



# A Plan For Britain

Polling the Public on the Future of Britain



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## The Future of Britain

As we emerge from a global pandemic, a war rages on European soil, growth stalls and the cost of living bites, the country is crying out for a positive plan for the future. We are facing an unprecedented global crisis from climate change. The UK's decision to leave the EU has put pressure on trade and our union. And we are living through the midst of the technological revolution.

It is the job of politics to find answers to these big issues, to map out a plan to meet them, and to harness the opportunities that these tectonic shifts present for our prosperity and the common good.

The Britain Project has spent the past year listening to the British people, asking them what they think and what they want politics to do. The picture they have given us sets out their expectations and the need for change. The findings in this report are supported by the outcomes of similar work conducted by My Life My Say and the Tony Blair Institute for Global Change.

A majority in this country believe politics is not working and there is no plan. People share a mood of deep pessimism, think the country is directionless and worry about Britain's decline. Very few people have confidence that the plan we need could ever emerge from the way politics is done today. Voters across the political divide feel underserved by and disillusioned with politics.

The electorate wants a different approach. Something better. A positive vision for the future.

Voters also want the *how* of politics to change, as well as the *what*. It is the way in which our politics is conducted, as well as the failure to put forward clear ideas for the future, which make people increasingly lose faith and hope in the capacity of politics to change anything for the better.

Where politics continues to fail, the opportunity lies.

If progressives are to respond effectively, what they need most of all is to offer a plan. This has to be the job of progressives.

Our three organisations have come together to offer a space to convene and catalyse that thinking. We have left tribes at the door to collectively analyse the challenges faced by Britain today and to seek progressive, long-term solutions that the country requires. This is the time for a vision that can transform our country.

In the way we behave, we engage, we speak and we act, we must show there can be a different, better, franker, fresher, braver and more honest politics. And as we fashion it, such a plan must be bold, it must be visionary. It must show answers for Britain on the economy, prosperity and growth, on climate change, on how we harness the technological revolution to bring prosperity to our people and on Britain's place in the world.

To be radical isn't to be extreme. To be exciting isn't to be unrealistic. To be muscular doesn't mean shutting out the vulnerable. Our progressive traditions, across the political centre ground, give us the tools to do all these things. To be both radical and centrist, to be exciting and pragmatic, and to be muscular and compassionate. Our challenge as progressives is to offer a politics of hope, and a vision rooted in the lives of people, but one that strives to make our country even greater than it is and to deliver for future generations.

These solutions will define how we and our children live, and the future direction of our country. But first we need to articulate the questions. And that is the starting point for our Future of Britain work, which kicks off with the Future of Britain Conference in London on 30 June 2022. We want to start the progressive conversation in earnest. What do we want the Future of Britain to be and how do we get there?

**Monica Harding**

Director, The Britain Project

## Overview

This is a defining period for Britain. Set against the context of a cost-of-living crisis and geopolitical upheaval, the twin transformations of climate change and technological acceleration in combination with the decision to leave the European Union are resulting in an acute sense of pessimism pervading the country. But behind every challenge is an opportunity – and the current one is no exception.

Many regard Britain as a country divided. However, as quantitative and qualitative research commissioned by The Britain Project and conducted by Yonder shows, most of those surveyed in England and Wales are united by the perception that the country is facing a period of decline. Moreover, the public believes there is no agenda for the country and that our politics cannot meet the scale of the challenge.

The findings of the Yonder polling are bolstered by recently published research and focus groups brought together in this report: My Life My Say's Annual Youth Index, Peter Kellner's [From Red Walls to Red Bridges](#) reports for the Tony Blair Institute, as well as new polling from Tortoise Media on the state of democracy in the UK.

Together, these findings require a call to action for new ideas that can reshape Britain and prepare the country for the decades ahead. In recent years, progressive politics – all those working towards an optimistic vision of the future, rooted in a belief that politics done well has the power to change lives – has failed to meet this demand. A supply-side deficit of ideas has created a vacuum where populism on the left and the right has thrived. These extremes have spoken to legitimate grievances but traded in simple solutions that have not solved the problems faced by voters.

Herein lies the opportunity for progressives, with this report clearly setting out the need for a strong centre ground able to deliver new ideas for the Future of Britain.

## The Yonder Clockface

The Britain Project commissioned the polling company Yonder to conduct waves of polling from autumn 2021 to June 2022 to better understand the British public and their views. The first wave consisted of a series of focus groups. For the second, Yonder polled 4,030 members of the English and Welsh public in autumn 2021 and February 2022, using its unique clockface model to analyse the findings (Scotland and Northern Ireland were excluded due to differing political and electoral dynamics). A third and final wave of polling, which included Scotland and Northern Ireland, was conducted this June to get an up-to-date snapshot of the public mood.

Yonder's polling has been analysed using its population model, called the Yonder Clockface. The clockface looks at the country in a way that explains the shifts in public opinion widely noted by political analysts today. It explains how and why we live in the political landscape that we do.

Statistics about public opinion usually hide a very important fact – that there is no single “public opinion”. Instead, different demographics, backgrounds and circumstances go a long way to explaining opinions and behaviour. By looking at public opinion through these lenses, we can shed light on the things that unite us and the things that increasingly divide us.

Every person in the country occupies a position on the Yonder Clockface.

