# Reform UK launches Doge unit to target 'wasteful' council spending starting with Kent



Reform UK is poised to launch its inaugural Department of Government Efficiency (Doge) team, aimed at scrutinising what it describes as “wasteful spending” within local councils, starting with Kent County Council. This initiative, modelled after a similar programme that emerged during Donald Trump’s presidency in the United States, seeks to harness technology and data analytics to drive accountability and efficiency in public spending.

The new Doge unit comprises a diverse team of software engineers, data analysts, and forensic auditors tasked with identifying inefficiencies across council operations. Leaders within Reform UK assert that the unit will employ advanced artificial intelligence and forensic auditing techniques to pinpoint areas susceptible to cost savings. A letter from the party to Kent County emphasises a comprehensive review of various financial practices, including contractual arrangements and use of reserves, alongside access to extensive council documentation. In a notable assertion of authority, the party has stated that any obstruction in providing requested information will be viewed as gross misconduct.

Party Chairman Zia Yusuf articulated a sentiment of frustration with perceived financial mismanagement, stating, “For too long, British taxpayers have watched their money vanish into a black hole.” He highlighted the increasing tax burden coupled with decreasing public services, positioning the introduction of the Doge unit as a vital step toward rectifying these issues. The commencement of this initiative follows a significant victory for Reform UK at the May local elections, where they gained control over several councils, including Kent.

Critics have noted that while the proposal sounds promising, substantial scepticism surrounds the party's ability to effect real change. Local councils, particularly those in Kent, are grappling with severe financial constraints influenced by rising costs in children’s services and adult social care. This fiscal challenge complicates the ambitious aims of the Doge initiative, as significant portions of council budgets are already committed to these essential services. According to sources, the forthcoming Spending Review is anticipated to be instrumental in determining the future viability of local finances.

Historical context reveals that the original U.S. Doge initiative, which Elon Musk led, was met with mixed outcomes. Originally aiming for $2 trillion in savings, Musk’s targets were drastically revised downward after the programme failed to achieve meaningful cost reductions. Critics argue that the lack of seasoned government personnel and an overreliance on technologists unfamiliar with bureaucratic functions limited the initiative's effectiveness. Despite these setbacks, some observers maintain that the awareness raised by Doge can still foster future reform if the right structures are put in place. Observers in the UK will be watching closely to see whether Reform UK's attempt to emulate this approach can sidestep similar pitfalls.

Nigel Farage, the leader of Reform UK, has been vocal about the need for efficiency within local councils, calling for a deployment of Doge units across every council in England. His remarks reflect a broader dissatisfaction with perceived inefficiencies and wasted expenditure at the local government level, where he notes that millions have been spent on questionable projects. Farage's push for a Doge team aligns with the party's ambitious electoral strategy, which aims to disrupt traditional party dynamics and enhance productivity within local governance.

As the Doge initiative gears up, the broader implications for local governance in England remain to be seen. The scrutiny and analysis brought forth by this team may serve to illuminate deep-seated issues in spending practices, potentially setting the stage for a transformative approach to public financial management—a development that could have far-reaching effects on taxpayer confidence and service delivery.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.irishnews.com/news/uk/reform-uk-to-send-first-doge-team-to-look-at-council-spending-S3SWWH4KMNIJTD5IKD6KYGO5HU/), [[2]](https://www.ft.com/content/9d5f7c54-44f7-43d8-8dbb-d6b55c818e83)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.irishnews.com/news/uk/reform-uk-to-send-first-doge-team-to-look-at-council-spending-S3SWWH4KMNIJTD5IKD6KYGO5HU/), [[6]](https://www.kentonline.co.uk/news/national/reform-uk-echoes-trump-with-make-britain-great-again-aired-at-election-launch-143005/)
* Paragraph 3 – [[2]](https://www.ft.com/content/9d5f7c54-44f7-43d8-8dbb-d6b55c818e83), [[5]](https://www.ft.com/content/63ace933-c2ce-4395-8e51-4b7e3cbf1cd3)
* Paragraph 4 – [[3]](https://apnews.com/article/d40ff2bfe020001d2770660e72f5c9f2), [[4]](https://www.ft.com/content/cac27eba-6ed7-4d65-baef-cc043a07aa9d)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.irishnews.com/news/uk/reform-uk-to-send-first-doge-team-to-look-at-council-spending-S3SWWH4KMNIJTD5IKD6KYGO5HU/), [[7]](https://www.gbnews.com/politics/nigel-farage-elon-musk-reform-audit-councils-waste-money)
* Paragraph 6 – [[2]](https://www.ft.com/content/9d5f7c54-44f7-43d8-8dbb-d6b55c818e83), [[6]](https://www.kentonline.co.uk/news/national/reform-uk-echoes-trump-with-make-britain-great-again-aired-at-election-launch-143005/)

