

NORTH DEVON COUNCIL

POLICY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE: 27TH MAY 2021

NOTICE OF MOTION TO FULL COUNCIL ON 7TH APRIL 2021 BY COUNCILLOR MACK IN RESPECT OF ITEM 6 ON THE POLICY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE AGENDA

To consider motions of which notice has been submitted by Members in accordance with Part 4, Council Procedure Rules, Paragraph 11 of the Constitution.

(a) To consider the following notice of motion from Councillor Mack:

“Full 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. This leads to voter apathy and a feeling of disconnection from local democracy.
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 and those who receive the most backing (including second and subsequent choices) are elected to serve in multi-member wards.
3. The Welsh Assembly has just agreed legislation to allow local authorities to choose to change their voting system to the proportional Single Transferable Vote system, which is already used for local elections in Scotland and Northern Ireland.
4. The introduction of PR for local elections in Scotland has led to an increase in turnout, which was 47% at the last elections, held in 2017. In contrast, turnout for North Devon was 37% in the 2019 local District elections.
5. Barnstaple Town Council unanimously supported a move to proportional representation in North Devon on February 22nd. Full council believes 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 processes, thereby benefiting all North Devon residents.

Therefore, this Council resolves to:

1. Welcome the new legislation allowing Welsh councils to choose the fairest and most appropriate voting system for their local elections.
2. Request that the Government bring forward legislation to allow local elections in England to be run by a proportionally representative voting system (PR).
3. Work with the Electoral Commission to agree upon and choose the most appropriate electoral system for North Devon.”