

The Highland Council
Standing Orders
Relating to the Conduct of Meetings

8 September 2011

Highland Council

Standing Orders Relating to the Conduct of Meetings - List of Contents

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**Standing Orders of The Highland Council
Relating to the Conduct of Meetings**

**Standing Orders made by the Highland Council on
23 June 2011**

A. Preliminaries

1. Commencement

These Standing Orders will apply and have effect on and after 9 September 2010.

2. Application of Interpretation Act

The Interpretation Act 1978 will apply to the interpretation of these Standing Orders as it applies to the interpretation of an Act of Parliament.

3. Definitions

In these Standing Orders the following words and expressions shall have the meanings shown below:-

"the 1973 Act" means the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973.

"the 1994 Act" means the Local Government etc. (Scotland) Act 1994.

"Council" means The Highland Council constituted under the 1994 Act.

4. Alteration

It shall not be competent to rescind or alter any of these Standing Orders unless the Council has passed a resolution to that effect following the procedure detailed in Standing Order 10.1, or where the Council has agreed at a previous meeting to consider such rescission or alteration. In the case of the Notice of Motion Procedure, the terms of the proposed amendment will have been specified in the Notice of the Business for the meeting of the Council. (For the avoidance of doubt this Standing Order cannot be suspended under Standing Order 6 below).

5. Review

The Council will review these Standing Orders each year, normally in September.

6. Suspension of Standing Orders

To suspend any of the Standing Orders, with the exception of Standing Orders 4, 12, 17, 21 and 43-46 which cannot be suspended, will require the consent of not less than two-thirds of the Members voting.

7. Application of Standing Orders to Committees, Sub-Committees etc.

The provisions of these Standing Orders, with the exception of Standing Orders 37-45 will apply to all Committees of the Council and to Sub-Committees of Committees (and to other subsidiary bodies) as they apply to the Council with the substitution of references to the Committee or Sub-Committee (or other

subsidiary body) and to the Chairman, Vice-Chairman (or other Member chairing a meeting in terms of Standing Order 11) as the case may be and as appropriate, for reference to the Council and to the Convener and Leader of the Council's Administration respectively.

B. Calling Meetings/Items for Future Meetings

8. Notice of Meetings

- 8.1 **Generally** Notice of the place, date and time of a meeting of the Council will, subject to the provisions of Standing Order 8.3 below, be given to every member of the Council by or on behalf of the Assistant Chief Executive not later than the seventh day before the meeting by being delivered, posted, faxed or delivered or transmitted by other electronic means to his or her usual place of residence (or any other address stated in writing by the member to the Assistant Chief Executive).
- 8.2 A **Special Meeting** of the Council will be called by the Assistant Chief Executive (a) on being required to do so by the Convener of the Council or (b) on receipt of a requisition in writing for that purpose (i) stating the business proposed to be transacted at the meeting; and (ii) signed by at least a quarter of the membership (i.e. 20 members of the Council, the relevant number in the case of a Committee being subject to a minimum of 3) and the meeting will be held within fourteen days of receipt of the requisition by the Assistant Chief Executive.
- 8.3 In the case of a Special Meeting called at the request of the Convener of the Council where it appears to the Convener that the item of business demands special urgency, the Assistant Chief Executive may call the meeting without giving the seven days notice specified in 8.1 above provided every effort is made to contact members to give them as much notice as possible before the meeting.
- 8.4 **Public Notice** of a meeting of the Council will be given by posting a Notice outside the Council Headquarters, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness or outside any other place where the meeting is to take place, at least four clear working days before the meeting, or if the meeting is convened at shorter notice, then at the time it is actually convened.

The Notice of Meeting will include:

- (a) The date, time and place of the meeting, and
- (b) information on the availability for inspection of the Agenda and accompanying reports.

The Agendas and accompanying reports will be available for public inspection during working hours at the office where the Notice is posted, and will be published on the Council's website for the press and the public at least three clear days before the meeting.

Further, the Agendas and accompanying reports will be made available for inspection at least three clear days before the meeting at other outlets belonging to the Council, including Area Offices, Service Points and selected libraries.

- 8.5 Want of service of a Notice of Meeting on any Member of the Council shall not affect the validity of the meeting.

