

Only Labour can beat the SNP – Dugdale



Yesterday, I kicked off our General Election campaign in Rutherglen.

Like most communities in Scotland, families here are currently represented by the SNP at Westminster.

Margaret Ferrier, like so many of her colleagues, promised to 'stand up for Scotland' yet has done nothing but seek division and campaign for an unwanted second independence referendum.

The people of Rutherglen and Hamilton West deserve better.

They deserve a hard-working local MP who will stand up for local families, and that's what they will get by voting for Ged Killen, our fantastic General Election candidate.

Last week's council elections proved that only Labour can defeat the SNP in seats such as Rutherglen.

We were a very close second to the Nationalists, with the Tories a distant third.

The same is true in Inverclyde, Midlothian, Glasgow East and elsewhere across the central belt, while Labour is now in pole position in places such as Coatbridge, Chryston and Bellshill, East Lothian and Edinburgh South.

Tory leader Ruth Davidson has been crowing about last week's results, claiming her party is in the ascendency from the Borders to the Highlands.

Unfortunately, she forgot about everywhere in between. That's where only Labour can beat the SNP.

Much has been made about the Tories' slight revival in Glasgow, but it was Labour which prevented the Nationalists from securing their top priority of a majority on Glasgow Council.

SNP MPs across Glasgow will now be incredibly nervous about their future job prospects – and so they should.

Across Scotland, we defied the experts. Opinion polls had us on 14 per cent, and pundits said we would lose every single council. In fact, we won three, tied with the SNP in the fourth and came within one seat of the Nationalists in North Lanarkshire and West Lothian.

And the SNP lost its majorities in Dundee and Angus, with its overall vote share across Scotland plummeting from 50 per cent in 2015 to 32 per cent. The tide has turned.

And the reason for that is clear. People are fed up with Nicola Sturgeon's

attempt to force another divisive independence referendum on the people of Scotland.

With 4,000 fewer teachers in our schools, and local NHS services facing cuts and closure, people want the Nationalists to focus on the day job.

So as we look ahead to the General Election, the hard, simple truth is that in many of Scotland's towns and cities, the only way to defeat the SNP is to vote Labour.

At this election, people shouldn't take the risk of voting SNP. In 2015, Labour warned that a vote for the SNP would help the Tories back into Number Ten. That's exactly what happened, and now we have the chaos of Brexit and the threat of a second independence referendum.

The only way that people across Scotland can reject this Tory Government and reject the threat of a divisive second independence referendum is to vote Labour on June 8.

This article originally appeared in the Daily Record on 09/05/17

[Labour will guarantee the rights of EU nationals](#)

9 May 2017

Labour has challenged the Tories and the SNP to guarantee the rights of EU nationals living in Scotland

Today is Europe day, and Kez Dugdale has confirmed that EU nationals will have their rights guaranteed by a Labour government.

Now it's time for Ruth Davidson to do the same

Kez said:

"The Tories have used people like poker chips since the EU referendum. It's sickening, it's wrong and it needs to stop.

"Labour's manifesto will guarantee the rights of EU nationals. This goes to the very heart about who we are as a country. There are over 180,000 EU nationals currently living and working in Scotland and they make a rich contribution to our society and economy.

"In Edinburgh, EU nationals are vital to our capital's economy, and Ian Murray will always fight for their rights in Edinburgh South.

"Ruth Davidson and the Scottish Tories need to match Labour's commitment and guarantee beyond doubt that EU nationals will be able to continue to live and work in Scotland after we leave the EU.

"Nicola Sturgeon needs to stop destabilising Scotland's economy and take the threat of a second independence referendum off the table.

"Labour believes that together we're stronger. Our country is divided enough. It is time to start healing the scars of both 2014 and 2016. That's why a vote for Labour on June 8 is a vote against another divisive independence referendum and against a hard Tory Brexit."

Share our values? [Then spread our message.](#)

[It's official: Sturgeon surge is now the Sturgeon slump](#)

Official figures published today have confirmed that the Sturgeon surge has turned into a 'Sturgeon slump'.

Labour's General Election campaign manager James Kelly said Nicola Sturgeon can no longer claim to speak for all of Scotland having secured less than a third of votes in last week's council elections.

The Electoral Management Board for Scotland data shows that nationally the SNP vote stands at 32 per cent – dramatically down 18 points on its 2015 General Election showing.

Labour defied the pollsters to win three councils, tie in first place in one more, and was just one seat behind the SNP in another two.

The figures show that voters are turning their backs on the SNP on the basis of a divisive second independence referendum.

Labour General Election campaign manager James Kelly said:

"It's official – the Sturgeon surge has turned into a Sturgeon slump with the threat of a divisive second independence referendum hanging over Scotland.

