



---

– **gk** strategy insights

# Tees Valley Mayoral Election

If Ben Houchen's victory in the inaugural [Tees Valley](#) mayoral election represented the first brick to be chipped out of Labour's 'red wall' – his [landslide re-election](#) by 73% of Teeside voters firmly emphasises the realignment amongst England's working-class voters.

Throughout the campaign, red wall Tory MP's have highlighted the "Houchen factor" – with activists on the ground reporting wide-spread praise for Houchen's first term as mayor.

While his re-election will add further evidence of the Conservative's messaging regarding the "levelling-up" agenda, Houchen's success has in part been down to his ideological independence from the Tory party – and his willingness to embrace all aspects of the ideological spectrum.

Take Houchen's first election pitch – in which he [pledged](#) to renationalise the small Teeside airport and reinstating more flights.

His popularity in the region will have no doubt received a recent boost from the area's new [freeport status](#) and the [announcement](#) that Darlington is to be the home of the Treasury's new northern campus.

However, there is no doubt that with a massive backing of the electorate, and a plethora of interventionist policy initiatives, Houchen has the opportunity to define the blueprint for the Conservative party as it attempts to deliver on its "levelling-up agenda".

**For more insight and analysis and what engaging with the nations and regions of the UK could mean for your organisation, please email [jack@gkstrategy.com](mailto:jack@gkstrategy.com)**