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# Special GENERAL MEETING 2022

Minute of the Special General Meeting of the Law Society of Scotland held by video and telephone conference on Wednesday 26 October 2022 at 5.30 pm.

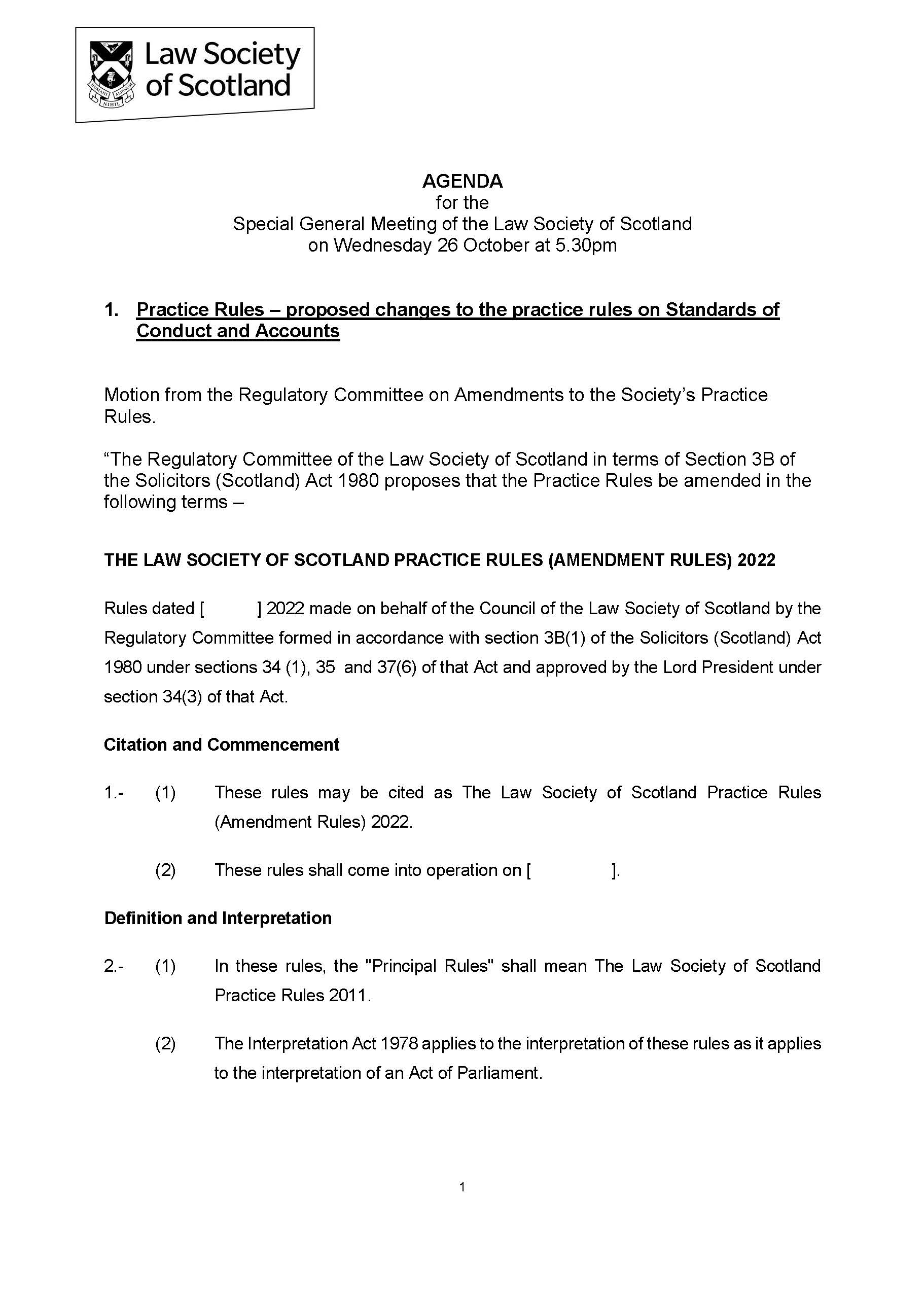
**Present:** Murray Etherington (President), Sheila Webster (Vice-President), Ken Dalling (Past President), John Mulholland, Paul Gostelow, Patricia Thom, Jean-Paul Kasusula, Andrew Hinstridge, Austin Lafferty, Philip Lafferty, Jim Stephenson, Amna Ashraf, Serena Sutherland, Ross Taylor, Susan Murray, Deborah Wilson-McCuish, Alison Atack, Beatrice Nicholas, Bruce Milton, Colin Anderson, Elaine Motion, Elaine Wilson, Frazer McCready, Gordon Christie, Graeme Smillie, Hugh Sanders, Jonathan Tait, Ken Haughney, Kevin Duffy, Kyle Sinclair, Lorraine Kerr, Michael Lowrie, Minglye Lee, Solomon Obulor, Sylvia Matheson, Thomson Johnston and Xing Zhu.

