

Jeremy Corbyn on course for Downing Street

Polls paint grim picture for Conservatives, who face electoral wipeout at local, national and European level.



Daniel Leal-Olivas/AFP/Getty Images – Jeremy Corbyn voting in 2017

A flurry of polls suggest Jeremy Corbyn is on course to sweep into Downing Street following a general election, as voters turn their anger on the government for failing to deliver Brexit.

A poll of polls for The Sunday Telegraph predicts the Conservatives would lose 59 seats if a vote were held today, making Labour the largest party in the Commons. This would not be enough to secure Corbyn a working majority but would put him in prime position to agree a power-sharing deal with other progressive parties such as the SNP, Lib Dems or Change UK.

Meanwhile, high profile Tories at risk of losing their seat if a snap vote is called include former leader Iain Duncan Smith and Work and Pensions Secretary Amber Rudd, who has been widely courted by prospective leadership contenders.

A separate poll by Opinium put Labour seven points ahead of the Tories, echoing the findings of YouGov polling last week which showed Tory support had slumped to its lowest level in six years.

The survey in The Independent put Theresa May's party on 28% in the event of a general election, down four points since the start of April, with only a two thirds of voters who backed the Tories in the 2017 election saying they would back them again.

Earlier this month dozens of Tory association chairmen wrote to Conservative campaign headquarters warning that the Tories face an electoral "wipeout" at local elections in early May.

Since then, however, things have gone from bad to worse. Theresa May was forced to ask for yet another extension to Article 50 which delays Brexit until Halloween, meaning the UK will have to contest European Parliamentary elections, three years after Britain voted to leave the EU.

A survey from Hanbury Strategy, the first to poll British voter intention ahead of EP elections, shows Labour on 37% with the Conservatives way behind on 23%.

It appears Nigel Farage's new Brexit Party has be the main beneficiary of public anger, scooping up disgruntled Conservative voters at a local, national and European level.

Angry at her failure to successfully navigate the UK out of the EU, it appears Theresa May's dramatic U-turn in reaching out to Corbyn was the final straw for grassroots supporters in finally turning against the party. Associations claim one of the main attack lines on Labour – that the veteran socialist represents a risk to national security – has effectively been nullified after the prime minister chose to engage him in the Brexit process.

The Telegraph reports that “amid growing calls for May to resign, Conservative Party lawyers potentially opened the door for MPs to formally oust the prime minister within months, with officials advising the influential 1922 Committee that the panel could rewrite the rules currently preventing MPs from mounting more than one attempt to oust a leader per year”.

There was also a word of warning from Labour's leader in the European parliament. Richard Corbett and other grandees have said that the party will be deserted by millions of anti-Brexit voters if it fails to clearly back a second referendum in its manifesto for next month's EU elections.

It comes “amid growing fears at the top of the party that it could lose a generation of young, pro-EU voters if it does not guarantee another public vote”, The Guardian says.

MPs say that young people, as well as many other Remainers, could turn instead to unambiguously anti-Brexit parties, including the fledgling independent group Change UK, the Liberal Democrats, the Greens and the SNP.

The leader article in The Times says “Corbyn, a lifelong Brexiteer, has no desire

for a second referendum but if his party's membership twisted his arm at this autumn's conference, he might see that as a price worth paying for getting closer to Downing Street".

"The risk to Labour votes in leave-supporting seats, against a Brexit vote split between the Tories, UKIP and Nigel Farage's new party, should not be exaggerated" he writes, adding that "a Labour commitment to a referendum would also shoot the fox of Change UK, the party formed by the independent group of MPs" it adds.

Source:

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