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.irishnews.com/news/uk/reform-uk-to-send-first-doge-team-to-look-at-council-spending-S3SWWH4KMNIJTD5IKD6KYGO5HU/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.ft.com/content/9d5f7c54-44f7-43d8-8dbb-d6b55c818e83> - Reform UK has assumed control of several local councils in England, including Kent County Council, following the May 1 elections. The party faces significant financial challenges, with councils grappling with budget constraints due to rising costs in children's services and adult social care. Reform UK's promises to cut costs are met with skepticism, given limited discretionary control over most council budgets. The upcoming Spending Review on June 11 will be crucial in determining whether local governments can escape the cycle of unsustainable budgets and begin meaningful regeneration in neglected areas.
3. <https://apnews.com/article/d40ff2bfe020001d2770660e72f5c9f2> - Elon Musk's tenure as head of the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) aimed to drastically reduce federal spending but concluded with underwhelming results. Initially targeting $2 trillion in savings, Musk later revised his goal down to $150 billion. Experts suggest the effort faltered due to a lack of experienced government personnel, relying too heavily on technologists unfamiliar with bureaucratic operations. Critics warn Musk's chaotic reforms may jeopardize future government functions like emergency response or entitlement delivery. Nonetheless, conservative figures praise Musk for spotlighting inefficiencies and believe his efforts will spur lasting reforms if Congress builds on them.
4. <https://www.ft.com/content/cac27eba-6ed7-4d65-baef-cc043a07aa9d> - Elon Musk has publicly criticized President Donald Trump's new tax bill, calling it detrimental to government cost-cutting efforts and likely to significantly increase the U.S. national debt. The bill, narrowly passed by the House and pending Senate approval, has been hailed by Trump as a landmark legislative achievement. However, Musk, formerly head of the Department of Government Efficiency (Doge), condemned the bill for undermining deficit reduction efforts, noting it adds over $3.3 trillion to the national debt over the next decade. He also criticized White House trade policies and expressed disillusionment with political involvement, stating he would reduce future campaign contributions after spending nearly $300 million in the last election. Musk's Doge initiative claimed $175 billion in savings but fell short of its $2 trillion target, with a recent Financial Times investigation revealing unreliable accounting. Musk has since stepped away from his Doge role to refocus on his companies, including Tesla and SpaceX. His remarks mark his most pointed criticism of Trump to date, indicating a significant rift between the two.
5. <https://www.ft.com/content/63ace933-c2ce-4395-8e51-4b7e3cbf1cd3> - Elon Musk’s four-month tenure as the head of the U.S. Department of Government Efficiency (Doge) ended with minimal fiscal impact and significant damage to his reputation and businesses. Musk had pledged to identify $2 trillion in government savings, but Doge achieved only limited cost-cutting. Though early administrative moves appeared favorable—such as dropped regulatory probes and potential business gains for SpaceX and Starlink—the backlash was severe. Tesla’s stock plummeted, Musk’s personal wealth declined steeply, and public perception soured, especially among liberal-leaning U.S. customers. Starlink lost contracts abroad, and his social media platform X faced a significant user decline in Europe. Critics accused Musk of using his role to dismantle regulatory oversight for personal gain while promoting a far-right agenda under Trump’s leadership. Infighting with cabinet members and widespread dissent from both Democrats and Republicans further alienated Musk. Doge, now diluted into standard government operations, is focusing on routine bureaucratic improvements. Meanwhile, Musk, freed from official duties, has resumed vocal criticism of Trump’s administration, signaling a potential shift from collaborator to critic. His legacy from this governmental foray may chiefly be marked by controversy and setback rather than reform or efficiency.
