

APPENDIX A - Standing Orders for Meetings of Full Council – Assessment of Options

Questions at meetings – current Standing Orders

16.1 Subject to Standing Orders 12.14, 16.2 and 16.3, any Member will be entitled to attend any Committee or Sub-Committee meeting of which they are not a member and will be entitled to ask questions and address the meeting prior to motions and amendments being moved, such address to be for a maximum of 5 minutes.

24.1 The Convener may identify that a report requires introduction from an officer, or a representative of an external organisation, following which, Members will be given the opportunity to ask questions of officers or an external representative. Any introduction and questions for an external representative should be undertaken prior to asking questions of officers.

24.2 To promote the effective management of the meeting, Members must (wherever reasonably possible) seek clarification or advice on any points from officers, and submit questions, in advance of the meeting.

24.3 When, in the opinion of the Convener, Members have had a reasonable opportunity to ask questions, the Convener will move to determination of the matter.

26.2 Any Member wishing to speak at any meeting will address the Convener and restrict their remarks to the item of business before the meeting through:-

26.2.1 Asking questions, which can include asking questions of officers on a motion or amendment before it is moved, except where these are proposing budgets.

	Option	Purpose of change	Officer assessment of risk (e.g. Legal, Procedural, Reputational, Operational)	Management of change	Feasibility of implementation
1.	Questions to officers or external representatives to be permitted only during a separate question session,	Streamlining of meetings and finishing meetings in one day.	This option is considered low risk and this model is in place in at least one other local authority.	Ensure that a webcast of the question session is available for members to watch	Feasible.

	Option	Purpose of change	Officer assessment of risk (e.g. Legal, Procedural, Reputational, Operational)	Management of change	Feasibility of implementation
	either as a morning session or on a separate day.	To set aside a specific session for questions by members which need not be attended by all officers.	Separating out questions could make the debate harder to follow but this seems relatively minor. There is a slight risk that members could be criticised if they do not attend for questions prior to voting on a matter, however there is currently no requirement for members to ask questions in a meeting and they can be absent from a meeting in the lead up to a vote. They can continue to submit questions to officers prior to the meeting.	<p>before decision if they are unable to attend, and for members of the public.</p> <p>Continue providing the opportunity to ask questions/receive individual briefings prior to the meeting.</p> <p>Sessions would also be minuted and attendance recorded.</p> <p>Convener training to ensure that session is restricted to questions only.</p> <p>If held on a separate day to the remainder of the meeting, ensure that Standing Orders harmonise with the submission of motions and amendments, i.e. the day before the meeting both members and officers are busy</p>	

	Option	Purpose of change	Officer assessment of risk (e.g. Legal, Procedural, Reputational, Operational)	Management of change	Feasibility of implementation
				<p>finalising motions and amendments.</p> <p>Deputations could be taken during the question session.</p> <p>Meetings to be held in public to evidence public scrutiny.</p>	
2.	Remove ability to ask questions on reports during meetings entirely.	Streamlining of meetings and finishing meetings in one day.	<p>Lack of public scrutiny.</p> <p>Risk that members may be required to vote on matters without having all the information they need.</p>	Submit questions to officers prior to the meeting.	Difficult to implement due to concerns about lack of scrutiny in public
3.	Restrict the number of questions per group/independent member	To prevent meetings from overrunning due to questions and to encourage questions being asked of officers prior to meetings.	<p>Risk of additional requisitioned meetings.</p> <p>Risk that members may be required to vote on matters without having all the information they need.</p>	Members have the opportunity to ask questions before meetings.	Difficult to implement due to the risk of unequal treatment of members.

	Option	Purpose of change	Officer assessment of risk (e.g. Legal, Procedural, Reputational, Operational)	Management of change	Feasibility of implementation
4.	Set a time limit for questions on an item with this to be managed through Lord Provost.	Streamlining of meetings and finishing meetings in one day.	<p>Risk of additional requisitioned meetings.</p> <p>Risk that members may be required to vote on matters without having all the information they need.</p>	<p>Members have the opportunity to ask questions before meetings.</p> <p>Needs to be carefully managed so every group, or independent member, gets an opportunity to ask questions.</p>	Difficult to implement due to the risk of unequal treatment of members.

