

Funding the Future

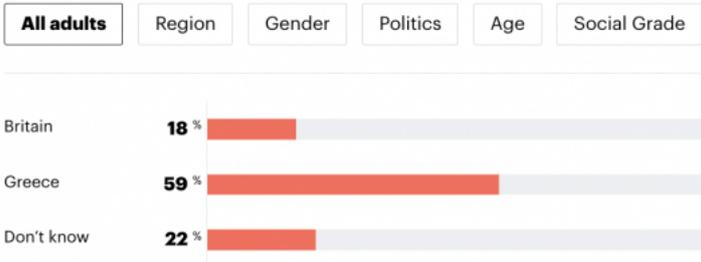
The message of the morning is clear: our political lead...

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The overwhelming feeling generated by this morning's news is that our political leaders are massively out of tune with the people of the UK as a whole.

Take the so-called Elgin Marbles, or Parthenon Sculptures, as they are more appropriately described. To my own surprise, I ended up discussing these on Radio 2 yesterday. I was on the side of their return, without conditions, and with a note of apology attached. I am not alone. This is [the result of a poll](#) on this issue taken in 2021:

The Parthenon Marbles are a collection of Ancient Greek sculptures that were removed from the Acropolis in Athens from 1801-12 (when Greece was ruled by the Ottoman Empire) and have been on display in the British Museum since 1817. The Greek government has requested their permanent return, but the British Museum has refused. Where do you believe the Parthenon Marbles belong?



The poll was of 7,717 people by YouGov. I think we can be pretty sure that Sunak has got this horribly wrong. Rowing with the Greek government over something about which most in the UK are clear we are in the wrong is really not a very good look.

He got his anti-green measures horribly wrong, too. After the Uxbridge by-election, he

thought that attacking the environment and being pro-motorist was the way to go. In light of the imminent COP28 summit, he is now desperately trying to repolish his green credentials. [As the Guardian reports:](#)

Rishi Sunak is to announce a new package of green measures as the Cop28 UN climate summit begins in Dubai, including a search for a national park, a strategy on British rainforests and landscape recovery projects with farmers.

But green groups have told the Guardian the package is greenwashing and an attempt by the UK prime minister to “reset” his reputation after previously opposing environmental measures.

The total package amounts to a few tens of millions, relatively widely spread. It is probably no more than the cost of shipping the UK delegation to COP28 when all the costs are taken into account. And some of the measures, like trying to fund another national park when those we have are woefully underfunded because of austerity, are just absurd.

More importantly, no one is going to be fooled. It is obvious that the government has backtracked on green issues. A little greenwashing will not help.

But there again, Labour is doing little better. It lost four councillors and its majority on Norwich City Council last night, with those leaving becoming independents. [As those leaving said:](#)

After long and careful consideration we have made the heartbreaking decision to leave the Labour Party and become independent councillors.

There are many reasons, but in essence we no longer consider the current national and local Labour Party matches the overriding principles that guide our work as Town Close councillors.

Most of those who left represented the ward referred to. What is clear is that they think the direction of Labour's travel is against the interests of those that they represent. The struggle to pretend otherwise has obviously got to them.

In each case, the message is clear: our political leadership is out of touch with people. There is no way that they deserve our support as a result.

And then people wonder why, as a country, we are in trouble.