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**WHAT HAPPENED TO  
FAR-RIGHT POLITICAL PARTIES  
IN THE WEST MIDLANDS**

**AN ANALYSIS OF THE 2005 GENERAL ELECTION  
RESULTS**

**June 2005**



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## Introduction

The reports looks at the performance in the 2005 General Election (referred to as the 2005 election) in the West Midlands<sup>1</sup> of those political parties whose core beliefs embrace racism, more commonly known as ‘far right’ political parties. The principal far-right party that contested seats at the 2005 election was the British National Party (BNP).

The BNP’s distinctiveness and electoral appeal lies in its stance on race and immigration. In essence, it advocates a Britain that is an independent national state, free from close economic and political alliances with other nations, and whose population is exclusively or largely white.

Given the BNP’s agenda, the report looks at the stance of the three large mainstream parties (Labour, Conservative and Liberal Democrat) on race and immigration during the election campaign. It also covers the stance of the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP) and Veritas<sup>2</sup> on these issues. As parties which emphasise the independence of Britain, they are suspicious of the influence of foreign countries and their populations on how the United Kingdom conducts its affairs. It means that they advocate strict controls over immigration into the U.K.

In its examination of the 2005 election, this report looks at what happened in the previous General Election in 2001 (referred to as the 2001 election) and in more detail at three parliamentary constituencies which in recent years have been targeted by the BNP. They are West Bromwich West, Dudley North, and Stoke-on-Trent South.

On the same day as the 2005 election, elections to some local authorities also took place in the West Midlands. The performance of far-right political parties in these elections is also examined.

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<sup>1</sup> The West Midlands covers the local authority areas of Birmingham, Coventry, Dudley, Herefordshire, Sandwell, Solihull, Telford & Wrekin, Wolverhampton, Staffordshire, Stoke on Trent, Shropshire, Walsall, Warwickshire and Worcestershire.

<sup>2</sup> Veritas is a new party that has broken away from UKIP. Its leader is former Labour and UKIP politician and television chat show host, Robert Kilroy –Silk.

## Chapter One

### Race and the General Election 2005

- 1.1 Race, in particular, immigration, was a prominent issue in the 2005 election. This was because the Conservative party chose to make what it termed ‘controlled immigration’ one of its main campaign issues. In its manifesto, under the heading ‘Secure Borders and Controlled Immigration’, it attacked the Government for losing effective control of the country’s borders so that more than 150,000 extra people came to the UK every year (a town the size of Peterborough was quoted) and for having no upper limit to legal immigration. The Government’s asylum system was described as being in chaos.
- 1.2 In their manifesto, the Conservatives committed themselves to an annual quota on the number of refugees and migrants allowed to enter the UK, a points-based system for work permits that gave priority to persons with skills that the country required, withdrawal from outdated international conventions that governed who could settle in Britain, the establishment of British border control police to secure the country’s borders, the maintenance of 24-hour surveillance at all ports of entry, and the processing of asylum seeker applications outside Britain. The manifesto also committed the Conservatives to making a continued success of Britain’s diversity. Apart from saying that this was dependant on controlled immigration, no details were provided.
- 1.3 The Conservatives followed up their pledges on immigration with advertisements on poster board sites saying ‘It’s not racist to impose limits on immigration’, and advertisements in newspapers using the headline ‘Mr Blair’s asylum chaos has cost Birmingham £24 million’<sup>3</sup> (the sum the City Council has apparently had to spend on supporting the asylum system since the Government came to power in 1997<sup>4</sup>).
- 1.4 It also included target letters from the party leader to potential voters headed ‘Are you thinking what we’re thinking about immigration’ and saying ‘You may be shocked to learn that his (Blair’s) chaotic asylum system has cost your council £ (with amount) since 1997- money that could have been spent on essential local services. No wonder a typical hardworking family in a Band D property in your council area now pays (amount inserted) more in their council tax than in 1997’. At the end of the letter, there was a P.S. message: ‘...five more years of Mr. Blair who won’t put a limit on immigration or a Conservative Government that will’.

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<sup>3</sup> Full page advertisement *Birmingham Evening Mail* 21.04.05

<sup>4</sup> A controversial claim given that funding to support housing/welfare needs of applicants for asylum comes from central government, with councils being reimbursed for their expenditure.

- 1.5 Party leader Michael Howard in television and media interviews stated that the failure to adequately control immigration would result in the kind of race disturbances that took place in certain Northern England towns in 2001 and produce electoral success for the BNP. Leaflets from Conservative candidates in constituencies often pursued a similar theme. In the London borough of Croydon, the Conservatives circulated a leaflet headlined 'Unlimited Immigration', depicting a world map with an arrow pointing to Croydon (it hosts the Home Office immigration assessment office). In another London constituency, the Conservative candidate wrote in a leaflet 'I have actively campaigned to make people recognise the ... strain put on schools by bogus asylum seekers'.<sup>5</sup>
- 1.6 The fact that the Conservative party chose to make immigration a key issue was not altogether surprising. Immigration as a news story has featured regularly in the last five years, particularly with the rise in the number of asylum seekers. Public opinion polls have consistently recorded immigration as one of the top public concerns. The Government has been perceived by a significant number of voters not to adequately control immigration, with the knock-on effect of putting pressure on public services. Also, opinion polls have shown immigration to be one of the few issues where the Conservatives have been viewed more favourably than the Labour Government.
- 1.7 In the election campaign, Labour wished to emphasise its record and future plans on the economy and public services and not to see immigration issues dominating the campaign and its associated media coverage. Neither did the Liberal Democrats want immigration to be seen as a prominent campaign issue. It was not one of their major election planks and they were capable of being attacked, particularly by the Conservatives, as being lax on immigration controls and wanting to give complete control of the country's asylum and immigration system to Brussels (European Union). Both Labour and Liberal Democrats viewed Conservative concentration on immigration as exaggerating the issues surrounding migration into the UK and, in so doing, exploiting people's anxieties to the detriment of race and community relations.
- 1.8 During the election campaign, Prime Minister Tony Blair devoted a speech to immigration on April 22<sup>nd</sup> in Dover. The location was symbolic, given that Dover, as a major port of entry into the UK, has had to grapple with issues of people seeking asylum in the UK, and is also a constituency which the Conservatives needed to win from Labour if they were to form a Government. The speech received widespread news coverage. In his speech, the Prime Minister attacked the Conservative party's proposals on immigration as impractical, maintained that a Labour Government would continue to put in place strict immigration controls that worked and reduced abuse, and that a Labour government would continue to make the case for the benefits that immigrants brought to the economy and to society.

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<sup>5</sup> *Independent* 22.04.05.

