

THE IMPACT OF THE COMMUNITY CHARGE ON
ELECTORAL BEHAVIOUR: THE 1990 LOCAL ELECTIONS
IN ENGLAND AND WALES

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ONE of the avowed goals of the introduction of the community charge to replace the system of domestic rates was to improve the accountability of local government. Mrs Thatcher was concerned not simply that fewer than half the electorate bothered to participate in the choosing of their local council, but that many eligible electors were not themselves local taxpayers. She believed that 'representation without taxation' led to councils gaining support more for what they could promise as spenders rather than save as prudent housekeepers. By introducing a per capita tax, it was the government's aim to draw every adult's attention to exactly how much their local services were costing and to encourage them to assess whether they were receiving value for money.

This is not the place to rehearse old ground about the politics of the poll tax, but it is important to note that, as implemented, the tax straightaway compromised some of its initial stated objectives.¹ The wide entitlement to reliefs and rebates, which the government insisted were more generous than under the rates; the existence of safety nets to redistribute income between certain authorities; and the immediate introduction of capping all fudged the relationship between councils and voters. Local authorities continued to be threatened with central government imposed limitations on their ability to raise revenue locally, and the personal consequences for individual community charge payers voting for either increases or decreases in expenditure would vary considerably. When one further considers that all electors in Scotland and in non-metropolitan England and Wales have services provided by two different types of council, then the image of a clear and direct line of accountability between elector and local authority begins to evaporate.

Nevertheless, the issue of the poll tax was very clearly the context within which the 1990 local elections were fought. The new tax was the source of considerable public indignation, with marches, rallies and petitions the order of the day throughout the country. Moreover, it had

become clear from the opinion polls that the unpopularity of the new tax was being laid at the door of the government which had introduced it, rather than the local authorities who were responsible for levying and collecting it.²

The 1990 local elections were thus treated by both politicians and commentators as providing not simply a test of the impact of the poll tax, but also a crucial verdict on Mrs Thatcher and her government. The political temperature throughout the spring was very high, and Labour's lead in the polls was consistently over 20% in the month following their dramatic gain in the Mid-Staffordshire parliamentary by-election in late March. Swings of up to 30% to Labour in the year since the county council contests were recorded in several local government by-elections, with the party registering a number of victories in the hitherto barren ground of the rural South and East. Projections from the polls suggested that Labour might make over 500 net gains on May 3rd,³ and the prospect of such a result led to speculation about the removal of Mrs Thatcher from office. More than anything, though, the May 1990 elections provided voters with an opportunity to make their views known in the relative calm of the ballot box, and it was an opportunity they took in unprecedented numbers.

A Summary of the Results

LONDON*

The quadrennial elections in London were, by some degree, afforded the most political and media attention. In the event this was justified, because the results in London did differ markedly from those in the rest of the country. The London Boroughs had last been contested in 1986 when Labour won exactly half of all the seats and a small plurality in votes cast—see Table 1. Opinion polls conducted in the capital during the 1990 campaign suggested that Labour might receive as much as 50% of the vote overall, with surveys in individual boroughs presaging Labour gains in such key areas as Barnet, Wandsworth and Westminster.

	1986	1990	Diff.
Conservative	35.5	37.7	+2.2
Labour	37.4	38.7	+1.3
Alliance/SLD	23.9	14.4	-9.5
Other	3.2	9.2	+6.0
Turnout	45.4	48.2	+5.4

In the event, however, Labour actually suffered a swing against it compared with 1986, lost a net total of 20 seats and, in some boroughs, even performed less well than at the 1987 general election. The Conservative vote increased by something over 2%, whereas Labour's

share, despite an almost ten point decline by the Democrats, rose by just 1.3%. In eleven boroughs there was a swing to the Conservatives, with movements of over 7% being recorded in Brent, Wandsworth and Westminster. The emphasis given to London by the media allowed the Conservatives to camouflage their very much poorer performance everywhere else. Indeed, if the results in London had been repeated throughout the country, Labour would not have done well enough to gain an overall majority in a putative general election. As *The Economist* put it: 'Mrs Thatcher has much to thank the capital for'.⁵ One characteristic which London did share with the rest of the country was an increase in turnout: 48.2% of registered electors voted, compared with 45.4% in 1986.

