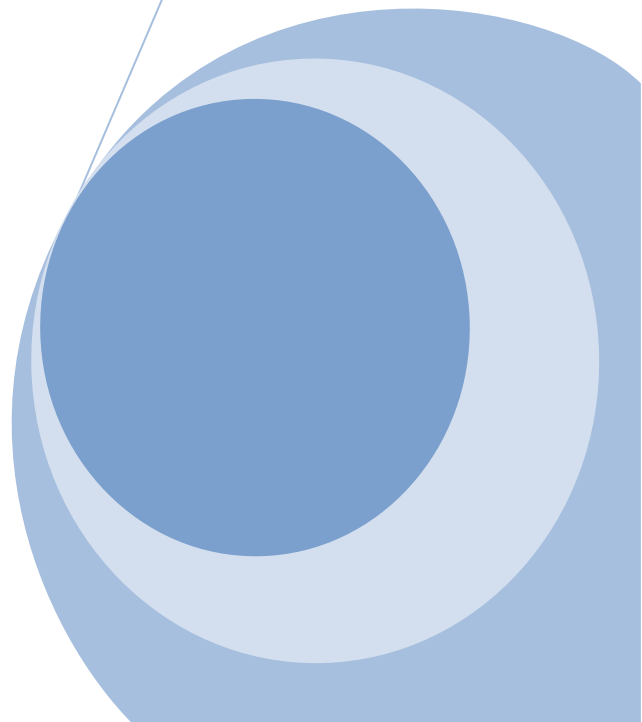


**THE PERFORMANCE OF  
FAR-RIGHT POLITICAL  
PARTIES  
IN THE MAY 2008  
LOCAL COUNCIL  
ELECTIONS**



**First edition by Dr Frank Reeves, REWM 2008**

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Waterhouse Consulting Group is a multi disciplinary management consultancy that brings together the UK's leading experts to deliver services in equalities & diversity, counter-extremism training, research and executive search.

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## **1 Introduction**

This report looks at the performance of the British National Party (BNP) and other far right political groupings<sup>1</sup> who contested local authority elections in the West Midlands on May 1st 2008. The performance of the BNP in the 2008 elections is compared with its performance in the previous local authority (council) elections in May 2007 and, where appropriate, 2006.

To assist in this analysis, the report:

- comments upon any national issues and accompanying media attention in the run up to the elections that may have influenced the BNP's performance.
- describes the areas where the elections took place in May 2008, the main results of the elections, and the national performance of the BNP, with a more detailed analysis of outcomes in the West Midlands.

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<sup>1</sup> Far right parties are defined as those political parties whose policies derive from an extreme nationalist, racist and authoritarian belief system.

## 2 Summary

Across the UK, the British National Party (BNP) fielded just over 600 candidates for elections in some 4080 seats to major authorities in England and Wales. The proportion of seats subject to election contested by the BNP was 15%.

In the local authority elections in England and Wales outside of Greater London the BNP received some 236,000 votes and an average 13.3% share of the votes cast in the electoral wards it contested. This was lower than the 14.6% average share of the vote it received in the wards it contested in the 2007 local authority elections. It was also lower than the 14.5% average share of the vote it received in the local authority by elections it contested in the twelve months preceding the May 2008 elections.

In the elections in Greater London for the position of Mayor and the London Assembly, part of the voting system and counting is by a form of proportional representation. Comparisons with elections in local authorities elsewhere which are held on a winner-takes-all system are not possible. In these elections, the BNP was successful in winning a seat on the London Assembly for the first time.

The number of seats held by the BNP on major local authorities after the elections was 55. It is a record number and represented a net gain of ten seats. The BNP won 13 seats and lost 3 seats that it was defending. The BNP now has councillors on twenty-two major local authorities.

In the local authority elections in the West Midlands, the BNP fielded 121 candidates. It contested 55% of the seats in the urban metropolitan local authorities and 50% of the seats in the urban unitary authority of Stoke on Trent. In the more rural/urban district council areas, the number of seats contested by the BNP was smaller (15%).

As a result of the May 2008 election, the number of BNP councillors in the West Midlands increased from 11 to 16 (a record number). The BNP gained 3 seats in Stoke and, for the first time, gained 2 seats on Nuneaton and Bedworth District Council. The BNP now has councillors serving on six major local authorities in the West Midlands.

Across the West Midlands, the BNP received 56,311 votes in elections to major local authorities. Its average share of the votes cast in the electoral wards it contested was 13.0% (almost identical to the national average). This was very similar to the 12.7% share of the vote it received in the wards it contested in the 2007 elections, but was less than the 15.8% share of the vote it obtained in the 2006 local authority elections.

The BNP's best performances in the West Midlands were in the district of Nuneaton and Bedworth, where it won two council seats for the first time, and in Stoke, where it gained three seats and now has nine councillors (it makes it the second largest BNP council group in the UK). The BNP vote, however, declined significantly in the metropolitan boroughs of Dudley and Sandwell, which had come to be seen as its traditional heartlands in the West Midlands.

### **3 What happened across the UK**

#### **Where the elections took place**

On May 1st 2008, there were elections to 138 local authorities (councils) in England and to all 22 major local authorities in Wales. More specifically, it comprised:

- Elections for seats in 36 metropolitan (urban) local authorities in Merseyside, Greater Manchester, South Yorkshire, Tyne and Wear, the West Midlands, and West Yorkshire. In these authorities, one third (815) of the council seats was subject to election.
- Elections in 22 unitary local authorities in Wales, consisting of some 1,262 seats. All seats were subject to election.
- Elections in 23 unitary authorities in England, consisting of some 675 seats. In 19 authorities, one third of the council seats was subject to election. In 4 authorities, all seats were subject to election as they were newly established authorities.
- Elections for seats in 78 district local authorities in England, consisting of some 1305 seats. In 67 authorities one third of the council seats was subject to election, in 7, half the seats was subject to election and, in 4, all the seats were subject to election due to boundary changes.
- Elections to the London Assembly for an Executive Mayor and 25 Assembly members<sup>2</sup>.

#### **The run up to the elections**

What makes the BNP (and for that matter far-right political parties) distinguishable from other mainstream political parties is its belief in the racial and cultural purity of Britain (which in its view means a white population and a Christian faith) and the primacy of Britain as a nation state. It is also these beliefs that attract some voters to the BNP as it seeks to exploit concerns people may have about the multi-racial nature of British society, levels of migration into the UK, and the inability of Britain to control its own destiny due to membership of the EEC and economic globalisation.

