

Mayor and Councillors
COUNCIL

24 JANUARY 2013

Meeting Status: **Public**

Purpose of Report: For Decision

**PROGRESSIVE PROCESSING OF VOTES FOR THE 2013
LOCAL BODY ELECTIONS**

PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1 This report seeks approval from Council to adopt progressive processing of votes for the 2013 Local Authority Elections, to facilitate the processing of voting papers.

SIGNIFICANCE OF DECISION

- 2 This report does not trigger the Council's Significance Policy.

BACKGROUND

- 3 The early processing of votes is enabled by Section 79 of the Local Electoral Act 2001 and refers to the checking off of voting documents against the electoral roll. The actual tallying of voting preferences is another process, and this does not happen until after 12 noon on Election Day.
- 4 The Council has adopted progressive processing of votes for the 1998, 2001, 2004, 2007 and 2010 elections and thus avoided the pressure of having to process all votes on Election Day.
- 5 Progressive processing of votes during the three-week voting period is now used by most of the territorial authorities for the Local Authority Elections.
- 6 The Local Electoral Act 2001 requires at least one Justice of the Peace (JP) to supervise any processing of votes before the close of voting. The JP must provide a report to the Electoral Officer on compliance with the regulations prescribing the procedure for the early processing of votes over the voting period.
- 7 It is intended to manage the elections by carrying out the processing of votes 'in-house' using a software package that has been used successfully for the 2007 and 2010 elections. The software package is managed by Independent Election Services Ltd.

CONSIDERATIONS

Issues

- 8 As at the time of writing the Local Electoral Amendment Bill (No 2) is proceeding through Parliament, but is not expected to be enacted until May 2013. The Bill amends the Local Electoral Act 2001 and the Local Electoral Regulations 2001 with the intent of improving the conduct of local body elections, increasing transparency and accountability around electoral donations and strengthening

the integrity and efficiency of the local electoral system. One of the proposed amendments is to repeal section 79, thereby removing provisions for local authorities to determine by resolution on the early processing of voting papers, and to amend section 80 to provide discretion for the Electoral Officer to carry out progressive processing.

Financial Considerations

- 9 If progressive processing of voting papers is not approved then it would result in additional costs to employ extra personnel to process all of the voting papers on Election Day. It would also mean that results would not be available as early as in previous elections.

Legal Considerations

- 10 Under Section 65 of the Local Electoral Act 2001 the Electoral Officer is required to place a public notice after the close of nominations, which states whether or not a resolution has been made under section 79 that voting documents are to be processed during the voting period.

Delegation

- 11 The Council has the authority to consider this matter.

Consultation and Policy considerations

- 12 There are no consultation or policy considerations.

Tāngata Whenua Considerations

- 13 There are no tāngata whenua considerations.

Publicity Considerations

- 14 A media release will be prepared to convey Council's decision to the community.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 15 That Council adopts progressive processing of votes for the 2013 Local Authority Elections to enable the early processing of voting papers during the three week voting period in accordance with Section 79 of the Local Electoral Act 2001.

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