
REPORT 2
(1215/52/IM) (1225/16/IM)

ELECTION SYSTEM FOR FUTURE LOCAL AUTHORITY ELECTIONS

1. Purpose of Paper

To submit for the Committee's consideration the options that are now available to the Council in relation to the electoral system it uses, and the subsequent processes it is required to follow, for the 2010 local authority elections.

2. Executive Summary

The Council, at its meeting on 9 September 2002, resolved that a poll of electors be held to determine the electoral system to be used for the 2004 and 2007 local authority elections in Wellington city. The poll was held in November 2002, the result of which determined that the 2004 and 2007 triennial elections at least (and any subsequent by-elections) would be held using the STV electoral system.

The STV electoral system currently in place continues in effect for all subsequent elections until a further resolution of the Council or a further poll of electors determines otherwise.

Now that two triennial elections have been held under the STV method, the Council, or its community, have the opportunity, under the provisions of the Local Electoral Act 2001 (LEA), to reconsider what electoral system should be used for the 2010 local authority elections. There are a number of different options the Council can take in making that decision and which option it takes will determine the process it is required to follow in notifying its decision. Details of the options and the processes that must be followed are set out in the report. However, it is important to note that any by-election required prior to the 2010 election will have to be held using the STV electoral system (regardless of the Council's decision on the method to be used in 2010).

3. Recommendations

It is recommended that the Committee:

1. *Recieve the information.*
2. *Note that changes to or retention of the current electoral system for the 2010 local authority elections can be initiated by the Council, or its community, in the following ways:*
 - *Council can resolve by resolution (no later than 12 September 2008), to change or retain its current electoral system. Electors have the ability to challenge that decision and can force the Council to hold a poll on the matter, the result of which is binding for the next two triennial elections and any associated elections.*
 - *The public can demand by way of a petition (to be received by 28 February 2009) that a poll be held to decide which electoral system should be used for the 2010 election.*
 - *The Council can itself resolve to hold a poll on the issue, the result of which is binding for the next two triennial elections and any associated elections.*

Any poll held under these provisions must be held no later than 21 May 2009 in order to take effect at the 2010 triennial elections.

3. *Note that Council must give public notice, on or before 19 September 2008, of any resolution passed by 12 September 2008 and of the right of 5% of electors to demand that a poll be held to determine the electoral system to be used for the 2010 local authority elections.*
4. *Recommend to Council that:*
 - (a) *a poll of electors be initiated to determine the electoral system to be used at the 2010 and 2013 local authority elections*
 - (b) *the poll be held on Saturday 27 September 2008 and be conducted using the postal voting method*
 - (c) *the poll be conducted using the First Past the Post electoral system.*
 - (d) *a sum of \$185,000 be provided for in the 2008/2009 annual budget allocated to Democratic Services for the costs of running the poll*
 - (e) *the Electoral Officer be permitted, subject to strict compliance with the provisions of the Local Electoral Act 2001, to progressively process the voting documents during the three week period prior to 12 noon on polling day (Saturday 27 September 2008).*
 - (f) *the wording of the electoral system proposal, to be included on the voting documents, be as follows*

“The Local Electoral Act 2001 gives local authorities a choice of two electoral systems for electing its members. The two options

are the First Past the Post (FPP) electoral system and the Single Transferable Vote (STV) electoral system.

The Wellington City Council has used the STV electoral system to elect its members, and the members of its two community boards, since 2004. The Council has decided to hold a poll of electors to determine which system will be used to elect its members at the triennial elections to be held in 2010 and 2013.

If a majority of the votes cast in this poll are in favour of the present STV electoral system, as provided for in the Local Electoral Act 2001, the method of electing members of the Wellington City Council and its community boards at the 2010 and 2013 local authority elections will remain by way of the STV electoral system.

If a majority of the votes cast in this poll are in favour of the FPP electoral system, as provided for in the Local Electoral Act 2001, the method of electing members of the Wellington City Council and its community boards at the 2010 and 2013 local authority elections will be by way of the FPP electoral system.

To vote, place a “√” clearly within the box next to the option you wish to vote for. You can vote for only one (1) option.