9. Place of Meetings

- 9.1 **Meetings of the Council** will be held at Council Headquarters, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness on the days and times fixed by the Council or at such place and time as may be otherwise fixed by the Convener in consultation with the Assistant Chief Executive.
- 9.2 **Meetings of Committees** other than Planning Applications Committees will be held at Council Headquarters Glenurquhart Road, Inverness on the days and at the times fixed by the Council, unless agreed otherwise by the Committee or by the Chairman of the Committee for special reasons having consulted with the Convener of the Council and the Assistant Chief Executive. The powers of the Chairman of the Committee under this Standing Order include power to cancel an ordinary meeting if it appears to him or her, after such consultation, that there is insufficient business to justify the holding of a meeting.
- 9.3 **Meetings of Planning Applications Committees** will be held at places and times determined by them within the pattern agreed by the Council or as shall be fixed by the Chairman in consultation with the Assistant Chief Executive or the Corporate Manager.

10. Notices of Motion etc for Submission to Future Meetings

- 10.1 **A Notice of Motion for submission to a future meeting** of the Council will be in writing, signed by the Member of the Council giving Notice, counter-signed by at least one other Member (entitled to exercise a deliberative vote in respect of the Motion) and sent to the Assistant Chief Executive.
- 10.2 Such a Notice of Motion must be received not later than fourteen days prior to the meeting of the Council concerned and no later than 5pm on the final day. In calculating the fourteen days notice, the day of the Council meeting will be excluded. If a Notice of Motion is late, it will be referred to the next available meeting of the Council, at the request of the members involved.
- 10.3 **Notice of Amendment (challenging a Headquarters or Inverness City Committee decision).** A Notice for submission to a meeting of the Council, which seeks rescission or alteration of a resolution or decision of a Headquarters Committee or Inverness City Committee, on a matter delegated or remitted with powers to that Committee will be termed a Notice of Amendment. The Notice must be in writing, signed by a Member of the Council giving the Notice, countersigned by at least seven other Members of the Council (in the case of Inverness City Committee the eight signatories must include at least one quarter of the Members of that Committee) and received by the Assistant Chief Executive not more than three 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. On receipt of such a Notice of Amendment the Assistant Chief Executive will immediately instruct the Service Director not to implement the Committee decision.
- 10.4 **Notice of Amendment (Planning).** Should a Member of a Planning Applications Committee wish to have a decision on a planning matter reconsidered at the Planning Environment and Development Committee,

he or she must submit to the Assistant Chief Executive a Notice of Amendment (Planning) not more than three 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. This Notice must be in writing and signed by eight members of the Council including at least one third of the membership of the relevant Planning Applications Committee. The Notice of Amendment (Planning) will be determined by the Planning Environment and Development Committee with no further opportunity to refer the matter to the Council in terms of paragraph 10.3.

10.5 The Notice of Amendment procedure will not apply to decisions

- (a) of Appeals Committees;
- (b) of Appointment Sub-Committees, Panels etc;
- (c) of Committees or Sub-Committees which act in a quasi judicial capacity;
- (d) taken under full delegated powers in terms of the Council's Scheme of Delegation and Administration.

10.6 **Notice of Referral.** The Assistant Chief Executive has the power in terms of the Council's Scheme of Delegation and Administration to refer for further consideration by the Council by way of a Notice of Referral any decision taken which may be considered by that Officer as a contravention of law or any Code of Practice under any enactment, or maladministration leading to injustice.

C. Attendance at Meetings - Basic Provisions

11. Chairman

11.1 At a meeting of the Council, the Convener of the Council or in the event of the Convener's absence, the Chair of the Resources Committee will preside. If the Convener and the Chair of the Resources Committee are both absent, the Chief Executive will preside until the members of the Council choose one of their number to preside.

12. Quorum

12.1 No business will be transacted at a meeting of the Council unless at least 20 members (i.e. one quarter) of the Council are present. In the case of any Committee, Sub-Committee or other Group to which these Standing Orders apply, the quorum will be one quarter of the membership, subject to a minimum of 3.

12.2 If within ten minutes after the time appointed for a meeting of the Council, a quorum is not present, the Convener will adjourn the meeting to a time he or she may then or afterwards fix and in the event of the Convener being among those absent, the Assistant Chief Executive or her representative will record that owing to the lack of the necessary quorum no business could be transacted.

12.3 If during any meeting of the Council the attention of the Convener is drawn to the number of members present he or she shall, unless it is apparent to him or her that a quorum is present, direct the roll to be called and if it is found that there is not a quorum present then the meeting shall end at that point.