In the months running up to the May 2008 elections, there were no issues that attracted prolonged or significant media coverage and thus public attention where the BNP's stance on race and nationalism could be exploited for electoral advantage. There was no public outcry over levels of migration and applications for asylum from countries outside of Europe, violent crimes committed by migrants, or terrorist acts carried out by persons using the Muslim faith to support their actions. Instead, there

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<sup>2</sup> In the London Assembly member elections, 14 members are elected from constituencies where the winner is the candidate with most votes (first-past-the-post system). The other 11 members are elected on the proportion of votes that each party receives across London as a whole. It is known as the Modified d'Hondt Formula. For the Mayor elections, a candidate has to receive 50% or more of the total vote to win. If no candidate achieves this on first choice votes, then second choice votes are used to determine who wins. The top two candidates on first choice votes go through to a second round with the winner being the candidate who receives most votes after second choice votes are added to their first choice vote total.

were periodic news stories of such persons being tried before the courts and being convicted for attempts to organise acts of terrorism for which they were arrested before they could carry them out.

There was, however, increasing economic uncertainty underlying public concerns about levels of migration from Eastern European Common Market countries and its impact on public services. The almost daily news coverage of hostilities in the Middle East and the engagement of British forces in military activity in Afghanistan will again have reinforced in the minds of some sections of the public the inherent volatility of Muslim countries and the idea that Muslim communities provided a threat to the culture and way of life of the UK. The BNP, in its campaign material, always sought to exploit these concerns.

At the same time, however, the BNP was having its own internal difficulties. During the winter months of 2007/2008, an internal dispute erupted over the direction and running of the party. As always in such disputes, personality differences came to the surface, but there were also underlying concerns about the leadership and role of the party leader, Nick Griffin. It was followed up with calls from the protagonists for expulsions from the party. In the end some 60 national and local activists resigned or were expelled from the party. It included the party's sole councillor in Broxtowe, Sadie Graham, who saw her home raided by party security officials and her computer seized because it contained party material. As a result, Graham left the party to become an Independent councillor. In Bradford, it led to party activists breaking away to form a new party known as the Democratic Nationalists. The unrest did not affect all branches and, as the May elections approached, the feuding gradually petered out. Nevertheless, it undoubtedly adversely impacted upon the BNP's readiness to contest key target wards in some areas.

Coupled with this internal dispute, seven of the BNP's fifty councillors after the May 2007 elections either resigned or left the party. Four councillors (in Stoke, Sandwell, Calderdale and Broxtowe) became Independent councillors. Two other BNP councillors resigned (Epping and Havering) and one was disqualified for non attendance (Sandwell). In the subsequent by elections, the BNP held the seats in Epping and Havering, but lost a seat in Sandwell.

Another way in which the BNP has sought to build up public support is to contest and win local council by-elections held outside of established election dates as a result of vacancies for councillors arising from resignations or ill health. It was this approach that helped the BNP to start winning council seats in the major council elections that took place in 2003 and 2004. In the period between the council elections in May 2007 and April 2008:

- The BNP contested 55 council by-elections (26% of the total held). This was an increase on the 15% of council seat by elections it contested in the equivalent period between May 2006 and April 2007.
- The BNP's average share of the votes cast in the 55 seats it contested was 14.5%. This was slightly down on the 16% share of the vote it received in council by elections between May 2006 and April 2007.
- The BNP won just two of the 55 seats it contested. These were both seats which the BNP was defending following the resignation of sitting BNP councillors. The BNP did not win any seats from other parties and has not now done so in a council by election since September 2004.

- The BNP received over 20% of the votes cast in 24% of the seats it contested and thus, in theory, has a sufficient level of support to possibly win these seats in future elections.
- In the West Midlands, the BNP contested 10 council by elections. Its average share of the vote cast in these seats was 15.9%. The BNP did not win any of these elections and lost a seat it was defending in Sandwell following the disqualification of a sitting BNP councillor.

### **BNP policy in elections**

Like any political party contesting council elections, BNP will highlight local issues in its election leaflets. However, there is always an underlying message around race and the protection of Britain as an independent white-populated country. On immigration, the BNP's slogan is 'time to say enough'. It wants an immediate halt to immigration to the UK, the deportation of illegal immigrants, and the offering of money for voluntary resettlement to those immigrants who are legally here, so they can return to 'their lands of ethnic origin'. On education, the BNP slogan is 'discipline, standards and achievement'. It talks about ending 'politically-correct indoctrination' and restoring discipline in the classroom. It says 'we will seek to instil in our young people knowledge of and pride in the history, cultures and heritage of the native peoples of Britain'.

The BNP also has populist messages to feed people's concerns about economic issues and threats to their services. It refers to the export of jobs to the Third World bringing ruin and unemployment to British industries and calls for the selective exclusion of foreign-made goods from British markets and the reduction of foreign imports. On crime, it talks about a crack down and says the liberal fixation with the rights of criminals must be replaced by concerns for the rights of victims. On health, it says that no money should be given in foreign aid while our own hospitals are short of beds and the staff to run them.

In the elections in London for Mayor and the Assembly the BNP played upon people's concerns about the housing market by calling for 50% of all new housing to be council housing for rent, and for council housing to be awarded on the basis of time on the waiting list, rather than the current emphasis of allocating property based on housing need. The underlying message behind this approach to housing allocations was that social housing should be for people (essentially white) who had always lived in London, rather than more recent migrants.

### **BNP candidates**

The BNP contested some 619 seats in the May 2008 elections across the UK. Its slate consisted of:

- Candidates contesting 348 seats for elections to the urban metropolitan local authorities in England in the West Midlands, Merseyside, Greater Manchester, West Yorkshire, South Yorkshire and Tyne and Wear. The BNP had candidates contesting seats in all 36 metropolitan authorities. It contested around 43% of the seats subject to election.

- Candidates contesting 90 seats for elections to 13 unitary authorities in England. It contested around 13% of the total unitary authority seats subject to election.
- Candidates contesting 142 seats for elections to 33 district councils in England. It contested around 11% of the seats subject to election.
- Candidate for London Mayor and 11 candidates for election to the London Assembly.
- Candidates contesting 28 seats in 10 unitary local authorities in Wales. The BNP contested around 2% of the seats subject to election. The two main areas where the BNP fielded candidates were Conwy County and Wrexham in North Wales.

