

Agenda Item	13
Report No	HC/30/21

HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: Highland Council

Date: 28 October 2021

Report Title: Annual Review of Standing Orders Relating to the Conduct of Meetings

Report By: Executive Chief Officer, Performance and Governance

1. Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report contains a proposed revision to the Council's Standing Orders Relating to the Conduct of Meetings.
- 1.2 The current version of Standing Orders is available here: [StandingOrders](#) for ease of reference and to aid discussion.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 The Council is invited to agree the revision to Standing Order 12 set out in section 4 of this report; and
- 2.2 Note that a Members survey will be issued in the coming weeks which will include section on governance arrangements, which will help to inform whether to consider further adjustments to Standing Orders.

3. Implications

- 3.1 Resource Implications: there are no resource implications arising from this report.
- 3.2 Legal: The Council's Standing Orders are aligned with the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 and subsequent revisions. They will support the Council to meet its legal duties and enhance the Council's governance arrangements.
- 3.3 Risk: the proposed changes should have a positive impact on risk because of improved governance and scrutiny.
- 3.4 Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural); Climate Change / Carbon Clever; Gaelic: There are no implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

4. Specific Changes to Standing Orders

- 4.1 The specific amendments to Standing Order 12 are set out below. The new/revised

text is shown as ***bold italics***, deleted text is shown with a line through it.

- 4.2 **SO 12** relating to Notices of Motion was amended the last time that the Standing Orders were reviewed by the Council. This change had been brought forward following a Members' seminar and removed the previous limit on the total number of Motions that could be considered at a single meeting of the Council whilst at the same time seeking to manage the amount of time spent in debating Motions.
- 4.3 Experience of managing this part of the Council meeting has shown that the current arrangements are difficult to accommodate, particularly in the event that an amendment is tabled towards the end of the half hour period and there is insufficient time available for debate and to then allow both the proposer and mover of the amendment to speak. The changes set out below are intended to have the same effect of managing the time set aside for Motions, whilst providing arrangements for amendments coming forward in the course of the discussion.
- 4.4 SO12 Notices of Motion –

...The first signatory on the Notice of Motion will be entitled to speak for up to 5 minutes, all other Members wishing to speak on the Motion will be limited to a maximum of 3 minutes.

The total time allowed for ***to debate*** each individual Motion will be 30 minutes, after which time the Convener/Chair will move to the next item or to a vote.

At the conclusion of the 30 minute period the Convener will ask if any Member wishes to move an amendment. In the event that an amendment/s is moved and seconded, the Convener will ask the proposer/s to speak for a maximum of 5 minutes and the original proposer will be asked to sum up at the end for a maximum of five minutes. The meeting will then proceed to the vote.

The total time allowed for Notices of Motion at any individual meeting, ***including the time taken for votes***, will be 2.5 hours...

...If a Notice of Motion is not reached, it will be referred to the next meeting of the Council (or Committee) at the request of the original proposer and will be given priority in terms of the order of Motions to be taken forward to the meeting.

The order in which any Motions not already tabled will be taken on the Agenda will be determined by the Head of Corporate Governance through the drawing of lots.

5. Further Review Opportunities

An all-Member survey is being drawn up to seek input on a range of matters including assisting with preparations for the new Council in 2022 and new Member induction; understanding the impact of Covid/blended working on managing Council and ward business; and assessing how the current governance arrangements are working (including Standing Orders) and considering opportunities for improvement. This will be issued in November and feedback provided to Members as soon as possible thereafter.

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Date: 26 September 2021