

## London local elections 2022: what the results mean for London HE

### Introduction:

Local government elections took place across London on 05 May 2022. This briefing note has been prepared by London Higher CEO Dr Diana Beech in the wake of the election results to help members make sense of the results and understand what they could mean for our sector and city.

### Results

In 2022, all councillor seats were up for election, plus mayoral elections were held in five boroughs.

#### Following the 05 May elections, the 32 London councils now look as follows:

LAB has control of 21 councils

CON has control of 5 councils (Hillingdon, Harrow, Kensington and Chelsea, Bromley & Bexley)

LIB DEM has control of 3 councils (Sutton, Kingston & Richmond)

IND has control of 1 council (Tower Hamlets: Aspire)

There is no overall control in 2 councils (Havering and Croydon)

#### The borough mayor results are also as follows:

Hackney: Philip Glanville, LAB hold

Lewisham: Damian Egan, LAB hold

Newham: Rokhsana Fiaz, LAB hold

Tower Hamlets: Lutfur Rahman, IND gain (Aspire)

Croydon: Jason Perry, CON gain (new mayor position for 2022)

You can view the full 2022 borough-by borough results on this [London Councils interactive map](#).

### Key changes

- LAB gained the three councils from CON in **Wandsworth, Westminster** and **Barnet**.
- CON won the first borough mayor election in **Croydon** while LAB lost control of the council.
- CON also took **Harrow** from LAB and decreased the LAB majority in **Enfield**.
- IND (Aspire) won the borough mayor election in **Tower Hamlets** and control of the council.
- In other significant developments: The Greens replace CON as the main opposition in **Richmond**, and LIB DEM replace CON as the main opposition in **Merton**.

### Implications for London HE

- CON council losses, coupled with the fact that the Conservatives have never held a smaller share of London constituencies while being in Government than they do today, will be interpreted by the current UK Government as a clear sign it is losing political sway in London.
- While LAB made significant gains in London, the party's progress has been more limited elsewhere in the country (e.g. the one-point advance in LAB's vote share in London was accompanied by a three-point fall in the North-East of England).
- This could cause the UK Government to react in one of two ways: either emboldening it to focus attentions even more strongly on delivering across the North and Midlands at the expense of

what it will now see as “Labour London”, or realising it needs to deliver for Londoners before it risks losing London completely at the next General Election.

- If London becomes even less of a priority for the UK Government due to a sense of a “Southern collapse” in the CON vote, it will become harder for London and its institutions to make the case for investment, e.g. attracting essential infrastructure funding, capital investment or Levelling Up funds, despite the capital being home to some of the most deprived areas of the country.
- A greater impasse between the UK Government and London could also make it harder to reach a sustainable solution for the TfL funding crisis, potentially causing difficulties for students and staff across the city should public transport prices go up further or services be cut.
- Relations in boroughs with CON MPs but with a LAB council, such as Westminster, could well become difficult if the ‘spiky’ relations of late between the CON Government and LAB City Hall are anything to go by. (It will also be interesting to see how the new CON mayor of Croydon exerts influence over the council under NOC).
- LAB’s win in Barnet will be seen as a sign that the party has cleaned up its image on anti-Semitism. This means we can probably expect the UK Government to push even harder on universities to adopt the IHRA to prove it is the party who can really be trusted to take action in this area.
- Election results in Croydon, Tower Hamlets and Harrow are also leading some to suggest that London’s Asian vote is shifting rightwards away from LAB – a point of diversity we must be mindful of as we seek to build inclusive, representative communities.
- Given the relative failure of candidates standing against Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTNs) to win seats, some London commentators are suggesting that London councils may well be emboldened to speed up and go further on these types of schemes. This would not only directly affect London higher education institutions and their students and staff, but also be an opportunity for providers to get involved in the design stage through their research and expertise.
- Providing there isn’t a snap General Election on the horizon, the next major election for London will be the Mayoral and London Assembly elections in May 2024. This means we at least have a two-year period ahead in which to build good relations with London’s newly-(re)elected councillors and borough mayors and find ways to show that partnering with higher education institutions can bring benefits to their work.

**Further Information:**

We have prepared a [position paper](#) for all new London councillors and borough mayors detailing how London’s higher education sector can help them to achieve their aims during their time in local government. This has been launched as part of our wider #LondonIsLocal campaign and has been distributed to all elected councillors.

If you would like to discuss this briefing paper or require any further information, please contact Dr Diana Beech, Chief Executive Officer at London Higher on [diana.beech@londonhigher.ac.uk](mailto:diana.beech@londonhigher.ac.uk).