12.4 Subject to the provisions of the 1973 Act, no item of business will be transacted at a meeting of the Council if in consequence of the provisions of Section 38 of that Act (disability of members from voting on account of an interest in contracts etc.) less than a quorum of the Council is entitled to vote on that item.

13. Non-Members of Committee

13.1 Any member of the Council who is not a member of a Committee or Sub-Committee may attend a meeting of that Committee or Sub-Committee and may be entitled to speak at the meeting (but subject to 13.2 below, not vote) at the discretion of the Chairman, on any item of business on the agenda that concerned them.

13.2 Where a non-Member of a Planning Applications Committee or Licensing Committee has a special interest as a local Member in an item on the agenda, then the Member shall become a full voting Member for that item as long as that interest and the wish to exercise a vote has been intimated in writing to the Assistant Chief Executive not later than 5 pm on the day prior to the meeting taking place. The matter will be determined by the Assistant Chief Executive in consultation with the relevant Chairman. In the event of any dispute as to entitlement to vote on the basis of such a special interest, the matter will be determined by the Committee before consideration of the item starts.

13.3 Standing Order 13.2 will apply to the Planning Environment and Development Committee in respect of its consideration of planning applications only.

14. Members of Press/Public

Members of the Press and public will be entitled to attend meetings of the Council and its Committees. However, in exceptional cases, the Council or any Committee will resolve that members of the Press and public be excluded from the meeting where confidential business, or business containing exempt information will be disclosed, all as defined in the 1973 Act.

D. Conduct of Business/Proceedings at Meetings

15. Convener - Powers and Duties

15.1 Deference shall at all times be paid to the authority of the Convener or Chairman and on all points of order, competency and relevancy, his or her ruling shall be final and not open to discussion. This includes discretion to rule on all questions of procedure where no express provision is made under these Standing Orders. When the Convener rises to speak, any member of the Council who is addressing the meeting must resume their seat. It is the duty of the Convener to preserve order and to ensure that members obtain a fair hearing. In the event of disorder, the Convener has absolute discretion to adjourn the meeting, and by quitting the Chair will bring the meeting to an end.

15.2 All powers and duties of the Convener in terms of these Standing Orders shall, in the absence of the Convener, or in the event of the Convener being unable to act for any reason, be exercised by the Leader of the

Council's Administration, whom failing the member chosen to preside in terms of Standing Order 11 above.

- 15.3 The Convener or Leader of the Council's Administration may be removed from office before the date of the next ordinary election of the Council provided that a majority of the Members of the Council present and voting so decide. No proposal to remove the Convener or Leader of the Council's Administration from office shall be made without notice being given at one meeting of the Council to be discussed at the following one.

16. Sederunt

The Assistant Chief Executive, or a member of the Council's staff acting as Clerk to the Meeting, will record the names of the members present at each meeting of the Council, as well as those who have submitted apologies for absence with special reference to those who have been unable to attend due to other Council duties. The sederunt will be taken by calling the roll at Council meetings and may be taken by this method at Committees or Sub-Committees if the Chairman so directs.

17. Urgent Business

- 17.1 Except in the case of business brought before the meeting which is certified by the Convener or Chairman as urgent in terms of the 1973 Act, no business will be transacted at a meeting of the Council other than that specified on the Agenda for the meeting.
- 17.2 It shall be in the sole discretion of the Convener to decide whether any business not specified on the Agenda for the meeting should, by reason of special circumstances, be considered at the meeting as a matter of urgency, and such special circumstances must be specified in the Minutes of the Meeting.

18. Order of Business/Adjournment

The business of a meeting of the Council shall be conducted in the order set out on the Agenda for the meeting, provided that any item of business may, with the consent of the meeting, be taken out of its place. The Convener may with the consent of the meeting also adjourn the meeting to any other day, time and place.

19. Special Provisions for Meetings of the Full Council only

Special provisions on the order and conduct of business at meetings of the full Council are contained in Standing Orders 37-42 below.

20. Rescinding of Resolution or Decision

A resolution or decision of the Council and a resolution or decision of a Committee on a matter delegated or remitted with powers (except a resolution or decision challenged by a Notice of Amendment or Notice of Amendment (Planning) under Standing Orders 10.3 and 10.4 above), will continue to be operative and binding on the Council for at least six months after the date of the resolution or decision.