*I vote for the **Single Transferable Vote (STV)** electoral system*

*I vote for the **First Past the Post (FPP)** electoral system”*

5. *Recommend to Council that, if a poll of electors is held and the result of that poll is to revert back to the FPP electoral system, consideration be given to undertaking another representation review in 2009.*

4. Background

4.1 Electoral systems

It is mandatory, under the New Zealand Public Health and Disability Act 2000, for all District Health Boards (DHB's) to use the STV system for the election of their members.

However, subject to compliance with the processes set out in the Local Electoral Act (LEA), local authorities, or their communities, can choose the electoral system to be used for elections and polls held in their respective districts. The two options available are First Past the Post (FPP) and the Single Transferable Vote (STV) systems.

Changes to the electoral system may be initiated in the following ways –

- (a) a local authority may, by **resolution**, resolve to change its electoral system; or

- (b) a **poll** may be held to determine which electoral system will be used in the local authority area concerned. A poll can arise from a public demand (i.e. a petition) or as a result of a local authority decision.

Whatever the result of the poll is (i.e. whether the current system is retained or is changed), that system must remain in use for at least the next two triennial elections (i.e. in our case 2010 and 2013) and any associated elections. An associated election in this context means any by-election to fill an extraordinary vacancy in the membership of the local authority that is held between the two successive triennial elections or after the second of those elections but before the subsequent (i.e. third) triennial election.

Furthermore, the electoral system will continue in effect for all subsequent elections and until a further resolution of the local authority or a further poll of electors takes effect, whichever occurs first.

If the electoral system changes as a result of a local authority **resolution**, the new system also takes effect for the next two triennial elections and any associated elections. However that decision can be reversed, after the first triennial election (and any associated election) has been held under the new system, by a subsequent Council resolution or by a poll of electors.

5. Discussion

5.1 *Analysis of recent local government electoral experience under the STV and FPP electoral systems*

An analysis of available electoral data since the introduction of the STV electoral system at the 2004 local authority elections has shown the following:

- One of the strong arguments in support of STV is that it is a fairer system and candidates from ethnic and other minority backgrounds have a better chance of being elected under this system. This has not proved, as yet, to be the case in Wellington after two elections under the STV system.
- The number of candidates standing for election for those councils using STV has decreased over the past few elections. This has also been the situation for those Councils that use the FPP system and is not, it would appear, as a result of the Council changing to the STV system.
- Of the ten local authorities that decided (either by way of a Council resolution or by holding a binding poll) to use the STV voting system for the 2004 local authority elections, only eight chose (or were required to) retain that system for the 2007 elections.
- The voter turnouts for all Councils which changed from FPP to STV in 2004 dropped (apart from Porirua which stayed the same). The average decrease across the other Councils who changed to STV in 2004 was 6% which was

also the decreased turnout for Wellington City. The average reduction in voter turnout for councils which stayed with FPP was 5.8%.

- Papakura and Matamata-Piako District Councils decided to revert back to the FPP electoral system for the 2007 election. That decision resulted in a marginal increase in voter turnout for Matamata-Piako (i.e. 14%) and a reduction of 5.34% for Papakura (i.e. the decision to go back to FPP did not significantly improve their voter turnout).
- Although the voter turn-out in Wellington has decreased since STV was introduced in 2004, it has been declining, even under the FPP system, since 1995 when we achieved a high of 53%.
- In 2007 the voter turn-out declined, on average, by 2.03% (Wellington's voter turn-out decreased by 2.24%). All but eight local authorities used the FPP electoral system in 2007 which means that voter participation under this method is also on the decline.
- The number of informal and blank votes that were cast throughout the country under both electoral systems (in both 2004 and 2007) was relatively high. In our view, this is not because people don't know how to vote under STV (or FPP for that matter) but rather the result of two voting systems being on the one combined voting paper.
- Despite spending \$130,000 on public awareness and encouraging electors to vote, the Wellington City Council turn-out decreased by 2.24% in 2007. This followed a similar pattern to what happened in the two previous elections. It is impossible to judge what the result might have been, however, if this additional advertising had not taken place.
- Despite the Department of Internal Affairs's best endeavours, the public's knowledge of the STV electoral system is still, in our view, very poor. The Government has spent millions of dollars over the years explaining how the MMP electoral system works, and a similar campaign, over a period of elections, will be needed to fully educate electors on the STV system.
- The general view is that unless there is a strong Mayoral race (or the incumbent is not standing for re-election), or there are "significant issues" under public debate or scrutiny, then the chances of achieving a high voter turn-out are markedly reduced. Some initial research of the results shows this was the case in 2007. Other results, however, indicate that these factors will not always result in an increase in turnout. For example, the 2007 Auckland City mayoral election could be considered to be high profile but turnout decreased by 8.78% and in Buller District with a retiring Mayor, turnout decreased by 8.52%.