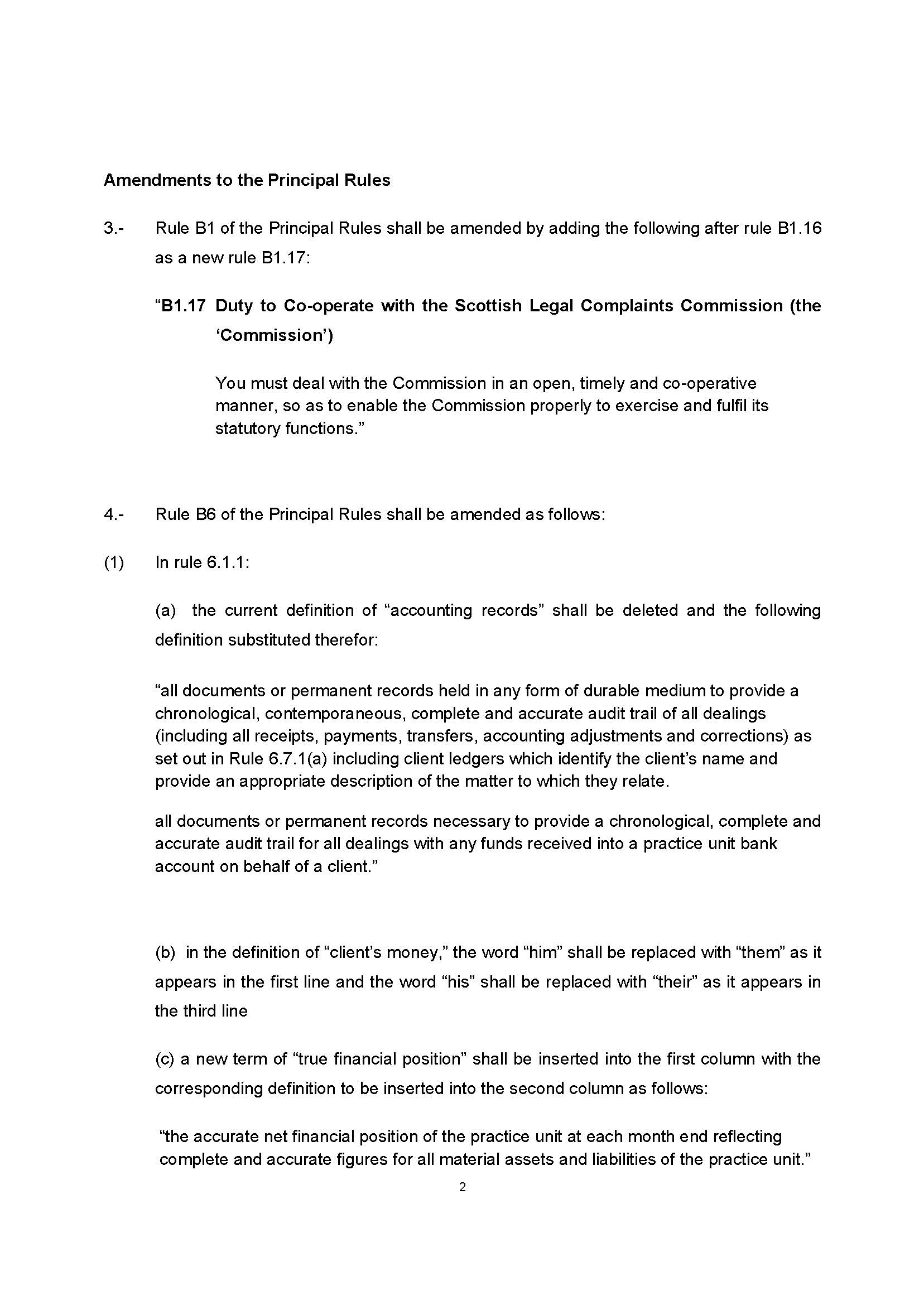
**In attendance:** Sue Carter (Lay Council Member) Fiona Larg (Lay Council Member), Rachel Wood (Executive Director of Regulation), Kevin Lang (Executive Director of External Relations), Liz Campbell (Executive Director of Education, Training and Qualifications), Paul Mosson (Executive Director of Member Services & Engagement), James Ness (Head of Member Registration and Business Intelligence), Fiona Watson, Valerie McEwan (Media and Communications Manager), Ian Messer (Director of Financial Compliance), Samantha Hollywood (Regulation Solicitor), Alex Spence (Council Secretary, Vialex Limited) and Laura Crocker (Minute Taker, Vialex Limited).

