

Bath and North East Somerset Council

Full Council meeting, Thursday 10 October 2019

Liberal Democrat Motion on Electoral Reform

To be proposed by a Liberal Democrat Councillor

Council:

1. Believes that young people should be allowed a say over their future.
2. Recognises that 16 and 17 year olds are knowledgeable and passionate about the world in which they live and are as capable of engaging in the democratic system as any other citizen.
3. Notes that there is currently an unequal situation across the United Kingdom, with 16 and 17 year olds having voting rights in Scotland and Wales that are not available to them in England and Northern Ireland.
4. Supports the need for greater engagement with young people, leading to greater involvement of young people in the decisions that affect their community.
5. Believes that lowering the voting age to 16, combined with strong citizenship education, would empower young people to better engage in society and influence decisions that will define their future.
6. Believes that people aged 16 and 17, who can consent to medical treatment, work full-time, pay taxes, get married or enter a civil partnership and join the armed forces, should also have the right to vote.
7. Recognises and supports the ongoing 'Votes at 16' campaign by the British Youth Council, the UK Youth Parliament and other youth organisations, supported by thousands of young people across the UK.
8. Notes that the "Youth Strike 4 Climate" protesters in B&NES presented a list of demands to the Council in May 2019, including the demand of government to: "recognise that young people have the biggest stake in our future, by incorporating youth views into policy making and bringing the voting age down to 16".
9. Calls for 16 and 17 year olds to have the right in all elections and referendums across the UK.

Council therefore:

10. Requests that the Leader write to relevant Ministers and local MPs: expressing this Council's support for the Votes at 16 campaign; calling for the extension of the franchise to 16 and 17 year olds in all elections and referendums across the UK; and indicating this Council's willingness to participate in any pilot scheme.
11. Requests that the Leader write to the local MYPs and the British Youth Council expressing this Council's support for the Votes at 16 campaign and requesting to join the Votes at 16 coalition.