METROPOLITAN BOROUGH⁶

Turnout in the metropolitan boroughs in 1990 was, at 46.3%, higher even than that in the two pre-general election contests in 1983 and 1987. Turnouts of over 50% in individual wards were almost commonplace, and in only one ward throughout the metropolitan areas (Elswick, Newcastle upon Tyne) did fewer than one in three of the electorate go to the polls. There was a healthy rise in participation in almost every borough, with habitual poor performers like Sandwell and Sunderland increasing their average turnout by almost 10%. Bury and Stockport once more topped the list, with third place going to Bradford, an authority where the national attention paid to the city's politics, and the polarising of political opinion on the ground, can only have increased electoral interest.⁷

Metropolitan Borough Elections (% Vote)

	1986	1990	Diff.
Conservative	26.3	26.6	+0.3
Labour	48.7	54.8	+6.1
Alliance/SLD	23.0	13.5	-9.5
Other	2.0	5.1	+3.1
Turnout	39.3	46.3	+7.0

Competition between the parties was, however, somewhat less than in previous years. Councillors were elected unopposed in 53 wards, more than 6% of the total, and there was a contest between the three major political groups in only 6 in every 10 wards. Labour was, as usual, almost universally present, but the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats fielded 48 and 76 fewer candidates respectively than in 1988. Both parties seemed to feel little obligation to fly the flag in their most barren areas, with the Democrats in particular gaining some reward from the careful husbandry of their more slender resources.

Indeed, the ability of the Liberal Democrats yet again to confound the pundits and the polls was a striking feature of these elections. Their

vote was scarcely changed from two years previously, and they easily overcame their tormentors from the 1989 European Assembly elections, the Greens. They came first in 66 wards and emerged as the only national political party other than Labour and the Conservatives with any metropolitan councillors.

This relative success should not, however, overshadow Labour's undoubted triumph. With the party buoyant in the opinion polls, and taking full benefit from government discomfiture over the poll tax, Labour increased its share of the vote to almost 55%. At this level of support the electoral system begins to work very handsomely in a party's favour, and Labour came first in over three-quarters of the wards. Despite this, only Bradford was actually gained by the party, and many Labour votes were in a sense wasted by piling up even higher in areas where the party was already dominant.

The Conservatives suffered a considerable loss of seats, but their share of the vote was static compared with 1986 thanks to the declining support of the former Alliance parties. However, they did 5% less well than in 1988, and their attempts to castigate high spending Labour metropolitan authorities seemed to backfire. There was little sign of any success for the campaign that Mrs Thatcher announced on the steps of 10 Downing Street in 1987 to "win back the cities" for the party. The so-called Tory flagship council among the metropolitan boroughs, Bradford, was comfortably won by Labour with an above average swing of 7.4% since 1988.

These general trends once again disguise some interesting regional and local variations in results. Labour made least advance in the West Midlands, with its share of the vote in Sandwell, Walsall and Wolverhampton actually decreasing compared with 1988. However, in 1988 those three boroughs were each among the top five increases in Labour share of the vote. It seems likely that the party had done so well then that there was little room for further advance, rather than that its performance in 1990 was especially poor.

At the other end of the scale, Labour did impressively well in some boroughs. Its share in Liverpool rose by more than 14% compared with 1986, but hardly changed if comparison is made with 1988. On the other hand, the party made substantial headway on both 1986 and 1988 in a large number of boroughs. In Stockport Labour jumped from third to first place in terms of votes cast, and in Leeds it added almost 10% to take its share to over 55%. The considerable increases in the Labour vote in Knowsley and Tameside do, however, have to be seen alongside a lower level of party competition.

Although the Conservative vote overall remained roughly at its 1986 level, their comparative share actually fell in 22 of the 36 boroughs. Some of the wilder fluctuations can be explained by changing patterns of party contestation. The Conservatives only contested three seats in

Barnsley in 1986, so their borough-wide share was certain to increase after fielding ten candidates last May. Conversely, in South Tyneside, they had candidates in 13 wards in 1986 but only in nine this time.

The performance of the Liberal Democrats was similarly affected, although their average share of the vote in seats contested held up very well. The benefits of targeting were seen, for example, in St Helens where the party gained four seats compared with 1986 and managed to keep its share at the level experienced in the days of the Alliance.

Finally, we should note the healthy expansion in the number of women candidates—exceeding 25% for the first time in the metropolitan authorities. Although women were proportionately less successful than men in being elected (24% of them came first as against 35% of men), 1990 resumed the upward trend in female participation in local elections which had been so strangely set back in 1988.

