

LTNs

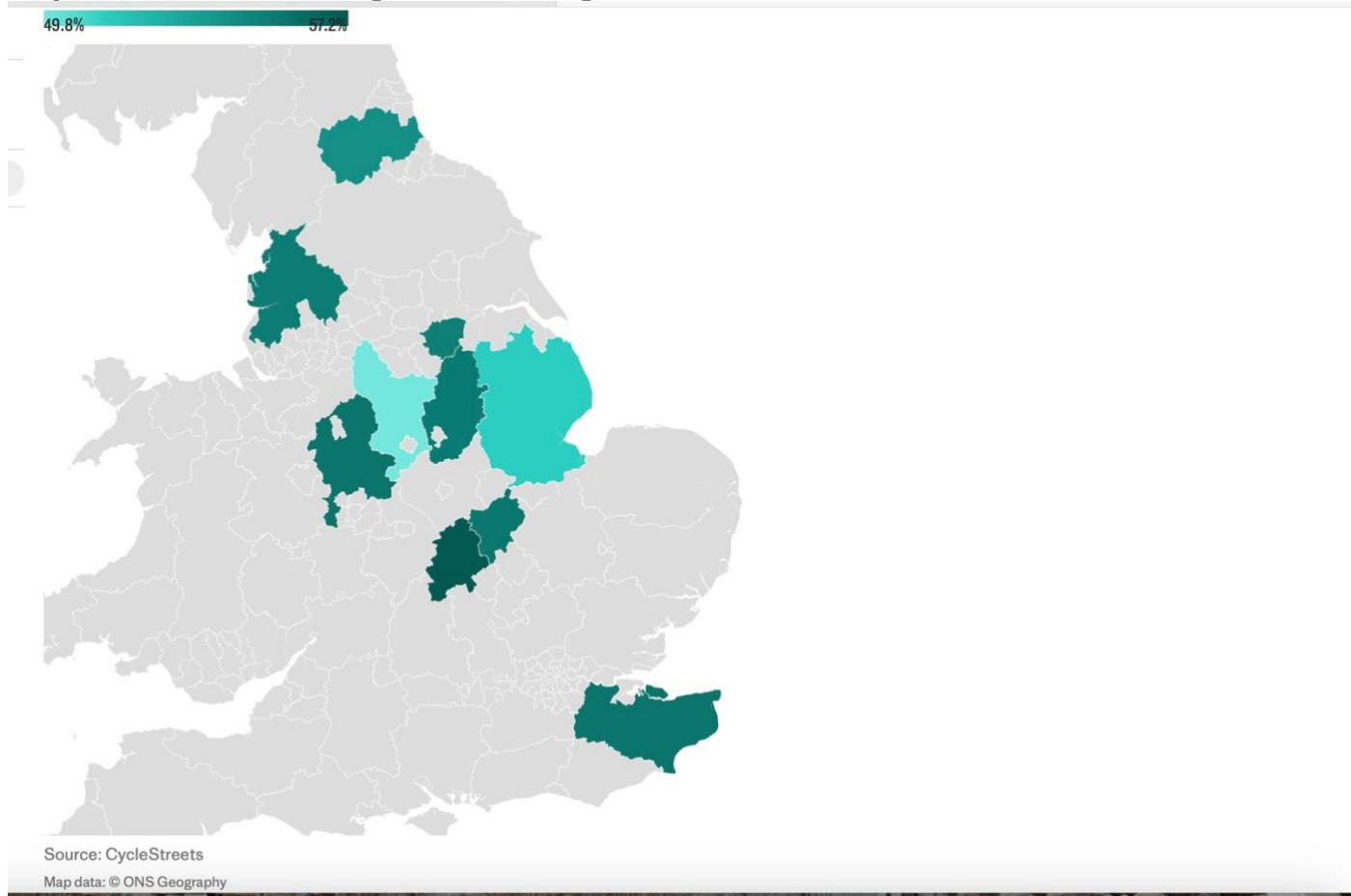
Pledge to reverse green schemes and block new ones in all 10 local authorities it won in elections

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17 May 2025

How many LTNs are there in Reform's councils?

