

## **Recommendations from the Standing Orders Working Group:**

### **Introduction:**

The Standing Orders Working Group was asked by the elected Members to review the existing procedures relating to the management of business on the Council agenda and in particular how Motions are dealt with. The following recommendations are designed to improve the effectiveness of Council meetings as well as addressing concerns surrounding the length of time allocated to motions on notice and the multiplicity of emergency motions. The goal is to achieve a balance between fulfilling the statutory obligations of Councillors while at the same time allowing members to discuss issues relevant to them and their communities. Standing Orders is an adaptable document and the Working Group will continue to review its operation on an ongoing basis in light of these recommendations.

### **General:**

1. All Area, SPC and JPC Committees will be invited to agree a standard length of time for their meetings which would be approved by a majority of Members. An option to extend the meeting by a maximum of 30 minutes would be available with the agreement of a majority of Members present. The decision to extend the meeting to be taken 30 minutes before the scheduled conclusion of the meeting.
2. Discontinue the use of "Topical Issue" mechanism
3. Amalgamation of all Area Committee and all Area JPC Breviates into a single report for each category. (To be reviewed in 6 months with the option to include SPC in this process if successful)
4. Lord Mayor's Business to be limited to 10 minutes and relevant to the role of the LM,
5. Reserved functions, management reports and breviates to be dealt with between 6.25 – 8.30pm. The Housing Supply and Delivery report to be the first item listed after the reserved functions.

### **Motions on Notice:**

6. 1 hour will be set aside for motions from 8.30 – 9.30pm (To be reviewed in 6 months)
7. Motions on notice will be dealt with between 8.30 – 9.10pm
8. The time allocated to speakers will be 2 minutes for the proposer plus 1 minute at close of debate and 90 seconds for all other speakers taken by group first.
9. The debate will conclude following a maximum of 20 minutes after which the motion will then be put to a vote.

### **Emergency Motions:**

10. Emergency motions will be considered from 9.10 – 9.30pm
11. A Councillor may propose or second one emergency only for each monthly meeting.
12. The time allocated to speakers will be 90 second each. Councillors will speak by group and then open to other interested speakers
13. The debate will conclude following a maximum of 20 minutes after which the motion will then be put to a vote. Emergency Motions will continue to require 2/3 of Members support for approval as under existing standing orders

### **Note:**

Consideration was given to replacing Emergency motions with a Party/Group Topical motion. Groups would be allocated slots on the agenda either proportionally or through group rotation.

Proportionately by size the slots available to groups for the remainder of this Council would be as follows:

I.)	Fianna Fail	-	4 slots	V.)	Labour	-	3 slots
II.)	Independent	-	3 slots	VI.)	Sinn Fein	-	3 slots
III.)	Green Party	-	3 slots	VII.)	Social Democrats	-	2 slots
IV.)	Fine Gael	-	3 slots	VIII.)	People Before Profit	-	1 slot

If motion slots were allocated in order of size on a rotational basis the order would be as follows: Each group would potentially have 2-3 slots for the remainder of this Council.

1.)	Fianna Fail	5.)	Labour
2.)	Independent	6.)	Sinn Fein
3.)	Green Party	7.)	Social Democrats
4.)	Fine Gael	8.)	People Before Profit

The Working Group thought that the Party/Group motion had merit but that it represented too big a departure from the current system and therefore recommended the continued use of the Emergency Motions procedure as amended in this document.

### **Operation of Section 132 of the Local Government Act 2001 – Second Legal Opinion:**

14. To facilitate the obtaining of second Legal opinions under Section 132 of the LGA 2001 it is proposed that a section 132 motion should be delivered to the Chief Executive's Department requesting a second legal opinion in specified terms at least 7 days before a Council Meeting but before the agenda is issued. . The members will have already received a legal opinion and the matter will be in relation to the exercise or performance of a reserved function as set out in Section 132 (2) (a). The wording of the section 132 motion with the signatories of those requesting the second legal advice would then be listed for decision in the governance section of the agenda. Where the terms of the resolution were not agreed by Council or not sufficiently specified in the Section 132 Motion the matter would be referred to the Protocol Committee to agree the terms. This process does not preclude the capacity of Members to request second legal opinion on a matter before Council for discussion.