

17. **EARLY PROCESSING AND ORDERING OF CANDIDATES' NAMES ON VOTING DOCUMENTS:  
ELECTION OF ONE AKAROA MEMBER OF AKAROA-WAIREWA COMMUNITY BOARD**

<b>General Manager responsible:</b>	General Manager Regulation and Democracy Services, DDI 941-8549
<b>Officer responsible:</b>	Democracy Services Manager
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**PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1. The purpose of this report is to seek approval for the early processing of the returned voting documents used at the election to be held on Tuesday 12 February 2008 to elect one Akaroa member of the Akaroa-Wairewa Community Board. A decision is also sought as to the order in which the candidates' names are to be shown on the voting documents used at that election.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

**Early Processing**

2. Section 79 of the Local Electoral Act 2001 permits a local authority to process (but not count) returned voting documents over the voting period.
3. Early processing of voting documents was introduced for the 1998 Christchurch City elections (but restricted to the 84 hours before the close of voting) and was used very successfully throughout the country. Because of the success of early processing in 1998 and the benefits which early processing provides, the early processing period was subsequently increased to the entire three week voting period now provided under the current legislation. The immediate benefit of adopting early processing is that much, if not all, of the cumbersome and time-consuming task of extracting and checking the voting documents is undertaken progressively over the three week voting period (under strict security and under the supervision of a Justice of the Peace). This means a quicker and more accurate result can be achieved on polling day.

**Order of Candidates' Names on Voting Documents**

4. Clause 31(1) of the Local Electoral Regulations 2001 allows the Council to decide whether the names are to be arranged on the voting documents in alphabetical order of surname, pseudo-random order or random order. In the absence of any Council resolution approving another arrangement, the candidates' names must be arranged in alphabetical order of surname.
5. The features of each arrangement are described below:
  - (a) **Arrangement 1 - Alphabetical Order of Surname**

This is the order which was used for all local authority elections prior to 2004, and is self-explanatory.
  - (b) **Arrangement 2 - Pseudo-Random Order**

Under this arrangement, the candidates' names for each issue are placed in a hat (or similar receptacle) mixed together, and then drawn out of the receptacle, with the candidates' names being placed on all voting documents in the order in which they are drawn.
  - (c) **Arrangement 3 - Random Order**

Under this arrangement, the names of the candidates are shown in a different order on each and every voting document, utilising software which permits the names of the candidates to be laser printed in a different order on each document.

This is the order which was used for all the issues included in the voting documents used for the 2004 and 2007 Christchurch City elections, ie:

- Election of Mayor
- Election of Councillors
- Election of Community Board Members
- Election of Christchurch City Members of the Canterbury Regional Council (ECan)
- Election of Canterbury District Health Board Members

#### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

6. The total cost of the by-election will amount to approximately \$15,000. This can be accommodated within the provision for the 2007 triennial elections included in the 2006-16 LTCCP budgets.

#### **LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS**

7. The early processing of the returned voting documents is provided for in section 79 of the Local Electoral Act 2001 and clause 101 of the Local Electoral Regulations 2001.
8. The ability to choose between alphabetical order of surname, pseudo-random order or random order for arranging the candidates' names on the voting documents is provided for in clause 31(1) of the Local Electoral Regulations 2001.
9. The regulations provide that if a local authority has determined that pseudo-random order or 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 arranged. Any person is then entitled to attend while the arrangement is in progress.

#### **ALIGNMENT WITH LTCCP AND ACTIVITY MANAGEMENT PLANS**

**Do the recommendations of this report support a level of service or project in the 2006-16 LTCCP?**

10. Yes.

#### **ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIES**

**Do the recommendations align with the Council's strategies?**

11. Not applicable.

#### **CONSULTATION FULFILMENT**

12. Not applicable.

#### **STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended:

- (a) That the returned voting documents for the election to be held on 12 February 2008 to elect one Akaroa member of the Akaroa-Wairewa Community Board be processed during the voting period, such early processing to be undertaken in accordance with section 79 of the Local Electoral Act 2001; the Local Electoral Regulations 2001 and the Society of Local Government Managers' Code of Good Practice for the Management of Local Authority Elections and Polls.
- (b) That the names of the candidates be arranged in random order.