



INVERCARGILL CITY COUNCIL

ELECTION PROTOCOLS FOR COUNCIL STAFF

These election protocols are intended to assist and give guidance to you during this year's election and particularly the pre-election period for the 2022 local authority election.

ISSUES FOR STAFF TO BE CONSCIOUS OF DURING AN ELECTION:

- » That actions of staff may lead to allegations of bias;
- » A sitting member achieves electoral advantage at ratepayers expense;
- » Use of Council resources to promote re-election prospects;
- » Staff must not align themselves or support candidates (sitting or aspiring);
- » Any staff wishing to stand for election must advise their Manager in the first instance.

REASONS

There are some simple principles that need to be balanced during the pre-election period, and they are:

Actions of staff that may lead to allegations of bias

Be wary of tricky and leading questions, or being drawn into inappropriate discussions, with both sitting or aspiring candidates and the media. In particular employees must not make comment to the media (including via social media e.g. Facebook) about

election matters.

Any media queries are to go through the council Communications team.

Staff must remain politically neutral at all times when dealing with Councillors and the public. Do not be drawn into discussions that could put your neutrality at risk.

Please refer to your Manager or Michael Morris, Deputy Electoral Officer, for guidance.

A sitting member achieves electoral advantage at ratepayers expense

Public funds that Council administers must not be used for electioneering or to benefit one candidate over another.

However, this is balanced between the fact Councillors are still in office during the election campaign and remain responsible for the activities of Council that are business as usual.

Council arranged or supported forums or electioneering and meetings must not be used for campaigning purposes.

Council's website includes details about its sitting members (titles, portfolios, contact details etc) and it is

KEY DATES

8 JUL

PRE-ELECTION
PERIOD

15 JUL

NOMINATIONS
OPEN

12 AUG

NOMINATIONS
CLOSE

16 SEP

VOTING
OPENS

8 OCT

ELECTION
DAY

appropriate that such general information remains as “current” on Council’s website.

Care must be taken that any Council publication does not promote an inappropriately high profile of any councillor.

Use of Council resources to promote reelection

Such things as equipment located within Council offices, for example: computers, mobile phones, email, stationery, photocopiers, stamps, business cards and Council venues must not be used for campaigning purposes.

Staff must not align themselves or support candidates (sitting or aspiring)

Staff must not visibly take part in any activity related to advocating a candidates’ election campaign (sitting or aspiring). This includes attendance at private campaign strategy meetings, involvement in public meetings (unless competing candidates are involved) and taking part in any activity that could be seen to be a campaign activity.

Extra care should be taken to ensure any Council organised event (or issuing statements) are not linked to a candidate’s campaign.

Staff have the same rights of free speech as other members of the public and are entitled to their own political views, membership of a political party and may stand for political office.

However, it is important for staff to distinguish when comments offered on election related matters are their own personal opinions and to avoid attributing those opinions as being representative of council as an organisation.

Staff must not use work communication tools to seek support for a particular candidate or candidates, nor use any staff forum as a platform for encouraging support for a candidate or candidates.

Any staff wishing to stand for election must advise their Manager

It is important that any member of staff wishing to be a candidate in the election of any local authority gives adequate prior warning to their Manager, so that potential for conflicts of interest and any resourcing implications can be determined.

Any member of staff of the Invercargill City Council who is elected as a member of the Invercargill City Council must resign as a council employee ((Section 41(5) Local Government Act 2002).

There is no statutory restriction in the case of an employee standing for, or being elected to, another authority outside the ICC area, such as Southland District Council or Environment Southland, other than the Invercargill City Council.

However, the Chief Executive will determine the feasibility of a member of staff standing for political office and will reserve the right to consider each situation on its merits.

HOW THE PROTOCOLS SHOULD BE APPLIED

These protocols apply during the election year and specifically during the pre-election period, 8 July 2022 to 8 October 2022, to staff of the Invercargill City Council.

One exception is in regards to staff wishing to stand for election – if you are thinking about standing or intending to stand, you are requested to speak with your Manager at the earliest possible time, as this will enable us to manage your work in a way that will avoid any conflicts of interest.

Situations that may occur will sometimes rely on the judgment and common sense of the staff member involved, whilst applying the principles described above. If you are unsure or require clarification please contact Michael Morris (Deputy Electoral Officer).

BREACHES OF PROTOCOL

Any breach of this protocol may result in disciplinary action being taken.

REVIEW

This protocol will be reviewed every three years and prior to the nomination period for Council elections.