Immigration has topped the list of factors most likely to influence how people will vote in the next

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Immigration has topped the list of factors most likely to influence how people will vote in the next UK general election.

Thirty per cent of people rank immigration as their priority election issue â€“ beating concerns over crime, health and education.Â And despite the gloomy economic outlook, personal tax still ranks far behind immigration as a voting priority â€“ with just 20 per cent ranking it number one.

But the issue falling behind all others polled is the environment.Â Whilst the Government continues to promote the green agenda, the majority of voters now see this as their lowest priority.Â Just one in 12 people (8 per cent) puts the environment at the top of the list of factors which will sway their vote â€“ suggesting Britain has a long way to go if it hopes to convince people to act against global warming.

The results, from a TNS study of 13,000 consumers, highlight the gulf between the Governmentâ€™s perceptions and the reality of what issues are really concerning Britain.Â This is echoed by the fact that, when asked to rank UK politicians in terms of their commitment to â€˜greenâ€™ issues, Ken Livingston wins an impressive 41 per cent of first place votes â€“ despite recently being ousted as the peopleâ€™s preferred candidate for London mayor.

Boris Johnson, the successful mayoral candidate, is seen as significantly less committed to green issues by the respondents in the TNS study, with just 31 per cent of people voting him top.

Ironically, despite Gordon Brownâ€™s pledge to meet the G8â€™s environmental targets, the British people see Labour as the UK political party that is worst for the environment â€“ again pointing to the Labourâ€™s failure to engage people through the green agenda.

Andrew Czarnowski, managing director of TNS UK, comments: â€œThese figures suggest that the Government really needs to be turning its attention to voting issues closer to home.Â People know they need to be environmentally friendly, but when it comes to choosing who will lead our country, there are clearly much bigger concerns.Â The â€˜green voteâ€™ is not going to win Labour another term â€“ and social and political events of recent years appear to have had an impact on votersâ€™ priorities.Â It will be interesting to see whether the credit crunch weakens the environmental lobby further.â€•

A low regard for environmental issues is found across the UK, but there are significant regional differences in what will most drive people to the polls.

Voters in England and Wales are most concerned by immigration, while in Scotland, crime tops the tables; it is named as the priority issue by 29 per cent of people.Â And whilst a quarter of Midlanders are most concerned by tax issues, the Scots see this as far less crucial (13 per cent).