21. Declaration of Interest

- 21.1 It shall be for any member who has declared any financial interest in any matter and is present at a meeting of the Council at which such matter is the subject of consideration, to leave the room before the matter is discussed, unless exempted from so doing by a Dispensation granted by the Standards Commission for Scotland.
- 21.2 It shall be for any Member who has declared any other interest in any matter and who is present at a meeting of the Council at which such matter is the subject of consideration, to determine whether or not to leave the room, or to participate in discussion or voting, in accordance with the Councillors' Code of Conduct and any relevant Dispensation granted by the Standards Commission for Scotland.
- 21.3 Where a member of the Council has applied for any Service from the Council e.g. for planning permission, that application will be referred for determination to the appropriate Committee or Sub-Committee even though the application could otherwise be dealt with under delegated powers.

22. Obstructive or Offensive Conduct

In the event of any member at a Council meeting disregarding the authority of the Convener or of being guilty of obstructive or offensive conduct, a motion may be moved and seconded to suspend such member for the remainder of the sitting.

Such a motion will be put to the meeting without discussion and if supported by a majority of members of the Council present and voting will be declared carried. The offending member will then be required by the Convener to leave the meeting.

23. Order of Speeches

A member wishing to speak will attract the Convener's attention by raising his or her hand, and when called upon will rise in his or her place to address the Chair. The member will direct his or her speech strictly to the matter under discussion or to the Motion or Amendment to be proposed or seconded by himself or herself or to a question of order.

The Convener will decide between two or more members wishing to speak by calling on the member whom he or she first observed to raise his or her hand. As stated in Standing Order 13, it will be at the discretion of the Chairman of a Committee or Sub-Committee to allow a non-member to speak at a meeting.

24. Number and Duration of Speeches

The number of speeches and the point at which Motions and Amendments are to be accepted is at the discretion of the Convener. A member moving a Motion or Amendment will not speak for more than ten minutes, except with the consent of the Council; all other speakers taking part in any discussion on an item will not speak for more than five minutes and shall speak only once in the same discussion unless to call attention to a point of order or to make an explanation in terms of Standing Order 27.

25. Motions and Amendments - General

- 25.1 All Motions and Amendments arising at a meeting will be moved and seconded, and then given in writing to the Clerk as soon as they are moved. This does not apply to motions seeking to approve or disapprove of any matter, purely negative amendments, amendments proposing further consideration and reports, and motions and amendments that are fully set out in a minute of a committee or a report by an officer. A member cannot move or second both the Motion and an Amendment or more than one Amendment upon a Motion.
- 25.2 If a Motion which is specified on the agenda for the meeting (under Standing Order 10.1) is not moved by the member who has given the notice and seconded, then it will, unless moved by another Member and seconded on the day, or postponed with the agreement of the Council, be considered as dropped and cannot be moved again without fresh notice.
- 25.3 A Notice of Amendment submitted in terms of Standing Order 10.3 specified on the agenda will require to be moved and seconded at the meeting concerned and will be debated as an amendment to the motion before the meeting for approval of the Committee minutes, and if successful when the vote is taken, will become the decision of the Council.

No other Motion or discussion will be allowed except where in the opinion of the Convener its subject matter lies within the limits set by the terms of the Committee resolution and the terms of the Notice of Amendment, but nothing in this Standing Order will prevent the Council from deferring consideration of the matter under discussion or from referring the matter back to the appropriate Committee.

- 25.3(a) A planning matter that is the subject of a Notice of Amendment (Planning) submitted in terms of Standing Order 10.4 specified on the agenda will be reconsidered at the Planning, Environment and Development Committee and that Committee's determination on the matter will become the decision of the Council. In reaching that determination, a motion, moved and seconded, to uphold the decision of the Planning Applications Committee that is the subject of the Notice of Amendment (Planning) will be treated as the motion before the Planning, Environment and Development Committee and any amendment, moved and seconded, seeking a different determination will be debated as an amendment to that motion.

Nothing in this Standing Order will prevent the Planning, Environment and Development Committee from deferring consideration of the matter under discussion until a future meeting of the Committee or from referring the matter back to the appropriate Planning Applications Committee while bearing in mind the provisions of the Development Management Regulations on time limits for decision making.

