

On May the 3rd all 32 London boroughs will elect their local Councillors.

Capital Letters will be issued every week until the elections and each edition will highlight a key borough and provide the latest news and analysis.



Wandsworth Council

Is Margaret Thatcher's favourite Council about to turn Red?

When Margaret Thatcher died in 2013, the current Tory Leader of Wandsworth Ravi Govinidia proudly recalled that Wandsworth was [Thatcher's favourite Council](#) due to its reputation for delivering low council tax to residents. The strength of the local Conservative brand coupled with a demographic change, enabled the Conservatives to keep winning through the Blair years, even when Labour held all the three of the local Parliamentary seats of Battersea, Putney and Tooting.

Yet, recent polling by [YouGov](#) and [Lord Ashcroft](#) suggests that Labour appear to be in with a real chance of winning Wandsworth for the first time since 1974. Ashcroft's [focus groups](#) detail how voters are now far more likely to be concerned with affordable housing and poor quality public services than low taxes. Presumably, this is bad news for the Wandsworth Tories, who hoped that their low tax message would again keep Wandsworth Blue.

Controversy about Wandsworth Council's decision to [reduce the amount of affordable housing in the iconic Battersea power station](#) development and a run of stories about residents being unhappy about local decisions including a ban on [kite flying and cricket in local parks](#), seem to have the Tories on the back foot as the elections approach. Labour gained the parliamentary seat of Battersea from the Conservatives at last year's General Election. Across the Borough, there was also a strong Remain vote in the 2016 EU referendum.

Wandsworth Snapshot

Current composition	 43	 17
Best Labour result: 1971	 53	 7
Best Conservative result: 2006	 51	 9

What will happen on May 3rd?

Labour is likely to gain at least 10 seats but the final 4 that Labour need for an overall majority on the 60 seat Council will be hard fought. The election will be won and lost in wards like St Mary's in Battersea, where Labour lost narrowly in the 2016 Mayoral election but won in the 2017 General election. If Theresa May's Government remain as unpopular in London as they are today, then Labour should overturn 40 years of Tory rule in Wandsworth.