In the local authority elections in England the BNP contested all, or almost all, seats subject to election in the metropolitan urban authorities of Barnsley, Birmingham, Leeds, Kirklees (West Yorkshire) and Sunderland, in the unitary authorities of Thurrock and Southend-on-Sea in Essex and in the district authorities of Broxbourne and Basildon bordering the north-eastern side of Greater London. The BNP also contested 50% or more of the seats subject to election in such authorities as Gateshead, South Tyneside, Burnley, Calderdale (West Yorkshire), Wakefield, Solihull, Stoke, Sandwell, Nuneaton, and Epping Forest (Essex).

Comparisons between the number of BNP candidates (619) in the May 2008 elections with previous local elections is not straight forward as the number of local authorities holding elections in the previous year was different. For instance, in May 2007, the number of authorities holding elections and, thus, the number of seats to be contested was much higher (some 10,500 seats contested in 2007 compared with around 4080 in 2008). Comparisons are, however, possible:

- In 2008, the BNP contested some 15% of the seats subject to an election. This was an increase on the May 2007 elections when the BNP contested some 7.6% of the seats subject to election.
- In both the May 2008 and 2007 elections, the number of seats subject to election in the 36 urban metropolitan authorities was the same, i.e. 815. In 2008, the BNP contested 348 seats in all 36 authorities. In 2007, the BNP contested 363 seats in 35. This suggests a slight fall. However, the reduction is almost wholly due to a split in the BNP party in Bradford which resulted in it fielding fewer candidates. If the situation in Bradford is excluded, there was very little difference between 2007 and 2008 in the overall number of BNP candidates.

A major contributory factor in the increase in the proportion of seats being contested by the BNP in 2008 was that the authorities holding elections in 2008 were more concentrated in urban areas in England where the BNP is better organised. In 2007, a greater proportion of the authorities holding elections was in rural or semi-rural/urban areas and in Scotland, where the BNP historically is weaker.

### **The election results and BNP performance**

In the local authority (council) elections in England and Wales in May 2008, the share of the vote received by the various parties was: Conservatives 44%, Labour 24 %, Liberal Democrats 25%, and other parties 7% (includes BNP) . The change in these figures from the previous elections in 2007 was that the Conservative's share of the vote increased by 4%, the Labour Party's share declined by 3%, and the Liberal

Democrats declined by 1%. There was no change in the share of the vote received by other parties. In most local authorities, there was no change in the running of them from one political party to another. A relatively small number of local authorities did, however, move from no political party having control to the Conservatives being the majority party and, in a few cases, to the Liberal Democrats being the majority party.

The attention of political commentators and the media centred on the increasing share of the vote enjoyed by the Conservatives and the fall of the Labour Party into third place behind the Liberal Democrats in terms of share of votes cast. In particular, media attention was devoted to the Conservatives winning the election for the London Mayor. There was considerable media speculation around the elections results suggesting that Labour would lose the next general election to the Conservatives. Little media attention was devoted to the performance of the BNP.

### **Wales**

The BNP received 4,846 votes and its average share of the votes cast in the wards it contested was 11.6%. The BNP did not come close to winning any seat. It was in second place in just one ward where it received 24% of the votes cast.

### **England**

In the local authority elections outside of London, the BNP received some 231,000 votes. Its average share of the votes cast in the electoral wards it contested was 13.3%. This was lower than its 14.6% share of the votes cast in the electoral wards it contested in the May 2007 elections. A fuller comparison of the BNP's share of the vote in wards it contested in local authority elections since 2003 is set out in the table below<sup>3</sup>:

<b>BNP</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>
Average vote share	17%	16%	19%	14.6%	13.3%

This comparison suggests that in the last two local authority elections in 2007/2008 there has been a fall in the average share of the vote received by the BNP in electoral wards it has contested. Between 2003 and 2006 it was between 16% and 19%. Since then it has been in the 14/13% range.

In the elections in Greater London for Mayor and the 25 seats in the London Assembly, the BNP's candidate for Mayor (Richard Barnbrook) received 69,710 first choice votes (2.89% share of the votes cast) and was in fifth place behind the three mainstream parties and the Green party. In the elections to the 25-seat London Assembly, the BNP won a seat for the first time in the London-wide members section. Under the form of proportional representation used for the election of these members, the BNP received 130,714 votes (5.4% share of votes cast) which was just above the 5% share mark required to win a seat. The BNP performance in the Mayor elections was almost identical to the previous elections in 2004. In the London-wide election to

<sup>3</sup> The 2005 elections to local authorities are excluded as the BNP contested very few seats as the elections were mainly for county council in largely semi urban/ rural areas.

the Assembly, the BNP's share of the vote was slightly up from the 4.7% vote share it received in the 2004 elections. It was, however, enough to give the BNP a seat in the Assembly (the successful BNP candidate being Richard Barnbrook, who was also candidate for Mayor, and is the leader of the BNP group on Barking and Dagenham council). One of the features of the London elections was the fall in the vote for the nationalist United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP). In the 2004 elections, it had two members elected to the London wide member section of the Assembly, with a vote share of 8.2%. In 2008, it lost both of these seats with its vote share falling to 1.9%.

In terms of council seats, the BNP in May 2008 won 13 new seats and lost 3 seats it was defending (a net gain of ten seats). This gave it a total of fifty-five councillors in twenty-two major local authorities. It constituted a net gain of ten seats. The local authorities where the BNP has councillors and the net changes in seats as a result of the 2008 elections are set out below:

<b>London</b>		<b>East Midlands</b>	
Barking & Dagenham	12 (no election)	Amber Valley	2 (gain 2)
Havering	1 (no election)	N.W Leicestershire	2 (no election)
London Assembly	1 (gain 1)	Charnwood	1 (no election)
Redbridge	1 (no election)		
<b>Eastern</b>		<b>North West</b>	
Epping Forest	4 (lose 2)	Burnley	4 (no change)
Three Rivers	1 (gain 1)	Pendle	2 (gain 1)
<b>West Midlands</b>		<b>Yorkshire</b>	
Nuneaton /Bedworth	2 (gain2)	Bradford	2 (no change)
Redditch	1 (no change)	Calderdale	1 (gain1)
Sandwell	2 (no change)	Kirklees	2 (lose 1)
Solihull	1 (no change)	Leeds	1 (no change)
Stoke on Trent	9 (gain 3)	Rotherham	2 (gain 2)
Staffordshire	1 (no election)		
Moorlands			

In addition to the BNP's 55 councillors, there are two far-right party councillors from the England First Party (EFP) who are members of Blackburn unitary authority. They were first elected in 2006 and there was no change in the number of far-right councillors in Blackburn in the 2008 elections. The BNP also saw some of its candidates in minor authority Town and Parish councils (Community Councils in Wales) win seats (some of its candidates were elected unopposed as seats for these minor authorities are not always contested). This has led the BNP to claim that it now 'holds 100 seats for the first time ever'.

