

Voice

your choice

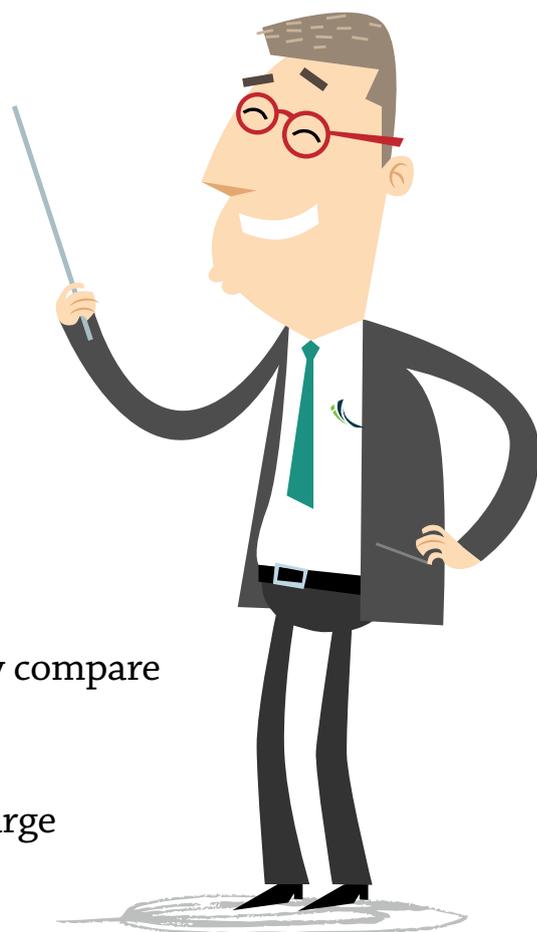


Representation Review 2015

Look inside to learn how you can have your say in how Invercargill City Councillors are elected and whether there should be Community Boards.

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Voice your choice is your chance to have a say in how Invercargill City Councillors are elected, how many Councillors there are in total and whether there should be community boards in any areas. It's called a Representation Review and Council does one at least every six years.

This document explains the process and what is involved in doing a Representation Review. It also gives some examples of what alternative representation systems might look like. It's about giving you the information so you can *Voice your choice*. This pamphlet will serve as a guide to understand what a Representation Review is and how the changes to the electoral system can affect you.

Council's Initial Proposal is open for submissions from

**Thursday August 6 and closes 5.00pm,
Friday September 6, 2015.**

Council will hear and consider submissions in October. Decisions on submissions will be made and Council's Final Proposal for Representation in the Invercargill District will be released in early November 2015. The Local Government Commission will decide any objections or appeals to Council's Final Proposal.



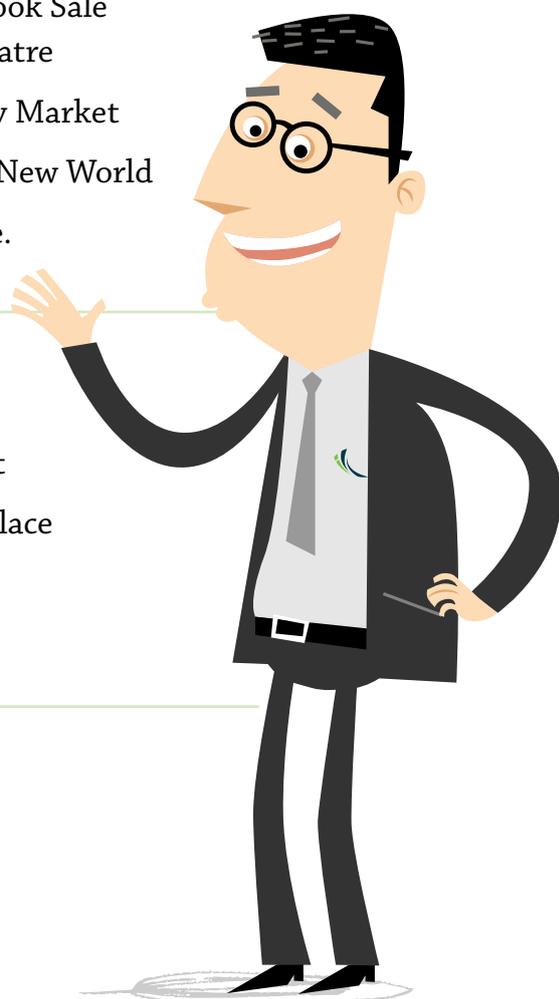
Please take the time to:



