

Proportional Representation for Westminster and Holyrood Elections – Motion as adjusted approved, after division.

14 Bailie Carroll, seconded by Bailie Wardrop moved that:-

“Council recognises the inequality in our UK voting system, which elects through a First Past the Post (FPTP) system. FPTP originated when land-owning aristocrats dominated parliament and voting was restricted to property-owning men.

Council notes that in Europe, only the UK and authoritarian Belarus still use single-round FPTP for general elections to their national parliaments. Internationally, Proportional Representation (PR) is used to elect the parliaments of more than 80 countries. These countries tend to produce more equitable, stable, and accountable governments.

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.

Council recognises that PR is currently used to elect the Welsh Senedd and Northern Ireland Assembly, as well as local councillors in Scotland. Council notes that the Scottish Parliament is only partially elected through a PR system, with the D'Hondt method.

Council also notes that as more people feel represented through a wider spectrum of voices elected through PR, disenfranchisement is reduced, as well as skewed results such as majority-rule of the UK Government on 33% of the vote in 2024, and 36% in 2015.

Such unrepresentative results have led to consequential policy changes with limited public support, including upon the democratic process. Council notes the Electoral Commission's data which detailed that 16,000 people were denied the right to vote due to incorrect voter ID at the 2024 UK General Election, with 4% of people polled post-election not voting due to Voter-ID requirements. Council expresses its opposition to the UK Government's policy of mandatory voter photo ID and the detrimental effect it has on voter turnout, especially in more marginalised communities, for an electoral process that already disenfranchises many through its voting system.

Council echoes the call for proportional representation for elections to the House of Commons which has been made by Trade Unions such as Unite, UNISON, and the CWU, and which was passed overwhelmingly by the Labour Party's 2022 Conference, and supported by the SNP, Scottish Greens, Reform, and other political parties within the UK.

Council supports moving towards a fully proportional system for Scottish Parliament elections, in the same spirit that the Welsh Senedd has.

Therefore, Council requests the Convener for Open Government writes to the Minister for the Cabinet Office urging support for fairer UK Elections, through amending the Representation of the People Bill to introduce a proportional

representation system of voting for UK Elections, and reversing the restrictions put upon voters by the introduction of mandatory voter ID.

Council additionally requests the Convener for Open Government write to the new Minister for Parliamentary Business in the Scottish Government to request that similar preparatory work begins to make the election system for the Scottish Parliament wholly proportional.

Council will also instruct the Council Election Office to investigate opportunities to enhance awareness of the new Voter ID requirements and to maximise uptake of postal ballot applications from as many people as possible who may otherwise be disenfranchised by the new voter ID law in future Westminster elections.”

Councillor Hepburn, seconded by Councillor Mitchell moved as an amendment that:-

In paragraph 6 AFTER ‘already disenfranchises many through its voting system.’
ADD

“Council hopes that in addition to measures to improve the proportionality of elections in the UK, that this session of the Scottish Parliament continues to seek ways to increase voter turnout and participation, and notes the decision of this Council on 3rd April 2025 regarding Automatic Voter Registration.

In paragraph 10 AFTER ‘make the election system for the Scottish Parliament wholly proportional’ ADD

‘And to provide an update on Glasgow City Council’s request for an Automatic Voter ID pilot within the City.’

Councillor Curran, seconded by Councillor Turner, moved as an amendment that:-

In first paragraph, delete all after “Council recognises” and insert:

“that there is an active and ongoing public debate about how different electoral systems translate votes into seats.”

In the following paragraph, remove “in Europe, only the UK and authoritarian Belarus still use single round FPTP” and please also delete “Internationally, Proportional Representation (PR) is used to elect the parliaments of more than 80 countries. These countries tend to produce more equitable, stable, and accountable governments.”

After “Council notes that”, please insert “a range of electoral systems operate internationally”.