- 1.9 The election campaign was about the Conservatives claiming that immigration was out of control and the system of administering it chaotic so the Government did not wish to talk about it. Labour rejected this charge. The details of what was actually taking place was not material that easily lent itself to media headlines or punchy slogans in election leaflets. For many electors, the details of what was, or was not, taking place on immigration never reached them.
- 1.10 An examination of the details of the three large mainstream parties' proposals on immigration showed similarities. They all committed themselves to giving priority to the admission of economic migrants with skills that were needed in the UK, making the system for considering asylum seeker applications more efficient, removing the possibilities for abuse, strengthening border controls where necessary, and continuing with the free movement of labour within the European Union. The main difference lay in the Conservative proposals to establish an annual limit on the number of migrants. This proposal was attacked by business leaders during the election campaign for damaging business flexibility, as it could mean that firms would be unable to recruit the skilled workers that they needed.<sup>6</sup>
- 1.11 Immigration as an election issue attracted significant media coverage at the start of the campaign. It subsequently gave way to other issues, in particular, the situation in Iraq and whether it showed that the Prime Minister's handling of the situation raised wider questions about his competence and judgement. There were plenty of press reports from Conservative Party campaigners that their messages on immigration were being well received by electors. Labour candidates reported that immigration was being raised with them by electors. *The Times* carried a story from the Birmingham Edgbaston constituency of an elector saying to the Conservative candidate "If I was an immigrant, they'd give us a nice big house and a car and a mobile. This country is solely and purely for the immigrants. We may as well pack up and leave". The Conservative candidate in reply is quoted as saying "Yes...we're being swamped".<sup>7</sup> An eve of opinion poll survey by Populus for *The Times* provided some perspective on how important immigration was seen by electors. It was named by just 14% as the factor that had the biggest influence on deciding their votes. It lagged behind party positions on public services and how the Prime Minister was viewed.<sup>8</sup>
- 1.12 The British National Party's theme on immigration showed a familiar line. Its manifesto said: 'we call for an immediate halt to all further immigration, the immediate deportation of criminal and illegal immigrants, and the introduction of a system of voluntary resettlement whereby by those immigrants who are legally here will be afforded the opportunity to return to their lands of ethnic origin assisted by generous financial incentives both for the individuals and the countries in question'. The BNP saw the Conservative Party's concentration on controlled immigration as an attempt to stop people voting for it and accused the Conservatives, and Michael Howard in particular, as a former Home Secretary, of not doing anything to stop immigration when they were in Government.

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<sup>6</sup> CBI Director General Digby Jones, media statement, 22.04.05

<sup>7</sup> *The Times* 14.04.05

<sup>8</sup> *The Times* 05.05.05

- 1.13 The nationalist right, in the form of the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP), proposed a range of measures to restrict immigration so that the number of people being admitted each year to the UK equalled those who were leaving. Some of its proposals, such as a points system for evaluating applications for work permits, echoed proposals from the mainstream political parties. Being opposed to the UK's membership of the European Union, UKIP blamed the expansion of the European Union as a major reason for the increase in immigration. More importantly, the message that UKIP conveyed to electors gave prominence to immigration. The party used a standard freepost election leaflet to electors in each constituency where it had a candidate. The headline message on the front of the leaflet had a cartoon showing the E.U. tearing up the UK's immigration policy and alongside it the slogan: 'Say No to Unlimited Immigration'.

## Chapter Two

### The General Election 2005: the national picture and the far right

#### Candidates

2.1 More than 3,500 candidates from 170 political parties contested the 2005 election.<sup>9</sup> The three large mainstream parties (Conservative, Labour and Liberal Democrat) had an almost full slate of candidates in England, Scotland and Wales. The number of candidates standing for the main far-right or nationalist-right parties was:

|                |   |
|----------------|---|
| BNP            | 119 candidates (in the 2001 election they had 33 candidates)  |
| National Front | 13 candidates (in the 2001 elections they had 5 candidates)   |
| UKIP           | 497 candidates (in the 2001 election they had 434 candidates) |
| Veritas        | 62 candidates (none in 2001 election).                        |

#### The number of BNP candidates standing

2.2 The number of candidates fielded by the BNP represented a significant increase on the 2001 election and was the highest number it had fielded in any General Election since the party was formed in the early nineteen eighties. The BNP was not expecting to win any seats but it was hoping for some good results in terms of vote shares and position in polls in a small number of constituencies. It targeted areas where there was already known BNP support (obviously including areas with BNP councillors), where the party had some form of local organisation, areas where issues around race could be exploited, and areas where the dominant local political party (usually Labour) was seen as, or perceived to be, relatively dormant and out of touch with its natural supporters. In the medium term, the BNP was also seeking to build on, or identify, support for future local council elections, starting with elections in many urban areas in May 2006.

#### 2.3 The results

| Party        | Seats | Vote Share                                      | Net Gain/Loss of seats |
|--------------|-------|---|------------------------|
| Labour       | 356   | 35/36% (reduction of 5.4% on the 2001 election) | loss of 47 seats       |
| Conservative | 197   | 32/33% (gain of 0.6% on the 2001 election)      | gain of 33 seats       |
| Lib Dem      | 62    | 22/23% (gain of 3.8% on the 2001 election)      | gain of 11 seats       |
| Other        | 30    | 8/10% (gain of 1.0% on the 2001 election)       | gain of 3 seats        |

The turnout was 61.2% (up 2% on the 2001 election). Labour's majority over all other parties was 67 seats. The far right and nationalist right parties did not win any seats.

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<sup>9</sup> Candidates in each constituency in a parliamentary election have to pay a deposit of £500. If they receive 5% or more of the total votes, the deposit is returned. If it is less than 5%, they lose their deposit.

### **The BNP results**

- 2.4 The BNP obtained 192,750 votes. This represented about 0.74% of the vote across the UK. In the 2001 election, the BNP received 47,129 votes with a smaller number of candidates. In the 119 constituencies where there were BNP candidates, the average number of votes they received was 1,620, which represented a 4.2% share of the vote. In the 2001 election the equivalent figures were 1,428 votes and a 3.9% share of the vote. The BNP saved its election deposits by obtaining 5% or more of the total vote in 34 constituencies (29% of total constituencies contested). The cost to the BNP of not saving its deposits in the remaining 85 constituencies it contested was £42,500. In the 2001 election, it saved its election deposit in 21% of the constituencies it contested.
- 2.5 The BNP's best result was in the Barking constituency in East London, where its share of the vote was 16.9%, and it came third in front of the Liberal Democrats. This was the only seat where it secured more votes than any of the three large mainstream parties. In the other constituencies it contested, it was in fourth place in 82 constituencies (69% of total contested), which meant it often secured more votes than UKIP. In the 2001 election, the BNP's best result was in the Oldham West constituency where it obtained 16.4% of the vote.
- 2.6 In the elections to the European Parliament in June 2004, the BNP obtained 808,201 votes, or 4.91% of the votes cast. The voter turnout in the European election was 38%, which was significantly less than the 2005 election.

### **The National Front (NF) results**

- 2.7 The National Front obtained around 8,079 votes, or 621 votes on average, in the 13 constituencies that it contested. In the 2001 election, its average vote in the 5 constituencies that it contested was 497. The NF lost its election deposits in all 13 constituencies, as its share of the vote was less than the required 5%. In 3 of the constituencies that it contested, there were also BNP candidates. The NF received fewer votes than the BNP in all three of these constituencies. The NF's best results were in the Newcastle North and Feltham and Heston (West London) constituencies, where it obtained almost 1,000 votes and 2.6% of the votes cast. Its next best result was in Peterborough, where it received just over 900 votes, or 2.3% of the total votes cast. No BNP candidates contested these constituencies.

### **UKIP results**

- 2.8 UKIP obtained some 610,000 votes. This represented about 2.8% of the vote across the UK. Its average vote in constituencies where it had candidates was around 1,230. It received less than 5.0% of the vote in 452 (90%) of the constituencies it contested and consequently lost its election deposits. Twelve months previously, in the June 2004 elections for the European Parliament, UKIP obtained 2,660,768 votes, which represented 16.1% of the total vote. In the 2001 election, UKIP received 390,900 votes, which amounted to 1.5% of the total UK vote and gave it an average of 900 votes in the 434 constituencies that it contested.

