















Funding the Future















Northern Ireland's local election results: a bad night ...

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This commentary comes from Sean Danaher on [Progressive Pulse](#) (with very slight changes to make it free-standing) and I thought well worth sharing given how little attention Northern Ireland gets in the rest of the UK. The headline is by me:

	Democratic Unionist Party	Councillors	Total	122	+/-	-8
	Sinn Féin	Councillors	Total	105	+/-	—
	Ulster Unionist Party	Councillors	Total	75	+/-	-13
	Social Democratic & Labour Party	Councillors	Total	59	+/-	-7
	Alliance Party	Councillors	Total	53	+/-	+21
	Green	Councillors	Total	8	+/-	+4
	Traditional Unionist Voice	Councillors	Total	6	+/-	-7
	People before Profit Alliance	Councillors	Total	5	+/-	+4
	Progressive Unionist Party of NI	Councillors	Total	3	+/-	-1
	Aontú	Councillors	Total	1	+/-	+1
	Cross Community Labour Alternative	Councillors	Total	1	+/-	+1
	UK Independence Party	Councillors	Total	0	+/-	-3
	NI21	Councillors	Total	0	+/-	-1
	Independent	Councillors	Total	24	+/-	+9

The final local election results for Northern Ireland last week were as follows: ([source](#)).

	Democratic Unionist Party	Councillors	Total 122	+/- -8
	Sinn Féin	Councillors	Total 105	+/- -
	Ulster Unionist Party	Councillors	Total 75	+/- -13
	Social Democratic & Labour Party	Councillors	Total 59	+/- -7
	Alliance Party	Councillors	Total 53	+/- +21
	Green	Councillors	Total 8	+/- +4
	Traditional Unionist Voice	Councillors	Total 6	+/- -7
	People before Profit Alliance	Councillors	Total 5	+/- +4
	Progressive Unionist Party of NI	Councillors	Total 3	+/- -1
	Aontú	Councillors	Total 1	+/- +1
	Cross Community Labour Alternative	Councillors	Total 1	+/- +1
	UK Independence Party	Councillors	Total 0	+/- -3
	NI21	Councillors	Total 0	+/- -1
	Independent	Councillors	Total 24	+/- +9

After 462 of 462 seats

The Northern Ireland parties are generally different to Britain, consisting of Unionist parties, Nationalist parties and Cross-Community parties. Because PR is used in NI elections, apart from the Westminster ones, there is a wider range of parties. UKIP is the only party that stands in both NI and Britain, though the Irish Green party is very closely aligned policy-wise with its British counterparts.

The Unionist parties are the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), Ulster Unionist Party (UUP), Traditional Unionist Voice (TUV) the Progressive Unionist Party (PUP) and UKIP. They are pro-Brexit and anti-backstop.

[People before Profit](#) is a Nationalist pro-backstop party, but is anti-EU in the Lexit sense.

The main Nationalist parties, Sinn Féin (SF) and the Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP) are Remain and pro-backstop. [Aontú](#) is also a remain pro-backstop party (but with very traditional anti-abortion etc. Catholic values). People Before Profit (PBP) is a left-wing anti-neoliberal party, with roots in the Socialist Workers Party and is an all-island party, more internationalist than nationalist, but for the purposes of this

analysis is considered a Nationalist party.

The cross-community parties are Alliance, the Greens and Labour Alternative and are very pro-remain and pro-backstop. Alliance have policies very similar to the Lib Dems. [Labour Alternative](#) is a Socialist party.

The Unionist parties lost 32 seats: DUP 8, UUP 13, TUV 7, PUP 1 and UKIP 3. They had a bad night (and a very bad night for the UUP and TUV). There was little change in the Nationalist parties, losing one seat overall with the SDLP losing 7 seats but the PBP gaining 5 and AintÃº 1. The big winner was the Alliance Party gaining 21 seats and the Greens doubling their seats from 4 to 8.

Again people vote on a range of issues, but the swing was largely from the Unionist parties to Alliance. Alliance is cross-community and hence have the ability to mop up votes from both sides. The UUP, which tends to represent more middle class and centrist Unionists had the greatest losses. Similarly, the SDLP, the more middle-class centrist party on the Nationalist side, lost seats.

The backstop is very popular with the business and agribusiness communities in Northern Ireland, which by its nature has voters from both communities.

The obvious conclusion is that the shift to Alliance is largely from pro-backstop Unionist voters.

Even though the DUP lost seats, its vote was marginally up. This was due to the ability to get voters out in their heartland communities. The hardline anti-backstop stance plays well with many Loyalists as it is seen as a commitment to preserving the Union.

This is good news for Alliance and increases the possibility of them winning the third seat in the European Parliament elections, which currently is held by the UUP. The other contender for the third seat is the SDLP and they had a bad night. Momentum will be on Alliance's side.

Overall as this chart shows, the results reveal that even though the Unionists are the largest block, they no longer form an absolute majority. This is based on seats won rather than the total vote. This has significance for a forthcoming "border poll." The outcome could well depend on the Cross Community vote.