In the local authority elections there was again a pattern of the BNP polling more votes than smaller far-right parties (e g National Front, England First Party). In the small number of wards contested by both the BNP and a small far-right party, the BNP invariably received more votes. In those areas where there were both BNP candidates and candidates from the more moderate but nationalist party, UKIP, the

BNP often polled more votes than UKIP<sup>4</sup>. UKIP can compete with the BNP for votes from electors with similar views. The pattern of the BNP out-polling UKIP was also a feature of the local authority elections in 2006 and 2007.

In the approach to the May 2008 elections, there were some 70 electoral wards that the BNP was again contesting which it could win on a swing of less than 10%. There were also a dozen other wards which the BNP was contesting for the first time where the social economic profile of the ward and the campaigning activity the BNP was undertaking made a win possible. Most of these wards had historically been held by councillors from the Labour Party. However, by May 2008, the Labour Party was on the electoral defensive owing to the relative unpopularity of the Labour Government. This background led some commentators talking about the BNP, to predict it would gain up to 40 seats in local authorities outside of London, plus up to 3 seats on the London Assembly.

In the event, the BNP made a net gain of 10 seats which was less than it probably expected. It won 13 seats (mostly from Labour) but lost 3 seats in wards where it had previously had councillors elected and was defending. (The BNP lost two seats in Epping District Council and one seat in Kirklees West Yorkshire.) The BNP did, however, make a breakthrough for the first time in Rotherham, Nuneaton, and Amber Valley (East Midlands) where it had two councillors elected to each authority. It also increased the size of the BNP council group in Stoke to nine councillors. As a result, it is now the second largest BNP council group in the UK after Barking and Dagenham.

The BNP win which attracted most media and thus public attention was the seat it won on the London Assembly. The BNP, however, was only just successful, with a vote share of 5.3% which was just above the 5% barrier needed to win a seat, and only 0.6% higher than its share of the vote in the previous election in 2004. It was helped to win the seat by the relatively strong minority vote it received in the outer London boroughs in North East/East London of Havering, and Barking and Dagenham. The successful BNP candidate (Richard Barnbrook) was quoted by BBC News as saying “He would stand up for Londoners regardless of their colour or identity”. It is a statement that could be made by a politician from any mainstream political party. However, he then went on to show his and the BNP’s antipathy towards a multi cultural society and ethnic minority groups by saying “This is Britain, it is for the British people...it is not for people to enter into this land dictating what will or will not happen to the people that created it and built it over generations”. He also added “If this city of ours is so great in its multi culturalism and its diversity, why is it that a small minority (this is a reference to ethnic minority communities) get a large proportion of the finance paid... by the majority that fund this city”.

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<sup>4</sup> There was an exception to this trend in the West Midlands borough of Dudley where UKIP’s performance was better than the BNP’s. It is discussed in the next chapter.

#### 4 What happened in the West Midlands

On May 1<sup>st</sup> 2008, elections took place in 18 local authorities in the West Midlands. The authorities were the seven metropolitan urban boroughs of the former West Midlands Metropolitan County Council, the unitary authority of Stoke on Trent, and ten district authorities in the counties of Staffordshire Warwickshire and Worcestershire. Generally, elections were held for one third of the council seats.

Prior to these elections, the only far-right political party with local authority councillors was the BNP. It had a total of eleven councillors in five different local authorities. The BNP fielded 121 candidates for seats in 15 local authorities, out of a total of 326 seats subject to election in the local authorities. The breakdown by type of authority where the BNP contested seats was:

- Seven Metropolitan Boroughs: BNP contested 90 seats (55% of total) in all seven authorities out of the 163 seats subject to election.
- One Unitary Authority (Stoke on Trent): BNP contested 10 seats (50% of total).
- Seven District Authorities: BNP contested 21 seats (14.7% of total) in seven of the ten district authorities holding elections.

The number of candidates fielded by the BNP (121) in the West Midlands was a small increase on the 114 candidates it fielded when these authorities last held elections in May 2007 and, in one instance, May 2006. There was an increase in the number of BNP candidates standing in Solihull and in the district council of Nuneaton and Bedworth. The BNP contested 12 seats in this district council compared with none when the council last held elections in 2006. There were, however, smaller numbers of BNP candidates contesting seats in the urban boroughs of Walsall, Wolverhampton, Sandwell, and Coventry.

Across the West Midlands, the BNP received some 56,300 votes and its average share of the votes cast in the seats it contested was 13.0%. The BNP won a further three seats in Stoke to give it a total of nine councillors, and won two seats for the first time on the district council of Nuneaton and Bedworth. No other BNP candidates were successful in winning seats. Out of the 121 BNP candidates just 5 (4%) won seats. As a result of the elections, the BNP now has sixteen councillors serving in six local authorities in the West Midlands, which is an increase of five.

The BNP's performance in the May 2008 elections across the West Midlands when compared with the local authority elections held in May 2007 and 2006 shows:

	<b>2008</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2006</b>
No. of candidates elected	5	4	8
No. of authorities elected to	2	2	4
Average vote share in contested wards	13.0%	12.7%	15.8%

In the 2008 elections, the BNP's performance across the West Midlands was similar to the elections in 2007 and its average share of vote cast in the electoral wards it contested was almost identical to the national average obtained by the BNP. However, it was less than the 15.9% share of the vote it was receiving in local authority by-elections it contested in the twelve months preceding the May 2008 elections. The BNP achieved a major breakthrough in Nuneaton and Bedworth where it obtained a quarter of the votes cast and won two seats. The BNP also showed that in certain areas of Stoke it had a significant vote and could win council seats. There was, however, a significant decline in the BNP's vote in the urban authorities of Dudley and Sandwell where in recent years the BNP has had councillors elected.

The BNP's 16 councillors in the West Midlands constitute the highest number of councillors it has ever had in the region. The BNP's overall performance in the 2008 elections was not as good as in 2006 when its average share of the vote was higher and it won eight seats. The next major elections in urban areas in the West Midlands will be in 2010 when the BNP will be defending seats it won in 2006. It will have to improve on its performance in 2008 if it is to hold some of these seats.

The only other far-right party to contest seats in the May 2008 elections in the West Midlands was the National Front (NF). It contested four wards in Birmingham. It did not come remotely close to winning any seats and the number of votes it received was significantly less than the BNP's.