### **Veritas results**

- 2.9 Veritas obtained some 40,500 votes. It represented a vote share of about 0.15% across the UK. The average number of votes it obtained in the constituencies it contested was 653. It obtained more than 5% of the votes to save its election deposit in just one constituency.

## Chapter Three

### What happened in the West Midlands

3.1 On 5<sup>th</sup> May 2005, elections took place in 58 of the 59<sup>10</sup> constituencies in the West Midlands. The constituency seats won by each party were:

|                  |    |                              |                     |
|------------------|----|------------------------------|---------------------|
| Labour           | 39 | Net loss of 4 seats          | Share of vote 38.9% |
| Conservative     | 15 | Net gain of 3 seats          | Share of vote 34.8% |
| Liberal Democrat | 3  | Net gain of 1 seat           | Share of vote 18.6% |
| Independent      | 1  | No change in number of seats |                     |

3.2 The turnout of electors was 61.4% (a rise of nearly 3% on the General Election 2001) and the same as the average turnout across the UK.

3.3 The BNP contested 22 constituencies (38% of the total). This compares with the 5<sup>11</sup> constituencies it contested in the 2001 general election in the West Midlands, when it received 6234 votes. In 2005, the BNP stood in constituencies in urban areas. It received 42,581 votes. Its overall share of the vote in the West Midlands was 1.8% (an increase of 1.5% compared with the 2001 General Election).

3.4 Other parties on the political right or far right who stood in the 2005 election were:

UKIP - contested all seats and received 75,302 votes. Its vote share was 3.1% (an increase of 1.3% on 2001).

Veritas – contested five seats and received 4,244 votes.

National Front (NF) – contested one seat (Birmingham Erdington) and received 416 votes. It was bottom of the poll. (In 2001, the NF contested two seats in the West Midlands.)

3.5 Labour's share of the vote fell by 6.1%, compared with the 2001 election. This produced a swing from Labour to the Conservatives of 3.1%, although the Conservative share of the vote was the same as in the 2001 election. The principal gainers from Labour's loss of vote share were parties on the centre left (principally the Liberal Democrats and, to a lesser extent, Respect) and parties on the political right and far right (principally, the BNP and UKIP). The net effect of this was that: **for every 20 voters that switched from Labour since the 2001 election, 12 went to centre-left parties, 7 to the far right or nationalist right, and 1 to the Conservatives.**

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<sup>10</sup> In South Staffordshire constituency an election did not take place on May 5th due to the death of a candidate. A by-election was subsequently held on June 23rd 2005. Their results do not form part of this report.

<sup>11</sup> The constituencies were Birmingham Erdington, Dudley North, West Bromwich West, Stoke South, and Coventry North East.

- 3.6 In the 22 constituencies in the West Midlands contested by the BNP, Labour's fall in the share of the vote it received compared with the 2001 election was slightly higher at an average of 6.9%. Labour's share of the vote fell in all 22 constituencies. The Conservative share of the vote in these constituencies overall was also slightly down at 1.6%. In only 3 of the 22 constituencies was the Conservative share of the vote higher than in the 2001 election. The principal gainers from this fall in the share of votes were the BNP (vote share up 4.6% on 2001) and the Liberal Democrats (vote share up 3.9% on 2001). The net effect of this was that **for every 20 voters that switched from Labour since the 2001 election, 11 went to the far right or nationalist right (mainly BNP) and 9 to centre left parties (mainly the Liberal Democrats). None went to the Conservatives, who instead lost a small number of voters to other parties.**

### Summary of BNP performance across the West Midlands in 2005

- 3.7 The BNP did not win a seat. In the 22 constituencies where there were BNP candidates, they always obtained fewer votes than candidates from the three mainstream parties. In 18 constituencies they were in fourth place, and in four constituencies they were in fifth place. In the 22 constituencies where the BNP stood, 19 were won by Labour, 2 by the Liberal Democrats, and 1 by the Conservatives. Fifteen of the Labour seats can be described as being safe Labour constituencies in that their majorities were above 5,000 votes. In the 22 constituencies where the BNP stood, only 2 constituencies saw a change in the winning party. They were Solihull and Birmingham Yardley, and they were both won by the Liberal Democrats.
- 3.8 In the 22 constituencies where the BNP stood, the average number of votes it obtained was 1,936, its average share of the vote was 5.1%, and it saved its election deposits because its share of the vote was 5%, or more in 11 constituencies (50%). The BNP's performance in the 2005 election in the constituencies where it stood was an improvement on its 2001 election performance. The BNP's average number of votes per constituency rose by 55% (1,247 votes in 2001 compared to 1,936 in 2005), its average share of the vote rose by 38% ( 3.7% in 2001 compared to 5.1% in 2005), and it saved its election deposits in half of the constituencies it contested, compared to none in 2001.
- 3.9 The BNP's best results in the West Midlands were in Stoke, Sandwell, Dudley, Walsall, and parts of Birmingham. The best constituency result was in the Sandwell constituency of West Bromwich West, where the BNP obtained 3,456 votes and a vote share of 9.9%. This was followed by the Dudley North constituency, where the BNP obtained 4,022 votes and a vote share of 9.7%. **The West Midlands was one of the best areas for the BNP. Its average vote per constituency and vote share was higher in the West Midlands than in any other region of the UK.** The West Bromwich West constituency result was the BNP's fourth best result in the UK.
- 3.10 Electorate turnout in the constituencies contested by the BNP was slightly lower than the average electoral turnout across the West Midlands of 61.4%. It was 58 %. This has to be set in the context that electoral turnout in safe Labour constituencies where most BNP candidates stood was lower than in marginal constituencies or constituencies held by other mainstream parties.

- 3.11 In the 22 constituencies contested by the BNP, there were UKIP candidates. In 18 of the 22 constituencies, the BNP received more votes than UKIP candidates. The four constituencies where UKIP received more votes than the BNP were Walsall South, Worcester, Wolverhampton South West, and Newcastle-Under-Lyme. Also, in 4 of the BNP contested constituencies, there were candidates from Veritas. Again, the BNP received more votes in each of these constituencies than Veritas.
- 3.12 The BNP's vote in the 2005 election in the West Midlands was significantly less than the vote it obtained in the June 2004 election to the European Parliament. In that election it received 107,794 votes, or 7.5% of the votes cast. It was the BNP's second best result in the UK.

### **Summary of BNP performance by local authority area**

#### ***Birmingham***

- 3.13 BNP candidates contested 4 out of the 11 constituencies in the City (Erdington, Hodge Hill, Northfield, and Yardley). The population in each constituency was predominantly white. The BNP came fourth behind the three large mainstream parties in each constituency. Across the 4 constituencies, it obtained a total of 5,788 votes and its average share of the vote was 4.8%. It saved its election deposits in 2 constituencies by obtaining more than 5% of the vote, one of the BNP's best 5 results in the West Midlands.

#### ***Coventry***

- 3.14 The BNP had a candidate in one (North West) of the three constituencies in the City. The BNP came fourth behind the three large mainstream parties. It obtained 1,556 votes and its share of the vote was 3.6%, which meant it lost its deposit. Coventry represented one of the BNP's poorer performances in the West Midlands.

#### ***Dudley***

- 3.15 BNP candidates contested 2 out of the 4 constituencies in the borough (Dudley North and South). The BNP came fourth behind the three large mainstream parties in each constituency. Across the two constituencies, it obtained a total of 5,863 votes and its average share of the vote was 7.2%. It saved its deposits in both constituencies. In the Dudley North constituency, the BNP received 4,022 votes (9.7% of total vote). Its candidate was a former councillor in Dudley. Dudley produced one of the BNP's top five results in the West Midlands.

