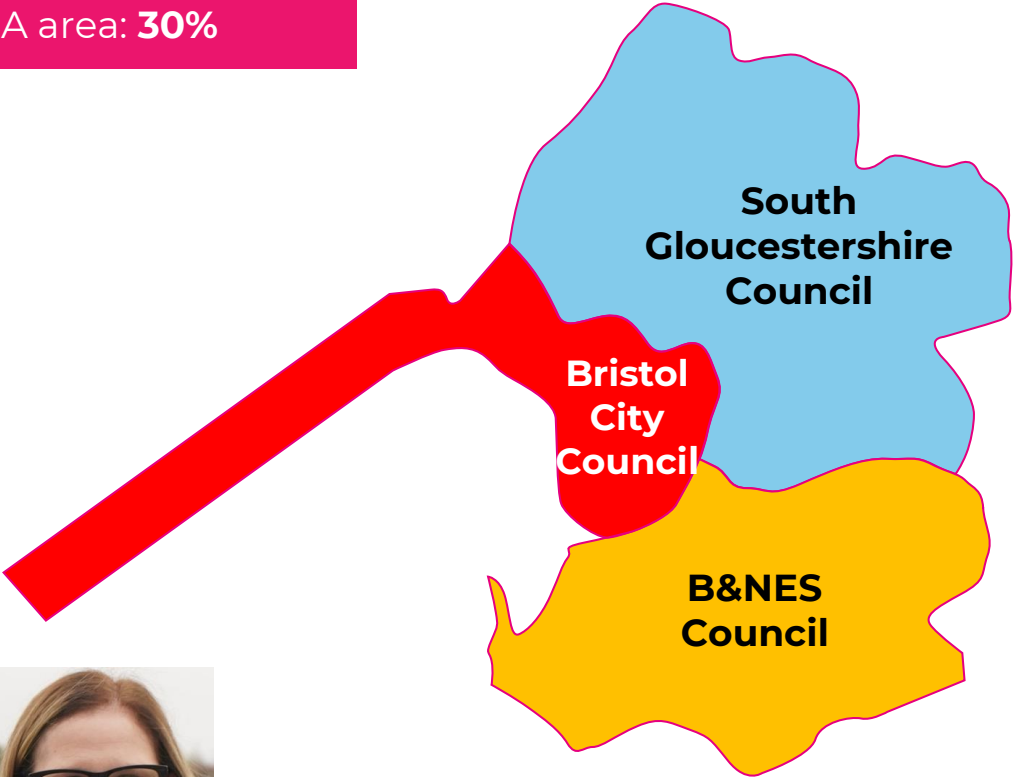


**TURNOUT:**  
Overall across the  
CA area: **30%**



### Labour wins second WECA contest in a row

New Mayor, same party. Despite shedding 33,000 votes compared to 2021, albeit on a 6%+ lower turnout, Labour won in a tight victory ahead of an unexpected challenger who didn't have a candidate until a few weeks ago.

### No 'Super Thursday' in Bristol means turnout reverts to type

In 2021, four sets of elections drove up Bristol's WECA turnout to over 40%. Fast forward to 2025, and with no other elections on the same day, turnout settled back under 30% as in 2017. Bad news for the Greens, who had counted on big numbers to vote for them in Bristol to repeat their 2024 success.

### Five-party politics emerges in the West of England

The first WECA election featuring Reform represented their strongest election result at any election in the subregion with 22% of the vote, pilfering votes from the Tories and probably Labour too.



**ELECTED: Helen Godwin**





# Labour holds firm as the heat rises

## Reform UK sizzle into second place

With days to go before polling, a shock YouGov survey gave the Green Party a four-point lead over Labour. The stage seemed set for a political fairytale: the Greens poised to lead both Bristol City Council and the West of England for the first time. But it wasn't meant to be. On the hottest day for a major election since June 1970, how did the pollsters' (and bookmakers') favourite melt away into third place, behind Labour and Reform?

First, Bristol swung back to Labour, bucking the trend of the 2024 local elections here. A sign, perhaps, that the Greens are feeling the heat of leading a council where controversy is never far away.

Second, their lack of electoral and campaign infrastructure outside Bristol proved costly. In South Gloucestershire, they were beaten into a distant fifth place, registering only 7,392 votes. Previous elections show that winning South Gloucestershire isn't essential, but being competitive is.

Third, Labour's sheer electoral footprint across the region gave them a solid foundation. Just ten months ago, they won six of the nine parliamentary constituencies in the subregion.

That level of support is hard to dislodge and with Tory support, their main competition in 2017 and 2021, rapidly evaporating, this always looked like Labour's contest to lose. In the end, their result surpassed all polling expectations, none of which had them above 23%.

Privately, Nigel Farage may well accept second place in the subregion. Reform's result was a 'smash and grab', topping the South Gloucestershire poll by 5,000 votes ahead of the Conservatives, who have dominated there for over two decades. Reform's success will buoy the party as much as it unnerves the Tories, who now have only two years to make up serious ground ahead of local elections, where they remain the largest party.

Could the Liberal Democrats have done better? Possibly. They comfortably topped the B&NES poll – as expected, holding two-thirds of council seats there – but an overall fifth-place finish with 14% of the vote may look disappointing once full South West council results are in.

Labour entered this election carrying heavy political baggage after four, arguably ineffective, years holding the WECA mayoralty. Perhaps the most intriguing unanswered question of the night: what if Reform had invested months, rather than weeks, in their campaign? Mayor Godwin might not have had her moment in the sun.

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