## 5 Metropolitan Urban Authorities

### Birmingham

There are 40 electoral wards in Birmingham which elect three councillors for each ward to form a total of 120 councillors on the City Council. In the May 2008 elections one third of the 120 council seats (40, or one in each ward) was subject to election. Prior to the election, the City Council had been run by a joint Conservative/Liberal Democrat party administration, with Labour as the main opposition party. The result of the election was that the Conservatives gained six seats, the Labour party lost six seats, the Respect party gained one seat, and the Independents lost one seat. It produced a political composition of 49 Conservative councillors, 36 Labour councillors, 32 Liberal Democrat councillors and 3 Respect councillors. There was no change in the political control of the authority.

In the May 2008 elections, the BNP contested all 40 seats i.e. every electoral ward that was subject to election. The BNP did the same in the May 2007 and May 2006 council elections. The BNP's performance in the 2008 elections, compared to the 2007 and 2006 elections, was as follows:

	<b>2008</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2006</b>
Seats contested	40	40	40
Total Vote	16,048	19,475	29,045
Average vote per ward	401	487	726
Average share of vote	7.1%	7.7%	11.1%
No. of wards where it received more than 20% of vote	1	1	5

In the May 2008 elections, the BNP did not come close to winning any council seat and it did not achieve second place in any electoral ward. Its performance was slightly down on 2007 and significantly worse than in the 2006 elections. The BNP's best result was again in the Shard End ward where it received 999 votes and 23.6% of the votes cast. It was, however, in third place and 753 votes behind the winning Labour candidate.

In the 2001 census, the ethnic make up of the population of Birmingham was 70.4% white and 29.6% ethnic minority (primarily Asian and Black Caribbean). When a comparison is made between the ethnic make up of the population in electoral wards and the votes received by the BNP it is found:

- In the 21 electoral wards where the population is largely white (over 85%), the BNP's average share of the vote was 10.0%

- In the 10 electoral wards where the population was more multi racial (white population between 50% and 85% and ethnic minority population between 50% and 15%) the BNP's average share of the vote was 6.1%.
- In the 9 electoral wards where the ethnic minority population formed the majority (over 50%) of the population the BNP's average share of the vote was 2.4%.

The BNP clearly does less well in areas which are multi racial or which have significant ethnic minority populations. It does best in areas (electoral wards) with largely white populations. A similar pattern was found in the 2007 and 2006 council elections. There is also some indication in these largely white electoral wards that the BNP receives a higher vote where the population is more lower-middle or working class. In May 2008, the BNP's average share of the vote in more middle-class wards was 7.5%, whereas its share of the vote in the more lower-middle or working-class wards was 13.2 %.<sup>5</sup> There was a similar pattern in the 2007 and 2006 elections.

The National Front contested four wards with a party title on ballot papers saying 'National Front Britain for the British'. It came bottom of the poll in all four wards, with an average vote per ward of 66 votes and a 1.4% share of the votes cast. It received significantly less votes than the BNP. The National Front's poor performance was worse than in 2007 when its average vote in the two wards it contested was 127.

## Coventry

There are eighteen electoral wards in Coventry. Each elects three councillors to form a total of 54 councillors on the City Council. In the May 2007 election, one third of the council seats (18, or one in each ward) was subject to election. Prior to the election, the local authority had been run for two years by the Conservatives, with the Labour party as the main opposition. The result of the election was that the Conservatives suffered a net loss of one seat to Labour. It produced a political composition of 27 Conservative councillors, 24 Labour councillors, 1 Liberal Democrat councillor and 2 Socialist councillors. The political control of the authority changed from Conservative to no one political party having control.

In the May 2008 elections, the BNP contested 13 (72%) of the council wards or seats that were subject to election. This was a reduction from the 16 seats it contested in the 2007 elections. The BNP's performance in the 2008 elections compared with the 2007 elections was as follows.

	<b>2008</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>Change</b>
Seats contested	13	16	-3
Total votes	5,535	6,002	-467
Average vote per ward	426	375	-51
Average vote share	11.1%	9.5%	+1.6%

<sup>5</sup> The wards classified from local knowledge as middle class were Bartley Green, Billesley, Bournville, Brandwood, Kings Norton, Quinton, Sutton Four Oaks, Sutton New Hall, Sutton Trinity, Sutton Vesey and Weoley. The wards classified as lower middle/working class were Erdington, Hodge Hill, Kingstanding, Longbridge, Oscott, Northfield, Shard End, Sheldon, Stechford and Yardley North and Tyburn.

The 13 wards contested by the BNP in 2008 were also contested by it in the 2007 elections. In these wards in 2007 the BNP's average share of the vote was 10.9%.

Six electoral wards were contested by the BNP in the three successive elections in 2006, 2007 and 2008. Comparisons of the BNP's performance in these six electoral wards is shown below:

	<b>2008</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2006</b>
Average vote per ward	470	478	540
Average share of vote	12.6%	12.6%	13.7%

The BNP has contested the majority of electoral wards in Coventry in both the 2007 and 2008 elections. It has not come close to winning any seats. Whilst the BNP's overall performance in 2008 was slightly better than in 2007, comparison of the BNP's performance with electoral wards it had fought in 2007, and also in 2006, shows it is in a static position. There is a solid BNP vote of between 10% and 13%. However, the BNP has not been able to improve on this in any electoral ward and thus put itself in a position where it can seriously challenge and win seats.

## **Dudley**

There are 24 electoral wards in Dudley which each elects three Councillors to form a total of 72 councillors on the borough council. In the May 2008 election, one third of the council seats (24, or one in each ward) was subject to election. Since the 2004 local council election, the authority has been run by the Conservatives, with the Labour party as the main opposition. The result of the election was that the Conservatives gained four seats and the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP) one seat at the expense of Labour who lost two seats and the Liberal Democrats who lost three seats. It produced a political composition of 43 Conservative councillors, 26 Labour councillors, 2 Liberal Democrat councillors, and 1 UKIP councillor.

There is a history of far-right and nationalist parties being active in Dudley. In the 2005 General Election, the BNP obtained almost 10% of the vote in the Dudley North constituency and, in 2003, the BNP had a councillor elected in the area for a year. Between the 2006 and 2007 local elections, the local authority had to deal with a planning application to build a Mosque and associated community facilities on a derelict site in the centre of Dudley. It became a controversial planning application with a large public petition (estimated to contain 22,000 signatures) being organised (actively supported by UKIP and the BNP) against the proposal. The authority rejected the planning application. However, the legacy surrounding the mosque planning application continued into the 2008 elections with the far right and nationalist parties alleging that there were still secret plans to approve the building of the mosque. The victorious UKIP candidate in the St. James ward in his election leaflets alleged that a 'Mega Mosque will be forced on Dudley' if Labour and the Liberal Democrats came to control the council. The same UKIP leaflets stated 'Any community building on any mosque site could never meet the needs of our Christian society'.