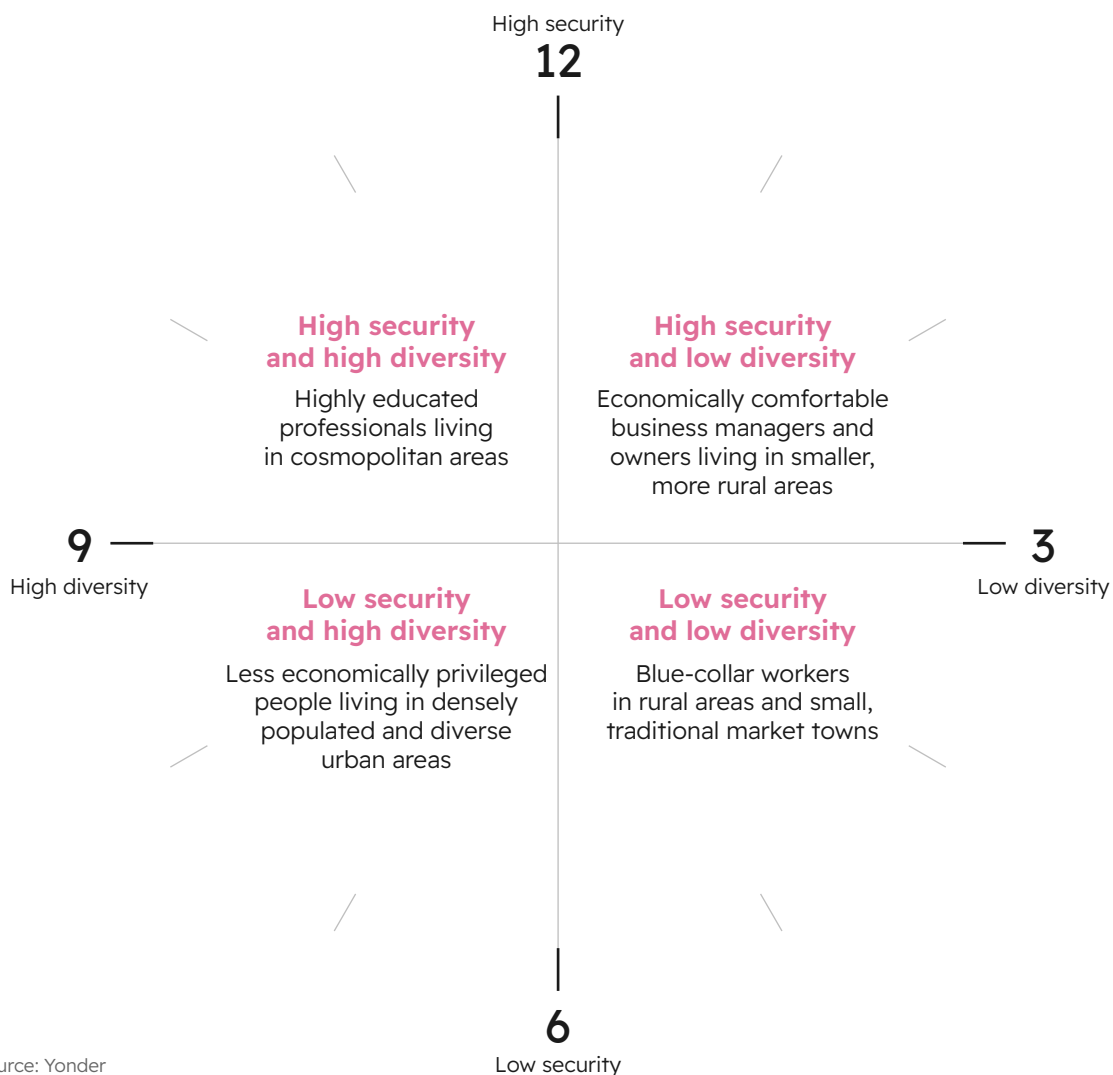
That position is defined by two sets of characteristics:

- 1 Security:** combines measures of health, wealth and wellbeing, such as income, occupation and education.
- 2 Diversity:** a combination of factors including ethnicity, culture and population density that determine how close you are to your neighbour in distance or background.

These two factors have been chosen because of their ability, time after time, to predict and explain attitudes and behaviours.

People located between 12–3 o’clock, for instance, are high in the bundle of measures we call “security” but low in those we call “diversity”, and that will influence how they behave, think and feel. In many respects, they live in a different world to those located, say, between 6–9 o’clock.

### The two characteristic sets of security and diversity and how they relate to the Yonder Clockface



Source: Yonder



## An Electorate on the Move

Yonder's analysis using the clockface model demonstrates how the demographic heartlands of the major political parties have shifted over time.

The Conservative Party has moved from a more diverse and secure base towards one that is less diverse and less secure. Meanwhile, the Labour Party has moved inversely to an electoral coalition that is more diverse and more secure.

Contrary to what some commentators suppose, these trends have not emerged during the past few years. While the Brexit referendum and subsequent responses of political parties have accelerated these trends, they go back to the 1980s in origin.

The Liberal Democrats and Green Party have stayed relatively stable around a moderately secure and somewhat diverse location on the clockface.

But the political centres of gravity for the Conservatives and Labour have been changing (see the clockface on the next page).

The analysis starkly reveals that the gravitational forces at play in modern politics are pulling the Conservatives away from an economically secure centre point around 12 o'clock Britain (where you're more likely to encounter, say, owners of detached houses with multiple cars in the driveway, several digits in the pension pot and access to private health care) towards a 3 o'clock centre point (where, for example, you find more lifelong residents of post-industrial towns, coastal areas and agricultural communities).

