

We'll do deal with Tories if Farage falls short at ballot box, say Reform members

PM pledges to fight any leadership challenge

By **Christian Calgie**
Senior Political Correspondent-at-Large

KEIR Starmer yesterday vowed that his 'deep sense of duty' would spur him to face Andy Burnham head-on in any leadership challenge.

The Prime Minister promised to fight attempts to oust him, warning that it would plunge the country into 'chaos'.

With Thursday's Makerfield by-election set to decide his fate, Sir Keir said: 'Whoever is PM is going to face the same prevailing winds as I am facing.'

He begged Labour MPs to give him time to 'turn things around', insisting he would not slink out of No10 without a fight. Speaking to the BBC, he added: 'I'm not going to go away. I don't think we should plunge the country into the chaos of a leadership

By **Martin Beckford**
Policy Editor

REFORM supporters overwhelmingly want Nigel Farage to join forces with Kemi Badenoch if he falls short of a majority at the next general election.

A new survey of Reform UK members has found that a massive 90 per cent believe the party should 'form a coalition or do a deal with the Conservatives' in the event of a hung parliament.

Only 7 per cent would rather 'stay in opposition', according to research conducted by former Conservative deputy chairman Lord Ashcroft, if - as current polling suggests - Reform wins the most seats at the election but fails to secure a majority.

Another one per cent of grassroots



Reform members said they would prefer an unlikely pact with Labour, the Liberal Democrats or the Greens.

Almost all of those questioned think the party will be in Government after the election, with 48 per cent looking forward to an overall majority. But 45 per cent are expecting a coalition with the Conservatives.

The findings will add to the growing calls to 'unite the right' in order to avoid Labour clinging on at the next election or forming a radical Left-wing coalition.

It comes days after Tory leader Mrs Badenoch ruled out a deal, claiming that Reform has 'quite a lot of Left-wing ideas', while Mr Farage said in April it would be

'My mum tells me to rein it in'

By **James Tapsfield**

NIGEL Farage has admitted even his mother tells him to 'rein it in' - as he insisted he is the best person to be Prime Minister 'right now'.

He said he believes his parents are proud of his achievements, but joked he 'occasionally' gets a critical call.

In an interview with LBC, in which he also listed his six favourite songs, he caveated an answer about whether he wanted to run the country.

He said he was currently the 'only' candidate who could 'take on the Establishment and do what needs to be done'. But he added that in a 'couple of years or more' there 'may well' be someone 'better equipped' for the job.

The Clacton MP was asked if his parents ever told him to 'rein it in'. He replied: 'Occasionally I get a call from my mum... why did you do this?'

Asked whether he wants to be PM, he added: 'Not for the sake of the office or title... I couldn't give a damn about



Proud: Nigel Farage with his mother Barbara Stevens

NIGEL'S TOP SONGS

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. Walk On By
Dionne Warwick | 4. Things Can Only Get Better
D:Ream |
| 2. The Logical Song
Super Tramp | 5. The Final Countdown
Europe |
| 3. Driving in My Car
Madness | 6. Without Me
Eminem |

that. For me, politics is not about what I become in terms of personal status. It's about what I can do. Right

now, I believe I'm the only person that's got sufficient public rapport and courage... to do what needs to be done.'

'highly undesirable' while failing to rule it out completely.

Despite their confidence about

the party's chances at the ballot box, the online poll of 850 Reform members found widespread fears

about the obstacles Mr Farage would face in becoming Prime Minister.

In total 89 per cent agreed that 'the political establishment and civil service will do everything they can to stop Reform UK being given a fair chance to form a government and take office'.

The Forging of Farage PAGES 44-46

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