- 25.3(b) In the determination of any matter before a Planning Applications Committee or a planning application before the Planning, Environment and Development Committee or full Council, to be entitled to participate, a Member must be present throughout all of the proceedings for all of the relevant item, including the site inspection if any.

This also applies to the determination of a Licensing Committee or Licensing Board item

- 25.4 It will not be competent for a member to move or second his or her own election or appointment as Convener, Leader of the Council's Administration, Budget Leader and Chairman of the Budget Information Group and Leader of the Opposition or as an Office-Bearer of any Committee, Sub-Committee or other Group or as a representative of the Council on any similar or outside body. This does not prevent a Member when such election or appointment is under consideration from indicating his or her interest in being nominated for election or appointment.
- 25.5 Every Amendment will be relevant to the Motion on which it is moved. The Convener will decide as to relevancy and has the power, with the consent of the meeting, to conjoin Amendments which are not inconsistent with each other.
- 25.6 Should any Amendment raise a procedural issue, rather than to affect the substantive issue, that procedural issue will be addressed and dealt with, without affecting the substantive Motion or Amendments.
- 25.7 All additions to, omissions from, or variations upon a Motion will be considered as Amendments to the Motion and will be disposed of accordingly.
- 25.8 Motions or Amendments which are not seconded will not be discussed.
- 25.9 A Motion or Amendment once moved and seconded will not be withdrawn without the consent of the mover and seconder, and then only with the sanction of the meeting.

26. Procedural Motions – Closure of Debate

- 26.1 A Member moving that the Council do now **proceed to the next business** or that the debate **be now adjourned** may speak for not more than five minutes and if the Motion is seconded it will be seconded without a speech. If the Convener is of the opinion that the business which is the subject of the debate has been sufficiently discussed, the procedural motion will be put, without further discussion to the meeting and, if supported by a majority of the Council present and voting, will be declared carried.

This procedural Motion may only be put forward where either a formal Motion or a Motion and any Amendments are not already before the Council in relation to the Item concerned.

- 26.2 Where both a Motion and Amendment(s) are before the Council, any Member who has not spoken in the debate may move that "**the matter be put to the vote**" and he or she may speak for not more than five minutes in support of that procedural Motion, which if seconded, will be seconded without a speech. If the Convener is of the opinion that the business which is the subject of the debate has been sufficiently discussed, a vote on the procedural motion will be taken without further debate.

If the procedural Motion is carried the mover of the original Motion will have the right to reply in terms of Standing Order 28 and the question under discussion will then be put to the vote.

27. Point of Order/Explanation

During the discussion, a member may call attention to a point of order, or with the sanction of the Convener, may make an explanation. A member who is addressing the meeting when a question of order is raised will resume his or her seat until the question of order has been decided by the Convener.

28. Right of Reply

The mover of an original Motion will have the right to speak for five minutes in reply and in the reply will confine his or her comments to answering previous speakers and will not introduce a new matter into the debate. The mover may, however, seek a point of clarification. After the mover has been called upon by the Convener to reply no other member can speak to the question except on the point of clarification raised and once the reply has been given the Council will proceed directly to the vote.

29. Voting - Order of Motions and Amendments

When only one amendment is made upon a Motion, the vote will be taken between the Amendment and the Motion. Where there is more than one Amendment, generally the Amendment last proposed will be put against the immediately preceding one, and the Amendment which is carried will be put against the next preceding, and so on until only one Amendment remains and the vote will be taken between that Amendment and the original Motion. However, particularly in relation to composite Motions, the Chairman may decide that Amendments be taken individually against the Motion. After the vote between an Amendment and the Motion whichever is carried will be the decision of the Meeting.

30. Voting - Election, Selection or Appointment of Members to any Particular Office or Committee

30.1 In the case of an Election, Selection or Appointment of Members of the Council to any particular office, Committee or other Group or as a representative of the Council on an outside body, where the number of candidates nominated exceeds the number of vacancies, the member(s) to be elected, selected or appointed as the case may be, shall be determined by vote. Members voting shall be entitled to cast as many votes as they wish up to the number of vacancies available.

30.2 Where only one vacancy requires to be filled the vote will normally be by ballot but may be by a show of hands and any candidate having an absolute majority of the votes cast shall be declared duly elected, selected or appointed as the case may be. Where more than one vacancy requires to be filled and the number of candidates nominated exceeds the number of vacancies, the vote shall be by ballot, the name of the candidate having least votes being struck out of the list of candidates. Such process of elimination by vote by ballot shall be continued until in a case where only one vacancy exists any candidate has an absolute majority of the votes cast, or in any case until the number of candidates remaining equals the number of vacancies when

the candidate or candidates remaining shall be declared duly elected, selected or appointed as the case may be.