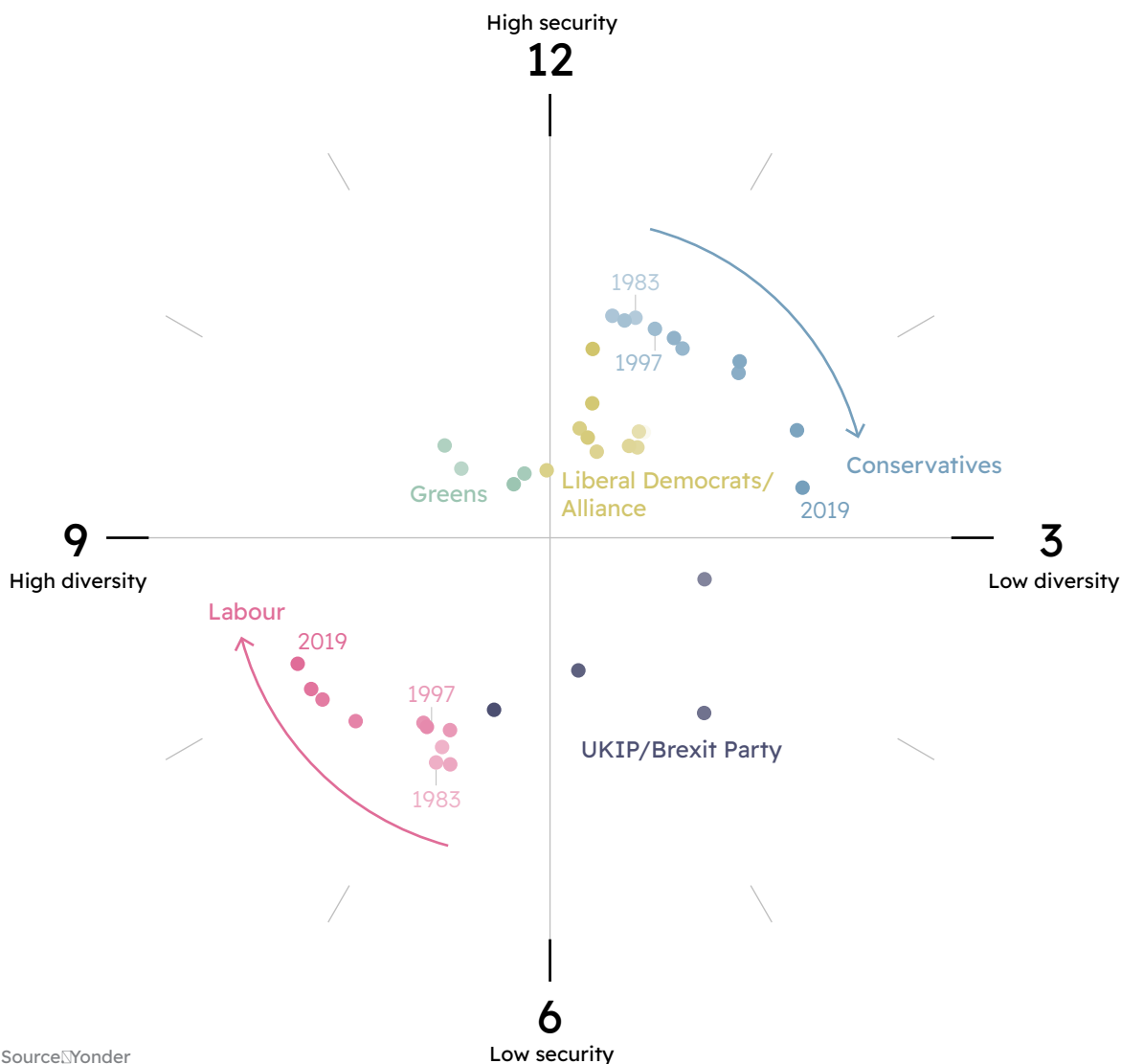
Having moved towards the 3 o'clock centre point, the Conservatives find themselves trading less on the virtues of economic stability and maintenance of the social status quo, and more on the need to redress regional economic disparities while tempering the perceived negative



effects of immigration. They are competing more and more with right-wing populist parties whose greatest pool of likely voters are in the 3-6 o'clock zone (less diverse and less secure).

### The shifting centres of gravity for both the Conservatives and Labour since the early 1980s

Darker shades indicate more recent general elections



Source: Yonder

In a two-party system like ours, every action has an equal and opposite reaction. The gravitational pull for Labour has been away from its 1980s centre point at around 6.30 on the clockface – where its working-class, manual-labour roots made it the natural choice – towards 9 o’clock. That means a coalition of voters characterised by increasing proximity to diversity and increasing (though still below average) economic security.

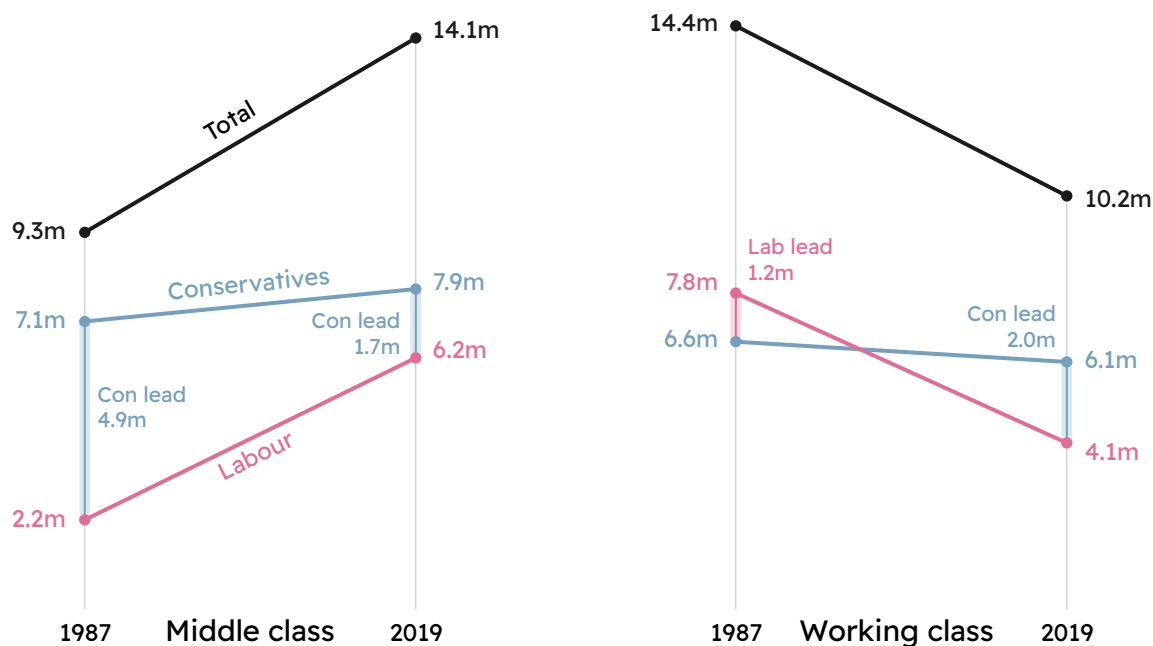
## The Decline of Class Politics

At the heart of the story told by the Yonder Clockface analysis is the decline of social class as a driver of voting choices. Until the 1980s, people with white-collar jobs (traditionally, the middle class) were likely to be more secure and better paid than blue-collar working-class voters, and to own their own homes and vote Conservative. Labour, meanwhile, attracted the most working-class voters. Hence the pattern of “high-security” constituencies returning Conservative MPs and “low-security” ones returning Labour MPs.