Consultation locations

DATE	THE CONSULTATION	THE PLACE
May	Consultation Caravan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farmer's Market Esk Street • Splash Palace • Bluff 4 Square • Waikiwi
June	Consultation Caravan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rotary Book Sale Civic Theatre • Glengarry Market • Windsor New World and more.
July	Consultation Caravan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farmers Market, Esk Street • Splash Palace

Mark these
on your
calendar



Please check the Council website, www.icc.govt.nz for up-to-date consultation times and locations.

What has to be considered?

The Council must carefully consider the following three key factors when deciding on its representation proposal:

- Communities of Interest.
- Effective representation.
- Fair representation.

Communities of Interest

The Council must ensure that the election of Councillors provides effective representation for the community or communities of interest within its area. Giving proper consideration to defining local communities of interest is therefore an essential part of the representation review process.

Council defines a community of interest as follows:

- The history of the area influences and contributes to the current sense of community.
- The area is bounded by distinct or clear topography.
- Distinct land use.
- Strong issues specific to the area.
- Shared and unique economic activities.
- Completeness of community services (schools, shops, services).
- Demographic or socio-economic disparity.
- Ethnic groups or cultural significance which are an important aspect in defining the community.

In the past, Bluff was defined as a community of interest. Other possible communities of interest are:

- Rural farming.
- Residents of the Otatara area.
- South City/South West Invercargill (roughly the suburbs of Crinan, Appleby-Kew, Georgetown, Strathern and Kingswell-Clifton).

Effective Representation

The Council must consider whether effective representation is best achieved by way of:

1. An at-large (city wide) system; or
2. A ward system; or
3. A mixed system, with election partially at-large and partially by ward.

Additionally or alternatively, the Council might consider that a community board is necessary to provide effective representation for some communities.

When deciding effective representation, questions in relation to accessibility, size and configuration of an area also need to be considered, for example:

- Would the population have reasonable access to its elected members and vice versa?
- Would elected members be able to effectively represent the views of their electoral subdivision?
- Would elected members be able to attend public meetings through their area and provide reasonable opportunities for their constituents to have face-to-face meetings?

Fair Representation

If the Council decides to divide the district into wards, in whole or in part, the Local Electoral Act requires that each ward Councillor must represent the same number of people, plus or minus 10%.

