**NORTH-WEST COUNCIL ELECTIONS, THURSDAY 3 MAY 2018**

**PROFESSOR JON TONGE, DEPARTMENT OF POLITICS, UNIVERSITY OF LIVERPOOL**

**j.tonge@liverpool.ac.uk****, 0151-794-2899w, 0778 8190742m, @jontonge**

**The state-of-play: the comparison is with 2014**

1. **The direct comparison for most local authorities in terms of election cycle for these elections is with 2014, based on the four-year cycle – 3 years of elections plus one fallow year i.e. it was in 2014 that most of the councillors defending their seats were elected.**
2. **The 2014 local elections were held on the same day as what turned out to be our last-ever European Parliament elections – and UKIP’s strong performance in the EP elections spilled over slightly into the local contests – so a lot of UKIP votes to play for.**
3. **Labour performed only moderately well nationally in 2014, gaining 324 council seats (below what might have been expected – an indication of their looming 2015 election defeat). – but Labour did do well (as usual) in the North-West.**
4. **NW vote shares in 2014 were as follows: Lab 45%, Con 22%, UKIP 16%, LD 12%, Others 5% - so clearly there is a sizeable UKIP vote to compete for.**
5. **Labour won 71% of the NW seats contested in 2014, Cons 17% and LDs 10%. On the councils being contested on 3 May, Lab holds 69% of the seats, Cons 19%, LDs 9%.**
6. **The rout of the Lib Dems continued apace in 2014. After those election results, they had lost 228 councillors across these 26 councils from the 379 they held (60% loss) when joining the coalition government in 2010. The Conservatives lost 141 councillors from the 432 they held between 2010-14 (33%).**
7. **The UKIP vote share was variable in 2014: low in big cities (5% Liverpool, 8%**

**Manchester) and in Con-Lab Trafford contest (6%); high in Bolton (25%) & Oldham (24%)**

1. **Although 2014 is the ‘official’ comparison, many will prefer to compare these results to 2016, the last time these councils held elections.**
2. **Of the 25 councils being contested, 21 are held outright by Labour. Two are NOC but under Labour minority control, the Conservatives hold Trafford only and the Liberal Democrats run South Lakeland.**
3. **Background of continuing cuts and largest increase in council tax (up to 5.99%) for a decade– due to an increase to 5% (effectively 6% with the social care precept) (from a previous limit of 2% increases before a referendum is needed) - but this 6% increase is for 3 years - councils are frontloading the cash.**
4. **All 96 seats in Manchester are contested due to boundary changes.**
5. **Labour’s dominance is summarised as follows. The Party controls 84% of the councils and holds 71% of the council seats – on 45% of the vote.**
6. **Formerly marginal or swing councils such as Bury, Chorley, Hyndburn and Oldham have become increasingly solid Labour.**