Since the 1980s, Britain’s economic structure has changed fundamentally. Gone are the millions of unionised jobs in coal, steel, shipbuilding, mills and factories that underpinned Labour’s support. Instead we have an economy transformed by technology, globalisation and a massive expansion of higher education, with a far more diverse workforce resulting from the recruitment of workers from abroad. Today’s middle-class voter is far more likely to have a liberal, internationalist outlook than their counterpart in the Thatcher era – and less likely to vote Conservative. Hence the shift shown by the clockface from security to diversity as the distinguishing feature of Labour versus Conservative constituencies.

A comparison between the 1987 and 2019 general elections is revealing. Both elections produced Conservative leads of 12 per cent, with each party achieving almost identical shares of the vote. But this similarity masks bigger differences in the kinds of people who voted for the two main parties, and the types of places that returned Labour and Tory MPs.

## How class voting for Labour and the Conservatives changed between the elections of 1987 and 2019



Source: Peter Kellner's estimates derived from Ipsos MORI (1987) and YouGov (2019) data

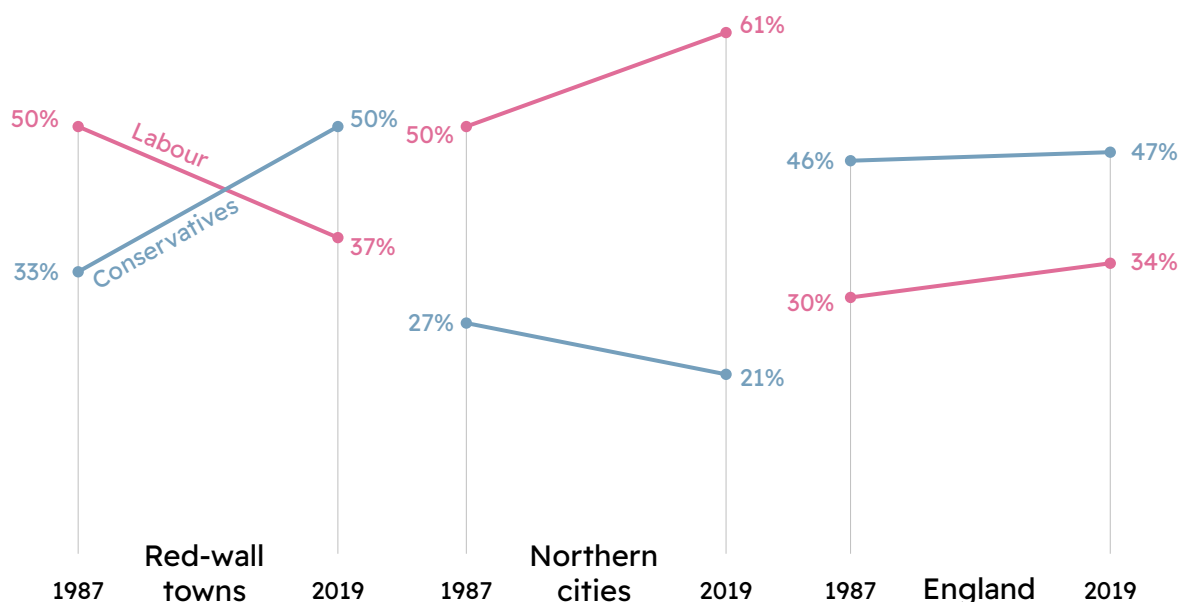
As shown above, there have been three big changes since 1987:

- 1** Britain's middle-class electorate has grown by almost five million while its working-class equivalent has shrunk by more than four million.
- 2** In net terms, Labour has gained the great majority of the extra middle-class votes – and suffered the larger majority of the working-class vote decline.
- 3** Although the overall class numbers for the Conservatives have not changed much, their share of the middle-class vote among the two parties declined from 76 per cent in 1987 (7.1 million out of 9.3 million) to 56 per cent in 2019, while its share of the working-class vote climbed from 45 per cent to 60 per cent over the same period.

If these numbers reflect the decline of security as a driver of voting choices, what about the rise of diversity?

The chart below shows what has happened by comparing the 1987 and 2019 elections, and contrasting how two sets of seats in England’s industrial north have diverged. One group comprises the “red-wall” towns that were once solidly Labour and are now Conservative; the other, the five big northern cities (Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester, Newcastle upon Tyne and Sheffield). Numbers for England as a whole are also included.

### The divergence of red-wall towns and the big five northern cities between the 1987 and 2019 elections



Source: Deltapoll

The numbers for England overall show how similar the two elections were. However, while the red-wall towns swung massively towards the Conservatives, Labour made big gains in the cities. This political divergence reflects the economic one: the cities with their major universities, huge growth in student and graduate voters, high-tech investment and workers from abroad – versus the towns with far fewer

students, graduates, high-tech jobs and immigrants. The big cities illustrate the shift in high-diversity Labour England from 6 o'clock to 9 o'clock on the clockface, while the red-wall towns illustrate the shift in low-diversity Conservative England from 12 o'clock to 3 o'clock. Research for the Tony Blair Institute shows how little class matters to voters these days – and how the two main parties risk being stranded on the wrong side of history.

