

**COUNCIL
19 JANUARY 2022**

PUBLIC DOCUMENT

TITLE OF REPORT: NOTICE OF MOTIONS UNDER STANDING ORDER 4.8.12

The following motion has been submitted, due notice of which has been given in accordance with Standing Order 4.8.12, previously published.

Notice has subsequently been given of an amendment to the Motion, as indicated in red font, as per Standing Order 4.8.14 (h).

A. Motion on Proportional Representation

To be moved by Councillor Chris Lucas and seconded by Councillor Ruth Brown:

“Council notes that:

1. *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.*
2. *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. With this system, voters rank candidates in order of preference and those who receive the most backing (including second and subsequent choices) are elected to serve in multi-member wards.*
3. *The introduction of PR for local elections in Scotland has led to an increase in turn-out, which was 44.8% at the last elections held in 2022. The average turnout in the May 2022 local elections in England was 33.6 which was broadly consistent with previous comparable elections^[1]. Whilst the turnout in the May 2022 local elections in North Hertfordshire District Council was slightly higher than the national average (39%)^[2] this still falls short of the successes in Scotland and elsewhere.*
4. *When the Electoral Commission surveyed eligible voters who did not vote in the May 2022 local election, 9% cited the reason for not voting as “there is in point in voting because... my vote doesn’t count”^[3]. This suggests that the improved representation offered by PR encourages greater engagement in local democracy.*

Council believes that there should be a move to the use of a system of proportional representation for local elections as soon as is practicably possible as this would boost turn-out and elect a council which is more representative of the range of political views of North Hertfordshire District Council’s residents.

Council resolves to:

1. *Call upon the UK Government to commit to changing electoral law to **permit the introduction of a PR system of voting** in any reforms to local government presented to Parliament.*

2. *Instruct the Managing Director to write to North Hertfordshire District Council's three MPs to ask them to call for a change to electoral law to permit a PR system of voting and promote the matter for debate in Parliament.”*

References:

- (1) <https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/who-we-are-and-what-we-do/elections-and-referendums/past-elections-and-referendums/england-local-council-elections/report-may-2022-local-elections-england>
- (2) <https://democracy.north-herts.gov.uk/mqElectionResults.aspx?ID=500000004&RPID=502471994>
- (3) <https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/who-we-are-and-what-we-do/elections-and-referendums/past-elections-and-referendums/england-local-council-elections/report-may-2022-local-elections-england>