**MAIN CON TARGETS**

**PENDLE (FROM NOC LABOUR-LD MINORITY RULE – ONLY REAL POSSIBILITY OF CON GAIN?)**

**ROSSENDALE (FROM LAB)**

**SOUTH LAKELAND (FROM LIB DEMS)**

**WEST LANCASHIRE (FROM LABOUR)**

***Holding Trafford the main priority***

**MAIN LAB TARGETS**

**TRAFFORD (FROM CONS)**

**STOCKPORT (TURN NOC LABOUR MINORITY RULE INTO OVERALL MAJORITY)**

**MAIN LD TARGETS**

**TO BECOME LARGEST PARTY IN STOCKPORT**

**CURRENT STATE OF PLAY ON COUNCILS, MARCH 2018**

**ONE-THIRD OF SEATS UP FOR ELECTION UNLESS OTHERWISE STATED**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **CON** | **LABOUR** | **LIB DEM** | **OTHERS** | **CONTROL** | **COMMENTS** |
| BARROW |  |  |  |  |  | NO ELECTION |
| **BLACKBURN with DARWEN** | **17** | **44** |  **3** | **0** | **LAB** | **LAB TOOK OC 2011. EASY HOLD**  |
| BLACKPOOL |  |  |  |  |  | NO ELECTION |
| **BOLTON** | **16** | **36** |  **3** | **4****(all UKIP)** | **LAB** | **LAB TOOK OC 2011. CONS WON BOLTON W PARLIAMENTARY SEAT 2015 GE AND HELD IT IN 2017. LAB LOST 2 SEATS TO UKIP IN 2016**  |
| **BURNLEY** | **4** | **26** | **6** | **8** **(1 UKIP)** | **LAB** | **LDs LARGEST PARTY UNTIL 2012 WHEN LAB TOOK OC. 3 DIFF TYPES OF INDEPENDENT.****LAB TOOK PARL SEAT FROM LDs 2015 GE.****COUNCIL MAYOR IDEA REJECTED IN 2017 VOTE**  |
| **BURY** | **16** | **32** | **3** | **0** | **LAB** | **LAB WON OC IN 2011. CONS MADE 3 GAINS 2016 (2 FROM LAB) BUT LOST BURY N PARL SEAT IN 2017 GE** |
| CHESHIRE EAST |  |  |  |  |  | NO ELECTION |
| CHESHIRE WEST |  |  |  |  |  | NO ELECTION |
| **CHORLEY** | **14** | **30** | **0** | **3**  | **LAB** | **LAB OC SINCE 2012. 17 OF 20 WARDS BEING CONTESTED. USED TO OFTEN CHANGE BUT SEEMS MORE SOLIDLY LAB NOW: DOUBLED PARL SEAT MAJ 2017 GE.**  |
| FYLDE |  |  |  |  |  | NO ELECTION |
| **HALTON** | **2** | **52** | **2** | **0** | **LAB** | **LAB FOR ALL 44 YEARS OF ITS EXISTENCE… 2 CONS IN DARESBURY** |
|  | **CON** | **LAB** | **LIB DEM** | **OTHERS** | **CONTROL** |  |
| HIGH PEAK |  |  |  |  |  | NO ELECTION |
| **HYNDBURN** | **7** | **26** | **0** | **1 (UKIP)** | **LAB** | **LAB TOOK OC 2011. LAB WON 51% OF THE VOTE IN 2016 AND GAINED 1 SEAT FROM THE CONS. UKIP WON 2 SEATS HERE IN 2014 – WON’T HOLD EITHER** |
| **KNOWSLEY** | **0** | **41** | **3** | **0** | **LAB** | **COUNCIL CUT IN SIZE BY ¼ SINCE 2016. LAB 75% OF VOTE THEN, LD 9%. CON 3%** **ONE-PARTY COUNCIL 2012-15** |
| **LIVERPOOL** |  **0** | **79** | **4** | **7****(4 Green)****(2 Lib)****(1 Ind)**  | **LAB** | **LAB OC SINCE 2010. CON-FREE.** **MAYORAL ELECTION 2016. GREENS DEFENDING 2,****LDs 1, LIBS 1. ALL VULNERABLE TO LAB BUT RESILIENT SEAT-HOLDERS** |
| **MANCHESTER** |  **0** | **95** | **1** | **0**  | **LAB** | **ALL 96 SEATS UP. ONE PARTY STATE 2013-15 BEFORE LD JOHN LEECH ELECTED IN 2016. MAJOR WARD BOUNDARY CHANGES WON’T ALTER MUCH. HUGE LAB MAJ IN WITHINGTON IN SOUTH OF CITY 2017 GE – WHICH HAD BEEN MORE FERTILE LD LAND**  |