ENGLISH AND WELSH DISTRICTS

The results of the district council elections in 1990 were quite exceptional. Although media attention remained fixed on events in London, they surely provided Mrs Thatcher's government with its biggest shock. Labour topped the poll and won more than half the wards in the tier of local government usually assumed to be a Conservative stronghold. Unlike in London and the metropolitan areas, the Tory vote actually fell compared with 1986, and Labour's share rose by more than 10%. The Liberal Democrats did much less well than had the Alliance in 1986 in terms of votes, but they had more success in targeting and retaining council seats. Turnout was 7% higher than in 1988, and was in fact the highest for this set of authorities since local government reorganisation in 1973⁸.

District Council Elections (% Vote)

	1986	1990	Diff.
Conservative	34.6	30.2	- 4.4
Labour	33.5	43.8	+ 10.3
Alliance/SLD	28.5	18.5	- 10.0
Other	3.4	7.5	+ 4.1
Turnout	41.6	48.6	+ 7.0

Against this background the Conservatives fell back almost everywhere, only obtaining greater than 50% of the vote in the Chancellor of the Exchequer's home district, Huntingdonshire. They found themselves squeezed by either Labour or the Democrats depending on local patterns of party competition, and they lost control of a wide range of

district councils. In Hampshire alone Gosport, Havant and Portsmouth all slipped from their grasp.

There was a small regional dimension to these results, with the swing to Labour varying from 3.2% in the Northern standard region, where only 4 districts held elections, to 8.8% in both the East Midlands and the North West. The Conservatives did not do as badly in the South East as elsewhere (average swing to Labour, 4.7%), whereas Labour performed much better in another traditional area of weakness, the South West, with the Conservative vote dropping substantially in Bristol (-6.7%), Exeter (-8.8%), Penwith (-11.6%), and Torbay (-17.4%).

Labour's performance, particularly in parts of the South of England, was extraordinary. It polled comfortably more than 50% in a number of areas where it will be looking for parliamentary gains at the next general election. Included in this list are Great Yarmouth, Hyndburn, Slough, Harlow, Ipswich and Thamesdown (Swindon), where the local authority and constituency boundaries are exactly or very nearly contiguous.

The Liberal Democrats had the highest share of the vote in several authorities where they have proven local government strength. The question remains, however, one of translating local performance into national success. In areas such as Cheltenham, Hereford and Eastbourne there is little to suggest that anything new has happened to enable them to translate this into general election support. Nevertheless, as the outcome of the Eastbourne parliamentary by-election demonstrated, a strong local electoral base developed over a number of years can provide the Liberal Democrats with the opportunity for a sensational, if perhaps transient, victory. Such local support cannot, however, be taken for granted. In Southend, for example, their vote fell quite sharply compared with 1988 and they lost six seats, although in neighbouring Rochford their share increased by 8%.

In the districts fewer councillors were returned unopposed than in 1988, and there was a sizeable increase in the total number of candidates. The Greens were present in over 500 wards, compared with 206 wards in 1988, and the Liberal Democrats were able to field almost as many candidates as they had done previously. This contrasts with the picture in the metropolitan authorities where they had 15% fewer candidates. On average each vacancy was fought by more than 3 contenders.

The proportion of women candidates was at 29.4% the highest we have yet discovered for any tier of local or central government. More women were elected in 1990 than in 1988, but still a lower proportion of female candidates than male were successful. However, with more than 25% of all district councillors returned in 1990 being women, we may just be seeing evidence of a 'bottom up' trend in female participation in electoral politics in Britain.

Determining the impact of the Poll Tax

The swing to Labour, the increase in turnout and the sharp variations in results between authorities are all relevant when it comes to examining what effect the poll tax had on voting patterns. We will again look at each set of local councils in turn and attempt to gauge the role of differences in poll tax levels in determining the electoral outcome.

LONDON

In London, the combination of exceptionally low community charge levels and big swings to the Conservatives in Wandsworth and Westminster and, conversely, an almost equally poor Labour performance in charge-capped Brent and Hammersmith and Fulham, seemed to provide *prima facie* evidence that the poll tax had had a significant impact on behaviour. Individual authorities apart, however, the pattern across London was much less clear cut. Analysis of the effect of poll tax levels in all boroughs indicates a tendency for a swing away from the incumbent party.