Debate and Voting – current Standing Orders

26.1 If consensus cannot be reached on an item, the order of debate will be as follows:-

26.1.1 Motion moved and seconded

26.1.2 Amendment(s) moved and seconded

26.1.3 Debate

26.1.4 Summing up for the amendment(s)

26.1.5 Summing up for the motion

26.1.6 Vote

30. TIME ALLOWED FOR SPEAKING

30.1 Moving a motion or amendment – 10 minutes

30.2 Seconding a motion or amendment – 5 minutes

30.3 Speaking in debate – 5 minutes

30.4 Summing up – 5 minutes

30.5 Moving a Council budget – 30 minutes

30.6 Seconding a Council budget – 10 minutes

30.7 Summing up a Council budget – 10 minutes

	Option	Purpose of change	Officer assessment of risk (e.g. Legal, Procedural, Reputational, Operational)	Management of change	Feasibility of implementation
5.	Reduce the timings (i.e. maximum number of minutes) for moving motions/amendments, seconding,	To reduce the amount of time being spent in debate during	This is considered to be low risk.	None required.	Feasible.

	Option	Purpose of change	Officer assessment of risk (e.g. Legal, Procedural, Reputational, Operational)	Management of change	Feasibility of implementation
	speaking in debate and summing up - e.g. from 10/5/5/5 to 7/4/3/3 or 5/5/5/5	meetings, so as to shorten meetings.	7/4/3/3 would save more time and give the mover more time to speak.		
6.	Debate during afternoon session with only minimal officers in attendance.	To free up officer time when no input is required from them.	No risks other than those identified at 1. above.	As per 1. above.	Feasible.
7a.	Within afternoon session, debate each item in order and vote on each item (or reach consensus) upon the conclusion of each debate.	To provide a clear schedule for when debate and votes will take place.	No risks identified but may not achieve the purpose of ensuring all business is dealt with in a single sitting.	Convener and Clerk to provide clarity to the meeting before any votes take place.	Feasible.
7b	Within afternoon session debate/discuss items one after the other and batch all votes at a specified time - e.g. 4pm. In addition reduce the timings for moving motions/ amendments, seconding and summing up to one minute in each case.	To provide a clear schedule for when debate and votes will take place and to ensure that all items are dealt with in a single sitting. This operates in at least one other local authority and has reduced the length of meetings.	Risk of the vote becoming detached from the debate which could lead to confusion amongst members on what they are voting for. Risk that members cannot cover all their points in one minute.	Convener and Clerk to provide clarity to the meeting before any votes take place.	Feasible.
8	Additional powers for Convener to extend or reduce timings.	To provide some discretion to Conveners if flexibility is required.	Risk of challenge to Conveners in meetings/disruption to meetings including	None identified.	Feasible

	Option	Purpose of change	Officer assessment of risk (e.g. Legal, Procedural, Reputational, Operational)	Management of change	Feasibility of implementation
			procedural motions to suspend SOs.		
9	Require those wishing to speak in debate to provide prior notice e.g. one hour before the meeting.	To provide a clear schedule for when debate and votes will take place.	Risk that members will want to join debate after hearing from another member, leading to disruption to meetings including procedural motions to suspend SOs.	Communications to members.	Difficult to implement due to the likelihood that members will wish to respond in the meeting.
10	Explore alternative options for electronic voting as part of chamber refurbishment	As part of chamber refurbishment, officers are liaising with partners in terms of the options for electronic voting to speed up the voting process in relation to hybrid meetings. This will likely include enhanced utilisation of Microsoft Teams for those members taking part remotely.	Failure of technology, although this is inherent in any option which utilises technology. A contingency plan would be required for such an eventuality.	Communication to members, including any training as required	Feasible

Requisitioned Council Meetings

	Option	Purpose of change	Officer assessment of risk (e.g. Legal, Procedural, Reputational, Operational)	Management of change	Feasibility of implementation
11.	<p>Draft motion to be submitted at the same time as the written request, and finalised on either the first or second working day thereafter.</p> <p>Draft amendments to be submitted on or before the second working day before the meeting and circulated by 4pm on the working day before the meeting.</p>	To better manage the process around requisitioned meetings.	None identified.	It is realistic to require a motion to be prepared at the same time as the written request. Motion must be relevant to the business of the meeting. The motion need not be signed (nor agreed to) by all the requisitioning members.	Feasible.
12.	<p>Draft motion to be submitted no later than the first working day after submission of the written request, and finalised on either the first or second working day after submission of the draft motion.</p> <p>Draft amendments to be submitted on or before the second working day before the meeting and circulated by 4pm on the working day before the meeting.</p>	To better manage the process around requisitioned meetings.	None identified.	As above.	Feasible.