

Most Thurrock voters were cheated by crazy voting system on 7th May

The undemocratic First-past-the-post voting system used in 7th May's Council elections effectively disenfranchised a majority of those who voted in Thurrock while gifting Reform UK a thumping majority of the seats and absolute power on the Council, even though they were supported by only 44% of voters.

These were the voting percentages based on information on the Council's website:

	Con	Green	Labour	LibDem	Reform	Others
Votes %	14 %	14%	21%	1%	44%	6%
Seats	2	0	2	0	45	0
Seats %	4%	0%	4%	0%	92%	0%

Moreover, drilling down to ward level reveals poor levels of representation: Councillors in 15 of the 20 wards were elected on a minority of the vote, so we have the ridiculous situation where, in Grays Riverside Ward for example, 33% of those who voted enjoy 3 councillors of their political persuasion, while 67% of ward voters have none. This explains why only 44% of the vote across Thurrock was effective.

Given that two thirds of Thurrock's voters did not participate, it can rightly be claimed that a majority in Thurrock did not vote and, of the minority who did, a majority failed to elect anybody. What sort of democracy is that?

These crazy results are a disgrace. This was not what the voters of Thurrock had voted for on May 7th.

Reform UK did well, but nowhere near well enough to warrant walking off with over 9 out of 10 of the Council seats at the expense of the Conservative, Labour and Green parties who were all cheated out of their fair share of the seats.

The fault lies with continued use of the Victorian First-past-the-post voting system, an outdated steam age device which wastes many, if not most, of the votes shovelled into it, while producing a distorted result with the remainder. Moreover, outcomes are neither consistent nor certain. First-past-the-post is past it. Continued use of this museum piece makes about as much sense as having Stephenson's Rocket haul trains on HS2.

We need to replace First-past-the-post with a system of proportional representation which awards seats to parties in proportion to the votes cast for them so that, say, if Labour won 4 out of 10 votes, they would be awarded 4 out of 10 seats. First-past-the-post is not designed to achieve this. Not only would voting reform deliver more accurate representation, there would be no need for tactical voting and there would be no more safe seats as every vote would be keenly contested. More choice and more participation would revitalise local politics, with everything for everyone everywhere to play for.

All is not lost. Reform UK are staunch supporters of voting reform so should use what has happened in Thurrock to highlight the fact that they have won far more seats than their support warranted and demand that the Government takes action to reform our outdated voting system.

David Green,
33 Hartwood Rd, Southport PR9 AN

This press statement is published by David Green, a Merseyside resident who runs the Supervote Project, a small campaign which, in the company of others, seeks to reform the voting system in the UK. While colleagues tend to concentrate on elections to Westminster, the Supervote Project focuses on council elections in the belief that far more damage is being done to the fabric of our democracy at the grassroots by the continued use of the First-past-the-post voting system in local government elections. Please note that, while best endeavours have been used to ensure that the above information is accurate, this is an amateur publication.

supervote.org.uk