

9. Rules of Debate

General

Debates at meetings of the Cabinet, committees, sub-committees and boards may be less formal than debates at Full Council, which will always follow the procedure below. The chairman of these meetings has the discretion to allow this informality, but in the event of dispute the process set out in this procedure rule will be followed.

Speaking at meetings

When a councillor speaks at a meeting, they will remain seated and address the meeting through the chair. If more than one councillor wishes to speak, the chairman will ask one to speak and others must remain silent.

Chairman standing

When the chairman stands during a debate, any member speaking at the time must stop.

Member not to be heard further

If a member persistently disregards the ruling of the chairman by behaving improperly or offensively or deliberately obstructs business, the chairman may move that the member be not heard further. If seconded, the motion will be voted on without discussion.

Member to leave the meeting

If the member continues to behave improperly after such a motion is carried, the chairman may either adjourn the meeting for a specified time or move that the member leaves the meeting. If the motion that a member leaves the meeting is seconded, the motion will be voted on without discussion.

General disturbance

If there is a general disturbance making orderly business impossible, the chairman may adjourn the meeting for as long as they think necessary.

No speeches until motion seconded

No speeches may be made after the mover has moved a proposal and explained the purpose of it until the motion has been seconded.

Right to require motion in writing

Unless notice of the motion has already been given in writing, and is not a procedural motion, the chairman may require it to be written down and handed to them before it is discussed.

Secunder's speech

When seconding a motion or amendment, a member may reserve their speech until later in the debate.

Content and length of speeches

Speeches must be directed to the question under discussion or to a personal explanation or point of order. No speech may exceed three minutes without the consent of the chairman, except that

the mover of an original motion can speak for up to five minutes in moving the motion and then for a further period of five minutes in replying at the end of the debate.

When a member may speak again

A member who has spoken on a motion may not speak again whilst it is the subject of debate, except:

- (a) to speak once on an amendment moved by another member
- (b) to move a further amendment if the motion has been amended since they last spoke
- (c) to speak on the main issue when their first speech was on a moved amendment
- (d) in exercise of a right of reply
- (e) on a point of order
- (f) by way of personal explanation

Amendments to motions

An amendment to a motion must:

- (a) be relevant to and intelligible with the motion
- (b) either add or delete a word or words
- (c) not introduce a new topic
- (d) not negate the motion
- (e) be worded so that, if it is agreed by the council, it can be passed as a valid resolution
- (f) not be, in the opinion of the Monitoring Officer, defamatory, frivolous, offensive or otherwise out of order

Only one amendment may be moved and discussed at any one time. No further amendment may be moved until the amendment under discussion has been disposed of.

The text of any amendment must be given to the chairman. If it is not they may rule that it falls.

If an amendment is not carried, other amendments to the original motion may be moved.

If an amendment is carried, the motion as amended takes the place of the original motion. This becomes the substantive motion to which any further amendments are moved.

After an amendment has been carried, the chairman will read out the amended motion before accepting any further amendments, or if there are none, put it to the vote.

Alteration of motion

A member may alter a motion they have moved with the consent of both the meeting and the seconder. The meeting's consent will be signified without discussion. Only alterations that could be made as an amendment may be made.

Withdrawal of motion

A member may withdraw a motion they have moved with the consent of both the meeting and the seconder. The meeting's consent will be signified without discussion. No member may speak on the motion after the mover has asked permission to withdraw it unless permission is refused.

Right of reply

The mover of a motion has a right of reply at the end of the debate on the motion, immediately before it is put to the vote.

If an amendment is moved, the mover of the original motion has the right of reply at the close of the debate on the amendment.

The mover of the amendment has no right of reply to the debate on their amendment.

Procedural motions

When a motion is under debate, no other motion may be moved except the following procedural motions:

- (a) to withdraw a motion
- (b) to amend a motion
- (c) to exclude the public and press in accordance with the Access to Information rules (see Part 5 Section 2)
- (d) to not hear further a member named under Section 9 or to exclude them from the meeting

Closure motions

A member may move, without comment, the following motions at the end of a speech of another member:

- (a) to proceed to the next business
- (b) that the question now be put
- (c) to adjourn a debate
- (d) to adjourn a meeting

If a motion to proceed to next business is seconded, the chairman shall immediately put this to the vote and if the majority of those voting are in favour, the meeting will move immediately to the next item of business and there will be no further discussion (or decision) on the matter being considered.

If a motion that the question now be put is seconded and the chairman thinks the item has been sufficiently discussed, then the chairman shall immediately put this to the vote. If carried, the chairman will give the mover of the original motion a right of reply and then immediately put the substantive motion to the vote. If the chairman is not satisfied that the item has been sufficiently discussed, then they will reject the procedural motion and the item will be further debated.

If a motion to adjourn the debate or to adjourn the meeting is seconded and the chairman thinks the item has not been sufficiently discussed and cannot reasonably be so discussed on that occasion, they will put the procedural motion to the vote without giving the mover of the original motion the right of reply.

Point of order

A member may raise a point of order at any time. The chairman will hear them immediately. A point of order may only relate to an alleged breach of these procedure rules or the law. The member must indicate the rule or point of law and the way in which they consider it has been broken. The ruling of the chairman on the matter will be final.

Personal explanation

A member may make a personal explanation at any time. A personal explanation may only relate to some material part of an earlier speech by the member, which may appear to have been

misunderstood in the present debate. The ruling of the chairman on the admissibility of a personal explanation will be final.

Non-members invited to speak

Where non-members are invited to make presentations on matters being considered by the meeting they will also, at the chairman's discretion, be invited to participate in any debate following the presentation other than the ability to move or second motions or vote thereon.