In the 15 boroughs effectively under Labour control at the time of the elections, there was a 1.1% swing to the Conservatives since 1986. It appeared to make no difference whether the borough had been charge-capped. In the 13 Tory-controlled authorities, the average swing was 0.5% to Labour. There is only one significant change to this pattern when the actual levels of community charge are taken into account. In the two Labour authorities, Barking and Haringey, where a community charge at or below the government's estimated figure was levied, there was a swing to the incumbents. Similarly, there was an average swing to the Tories in those boroughs where poll tax demands were below government estimates or where household bills were likely to be less than under the rates.

Conservative/Labour Swing (to/from Cons.) and Poll Tax Levels in London 1986-1990

Conservative Boroughs	- 0.5
Labour Boroughs	1.1
Capped Labour Boroughs	1.0
Non-Capped Labour Boroughs	1.0
Estimated average household tax burden to increase by <10%	
Conservative Boroughs	1.2
Conservative Boroughs (excluding Wandsworth and Westminster)	- 2.0
Labour Boroughs	1.0
Estimated average household tax burden to increase by >10%	
Conservative Boroughs	- 2.4
Labour Boroughs	1.0

The biggest swings to Labour in Conservative run authorities were in Kensington and Chelsea (3.6%) and Merton (3.2%). Whilst the poll tax in Kensington was set some 48% above government estimates, Institute of Public Finance figures suggest that average household bills

would be a quarter lower than under the rates. In Merton, a poll tax below the government estimate and a modest 5% increase in average household bills did not protect the council from an adverse swing.

Local issues, including the election of three independent candidates who campaigned against a new road, played a part in the Tories' loss of Merton, and similar borough-specific factors seemed to be at work in those Labour authorities where the party fared particularly badly. In poll-capped Brent, where the levy and average bills only increased by 4%, the swing against Labour was 7.3%. In Ealing, where bills increased by 30% but which was not capped, the swing to the Conservatives was 6.0%. In Hammersmith and Fulham, where the pre-capping levy and the average bill were up by 23%, there was a 5.2% movement in favour of the Conservatives.

Conversely, in Haringey, despite being capped and having the highest poll tax in the country, there was a 1.4% swing to Labour. In Lewisham, with the council imposing a poll tax some 20% above government estimates, albeit at only £297, Labour posted its best result in all London with a swing of 5.2% compared with its already good performance in 1986. These results suggest that, although very high or very low poll tax demands could affect the performance of either party, levels of community charge were not themselves the prime determinant of electoral behaviour. Rather, it seems voters were strongly influenced by their perception of the competence of their own local authority.

METROPOLITAN BOROUGHES

A similarly complex picture emerges from the results in the metropolitan authorities. In the three authorities which were controlled by the Conservatives before the 1990 elections, there was an average swing to Labour of just 1%. However, this disguises variations between Bradford, where the swing to Labour was 2.5%, and Trafford, where there was a marginal movement to the Conservatives. In those four boroughs where no one party had overall control there was a much more pronounced rise in Labour support, with the party's share of the vote in Wirral increasing by over 8% despite an individual poll tax figure below government estimates and average household bills less than the previous year's rates.

Conservative/Labour Swing (to/from Cons.) and Poll Tax Levels in Metropolitan Boroughs 1986-1990

Conservative Boroughs	- 1.0
Labour Boroughs	- 3.2
Hung Boroughs	- 5.8
Estimated average household tax burden to increase by <30%	
Labour Boroughs	- 3.7
Estimated average household tax burden to increase by >30%	
Labour Boroughs	- 3.1
Capped Labour Boroughs	- 1.4
Non-Capped Labour Boroughs	- 3.9

The remaining 29 boroughs were under Labour control before the elections. In 19 cases rises in household bills of more than 30% were suggested by IPF figures, and here the swing to Labour was 3.1% compared to 3.7% in authorities where the average increases were less. Somewhat more of a variation occurs if we examine the eight capped metropolitan boroughs. In these cases Labour support was 5.5% higher than it had been in 1986, compared with 6.9% higher in the 21 non-capped authorities. There was no difference in the degree to which turnout rose between the two sets of authority. However, it should be pointed out that contests between Labour and the Conservatives took place in only 91 out of 165 wards in the capped authorities in both 1986 and 1990. Any change data are thus inevitably incomplete and do not make allowance for potential voting patterns in the many very safe Labour wards where councillors were returned unopposed.