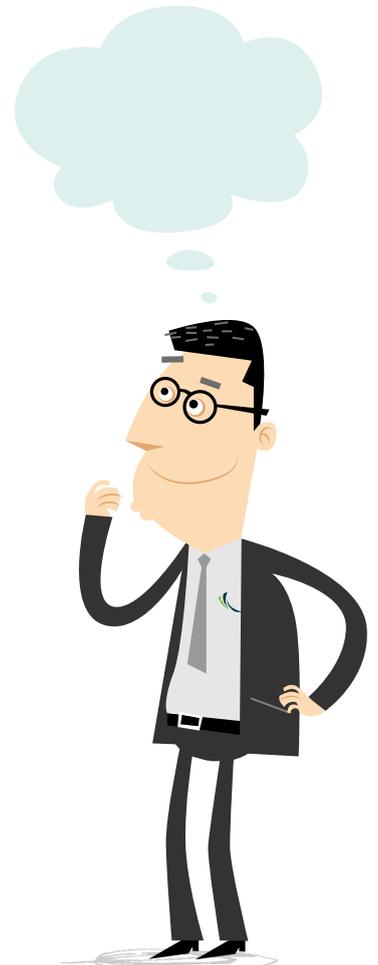
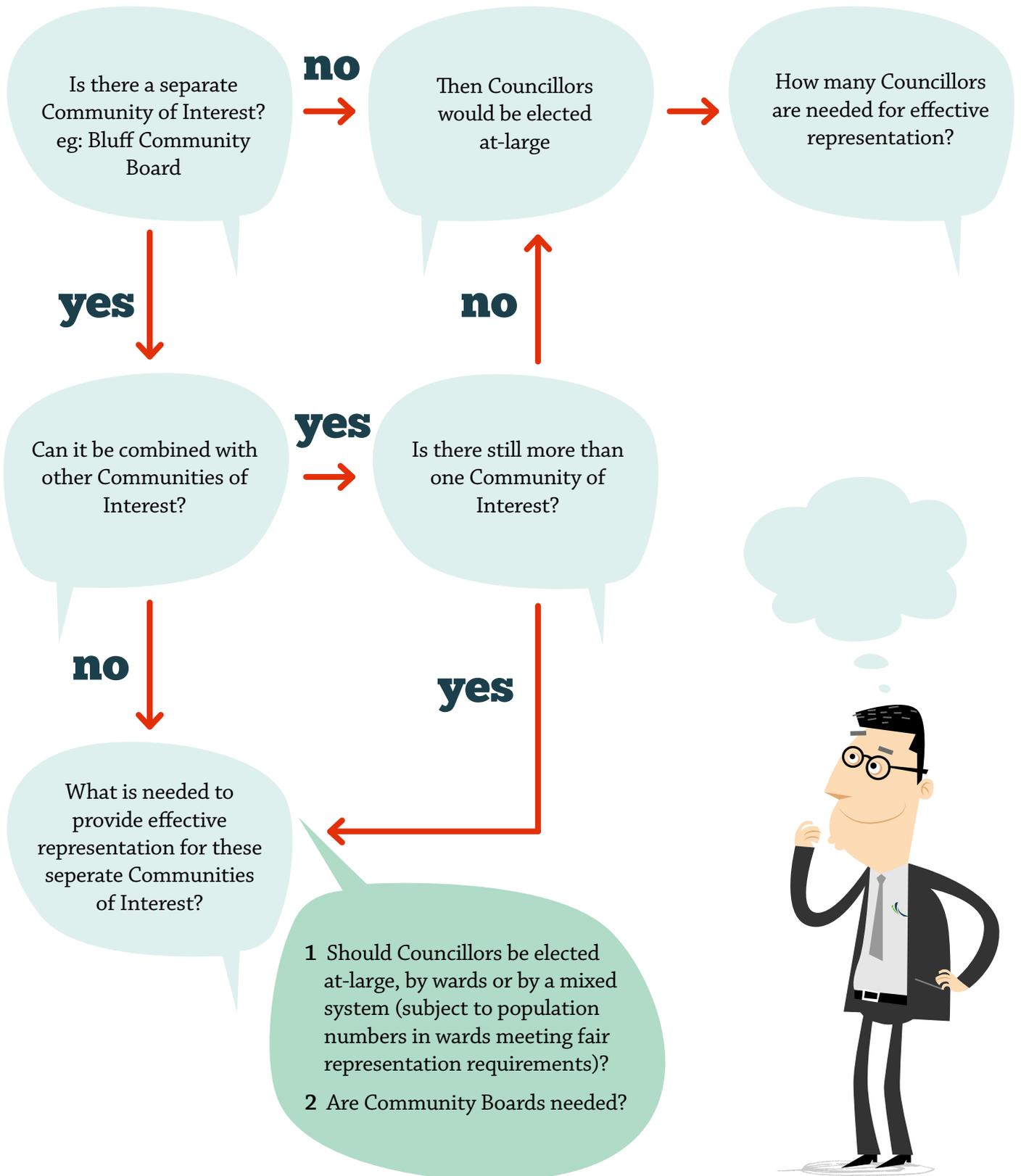
1. In Invercargill this would mean that each Councillor would need to represent between 3,774 and 4,613 people.
2. It also means that, in any ward based system, Bluff would always need to join with a wide additional area to reach the required population threshold. The Act however allows for a community board to be formed in only part of a ward and therefore, in this situation, a community board could continue in just the Bluff area.