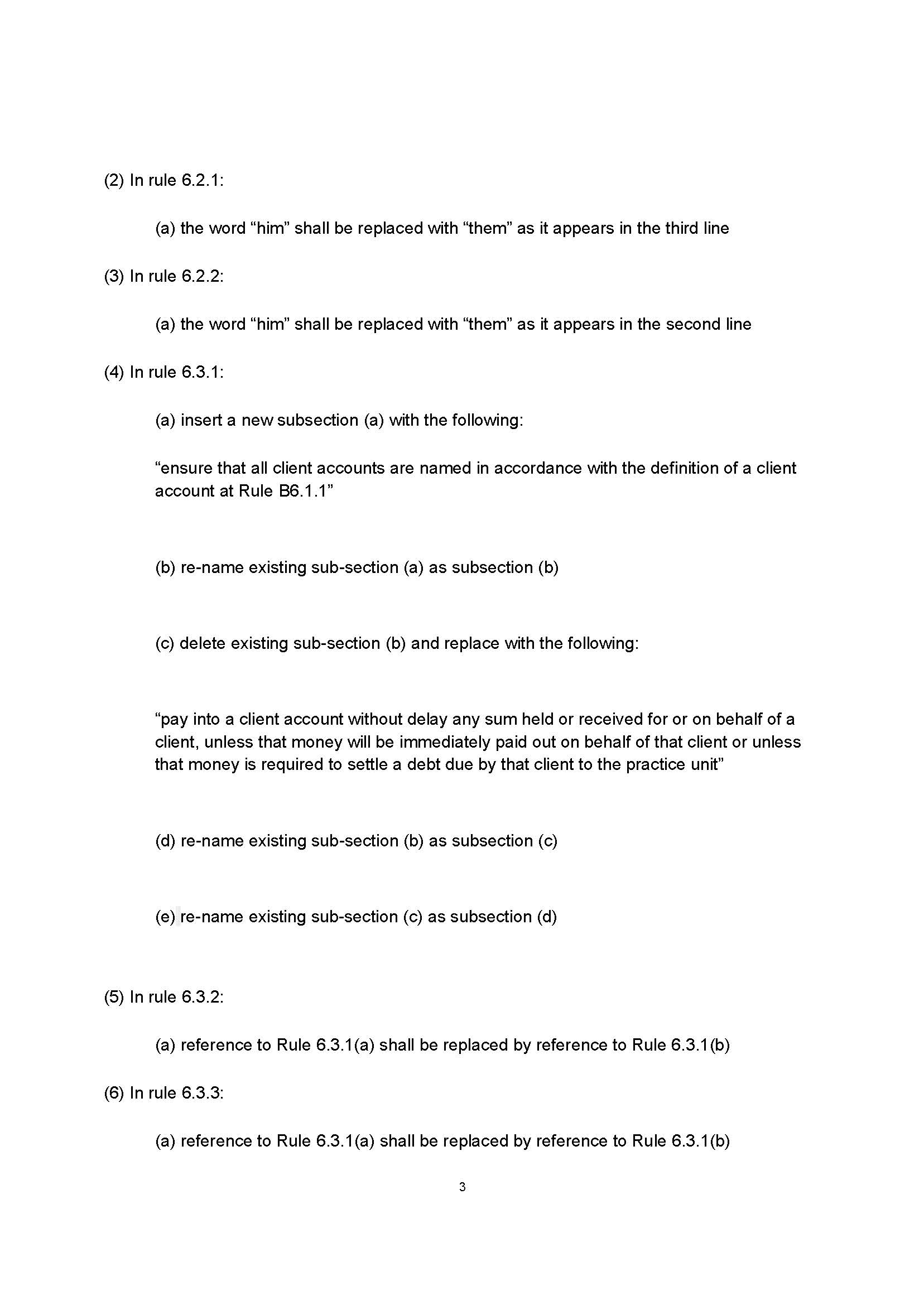
**Apologies** for absence were intimated from: Peter Walsh and Kirsty Thomson.

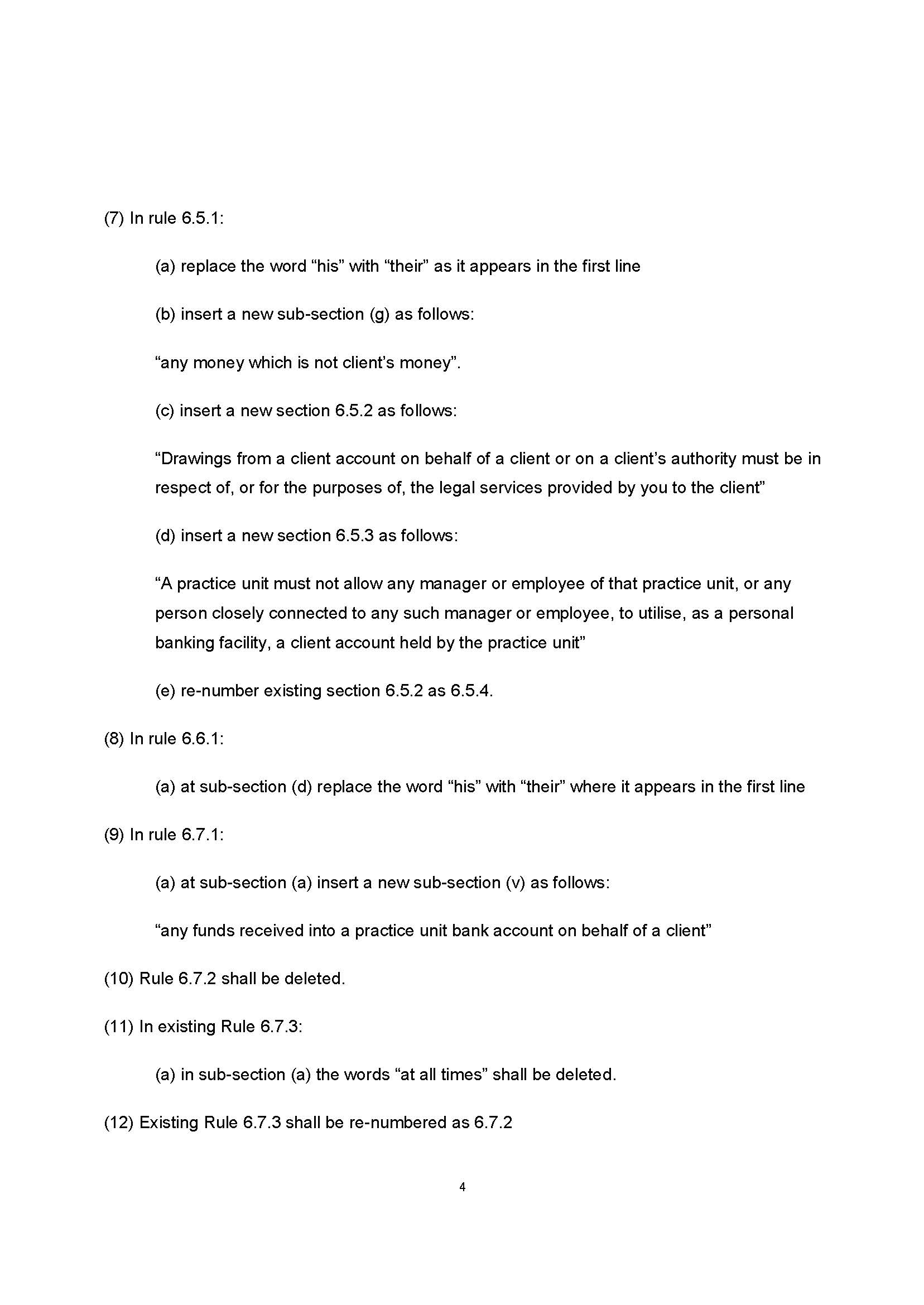
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|  | **Welcome**  The President welcomed everyone to the Special General Meeting of the Law Society of Scotland (the “**Society**”) and thanked all for their attendance. |
|  | **Procedural Arrangements**  The Council Secretary ran through the procedural arrangements for this Special General Meeting, noting apologies and highlighting that notice for the meeting had been sent out on Wednesday 28 September 2022. |
|  | **The President’s Address**  The President addressed the meeting and began by highlighting the publication of the Society’s new five-year strategy for 2022-2027 stating:  “The new strategy expresses our commitment to a diverse, sustainable and thriving Scottish legal sector and outlines how we will support our members to help them succeed in the coming years. Particularly as we continue to move on from the pandemic in a post-Brexit UK, and of course as we navigate the current cost of living crisis in among adapting to a vastly changed working environment.  One of the key things about our new strategy is that it has been developed with our members, drawing on their experience and insight from the outset.  