We also examined the performance of the parties in wards with differing social and economic characteristics. Of particular interest are the findings for Bradford, Sandwell and Walsall. In Bradford the Conservative vote in 13 wards was more than 10% above what would be predicted from the character of those wards, despite the positive swing to Labour noted earlier. In other words, one legacy of the regime of Councillor Pickles and his colleagues has been a city where the Conservatives have managed to stem the tide to Labour over the past decade. In the two West Midlands boroughs there was a clear tendency for the Conservatives to do better and Labour worse than a similar examination of a wide range of ward social characteristics would lead one to expect. It may well be that in some metropolitan areas Labour is suffering the kind of adverse voter reaction noted in the London boroughs, but the issue of the poll tax appears itself to have had very little substantive impact on the differences in electoral behaviour between authorities.

ENGLISH AND WELSH DISTRICTS

Analysis of the impact of the community charge in the English and Welsh districts is complicated by a number of factors. First, only about one-third of authorities hold annual elections and each year some councils change their electoral systems. Second, even where there are annual elections, the actual wards in which ordinary vacancies occur often differ from year to year. We can thus only strictly compare the district elections of 1990 with those at the same point of the cycle four years ago in the 114 local authorities where no material change to either boundaries or the electoral system has taken place. These councils can in no way be seen as a representative sample of all 333 districts.

In addition, alone of the authorities considered in this article, district councils are on the second rung of a two-tier structure of local

government. The bulk of the money raised and spent in non-metropolitan England and Wales is at the county level. Many counties had drawn on their reserves to keep rate increases down in their own election year of 1989. In 1990 they took the opportunity to rebuild them as well as allocating extra money to services such as education in the wake of legislative changes. When determining their poll tax levies, districts were thus faced with already agreed demands from the counties, and their own precepts actually made up only a small proportion of the total amount community charge payers were required to pay. It could therefore be argued that as the districts were neither fully responsible nor fully accountable for the level of poll tax paid by their residents, electors would find it hard to make a judgement on the performance of their own authority based solely on that criterion.

What is immediately apparent is that the political control of the district authority made very little difference to the Conservative/Labour swing in 1990. The Labour vote itself rose by an average of between 8.3% in hung authorities to 9.7% in the handful of Democrat-controlled districts.

**Conservative/Labour Swing (to/from Cons.) and Poll Tax Levels in District Councils
1986-1990**

Conservative Districts	- 6.7
Labour Districts	- 5.8
Democrat Districts	- 6.9
No Overall Control	- 6.0

Aggregate data do not, of course, allow us to draw any inferences about the behaviour of individual authorities which give rise to these findings, particularly where so few cases are often involved. There was, for example, a 6.2% swing to the Conservatives in Labour controlled councils with less than a 10% increase in household bills, but in fact just one council, Harlow in Essex, falls into that category. Only four councils in the entire sample showed a swing to the Conservatives. In each of these cases there was a slight drop in the Labour vote, with the Conservatives benefiting from the declining performance of the Democrats. Only two shire districts, Basildon and Bristol, had their poll tax levies capped by the government, and thus a comparison with all other authorities is not very productive.

In general, Labour seemed relatively to suffer from high poll tax levels even where it was not in control of the council. It is not as if the blame was being placed on Labour counties, for in only one case where a Conservative or hung district had a poll tax of over £400 (Derby) did Labour control the county. The Conservatives' worst performances, in contrast, came where they had a majority on the council and there had been a large increase in bills. The 15.3% swing against them in Torbay is indicative both of this and of a more generalised dissatisfaction with

the policies of the council. Once again we are led to the provisional conclusion that the poll tax was only one variable determining party support in individual district authorities, not least because of the problems voters had in deciding where responsibility lay.

One important political ingredient giving shape to the results in the districts was the failure of the Democrats to contest more than two-thirds of the vacancies, compared with the Alliance's presence in over 85% of wards in 1986. The decision by the party to target carefully chosen areas of strength allowed them to gain a share of the vote far in excess of their opinion poll rating. On the other hand, their absence from many of the wards they had fought in 1986 in places such as Cherwell, Portsmouth, Stevenage and Waveney directly contributed to Labour's success. The impact of such variations in party competition should never be overlooked when analysing the outcome of local elections.

Discussion

The data we have examined suggest that the poll tax was not itself the prime cause of the variation in results either between types of local authority or individual councils. Labour's inability to make progress in London as a whole compared with 1986 disguised sharp differences between the boroughs. However, apart from the exceptional cases of Wandsworth and Westminster, there is no *prima facie* evidence that borough determined reactions to the poll tax can explain the performance of the parties. Outside London there was a strong swing to Labour regardless of either political control or the level of the community charge.

