

A divided party won the local elections

Labour did well in the local elections. Being hopelessly divided on big issues did not stop its success. Its former leader remains banished. Some of the Corbynites remain on the Labour benches arguing for more Corbynite policies. The party is deeply split over the Hamas/ Israel war with some wanting a much tougher anti Israel line and some worrying about anti semitism . It is split over the Reeves wish to follow OBR austerity economics. There are many keen promoters over a speedier path to net zero shocked by the dumping of planned public spending to try to up the pace. All those who want to nationalise much more and tax much more are kept quiet or played down.

I point this out as a minority in my party argue that if all Conservative MPs supported everything the government does we would jump in the polls. They say divided parties cannot win. So how did Labour manage it? How did Margaret Thatcher pull off 3 great wins, when the Wets as they were then disparagingly called tried to undermine her continuously?

The way to win is to govern well. It is to allow robust debate about issues, policies and out turns. A leader needs to listen, adopt the best ideas, and be prepared to make the case for his choices.

To win Rishi Sunak needs to get legal migration well down, cut taxes for all, curb excessive public sector losses, recapture lost public service productivity and resolve public sector strikes.

Most people do not believe there is a climate emergency

Most of us accept the science that says CO₂ is a greenhouse gas, and accept manmade CO₂ is an influence on the climate. Clearly, however, most people do not think there is a manmade CO₂ driven climate emergency, because if they did we would see jet travel plunging, car use falling, meat diets disappearing, heat pumps flying off the shelves and many other behavioural changes.

Instead polls tell us people are against dearer fossil fuel energy. They oppose higher petrol taxes, oppose schemes to make it more difficult to use cars and vans, oppose wind farms and pylons near their homes and are angry about climate protesters trying to block roads and attacking petrol companies. Only a small minority buy all electric cars.

Many voters would like government to limit UK CO 2 by enforcing a major reduction in migration numbers. We would like more home grown food to cut the food miles rather than wilding schemes to boost imports. We support promoting fuel efficiency.

Some say in a temperate climate like the UK a possible average rise of temperature of say 2 degrees might help agriculture, as would some increase in CO 2. There have been many changes in climate during earth history. Some think adaptation is a more affordable and practical response as and when change occurs. It is self evidently true that unless China, India and the US reduce their CO 2 output nothing we do can stop more rises in world CO 2. It is also obvious importing instead of making and growing at home usually increases world CO 2 so it is not a win. The Green party who promote climate crisis as their lead issue never get out single figures in the polls.

[My Intervention on the Urgent Question – Port Talbot Steelworks](#)

Sir John Redwood (Wokingham) (Con):

When will the Government do something about the very high energy prices in this country, which have been made high by regulations and taxes? Does my right hon. Friend not accept that any kind of steelmaking will be extremely difficult if we have uncompetitive energy, and is it not wrong to import such materials, because it will mean even more carbon dioxide emissions, as well as destroying jobs here?

David T. C. Davies (Secretary of State for Wales):

We have looked carefully at the losses that Tata is making, which have come about partly because of the age of the infrastructure. In fact, Tata has had to close down the furnaces at the Morfa coke ovens within the last few weeks. The UK Government are fully cognisant of the cost of energy at the moment, which is why Tata has already benefited from many of the schemes that we have introduced over the past few years, will begin to benefit from the British industry supercharger scheme shortly, and will benefit from the carbon border adjustment mechanism at the start of 2027.

[Too many layers of government](#)

The more government we have the worse it is. I have more government than I want, more government than I need and more government than I can afford.

It is great news we have got rid of the needless, prying, interventionist EU government . Too many place still have three layers of local government with County, district and town or parish. There are then national quangos and regional quangos.

Wokingham has a Borough Unitary rather than County and District. That avoids disputes and confusions over which Council does what and saves a double overhead. I did with others successfully press to get rid of the regional Development Agency but we are now lumbered with a useless, annoying and expensive LEP, though it is cheaper than the RDA.

Elected Mayors are prone to playing national politics in preference to doing the day job of improving and supervising local public services. Mayor Kahn has damaged London with his anti driver measures, his failure to control knife crime and his inability to run a good value strike free public transport system, The overlap with the London Boroughs causes tensions and extra cost, especially over planning.

[A new approach to the public sector](#)

The low level of turnout at many of the elections and the low level of support for all the main parties with Labour topping the polls with just 35% on the national calculation displays a big gap between what the public want and will support and what the parties are offering.

Councils spend huge sums of money. They have extensive powers over our roads, schools, social services, planning, trading standards, the public estate, sport and leisure. Many of them claim poverty and blame the government for their excesses and mistakes.

The more Councils claim to be incapable of marshalling their resources to serve us better, the less interest there is by many in voting or engaging with them. Instead of building a strong local democracy their incompetence and denials of responsibility encourage people if they do wish to engage to gravitate their complaints or opinions to government or Parliament. Many people assume their Council will continue to ignore their needs and wishes as it has so often in the past.

The Liberal Democrat Wokingham Council is a good example of what is wrong. They spend money on consultations, only to ignore the results. They waste millions on road projects that make our roads worse, impede people living their lives and damage local businesses. They have amnesia about their decisions when people complain about what they are doing.