top her list and she said she will deliver more social housing, with half of new homes built by developers to be delivered *'at social rents and owned by the council'*: Fiaz has also pledged to build 1,000 council houses. Affordable housing targets seem likely to rise. What affect that agenda will have on housebuilding we will have to see. There is also a vocal campaign in Newham against more academy schools - Fiaz seems likely to throw her support behind that campaign. All in all, it seems like there could be big changes after Fiaz becomes the first female directly elected mayor in a London borough on 3rd May.

Philip Glanville replaced Jules Pipe as Mayor of **Hackney** in a 2016 by-election after Pipe was appointed Deputy Mayor London for Planning and Regeneration by Sadiq Khan. Previously a councillor in Hoxton ward, and a Cabinet Member for Housing, Glanville won the by-election convincingly: we fully expect him to do so again. On the more moderate wing of the Labour Party, Glanville has had to tack slightly to the left in the current political climate. He has kept his fire focussed on the Government and has quietly got on with his job. He has also decided to try a more inclusive approach, holding his first Mayor's Question Time in Hackney at the end of last year. He defends charges of 'gentrification', by saying the approach he is taking - for example by renting out old council buildings to workspace providers and getting Amazon UK HQ to locate on council land in Shoreditch - is necessary to bring in long-term income and jobs. He advocates a build to sell scheme, boosting private building to fund social and affordable housing, and generally accepts the need for councils to be innovative in the way they operate, rather than looking backwards to the past. All in all, Hackney looks like continuing a progressive approach to policy issues under another Glanville term of office.



A CLOSER LOOK - DIRECTLY ELECTED MAYOR ELECTIONS CONT...



Damien Egan was selected as Labour's candidate for Mayor of **Lewisham** after the long-term incumbent, Sir Steve Bullock, Mayor since the post was created in 2002, announced he was standing down last year. As with the other Mayoral elections, we expect Labour to win easily. A councillor in the ward of Lewisham Central, Egan served as Bullock's Cabinet member for Housing. His background is in the charity sectors, working for the Ethical Trading Initiative, *'an NGO protecting workers in sweatshops around the world.'* Egan beat the local Momentum backed candidate, fellow councillor Paul Bell, with a substantial majority in late 2017. Whilst not receiving the backing of Momentum, it has been reported that Egan has felt the need to shift his politics leftwards in order to win. He has certainly changed his position on one of the council's largest regeneration projects, the New Bermondsey scheme next to Millwall FC. [OnLondon](#)'s Dave Hill reported that *'Egan had originally supported the council's intention to use compulsory purchase powers (CPO) to push the scheme through against opposition from the football club, but in January, following negative media coverage, announced that he had "less confidence" in the developer than before and that the council should "completely revisit" the original planning application, made in 2011. During [his selection] campaign he said he opposed the use of CPO and the sale of the freeholds of land owned by the council but leased to the club.'* Going into the local elections, Housing seems to be his biggest priority, with Egan citing his own experience of homelessness as a teenager as a driving force. He commits himself to *'building more council and genuinely affordable housing in our borough'* and has also recently tweeted that *'Lewisham Labour will build 1,000 new social homes, crack down on rogue landlords, & set up a renters' union for private tenants.'* Local health services seem also to be at the forefront of campaigning and, as a pro-EU campaigner, residents in Remain-voting Lewisham can probably expect some campaigning on Brexit.

John Biggs became Mayor at the 2015 by-election in **Tower Hamlets**, after an Election Court ruled that the incumbent elected in 2014, Lutfur Rahman, was guilty of corrupt and illegal campaign practices. Rahman is barred from running for political office but his influence in the borough remains and two of his former supporters will contest the Mayoral contest in May, one apparently with his blessing, the other without. Cllr Ohid Ahmed, a former council Cabinet Member and Deputy Mayor to Rahman until 2014, is running under the banner of the new Aspire party and with the backing of the former Mayor. Cllr Rabina Khan, who ran with the backing of Rahman against Biggs in the 2015 by-election, has broken away from Rahman and is running again for Mayor: she is also the leader of the also newly register People's Alliance of Tower Hamlets (PATH) group. As mentioned in the section on council elections earlier, Biggs is likely to benefit from the splitting of his opponents and, although nothing in Tower Hamlets can be taken for granted, he seems almost assured of winning a second term on 3rd May. He will be hoping that he does not also have to deal with a hung council this time though, and we don't think he will: we predict a substantial Labour majority on the council for him to work alongside.



A former leader of Tower Hamlets council, Biggs also served as London Assembly member for the City and East constituency from the GLA's inception in 2000 until 2016. During that time he showed himself to be an independent-minded thinker and operator, often proving to be the Assembly's toughest inquisitor of former Mayor Ken Livingstone, even once Livingstone had re-joined the Labour Party. Planning, housing and regeneration issues will, yet again, be to the fore in this campaign, with a huge demand for affordable housing, but also concerns about whether local infrastructure can keep pace with developments. Lurking in the background though are further allegations of corruption, with the Sunday Times reporting that a Labour councillor had been willing to accept bribes in return for securing planning permissions. These allegations have been passed onto the authorities to investigate. As a result, the Conservatives in the borough have been campaigning to clean up corruption, although it is unlikely that the issue will gain enough traction to seriously make dents in the likely outcome on polling day.



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If you would like a more in-depth analysis on this subject, or would like to discuss how Nudge Factory might be able to assist you in producing bespoke briefings or reports, please contact us using the details below:

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