Some initial research of voter numbers at the 2007 local elections has also shown:

- there were ten cities/districts with a voter turnout of over 57.58% (highest was Chatham Islands with 63.92%). All of these authorities, with the exception of the Chatham Islands Council, used the FPP electoral system.
- ten cities/districts received less than 38.24% turnout (the lowest being Otorohanga District with 29.94%). All of these Councils used the FPP system.
- voter turnout was up in only 23 cities/districts, the highest being the Chatham Islands with 17.57% where there was a Mayoral election only
- the biggest decrease of 18.88% was experienced by Westland District where the Mayor was elected unopposed.

More detailed information on a number of these issues is provided in the tables attached to this report as Appendix 1.

All district health boards are required to use the STV electoral system to elect their members. Even if the 2010 and 2013 Council elections are held under the FPP electoral system, unless there are other changes (i.e. separate DHB elections are held or the requirement that all DHB elections are held under the STV system are lifted), Wellington City will always be running STV elections in conjunction with its Council and community board elections.

5.2 Available options

Generally a change to an electoral system may be initiated at any time. However, the Act sets time constraints which determine when any change becomes effective. The following table sets out the change option or requirement and associated time constraint.

No.	Option/Requirement	Time Constraint
1	Local authority <u>may</u> resolve (by resolution) to change the electoral system	By 12 September 2 years before next triennial election if the change is to take effect at the next triennial election. <i>e.g. for the 2010 election the resolution to change the electoral system must be made by 12 September 2008</i>

2	<p>Local authority <u>must</u> publicly notify the right for the public to demand a poll to change the electoral system, whether or not a resolution (to change the electoral system) has been passed.</p> <p>If a resolution to change the electoral system has been passed the public notice must include notice of the resolution, the electoral system to be used and that a poll will be required to countermand it.</p> <p>Public notice is not necessary if:</p> <p>(a) the local authority has already passed a resolution to hold a poll, including a poll date before 21 May in the year before the election (see item 4. below); or</p> <p>(b) the result of an earlier poll took effect at the previous triennial election or takes effect at the next triennial election (s32).</p>	<p>By 19 September 2 years before next triennial election</p> <p><i>e.g. for the 2010 election public notice must be given by 19 September 2008</i></p>
3	<p>The public demand a poll to decide which electoral system should be used.</p> <p><i>A demand may arise whether or not a resolution has been passed by a council.</i></p> <p><i>The public may not demand a poll if the result of an earlier poll took effect at the previous triennial election or takes effect at the next triennial election.</i></p>	<p>If a demand is received prior to 28 February in the year before a triennial election, the poll must be held by 21 May in that year. The results of the poll are effective for at least the next two triennial elections.</p> <p>If a demand is received after 28 February in the year before a triennial election, the poll must be held after 21 May in that year and the results are effective for the next but one triennial election and at least the following triennial election.</p> <p><i>e.g. a valid demand for a poll to be held to determine the electoral system to be used for the 2010 election must be lodged by 28 February 2009 and poll held by 21 May 2009.</i></p>
4	<p>Council resolves to hold a poll to decide which electoral system should be used.</p> <p><i>The local authority may not hold a poll if the result of an earlier poll took effect at the previous triennial election or takes effect at the next triennial election.</i></p>	<p>The decision must be made by 28 February in the year before a triennial election and the poll held by 21 May in that year.</p> <p><i>e.g. the resolution to hold a poll must be made by 28 February 2009 and the poll held by 21 May 2009 if the results of the poll are to take effect at the 2010 triennial election.</i></p>