We consulted widely, seeking input from our members as well as our committees, the staff team at the Society, MSPs and other stakeholders to ensure that the strategy is relevant to the legal sector more widely, and to you, as individual members and that as your professional body, we can help support you in doing what you do best, providing high quality legal advice and representation.  As part of developing the strategy, we examined the demographics of the profession today and where it’s headed.  We also looked at the economic, political, societal, technological and environmental contexts to ensure we could develop a strategic plan that did not sit in isolation. That broad outlook is to make sure we do not take too narrow a view and miss important developments. It will allow us to be agile and respond when needed.  We have set out five key aims.   1. **Supporting our members to thrive:**   Scotland benefits from having an excellent legal profession and you, our members are trusted to deliver for your clients. Our role is to support this through professional development and advice and by promoting wellbeing.   1. **Acting in the public interest through modern and effective regulation:**   Our regulatory system works, but we want to see improvement. which means we will maintain robust standards, regulate independently, and protect the public interest.   1. **Innovation and efficiency:**   We will work with innovators to learn and improve how we support our members.   1. **Using our voice to enhance our legal sector and justice:**   We will continue to offer insight, perspectives, protect the rule of law, lobby to revive the legal aid sector, and regulate well.   1. **Leading the profession:**   We will support social mobility and diversity and also aim to demonstrate leadership on sustainability and will support the profession in taking positive action    In short, our strategy sets out how we will support the Scottish legal sector to make a difference.  Solicitors play a crucial role in our society and this is reflected throughout the strategy. The rule of law, supported by an independent legal sector and judiciary, is essential. It helps ensure that the law applies equally to everyone, that rights are protected and disputes resolved and that government acts within and upholds the law.  It’s also vital that we have a sustainable legal aid system, ensuring access to justice so that people can uphold their rights – which is why we have launched a campaign to raise the profile of the crisis in legal aid across Scotland.  