#### ***Hereford***

- 3.16 There are two constituencies in the local authority area but the BNP did not have candidates.

3.17 *Sandwell*

BNP candidates stood in all three constituencies (West Bromwich West, and East, and Warley) in the borough. The BNP came fourth behind the three large mainstream parties in each constituency. Across the three constituencies, the BNP obtained a total of 7,546 votes and its average share of the vote was 7.3%, which meant it saved its deposits. In a radio interview, the BNP candidate in the Warley constituency during the election stated that black, Asian and other ethnic groups born in the UK could not be called British. He also admitted in the same interview that immigration was the BNP's core issue. In the West Bromwich West constituency, the BNP received 3,456 votes (9.9% of total vote). Its candidate was a Sandwell councillor representing a ward in the constituency. Sandwell produced one of the BNP's top 5 results in the West Midlands.

*Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin*

3.18 The BNP contested none of the 5 constituencies.

*Solihull*

3.19 The BNP contested one (Solihull) of the two constituencies in the borough. The BNP came fourth behind the three large mainstream parties. It obtained 1,752 votes and its share of the vote was 3.35%, which meant it lost its deposit. Solihull was one of the BNP's poorer performances in the West Midlands.

*Stoke*

3.20 BNP candidates contested all three constituencies in the City (North, Central and South). They came fourth behind the three large mainstream parties in each constituency. The BNP across the three constituencies received 7,615 votes and its average share of the vote was 7.92%, which mean it saved its deposits. Overall, Stoke represented the BNP's best performance in the West Midlands.

*Staffordshire*

3.21 The BNP contested 2 of the 8 constituencies in Staffordshire (Burton and Newcastle under Lyme). In one constituency, the BNP came fourth and in the other constituency (Newcastle) it came fifth behind UKIP. Across the 2 constituencies it received 3,230 votes and its share of the vote was in the region of 3.6%, which meant it lost its deposits. Staffordshire was one of the BNP's poorer performances in the West Midlands.

*Walsall*

3.22 BNP candidates contested all three constituencies in the borough (Walsall North and South and Aldridge Brownhills). It came fourth behind the three large mainstream parties in 2 constituencies and fifth (just behind UKIP) in one constituency. Across the three constituencies, it obtained a total of 5,388 votes and its average share of the vote was 5.0%. It saved its election deposits in two constituencies (Walsall North and South). In the Walsall North constituency, it obtained 6.0% of the total vote. Walsall represented one of the BNP's top five results in the West Midlands.

### ***Warwickshire***

- 3.23 The BNP contested one of the 5 constituencies (North Warwickshire) in the County. It came fourth with 1,910 votes and a vote share of 4.0%, which meant it lost its election deposit. Overall, Warwickshire is an area where the BNP is weak.

### ***Worcestershire***

- 3.24 The BNP contested one of the 6 constituencies (Worcester) in the County. It came fifth behind UKIP and the three large mainstream parties. It received 980 votes and its share of the vote was 2.1%, which meant it lost its election deposit. Overall, Worcestershire is an area where the BNP is weak.

### ***Wolverhampton***

- 3.25 The BNP contested one of the three (South West) constituencies in the town. It came fifth behind UKIP and the three large mainstream parties. The BNP received 983 votes, which represented a 2.4% share of the vote. As a result it lost its election deposit. Wolverhampton represented the BNP's worst performance in an urban area in the West Midlands.

## Chapter Four

### Three constituencies

#### West Bromwich West

- 4.1 The constituency is an urban seat consisting of the linked towns or communities of Wednesbury, Tipton, Great Bridge, Oldbury and Tividale. Historically, it is a constituency based on engineering and metal work industries. A quarter of the working population is still engaged in manufacturing. Traditionally, residential housing areas have been located alongside factory sites. In more recent years, industrial estates have been developed. The parcel service firm, Nightspeed, located on one of these estates, is now one of the largest employers. New largely-private housing is also being developed on former industrial sites.
- 4.2 The 2001 census showed that the constituency had higher rates of poor health and inability to work due to sickness than the national average, that 38% of the population did not own a car (national average 27%), that there were higher rates of unemployment compared to the national average, and that 31% of the population lived in rented local authority housing (much higher than the national figure of around 13%).
- 4.3. The 2001 census showed that around 16% of the population in the constituency were from black or minority ethnic groups. The largest minority ethnic community was Indian (majority Sikh). There was also a Muslim population (around 4% of total population) and smaller black and mixed race communities. The main area of settlement is Oldbury with smaller communities in Tipton.
- 4.4 Historically, the constituency has been a safe Labour Party seat in parliamentary elections. For many years, it was represented by the Labour MP and former speaker of the House of Commons, Betty Boothroyd. When she stepped down from parliament in 2000, a by election took place and the current Labour MP, Adrian Bailey, was elected. He has been returned to parliament with comfortable majorities ever since.
- 4.5 The British National Party (BNP) contested the constituency for the first time in the parliamentary by election in 2000. The party leader, Nick Griffin, was the candidate, and he received 794 votes or 4.2% of the votes cast. He came fourth behind the three mainstream parties and lost his election deposit. The BNP contested the seat again in the 2001 election (this time with a different and more locally-based candidate) and received 1,428, votes or 4.5% of the vote. Again, the BNP finished in fourth place behind the three mainstream parties and lost its election deposit. The result did, however, show a small but solid base of support for the BNP in the constituency and the BNP started regularly fielding candidates in local council elections. In the 2003 elections to the local council (Sandwell), the BNP won seats in two electoral wards (Great Bridge and Princess End).
- 4.6 The constituency is one of four parliamentary constituencies in the Sandwell local authority area. In June 2004, all of the council seats were subject to election, due to changes in electoral ward boundaries. The Labour Party retained its comfortable majority on the Council winning 53 of the 72 seats. The Conservatives won 12 seats, the Liberal Democrats 6, and the BNP 1 (previously it had 2 seats on the Council).

4.7 The constituency consists of 7 local authority election wards electing three councillors per ward, or 21 in total. The salient points arising from the June 2004 election results were:

- Labour won 17 seats, the Conservatives 3, and the BNP1.
- Labour contested every seat (only one of the three mainstream parties to do so) and in 5 electoral wards the three Labour candidates were successful, often with comfortable majorities. The three Conservative councillors were all elected with comfortable majorities in one ward (Wednesbury North).
- Four of the 17 Labour councillors elected were of Asian origin. They were elected in the Oldbury and Tipton Green wards.
- The BNP fielded 6 candidates, standing in 4 different electoral wards. It won one seat in the Princess End ward, where its candidate topped the poll. The other two councillors elected were both Labour. The BNP had previously won this ward in the 2003 election. In 2004, the sitting BNP Councillor was unsuccessful, whereas one of its other candidates won.
- In recent local elections another far-right party (the Freedom party) had contested one ward (Tipton Green). In 2004, it finished a strong second behind Labour.
- The results showed a significant vote for far right parties in 4 of the 7 electoral wards in the constituency. They were Princess End, Tipton Green, Great Bridge, and Tividale.

