



RESEARCH PAPER 98/59  
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# The local elections of 7 May 1998 and the London Referendum

This paper provides a brief summary of the local elections which took place in many parts of England on 7 May 1998. In the interest of producing the paper quickly it is based largely on press reports. More detailed information, including the votes cast, will be published later in the year.

Bryn Morgan

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## I Local Elections of 7 May

On 7 May 1998 elections took place in many parts of England. Candidates stood in more than 4,350 seats and about 22 million people, around 50 per cent of the British electorate, were eligible to vote. Elections took place for:

- all of the council in each of the 32 London boroughs;
- one-third of the council in each of the 36 metropolitan districts;
- one-third of the council in 88 non-metropolitan districts in England;
- one-third of the council in nine unitary authorities and the whole council in the Isle of Wight

This paper is intended as a brief and immediate summary of the elections and is largely based on press reports. The final compilation of the results, including accurate statistics on votes cast, takes some time. These will be published later this year<sup>1</sup>. In the meantime, any requests for further information should be directed to the Social and General Statistics Section (extension 3851).

Table 1 shows the numbers of councillors elected on 7 May. These include some elected as a result of casual vacancies. Table 2 gives details of each party's net gains or losses of seats on 7 May compared with immediately before the elections.

On the basis of these elections, the BBC projected the national share of the vote at 38% for Labour, 32% Conservative and 25% Liberal Democrat. They estimated the turnout in England as a whole at 29% with 34% of the electorate in London voting.

The appendix to this paper lists the councils which had elections.

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<sup>1</sup> For example in Colin Rallings and Michael Thrasher **Local elections handbook 1998**, which should be published in the Autumn.

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Table 1

### Councillors elected in 1998 local elections

	Number of authorities	Councillors elected					Total
		Conservative	Labour	Liberal Democrat	Other	Vacant	
Metropolitan districts	36	108	575	151	14	-	848
London boroughs	32	512	1,047	301	28	6	1,894
Shire districts							
<i>North</i>	17	97	115	68	13	-	293
<i>Midlands</i>	23	85	186	62	20	-	353
<i>South</i>	48	245	215	222	54	-	736
Total	88	427	516	352	87	-	1,382
Unitary authorities	10	38	102	49	17	-	206
<b>Total England</b>	<b>166</b>	<b>1,085</b>	<b>2,240</b>	<b>853</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>4,330</b>

North: Northern region, North West, Yorkshire and Humberside

Midlands: West Midlands, East Midlands, East Anglia

South: Greater London, South East, South West

Table 2

### Net gains or losses by party

	Conservative	Labour	Liberal Democrat	Other
Metropolitan districts	+33	-43	+22	-12
London boroughs	+14	+43	-31	-26
Shire districts				
<i>North</i>	+44	-40	-11	+7
<i>Midlands</i>	+32	-11	-3	-18
<i>South</i>	+114	-14	-89	-11
Total	+190	-65	-103	-22
Unitary authorities	+22	-23	-2	+3
<b>England</b>	<b>+259</b>	<b>-88</b>	<b>-114</b>	<b>-57</b>

The councils where control changed as a result of the 1998 local elections are listed below:

Formerly Conservative, now no overall control

Bromley

Formerly Labour, now no overall control

Cambridge

Hillingdon

Islington

Formerly Liberal Democrat, now Labour

Hastings

Formerly Liberal Democrat, now no overall control

Colchester

Craven

Isle of Wight

Kingston-upon-Thames

Rochford

West Lindsey

Woking

Formerly no overall control, now Conservative

Runnymede

Tunbridge Wells

Formerly no overall control, now Labour

Brent

Harrow

Lambeth

Waltham Forest

Formerly no overall control, now Liberal Democrat

Liverpool

## II London Referendum

Table 3 shows the result of the referendum held in London on 7 May, on the Government's plans for a mayor and assembly for London.

Table 3

**"Are you in favour of the government's proposals for a Greater London Authority, made up of an elected mayor and separately elected authority?"**