| **OLDHAM** |  **2** | **45** | **8** | **3** **(1 UKIP)** | **LAB** | **LAB TOOK OC IN 2011. CON SEATS DECLINED FAST FROM 10 AS RECENTLY AS 2014. LAB WON 49% OF VOTE 2016, UKIP 16%, LD 13%, CON 12%** |
|  | **CON** | **LAB** | **LIB DEM** | **OTHERS** | **CONTROL** |  |
| **PENDLE** | **23** | **15** |  **9** | **1 BNP** **I IND** | **NOC** **(run by Lab-LD coalition)**  | **CONS GAINED 3 AND LOST 1 2016. LAST BNP SEAT TO DISAPPEAR** |
| **PRESTON** | **19** | **33** |  **5** | **0** | **LAB** | **LAB TOOK OC IN 2011: WILL HOLD** |
| RIBBLE VALLEY |  |  |  |  |  | NO ELECTION |
| **ROCHDALE** | **10** | **48** |  **2** | **0** | **LAB** | **WAS LD 2007, NOC 2010 AND LAB SINCE 2011.****LAB WON 16 OF THE 20 SEATS IN 2016, WITH 52% OF VOTE, CONS 19%, LDS 8%****UKIP GOT 16%.** |
| **ROSSENDALE** | **12** | **22** | **0** | **2** | **LAB** | **LAB SINCE 2012. CONSOLIDATED IN 2016 BY 3 GAINS, 2 FROM THE CONS** |
| **SALFORD** |  **9** | **50** | **0** | **1** | **LAB** | **SOLID LAB SINCE 1973.**  |
| **SEFTON** |  **5** | **39** | **16** | **5** | **LAB** | **LAB SINCE 2012 AFTER NOC SINCE 1986. LD SEATS MAINLY IN SOUTHPORT**  |
| **SOUTH LAKELAND** | **16** | **2** | **31** | **1** | **LD** | **Only LD-run council in the north of England (only 7 nationally). LD since 2006.** **8% swing to cons at 2017 ge almost cost tim farron his westmorland & lonsdale seat** |
| SOUTH RIBBLE |  |  |  |  |  | NO ELECTION |
| **ST HELENS** | **3** | **42** | **3** | **0** | **LAB** | **BRIEFLY NOC (2010) BUT SAFE LAB OTHERWISE** |
| **STOCKPORT** | **14** | **23** | **21** | **5** | **NOC (minority LAB admin)** | **LAB MINORITY RUN SINCE 2016. LDs LOST OC 2011 AFTER 12 YEARS. BALANCE OF POWER HELD BY 3 IND RATEPAYERS, WHOSE LEADER, IS UP FOR RE-ELECTION IN HEALD GREEN. 2016 VOTE SHARES: LAB 30%, LD 29%, CON 24%, UKIP 9%**  |
|  | **CON** | **LAB** | **LIB DEM** | **OTHER** | **CONTROL** |  |
| **TAMESIDE** |  **6** | **50** | **0** | **0** | **LAB** | **VERY SAFE LAB. 51% OF VOTE 2016** |
| **TRAFFORD** | **33** | **26** | **3** | **1 vacant** | **CON** | **CONS NORTHERN FLAGSHIP URBAN COUNCIL - CONTROL SINCE 2004. IF CONS LOSE 2 THEY LOSE OC. CONS ARE DEFENDING 11 SEATS, LABOUR 9 AND LDs 1. LAB FAILED TO MAKE GAINS IN 2016, BUT SOME VERY CLOSE WARDS E.G. CONS HELD FLIXTON BY ONLY 60 VOTES** |
| **WARRINGTON** |  |  |  |  |  |  **NO ELECTION** |
| **WEST LANCS** | **21** | **31** | **0** | **2** | **LAB** | **LAB TOOK OC IN 2015 HAD BEEN CON-HELD 2002-14 STILL A CON TARGET BUT LAB EXTENDED LEAD 2016 AND ADDED 4,000 TO PARLIAMENTARY SEAT MAJ. IN 2017** |
| **WIGAN** |  **5** | **65** | **0** | **5** | **LAB** | **VERY SAFE LAB.**  |
| **WIRRAL** | **21** | **39** | **5** | **1 (Green)** | **LAB** | **LAB TOOK OC 2012 AFTER A DECADE OF NOC.****LAB GOT 47% OF VOTE IN 2016, V 31% CONS, 11% LDs, 7% GREENS. THE GREENS DEFENDING ONLY SEAT, IN BIRKENHEAD & TRANMERE. LDs DEFENDING 2. WILL REMAIN SAFE LABOUR.** |
| WYRE |  |  |  |  |  | NO ELECTION |
| **TOTAL** | **275** **(19%)** | **991 (69%)** | **128 (9%)** |  **51****(3%)** | **TOTAL: 1,445** |  |