

Notice of Motion to Full Council – Thursday 13th July 2023

Make votes matter by introducing Proportional Representation to the House of Commons

Southend-on-Sea City Council notes:

First Past the Post (FPTP) originated when land-owning aristocrats dominated Parliament and voting was restricted to property-owning men. Because of our outdated voting system, many thousands of residents in Southend-on-Sea cast votes which make absolutely no impact on the result of our national parliamentary elections.

In Europe, only the UK and authoritarian Belarus still use archaic single-round FPTP for general elections. Internationally, Proportional Representation (PR) is used to elect the parliaments of more than 80 countries. These countries tend to be more equal, freer 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 protected characteristics of both local communities and of the nation.

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 already used to elect the parliaments and assemblies of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Its use should now be extended to include Westminster.

Southend-on-Sea City 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To write to H.M. Government calling for a change in our outdated electoral laws and to enable Proportional Representation to be used for United Kingdom General Elections.

Proposer
Councillor Aston Line

Seconder
Councillor Matt Dent