30.3 If in any ballot among more than two candidates there is equality in votes among the candidates having least votes, the candidate whose name shall be eliminated shall be determined by an additional vote by ballot and unless there again be equality in votes, the name of the candidate having least votes shall be struck out of the list.

30.4 Where in any vote between two candidates or in such additional vote by ballot there is equality in votes, the candidate to be selected or appointed or eliminated (as the case may be) shall be determined by lot.

31. Voting - Appointment of Staff

Where there is member involvement in staff appointments, staff will be appointed in the same manner detailed in Standing Order 30 for the election, selection and appointment of members to any particular post or office or Committee except that where applicants for appointment to any particular post or office are being interviewed by the Council, a Committee, Sub-Committee or Appointments Board, the members of the appointing body will be entitled to participate in the voting for that appointment only if they have been present throughout all of the interviews. A further exception applies in relation to equality of votes, as is laid down in Standing Order 33.3 below.

32. Method of Voting

32.1 Where an electronic voting system is in operation, Standing Orders 32.2 to 32.4 will apply with regard to the method of voting. Standing Orders 32.5 to 32.8 will apply where there is no such system in operation.

32.2 The vote of the Council, including ballots referred to in Standing Order 30 and the recording of abstentions, will normally be taken by use of the electronic voting system.

32.3 If any member objects to the vote being taken by use of the electronic voting system and a majority of the Members of the Council present and voting signify their support of the objection, the vote will be taken by show of hands, calling the roll or by paper ballot.

32.4 All votes on procedure will be taken by use of the electronic voting system.

32.5 The vote of the Council, including the recording of abstentions, will be taken normally by show of hands (with the exception referred to in SO 32.7)

32.6 If any member objects to the vote being taken by show of hands and a majority of the members of the Council present and voting signify their support of the objection, the vote will be taken by calling the roll or by ballot.

32.7 A vote to determine a planning application or in respect of other consents and approvals for development will be taken by calling the roll.

32.8 All votes on procedure will be taken by show of hands.

33. Casting Votes

- 33.1 Except as otherwise provided in the 1973 Act and this Standing Order the Convener or the member presiding in his or her absence in accordance with Standing Order 11 shall in the case of an equality of votes give the casting vote.
- 33.2 In the case of the election, selection or appointment of members to any particular office or Committee in terms of Standing Order 30, in any case of equality of votes between candidates as described in Standing Order 30.4 the Convener or member presiding in his or her absence will not have a casting vote but the candidate to be elected, selected, appointed or eliminated as the case may be will be determined by lot.
- 33.3 For the avoidance of doubt, in the case of the appointment of a member of staff to a post as described in Standing Order 31 where in any vote between candidates there is equality in voting the Chairman will exercise a casting vote in determining the candidate to be selected or (in the case of an additional vote) to be eliminated in terms of Standing Order 30.4.

34. Defect in Procedures

The proceedings of the Council shall not be invalidated by any vacancy among their number or by any defect in the election or qualification of any member or by any member voting or taking part in the consideration or discussion of any question when he or she is not entitled to do so.

35. Recording of Dissent from Decision

A member of the Council may have his or her dissent recorded to a decision of the Council provided that he or she has moved a Motion or Amendment and failed to find a seconder or else has taken part in a vote provided that such member asks immediately after the item is disposed of that such dissent be recorded.

36. Decisions of Committees

Decisions of a Committee or Sub-Committee will not be carried into effect until these decisions have been reported to and approved by the Council except that and subject to Standing Order 10.3, 10.4 and 10.6, a Committee may carry into effect any decision on the following without the necessity of first having reported this to the Council -

- (a) a matter included in the delegation to the Committee or remitted with powers to the Committee, after the lapse of three working days after the date of the meeting of the Committee;
- (b) a matter remitted with full delegated powers to the Committee which may be implemented immediately;
- (c) any matter which in the opinion of the Committee is one of urgency on the understanding that, even though not included in the Annual Estimates of the Council, the decision does not involve major expenditure and has

the approval of the Depute Chief Executive and Director of Finance and of the Chairman of the Resources Committee;

(d) any routine matter not involving a change of policy.

