

Written Evidence from The Mayor of the West Midlands (TEB 55)

Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee The Elections Bill inquiry

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on the Government's proposal to amend the Elections Bill to include provision to: "use of the simple majority voting system in elections for the return of— (a) the Mayor of London; (b) an elected mayor of a local authority in England; (c) a mayor of a combined authority area; and (d) a police and crime commissioner".

I welcome and support the Government's proposals.

Firstly, simplicity and clarity. First past the post is a well-established and well-understood method of electing people in our country. It is used for the elections that most people are familiar with – General Elections and Council elections. This proposal is moving elections that are less well-established and have lower turnouts in line with elections that more people are familiar with and engage in with higher turnouts.

The Supplementary Vote is widely misunderstood, despite attempts to explain it. Numerous people have spoken to me about their confusion about how to use their votes and most importantly whether to use their votes. Confusion about the electoral process is not good for democracy and I am sure resulted in people effectively losing their vote through misunderstanding.

Importantly we had a situation in the West Midlands where there were multiple elections on the same day with different voting systems. This further added to the confusion and lack of clarity which is not good for democracy.

The only time the public have had a chance to express their view on the voting system they emphatically supported First past the post. The Government is right to bring Mayoral and PCC elections in line with the rest of the electoral process and remove this anomaly.

Yours sincerely

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Mayor of the West Midlands

September 2021