4.8 **Table 1**

| <b>WEST BROMWICH WEST CONSTITUENCY 2005 GENERAL ELECTION RESULT</b> |              |                       |  |
|---|--------------|-----------------------|--|
| <b>Party</b>  | <b>Votes</b> | <b>Vote Share (%)</b> | <b>Change in vote share on 2001 General Election</b> |
| Labour  | 18,951       | 54.3%                 | - 6.5%   |
| Conservative  | 8,057        | 23.1%                 | -2.0%  |
| Lib Dem   | 3,583        | 10.3%                 | +3.5%  |
| BNP   | 3,456        | 9.9%                  | +5.4%  |
| UKIP  | 870          | 2.5%                  | +0.9%  |
| Labour Party majority: 10,894 votes.                                |              |                       |  |

4.9 The voter turnout in the election was 52.3%, which, whilst up by 4.7% on the 47.7% turnout in the 2001 election, was still significantly below the average voter turnout across the West Midlands of 61.4%. There was a swing from Labour to the Conservatives of 2.3%, compared to the 2001 election. It arose even though the Conservative share of the vote fell due to the fall in Labour's share of the vote being even greater. The beneficiaries were the BNP (vote share up 5.4%) and the Liberal Democrats (vote share up 3.5%). This reflected a trend repeated in other constituencies across the West Midlands which the BNP contested.

4.10 The BNP candidate was their sole Sandwell councillor, James Lloyd, who was elected in June 2004 for the Princes End ward. It was the first time he had stood in the constituency at a parliamentary election. He was brought up in Tipton. His main freepost election leaflet was dominated by messages around race. There were three themes:

- Stop immigration as it was ‘giving our country away’. There was a cartoon showing a lorry parked outside a ‘welcome to Dover’ sign and migrant people jumping out of the lorry with the caption ‘Labour votes: falling off the back of a lorry’.
- The threat of Islamic fundamentalism, as it compromised our democracy and free speech.
- Defending jobs: the BNP would stop exporting jobs and importing cheap foreign labour.

4.11 In the main free-post election leaflets of the three large mainstream parties, the references to any issues around race and immigration were:

Conservative: One sentence headed ‘Controlled Immigration’ and calling for ‘a firm and fair immigration system that stops bogus asylum seekers, protects our nation and lets us decide who has the skills Britain needs’.

Labour: No direct reference to race or immigration but, under pledges made by the candidate, there was the phrase: defend national borders and security.

Liberal Democrats: No reference.

4.12 Local press coverage in the constituency largely reflected the national political issues of the day. Local issues were not given prominence. The daily evening newspaper, the *Express and Star*, apart from reflecting the immigration debate in the early part of the election, also carried two editorials on the subject.

The April 12th edition contained an editorial headed ‘Time right to speak out on taboo issues’. It criticised Commission for Racial Equality Chairman, Trevor Phillips, for asking politicians to lower the temperature in the debate on immigration. It called Britain’s asylum and immigration policy a ‘shambles’, referred to ‘100,000 illegal immigrants flooding into Britain every year’ and ‘gypsy travellers driving convoys of trucks through Britain’s precious planning laws’. It praised Conservative party leader Michael Howard for speaking the truth about these issues.

The April 19th edition contained an editorial headed ‘Issue too important to ignore’. It again complimented Michael Howard for trying to get a sensible debate started on the thorny issue of immigration and criticised left-wing politicians for hoping the issue would go away. It claimed that ‘immigration is a concern to voters of every political persuasion’ and alluded to ‘the race riots in Burnley and Oldham’ as being evidence that ‘this (immigration) is a topic that will not go away’.

## **Dudley North**

- 4.13 The constituency is an urban seat containing the town centre of Dudley and a number of small industrial towns and villages. In the last 20 years, Dudley's manufacturing employment base has shrunk although, in the 2001 census, a quarter of the working population was still engaged in manufacturing. It is being slowly replaced by light and service industries.
- 4.14 The economic social profile for the borough of Dudley closely follows the national average, although there are pockets of deprivation within the borough. The Dudley North constituency is characterised by its high number of semi-detached properties (51% of housing stock). Around two thirds of the electorate own their own properties. However, a quarter of the electorate is still council housing tenants.
- 4.15 The 2001 census showed that around 8% of the population in the constituency was from black and minority ethnic communities. The majority of the minority ethnic community is Muslim.
- 4.16 The constituency, since its creation in 1997, has always returned a Labour MP. From 1997 until the 2005 election, when he stepped down, it was Ross Cranston.
- 4.17 In the 1997 general election, two far-right parties contested the seat. They were the National Front and the National Democrats (Simon Darby). They received in total just over 1000 votes, or just over 2.5% of the total vote, and both parties lost their election deposits. That general election, however, marked the involvement of Simon Darby in the politics of the constituency. He subsequently stood as a British National Party (BNP) candidate in parliamentary and local council elections and for some years has been the BNP's West Midlands organiser. In the 2001 election, Simon Darby, as a BNP candidate, received 1,822 votes, or 4.7% of the total vote, which was a marked improvement on the 1997 election.
- 4.18 In the local council elections in May 2003, Simon Darby was elected to Dudley Council for the Castle and Priory ward with 1,069 votes, or 43% of the votes cast. He gained the seat from Labour on a turnout of electors of 31%. The ward contains a large mid-twentieth century-built council housing estate. It largely comprises semi-detached houses with gardens. Some of the properties show a need for improvements. It is close to a relatively-affluent town centre, private housing, and office/retail developments. Amongst the estate's residents, there is a view that they are neglected in favour of town centre development. At the time of Simon Darby's election, there was also some resentment about asylum seekers being placed in housing on the estate.
- 4.19 The constituency is one of four parliamentary seats in the borough of Dudley. At the last council elections in June 2004, all the council seats were subject to election, due to changes in election ward boundaries. The election saw the Conservatives take control of the Dudley council for the first time since the early nineteen eighties. In the intervening years, the Labour party usually had a majority of Councillors. The result showed the Conservatives with 40 seats, Labour with 25, and the Liberal Democrats with 7. The BNP lost its only seat on the Council.

- 4.20 There are currently 7 wards, each returning three councillors, in the Dudley North constituency. In the June 2004 elections, the Conservatives and Labour parties each won three wards and the Liberal Democrats one. The BNP contested 4 of the 7 wards. However, in only one ward (Castle and Priory) did it have a full slate of three candidates. In the other three wards it contested, it only had one candidate.
- 4.21 In the Castle and Priory ward, the three BNP candidates **were** in second place behind the winning three Labour candidates. They all polled more votes than the Conservatives. The former BNP councillor, Simon Darby, was only 36 votes behind the third winning Labour candidate, with 1,173 votes. In the other three wards contested by sole BNP candidates, they always came second behind the winning three candidates and ahead of the other mainstream parties contesting the wards. Two of these wards (Upper Gornal and Woodsetton and Gornal) returned Conservative councillors and one ward (Coseley East) returned Labour councillors.

#### 4.22 Table 2

| <b>DUDLEY NORTH CONSTITUENCY 2005 GENERAL ELECTION RESULT</b> |              |                   |  |
|---|--------------|-------------------|--|
| <b>Party</b>  | <b>Votes</b> | <b>Vote Share</b> | <b>Change in Vote Share on 2001 Election</b> |
| Labour  | 18,306       | 44.2%             | -7.9%  |
| Conservative  | 12,874       | 31.1%             | -3.4%  |
| Lib Dem   | 4,257        | 10.3%             | +1.6%  |
| BNP   | 4,022        | 9.7%              | +5.0%  |
| UKIP  | 1,949        | 4.7%              | +4.7%  |
| Labour majority: 5,432 votes.                                 |              |                   |  |

- 4.23 The voter turnout in the election was 60.2%. It was 4.1% up on the 2001 election turnout of 56.1% and almost in line with the average turnout of electors across the West Midlands. There was a swing from Labour to the Conservatives of 2.2%, compared to the 2001 election. It arose even though the Conservative share of the vote fell because the fall in the Labour share of the vote was greater. The main beneficiaries were the BNP (vote share up 5.0%) and UKIP (vote share up 4.7%). This was different from other constituencies in the West Midlands contested by the BNP where the Liberal Democrats were often one of the main gainers from the fall in Labour's share of the vote. In Dudley North, it was the nationalist right, represented by UKIP, which was one of the main beneficiaries, and not the Liberal Democrats.