What has to be considered?

Summary

The flow chart below summarises the decision-making process Council must follow.



The three different systems & how they compare



The Mayor is always elected by the whole district.

1. Elections At-Large

When Councillors are elected at-large it means that all Councillors are elected by the voters of the whole district. Characteristics which would make elections at-large appropriate are likely to include:

- The district having a relatively compact geographic area.
- Very strong commonalities of interest among identified communities of interest, ie a shared common community of interest across the whole city.

If the Council decides that its members are to be elected at-large, it must ensure that the number of Councillors it decides to have can effectively represent the communities of interest within the city.

Factors in favour of an at-large system to consider:

- Electors are able to vote for all Councillors and so have a much wider choice of candidates.
- Electors are more likely to feel they have a say in the running of the entire city through being able to vote for all Councillors rather than just those standing in a particular part of the city.
- At-large candidates are only required to act in the interests of the district as a whole and it may therefore be easier for Councillors to take a district-wide perspective. An elector can ask any Councillor for help and is not limited to their local ward Councillors.
- An at-large system may assist in achieving more diverse representation. For example, ethnic minority groups and other interest groups which are spread across the city could have a greater chance of being elected in an at-large system.
- If electors are given the opportunity to pass judgment on all candidates, increased accountability may result.

The three different systems & how they compare continued...



2. Election by Wards

The district may be divided into separate areas, called wards for electoral purposes. Under this system, Councillors are elected to represent a specific area or ward and electors may vote only for those candidates who are standing for election in the ward in which the elector lives. The number of Councillors per ward depends on the population of each ward as the ratio of Councillors to residents must be consistent across all wards.

Wards may be considered appropriate in circumstances where a territorial authority district, i.e. Invercargill City Council, contains a number of distinct communities of interest best served by separate representation.

Factors in favour of a ward system to consider:

- Representation is likely to be more evenly distributed geographically across the district, although candidates are not required to live in the ward in which they are standing.
- Potential candidates could find the financial and time costs of campaigning less prohibitive in a ward than an at-large system.
- It encourages residents to become better informed on candidates and their policies because there are fewer candidates, who may also be better known to locals.
- It may improve accountability in that ward and ensure a closer link between the Council and residents of particular parts of the district, thereby contributing to the effective delivery of local services and facilities. Residents may also feel more able to approach ward Councillors directly.
- A ward system may enable more effective management of the community/council consultation processes.



3. Elections under a mixed system, partly at-large and partly by ward

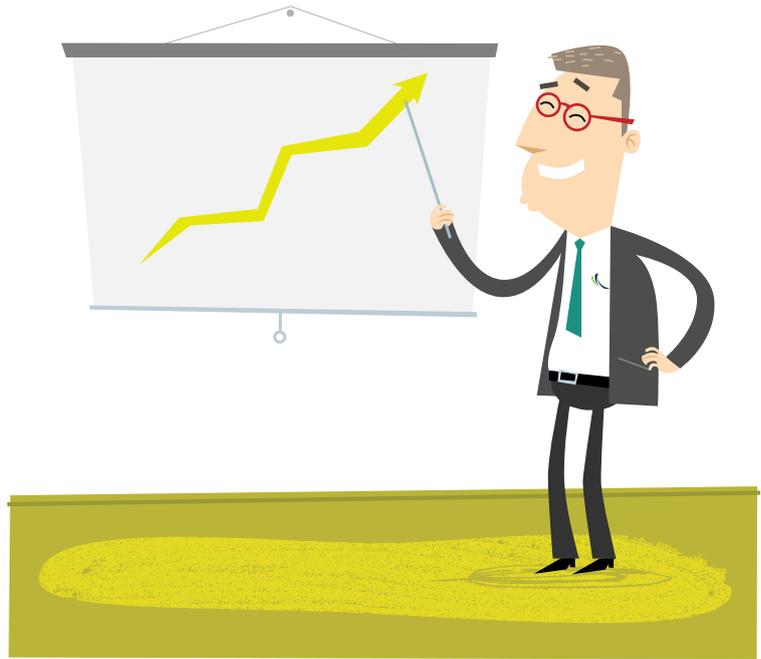
Under this option, an agreed number of Councillors are elected by ward and the remaining Councillors are elected on a city wide basis. It is up to each Council to decide what the proportion elected under each should be.

