

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.



## Kensington & Chelsea Council

The Royal London Borough of Kensington and Chelsea in London's West End has been solidly Conservative since its first election in 1964. This is hardly surprising for a [borough with the highest average mean income](#) of any council area in the UK. With Kensington Palace within its boundary, the location of the "Made in Chelsea" series has always been perceived as the domain of the upper crust.

However, the Grenfell fire has changed that perception. The Council's failure to respond effectively to the plight of Grenfell tower survivors has drawn attention to Kensington and Chelsea. The local residents distrust the [Grenfell Enquiry](#) and the Council's response to the fire is now the main story in local politics. To address this, the local Conservative group changed their leader from [Nicholas Paget-Brown to Elizabeth Campbell](#) and brought the [social housing management back in house](#).

### Could the Conservatives lose?

Labour's surprise victory by just 20 votes in Kensington in 2017, before the Grenfell tower tragedy has raised the question of whether the Conservatives could lose at the next elections. The answer to that is 'probably not', due to the social disparity between neighbourhoods.

The reason Labour won Kensington in 2017, with an impressive swing of 10.6%, was largely powered by an increased turnout, heavily concentrated in five wards in North Kensington, the area which contains most of the social housing in the borough. However, the Conservatives were still strong in the centre and south wards of the constituency, which are considered more affluent.

If a similar trend appeared at the next election, it would lead to Labour winning an additional three Councillors, but they would need an extra 16 to win the Council. For Labour to win with just a one seat majority, it would require a uniform swing of 27%, including in the Chelsea area, which stayed safely Conservative at the general election.

The one wild card is the launch of [Advance](#), a local political party that has had favourable coverage in the [Evening Standard](#). With the support of locals like Felicity Kendal, the party has worried the Conservatives, who fear they might lose votes to them and push the Council into no overall control. This however, is an unlikely scenario at their first attempt.



## What will happen on May 3rd

This borough is a Tory hold. Expect Labour to win more Councillors, but the demographic mountain is too high to climb for a foreseeable Labour win.