Proportion of total street length not for through traffic



Reform UK has vowed to reverse low-traffic neighbourhoods (LTNs) in all of the councils it controls.

Nigel Farage's party has announced that it will block most new schemes and reverse existing ones in the 10 councils it now controls after its sweeping local election victory.

LTNs were introduced during the pandemic in 2020 as part of a suite of green policies aimed at encouraging walking and cycling.

Cited as a way to reduce pollution, they involve shutting off the majority of side roads in an area to cars.

There are now more than 100 permanent Labour-backed LTN schemes in the UK, with the Government also pushing for more 20mph zones in what has been branded a “war on motorists”.

But Zia Yusuf, the Reform party chairman, told The Telegraph: “LTNs have proliferated too quickly and there are far too many of them.

“We view these schemes with the same suspicion as mass immigration and Net Zero. They are policies which are supported by and made to benefit more affluent people, who are then insulated from the negative consequences.

“You can expect, if you live in a Reform council, for there to be a much higher bar for any proposals for LTNs and for the large-scale reversal of these existing LTNs.”

Mr Yusuf said that the 10 councils – including in Durham, Kent and Nottinghamshire – would soon become “islands of freedom for motorists, where people who want to use their cars are able to do so”.

Reform council candidates across the country campaigned against LTNs during the local elections.

The party has said the schemes hollow out local high streets, make life difficult for drivers and push congestion into poorer areas.

Earlier this month, a judge ruled London’s Lambeth council had acted unlawfully by creating an LTN and ignoring residents’ concerns it would cause more traffic congestion.

Campaigners in Bath, meanwhile, conducted a recent survey that found an LTN next to a university campus has led to a 700 per cent jump in traffic past a primary school and nursery.

While LTNs are intended to reduce pollution and make streets safer for pedestrians and cyclists, they have been used as cash cows for councils which make millions in fines.

London's Hammersmith and Fulham council is raking in more than £1million from motoring fines from a single LTN, while the capital's Croydon council is among local authorities that have also raised millions.

The schemes are usually policed by blocking streets with planters or bollards or by using cameras, with drivers facing fines for driving down them.

Seventy-two LTNs opened during the pandemic as part of a £2bn active travel scheme overseen by Boris Johnson and Grant Shapps, the then prime minister and transport secretary.

The Tories subsequently withdrew this funding in 2023 as Rishi Sunak vowed to end measures that he saw as amounting to an anti-car agenda.

Local councils were told to independently fund the scheme without Westminster's help.

Just over half (54.3 per cent) of the length of all streets in council areas now controlled by Reform are the equivalent to LTNs, according to crowd-sourced data from CycleStreets.

The party wants to use its new councils to show British voters how it would run the country.

Last week Reform promised a flurry of legal challenges to close down existing asylum hotels in areas it controls and stop new ones from opening.

Mr Farage has also vowed to scrap all equality, diversity and inclusion roles as well as climate change-related work.

In a message to Durham council employees with roles similar to these, he said: "These include those working on climate change, diversity initiatives or even just from home. You all better be seeking alternative careers very, very quickly."

Reform won 677 council seats at the local elections earlier this month and took control of ten councils. Polling suggests it is on course to win the next general election and that Mr Farage will become the next prime minister.

The party hopes to follow its extraordinary result with further gains at the Welsh Senedd elections next year.

In Wales, the devolved Labour administration has established a 20mph speed limit on many roads.

Reform hopes to win votes in the Senedd elections by pledging to reverse the move. It has the potential to pick up dozens of seats and is polling second in Wales behind Plaid Cymru.

Mr Yusuf told The Telegraph: “In Wales these sweeping 20mph speed limits which Labour have brought in are hugely unpopular. You can expect us to campaign to reverse this and we will be taking the fight to Labour on this at the Senedd elections next year.”