

Mayor and Councillors
COUNCIL

27 SEPTEMBER 2018

Meeting Status: **Public**

Purpose of Report: For Decision

APPOINTMENT OF NEW ELECTORAL OFFICER

PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1 The Council is asked to consider appointing a new Electoral Officer, in the wake of the current Electoral Officer's resignation.

DELEGATION

- 2 Under the Local Electoral Act 2001 ('the Act') only the Council can make this appointment.

BACKGROUND

- 3 Section 12 of the Act requires all councils to have an Electoral Officer 'at all times'. Under Section 13 the Electoral Officer appoints a Deputy Electoral Officer. The Electoral Officer, unless he or she dies, resigns, is dismissed from office, or becomes incapable of acting, remains in office until his or her successor comes into office. The current Electoral Officer Ms Jude Wadsworth has indicated that she will resign to allow the appointment of a new Electoral Officer.

ISSUES AND OPTIONS

Issues

- 4 The next local body elections are being held in 2019, on Saturday 12 October. It is prudent to appoint a new Electoral Officer now in order to have sufficient time for training of the new appointee.
- 5 Ms Jude Wadsworth has presided over four elections since 2007, as well as a number of by-elections. She resigned as the Council's Customer Services manager in 2017.
- 6 This Council is one of a small number of councils in the region that continue to manage their elections in-house, using an STV calculator audited by the Department of Internal Affairs, and a computerised election management system supported by Independent Election Services a firm operating out of Auckland. Other councils have opted to have their election management outsourced, although either their Electoral Officer or their Deputy Officer are council staff.
- 7 As the current approach has served Council well it is recommended that it continue, but as Ms Wadsworth has resigned it is necessary to appoint a new Electoral Officer. It is recommended that Katrina Shieffelbein be appointed to the role.

- 8 Katrina has been an employee of the Council since 2010. She currently holds the role of Business Analyst in the Business Improvement Team and was previously Monitoring Officer in the Corporate Planning and Reporting Team.
- 9 Katrina has a good understanding of the local government environment in Kāpiti and a broad range of skills and experience that are relevant to the position, particularly in relation to process and project management. She is a committed resident of the district and has the required understanding of our communities and local needs.
- 10 Katrina is recommended to the Council for appointment to the role of Electoral Officer following an internal expression of interest process. Six expressions were received. This means there is a good pool from which a Deputy Electoral Officer could be appointed.
- 11 The new Electoral Officer will appoint the Deputy and both must have signed a declaration on or as soon as possible after 1 February 2019 to cover the period until 2022.
- 12 Jude Wadsworth will be employed to provide ongoing training and support to ensure an efficient transition ahead of the 2019 elections.

CONSIDERATIONS

Policy considerations

- 13 There are no policy considerations.

Legal considerations

- 14 There are no additional legal considerations.

Financial considerations

- 15 The costs of continuing to manage local body elections and by-elections on an in-house basis has been budgeted for, and will be less than the cost of outsourcing the function. The costs are \$150,000 but a portion of that is reimbursed due to Council processing votes on behalf of Wellington Regional Council and the two District Health Boards. The nett cost of a local body election over 3 years has come in under budget although this could be impacted in any cycle should there be a need for by-elections.
- 16 The electoral officers are paid for their roles on the basis of a formula developed by the Society of Local Government Managers (SOLGM). Council has budgeted for this requirement.

Tāngata whenua considerations

- 17 There are no tāngata whenua considerations.

SIGNIFICANCE AND ENGAGEMENT

Significance policy

- 18 This matter has a low level of significance under the Council's Significance and Engagement Policy.

Engagement planning

19 An engagement plan is not needed to implement this decision.

Publicity

20 This decision would be publicised through the Council's regular communications channels.

RECOMMENDATIONS

21 That Council notes that the Electoral Officer and Deputy Electoral Officer roles and the STV vote processing of the 2019 local body elections will be managed on an in-house basis.

22 That Katrina Shieffelbein be appointed to act as the Council's Electoral Officer.

Report prepared by

Approved for submission

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ATTACHMENT

Appendix 1 Extract from Local Electoral Act 2001

Appendix 1 - EXTRACT FROM LOCAL ELECTORAL ACT 2001

12 Electoral Officer

(1) For every local authority there must at all times be an electoral officer appointed by the local authority to exercise the powers and carry out the duties conferred on the electoral officer by this Act and any other enactment, in relation to that local authority.

(2) The electoral officer may—

(a) delegate to any person or class of persons any power or duty under this Act or regulations made under this Act (except this power of delegation):

(b) appoint or engage any person or class of persons for the purposes of carrying out any of those powers or duties.

(3) An electoral officer, unless he or she dies, resigns, is dismissed from office, or becomes incapable of acting, remains in office until his or her successor comes into office.