

Bath and North East Somerset Council

Full Council meeting 17 November 2022

Liberal Democrat Group amendment to Motion on Making Votes Count with Proportional Representation

To be proposed by Cllr Ruth Malloy

Council notes:

- Within Europe, only the United Kingdom and authoritarian Belarus still use the archaic First Past the Post (FPTP) system for General and Local Elections. Whilst internationally, Proportional Representation (PR) is used to elect parliaments in more than 80 countries.
- The UK's First Past the Post voting system curtails voter choice, making millions of votes ineffective, and leaving millions feeling unrepresented and unheard.
- **Elected under a form of Proportional Representation**, MPs, **regional mayors and councillors** and other elected representatives would better reflect their communities, leading to improved decision-making, wider **citizen** participation and increased levels of ownership of decisions taken.
- PR is already used to elect the parliaments and assemblies of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Council believes that:

- The FPTP system has contributed to dangerous levels of distrust and disillusionment with our democratic processes and politicians.
 - It is essential that faith is restored in our democratic system and that the public see Parliament as fairly reflecting their views.
 - Our First Past the Post voting system is a significant barrier to restoring this faith and all but guarantees that the balance of opinion among the electorate is not reflected in Parliament.
 - A system of Proportional Representation in which seats match votes and all votes count equally would help to rebuild public trust by ensuring that all political views are represented in Parliament **and Local Government** in proportion to their level of public support.
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- *Unless where specifically set out in the statute, motions approved at Council do not bind the Executive (Cabinet) but may influence their future decisions.*
 - *Councillors are reminded of their public sector equality duty which requires the Council to consider or think about how their policies or decisions may affect people who are protected under the Equality Act.*

Council therefore resolves:

1. To write to his Majesty's Government calling for a change in our outdated electoral laws to enable Proportional Representation to be used for general and local authority elections; and
2. **To thank Bath's MP Wera Hobhouse for her longstanding commitment to electoral reform, as evidenced by her role in the APPG for Electoral Reform and to call upon her to continue campaigning with Make Votes Matter and the Electoral Reform Society for a change to electoral law, leading to the introduction of a PR voting system for general elections and all other elections in the UK that do not yet use it, namely England.**
3. To call upon Bath and North East Somerset's two MPs to push for a change to electoral law to permit Proportional Representation and to promote the matter for debate within Parliament.

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