Reform UK Headlines — 07 Nov 2026

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NewsNow topic-hub sweep (UK/Politics/Reform+UK) — 7 new items processed since the 6 Nov run (published after the 6 Nov ~09:30 compile), plus 2 false positives discarded. Sources: The Independent, BBC, The National, The Herald, Yorkshire Live / Huddersfield Examiner, Derbyshire Times, Forces TV, openDemocracy.

? Top Story: Farage ally Arron Banks 'using private investigators to snoop on business rivals, political opponents and journalists'

The Independent reports that **Arron Banks** — the Brexit millionaire who bankrolled Leave.EU, a close ally of Nigel Farage, and a hopeful Reform UK candidate — has hired the private-investigation firm **Precision Risk and Intelligence (PRI)** to spy on his business rivals *and* on journalists.

- **Business rivals:** Banks is locked in a **seven-year dispute** with insurance company **Talanx** and its legal firm **Kennedys**. The Independent understands he asked PRI to **set up a whistleblowing operation**, contacting large numbers of staff at both to solicit information on any misconduct. He alleges Kennedys audited his own insurance company, **Legal Protection Group (LPG)**, while simultaneously pitching to Talanx to *replace* LPG — a conflict of interest. He has complained to the **Solicitors Regulation Authority** but "has also taken matters into his own hands."
- **Journalists:** The move "follows recent revelations that Mr Banks also used the same company to **spy on journalists at The Sunday Times** who had been investigating Mr Farage and other senior figures in Reform UK."

- **Political opponents:** There have "also been claims he used PRI to obtain material on **Tory chairman Kevin Hollinrake**."

Why it matters for Reform: Banks "is hoping to run as Reform UK's candidate in **Jacob Rees-Mogg's former North East Somerset seat**" and was the party's mayoral candidate in Bristol. The Independent frames it bluntly: "*It raises new questions over Mr Farage's judgement with candidates and his inner circle.*"

The Leave.EU revival backdrop: Farage has been publicly discussing resurrecting the Brexit campaign with Banks — reportedly in the wake of PM **Andy Burnham** looking at rejoining the EU (per the Independent). At a Reform event in Plymouth last month Farage said: "*I've spoken to Arron, and I'm seeing him next week, and we're getting reactivated.*" On GB News (12 Oct): "*Leave.EU has been in the cupboard, but it's been taken out and the dust is being taken off it and we're ready to go again.*"

Banks' response: He declined to comment on Talanx/Kennedys; on the Sunday Times spying he calls the journalist "*an activist*" and told The Mail on Sunday: "*If you live by the sword you die by the sword.*" On North East Somerset: "*I've said publicly I've discussed being the candidate if, and when, a by-election occurs.*" (Banks funded Leave.EU in 2016 and was pictured with Farage, Andy Wigmore and Raheem Kassam meeting Donald Trump that year.)

?? Latest Developments

Bradford rail: Tice insists Reform 'never opposed' the NPR station — after saying he'd scrap it

BBC reports Reform UK is trying to square its national rail stance with its own Bradford council's flagship project. Deputy leader **Richard Tice** said the party had **"never opposed" Phase 1 of Northern Powerhouse Rail (NPR)** — which includes Bradford's proposed new city-centre station — while remaining against spending on a **high-speed line between Liverpool and Manchester** . A BBC image caption notes the contradiction directly: Tice "*has previously said his party would scrap Northern Powerhouse Rail, but now insists this only applied to other legs of the project*" — and he once warned firms bidding for high-speed contracts **"not to bother."**

At Bradford's Reform-led executive, Tory group leader **Rebecca Poulsen** welcomed the station's location but said Bradford needs "more than a replacement terminus… we still need this through line." Green leader **Matt Edwards** asked whether Tice's comments undermine investor confidence. Council leader **Stephen Place** said he had spoken to national party figures who "will revisit any infrastructure projects… as and when and if they are returned to power," and insisted: "*We are absolutely 1,000% invested in a through line and not the terminus… I just don't see the*

point particularly investing all this money… for what? For a status quo." He said there was **"no risk."** Labour's **Imran Khan** called better rail a "game changer" but warned withdrawal of national support "would create serious problems." Work would not start until the **2030s** (next Parliament); Transport Secretary **Heidi Alexander** has said a year of surveys is needed to establish whether a through station is possible.

Barnsley: nursery staff to strike — and they blame the Reform council

Yorkshire Live / Huddersfield Examiner: More than **30 nursery workers in Barnsley walk out on Monday 9 November**, closing **six nurseries**, in a pensions row with the town's **Reform-led council** — what GMB's **Victoria Austin** calls "*the first time nursery workers in South Yorkshire have taken strike action in a generation.*" GMB says the council went ahead with transferring the nurseries to another provider after staff were initially told they could keep **Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS)** access, then **U-turned**, moving workers to a scheme GMB says means **lower pensions and pay**. One nursery in **Grimethorpe — in the council leader's own ward — has already closed.** Workers will picket Grimethorpe nursery 9am–midday, then canvass the ward door-to-door.