"How can Nicola Sturgeon claim to speak for all of Scotland having secured less than a third of the vote?"

"In 2015 the SNP secured half of the Scottish vote, and these official figures show that has now plummeted by 18 points.

"It is clear that more and more people are getting sick and tired of the SNP's obsession with dividing us again.

"Labour believes that together we're stronger. That is why the only way that people across Scotland can reject this Tory Government and reject the threat of a divisive second independence referendum is to vote Labour on June 8."

LABOUR WILL ONLY AGREE TO ANTI-AUSTERITY COUNCIL POWER-SHARING DEALS

6 May 2017

LABOUR WILL ONLY AGREE TO ANTI-AUSTERITY COUNCIL POWER-SHARING DEALS

Labour's Scottish Executive Committee (SEC) today agreed that Labour council groups will only agree to anti-austerity power-sharing deals in local government.

The SEC, which includes leader Kezia Dugdale, deputy leader Alex Rowley, MSPs, trade union representatives and constituency representatives, agreed that council groups will be required to ensure that 'no power-sharing arrangement will mean increased austerity that will disproportionately impact on the poorest communities'.

All local Labour groups will be required to apply to a working group of the SEC to set out in detail the policy aims of any proposed administration.

The policy priorities will have to be drawn from Labour's vision for local government, and must oppose any compulsory job redundancies in local government and oppose any further austerity to that already imposed by the SNP and Tory governments.

Since 2011, the SNP has cut £1.5 billion from local services – including £170 million this year alone.

Scottish Labour deputy leader and local government campaign manager Alex Rowley said:

"Following this week's elections, Labour remains a major party of local government.

"The SNP failed to win a single majority anywhere in Scotland, and the nature of the voting system means that cross-party deals may be agreed.

"Labour's approach is clear and consistent: we will categorically refuse to do any deal with another party if it would result in further austerity being imposed on local communities.

“Labour values must run through any deals: the defence of local services against cuts; and the proper funding of the services so many people rely on such as education and care for the elderly.

“Additionally, we will require any power-sharing administrations to protect jobs by opposing any compulsory redundancies.

“Every Labour councillor will always put their local communities first. They will fight against Tory attempts to drive down living standards and will not be distracted by campaigning for a divisive second independence referendum.”

Send the Tories and the SNP a message

2 May 2017

Speaking in Edinburgh today, Kez Dugdale said voters can send the Tories and the SNP a message by electing Labour councillors on Thursday.

The full text of Kez’s speech is below

Friends, when I asked Alex to be our local government campaign manager, I knew we would have someone who would lead by example.

But the miles he has clocked up as he knocks on doors in every corner of this country has astounded us all.

Alex, thank you for everything you have done to encourage people across Scotland to vote Labour when the polls open on Thursday.

And let me also thank Ian Murray.

He has taken the fight to the Tories in the House of Commons, and the Nationalists here in Edinburgh South, with the kind of grit and determination that makes me proud to be Labour.

But he hasn’t been fighting alone. He has had you, and he has had nearly 230 Labour colleagues from all across Britain, because we are a party that believes in solidarity and working together.

Friends, the election is less than 48 hours away.

That’s a sentence I have said an awful lot at events like these over the past few years.

In fact, since I joined the Labour Party in 2003 I have been involved in 12 national elections.

Twelve elections in less than 15 years.

It's no wonder, particularly here in Scotland, that sometimes we get election fatigue.

I am sure I am not the only one who empathised with Brenda, the Bristol pensioner whose angry and outraged reaction to the news of the snap General Election went viral.

But we keep going.

Because elections matter.

And this election is vitally important, because the very future of our local services is at stake.

Who runs our schools and how much we have to invest in Scotland's next generation is at stake.

The level of investment in social care is at stake.

The number of new houses we can build for families is at stake.

Yesterday we marked the 20th anniversary of Tony Blair's landslide election win in 1997.

It serves as a reminder that when Labour is in power, this country is transformed for the better.

That is why we continue to knock on doors, deliver leaflets and make our case for voting Labour.

And the council elections on Thursday and the General Election on the eighth of June are about two things:

Standing up for the public services that we all value, which the Tories want to decimate.

And sending a message to Nicola Sturgeon that the people of Scotland don't want another divisive independence referendum.

So let me say a bit more about those two issues.

After a decade of Tory and SNP cuts, Scottish public services are in a critical state.

There are 4,000 fewer teachers and 1,000 fewer support staff in our schools than when the SNP took office in 2007.

International league tables show a decline in maths, reading, and science.