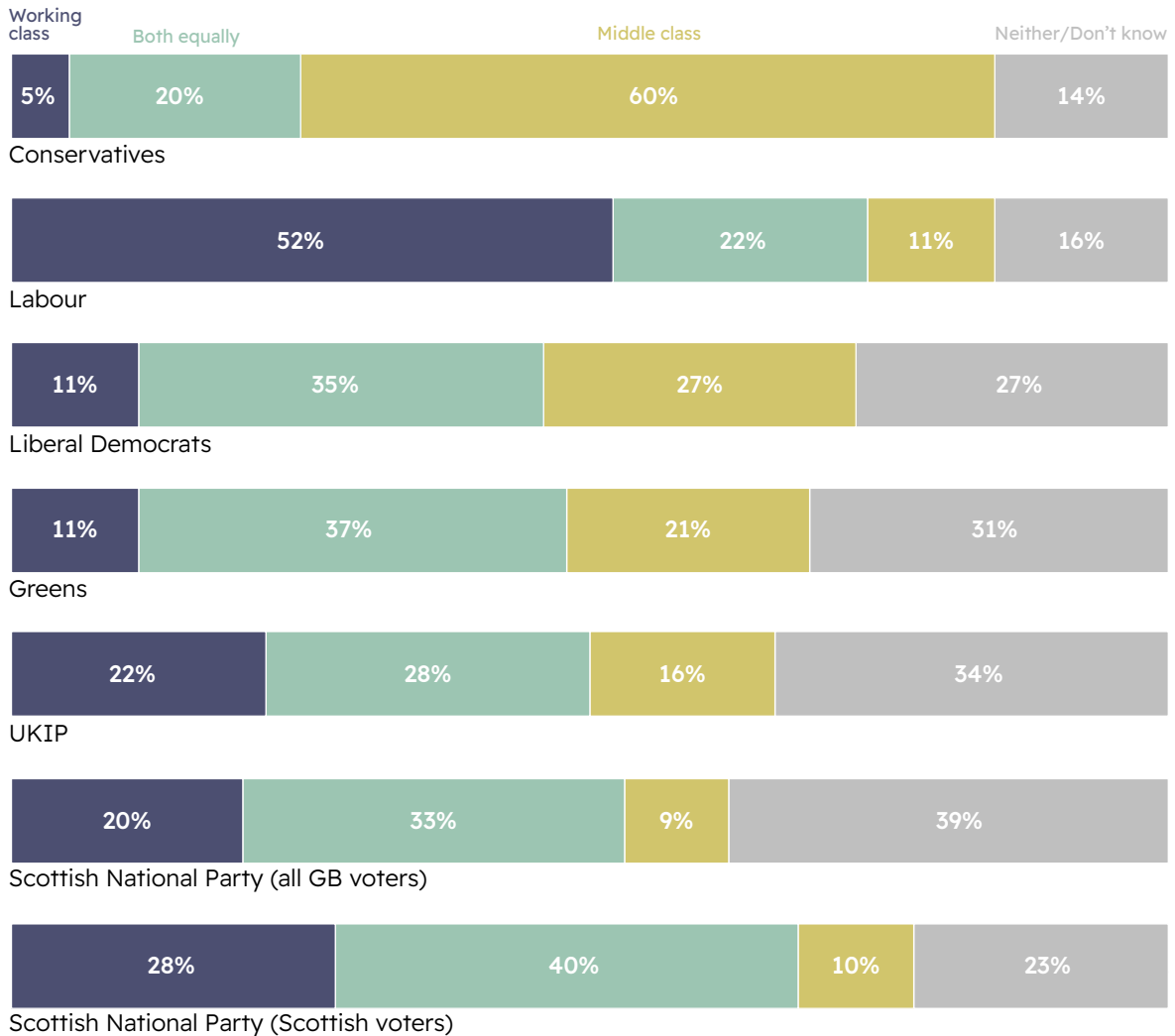
In the latest [From Red Walls to Red Bridges](#) report, Deltapoll asked people to assess their own class. Sixty-two per cent said they were working class, a far higher proportion than the 43 per cent classified by the occupation-based ABC1/C2DE system, underlining that how people describe their own class has very little to do with their occupation. For example, 42 per cent of people with professional or managerial careers said they were working class while 29 per cent of people with semi- or unskilled manual jobs said they were middle class. Nor does self-defined class have much to do with whether people own their own home or have a university degree. When people assess their own class, it is overwhelmingly the product of just one thing: the social class of their family when they were growing up. It is a murmur from the past, not a trumpet for today.

This is confirmed by another finding. Deltapoll asked people how much each of ten factors mattered to their own identity. “My social class” came joint eighth; just 27 per cent said it mattered “a great deal” or “a fair amount”. At the top of the list, with 58 per cent, was “my upbringing/family when I was growing up” followed by “being British” at 53 per cent. Social class came well behind “hobbies/interests/voluntary activities” (48 per cent), and was level with “my political outlook”.

These low numbers for both class voting and political outlook help to explain the finding that should worry Labour and the Conservatives most. Although few voters see class as an important feature of their own lives, most regard the two main parties – **and only the two main parties** – as class-bound relics from a bygone era.

## Class may not concern voters much but they still identify Labour and the Conservatives as parties bound to class interests

For each of these political parties would you say that they mainly represent the interests of the working class, the middle class, both equally or neither?



Source: Deltapoll

Together with the clockface data, these findings illustrate the big challenges facing both Labour and the Conservatives as well as the opportunities for the Liberal Democrats and other parties.

With an electorate in flux, given fresh charge by Brexit, globalisation, immigration and the cost-of-living crisis – the traditional parties face a tough time defining themselves – and who and what they stand for. They struggle to reconcile their traditional “brand stories” of the 20th century with the new sets of values and voters they must appeal to.

Yet against this backdrop, there lies an opportunity.

Parties that can adapt to this new electoral reality, and are able to offer a coherent and positive vision, can unify different types of voters across the clockface and forge a winning coalition – one that appeals to those who feel politically homeless and underserved. As the recent past demonstrates, declining support from any side of the clockface is not inevitable.

New Labour’s landslide victories in 1997 and 2001 demonstrate how a coherent and positive vision for the country overcame the general decline in working-class support, even though its share of the population was also shrinking. The right positive vision for the future of the country can transcend geography and social class, building a winning coalition of voters across party lines.

## A Sense of Decline in Britain

The polling to date shows an electorate untethered from its traditional moorings. The next insights take stock of how the country is feeling; in short, adrift.

