

EXTRAORDINARY MEETING

OF

WELLINGTON CITY COUNCIL

AGENDA

Time: 9.15am
Date: Wednesday, 16 September 2015
Venue: Committee Room 1
Ground Floor, Council Offices
101 Wakefield Street
Wellington

MEMBERSHIP

Mayor Wade-Brown

Councillor Ahipene-Mercer
Councillor Coughlan
Councillor Eagle
Councillor Foster
Councillor Free
Councillor Lee
Councillor Lester

Councillor Marsh
Councillor Pannett
Councillor Peck
Councillor Ritchie
Councillor Sparrow
Councillor Woolf
Councillor Young

Have your say!

You can make a short presentation to the Councillors at this meeting. Please let us know by noon the working day before the meeting. You can do this either by phoning 803-8334, emailing public.participation@wcc.govt.nz or writing to Democratic Services, Wellington City Council, PO Box 2199, Wellington, giving your name, phone number and the issue you would like to talk about.

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1 Meeting Conduct

1.1 Apologies

The Chairperson invites notice from members of:

1. Leave of absence for future meetings of the Wellington City Council; or
2. Apologies, including apologies for lateness and early departure from the meeting, where leave of absence has not previously been granted.

1.2 Announcements by the Mayor

1.3 Conflict of Interest Declarations

Members are reminded of the need to be vigilant to stand aside from decision making when a conflict arises between their role as a member and any private or other external interest they might have.

1.4 Items not on the Agenda

The Chairperson will give notice of items not on the agenda as follows:

Matters Requiring Urgent Attention as Determined by Resolution of the Wellington City Council

1. The reason why the item is not on the agenda; and
2. The reason why discussion of the item cannot be delayed until a subsequent meeting.

Minor Matters relating to the General Business of the Wellington City Council

No resolution, decision, or recommendation may be made in respect of the item except to refer it to a subsequent meeting of the Wellington City Council for further discussion.

1.5 Public Participation

A maximum of 60 minutes is set aside for public participation at the commencement of any meeting of the Council or committee that is open to the public. Under Standing Order 3.23.3 a written, oral or electronic application to address the meeting setting forth the subject, is required to be lodged with the Chief Executive by 12.00 noon of the working day prior to the meeting concerned, and subsequently approved by the Chairperson.

2. General Business

ONLINE VOTING TRIAL 2016

Purpose

1. The purpose of this report is for Council to confirm its' intention to participate in the online voting trial for the 2016 local government election.

Summary

2. Central government has indicated their support for an online voting trial for next year's local government election.
3. A Cabinet decision on which councils will be permitted to be part of the trial will be made by late September and a final decision on whether or not a trial will proceed is expected by early December.
4. Local Government New Zealand (LGNZ) is seeking confirmation from interested councils to confirm their interest in order to be included in the list of participating councils to be presented to Cabinet.
5. Council is required to confirm its participation in the proposed online trial and allocate an additional \$100,000 to fund this.

Recommendations

That the Council:

1. Receive the information.
2. Agree to confirm Wellington City Council's interest to participate in the proposed online voting trial for 2016 local election.
3. Agree to allocate an additional \$100,000 to the Election budget to cover the cost of participating in the online voting trial.

Background

6. In May 2015 Council agreed to register its interest, subject to cost, in participating in the online voting trial proposed for the 2016 elections.
7. Wellington City Council uses "electionz.com" as its Electoral Officer and election service provider. Electionz.com is recognised as having specific expertise in elections management and is confident that the system they have developed meets the requirements for the trial.
8. Ten (10) local authorities have expressed an interest in participating in the trial using electionz.com as their election service provider. The other councils are Rotorua, Masterton, Matamata-Piako, Horowhenua, Porirua, Marlborough, Selwyn, Christchurch and Dunedin.
9. Following LGNZ's initial discussions with the Minister, and now that cost estimates are available, councils are being asked to reconfirm their interest in participating in the trial. A decision regarding whether the trial will proceed is expected to be made in December 2015.

Discussion

10. Underpinning Wellington City's operations and aspirations is our vision of Smart Capital, a people-centred, hi-tech, progressive and ecologically-responsive place where talent wants to live. Being part of the local government online voting trial is consistent with this vision and our digital philosophy.
11. The capital's population size, engagement in local body and central government issues, and strong uptake of digital communications are strong attributes for a successful trial.
12. Our track record in adopting progressive forms of voting, such as Single Transferable Voting (STV), indicates a willingness of Wellingtonians to embrace new forms of representation.
13. If the 2016 trial is considered a success by the councils involved, and by central government, it is likely that all councils will be required to offer online voting in the 2019 elections.
14. Online voting has a number of advantages including:
 - Making voting faster and easier on any device
 - Improving the voting process for those with disabilities such as the visually impaired community and thus enable them to vote independently without assistance
 - The Wellington City Council's Youth Council is driving online voting on behalf of youth. Online voting makes it easier for them to vote, encouraging their participation, which has traditionally been low
 - Making voting easier for residents/ratepayers overseas during the election period. Wellington has a disproportionate large number of overseas voters
 - Reducing the number of errors on voting papers or invalid votes.
15. This presents an opportunity to increase our voter turnout.
16. The trial will be limited to a small number of councils, incorporating a mix of metro, rural and provincial councils.

Options

17. Council has the option not to participate in the 2016 online voting trial, and continue to accept postal votes as the only voting method.

Next Actions

18. 17 September 2015 - Councils must confirm their intention to participate in the trial.
19. Late September 2015 - Cabinet decision on which councils will be permitted to be part of the trial.
20. Early December 2015 – Final Cabinet decision on whether or not a trial will proceed.

Attachments

Nil

Author	Deb Howse, Manager, Iro/Acting Manager, Democratic Services
Authoriser	Anusha Guler, Acting Director Governance

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Consultation and Engagement

No consultation is required for this decision. However, a comprehensive communication plan will be developed to promote voting in the 2016 local government elections. If council chooses to participate in the online voting trial, additional communications will be used to encourage online voting.

Treaty of Waitangi considerations

No implications.

Financial implications

The total cost of the online voting trial (approx \$1.1M) will be split between the electionz.com councils participating in the trial based on the number of electors in their district. At this stage it is estimated that Wellington City Council's portion of this would be approximately \$100,000.

The cost of participating in the online voting trial is not included in existing budgets. If council agrees to participate in the online voting trial, an additional \$100,000 will need to be allocated to the election budget.

Policy and legislative implications

No implications.

Risks / legal

Central government has set a number of requirements for councils participating in the online voting trial relating to security, usability, accessibility, audit requirements. The requirements at this stage are in draft and will have to be met prior to the commencement of the trial.

Climate Change impact and considerations

No implication.