- 4.24 The BNP candidate was Simon Darby who was standing in the constituency for the third consecutive general election. His main freepost election leaflet was dominated by messages around race, with pictures of ordinary people (in fact, they were well-known BNP activists from across the UK) saying why they were voting BNP. The main theme in the BNP leaflet was that the way white people had traditionally lived their lives in Dudley was under threat from a multi-cultural society and, in particular, Muslims or the Islamic religion. For example:
- From the candidate Simon Darby: “There is no easy way to say it but the British people, especially us English, are having our culture, history, traditions and our way of life taken away from us”.
  - From a family voting BNP: “Friends with older children are disgusted by the way that Islam is taught in schools. Our children should learn about our culture and traditions, not foreign religions.”
  - From a mother of two children: “The BNP policy of using the £Billions wasted on asylum seekers on homes and health care for our own people makes sense”.
  - On a proposal to build a mosque in the centre of Dudley: “Giant Mosque-Your Chance to Vote NO” and “Lib/Lab/Con =Dudley Mosque, Simon Darby =No Mosque”. The item also contained the logo of the Dudley Muslim Association with the question “Islamic Dudley?”

### **Stoke-on- Trent South**

- 4.25 The constituency has a background of heavy industry (ceramics, coalmining and tyre-making) which has now largely disappeared. It can be described as a constituency with a skilled manual workforce (in the 2001 census, 29% of persons employed were engaged in manufacturing) but also has a suburban population in the electoral wards/areas of Trentham and Hanford and Meir Park and Sandon. The constituency has relatively prosperous areas as well as areas of social deprivation. The mix means that, across the constituency, many of its social/economic characteristics are close to the national average.
- 4.26 The population of the constituency, according to the 2001 census, is predominantly white (96%) with the black and minority ethnic community being predominantly of Asian origin. Stoke has received a number of asylum seekers over the years and in March 2005 some 850 asylum seekers were reported to be living in Stoke. They originate from a number of different countries, including Kurdish Iraq, Iran, Somalia, Kosovo, and Afghanistan. In 2001, there were also some relatively small disturbances involving Asian youths (they did not take place in the South constituency).
- 4.27 Since 1945, Stoke South has always returned a Labour MP to Parliament. For many years it was represented by the veteran campaigner for disabled people, Jack Ashley. Often the winning Labour MP has received more than 50% of the vote. In the 2005 election, the sitting Labour MP, George Stevenson, stood down and the Labour candidate was Robert Ffello. He was chief executive of a children’s charity and a former Birmingham City councillor.

- 4.28 The BNP achieved electoral prominence in Stoke in the first elections for a new City Council Mayor in May 2002. It received over 8,000 votes. It was also a time when there was significant dissatisfaction with the local Labour party that had controlled the Council for many years. The council elections that year resulted in an independent candidate being elected as the new executive mayor and with Labour no longer having the majority of councillors in the town hall.
- 4.29 In elections to the Council in 2003 and 2004, the BNP won the Longton North ward in the constituency. This is a mainly white lower-middle and working-class ward with a large social housing estate. A former Labour ward, there was a perception that Labour councillors in the area had become removed from, and were not doing enough for, local people. The BNP also campaigned against the number of asylum seekers in Stoke, although hardly any asylum seekers were placed in homes in the Longton North ward. In the 2004 elections, the BNP also fielded candidates in three of the other six electoral wards in the constituency. In each ward, the BNP candidate received around 25% of the vote.
- 4.30 Because of the electoral challenge that the BNP posed in both the parliamentary elections and the elections for a new council mayor being held at the same time, there was an independent third party campaign against the BNP, headed by the North Staffordshire Campaign against Racism and Fascism. A newspaper attacking the BNP with the headline ‘Build a Better Future for Stoke on Trent: Don’t let the BNP Wreck It’ was widely distributed.
- 4.31 The latter part of April also saw the launch of a new local campaign to stamp out racism. Organised as the Partnership Approach to Racial Incidents in North Staffordshire, or PARINS (its members included local authorities, local professional football clubs, and the local race equality council), the campaign included an invitation to people to sign a declaration rejecting racial hatred and discrimination. The campaign was given significant front page coverage in the local newspaper, *The Sentinel* and it included a copy of the declaration for people to sign and send in to the campaign organisers. *The Sentinel*, in an accompanying editorial, stated: ‘multiculturalism...is simply a fact of life here in North Staffordshire. We all... have a responsibility to build a just and tolerant society in which no one is made to feel excluded, persecuted or threatened on the basis of their race’.

**4.31 Table 3**

| <b>The STOKE-ON-TRENT SOUTH CONSTITUENCY TABLE</b> |              |                      |  |
|--|--------------|----------------------|--|
| <b>2005 GENERAL ELECTION RESULT</b>                |              |                      |  |
| <b>Party</b>                                       | <b>Votes</b> | <b>Share of Vote</b> | <b>Change in Vote Share on 2001 Election</b> |
| Labour   | 17,727       | 46.9%                | -6.9%  |
| Conservative                                       | 9,046        | 23.9%                | -0.7%  |
| Lib Dem  | 5,894        | 15.6%                | +2.5%  |
| BNP  | 3,305        | 8.7%                 | +4.9%  |
| UKIP   | 1,043        | 2.8%                 | +2.8%  |
| Labour Majority 8,681 votes.                       |              |                      |  |

- 4.32 The electoral turnout was 53.6%, which was slightly up on the turnout in the 2001 election, but still below the average turnout for the West Midlands. There was a swing from Labour to the Conservatives of 3.1%, compared to the 2001 election. . This occurred even though the Conservative share of the vote fell slightly because the fall in Labour's share of the vote compared to the 2001 election was higher. The main beneficiary was the BNP (vote share up 4.9%). The victorious Labour candidate and elected MP, in his acceptance speech at the end of the count, said that the BNP had to be openly confronted.
- 4.33 The BNP candidate was Mark Leat, a City Councillor for the Longton North ward in the constituency. His main freepost election leaflet was dominated by issues around race. It was very similar in design to the BNP candidate's leaflet in the Dudley North constituency, containing the same pictures of ordinary people (in fact BNP activists) and quotes on why they were voting for the party. The leaflet contained the pledge: 'Local people first – our Sons and Daughters policy would guarantee that local people go to the top of housing and school waiting lists'. It was a theme developed further by the BNP's candidate in the council mayoral elections, who claimed in his election material that asylum seekers were going to the top of the queue for council housing in Stoke, in preference to local people. The claim was given some authenticity, as it was published in a city council booklet sent to all electors containing the election addresses of all the candidates seeking to be mayor. The claim was not true and at the time this was stated to be the case, not only by the city council but by politicians of different political opinions. *The Sentinel* also ran a story exposing the falseness of the BNP's claims with the headline 'Not true Batkin's (BNP candidate) asylum seeker claims'.