This is in addition to continuing our discussions with the Scottish Government on laying the necessary regulations for the proposed £11 million funding boost to go ahead as quickly as possible. We also continue to press the government to introduce a mechanism for regular fee reviews to end the current ad hoc approach to funding legal aid.  There is of course an important focus in the strategy about regulation and protection of the public.  We know that Scottish Government ministers intend to bring forward a package of reforms to our courts, wider system of justice and changes to legal aid. The government is also committed to bringing forward new legislation on the regulation of legal services within the lifetime of this strategy and we will be prepared for the changes this may bring.  We have long said that much of today’s legislation is unfit for Scotland’s modern legal sector and the international markets in which we now compete. New legislation represents an opportunity to bring real improvements, which better protect consumers and allow the legal profession to thrive  It’s something we have set out in our strategy. Not only how we will ensure we are a strong regulator, but also how we will be a powerful voice for the public, the profession, and the Scottish jurisdiction.  It is with our public interest and public protection duties in mind, which in themselves safeguard the reputation of the solicitor profession, that these amendments to the rules have been made to bring improvements to the way we and our members operate”. |
|  | **Resolution – Proposed Changes to the Practice Rules on Standards of Conduct and Accounts**  The President referred to the resolution circulated within the notice of the meeting as detailed within the Appendix (the “**Resolution**”).  The President invited the Executive Director of Regulation to speak to the Resolution.  The Executive Director of Regulation thanked the President and reported to the meeting, stating:  “The Regulatory Committee intend to make a new rule B1.17 which will create a duty on solicitors to cooperate with the SLCC in an open, timely and co-operative manner, so as to enable the Commission properly to exercise and fulfil its statutory functions. This new rule mirrors the existing Rule B1.6 in relation to solicitors’ duty to cooperate with the Society. It is intended to assist with a more efficient complaints system and help to protect the reputation of the profession.  The Regulatory Committee also intend to make various amendments to the existing Accounts Rules at B6. The proposed changes aim to modernise the existing 2011 rules, address identified weaknesses and where possible, simplify requirements placed on members while ensuring continued high professional standards and robust protection for the public.  