



Full Council – 20 November 2023

Liberal Democrats Group Motion

Making our Voting System Fairer and More Representative

This Council believes:

The next General Election is an opportunity to take our country on a different course after years of chaotic Tory rule. This is especially true in the aftermath of the Brexit referendum, which saw the UK crash out of the European Union, with a bad deal, that has left us diminished, poorer and less important on the world stage. The next General Election will be fought under the antiquated First Past the Post voting system.

First Past the Post (FPTP) originated when land-owning aristocrats dominated parliament and voting was restricted to property-owning men. It is not fit for a 'modern democracy'.

In Europe, only the UK and authoritarian Belarus still use archaic single-round FPTP for general elections. This produces governments that have typically not had strong support across the country.

Internationally, Proportional Representation (PR) is used to elect the Parliaments of more than 80 countries. It is a system that works and has fostered a more consensual, pragmatic way of conducting politics and policy making.

PR ensures that all votes count, have equal value, and that seats won match votes cast. Under PR, MPs and Parliaments better reflect the age, gender and protected characteristics of both local communities and of the nation. Whilst the UK has taken leaps forwards in terms of electing a more diverse Parliament, we are still behind many other countries.

MPs better reflecting the communities they represent in turn leads to improved decision making, wider participation and increased levels of ownership of decisions taken. PR would also end minority rule. In 2019, 43.6% of the vote produced a government with 56.2% of the seats and 100% of the power. Fair, proportional votes also prevent 'wrong winner' elections such as occurred in 1951 and February 1974.

PR is now the national policy of the Labour Party, Liberal Democrats, Green Party, SNP, Plaid Cymru and Women's Equality Party along with a host of Trade Unions and pro-democracy organisations.

There is a growing consensus that the UK's voting system must change.

PR is already used to elect the parliaments and assemblies of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Its use should now be extended to include Westminster and considered at a local level too.

Our democracy is in a fragile state, with confidence in politics at a record low. Changing the voting system to guarantee that every vote counts equally can help to inspire renewed confidence in our political system, increase participation and ensure that the electorate are able to elect the type of government that the majority of the British people want to see.

This Council therefore resolves to:

- 1) Join 29 other local authorities across the country, of different political persuasions, in supporting calls for a change to the UK's voting system to Proportional Representation.
- 2) Request that the Leader of the Council write to H.M. Government calling for a change in our outdated electoral laws and to enable Proportional Representation to be used for UK general elections and local Council elections.
- 3) Request that the Leader of the Council write to H.M. Leader of the Opposition to encourage that the Labour Party include changing the electoral system in their next election manifesto.

Cllr Anton Georgiou
Alperton Ward