## Chapter Five

### Local elections in the West Midlands

- 5.1 On the same day as the general election there were also elections for local authorities in some parts of the West Midlands. The elections were for the county authorities in Shropshire, Staffordshire, Warwickshire, and Worcestershire, and for the mayor of the Stoke unitary authority.
- 5.2 In the county elections, the BNP and the NF did not contest any seats. The only far-right party to contest a seat in the county elections was the Freedom party in the Womborne Division for Staffordshire County Council. Its candidate, Sharron Edwards, received 2,360 votes, or 36.5% of the votes cast, and was just 71 votes behind the Conservatives who won the seat. Sharron Edwards is already a Councillor on South Staffordshire District Council (elected in 2003) for an area which includes part of the county division. The Freedom party is a small party that stands for 'an independent nation state and for the character and culture of our country to be nurtured and sustained'. Some of its activists have previously been associated with the BNP.
- 5.3 The elections for a mayor in Stoke Unitary Authority are based on a proportional system of voting. The mayor has considerable executive powers, with elected councillors having a scrutiny role. If the candidate with most votes after all the votes of the candidates have been counted does not obtain 50% of the votes cast, then a second round of counting takes place. There is a run off between the top two candidates, with the other candidates dropping out. Where voters for the candidates who have dropped out have expressed a second preference for one of the top two candidates, these are added to their votes. The candidate with most votes is then elected mayor. There is evidence that some voters are confused by this voting system. In the recent May 2005 election, it was reported that there were almost 10,000 spoilt ballot papers which could not be awarded to any candidate.
- 5.4 Elections for a mayor in Stoke first took place in 2002. They were contested by the BNP. The BNP received 8,213 votes and was in third place behind a Labour and independent candidate. Its share of votes cast was 18.7% and it was 1,143 votes behind the independent second-place candidate. In the second round of counting, the independent candidate was elected.
- 5.5 In the 2005 election, the BNP candidate (Steven Batkin, a local councillor, and standing for the second time for mayor) received 15,776 votes (19.0% of the total accepted votes cast). This time the BNP was in fourth place behind the first two candidates (Labour and Conservative) and just behind the independent candidate and retiring mayor. It was, however, only 435 votes behind the Conservative second placed candidate. Therefore, if the BNP had obtained a few more votes it could have gone into the final round of counting, with a chance of its candidate being elected as mayor, if (and it's a big if) voters of the candidates who dropped out had given their second preference votes to the BNP. The Labour candidate, who received nearly a third of the votes in the first round of counting and was well ahead of the other candidates, was easily elected as mayor in the second round of counting.

- 5.6 A local newspaper, *The Sunday Sentinel*, described the BNP's vote as a 'success'. The BNP's share of the vote was identical to the 2002 election on a much higher turn out of electors and the actual number of votes they received was just over double (8,161 more) than the number of votes it received in Stoke in the parliamentary elections. Clearly, a number of voters who voted for other parties in the general election voted for the BNP at a local level. The BNP's claim after the mayor election that 'it shows that we (the BNP) are here to stay as a permanent part of the political framework in the city' cannot be disputed at the current time.
- 5.7 It is not possible to say with any certainty what proportion of voters for other parties in the parliamentary elections changed their votes to the BNP in the local mayoral elections in Stoke. This is due to a number of factors, including the turnout of people voting in the mayoral elections being lower than in the parliamentary elections, and the electoral area for the mayoral elections in Stoke being slightly different from those in the parliamentary elections. Also, the Liberal Democrats and UKIP did not contest the mayoral elections, whereas there were 4 independent candidates, one of whom had a good chance of winning, namely, the retiring mayor. The independent candidates, in total, received 23,710 votes which represented some 29% of the valid voters cast. What is apparent is that a proportion of voters in Stoke view local elections differently from parliamentary elections, and that one of the beneficiaries from this is the BNP. The BNP's extra votes in the mayoral elections will have included voters for all of the national mainstream political parties in the parliamentary elections. Given the Labour party's dominance in the politics of Stoke, it is possible that it suffered from this movement of votes to the BNP to a greater extent than the Conservatives (who had a candidate in the mayoral elections) or the Liberal Democrats. However, to what extent this may have happened is unknown.

## Chapter Six

### What does the 2005 General Election mean for the future?

- 6.1 On the basis of the 2005 elections results, the BNP are not well placed to win parliamentary seats in the West Midlands at the next General Election. Its vote in the constituencies where it did best is still too low to seriously challenge the mainstream parties which hold the seats. It did no better than achieve fourth place behind the three national mainstream parties which means it cannot claim to be the main challenger to the party (usually Labour) holding the parliamentary seat.
- 6.2 There is a relatively small but growing number of electors in parts of the urban West Midlands who are consistently voting for the BNP in local and national elections. To vote BNP has become 'habit forming'. The West Midlands remains one of the BNP's best areas for attracting votes in the UK.
- 6.3 The result of the Stoke-on-Trent mayoral election shows that the BNP is capable of attracting more support at local elections than at parliamentary elections. It is able to target its limited resources at local areas and also to attract a protest vote. It is a trend which was already emerging from other elections. This must provide encouragement to the BNP for the next local authority elections in most urban areas in the West Midlands in May 2006.
- 6.4 The BNP's support in the West Midlands is currently confined to certain urban areas in the West Midlands. It is also associated with those areas where it has some level of organisation to conduct election campaigns. The BNP attracts little electoral support and does not have viable local organisations in rural or urban/rural areas in the West Midlands. This is evidenced by the complete absence of BNP candidates in the county council elections and the relatively poor showing of the few BNP candidates who stood in these areas in the parliamentary elections. Neither does the BNP currently attract support in the multi-racial urban area of Wolverhampton.
- 6.5 There was a movement away of some voters from Labour in the 2005 parliamentary election, as compared to the 2001 election across the West Midlands, and this included those constituencies where the BNP had candidates. It was not large, otherwise it could have resulted in Labour losing more seats than the relatively small number that it did lose. The net effect of this, however, was that it was not the Conservatives who benefited, in spite of the emphasis that they placed on being tough on immigration control during the election campaign. Instead, around half the voters that left Labour went to the BNP.
- 6.6 The impact of the BNP taking some votes from Labour at around the same level at the next General Election is that it would not result in the BNP winning any parliamentary seats. It could, however, result in Labour losing some seats to other mainstream parties (probably to the Conservatives). They could win the seats without significantly increasing their vote, due to the fall in the Labour vote to the BNP.

- 6.7 The BNP is better placed than other far-right parties to contest elections in the West Midlands. The number of candidates fielded by the National Front and Freedom Party in the 2005 parliamentary and local elections was negligible. The BNP also look to be better placed and to be capable of attracting more electoral support, particularly at a local level, **in** many urban areas in the West Midlands, than the nationalist-right parties like UKIP and Veritas.
- 6.8 How well the BNP does in future elections will depend on its own organisational capacity and the attractiveness of its message on race to certain electors. It will also depend on the actions of mainstream parties, institutions, voluntary groups, and others, to reduce the electoral appeal of the BNP.