Borough	Yes		No		Total valid votes	Turnout <sup>(a)</sup>
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent		
Barking & Dagenham	20,534	73%	7,406	27%	27,940	25%
Barnet	55,487	70%	24,210	30%	79,697	35%
Bexley	36,527	63%	21,195	37%	57,722	35%
Brent	47,309	78%	13,050	22%	60,359	36%
Bromley	51,410	57%	38,662	43%	90,072	40%
Camden	36,007	81%	8,348	19%	44,355	33%
City of London	977	63%	574	37%	1,551	31%
Croydon	53,863	65%	29,368	35%	83,231	37%
Ealing	52,348	76%	16,092	24%	68,440	32%
Enfield	44,297	67%	21,639	33%	65,936	33%
Greenwich	36,756	75%	12,356	25%	49,112	32%
Hackney	31,956	82%	7,195	18%	39,151	34%
Hammersmith & Fulham	29,171	78%	8,255	22%	37,426	33%
Haringey	36,296	84%	7,038	16%	43,334	30%
Harrow	38,412	69%	17,407	31%	55,819	36%
Havering	36,390	60%	23,788	40%	60,178	34%
Hillingdon	38,518	63%	22,523	37%	61,041	34%
Hounslow	36,957	75%	12,554	25%	49,511	32%
Islington	32,826	82%	7,428	18%	40,254	34%
Kensington & Chelsea	20,064	70%	8,469	30%	28,533	28%
Kingston upon Thames	28,621	69%	13,043	31%	41,664	41%
Lambeth	47,391	82%	10,544	18%	57,935	32%
Lewisham	40,188	78%	11,060	22%	51,248	30%
Merton	35,418	72%	13,635	28%	49,053	38%
Newham	33,084	81%	7,575	19%	40,659	28%
Redbridge	42,547	70%	18,098	30%	60,645	35%
Richmond upon Thames	39,115	71%	16,135	29%	55,250	45%
Southwark	42,196	81%	10,089	19%	52,285	33%
Sutton	29,653	65%	16,091	35%	45,744	35%
Tower Hamlets	32,630	78%	9,467	22%	42,097	34%
Waltham Forest	38,344	73%	14,090	27%	52,434	34%
Wandsworth	57,010	74%	19,695	26%	76,705	39%
City of Westminster	28,413	71%	11,334	29%	39,747	31%
London	1,230,715	72%	478,413	28%	1,709,128	34%

Notes: (a) Valid votes as per cent of electorate.

Sources: DETR web-site ([www.london-decides.detr.gov.uk](http://www.london-decides.detr.gov.uk)); press reports

Appendix - List of authorities with elections in 1998

88 shire districts in England (one third of the council)

Adur	Mole Valley
Amber Valley	Newcastle-under-Lyme
Barrow in Furness	North Bedfordshire
Basildon	North Hertfordshire
Basingstoke and Deane	Norwich
Bassetlaw	Nuneaton and Bedworth
Brentwood	Oxford
Broadland	Pendle
Broxbourne	Penwith
Burnley	Preston
Cambridge	Purbeck
Cannock Chase	Redditch
Carlisle	Reigate and Banstead
Cheltenham	Rochford
Cherwell	Rossendale
Chester	Rugby
Chorley	Runnymede
Colchester	Rushmoor
Congleton	Shrewsbury and Atcham
Craven	South Bedfordshire
Crawley	South Cambridgeshire
Crewe and Nantwich	South Lakeland
Daventry	St Albans
Eastbourne	Stevenage
Eastleigh	Stratford on Avon
Ellesmere Port and Neston	Stroud
Elmbridge	Swale
Epping Forest	Tamworth
Exeter	Tandridge
Fareham	Three Rivers
Gloucester	Tunbridge Wells
Gosport	Watford
Great Yarmouth	Waveney
Harlow	Welwyn Hatfield
Harrogate	West Lancashire
Hart	West Lindsey
Hastings	West Oxfordshire
Havant	Weymouth and Portland
Hertsmere	Winchester
Huntingdonshire	Woking
Hyndburn	Worcester
Ipswich	Worthing
Lincoln	Wyre Forest
Macclesfield	
Maidstone	



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### 10 Unitary Authorities (third except for Isle of Wight)

Bristol	Portsmouth
Derby	Southampton
Hartlepool	Stoke-on-Trent
Kingston upon Hull	Swindon
Milton Keynes	Isle of Wight

### All 36 metropolitan districts (one third of the council)

Barnsley	Rochdale
Birmingham	Rotherham
Bolton	Salford
Bradford	Sandwell
Bury	Sefton
Calderdale	Sheffield
Coventry	Solihull
Doncaster	South Tyneside
Dudley	St Helens
Gateshead	Stockport
Kirklees	Sunderland
Knowsley	Tameside
Leeds	Trafford
Liverpool	Wakefield
Manchester	Walsall
Newcastle upon Tyne	Wigan
North Tyneside	Wirral
Oldham	Wolverhampton

### All 32 London boroughs (full council)

Barking and Dagenham	Hounslow
Barnet	Islington
Bexley	Kensington and Chelsea
Brent	Kingston-upon-Thames
Bromley	Lambeth
Camden	Lewisham
Croydon	Merton
Ealing	Newham
Enfield	Redbridge
Greenwich	Richmond-upon-Thames
Hackney	Southwark
Hammersmith and Fulham	Sutton
Haringey	Tower Hamlets
Harrow	Waltham Forest
Havering	Wandsworth
Hillingdon	Westminster