Having said that, there were local influences at work which had a bearing on the result in particular boroughs and districts. We have been able to examine these largely through inference alone, but our information does seem to support Curtice and Steed's view of the 'denationalisation of British politics'.⁹ Variations across London often reflected the differential performance of the parties there at the last general election, and may well portend trends for the next. Similarly, the West Midlands, except Coventry, still seems to be an area where Labour is doing less well than it should all other things being equal. In the shire districts, the spectacular advances which enabled Labour to claim more than 50% of the vote in many authorities lend a further twist to the puzzle of why the party has not been able to match consistently good local results in these areas with comparable general election support.¹⁰

Such findings should perhaps not come as too great a surprise. It is increasingly apparent that the context of an election is important in shaping its result. As we have noted, surveys on the poll tax conducted in the first half of 1990 mapped not only the considerable public

hostility to the tax, but also the fact that the blame for it was firmly laid at the government's door. Only the dwindling band of loyal Conservative voters was likely to believe that the increase in charges compared with the rates was the responsibility of profligate local authorities. These elections were presented almost as a referendum on the performance of the government, and in such an atmosphere most councils must have felt confident that, for this year at least, they would avoid any adverse local electoral reaction to their fiscal policies. The non-metropolitan districts had the additional advantage of being able to portray themselves as the victims of county councils spending heavily in one of their own non-election years.

It is, of course, conceivable that the community charge will have a bigger direct effect on local elections in future years. Once people have been able to make a direct year-on-year comparison of local taxation demands, rather than be confused by a change of system, then councils may well be judged on their own individual performance. At the very least, the law of anticipated reactions is likely to come into play. However, it should not be forgotten that local authorities are also responsible for providing services, and there is evidence to suggest that voters recognise that such services have to be paid for.¹¹ Low local taxes are not always a recipe for electoral success.

It is possible to argue either that the community charge has failed its first test as a device to improve the accountability of local government or that it has not really been tested at all. Our data clearly demonstrate that the election results in individual local authorities in 1990 were at most only marginally affected by absolute or relative poll tax levels. It may well be that a fairer test must await an examination of the poll tax over an entire electoral cycle. Or, perhaps, it can never really be tested at all. The determination of the government to oversee the levels of local expenditure, and its use of reliefs as an instrument of national policy, immediately blurs the relationship between the council and the community charge-payer. The current structure of local government, with its varying patterns of single-tier and two-tier authorities and annual and quadrennial elections, serves only to confuse the issue.

Moreover, the government must recognise the need to balance its long-term interest in improving local political accountability with its short-term concern over the most appropriate timing of the next general election. More than most the government will want the 1991 district council elections to be an almost nationwide referendum on its record in office. It can ill-afford to have electors responding solely to one 'local' issue and ignoring the wider political climate as they make their party choice.

¹¹ See T. Travers 'Community Charge and other Financial Changes' in J. Stewart and G. Stoker (eds), *The Future of Local Government* (Macmillan, 1989).

¹ *N.O.P. Review*, July 1990.

³ *The Sunday Times*, 15 April 1990.

⁴ Full results for London are to be found in *The London Borough Elections of May 1990* (London Research Centre, 1990).

⁵ *Economist*, 12 May 1990.

⁶ The metropolitan and shire district election results are detailed in C. Rallings and M. Thrasher, *Local Elections Handbook 1990* (Local Government Chronicle Elections Centre, 1990). Further information may be obtained from the authors.

⁷ For a more detailed technical attempt to explain patterns of turnout in local elections, see C. Rallings and M. Thrasher, 'Turnout in English Local Elections', *Electoral Studies*, 1990/2.

⁸ Home Office, 'Local Government Elections, England and Wales, 1989', *Statistical Bulletin* 35, 1989.

⁹ J. Curtice and M. Steed, Appendix 2 in D. Butler and D. Kavanagh, *The British General Election of 1987* (Macmillan, 1988).

¹⁰ For a discussion see P. Dunleavy, 'Mass Political Behaviour: Is There More to Learn?' *Political Studies*, 1990/3 and J. Gyford et al., *The Changing Politics of Local Government* (Unwin Hyman, 1989).

¹¹ C. Game, 'Axeman or Taxman: Who is Now the More Unpopular?', *Local Government Studies*, 1984/1.