

Motion on proportional representation

In Europe, only the UK and Belarus still use the archaic single-round First past the post (FPTP) for general elections. England also uses it for local elections. Internationally, Proportional Representation (PR) is used to elect the parliaments of more than 80 countries. These countries tend to be more representative, more inclusive and greener.

PR ensures all votes count, have equal value and that seats won, match votes cast. Under PR, MPs and Parliaments better reflect the age, gender and characteristics of both local communities and of the nation.

PR would also end minority rule. In 2019, 43.6% of the vote produced a UK government with 56.2% of the seats and 100% of the power. In 2005 Labour was elected with 35.2% of the votes cast yet received a majority of the seats. PR would have prevented "wrong winner" elections such as occurred in 1951 and February 1974.

Locally on East Herts District Council the Conservatives won all 50 seats in 2015 with only just half the votes cast. In 2019 they won 80% of the seats with 46% of the vote. In 2023 the Greens won more seats on East Herts District Council with 5% less of the vote than the Conservatives.

PR is already used to elect the parliaments and assemblies of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. It is also used for local elections in Scotland and Northern Ireland and is being introduced in Wales. Its use should now be extended to include Westminster and local elections in England.

Motion:

This Council therefore resolves to write to H.M. Government calling for a change in our outdated electoral laws and to enable Proportional Representation to be used for UK general elections and local elections in England.

Motion proposed by Cllr Miriam Swainston and seconded by Cllr Simon Marlow

