5. ELECTION OF ONE MEMBER OF THE RICCARTON/WIGRAM COMMUNITY BOARD

General Manager responsible:	General Manager Regulation and Democracy Services, DDI 941-8462
Officer responsible:	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 of a member of the Riccarton/Wigram Community Board, to be held on Friday 22 June 2012. 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. The death of Ishwar Ganda, QSO, a former City Councillor and member of the Riccarton/Wigram Community Board, has created an extraordinary vacancy which, as it is more than 12 months before the next triennial election, under s117(1) of the LEA 2001 must be filled by an election.

3. Nominations close on Thursday 3 May 2012 and the voting period will be from 30 May 2012 to 12 noon on Friday 22 June 2012.

4. Section 79 of the Local Electoral Act 2001 permits a local authority to process (but not count) returned voting documents over the voting period.

5. 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

6. 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.

7. 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 for that issue in the order in which they are drawn.   (*Note: Although the term "pseudo random order" is used in the Local Electoral Regulations to describe this arrangement, this is a somewhat imperfect description, in that the term "pseudo random" is understood by mathematicians and/or information technology specialists to have a different meaning.)

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(c)   **Arrangement 3 - Random Order**

Under this arrangement, the names of the candidates for each issue 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 paper.

This is the order which was used for all the issues included in the voting documents used for the 2010 and previous Christchurch City elections, ie:

- Election of Mayor
- Election of Councillors
- Election of Community Board Members.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

8.   The cost of printing the voting documents employing Arrangement 1, Arrangement 2 or Arrangement 3 will be identical. Thus, there will be no additional costs should random order be chosen for the issue being contested.

Do the Recommendations of this Report Align with 2009-19 LTCCP budgets?

9.   Costs for the election are estimated to be around $85,000, although this will depend on the voter turn-out. Because there have been three by-elections this financial year the activity "Public Participation in the Democratic process" is forecast to be over budget by year end. Typically each year we only anticipate one by-election.

LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

Have you considered the legal implications of the issue under consideration?

10.   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.

11.   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.

12.   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 2009-19 LTCCP?

13.   Yes. Democracy and Governance - public participation.

ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIES

14.   Not applicable.

CONSULTATION FULFILMENT

15.   Not required.

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STAFF RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended:

(a)   That the returned voting documents for the election of one member of the Riccarton/Wigram Community Board be processed during the voting period 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 for the election be arranged in random order.