E. Special Provisions on Order/Conduct of Business at Full Council meetings only

37. Order of Business at Council Meetings

The business of the Council at ordinary meetings shall normally proceed in the following order:-

1. Prayer.
2. Sederunt and apologies intimated
3. Declarations of Interest
4. Minutes of immediately preceding meeting and of any intervening special meeting.
5. Minutes of Headquarters Committees and Inverness City Committee (including any Notices of Amendment under Standing Order 10.3 which will be dealt with on submission of the Minutes to which they refer).
6. Policy Items including Notices of Motion
7. Procedural, statutory and business type items.

Notwithstanding the above, the Assistant Chief Executive may, in consultation with the Convener, change the order of business at any Council meeting if she considers it appropriate to do so.

38. Order of Business at First Meeting of the Council after Elections

38.1 At the first meeting of the Council after the election of Councillors the order of business will be -

1. Intimation of election of Councillors.
2. Sederunt (noting which Councillors have executed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office).
3. Election of Convener of the Council.
4. Election of Leader of the Council's Administration.
5. Consideration of the Council's Committee Structure.
6. Appointment, if appropriate, of Standing Committees of the Council.
7. Appointment, if appropriate, of Budget Leader and Chairman of the Budget Information Group and Chairmen of Standing Committees of the Council and confirmation of the appointment of the Leader of the Opposition following nomination by the largest political group in opposition to the Administration.
8. Appointment, if appropriate, of Vice-Chairmen of Standing Committees of the Council.
9. Appointment of representatives of the Council to Joint Committees and other Statutory Bodies.
10. Other statutory or competent business.

38.2 The first meeting of the Council after the election of Councillors will be held within 21 days of the date of the election.

38.3 The election of a member as Convener, Leader of the Council's Administration, Budget Leader and Chairman of the Budget Information

Group and Leader of the Opposition does not in any way debar him or her from being appointed Chairman or Vice-Chairman of any Committees or Sub-Committees of the Council.

39. Minutes of Council Meetings

All Minutes of the proceedings of the Council in which will be recorded the names of the members who attended the meetings will be drawn up by or on behalf of the Assistant Chief Executive and so far as practicable issued to members of the Council not later than the fourth day before the next ensuing ordinary meeting at which they will be submitted, held as read, corrected if need be, and where held to be a true record of the proceedings to which they relate will be signed by the person who presided at the previous meeting or who presides at the meeting when the Minutes are approved. Without prejudice to any of the provisions of the 1973 Act any Minutes purporting to be so signed will be received in evidence without further proof.

40. Submission of Minutes of Headquarters Committees and Inverness City Committee

- 40.1 The reports of the Headquarters Committees and of the Inverness City Committee, being the Minutes of Meetings of such Committees, will be circulated among the members and will be held as read.
- 40.2 The Minutes of Meetings of these Committees will be submitted for confirmation as correct records of the proceedings to the next ordinary meeting of the Council by the Chairman of each Committee (whom failing the Vice-Chairman) (a) for information in respect of business delegated or remitted with powers and (b) for approval in respect of matters referred.
- 40.3 If any question arises at a meeting of the Council **as to the accuracy of a Minute** which has not already been confirmed such question will be determined by the members of the Committee who were present at the meeting to which the Minute relates and are present at the meeting of the Council at which the matter is raised.
- 40.4 In relation to **business delegated or remitted with powers** to Committees no discussion or Motion will be allowed in the Council on the Minutes except as to their accuracy as a correct record unless there is before the Council a Notice of Amendment submitted in accordance with Standing Order 10.3.
- 40.5 In **matters referred to Committees** a member may move an amendment to the Motion before the Council referred to in Standing Order 40.6 for approval of the Committee Minutes and provided that the Amendment is seconded, concerns the merits of the Committee decision and is successful when the vote is taken, that Amendment 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 except in terms of Standing Order 40.7 below.
- 40.6 The Motion by the Chairman for approval of the Minutes of the Committee of which he or she is Chairman and the seconding of the Motion will not inhibit the Chairman or seconder if either of them wishes to support the rescission or amendment of any Committee decision. In

moving the approval of the Minutes of the Committee, the Chairman, and in seconding the Motion the seconder, shall be regarded as carrying out a formal function which does not prevent either of them as an individual Councillor from disagreeing with the decision of the Committee.