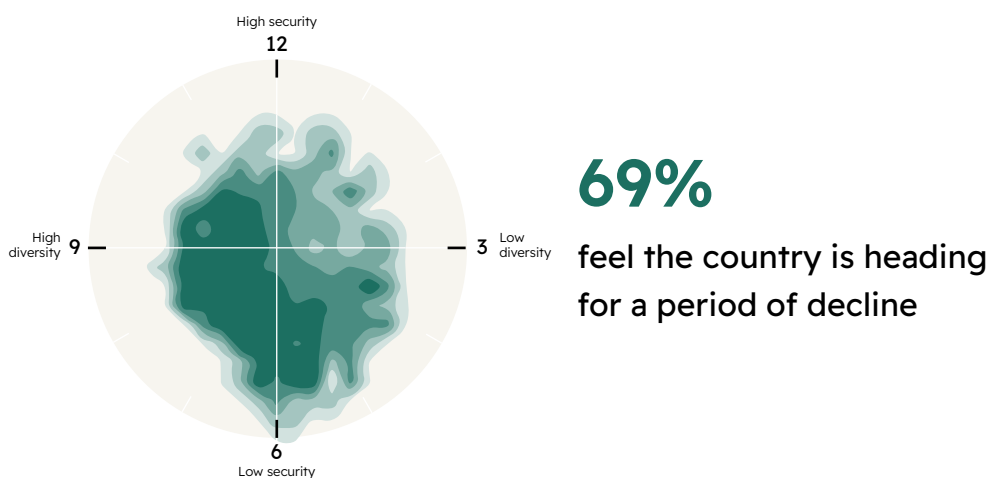
The picture is clear. A large proportion of the country, spanning ages, geographies and different segments of the Yonder Clockface, are pessimistic about the state of Britain and share a severe lack of confidence about where it is going. At any time, it is vital for the country to have a sense of direction, but the need is even more pressing in light of the scale of the challenges the UK is facing.



“I’d probably say [that Britain is] at best stagnant. I feel like the future’s very uncertain. There are a lot of changes happening, Brexit and so on, but I don’t feel like any of us really understand what’s going to happen.”

**Focus-group respondent on Britain**

The Britain Project’s polling by Yonder shows 69 per cent across England and Wales who agree that “if we don’t do something to stop it, the country is heading for a period of decline”. In the heatmap below, the darker the shading, the stronger the agreement. This clearly shows that the sense of a country heading for decline is particularly acute for those in the lower-left quadrant of the clockface (6–9 o’clock). But people in every hour agree far more with the proposition than they disagree with it.



Source: Yonder (Original question – To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: Britain is heading for a period of decline)

“Social mobility is nowhere near as good as when I was growing up as a teenager. There was more social mobility going to a state school and then moving into a reasonable job. I don’t think that mobility exists now.”

**Focus-group respondent on Britain**

This sense of decline reaches across generational divides.

In focus groups conducted in May 2022, anxiety about the state of the country was most pervasive among younger participants. The inability to get on the property ladder and a wage packet that never seemed to keep up with the bills were two key themes in their responses.

“Our generation is paying for mistakes we didn’t make.”

**Focus-group respondent on the state of Britain**

“I don’t foresee myself ever owning a property like I probably would’ve easily been able to do 30 years ago. Where I live, I’d realistically have to wait for a parent to pass to have that opportunity. I’ve made the decision that when that happens, I’m passing that on to my son immediately to break that wheel.”

**Focus-group respondent on uniting young and old**

## Are We Global Britain?

This public pessimism extends to Britain’s international reputation. Yonder’s polling reveals the public largely thinks that Britain has lost its place in the world, with 62 per cent no longer regarding the country as a leader on the global stage.

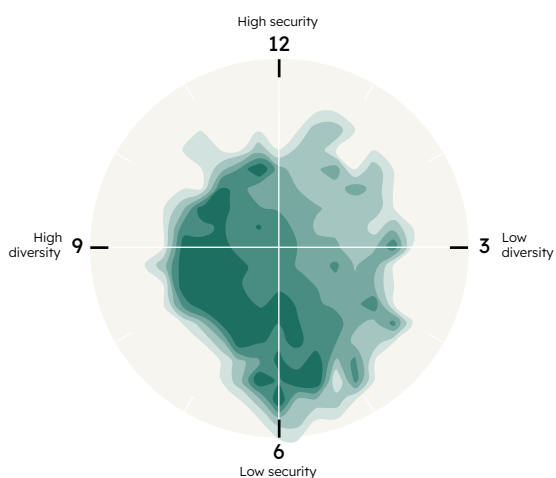
“I don’t think we are a Great Britain anymore.”

**Focus-group respondent on Global Britain**

As the heatmap on the next page shows, voters to the left of the clockface (6–12 o’clock) agree especially strongly that “Britain is no longer a leader on the world stage” while those in the upper-right quadrant (12–3 o’clock) were somewhat less anxious about Britain’s place in the world, mirroring their response to the question of decline above.

“We’re a small fish in a big pond now. I think we lost a lot of our status, a lot of power.”

**Focus-group respondent on Global Britain**



**62%**

**feel Britain is no longer a leader on the world stage**

Source: Yonder (Original question – Please indicate on a 0-100 scale where your views falls between these two pairs of statements: Britain continues to be a leader on the world stage, and Britain is no longer a leader on the world stage)

### Disenchantment With Democracy

To this sense of decline and loss of global influence is an added disillusion with the democratic process itself. A recent Deltapoll for Tortoise Media found that only half the public think Britain’s political system is “very” or “fairly” democratic. Given eight adjectives to choose from – four positive and four negative – to reflect their feelings towards democracy in Britain, people gave “uneasy”, “disgusted” and “angry” as their top three choices, while the three chosen by the fewest people are “proud”, “happy” and “confident”.

These views are linked to widespread anger towards our MPs. By almost three-to-one (66 per to 23 per cent), the public think “most MPs are mainly out for themselves” rather than “most MPs are genuinely interested in public service and helping their constituents”. A significant 54 per cent pick out “the quality of our MPs at Westminster” as one of the worst features of British democracy. Only 5 per cent choose it as one of the best features.

These attitudes find their most dramatic outlet in the view of the 30 per cent – equivalent to 14 million people – that “Britain these days needs a strong leader who can take and implement big decisions quickly without

having to consult Parliament”. While a majority (61 per cent) believe that “it is dangerous to give leaders too much power; it is better for Parliament to debate and sometimes amend government proposals, even if this takes more time”, support for this view falls well short of an overwhelming national consensus.

This polling underlines the urgency with which political parties need to take steps to adapt their structures to better reflect electoral realities and to heal the disconnect between politics and the electorate.

So what do the public want to see? Yonder polling shows that three-quarters of the public tend to feel that politics as it exists today cannot provide solutions to the big challenges.