6. <https://www.kentonline.co.uk/news/national/reform-uk-echoes-trump-with-make-britain-great-again-aired-at-election-launch-143005/> - Reform UK leader Nigel Farage has called for a DOGE team to be deployed in every local council in England to save taxpayer money by reducing waste and inefficiencies. In three weeks, voters will select new representatives to fill over 1,600 councillor seats across England. This will be the first significant electoral test for Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer’s left-wing Labour Party government since coming to power last July. The elections will also represent the first major national test for the Reform UK party in its poll-leading era as it seeks to compete with the establishment parties at the next general election. Consistently polling in either first place or tied with Labour, the upstart populist party is hoping to secure council victories upon which it can build a national campaigning infrastructure. Speaking to the BBC on Sunday about the prospect of Reform possibly taking control of some councils in England for the first time, party leader Nigel Farage highlighted a desire to root out waste and inefficiencies locally to save taxpayer money and deliver better services. Taking inspiration from the Trump administration’s efforts through the Elon Musk-led Department of Government Efficiency, Mr Farage said every council in England should have their own form of DOGE. “I’ve looked at the numbers, we did thousands of FOI requests to have a look where money was being spent,” he said. “We probably need a DOGE for every single county council in England.” “Quite why Lancashire County Council spent half a million quid on ergonomic chairs for their staff, I don’t know. Quite why up to a third of council staff almost never come to the office, I don’t know,” Mr Farage remarked. Mr Farage acknowledged that many local councils are cash-strapped, with inflation and national budget cuts impacting local governments throughout the country, and that the majority of budgets are spent on education and social care. However, he argued that local governments are also being held back by a stagnant culture, saying that he would Reform would not focus on increasing taxes or slashing benefits, but rather on “increasing the productivity of staff”. “And the whole work from home culture, all that needs to go. There are a lot of people working for these councils earning more money than the prime minister and not delivering,” Farage said. The Reform chief also pointed to common-sense solutions that could save money at the local level, such as getting out of long-term contracts for issues such as potholes while turning to novel and cheaper options. “The whole thing needs a fresh pair of eyes,” he said. In the May 1st elections, 1,641 council seats across the country will be up for grabs. According to analysis from the PA news agency, Reform has drafted the most candidates of any party and is currently on pace to contest 99.4 per cent of seats, with 1,631 candidates. This demonstrates the effectiveness of the push from Farage and Reform chairman Zia Yusuf to “professionalize” the party, they say. In contrast, the establishment Conservatives have drafted 1,596 candidates to contest 97.3 per cent of seats, while the governing Labour party has only drafted 1,543 candidates to contest 94 per cent of seats. Reform was also bolstered last week with a landslide victory in a council by-election in Tameside, Greater Manchester. The Reform candidate, Allan Hopwood, more than doubled the vote received by the Labour candidate for the Longdendale ward council seat. Following the victory, Mr Farage said that Reform will “astonish everybody” by “eating into the old Labour vote” when voters head to the polls next month.
7. <https://www.gbnews.com/politics/nigel-farage-elon-musk-reform-audit-councils-waste-money> - Nigel Farage has pledged to become Britain's Elon Musk by launching a war on council waste as he accused local authorities of 'taking taxpayers for mugs' and vowing major reforms if Reform UK wins in next month’s local elections. The Reform Party leader has pledged to implement a British version of Musk's DOGE (Department of Government Efficiency) initiative to slash wasteful spending in town halls across the country. Speaking to The Sun, Farage revealed shocking findings from Reform's audit of council expenditure. 'Millions are being spent on frivolous projects - like free driving lessons for asylum seekers, trips to the south of France for civil servants and ergonomic chairs,' Farage said. The Reform leader blasted councils for wasting substantial budgets whilst failing to deliver basic services.