In the May 2008 elections, the BNP contested ten (42%) of the twenty four seats or electoral wards that were subject to election. This was the same number of wards as in the 2007 elections. The BNP's performance in the 2008 elections compared with the 2007 elections was as follows:

	<b>2008</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>Change</b>
Seats contested	10	10	None
Total vote	5,047	6,601	-1554
Average vote per ward	505	660	-155
Average share of vote	14.3%	18.5%	-4.2%

Eight of the ten of the electoral wards contested by the BNP in 2008 were also contested by it in the 2007 elections. Comparisons of the BNP's performance in the eight electoral wards it contested in both the 2008 and 2007 council elections shows:

	<b>2008</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>Change</b>
Average vote per ward	531	690	-159
Average share of vote	15.8%	19.2%	-3.4%

For the second successive year, the BNP's share of the votes cast in the electoral wards it contested fell. In the 2006 elections the BNP received just over a quarter of the votes cast (26.8%) in the wards it contested. It is now down to a vote share of 15.8%. This poorer BNP performance also meant that in 2008 it was not in second place in any ward it contested, whereas in 2007 it came second in two wards.

UKIP can compete with the BNP for electors' votes and can convey similar messages to the electorate. In the May 2008 elections, UKIP contested 21 of the 24 electoral wards, won one seat and received an average vote per ward of 571 and an average share of 16.2% of the votes cast in the wards it contested. In seven wards, UKIP was in competition with the BNP. It polled more votes than the BNP in three wards, whereas in the previous elections in May 2007 it had received more votes than the BNP in only one ward. All these indices show that UKIP's performance was better than the BNP's.

The BNP vote in Dudley in successive local elections is in decline. Following the 2008 elections, it cannot be said to be well placed to win elections in any ward. It also suffered in 2008 from a stronger performance by UKIP candidates.

## **Sandwell**

There are 24 electoral wards in Sandwell. Each elects three councillors to form a total of 72 councillors on the borough council. In the May 2008 elections, one third of the council seats (24, or one in each ward) was subject to election. Historically, Sandwell has been run by the Labour party which usually has a significant majority over all opposition parties. The result of the election was that the Conservatives gained three seats and the Labour Party lost three seats. It produced a political composition of 49

Labour councillors, 14 Conservative councillors, 5 Liberal Democrat councillors, 2 Independents and 2 BNP councillors. There was no change in political control of the council.

Far-right political parties (primarily the BNP) have been politically active in Sandwell for a number of years. In the 2003 local elections, the BNP gained its first seats on the council and in the 2006 council elections the BNP gained three seats to increase its total number of Councillors to four. In the 2005 General Election the BNP contested all three parliamentary seats in the borough. Its best result was in the West Bromwich West constituency where its share of the vote was 10%.

Following the May 2007 elections, the BNP council group experienced a number of problems. In August, one of its councillors (Simon Smith) left the BNP to become an Independent. In October, another BNP councillor (James Lloyd in the Princess End ward) was disqualified for non attendance at council meetings. In the subsequent by election in December 2007, the BNP lost the seat to the winning Labour candidate. The BNP's share of the votes cast fell significantly. It was 19.0% compared to 34.9% when the seat had been contested in the May 2007 elections.

In the May 2008 elections, the BNP contested 12 (50%) of the 24 council seats or electoral wards that were subject to election. This was a reduction on the 15 seats it contested in 2007. The BNP's performance in the 2008 elections compared with the 2007 elections was as follows:

	<b>2008</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>Change</b>
Seats contested	12	15	-3
Total votes	5,755	11,646	-5,891
Average vote per ward	480	776	-296
Average share of vote	17.1%	24.5%	-7.4%
Seats won	Nil	Nil	No change

The BNP contested the same 11 wards in both the 2008 and 2007 elections. Comparison of the BNP's performance in these eleven wards between 2007 and 2008 shows:

	<b>2008</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>Change</b>
Average vote per ward	488	817	-329
Average share of vote	17.7%	25.5%	-7.8%

The BNP's performance in the May 2008 elections in Sandwell was poor when compared with its performances in the previous elections in 2007 and 2006 (the BNP's average share of the vote in the wards it contested in 2006 was 33%). The BNP did not come close to winning any council seat in the 2008 election. It came second in only one ward (Great Bridge) but was still 230 votes behind the winning Labour candidate. The BNP had won this ward in 2006 with 45.4% of the votes cast. However, in May 2008, it only received 26.1% of the votes cast. A further example of the BNP's decline was in the Tividale ward. The BNP had won this ward in 2006,

receiving 37% of the votes cast. Although it did not win the ward in the 2007 elections it was still in second place with almost 30% of the votes cast. However, in the 2008 elections, the BNP did not even contest the seat.

On the basis of the BNP's performance in the 2008 elections it is unlikely to hold its two existing seats on the council when the next elections take place in 2010.

## Solihull

There are 17 electoral wards in Solihull. Each elects three councillors to form a total of 51 councillors on the borough council. In the May 2008 elections, one third of the council seats (17, or one in each ward) was subject to election. Prior to the election no party had a majority of council seats, although the Conservatives were the largest group. The result of the election was that the Conservatives gained one seat, the Greens gained one seat, and Labour lost two seats. It produced a political composition of 26 Conservative councillors, 18 Liberal Democrat councillors, 5 Labour councillors, 1 Green councillor, and 1 BNP councillor. The Conservatives regained political control of the council with a majority of one seat over all other parties.

In the May 2006 elections, the BNP had won its first seat on the council in the Chelmsley Wood ward. In the 2008 elections, the BNP contested 12 electoral wards compared with five wards in the 2007 elections. The BNP's performance in the 2008 elections compared with the 2007 elections was as follows:

	<b>2008</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>Change</b>
Seats contested	12 (71% of total)	5 (29% of total)	+7
Total vote	5,068	2,473	+2,595
Average vote per ward	422	495	-73
Average share of vote	12.6%	14.6%	-2.0%

A comparison of the BNP's performance in the five electoral wards it contested in both the 2008 and 2007 elections shows:

	<b>2008</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>Change</b>
Average Vote Per Ward	506	495	+11
Average Share Of Vote	15.6%	14.6%	+1.0%

In the 2008 election, there was a significant increase in the number of electoral wards contested by the BNP. Overall, its performance was slightly worse than in 2007 and it did not come close to winning any seats. In the Chelmsley Wood ward which the BNP narrowly won in 2006 with a 33% share of the votes cast, the BNP's share of the vote by 2008 had fallen to 26.2%. It was 133 votes behind the winning Labour candidate.