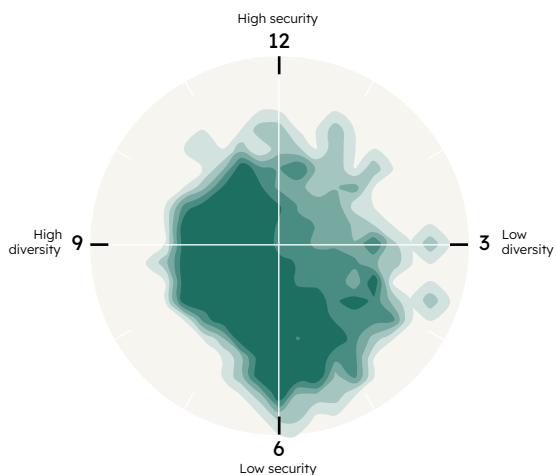
“There isn’t a strong enough understanding of what the vision is and where we’re going to go. There’s so much flipping and flopping, and it doesn’t feel like there is a long-term plan for where you want to get to.”

**Focus-group respondent on the need for a vision**

As the heatmap on the next page shows clearly, there is strong agreement that “our political system is broken and the main parties can’t fix it”, a view spanning three-quarters of the clockface.

[Polling](#) by My Life My Say also shows a worrying loss of faith in politics among young people. In their April 2022 poll of 18 to 24-year-olds, only 19 per cent said they trust politicians and only 35 per cent think their vote matters in an election.

This pessimistic mood about politics is impacting how voters feel about the country’s prospects. The polling also shows that a large majority – 75 per cent – tend to believe there is no clear plan for the country. In the face of critical challenges such as climate change, the technological revolution and the UK’s departure from the EU, there is a profound sense the country now lacks the unifying, clear and credible plan it needs.



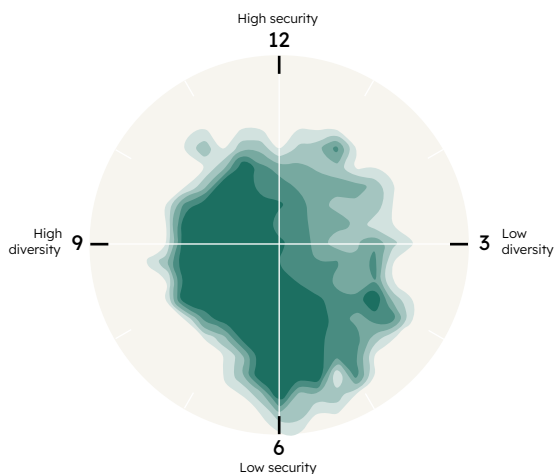
**76%**  
 feel our political system is broken  
 and the main parties can't fix it

Source: Yonder (Original question – Please indicate on a 0-100 scale where your view falls between these two pairs of statements: Our political system is strong and there is no need for significant change, and our political system is broken and the main parties can't fix it)

“Farcical. It is a farce. What’s happened? Nothing. It’s just got tougher and tougher.”  
**Focus-group respondent on Brexit**

“The infrastructure isn’t there.”  
**Focus-group respondent on the net-zero challenge**

Clearly, there is a vacuum of ideas that is fuelling pessimism. Across the country, three-quarters of all voters agree that “it feels like the country has no clear plan about where it is headed” – with agreement especially strong between 5 o’clock and 12 o’clock.



**75%**  
 feel like the country has no clear plan  
 about where it is headed

Source: Yonder (Original question – Please indicate on a 0-100 scale where your views fall between these two pairs of statements: It feels like the country has a clean enough plan about where it headed, and it feels like the country has no clear plan about where it is headed)

## New Ideas Wanted

Politics must – and can – reverse this, showing that it has the answers to the biggest challenges of our time: climate change, technology and making the economy work after Brexit.

“I’d really want to see somebody now coming forward [who says] ‘we are out of Europe. Now this is how I’m going to create jobs. This is how I’m going to reform the British economy, and this is how we’re going forward’. Give us a clear direction.”

**Focus-group respondent on the need for new ideas**

While continued lack of political responsiveness will serve only to fuel the rise of populist parties, and despite the anxieties outlined above, the research does hint at a more positive way forward. And this cause for optimism is evidenced by recent election results for progressive parties in Western countries.

## The Global Shift

While it is not inevitable that British politics will continue along its current trajectory, it isn’t just in this country that we observe these dynamics at play. Yonder Clockface analysis shows a similar set of battlegrounds emerging from the same demographic trends in Western democracies around the world.

The US Republican Party, for instance, has rotated even further on its political axis than the British Conservatives, moving from an economically secure centre of gravity under Ronald Reagan to a less diverse, less secure one under Donald Trump. The Democratic Party, likewise, have moved over time towards a centre of gravity that is more diverse and more economically secure, in the same way as their British Labour counterparts. In the 2020 US election, the heartland of Joe Biden’s support was around 10.30 on the clockface while Trump voters centred around 4.30.

This story recurs around the Western world, with the same underlying forces challenging the established demographic structure of traditional

party support. In France, the centre-right Les Republicains (formerly UMP and RPR) and centre-left Parti Socialiste dominated the political landscape for decades before Emmanuel Macron's successful bid from the centre. Only ten years ago, Nicolas Sarkozy (UMP) and Francois Hollande (PS) collected over 55 per cent of the vote while, in the first round of April 2022's presidential elections, the two former giants collected less than 7 per cent between them.

In Germany, the traditional parties of the centre-left Social Democratic Party (SPD) and centre-right Christian Democratic Union/Christian Social Union collected 50 per cent of the overall vote count in last September's election, but this is significantly lower than the 67 per cent they collectively won in 2013. Furthermore, younger voters massively favoured progressive parties outside the mainstream in 2021, notably the Green Party and the liberal Free Democratic Party, both of whom are now in coalition with Olaf Scholz's SPD. In Italy, the arrival of Mario Draghi as prime minister, at the head of a national-unity government, has provided some much-needed stability in a system where turmoil and instability are the norm.

What recent elections in Australia, France and Germany demonstrate is the possibility for progressive parties to win power when they commit themselves to straddling a sufficiently broad base across the Yonder Clockface. They do so by prioritising issues such as climate change, social mobility and gender equality (appealing especially to those located towards the left-hand side of the clockface) while also taking pains to affirm the importance of national pride, local community, social responsibility, and law and order (appealing especially to those on the right-hand side).

