

FALKIRK COUNCIL

Subject: STANDING ORDERS
Meeting: FALKIRK COUNCIL
Date: 31 MARCH 2015
Author: CHIEF GOVERNANCE OFFICER

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to present to Council an amendment to Standing Orders in implement of the decision taken by Council on 11 March 2015. At that meeting, Council agreed:-
- (a) to publish the attendance and apologies of members at every Council meeting (to include committees held in public) on its website within 48 hours of the meeting being held. This information is to include the detail of any motion, amendment or addendum submitted and the result of any division with a clear record of how each member voted, including abstentions, and
 - (b) that the Chief Governance Officer will report to the next available meeting of Council on any necessary changes to the Standing Orders to give effect to this proposal.

2. STANDING ORDERS

- 2.1 In terms of Standing Orders as they currently stand, voting is normally by a show of hands with the number of votes cast for the motion and amendment recorded in the minute. However, if not less than one-quarter of members present at the meeting so request, a record is made of the names of those members voting for the motion or for the amendment or who abstain. In order to give effect to the recent decision of Council, an amendment to this part of Standing Orders is required so that all votes taken in public are by way of roll call.
- 2.2 Section 22 within Standing Orders deals with voting. The current version is attached as appendix 1 while appendix 2 suggests revised wording which would give effect to Council's decision
- 2.3 Should Council agree to revise Standing Orders as proposed, a record of public votes taken at Council and its committees will be posted on the Council's website following each of the meetings. For the purposes of clarity, reference to the period of 48 hours is understood to mean within 2 working days of the day of the meeting. This will allow officers, in the event that a meeting is held, for example, on a Thursday or Friday, to give practical effect to Council's decision.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 Council is invited to:-

- (1) agree the amendment to Standing Orders set out in appendix 2; and**
- (2) note that the record of meetings will be posted within 2 working days of the day of the meeting.**

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CHIEF GOVERNANCE OFFICER

Date: 23 March 2015
Contact Officer: Brian Pirie
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LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

Nil

22. VOTING

- 22.1 Unless dispensed with by the Provost, the clerk will read out to the meeting the terms of the motion and the amendment. Thereafter the clerk will:-
- (i) call for votes for the amendment, and subsequently; and
 - (ii) call for votes for the motion.
- 22.2 The clerk will then announce the result of the vote on the basis of a simple majority of those voting.
- 22.3 After the clerk has announced the issue on which a vote is to be taken and has started to take the vote, no councillor will be permitted to offer an opinion, ask a question or otherwise interrupt the proceedings, until the result of the vote is declared.
- 22.4 Voting will be by show of hands, except in the following circumstances:-
- (i) if not less than one-quarter of the Council present and voting so request, the clerk will call over the names of all the councillors and will record in the minutes of the meeting the names of those:-
 - (a) voting for or against the motion or amendment; or
 - (b) abstaining from voting, or
 - (c) absent from the meeting when the vote was taken.
 - (ii) on a motion put forward, seconded, and carried without discussion, by a majority of members at the meeting, voting will be by ballot which will be undertaken by the clerk to ensure the secrecy of the vote. No written notice of motion is required.
- 22.5 If, immediately after a vote is taken, a councillor requests his or her vote to be recorded, there will be noted in the minute of the meeting whether the councillor:-
- (i) cast his or her vote for or against the question, or
 - (ii) abstained from voting,
- except in any case where the vote is taken by roll call.
- 22.6 In the case of an equality of votes, the Provost will have a second or casting vote and may exercise it at his/her discretion except when voting on appointments as detailed in Standing Order 23.

22. VOTING

- 22.1 Unless dispensed with by the Provost, the clerk will read out to the meeting the terms of the motion and the amendment. Thereafter, where the vote is being taken in public, the clerk will call over the names of all the councillors and will record in the minutes of the meeting the names of those:-
- (a) voting for or against the motion or amendment; or
 - (b) abstaining from voting; or
 - (c) absent from the meeting when the vote was taken.
- 22.2 For items where the public has been excluded, voting will be by show of hands except in the following circumstances:-
- (i) if not less than one-quarter of the Council present and voting so request, the vote will be taken by roll call in the manner set out in Standing Order 22.1.
 - (ii) on a motion put forward, seconded, and carried without discussion by a majority of members at the meeting, voting will be by ballot which will be undertaken by the clerk to ensure the secrecy of the vote. No written notice of motion is required.
- 22.3 Where a vote is taken by a show of hands and, immediately after a vote is taken, a councillor requests his or her vote to be recorded, there will be noted in the minute of the meeting whether the councillor:-
- (i) cast his or her vote for or against the question, or
 - (ii) abstained from voting.
- 22.4 The clerk will then announce the result of the vote on the basis of a simple majority of those voting.
- 22.5 After the clerk has announced the issue on which a vote is to be taken and has started to take the vote, no councillor will be permitted to offer an opinion, ask a question or otherwise interrupt the proceedings, until the result of the vote is declared.
- 22.6 In the case of an equality of votes, the Provost will have a second or casting vote and may exercise it at his/her discretion except when voting on appointments as detailed in Standing Order 23.