# Starmer and Badenoch dismiss rising reform party amid local election shockwaves



# Political Amnesia: Starmer and Badenoch's Unyielding Stance Amidst Electoral Turmoil

In the wake of significant upheaval in the recent local elections, one would expect Keir Starmer and Kemi Badenoch to engage in some much-needed reflection during Prime Minister's Questions. Instead, both leaders appeared obstinate, unwilling to confront the electorate's resounding message, a troubling sign that could further entrench the decline of the traditional two-party structure. Their apparent selective amnesia regarding the electoral gains of the reform-minded alternative—a remarkable victory that saw them win 677 council seats—suggests a curious denial of the shifting tides in British politics.

Starmer’s discomfort was palpable, his faltering words hinting at an underlying unease. The silence from Labour backbenchers spoke volumes about their growing desperation for direction and renewed faith. Contrary to what we might expect from leaders facing adversity, both Starmer and Badenoch opted for defiance, failing to grasp the severe implications of the electoral results.

Badenoch, seemingly oblivious to the winds of change, has persistently engaged Labour in confrontation, even as her own party wanes. Her previous critiques of Labour’s trade deal with India, warning it would swamp the market with non-contributing immigrants, suddenly seemed misplaced. At PMQs, she danced around self-reflection, neglecting to connect her past roles with current policy realities. This selective memory could explain her inability to recognize that similar arrangements are standard in Britain’s other trade negotiations.

Starmer's enthusiasm for the recent trade deal with India, touted as historic, felt misaligned given its projected GDP boost of a mere 0.1% by 2040. While he clings to this as a breakthrough of post-Brexit negotiations, it shows that he is increasingly out of touch with the electorate's pressing concerns. Kemi’s quips during PMQs primarily echoed outdated grievances rather than providing viable solutions for contemporary issues, revealing a detachment from the core needs of the public.

These local elections, viewed as a pivotal moment for Starmer's leadership, marked a decisive shift with substantial gains for the reform-centric party. Securing traditional Tory bastions like Staffordshire and Lincolnshire reflects not just a shift in voter loyalty but a potential upheaval in the existing political landscape. With the reform party now gaining ground in national opinion polls, the pressure on Starmer and Badenoch intensifies. Their methods must adapt swiftly, or risk being outmaneuvered.

Amidst the barrage of questions, it was Ed Davey of the Liberal Democrats who brought the local elections back into focus—illuminating the failures of both Starmer and Badenoch. The parliamentary chamber seemed disengaged from the electoral turmoil, with Kemi fixating on inconsequential issues rather than confronting the palpable threat from the reform party. This pronounced evasion of accountability hints at an existential crisis for traditional parties, highlighting their inability to resonate with a growing segment of the population weary of business-as-usual politics.

As the ramifications of the local elections settle in, their refusal to acknowledge recent missteps only exacerbates the gap between politicians and the electorate. The political landscape is undeniably evolving, potentially heralding a new era in British governance, one where established dichotomies are increasingly obsolete. In the coming weeks, the actions of Labour and the Conservatives will determine whether they can recalibrate their strategies or continue to languish in a cycle of denial—a political time warp of their own creation.

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

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2025/may/07/dont-mention-the-local-elections-keir-and-kemi-sign-non-aggression-pact-at-pmqs> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.ft.com/content/197d3cf6-8719-49dd-b3b4-63fa41382d65> - This article discusses the challenges faced by the Labour and Conservative parties in countering the rise of Reform UK, led by Nigel Farage, following significant gains in the recent local elections. Reform UK captured 677 council seats and narrowly won the Runcorn and Helsby parliamentary by-election. The piece highlights the disruption to Britain's traditional two-party system and the broader populist shift in politics, with Reform UK now leading national opinion polls. The article also touches upon the responses of Labour and Conservative leaders to these developments.
3. <https://apnews.com/article/33fa773d553d022c6af527656e54ac21> - This article reports on the substantial gains made by Nigel Farage's Reform UK party in the latest UK local elections, signaling a challenge to the traditional dominance of the Labour and Conservative parties. Reform UK won a Westminster seat in Runcorn and Helsby by a narrow margin, secured over 600 local council seats, and gained control in conservative heartlands such as Staffordshire, Lincolnshire, and Durham. The piece describes these results as a turning point in British politics, hinting at the decline of long-established two-party dynamics.
4. <https://www.ft.com/content/02a06002-d769-478f-8ac9-6c2fb0dd4640> - In this episode of the Financial Times' Political Fix podcast, the panel analyzes the significant shake-up in the UK's political landscape following recent local elections. The main highlight is the marked success of Reform UK under Nigel Farage, including winning a fifth MP, a first mayoralty in Lincolnshire, and control of at least two councils. This shift signals a substantial blow to both Labour and the Conservatives, especially the latter, facing what some described as an existential crisis.
5. <https://www.reuters.com/world/uk/nigel-farages-reform-uk-party-ahead-by-four-votes-key-election-race-2025-05-02/> - This article reports on Reform UK's significant electoral gains in England, including winning a parliamentary seat in Runcorn and Helsby by a narrow six-vote margin, capturing the mayoralty of Greater Lincolnshire, and taking control of Staffordshire and Durham county councils. These victories mark the party’s fifth seat in the House of Commons and its continued rise as a right-wing alternative to the established Labour and Conservative parties. The piece also touches upon the reactions of Labour and Conservative leaders to these developments.
6. <https://apnews.com/article/d72de3feac338b7a72ecc114086e4d01> - This article discusses the local elections in England, considered a key barometer of public sentiment toward Prime Minister Keir Starmer's Labour government. The elections cover 1,600 local council seats, six mayoral races, and a parliamentary seat in Runcorn and Helsby. The hard-right Reform UK party, led by Nigel Farage, fielded the most candidates and is aiming for significant gains, particularly at the expense of the struggling Conservative Party. The piece also touches upon the potential challenges Reform UK may face in delivering practical solutions to everyday governance issues.
7. <https://www.ft.com/content/20598c6b-3884-4f31-a874-e5a3a827cc4d> - This article reports on the May 1, 2025 local elections in England, marking a seismic shift in British politics with Nigel Farage's Reform UK delivering a devastating blow to both the Labour and Conservative parties. Reform UK achieved a symbolic victory by winning the Runcorn and Helsby by-election, previously one of Labour’s safest seats, and went on to dismantle decades-long Conservative control in councils such as Kent. The piece also discusses the reactions of Conservative officials to the outcome and the challenges facing the party's leadership.