

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

5 September 2019

Agenda Item	23
Report No	HC/48/19

STANDING ORDERS RELATING TO THE CONDUCT OF MEETINGS

Report by the Head of Corporate Governance

Summary

This report outlines proposals for amendment to the Council's Standing Orders Relating to the Conduct of Meetings.

Annual Review of Standing Orders is a requirement of the Council's Code of Corporate Governance.

A copy of the current Standing Orders can be found on the Council Website as follows:-

https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/11817/standing_orders_for_the_conduct_of_meetings

Recommendations

The Council is asked to approve the proposed amendments to the Standing Orders Relating to the Conduct of Meetings as detailed.

Implications

There are no resource, legal and climate change/carbon clever risk implications or community impacts (equality, poverty, rural and Island) arising from these proposals.

1. Proposed Amendments

1.1 SO12 – Notices of Motion

It is proposed to include the following wording within Standing Order 12:-

“In terms of relevancy and competency, any Notice of Motion being proposed must concern the business of the Council.

All Notices of Motion and Starred Items coming before Council for consideration shall be accompanied, where appropriate, with an assessment completed by the Executive Chief Officer, Resources and Finance, identifying the financial, staffing and other implications of adopting the Motion/Starred Item together with, where appropriate, an assessment of the measures that have been identified to address such implications.”

1.2 SO 13 - Notices of Amendment

It is proposed to include the following wording within Standing Order 13:-

“For the avoidance of doubt, individual emails and/or individual written signatures will be accepted from Members who wish to submit and/or support Notices of Amendment.”

It is proposed to amend the following paragraph:-

“The Notice must be in writing, signed by a Member of the ‘Committee’ (previously ‘Council’) giving the Notice, countersigned by at least 7 other Members of the ‘Committee’ (previously ‘Council’). In the case of a City/Area Committee, the 8 signatories must include at least one quarter of the Members of that Committee (subject to a minimum of 3) and received by the Head of Corporate Governance not more than 3 working days after (but excluding) the date of the Committee meeting at which the resolution or decision was passed and no later than 5pm on the final day”.

1.3 SO 14 - Notices of Amendment (Planning)

It is proposed to include the following wording within Standing Order 14:-

“For the avoidance of doubt, individual emails and/or individual written signatures will be accepted from Members who wish to submit and/or support Notices of Amendment (Planning).”

It is proposed to amend the following paragraph:-

“This Notice must be in writing, signed by ‘19’ (currently ‘15’) Members of the Council (including at least one third of the membership of the relevant Planning Application Committee) and will be submitted to the next scheduled meeting of the full Council”.

1.4 SO 25 – Method of Voting

It is proposed to delete the following wording within Standing Order 25:-

“Immediately prior to any vote being taken, the bell will be rung and the Clerk will read out the issue on which the vote is to be taken. Thereafter, no-one shall interrupt the proceedings until the result of the vote has been announced”.

1.5 SO 32 – Submission of Minutes of Headquarters Committees and City/Area Committees

It is proposed to include the following wording within Standing Order 32:-

“In the case of any matter discussed by a Committee where that matter is not included within the Committee’s remit, any decision taken will require to be submitted to the next scheduled meeting of the full Council as a recommendation (known as a ‘starred item’).

At the Council meeting, any Member can move an amendment when approval of the starred item is considered. If that amendment is seconded and successful when a vote is taken, it will become the decision of the Council.

The Council having so decided, it will be incompetent for the matter to be re-considered by the Committee concerned”.

1.6 New Standing Order - Question Time (Public) – from December 2019

It is proposed to include the following:-

A member of the public may submit, for consideration at an ordinary meeting of the Council, a written question to the Leader of the Council, Depute Leader of the Council or Chair of a Committee concerning the business of the Council. This question must be received by the Head of Corporate Governance no later than 12 noon on the Friday preceding the meeting.

Questions will be delivered at the meeting exactly as submitted and one supplementary question will be allowed in each case. No question will exceed 1 minute.

Questions must not refer to individual planning or licensing matters or any matter of a personal nature. In addition, questions must not be substantially the same as a question which has been put at a meeting of the Council in the previous 6 month period, must not be defamatory, frivolous, vexatious or offensive and must not require the disclosure of confidential or exempt information.

A 20 minute time allocation will be allowed at ordinary Council meetings for questions from members of the public.

2. Other Administrative Changes

- 2.1 Minor administrative changes will be made as necessary to remove duplication and to clarify existing arrangements.

Designation: Head of Corporate Governance

Date: 26 August 2019