

Mayor and Councillors
COUNCIL

24 JANUARY 2013

Meeting Status: **Public**

Purpose of Report: For Decision

**ORDER OF CANDIDATE NAMES ON VOTING DOCUMENTS
FOR 2013 LOCAL BODY ELECTIONS**

PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1 This report seeks Council's decision on the order in which candidates' names are to be shown on the voting documents used for the 2013 Local Authority Elections.

SIGNIFICANCE OF DECISION

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

BACKGROUND

- 3 Clause 31 of the Local Electoral Regulations 2001 enables councils, if they choose, to determine by resolution which order the candidates' names are to be arranged on the voting document (see Appendix 1).
- 4 These can be by alphabetical order, by pseudo-random order or by random order. The 2010 Local Body Elections were sorted using the alphabetical order of the surname.
- 5 If Council does not wish to decide on this matter the default legislative position is for candidates' names to be listed alphabetically.

CONSIDERATIONS

Issues

- 6 Research suggests that there is evidence for a degree of advantage for candidates whose names are listed first in a voting paper ('ballot order' effect).¹
- 7 Each arrangement is described as follows:

Option 1 – Alphabetical order of surname

- 8 Candidate names are sorted alphabetically by their surnames, from A to Z. This is the simplest method for the elector. It is the method they are familiar with and is the system used at the parliamentary elections. Alphabetical order makes it easier for the voter to quickly find the name of the candidates they wish to vote for, assuming they have decided prior to voting.

¹ "The Impact of Candidate Name Order on Election Outcomes" Joanne M Miller and Jon A. Krosnick, 1998

"First Among Equals? Prime Ballot position improves a candidate's chances of winning office" Kellogg School of Management, 2010

"On the Causes and Consequences of Ballot Order Effects", Marc Meredith and Yuval Salant, 2012

Option 2 – Pseudo-random order

- 9 Under this option, the candidates' names for each election are drawn randomly to determine the order of candidates' names on all voting documents for the current election, with the candidates' names being placed on all voting documents for that election in the order in which they are drawn. Every voting document therefore is identical.
- 10 The Local Electoral Regulations provide that if a Local Authority has determined that pseudo-random order is to be used, the Electoral Officer must state in a public notice required to be given, the date, time and place at which the order of the candidates' names will be drawn. Any person is then entitled to attend while the draw is in progress.
- 11 Candidates with a surname starting with a letter late in the alphabet are disadvantaged no more or less than any other candidate under this method. All candidates have the same chance of being first on the voting documents. The candidate who's name is selected first for the list does gain an advantage through the ballot effect, as their name appears first on every voting document for that election.

Option 3 – Random Order

- 12 Under this option, the list of candidates for each election is randomly printed on each voting document. This is achieved by utilising software which permits the names of the candidates to be laser printed in a random order on each paper. The number of times each candidate's name appears as the first candidate on the list should be approximately equal for the same election. Thus, on average, should ten candidates be standing in one election each candidate's names should be first ten times in every one hundred voting papers.
- 13 Although it may not be particularly user friendly (for voters searching for the names of their preferred candidates) this method is possibly the fairest to all candidates as it removes any chance of a ballot-order effect.

Comparative Cost of Each Option

- 14 The cost of printing the voting documents employing either Option 1 or Option 2 will be identical. Should the Council adopt Option 3 (random order) there will be some increase in cost, because of the need to individually laser print each voting document rather than having them pre-printed. The additional cost of Option 3 Random Order would be approximately \$5,000.

Results

- 15 Whichever method is chosen from the order of candidates on the voting papers, the announcement of results by the Electoral Officer will be in the manner prescribed under the Local Electoral Act 2001 (sections 106 and 108).

Financial Considerations

- 16 There are no further financial considerations.

Legal Considerations

17 The order that the candidate names will appear on voting papers (ie alphabetical, pseudo-random or random) will be stated in the public notice of the election that will be published in August 2013. If pseudo-random order has been selected then the notice will provide details of the date, time and place at which the order of the candidates' names will be arranged and any person is entitled to attend.

Delegation

18 The Council has the authority to consider this matter.

Consultation

19 Consultation is not necessary for a decision on this matter.

Policy Implications

20 There are no policy considerations.

Tāngata Whenua Considerations

21 There are no tāngata whenua considerations.

Publicity Considerations

22 A media release will be prepared on the decision.

RECOMMENDATIONS

23 That the names of the candidates for the 2013 Local Authority Elections held for the Kapiti Coast District are to be arranged on the voting papers in:

- (a) alphabetical order of surname; OR
- (b) pseudo-random order; OR
- (c) random order

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ATTACHMENTS:

Appendix 1 extract from Local Electoral Regulations 2001 (clause 31)

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31 Order of candidates' names on voting documents

- (1) The names under which each candidate is seeking election may be arranged on the voting document in alphabetical order of surname, pseudo-random order, or random order.
- (2) Before the electoral officer gives further public notice under Section 65(1) of the Act, a local authority may determine, by a resolution, which order, as set out in subclause (1), the candidates' names are to be arranged on the voting document.
- (3) If there is no applicable resolution, the candidates' names must be arranged in alphabetical order of surname.
- (4) If a local authority has determined that pseudo-random order is to be used, the electoral officer must state, in the notice given under section 65(1) of the Act, the date, time, and place at which the order of the candidates' names will be arranged and any person is entitled to attend.
- (5) In this regulation –

Pseudo-random order means an arrangement where-

- (a) the order of the names of the candidates is determined randomly; and
- (b) all voting documents use that order

Random order means an arrangement where the order of the names of the candidates is determined randomly or nearly randomly for each voting document by, for example, the process used to print each voting document.