There is a relatively small minority of the electorate in Solihull that is attracted to vote for the BNP. However, the results of both the 2007 and 2008 elections suggest that it does not lead to the BNP winning any council seat and, if this pattern is

repeated again in the next council elections in 2010, the BNP will lose its only council seat in Chelmsley Wood.

## **Walsall**

There are 20 electoral wards in Walsall which each elects three councillors to form a total of 60 councillors on the borough council. In the May 2008 elections, one third of the council seats (20 or one in each ward) was subject to election. Prior to the election, the Conservatives had run the authority since 2004, with the Labour Party as the main opposition. The result of the election was that there was no net change in the number of seats held by the political parties represented on the authority. It produced a political composition of 33 Conservative councillors, 18 Labour councillors, 6 Liberal Democrat councillors, and 3 Independent councillors. There was no change in the political control of the council.

In recent years, Walsall has experienced some targeting by the BNP in elections. It first became apparent in 2003 when the BNP achieved 26.1% of the vote in a council by election and came a relatively close second to the winning Conservative party candidate. In the 2005 General Election, the BNP received 6% of the vote in the Walsall North parliamentary constituency, which was one of its better performances in the West Midlands. In the 2006 council elections, the BNP received an average of 700 votes in the seven electoral wards it contested. This suggested that there was a minority of the electorate in Walsall who were consistently voting for far right parties like the BNP. However, the number of BNP candidates fell to just four in the 2007 elections and, by 2008, they had just one candidate in one ward (Short Heath).

	<b>2008</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>Change</b>
Seats contested	1	4 (20% of all seats)	-3
Total vote	436	2123	-1687
Average vote per ward	436	531	-95
Average share of vote	17.6%	16.7%	+0.9%

In the one ward in the 2008 elections contested by the BNP, its performance showed no change from when it had previously contested the ward in the 2007 elections. The BNP is not coming close to winning any ward on Walsall Council and the number of wards it is contesting shows a steady decline.

## **Wolverhampton**

There are 20 electoral wards in Wolverhampton. Each elects three councillors to make a total of 60 councillors on the borough council. In the May 2008 elections, one third of the council seats (20, or one in each ward) was subject to election. For a considerable period, Wolverhampton has been run by the Labour Party. The result of the election was that the Conservative Party gained eight seats and the Liberal Democrats one seat. It produced a political party composition of 28 Labour councillors, 27 Conservative councillors and 5 Liberal Democrat councillors. The

political control of the Council changed from Labour to no political party having control.

In the 2008 elections, the BNP contested just two, or 10%, of the electoral wards. This was a reduction on the six wards they contested in the 2007 elections. The BNP's performance in the May 2008 elections can be most accurately compared with its performance in the 2007 elections by looking at the two wards it fought in both the 2007 and 2008 elections. This is set out in the table below:

	<b>2008</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>Change</b>
Average total vote in two wards	579	817	-238
Average share of vote in two wards	15.7%	22.5%	-6.8%

The BNP contested elections in 2008 in the two wards where it obtained its best results in the 2007 elections. It did not come close to winning either ward and was in third place. Both wards were won by the Conservative Party from Labour. The votes cast for the BNP and its share of the total vote in both wards was less in 2008, compared with 2007.

## **6 Unitary Authorities**

In the May 2008 elections for the one unitary authority holding elections in the West Midlands, the BNP again concentrated on the urban authority of Stoke on Trent.

### **Stoke on Trent**

The authority has an elected executive mayor and 60 councillors, consisting of three councillors for each of the 20 electoral wards. In May 2008, elections took place for one third of the councillors. It meant elections for one councillor in each of the twenty electoral wards.

Prior to the May 2008 election, no political party had a majority of councillors on the authority. The Labour Party was the largest group and the executive mayor also came from the Labour Party. The result of the election was that the Labour Party lost 7 seats, the BNP gained 3 seats, the Independents gained 3 seats, and the Liberal Democrats one seat. It produced a political composition of 17 Labour councillors, 19 Independent councillors, 9 BNP councillors, 9 Conservative councillors, and 6 Liberal Democrat councillors. There was no change in the party political administration of the council.

Stoke has been a key target for the BNP in elections in recent years. The potential electoral support for the BNP first became apparent in 2002, when it received over 8,000 votes (or 18.7% of the votes cast) in the first election in Stoke for an executive mayor. In elections for councillors to the authority in 2003 and 2004, the BNP won the Longton North ward (a ward with an almost exclusively white population and a large social housing estate). In the 2005 general election, the BNP contested all three parliamentary seats in Stoke and received 7615 votes, or 7.9% of the votes cast. It was one of the BNP's best electoral performances in the UK. On the same day, elections were also held for a new executive mayor. The BNP received 15,776 votes or 19% of the votes cast. It showed stronger support for the BNP in local council elections than in parliamentary elections.

In the May 2006 council elections, the BNP gained three seats in new wards to give it a group on the authority of 5 councillors. In the 2007 elections, the BNP won the same three wards, but lost a sitting councillor in the Longton North ward. This gave it a group of seven councillors. However, shortly after the elections, the remaining BNP councillor, Mark Leat, in the Longton North ward, left the BNP group and became an Independent. Mark Leat contested the same ward in the May 2008 elections as an Independent, as did the BNP.

In the 2008 elections, the BNP contested 10 electoral wards. This was the same number of wards as in the 2007 elections. The BNP's performance in the 2008 council elections, compared with the 2007 elections, was as follows:

	<b>2008</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>Change</b>
Seats contested	10	10 (50% of total)	None
Total vote	8,557 <sup>6</sup>	8,356	+201
Average vote per ward	856	836	+20
Average vote share	28.4%	27.4%	+1.0%
Seats won	3	3	No change
Seats lost	0	1	

The three wards won by the BNP were Abbey Green (majority of 74 votes), Bentilee and Townsend (majority of 209 votes) and Meir Park and Sandon (majority of 70 votes). The BNP now has all three councillors in the Abbey Green, and Bentilee and Townsend wards, having won these wards in the two previous elections in 2006 and 2007. The BNP did not win the Weston and Meir North ward, which it had won in the 2006 and 2007 elections. It was in second place with 76 less votes than the winning Conservative candidate. In the Longton North ward, which was the first ward to elect BNP councillors in Stoke, the Labour Party gained the third seat from the sitting Independent, but former BNP councillor, Mark Leat. However, if the votes for the BNP candidate and Mark Leat are combined, they secured 417 more votes than the winning Labour candidate.