If, however, the Chairman wishes to move an Amendment to the Minutes in respect of an item or items or a Notice of Amendment or Notice of Amendment (Planning) under Standing Orders 10.3 and 10.4, then the Chairman when moving approval of the Minute will do so under exception of the item(s) concerned, leaving it to another member to move approval of the Minute in relation to the excepted item(s). The same principle shall apply in relation to the seconder of the Motion for approval of the Committee Minutes.

For the avoidance of doubt, the mover of the Motion for approval of the excepted item(s) of the Minutes in such a case will have the right of reply in relation to the item(s), the Chairman having such right as regards the remainder of the Minutes.

- 40.7 In the event of a matter being referred back by the Council to a Committee for further consideration, the Committee will not require to suspend Standing Orders before such matter can be considered by the Committee or before the Committee can alter their decision on the matter.

41. Submission of Minutes of Planning Applications Committees and Highland Licensing Committee

- 41.1 The Minutes of Meetings of the Planning Applications Committees will be submitted to the Planning Environment and Development Committee for information only unless a Notice of Amendment (Planning) has been received in terms of Standing Orders 10.3 or 10.4 in which case the particular decision concerned will be dealt with under the relevant procedure.
- 41.2 The Minutes of Meetings of the Highland Licensing Committee will be submitted to the Transport Environmental and Community Services Committee for information only.

42. Question Time at Council Meetings

- 42.1 A Member may submit, to the Convener, Leader of the Council's Administration, Budget Leader and Chairman of the Budget Information Group or Chairman of a Committee, for consideration at an ordinary meeting of the Council, a written question relating to the business of the Council or of that Committee, to be answered in writing by the recipient in advance of the meeting. The answer will be circulated to the other Members of the Council.
- 42.2 Any such question must be sent to the Assistant Chief Executive and received not later than fourteen days prior to the meeting of the Council concerned and no later than 5pm on the final day. In calculating the fourteen days notice, the day of the Council meeting will be excluded. If the question is submitted late, it will be referred to the next available meeting of the Council, at the request of the Member concerned.

- 42.3 At the meeting of the Council concerned, the Member who submitted the written question, having received a written answer, may ask orally one supplementary question directly bearing on the subject matter of the original question, which shall be answered by the Convener, Leader of the Council's Administration, Budget Leader and Chairman of the Budget Information Group or relevant Chairman as appropriate.
- 42.4 No discussion shall be allowed on any question, principal or supplementary so put.

F. Miscellaneous

43. Vacation of Office by Failure to Attend Meetings

- 43.1 Subject to Section 35 of the Act of 1973, if a member of the Council fails throughout a period of six consecutive months to attend any meeting of the Council, he or she will unless the failure was due to some reason approved by the Council, cease to be a member of the Council.
- 43.2 Attendance as a member at a meeting of any Committee or Sub-Committee of the Council, or at a meeting of any Joint Committee, Joint Board or other body by whom for the time being any of the functions of the council are being discharged, and attendance as representative of the Council at a meeting of any body of persons, will be deemed to be attendance at a meeting of the Council.

44. Authentication of Notices etc.

Every notice, order, demand, requisition or such other document or withdrawal thereof by the Council required or authorised by any enactment, Statutory Order or bye-law will, except in so far as such enactment or Statutory Order specifically otherwise provides, be signed by the Assistant Chief Executive or by such other officer of the Council as the appropriate Committee may direct.

45. Execution of Deeds and Use of Seal

- 45.1 All deeds to which the Common Seal of the Council will require to be affixed will be sealed only if authorised by the Council or where the necessity to execute a deed is in consequence of a decision taken by the Council or, in the case of the discharge of a duty or function delegated by the Council to a Committee of the Council, by that Committee.
- 45.2 All deeds to which the Common Seal of the Council is required to be affixed will also be signed by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services, or by a member of staff authorised by him or her to do so.
- 45.3 A list of all deeds so executed will be reported upon to the next succeeding ordinary meeting of the Council for the information of members.
- 45.4 The Common Seal of the Council will be kept by the Assistant Chief Executive, who will be responsible for its safe custody.

46. Councillors' Code of Conduct

All members of the Council will be bound by the provisions of the Councillors' Code of Conduct issued under the Ethical Standards in Public Life etc. (Scotland) Act 2000.