

# Full Council Familiarisation Session

**Please sit near a microphone and  
where you can see a screen**

# Full Council Familiarisation Session

- Paul Turner, Director, Legal and Assurance
- Joanna Boaler, Assistant Director: Democracy and Transparency

Thursday 21 May 2026

# Council meetings



- **Three types of Council meeting:**
  - Annual (May), Ordinary and Extraordinary
- **Typical Order of Business:**
  - Declarations of interest
  - Public Questions
  - Approval of minutes (from previous meeting)
  - Chairman's Announcements
  - Petitions
  - Executive Statement
  - Motions (Notice of motions): Voting, speeches, time
  - Council business
  - Cabinet business
  - Reports
  - Oral questions

# Meetings in the Chamber



- Only water permitted
- Turning on and off the microphone
- Taking care of papers and your arms
- Requesting to speak
- Sit or stand
- Clocks
- Bells

# Words we use in Council meetings

Apologies

Motion/Move

Proposer/Mover

Seconder

Carried/Lost

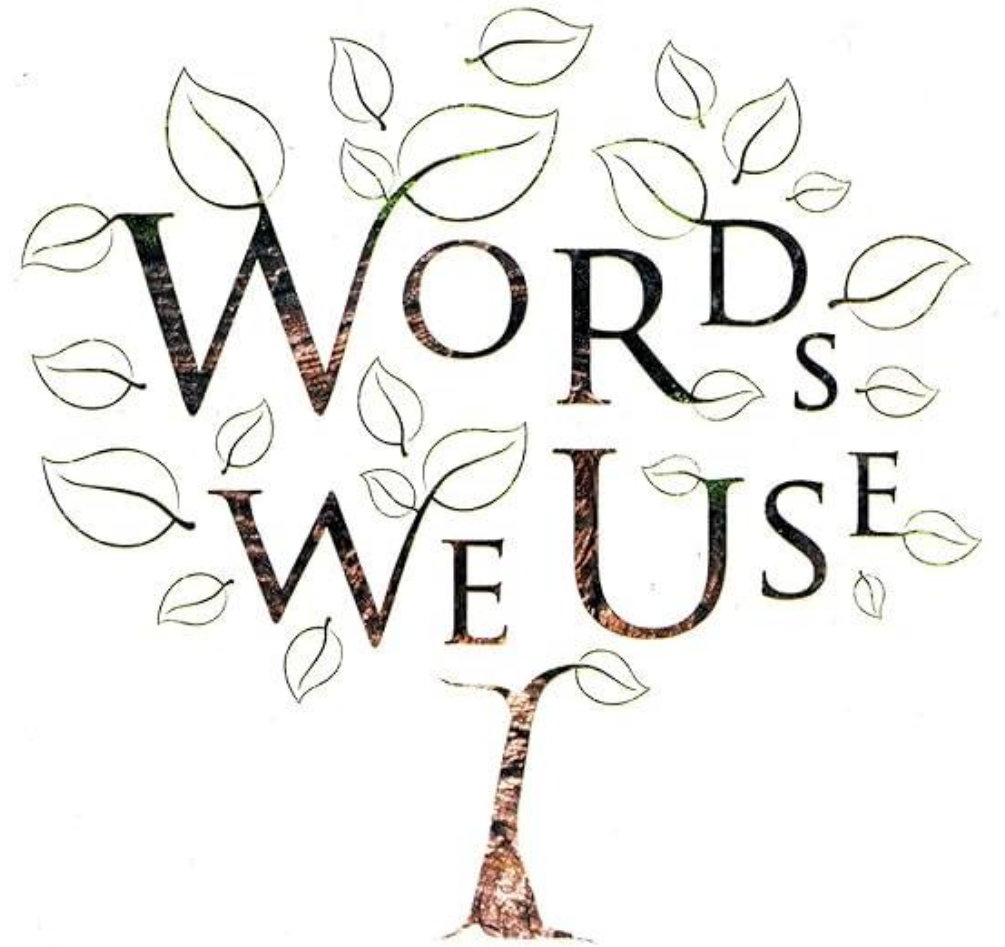
Resolve/Resolution

Notice of Motion

Amendment

Substantive motion

Reserve right to speak



DIARMAID Ó MUIRITHE

# **The Six Months Rules**

- **A member loses their seat if they don't attend a meeting every six months (committee meetings and cabinet meetings count)**
- **Council can't normally consider a motion which reverses a decision taken in the last six months**

# Basics of Meetings

- **Motions – every time council decides anything it's a motion**
- **A councillor speaks only once in a debate**
- **If every councillor spoke in every debate?**
  - it would be at least  $3 \times 78 = 234$  minutes per debate – nearly four hours
- **Address the Chairman – speak to other members**
- **Voting**
- **The Chairman's decision is final.**

# Speaking in a debate

- **Motions are proposed and seconded without a speech**
- **Any amendments are proposed and seconded without a speech**
- **Proposer has five minutes**
- **Secunder has three minutes – either after proposer or at the end.**
- **Amendment proposer has three minutes**
- **Amendment seconder has three minutes – either after proposer or at the end**
- **Everyone else speaks (three minutes, but cabinet members have five when speaking about their portfolio)**
  - Tell us in advance if you know you want to speak
  - Indicate to speak by raising your hand. Keep your hand up until we have confirmed we have seen you
- **Any seconds sum up if not already spoken**
- **Vote(s)**
- **If passed, the substantive motion becomes a resolution of the council.**

# Speaking in debates

Succinct – less can be more?

Speech must be relevant or Chairman can call you out.

Only one speech per debate

No right of reply

You will be called to speak - tell us in advance that you want to speak or put your hand up – you can take it down when we have seen you.

# Points of Order and Points of Personal explanation



**You can raise a point of order at any time.**



**A Point of order is only to raise an issue where you think the constitution and the law haven't been complied with.**



**A Point of Personal Explanation can only be raised once you have already spoken in the debate. You can only raise on if you think that another member refers to your speech and you think they have misunderstood a point you made earlier**



**There is no general right of reply.**

# Voting



**General Assent**



**Show of hands**



**Named vote**

# Behaviour in the Chamber



If the Chairman stands everyone must sit down and stop speaking



If people disregard the ruling of the chairman ultimately they can be excluded from the meeting



People will complain if they cannot hear because members are having side conversations.

# Agenda for this meeting and what is needed

Prayers/ Outgoing Chairman's announcements

1 Election of Chairman

2 Appointment of Vice Chairman

3 Apologies for Absence

4 Declarations of Interest

5 Confirmation of the minutes of last meeting

6 Return of Members Elected and Proportionality

7 Election of Leader

8 Public Questions

9 Chairman's Announcements

10 Petitions

11 Appointments to Committees

12 Executive Statements

13 Motions

14 Council Issues

15 Cabinet Issues

16 Annual Reports for 2025/2026

17 Oral questions

Any  
Questions