

Certain Change

ERS Strategic Plan Summary 2025 to 2029

*“Perseverance is not a long race;
it is many short races one after the other”*

Walter Elliot

Introduction and preamble

Good strategy is about the big picture over a significant period of time. Most other things are tactics. Of course there will be times when we need to change the tack, but being persistently focused on the big strategic goals is vital if we are not to direct resources away from the areas where they will have the most impact.

The UK has a majority Labour Government elected on 34% of the vote in the most disproportionate election in British history. Four parties got more than 10% of the vote in 2024 making clear FPTP’s failures to audiences way beyond those that have known about them for a while.

That change is coming is inevitable. Our task is to build power and influence so that we can help shape that change towards our goals and values and away from the tendencies we have observed of democratic backsliding and the erosion of hard won democratic norms.

Our Vision

Our Vision is of a democracy fit for the 21st century, where every voice is heard, every vote is valued equally, and every citizen realises their power to take part.

Our Strategic Goals

- a. To have public authorities in the UK elected by proportional representation and specifically by the Single Transferable Vote in multi-member constituencies.
- b. That the democratic institutions of the UK, its nations and regions and other constituent parts work in ways that lead to citizens having high levels of trust in them.

The Route to Our Goals

Strategic Objectives for 2025 to 2029

1. We will significantly increase political support for Electoral Reform in all Political Parties and in parts of all UK Governments

How will this move us towards our goals?

If we have significant institutional understanding and support for electoral reform in all of the political parties and government, the less resistance there will be to reform at the moment a decision is made to progress legislation for the change.

What we will do

We will map and understand parties, their institutions, processes and people. We will build significant institutional understanding and support for electoral reform in members, politicians, ginger groups and the governance bodies of political parties. We will build relationships and reciprocity with key people in parties and governments through meetings, briefings and supportive activity. We will create and support political champions and aim to make this a rewarding position for them.

2. We will craft and deliver strong stories - Develop targeted electoral reform narratives that explain how PR can address the different challenges key stakeholders care about, and enlist their support.

How will this move us towards our goals?

A range of different sets of interests and groups have to align around a change like Electoral Reform in order to make it possible. They have to be convinced that this change is in their interest or at least not harmful to them. They will then encourage and not discourage legislatures and policy makers to enact legislation.

What we will do.

Our targets include institutional interests such as business and the third sector but also parts of the public. We will develop, try out and test various arguments and messaging with key players in various sectors through introductions, meetings and presentations. We aim to support other potential players in this area with the aim of building an operation beyond ERS that can connect with the sectors of society and the economy that we require to bring on board.

3. Expand the use of democratic innovations and reforms with the aim of creating more trust in institutions and more participation in democracy.

How will this move us towards our goals?

Many of our creaking institutions fall short of their purpose. This feeds into the distrust and disillusion that is being noted in so many places. There are changes proposed that are current, we can engage with them now as a way to build relationships, trust and influence with key people and institutions that help us towards our medium term goals. Small wins and successes build our confidence and abilities to win bigger success.

What we will do.

We will be part of projects and campaigns that are active in these areas. We will be involved in policy design and development. We will advocate for these changes in our comms and media. There are both ongoing experiments in democratic innovation such as 'deliberative and participative democracy' and legislation on institutional reform and lots of thinking on how to 'future proof' our democracy. These are worthwhile endeavours to be part of in their own right and help us travel towards our other strategic objectives above and specifically goal B.

4. Being ready for anything - Maintain a flexible strategy and be agile.

How will this take us towards our goals?

That volatility and unpredictability are normal means that we need to have the ability to pivot towards new opportunities and threats as they arise.

What we will do.

Regular assessment of the changing environment and how our strategic plan relates to it (assessments after key moments, including local elections, devolved elections, party leadership elections).

This plan is focused on the process of building power and influence and directing it at the right decision points at the most impactful moments.