

ELECTIONS TO NALC POSITIONS AND COMMITTEES

Currently NALC uses the multiple vote system for its internal elections (also known as First Past the Post or Plurality Voting). It is the method used for multi-member wards in English local elections.

Why Change

There are complaints that NALC tends to elect very samey (“male, pale & stale”) people to its committees.

For example if out of 60 voters there are 15 who believe that a woman should be elected but there are 30 who think that the “familiar faces” should continue it is likely that there will be 2 familiar faces and at least one woman. With plurality voting then it would be likely that all the “familiar faces” would be voting but not a woman.

With plurality voting if any voter has a particularly favourite candidate then if they use more than one vote then they damage the chances of that favourite candidate. With STV surplus or redundant votes will transfer.

I am proposing that NALC change to Single Transferable Vote (STV)

It can produce much greater variety or that it means that rather than having to vote for their favourite, they can also give preferences for their second and third choices. This means everyone’s vote counts.

Under the current system if your favourite comes, say last, your vote was worthless. But under STV, your candidate would be eliminated and we would quickly look at your second choice, and transfer your vote to them. It means your vote will count, in the final decision.

That encourages people to be bolder with their first choices, knowing that if they don’t win, their vote will get transferred. It is likely to widen the pool of candidates and enable people to signal up and coming people, who maybe don’t win first time, but who have support and should be encouraged for the future.

It almost certainly will produce a wider range of people, including more women, younger people and people of a more diverse background.

Single Transferable Vote (STV)

This is the method used with many organisations and is used for Scottish and Northern Ireland local elections and for the Northern Ireland Assembly and electing Northern Ireland's MEPs.

Voters number a list of candidates. Their favourite as number one, their second favourite number two, and so on. Voters can put numbers next to as many or as few candidates as they like.

STV produces proportional results. This is not restricted to political party proportionality but with respect to any factor that voters are mindful of e.g. gender, age, region, old hands, new blood etc.

Multi-member Plurality

This is simple to vote and to count. If there are 4 places to elect then the ballot paper list all the candidates and voters can put up to 4 crosses. The number of votes for each candidate is counted and the 4 candidates with most votes are declared elected.

STV How it's counted

Voters do not need to understand the counting process as long as they understand that their vote is unlikely to be wasted. If

To get elected, a candidate needs a set amount of votes, known as the quota. The people counting the votes work out the quota based on the number of vacancies and the number of votes cast.

Each voter has one vote. Once the counting has finished, any candidate who has more number ones than the quota is elected. But, rather than ignore extra votes a candidate received after the amount they need to win, these votes move to each voter's second favourite candidate.

If no one reaches the quota, then the people counting the vote remove the least popular candidate. People who voted for them have their votes moved to their second favourite candidate. This process continues until every vacancy is filled.

There is a worked out example in the Appendix

Appendix – Example of STV Count

There are 4 places and 60 voters with 8 candidates:

First Preference Votes received are

A 15, B 11, C 10 , D 8, E 8, F 4 , G 3 , H 1

The Quota is $(60 \text{ divide by } 4+1) + 1 = 13$

Stage 1

So any candidate with more than 13 votes is elected. In this case A. But A has more than the require votes to get elected. A has 2 surplus votes so only needed 13/15 of each person's vote..

Stage 2

A' 2nd preference votes are added to the other candidates at $2/15 = 0.133$ each.

If they were B 5, E 6, F4

So we now have, say B 11.667, D 10 C 10, E 8.8, F 4.533, G 3, H 1

Stage 3

None of these exceed Quota so the lowest vote H Is eliminated. That is transferred to the second preference say D which now has 11 votes.

Stage 4

There is not another candidate over Quota the next lowest is eliminated ie G. These votes are distributed. If they all go to D then D will now have 13 and reaches quota and is elected.

Stage 5

As D has no surplus votes none are to be redistributed. The next lowest F is eliminated. The 4 First preferences are distributed among the remaining

candidates and 4 votes inherited from A are passed on to the 3rd preference at 0.1333 each.

© NALC 2022