The proposals include the introduction of an ability to set assessments for cashroom managers regarding their knowledge of the accounts rules and additional requirements on the management of client accounts.  The precise wording of the new rule B1.17 and the amendments to the Accounts Rules were included in the SGM notice and are available on our website.  These draft practice rules are presented at the SGM for the information and comments of members. Any comments from members will be considered by the Regulatory Committee before the rules are presented to the Lord President for his formal approval”.  The President invited questions. None were raised  The Resolution was approved. |
|  | **Close of Meeting**  The President concluded the meeting by thanking everyone who had attended. The President also thanked everyone at the Society who had been involved in organising today’s meeting.  There being no other business the meeting closed at 5:40pm. |

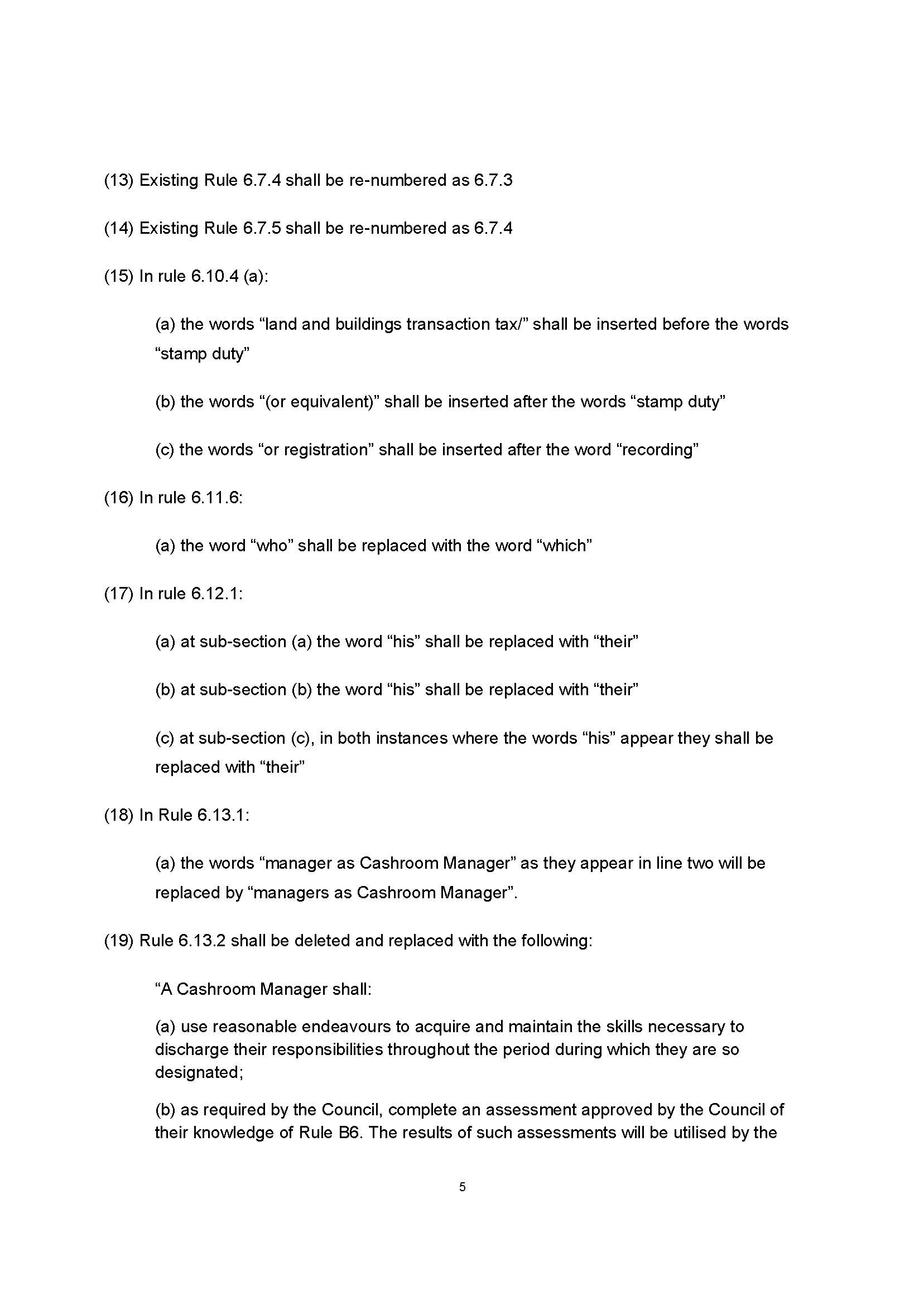
**Appendix**

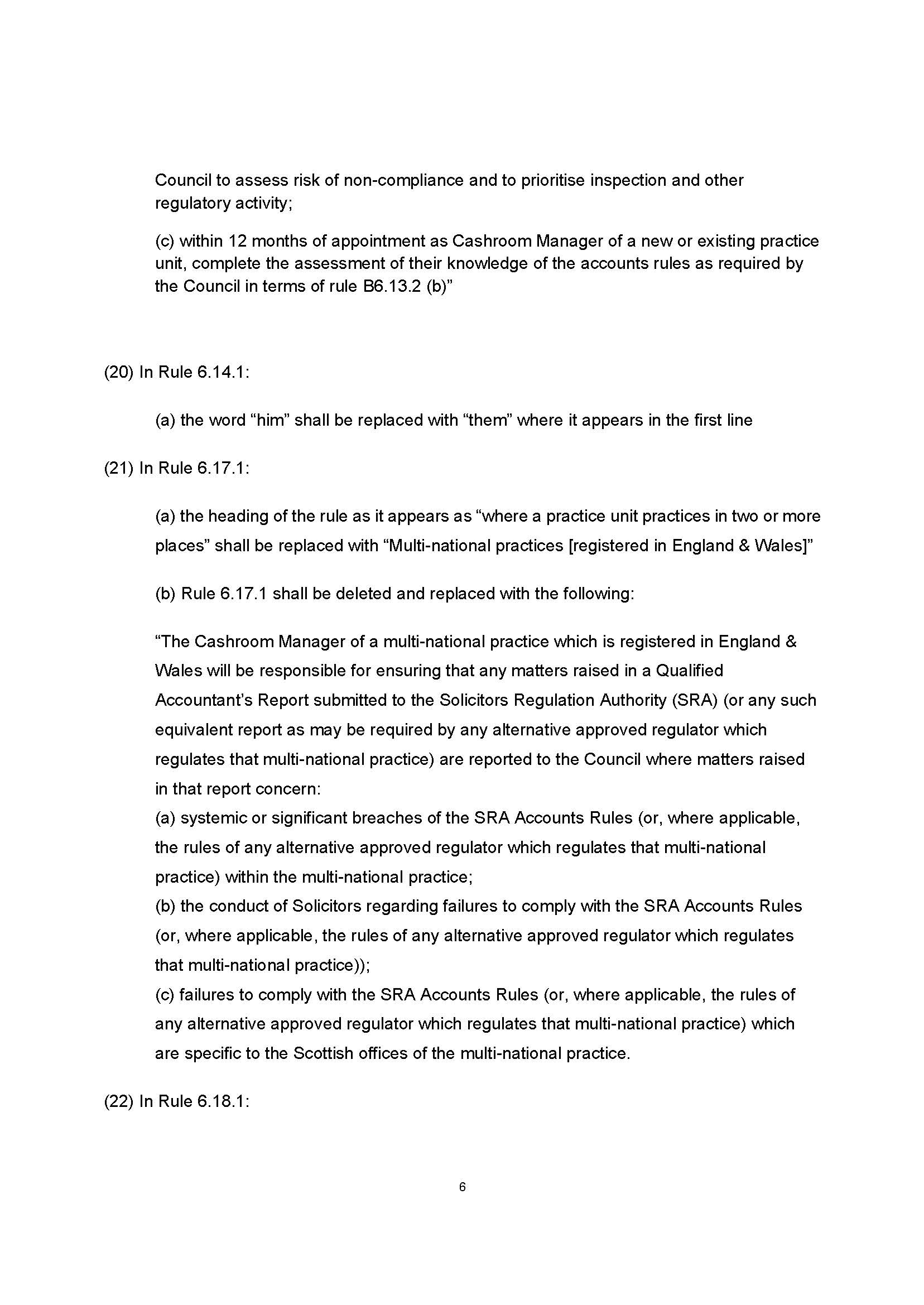
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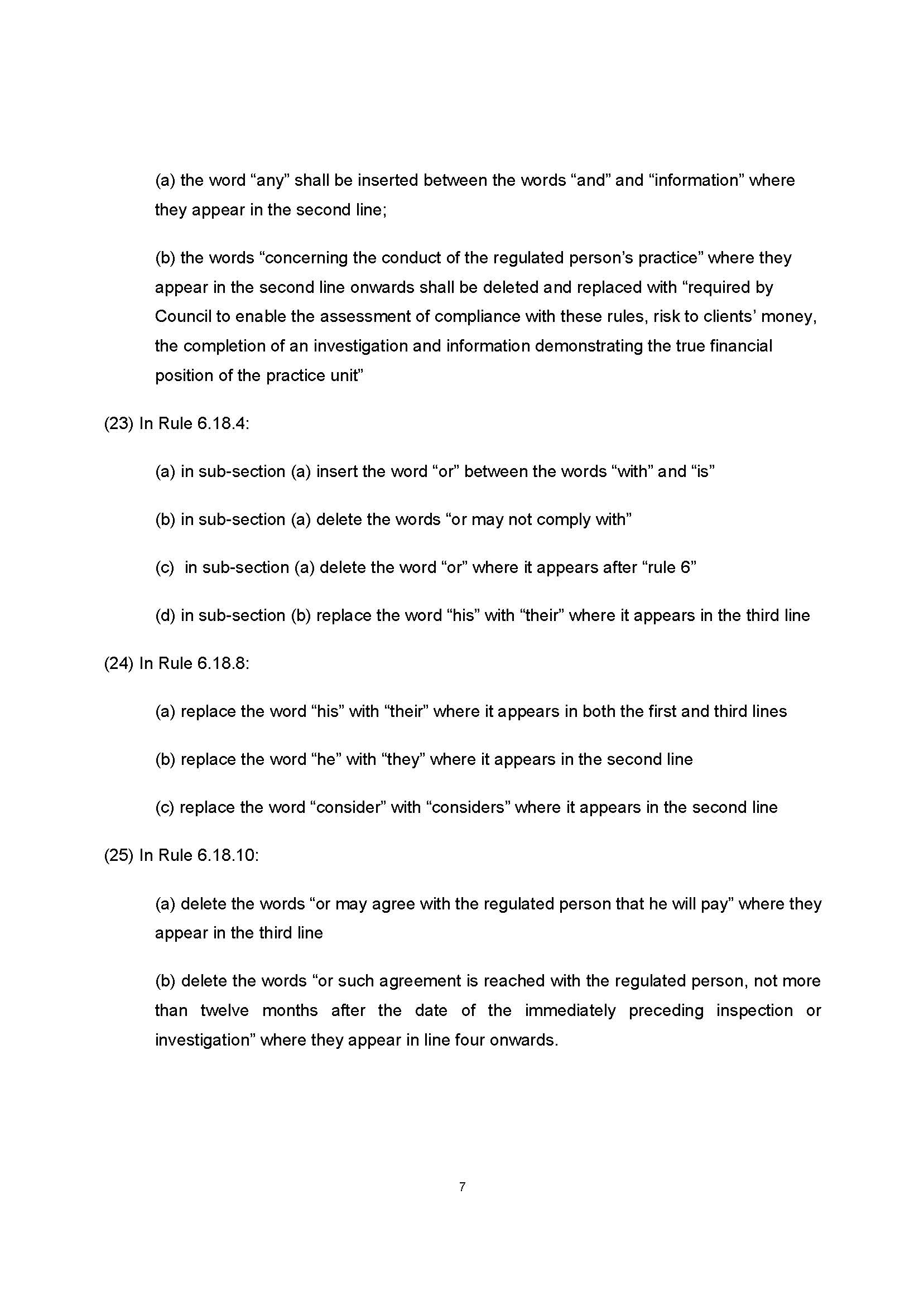
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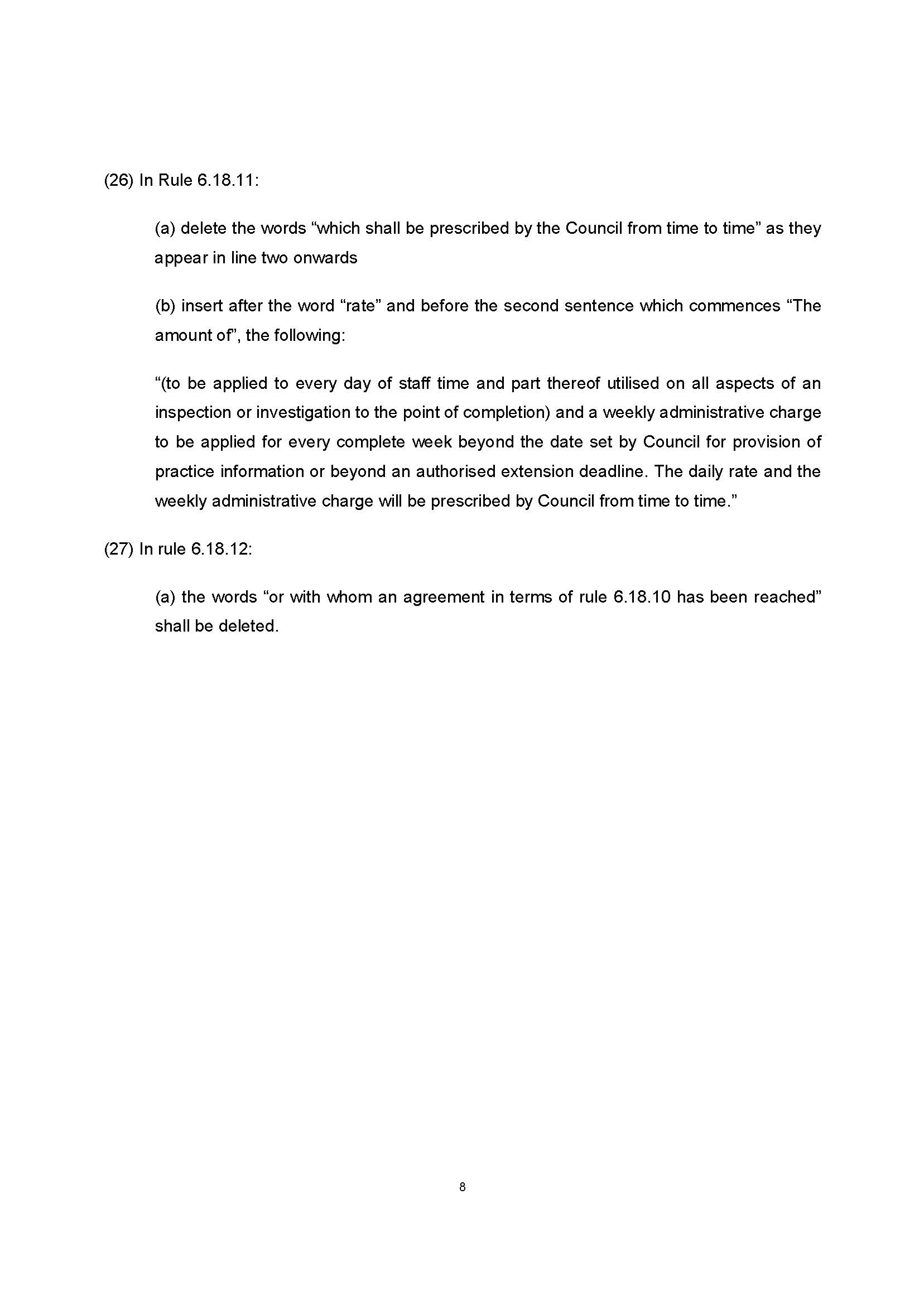
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