The BNP contested eight electoral wards in both the 2008 and 2007 elections to the local authority. A comparison of the BNP's performance in these eight wards is set out below.

	<b>2008</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>Change</b>
Average vote per ward	999	905	+94
Average share of vote	29.0%	29.1%	-0.1%

The BNP's performance in Stoke in the 2008 elections was very similar to its performance in the previous 2007 elections. It gained three more council seats and its average share of the vote was similar to that obtained in 2007. The size of the BNP council group in Stoke now makes it the second largest BNP council group in the UK. The BNP continues to demonstrate in Stoke that in certain areas it can attract over a quarter of the vote in local authority elections, and in so doing, win council seats.

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<sup>6</sup> The figures include for the Longton North ward the combined votes for the Independent candidate (formerly BNP) and the BNP candidate as this reflects more accurately the votes for the BNP in the ward.

## **7 District Authorities**

Ten district local authorities in the counties of Staffordshire, Warwickshire and Worcestershire held elections on May 1st 2008: 143 seats in these authorities were subject to election. Generally, one third of council seats was up for election. The BNP contested twenty one seats (14.7% of total) in seven of the district authorities. The BNP's performance is set out below.

### ***Staffordshire***

#### **Cannock Chase**

In Cannock Chase the BNP contested one electoral ward (Norton Canes) out of the thirteen wards holding elections. It received 368 votes, which represented 22.1% of the votes cast. It came third behind the winning Conservative candidate and the second place Labour candidate. In the 2007 elections, the BNP contested the same electoral ward and its share of the votes cast was 23.9%. The BNP are not coming close to winning this ward and in 2008 its performance was slightly worse than in 2007.

#### **Tamworth**

In Tamworth, the BNP contested one electoral ward (Stoneydelph) out of the ten wards holding elections. It received 293 votes, which represented 20.3% of the votes cast. It came third behind the winning Conservative candidate and the second-place Labour candidate. In the 2007 elections, the BNP contested the same ward and its share of the votes cast was 25.1%. The BNP is not coming close to winning this ward, and its performance in the 2008 elections was worse than in 2007.

### ***Warwickshire***

#### **Daventry**

The BNP contested one electoral ward (Drayton) out of the 13 wards holding elections. It received 451 votes, which represented 31.2% of the votes cast. The BNP came second to the winning Conservative candidate who received 45.3% of the votes cast. There is no recent history of the BNP contesting seats in this district. Its performance in the one ward they did contest was credible and suggests it has some support.

#### **Nuneaton and Bedworth**

The authority has 34 seats. Elections are held every two years for half the seats (17). Prior to the May 2008 elections, the Labour party had 20 seats and the Conservatives 14. Since the authority's inception in 1973, political control of the authority had always rested with the Labour party. The result of the election was that the Labour party lost six seats. Four of the seats were won by the Conservatives and two by the BNP. It produced a political composition of 18 Conservative councillors, 14 Labour

councillors and 2 BNP councillors. The political control of the authority for the first time in its history passed to the Conservatives.

The BNP did not contest the Nuneaton parliamentary seat at the 2005 general election and neither did it contest any seats in the previous elections to the district in 2006. One of the first signs that the BNP could attract electoral support in the district came in a by election in June 2007 in the Slough ward. The BNP came second with 582 votes and a respectable 27.3% share of the votes cast. In September 2007 there was a further by election in the Abbey ward. The BNP again came second with, 457 votes and a 21.5% share of the votes cast.

In the May 2008 elections, the BNP contested 12 (70%) of the 17 seats subject to election. The BNP performance is set out below:

<b>Total Vote</b>	<b>Average vote per ward</b>	<b>Average Share of Vote</b>	<b>No. Seats Won</b>	<b>No. Seats came 2nd</b>
5,948	496	24.7%	2	2

The elections to the local authority produced a major breakthrough for the BNP. With no recent history of electoral campaigning in the district, the BNP won two seats in the wards of Barpool (majority 13) and Camp Hill (majority 113). Both seats were gained from Labour. The BNP was also just 16 votes short of winning a third seat in the Bede ward. The BNP's share of the vote was 20% or more in eight of the twelve seats it contested. This suggests it is well placed to contest further seats in the authority in the next elections in 2010.

The only slight disappointment for the BNP was that it failed to build upon its impressive performances in 2007 in the by elections in the Abbey and Slough wards. In the Abbey ward, the BNP vote was less than it was in the by election, and in the Slough ward, the BNP's vote was almost the same as in the by election.

### **Rugby**

The BNP contested one electoral ward (Lawford and Kings Newham) out of the 16 wards holding elections. The BNP received 189 votes which represented 16.2% of the votes cast. The BNP was in third place behind the winning Conservative candidate and an Independent candidate in second place.

### ***Worcestershire***

#### **Redditch**

In Redditch, the BNP contested one electoral ward (Winyates) out of the nine wards holding elections. The BNP received 549 votes, which represented 22.0% of the votes cast. The BNP were in third place behind the winning Liberal Democrat candidate with the Conservative candidate in second place.

In the council elections in 2006, the BNP won a seat on Redditch Council for the first time in the Winyates ward (it received 806 votes, which represented 31.4% of the votes cast). It fought the ward again 2007, but came third with 600 votes and 21.6% of the votes cast. The BNP also fought two other wards in the 2007 elections. Whilst not successful, it obtained over 20% of the votes cast in each ward.

In 2008, the BNP fought fewer wards than in 2007 and its performance in the one ward did contest and where it had a sitting councillor was no different from 2007. It did not come close to winning the seat. The BNP's performance in the Winyates ward in 2007 and 2008 suggests it will lose their sitting councillor when it has to defend the seat at the next elections in 2010.

## **Worcester**

In Worcester, the BNP contested four out of the twelve electoral wards holding elections. In the previous 2007 elections, the BNP contested three wards.

The BNP did not come close to winning any of the wards it contested, although in one ward (Gorse Hill). They came second, with a 24.8 % share of the votes cast. The average number of votes cast for the BNP in the four wards they contested was 225 which represented an average 12.8% share of the votes cast.

The BNP contested two wards in both the 2007 and 2008 elections. In one ward (Nunnery) its share of the votes cast in 2008 was slightly better than in 2007, whereas in the other ward (St Clement), the BNP's share of the vote in 2008 was 50% lower than in 2007.