

# South East England Councils

## Member update: May 2017 local election headlines



There were elections in 8 South East local authorities on 4 May 2017. These were in 7 county councils Buckinghamshire, East Sussex, Hampshire, Kent, Oxfordshire, Surrey and West Sussex and 1 unitary council – the Isle of Wight.

### Changes of control May 2017

Two councils changed control following the elections, with Conservatives gaining both East Sussex CC and Isle of Wight from No Overall Control (NOC). Elsewhere:

- Conservatives retained control and gained additional seats in five counties – Buckinghamshire, Hampshire, Kent, Surrey and West Sussex. The largest Conservative increase came in Kent, with a gain of 24 seats.
- Oxfordshire remains NOC. Conservatives are the largest party but one seat short of a majority.

### Breakdown of political control in all South East councils

Across all 74 South East authorities the breakdown of political control is now:

- Districts – Conservative 45, Labour 3, NOC 3, Lib-Dems 2, Independents 1, UKIP 1.
- Unitaries – Conservative 6, Labour 3, NOC 3.
- Counties – Conservative 6, NOC 1.

Media coverage of the election results focused on the loss of UKIP county council seats. In the South East, UKIP lost all its 47 county seats but the party retains seats in the South East in 16 districts and 3 unitaries. Looking across all 3,474 councillors in the South East, the current state of the parties is:

**Conservatives** remain the largest political party in the South East with 2,367 councillors across all tiers. This is an increase of 54 seats from last year. The party has majority control in 57 councils. It is the largest party in 5 NOC councils (Elmbridge, Hart, Maidstone, Oxfordshire and Portsmouth) and forms the administration in 3 of these.

**Labour** are the second largest party with 400 councillors. This is a decrease of 19 seats from 2016. Labour has majority control of 6 councils (Crawley, Hastings, Oxford City, Reading, Slough and Southampton). They also form the administrations in 2 NOC councils (Brighton and Milton Keynes).

**Lib-Dems** are the third largest party with 381 councillors, an increase of 15 seats from 2016. This translates into majority control of 2 councils (Eastleigh and Eastbourne). A Ratepayer/Lib-Dem coalition also leads Elmbridge BC.

**Smaller parties.** Four groups (Independents, Ratepayers, UKIP and Greens) have a combined total of 326 councillors - a fall of 53 since last year - and provide the leaders in 3 councils. Independents lead Epsom & Ewell, a Ratepayer/Lib-Dem coalition leads Elmbridge and UKIP leads Thanet DC. See below for gains and losses by party.

### Party standings: share of the vote and seats 2017 vs 2016

Comparing 2017 share of the vote to last year's position Conservatives, Lib-Dems and Ratepayers increased vote share. All other parties showed decreases. Figures below show total votes cast and seats for all current councillors in the South East, not just those elected this year.

- ▲ **Conservatives:** 67.82% of votes, up from 62.32% last year. **2017:** 4.4m votes/ 2,367 seats. Gain = 54 seats.
- ▼ **Labour:** 12.47% of votes, down from 13.86%. **2017:** 817,972 votes/ 400 seats. Loss = 19 seats.
- ▲ **Lib-Dems:** 12% of votes, up from 11.14%. **2017:** 787,183 votes/ 381 seats. Gain = 15 seats.
- Combined smaller parties:** 7.72% of votes, down from 12.67%. **2017:** 506,307 votes/ 326 seats.
- ▼ **Independents:** 3.02% of votes, down from 3.94% last year. **2017:** 197,961 votes/ 114 seats. Loss = 12 seats.
- ▲ **Ratepayers:** 1.98% of votes, up from 1.80%. **2017:** 130,101 votes/ 94 seats. Gain = 11 seats.
- ▼ **UKIP:** 1.62% of votes, down from 5.76%. **2017:** 106,466 votes/ 91 seats. Loss = 51 seats.
- ▼ **Greens:** 1.09% of vote down from 1.17%. **2017:** 71,780 votes/ 27 seats. Loss = 1 seat.