

NOTICE OF MOTION – CLLR W FORSTER – PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION

Executive Summary

At its meeting on 21 July 2022, the Council referred the following Notice of Motion to the Executive.

Councillor W Forster

“The Council notes that Belarus and the United Kingdom are the only European countries that use First Past the Post for their national elections.

This Council believes that Proportional Representation ensures all votes count, have equal value, and those seats won match votes cast. Under Proportional Representation, Parliaments better reflect the age, gender and protected characteristics of local communities and the nation. Members of Parliament better reflecting their communities leads to improved decision-making, wider participation and increased levels of ownership of decisions taken.

Proportional Representation 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. Proportional Representation also prevents ‘wrong winner’ elections such as occurred in 1951 and February 1974.

Proportional Representation is already used to elect the parliaments and assemblies of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, but not for Westminster elections.

This Council therefore resolves to write to the Prime Minister and Woking’s Member of Parliament calling for a change in our outdated electoral laws to enable Proportional Representation to be used for future General Elections.”

Officer Comment

“Different voting systems have a variety of different features, ranging from how proportional they are (whether seats in parliament reflect votes cast), the connection between MPs and their communities and the extent to which voters can choose between different candidates.

The voting system we use to elect MPs to the UK Parliament is called First Past the Post. On election day, the UK is divided into 650 areas or constituencies (seats) and at the election the candidate with the most votes becomes the MP. As only one MP will represent the area, each party has one candidate to choose from.

Proportional representation is the idea that the seats in parliament should be in proportion to the votes cast. A more proportional way would mean that a party that received one-third of the vote could expect one-third of the seats in parliament. Within the more proportional systems, there are different ways of electing MPs. With some, you [only vote for a party](#), with others, you [vote directly for candidates](#).”

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Background Papers: None.

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