

The Rochdale by election

The Rochdale by election was a most revealing event.

Labour did not campaign and announced no-one should vote for their candidate on the ballot paper as he was unsuitable. Most people expected Conservatives to poll poorly in line with other recent by elections. The current mood of the Conservative half of the electorate is to send a clear message to the PM to improve things, by abstaining or voting for a different candidate.

These then were the ideal conditions for Reform, or the Greens and the Lib Dems to mount a great campaign and show momentum. Labour the obvious party to win here was not running.

The Greens with their extreme approach to net zero demanding so many changes in lifestyle came in ninth with just 1.4% of the vote. The Lib Dems who also want to stop people using cars and speed green changes came in fifth with just 7% of the vote. There is no evidence here or in other elections that voters want more of the net zero policies.

This surely was ideal territory and background for Reform. There was speculation they could even emerge the winner. In the event they limped in in sixth place with 6.3%.

Instead the Conservatives were the only established party to get into double figures in third place. Rochdale voted decisively for two independent candidates who got 61% between them.

People want government to improve the economy, boost take home pay and control our borders. The sooner it is seen to do so the sooner voters around the country could get behind the government again. There is little appetite for Green/Lib Dem and Reform's negative aim of destroying the Conservatives is not a big vote winner either as it does nothing to improve people's lives.