From this global context, progressives in Britain can be assured that a radical, credible centre ground in politics is relevant. And when it is on offer, people vote for it.

What does unite our country according to the polling is a strong desire for politics to solve problems: 88 per cent of people felt this required



politicians to work together.<sup>1</sup> This is particularly necessary as the scale of the challenges the UK faces will not be resolved in one parliament.

“At the moment people seem to be blaming everybody else but nobody ever turns to themselves and says, ‘Do you know what? I should take responsibility for this. I should do something.’ Instead it’ll be another party that they’ll complain about. This seems to be something that’s happened probably over the past ten years.”

**Focus-group respondent on the need for new ideas**

### At the Centre in Britain

The centre ground of politics is still where most UK voters are. New polling conducted this June by Yonder for The Britain Project asked people where they perceive each political party – and where they would place themselves – on a spectrum of 0 (extremely left wing) to 100 (extremely right wing), with 50 representing the exact centre politically.

The average position of UK voters on this spectrum is 49.7. In England, Scotland and Wales, the Conservative Party is perceived to be more than 20 points further to the right than the average voter, while the Labour Party is perceived to be around 16 points further to the left.

While significant minorities define themselves as left wing (20 per cent put themselves between 0 and 30) or right wing (17 per cent place themselves between 70 and 100), most people cluster around the centre: 44 per cent of voters across the UK say they are between 40 and 60 while nearly one-in-three place themselves even closer to the centre, between 45 and 55. Voters in Scotland (39 per cent), Wales (35 per cent) and Northern Ireland (41 per cent) are even more likely to place themselves between 45 and 55, close to the centre of the spectrum – far more than those who define themselves as being on either left or right.

<sup>1</sup> The Britain Project polling 2022

The same polling also found that nearly three quarters of adults (73 per cent) across the UK agree that “the UK needs stronger voices in the political centre ground”. Only 6 per cent of those polled disagreed.

Furthermore, in every part of the UK, a significant majority of voters (63 per cent) agree that “if we had a strong, progressive, centrist government in Westminster this would help bring all parts of the United Kingdom closer together”. Only 9 per cent disagree with the statement. It is the combination of “strong” and “centrist” that generates this majority. Centrism that appears simply to split the difference between left and right won’t work – it must be harnessed to a new, progressive politics relevant to today’s Britain. The poll indicates the potential electoral rewards if this can be done.

Broken down by region, agreement with the statement above is high in Wales (68 per cent), Scotland (64 per cent) and England (62 per cent). While agreement was somewhat lower in Northern Ireland, reflecting the different complexion of politics there, more than half of voters (52 per cent) agreed with the statement there too – and only 1 per cent disagreed – with the balance undecided.

The polling from Scotland shows that while there remains substantial support among some for independence, nonetheless there is also the same desire found all over the UK for a politics that can produce effective change to the economy and society, and a feeling that a politics based in the centre ground has genuine appeal.

## Reasons To Be Optimistic

Britain faces a moment of profound challenge: the prospect of decline, the lack of a plan and the absence of the right response by the political system. Radical change is needed.

The polling in this report shows the country understands this. There is widespread disaffection with traditional politics – a feeling that the answers the country needs are not being put forward and the UK is drifting as a consequence.

The scale and number of challenges – anaemic growth, a cost-of-living crisis, public services under pressure, technological advances, and the consequences of Brexit and climate change – require a fresh British political consensus.

This is not about a new political party. This is about revitalising progressive politics in order to deliver change that will stick. Reforms have no lasting value if each new government overturns the actions of the last one. So wherever you stand on the political spectrum, whichever party you belong to, mainstream politics must forge a new agenda that can navigate the country through these tumultuous times.

Progressive politics is at its best when it defines the problems facing the country. And when it puts forward better answers than the ones offered by those on the extremes. That is what the Future of Britain Conference is about. It is the start of a conversation, a shared analysis of the problems and an understanding of what is needed in policy terms in order to deliver a secure, healthy and prosperous future for the country.

### The Task Is Urgent

As is clear from both the Yonder Clockface analysis and the From Red Walls to Red Bridges research set out earlier in this report, to meet the huge policy task ahead, the main political parties must adapt to the new

electoral reality. Their 20th-century moorings, in terms of electoral appeal and ideological roots, are no longer where the electorate is to be found.

At the same time, the decline in security as the driver of geographical differences between Labour England and Conservative England should not be misinterpreted. It does not reduce the importance of politics that make life as secure as possible for struggling families at a time of change. As shown by [Red Wall, Red Herring?](#), the recent report by Professor Jane Green of Oxford's Nuffield College and Dr Roosmarijn de Geus of Reading University, any party that ignores the need for security can expect to be punished by the electorate.

All people located around the Yonder Clockface must be stakeholders in this future plan while any needs originating from across the clockface should be met by radical, muscular and practical action. The message from the Deltapoll research for the Tony Blair Institute and Tortoise is the same. This is no time for a plaster on the wounds, or a patchwork of promises, or policies designed only to appeal to specific parts of the clockface or different generations. This is a chance to redraw and rethink the solutions, based on collaboration beyond the political tribes and harnessing new opportunities that present themselves, while using every muscle within the clockface to leverage those opportunities and deliver for Britain. This is an agenda that must be rooted in the issues and priorities we identified from the electorate, but which also moves politics to lead again towards a progressive Future of Britain.

As recent polling by Yonder reaffirms: people want a plan rooted within radical but centrist politics and progressive values.

### Where Now for Britain?

We believe the solutions can be found in a Britain that is open and engaged with the world, harnessing the opportunities of the technological revolution, working internationally to pursue growth, prosperity and equality, and to achieve a healthier planet. As part of this progressive framework, there will remain debates that will need to be held within parties

as well as arguments between parties: about taxation, public services, the mechanisms and policies to avert climate change, ways to regulate new technology, the precise nature of a more productive relationship with Europe and so on. The priority is to agree on a progressive framework within which these debates can take place: a consensus about the ends within which we shall doubtless continue to argue about the means.

This work will begin with the Future of Britain Conference in June and continue with written work, engagement and activity in the coming months. We welcome those from all tribes, and those from none, to join the conversation as we work to establish and disseminate the ideas needed for progressive renewal of the UK.

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