**Appendix**  
**Summary of results in constituencies contested by the BNP**

| Constituency          | Winning Party | BNP Performance |                |  | Voter Turnout (%) |
|-----------------------|---------------|-----------------|----------------|--|-------------------|
|                       |               | Votes (No.)     | Vote Share (%) | Vote Share Change (+/-) compared 2001 election |                   |
| <b>Birmingham</b>     |               |                 |                |  |                   |
| Erdington             | Lab           | 1,512           | 4.76%          | +4.8%  | 48.9%             |
| Hodge Hill *          | Lab           | 1,445           | 5.08%          | +1.7%  | 52.7%             |
| Northfield            | Lab           | 1,278           | 4.1%           | + 4.1%   | 56.6%             |
| Yardley               | Lib Dem       | 1,523           | 5.2%           | +5.2%  | 57.7%             |
| <b>Coventry</b>       |               |                 |                |  |                   |
| North West            | Lab           | 1,556           | 3.6%           | +3.6%  | 59.4%             |
| <b>Dudley</b>         |               |                 |                |  |                   |
| North *               | Lab           | 4,022           | 9.7%           | +5.0%  | 60.2%             |
| South                 | Lab           | 1,841           | 4.7%           | +4.7%  | 68.9%             |
| <b>Sandwell</b>       |               |                 |                |  |                   |
| West Brom East        | Lab           | 2,329           | 6.6%           | +6.6%  | 58.6%             |
| West Brom West*       | Lab           | 3,456           | 9.9%           | +5.4%  | 52.3%             |
| Warley                | Lab           | 1,761           | 5.5%           | +5.5%  | 57.1%             |
| <b>Solihull</b>       |               |                 |                |  |                   |
| Solihull              | Lib Dem       | 1,752           | 3.35%          | +3.3%  | 67.2%             |
| <b>Staffordshire</b>  |               |                 |                |  |                   |
| Burton                | Lab           | 1,840           | 3.8%           | +3.8%  | 61.0%             |
| Newcastle             |               |                 |                |  |                   |
| Und-Lyme              | Lab           | 1,390           | 3.5%           | +3.5%  | 58.2%             |
| <b>Stoke</b>          |               |                 |                |  |                   |
| Central               | Lab           | 2,178           | 7.8%           | +7.8%  | 48.4%             |
| North                 | Lab           | 2,132           | 6.9%           | +6.9%  | 52.7%             |
| South *               | Lab           | 3,305           | 8.7%           | +4.9%  | 53.6%             |
| <b>Walsall</b>        |               |                 |                |  |                   |
| North                 | Lab           | 1,992           | 6.0%           | +6.0%  | 52.8%             |
| South                 | Lab           | 1,776           | 5.0%           | +5.0%  | 58.5%             |
| Aldridge              |               |                 |                |  |                   |
| Brownhills            | Con           | 1,620           | 4.1%           | +4.1%  | 64.1%             |
| <b>Warwickshire</b>   |               |                 |                |  |                   |
| North                 | Lab           | 1,910           | 4.1%           | +4.1%  | 62.2%             |
| <b>Worcestershire</b> |               |                 |                |  |                   |
| Worcester             | Lab           | 980             | 2.1%           | +2.1%  | 64.1%             |
| <b>Wolverhampton</b>  |               |                 |                |  |                   |
| South West            | Lab           | 983             | 2.4%           | +2.4%  | 62.1%             |

\* BNP contested constituency in 2001 election

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## Race Equality West Midlands

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Most Race Equality Digests and research reports are available in hard copy from the REWM office or on the REWM website at [www.rewm.org](http://www.rewm.org).

#### Race Equality Digests (RED)

- RED 1      *Community cohesion, Bradford, Burnley and Oldham: four significant reports (January 2003).*
- RED 2      *The draft statutory code of practice on the duty to promote race equality (February 2002).*
- RED 3      *Ethnicity and religious affiliation in the West Midlands region: information from the 2001 Census (Spring 2003).*
- RED 4      *The success of the British National Party and other extreme right-wing parties in the local elections on 1 May 2003 (May 2003). RED Supplement: From BUF to BNP: a concise chronology of extreme right-wing activity in Britain and of the responses to it (May 2003).*
- RED 5      *How should local race equality work be organised? Developing and positioning race equality organisation in the context of Neighbourhood Renewal and the statutory duty of public authorities to promote race equality (October 2003).*
- RED 6      *Race equality councils and partnerships: their strengths, needs and aspirations. The 2003 audit of resources of West Midlands race equality councils and partnerships (February 2004).*
- RED 7      *Gypsy and Traveller Communities in the West Midlands Region with information from the last five ODPM counts (July 2004).*
- RED 8      *Modelling the delivery of local equality services in rapidly changing circumstances. Exploring the feasibility of local equality and human rights facilities in a world of Race Equality Councils and other single equality strand agencies (July 2004).*
- RED 9      *The 2004 national audit of race equality councils and partnerships (September 2004).*
- RED 10     *Assessing the impact on local race equality work of the Commission for Racial Equality's policy for funding organisations under Section 44 of the Race Relations Act (Getting Results 2004-05) (October 2004).*
- RED 11     *Confronting the racist activities of political parties. A guide for voluntary and community organisations (January 2005).*

- RED 12      *Confronting the racist activities of political parties. A guide for local authorities* (February 2005).
- RED 13      *What happened to far-right political parties in the West Midlands. An analysis of the 2005 General Election results* (June 2005).
- RED 14      *Planning for multi-strand equality work. The implications for race equality councils of the Commission for Equality and Human Rights* (July 2005).

### **Research reports**

1.      *Race equality: the significance of working with local communities. A strategic review of West Midland racial equality councils and partnerships* (August 2001, revised November 2001).
2.      *West Midland Race Equality councils' development project. End-of-project report* (August 2002).
3.      *Promoting race equality and community cohesion through local strategic partnerships. Report and recommendations based on research into local strategic partnerships in West Midland NRF and local management pilot areas* (Race Equality West Midlands in association with Government Office for the West Midlands and the Commission for Racial Equality, Birmingham office) (November 2002).
4.      *Local authority race equality schemes 2002 and their preparation. How local authorities in the West Midlands have responded to their duties under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000* (Race Equality West Midlands in association with Government Office for the West Midlands, the Commission for Racial Equality, Birmingham office and West Midland Race Equality Councils and Partnerships) (December 2002).
5.      *Community cohesion: concept, policy, implementation and theory. An introduction to recent community cohesion initiatives, with reference to West Midlands pathfinder programmes* (Race Equality West Midlands in association with Government Office for the West Midlands, the Commission for Racial Equality, Birmingham office and West Midland Race Equality Councils and Partnerships) (October 2003).
6.      *Impact assessment as a means of improving race equality schemes, eliminating institutional racism and promoting race equality. Scoping the tasks involved with a view to undertaking further analysis of method and providing guidance* (Race Equality West Midlands in association with Government Office for the West Midlands, the Commission for Racial Equality, Birmingham office and West Midland Race Equality Councils and Partnerships) (December 2003).
7.      *A new approach to race equality in Warwickshire* (research report undertaken for Warwickshire County Council and other partners as a joint report by TMP Worldwide and Race Equality West Midlands) (May 2004).
8.      *Walsall racial equality and diversity audit, review and plan* (research and development report undertaken for Walsall Borough Strategic Partnership) (August 2004).

9. *Jigsaw Mentoring Partnership. Project Review and Recommendations*, prepared for East Staffordshire Race Equality Council (May 2004, finalised September 2004).
10. *Young people for race equality. A compendium of local youth projects promoting race equality and community cohesion in the West Midlands* (March 2005).

### **Conference reports**

*Combating racism through the ballot box: meeting the challenges of the racist far-right*, conference organised jointly by the Commission for Racial Equality, Trades Union Congress Midlands Region and Race Equality West Midlands, 15 March 2004, at the Bescott Stadium, Walsall.

*The local race equality roadmap: the way ahead*, conference organised by Race Equality West Midlands, 22 October 2004, at the Hawthorns, West Bromwich, Birmingham.