

Motion 1 - Motion to reject First Past the Post, the voting system currently used for local and general elections in the United Kingdom, and to support the introduction of a form of Proportional Representation in which all votes count equally and seats match votes.

To be moved by Councillor Robinson and seconded by Councillor Denis.

Preamble:

The electoral system used for local elections in England and Wales, First Past the Post (FPTP), is not a fair system, because it means that votes do not have equal weight and many votes are wasted. This leads to voter apathy and a feeling of disconnection from local democracy. Many seats are not even contested, and certain parties are over-represented. Across the county this may vary between the two larger parties, leaving those who have cast their vote for one of the other parties unrepresented – even when receiving support in large numbers.

The alternative to FPTP is a system of proportional representation (PR), where votes cast for parties translates more or less directly into seats won. There are many variants of PR. The Single Transferable Vote system (STV) variant of PR is already in use for local elections in Scotland and Northern Ireland.

The recently passed Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 introduced by the coalition government in Wales will introduce votes at 16, greater diversity in local government, and the ability for councils to choose their voting system between FPTP and STV.

Proposed Motion:

We call on the Council to agree:

That a move to the use of proportional representation for local elections would boost turn-out, make the Council more representative of the political make-up of its residents, and improve the quality of its decision-making, thereby benefiting all Lewes District residents.

This Council therefore asks the Chief Executive:

- To write to the Government to request that it changes electoral law to permit such a move; and
- To contact the Local Government Association asking them to assess the Welsh policy and investigate the legal options for improving democracy and participation in local government in England.