The council disputes the framing: it says the nurseries are being **transferred, not outsourced**; that further legal advice "made clear staff are not eligible to stay in the scheme" (staff and unions were told in spring); and that the lower-pay claim is **incorrect** because **TUPE** protects terms and conditions including pay — though it concedes TUPE "does not automatically protect pensions." Council leader **Cllr William Brown**: "*We're disappointed that GMB members have voted in favour of strike action. The decision to transfer these nurseries to another provider was taken to protect jobs and retain these services for families.*" Nurseries will close **9, 18 and 26 November**; Austin's verdict: "*Barnsley's Reform council leadership must change course — for the sake of our town's children.*"

Miners' pensions: Reform's Derbyshire leader issues a £1.2bn Christmas ultimatum

Derbyshire Times (BBC LDR Jon Cooper): Reform UK **Derbyshire County Council leader Alan Graves** is urging the Government to release more than **£1bn** locked in the **Mineworkers' Pension Scheme (MPS) Guarantor's Fund**. Chancellor **John Healey** told the Commons at the **28 October budget** that work was under way to release the fund, and — after Labour MPs, Graves and scheme trustees complained no final settlement was reached — said he wants a deal releasing the remaining money **"in weeks, not months."** Healey pledged the **full transfer of the Guarantor's Fund (believed to be worth £1.2bn)** and an end to the "standstill arrangement" so pensions keep rising, plus scrapping the 50/50 surplus split with Government — **but announced no timeline.**

Graves: "*Our miners are still waiting for the £1.2bn that is rightfully theirs. Derbyshire works hard. It deserves a Government that backs it.* ***Reform UK will.***" Reform UK says that **if Labour fails to settle the MPS before Christmas, it will do so within its first 100 days of power**, and accuses the Chancellor of failing to set "a clear and unambiguous timetable." (The MPS was closed to new members when British Coal was privatised in **1994**; Amber Valley Labour MP **Linsey Farnsworth** has also pressed for a payout. This follows the 3 Nov all-party miners' pension push fronted by Reform shadow chancellor Robert Jenrick.)

Holyrood: SNP demands LibDems 'spill the truth' over Graham Simpson defection rumours

The National and **The Herald** both report Holyrood is "awash with gossip" that Reform MSP **Graham Simpson** — who defected from the Scottish Conservatives to Reform in **August 2025** — may be about to defect **again**, this time to the **Liberal Democrats**. The SNP has demanded Lib Dem leader **Alex Cole-Hamilton** rule out accepting Reform MSPs, claiming it heard from an "external stakeholder" that Cole-Hamilton had said a meeting took place between him and Simpson. Simpson recently joined Cole-Hamilton on a **cross-party delegation to Taiwan**.

The denials are emphatic. Simpson to The Herald: "*This story is rubbish.*" A Scottish Lib Dem spokesperson: "*This is nonsense.*" A senior Lib Dem source: "*We don't think Graham has much in common with us.*" The SNP's **Alex Kerr** pressed anyway: "*Reform defectors have already been welcomed into the Liberal Democrats and now this — it's time Alex Cole-Hamilton spilled the truth... People who voted Liberal Democrat were not voting to see Reform UK MSPs offered safe harbour in their ranks — it's illiberal and undemocratic.*" The row follows former Tory MSP **Maurice Golden** — who had been working as a Reform adviser at Holyrood — joining the Lib Dems (and understood to be eyeing a Lib Dem candidacy at the next general election). Cole-Hamilton had said in March there is "*no circumstances the LibDems are going to enter a pact with Reform.*"

Forces TV: MacIntyre adds a NI-legacy 'lawfare' vow and a 'Healey should resign again' jab

Forces TV carries Reform's new armed-forces spokesman **Wg Cdr Angus MacIntyre**'s first speech (the same 100-day pledge logged on 6 Nov), with detail the earlier reports lacked. He attacked the **Northern Ireland legacy bill** now replacing the Tories' 2023 Legacy Act: "*It is a scandal that those who served there, who faced down the horrors of the IRA, now find themselves punished with* ***lawfare*** *for doing their duties.*" On Special Forces: "*Today our current government actively handicaps them and all service personnel with the threat of prosecution. Under Reform UK this will stop.*" The pledge: end all ongoing and future prosecutions of service personnel and veterans **"save the explicit consent of the Secretary of State for Defence"** within 100 days — "*if I fail in those first 100 days, I will resign.*"

He charted the shrinkage he witnessed: he joined a military of **330,000** (Army three armoured divisions, eight brigades; Navy ~50 frigates/destroyers; RAF 500+ fast jets) and left one with **less**

than half the personnel, **one** armoured division "that cannot train because there's no budget," **13** frigates/destroyers and **under a third** of the RAF's fighter aircraft. Reform is committed to **3% of GDP on defence by 2030** and NATO's **3.5% by 2035**. His parting shot at Chancellor **John Healey** (who quit the defence brief in June over funding, then delivered the Autumn Budget): "*If John Healey won't match that, despite everything, then he should **resign again**.*"

?? Policy / Controversy — also logged

- **openDemocracy podcast — "Abolish Westminster" (with Adam Ramsay):** A constitutional-critique episode tying devolution debates to dark money in politics; among its themes is "*why Reform UK is weaponizing imperial nostalgia*" and why breaking up the union may force England to build a modern democracy. Commentary, not Reform news — logged for completeness. (Marginal.)