In favour of a mixed at-large/ward system:

- Electors can vote for more than just their ward Councillor(s) as they are also able to vote for Councillors being elected at-large. This could reduce the frustration some voters feel in a ward-only system at being able to vote for a much smaller number of Councillors.
- A mixed system could provide a better balance of interests between the district as a whole and the needs of specific wards.
- A mixed system still provides specific ward (local) representation, although the wards would be bigger and have fewer Councillors than under an entirely ward system.
- The option of ward representation, with the lesser campaign costs and time involvement, could encourage a wider range of candidates to stand.
- A part ward system would still provide some of the anticipated better linkages between the Council and residents of particular parts of the district.

Number of Councillors

The law currently provides for the membership of a territorial authority to be no fewer than six and no more than 30 members including the Mayor. This range is set to enable the community to settle upon a system of representation which allows for the variety and complexity of local needs and the range of functions being undertaken by a territorial authority.



The view of those who support a smaller number of elected members is that the legislation now requires Councillors to focus their attention on strategic and policy matters and have less hands-on involvement in the running of the Council. Therefore a smaller number of Councillors could do the job.

The opposing view is that any reduction to the existing numbers would lower the level of representation to an unacceptable degree and is seen as an erosion of the democratic process. Fewer Councillors would also increase the workload of those elected.

The current elected membership of Invercargill City Council, not including the Mayor, is 12. This was reduced from 15 in 1992 when the previous ward based system was abolished.



Now that you know all about the Representation Review we would love to get your comments.

Included on the next page is a submission form where you can Voice Your Choice. It's important to us to know what your thoughts are on the best way to ensure fair and effective representation.

We will be using the feedback from your submission form to build a formal proposal for the Invercargill City Council. Your opinions matters to us so please take the time to Voice Your Choice.

Your feedback

We want to hear your thoughts

Contact Details (Please print clearly)

NAME: _____

WHAT NEIGHBOURHOOD TO YOU LIVE IN: _____

POSTCODE: _____

Question 1.

We currently have 12 Councillors and a Mayor.

Do you think we need?

- A larger Council Same size A smaller Council

Question 2.

What electoral system do you prefer? Details about the systems on pages 9-11

- At large(current system) Wards At large and Wards

Question 3.

Do you think we should keep the Bluff Community Board?

- Yes No

Question 4.

Do you think we need more community boards?

- Yes No

If so where? _____

Question 5.

Do you think voting ballots should list candidate's names in alphabetical order or in a random pattern?

- Random Alphabetical

Voice your choice



Invercargill
CITY COUNCIL

Your feedback...



Question 6.

Would you like to be able to vote online?

- Yes No

Question 7.

Which form of voting would you prefer?

- Online Postal Both

Question 8.

Do you feel you have effective representation under the current system? (Refer to page 7)

- Yes No

Additional feedback:



Voice your choice



POST TO: Freepost,
Voice your Choice, Private Bag 90104
Invercargill 9840

Feedback form must be returned by 5pm on Friday 17 July 2015.

Please note that feedback might be included in papers which are available to the public.





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