This paragraph should now read as follows:

“Council notes that a range of electoral systems operate internationally for general elections to their national parliaments.”

Please delete the paragraph beginning with “PR ensures all votes count.”

After “D’Hondt method” please insert new paragraph, which should read as follows: “Council further notes that proportional electoral systems for devolved institutions in the UK, including elections to the Scottish Parliament, the Welsh Senedd and the Northern Irish Assembly, were introduced through legislation passed by a UK Labour Government as part of wider constitutional and democratic reform.”

In the subsequent paragraph, after “Council also notes” delete the rest of this paragraph and insert “levels of public confidence and engagement with democratic processes vary, and that perceptions of fairness and representation can influence voter participation.”

In the following paragraph, please remove: “Such unrepresentative results have led to consequential policy changes with limited public support, including upon the democratic process.” In the same paragraph, after “due to Voter-ID requirements” please insert: “Council notes that the UK Government has committed to reviewing voter ID requirements in light of evidence from recent elections, particularly their impact on voter participation.” Thereafter, please delete the rest of this paragraph.

In the next paragraph, please delete “echoes the call for proportional representation for elections to the House of Commons have been made”

After the paragraph mentioned above, please delete the remaining paragraphs.

During the debate, Bailie Carroll and Councillor Hepburn, with the agreement of their seconders, agreed to combine their motion and amendment, resulting in the following adjusted motion:-

“Council recognises the inequality in our UK voting system, which elects through a First Past the Post (FPTP) system. FPTP originated when land-owning aristocrats dominated parliament and voting was restricted to property-owning men.

Council notes that in Europe, only the UK and authoritarian Belarus still use single-round FPTP for general elections to their national parliaments. Internationally, Proportional Representation (PR) is used to elect the parliaments of more than 80 countries. These countries tend to produce more equitable, stable, and accountable governments.

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.

Council recognises that PR is currently used to elect the Welsh Senedd and Northern Ireland Assembly, as well as local councillors in Scotland. Council notes that the Scottish Parliament is only partially elected through a PR system, with the D’Hondt method.

Council also notes that as more people feel represented through a wider spectrum of voices elected through PR, disenfranchisement is reduced, as well as skewed results such as majority-rule of the UK Government on 33% of the vote in 2024, and 36% in 2015.

Such unrepresentative results have led to consequential policy changes with limited public support, including upon the democratic process. Council notes the Electoral Commission's data which detailed that 16,000 people were denied the right to vote due to incorrect voter ID at the 2024 UK General Election, with 4% of people polled post-election not voting due to Voter-ID requirements. Council expresses its opposition to the UK Government's policy of mandatory voter photo ID and the detrimental effect it has on voter turnout, especially in more marginalised communities, for an electoral process that already disenfranchises many through its voting system.

Council hopes that in addition to measures to improve the proportionality of elections in the UK, that this session of the Scottish Parliament continues to seek ways to increase voter turnout and participation, and notes the decision of this Council on 3rd April 2025 regarding Automatic Voter Registration.

Council echoes the call for proportional representation for elections to the House of Commons which has been made by Trade Unions such as Unite, UNISON, and the CWU, and which was passed overwhelmingly by the Labour Party's 2022 Conference, and supported by the SNP, Scottish Greens, Reform, and other political parties within the UK.

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Council additionally requests the Convener for Open Government write to the new Minister for Parliamentary Business in the Scottish Government to request that similar preparatory work begins to make the election system for the Scottish Parliament wholly proportional and to provide an update on Glasgow City Council's request for an Automatic Voter ID pilot within the City.

Council will also instruct the Council Election Office to investigate opportunities to enhance awareness of the new Voter ID requirements and to maximise uptake of postal ballot applications from as many people as possible who may otherwise be disenfranchised by the new voter ID law in future Westminster elections."

On a vote being taken electronically and by calling the roll, 25 voted for the amendment and 41 for the motion as adjusted, which was accordingly declared to be carried.