Too many of our older people can't get the care package they need. And those that do get 15 minute visits – if they're lucky.

That should shame the SNP government.

NHS services across the country – from maternity units to children’s wards, and from GP surgeries to entire hospitals – are at risk of cuts or closure altogether.

And yet almost every day of this campaign, Nicola Sturgeon has claimed that we need to vote SNP to protect Scotland from Tory cuts.

What a cheek.

Under the SNP £1.5 billion has been cut from local services since 2011 alone.

That’s money taken from our schools and nurseries and care of the elderly.

Money taken from protecting our most vulnerable.

Money taken from services which offer hope and aspiration to those who feel left behind and forgotten.

Money which offers opportunity.

People want their children to get a decent education in good schools.

They want to know that further education is possible.

They need to hope that there will be decent jobs paying decent wages because the government is investing in the future.

The SNP does not offer that.

It might campaign against austerity but the SNP does nothing about it when in power.

The party – the only party – in this election with a plan to invest in public services is Labour.

Every Labour councillor elected on Thursday will fight for better schools and safer communities.

They are the people who will focus on ending poverty in their communities and offer opportunity to all.

They will stand up against the cuts, and work tirelessly to invest in the local services that we all rely on.

The SNP won’t stop the cuts.

And the Tories will cut even more.

So to those thinking about voting Tory on Thursday, I want to say this.

Think carefully about what that vote means.

It’s an endorsement of the abhorrent rape clause.

It's a vote for a hard Brexit, affecting jobs and workers' rights.

It's a vote for more severe cuts to schools and other valued local services across the country.

Because the more Tories in town halls, the more chance they have of actually getting their hands on local services – and cutting them even further.

So when you are out on the doorsteps over the next 48 hours, tell the voters this:

Don't vote for the Tories as a protest vote. Protest against them.

And don't vote for the SNP. Stop them from taking this country through another divisive referendum.

Nicola Sturgeon has been desperate to convince people that the coming elections aren't about a second divisive independence referendum.

She says that a vote for the SNP is safe, because it isn't really about independence this time round.

But she said that in 2015, and look what happened.

The day after her party won in Scotland she started her divisive campaign to break up the UK all over again.

And if the SNP win 56 seats at the General Election they will, once again, seek to claim a mandate for another divisive independence referendum.

Like you I am utterly fed up with the duplicitous nature of a party which pretends to stand up for Scotland when all it really wants is to tear the UK apart.

Friends, there is nothing progressive about nationalism.

There's nothing progressive about refusing to ask the rich to pay their fair share.

And there's nothing progressive about breaking up the United Kingdom, ending the very means by which we redistribute wealth across these islands.

Like many of you in this room, my belief in Scotland remaining in the United Kingdom isn't based on ideology.

It's not based on the love of one flag over another.

Rule Britannia! doesn't quite do it for me.

My passionate belief in the United Kingdom comes from lived reality.

From seeing the value of being part of something bigger in our everyday lives.

The UK pension that allows older people to live out their retirement with dignity.

The thousands of jobs that are sustained by being in the UK single market, where firms can trade freely between the four nations of our isles.

The shipyards workers, who are in jobs because of UK defence contracts that would be lost if we went our separate ways.

The schools that are built across this country thanks to tax revenues raised and redistributed across the whole of the UK.

The NHS –created by a UK Labour government, and funded by the contributions of working people throughout Britain.

The millions of people around the world who have been helped thanks to the work of the Department for International Development in East Kilbride.

In every part of our country there is a reminder of the benefits we get from being part of Britain.

And there isn't just an economic and practical argument for remaining in the UK, important though that is.

There is a powerful emotional argument too

It's an argument that is written into the very DNA of our party.

That we achieve more together than by going it alone.

We are the party of solidarity.

We are the party of working together.

We are the party that knows that sharing resources isn't selling our nation out, it's part of building our country up.

So let the message ring out that together we're stronger.

On Thursday, every Labour councillor elected will fight to make their local community stronger.

A local champion who will protect local services from the Tory and SNP cuts.

A local champion who will be the last line of defence between the services people value...

... and the narrow-minded dogma of two opposing nationalist forces.

A local champion whose priority will always be improving our schools and our social care services, not obsessing about a second independence referendum.

So on Thursday send the Tories a message – tell them that Scotland does not want their austerity.

And send Nicola Sturgeon a message as well.

Tell her to abandon her plan for another divisive referendum and get on with the day job.

You can protest against the Tories and protest against plans for a second referendum on Thursday with one vote.

By voting Labour.

And in return, you'll get a local champion for your community.

Someone utterly committed to investing in the public services your family needs and deserves.

So let's get out there.

Thank you.