



INVERCARGILL CITY COUNCIL ELECTION PROTOCOLS FOR COUNCIL STAFF

BY-ELECTION

These election protocols are intended to assist and give guidance to you during this years by-election.

ISSUES FOR STAFF TO BE CONSCIOUS OF DURING AN ELECTION:

- » That actions of staff may lead to allegations of bias;
- » Use of Council resources to promote re-election prospects;
- » Staff must not align themselves or support candidates;
- » 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 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 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.

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

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.

KEY DATES

11 MAY

NOMINATIONS
OPEN

8 JUNE

NOMINATIONS
CLOSE

13 JULY

VOTING
OPENS

4 AUGUST

ELECTION
DAY

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 by-election period, 11 May 2023 to 4 August 2023, 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.