1. That there should be themed debates on government business on topics that are of importance over three sessions Wednesday Thursday am and pm. The government should be the proposer but the corporate body/opposition should have the power to reject. These debates should allow longer times for speakers. They should also allow for more interruptions and so more ‘real debate’ [suggest that in the meantime a note should be made of the frequency with which interruptions are not taken, though clearly this will reflect the brevity of speeches not encouraging attempts at interruptions]

2. In ordinary debates each party should be told the time that it has for back bench speakers and should be able to determine for itself how many speakers it will have. For example if the allocation is 24 minutes for 4 speakers. The party might wish to have 3, 4 or even 6 speakers they could speak for 8 6 or 4 minutes [but informing the presiding officer beforehand]

3. At voting time in order to assist the presiding office the motion should be put in such a way that only those saying no speak

4. Any member’s debate which gets more than one third of the members supporting should have the option of being a motion with a vote. The vote being held at the first decision time after the debate

5. A member’s motion for debate which receives more than 50 signatures should be selected for debate during ‘normal session’ perhaps doubled up with a minor parties business time splitting a Thursday morning.

6. The practice of moving amendments but withdrawing them before the vote which is practised in the Welsh assembly should be offered to parties

7. It should be formally permitted to use apple ipad or equivalent android in the chamber to give speeches. I have already done it once.

Richard Simpson MSP
3 November 2011