

The lessons of Eastleigh

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I have to [admit to surprise at the Eastleigh election result](#).

I did not think the Lib Dems could hold on.

I thought the Tories might just win.

I did not think the UKIP surge was as strong as it was.

I got Labour right.

What can it mean? In my opinion a number of things.

First the Tories will move sharply to the right. Hard to imagine, but under pressure from UKIP where else can they go?

Second, there will be more than a taxi load of Lib Dems in the next parliament after all.

Third, Labour has to communicate what it is about, and soon.

Fourth, if Osborne does not change tack on the deficit at this next budget then he and his party are finished whatever they do.

Fifth, and I hate to say it, the chance of coalition again after the next election is real despite Labour's big opinion poll lead.

Who would have thought Nick Clegg might be the ultimate survivor? Perhaps they were right last time when they said "I agree with Nick". Given what his party has done to the NHS, on benefits and much else, it's not a prospect I find appealing.