False positives discarded this run:

- **The Critic — "Reform, dismantle, or exit?"** (Pieter Cleppe, 7 Nov): the "Reform" in the title is the *verb* — a column on reforming/dismantling/exiting the **European Union** (Cameron's 2016 renegotiation, Open Europe). Not about Reform UK; also a paywalled archive piece. Excluded.
- **4ni.co.uk — "Ulster University and Queen's co-host policing conference marking 25 years of reform"**: "reform" = the **PSNI/policing** 25th anniversary, not Reform UK. Excluded.

? Quick Summary

#	Story	Status
1	Arron Banks (Farage ally, hopeful Reform candidate) hired PRI to spy on business rivals, Sunday Times journalists and reportedly Tory chair Hollinrake	Independent: "raises new questions over Farage's judgement"; Banks declines comment, calls reporter "an activist"
2	Tice: Reform "never opposed" Bradford's NPR Phase-1 station — after previously vowing to scrap NPR and telling bidders "not to bother"	Bradford Reform leader Place "1,000% invested in a through line," says "no risk"; cross-party doubt
3	Barnsley nursery staff (30+) strike 9 Nov, closing six nurseries, blaming Reform council over pension U-turn	GMB: "first in a generation"; council says transfer not outsourcing, TUPE protects pay not pensions

#	Story	Status
4	Reform Derbyshire leader Alan Graves: release the £1.2bn miners' pension Guarantor's Fund	Reform pledges to settle within 100 days if Labour misses Christmas; Healey gave no timeline
5	SNP demands LibDems rule out Reform MSP Graham Simpson defecting	Simpson: "rubbish"; LibDems: "nonsense" / "not much in common"; follows Maurice Golden switch
6	Forces TV: MacIntyre adds NI-legacy "lawfare" vow + "Healey should resign again"	Same 100-day resign-if-I-fail pledge as 6 Nov; new detail on forces shrinkage
7	openDemocracy "Abolish Westminster" podcast (marginal)	Reform "weaponizing imperial nostalgia" — commentary only

Compiled 07/11/2026 09:30 GMT — NewsNow topic hub (UK/Politics/Reform+UK), 7 new items since the 6 Nov run. All article bodies verified from publisher pages; Derbyshire Times, Yorkshire Live and The Critic recovered via Playwright :8090 (403/202 on the NewsNow /A/3/ hop); Independent, BBC, The National, The Herald, Forces TV and openDemocracy fetched clean via plain urllib. Quiet Saturday window — top-cluster items (Madgwick charges, MacIntyre announcement, burqa-ban defeat, Hudson AI deepfake, Harrison/Leics resignation, EHRC letter, Voaden shove) all already covered in the 6 Nov file.

? Source Links

- The Independent — Farage ally Arron Banks using private investigators to snoop on business rivals, political opponents and journalists: https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/farage-reform-arron-banks-private-investigators-b3077399.html
- BBC — Party 'never opposed' Bradford rail plan, say Reform UK: https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cx5ynnedvg84o
- Yorkshire Live / Huddersfield Examiner — Staff at six Yorkshire nurseries to walk out, and they blame Reform council: https://www.examinerlive.co.uk (via NewsNow A/3/1329110571)
- Derbyshire Times — Derbyshire council leader urges Government to release miners' pension fund money: https://www.derbyshiretimes.co.uk/news/people/derbyshire-council-leader-urges-government-to-release-miners-pension-fund-money-9335801
- The National — SNP warn LibDems over Reform's Graham Simpson Holyrood defection: https://www.thenational.scot/news/26707107.snp-warn-libdems-reforms-graham-simpson-holyrood-defection/
- The Herald — Graham Simpson breaks silence on rumours of second defection: https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/26706443.lib-dems-dismiss-claims-reform-msp-defect-party/
- Forces TV — Reform's defence spokesperson says he'll end Forces prosecutions within 100 days, or resign: https://www.forcesnews.com/politics/reforms-defence-spokesperson-says-hell-end-forces-prosecutions-within-100-days-or-resign

- openDemocracy — Abolish Westminster (with Adam Ramsay): https://www.opendemocracy.net/podcasts/abolish-westminster-with-adam-ramsay/

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