In summary, the options available to Council and its electors to change (or retain) the STV electoral system for the 2010 local authority elections are as follows:

- Council can resolve, by resolution (no later than 12 September 2008), to change or retain its current electoral system. Electors have the ability to challenge that decision and can force the Council to hold a poll on the matter, the result of which is binding for the next two triennial elections and any associated elections.
- The public can demand (by way of a petition) that a poll be held to decide which electoral system should be used for the 2010 election. Their request that a poll be held would have to be received by 28 February 2009.
- The Council can itself resolve to hold a poll on the issue, the result of which is binding for the next two triennial elections and any associated elections.
- The Council can do nothing, other than notifying the public of its right to demand a poll.

Note:

With the exception of a decision to hold a poll of electors before 21 May 2009 (i.e. bullet point 3 above), the Council is required, under all other options, to give public notice of the right for the public to demand a poll to change the electoral system no later than 19 September 2008.

5.3 *Decision by resolution*

5.3.1 Council resolution

The Council can resolve by resolution to change the electoral system under which it elects its members. However, if the change is to take place at the next triennial election the resolution must be passed by 12 September two years before the next triennial election (ie to change the electoral system at the 2010 triennial election the Council must pass its resolution no later than 12 September 2008). Public notice of that decision must be given by 19 September, two years before the next triennial election. That notice must also give notification of the right of the public to demand that a poll of electors be held to countermand that decision.

If the Council's decision is not challenged (i.e. a poll of electors is not demanded) the Council can resolve to change the electoral system again in time for the next triennial election.

5.3.2 Demand for a Poll

To be valid, a demand must satisfy all of the following criteria:

- it must be made by notice and in writing;
- it must be made by people qualified as electors of the local authority concerned, who are enrolled either on the local authority roll (residential or ratepayer) or the most recently published parliamentary roll, at an address within the district of the Council concerned;

- it must be signed by 5% or more of the number of electors enrolled as eligible to vote at the previous general election of the local authority (in Wellington City's case that is 6603 qualified electors);
- it must be delivered to the principal office of the local authority;
- in addition to each elector's signature, it must state the elector's name and the address for which the person is qualified as an elector of the local authority;
- it must be received by 28 February in the year before the next triennial election if the result of the poll is to take effect at the next election.

5.4 Poll of electors

5.4.1 Decision on whether or not to conduct a poll

The result of a poll, whether it is conducted in response to public demand or initiated by Council itself, is binding. The electoral system adopted or confirmed by a poll must be used for the next two triennial general elections and for all subsequent general elections until a further resolution or poll is held.

A poll is a broad form of public decision making as it provides every elector with the opportunity to vote. However, history demonstrates there is also the risk that there may be low levels of voter participation should a poll be conducted.

The Council was proactive in September 2002 and decided to "ask the electors" what electoral system they wanted for the 2004 and 2007 elections and is enabled by legislation to do so. Although only 32.2% of the electors actually voted (52% in favour of STV and 48% in favour of FPP) everyone was given a chance to have their say. This approach is consistent with Council's policy of wanting to involve the public in decision making that affects them and at the same time making it as easy as we can for them to do so.

It is therefore recommended that the Council agree to hold a poll of electors to determine the electoral system to be used in Wellington City for the 2010 and 2013 local authority elections.

5.4.2 Poll Timetables

Following the passing of a resolution by a local authority or the validation of a demand for a poll, the chief executive must give notice of the resolution or the valid poll demand to the electoral officer.

The chief executive's notice is important because it's the trigger point for compliance with the timetable requirements of the Act. If a resolution or valid demand for a poll is made/received by 28 February in the year before a triennial election then the poll must be held on or before 21 May in the year before the election and must be held not later than 82 days after the electoral officer receives the chief executive's notice.

If a valid demand for a poll is received after 28 February in the year before a triennial election then the poll must be conducted after 21 May in the year before the election. The result of the poll (to either change to a new system or to continue with the existing one) will not take effect until the next but one triennial election and at least the triennial election following that one. The poll may be conducted at the same time as a triennial election.

5.4.3 Wording of Poll Proposal

In making the decision to hold a poll the Council is required to submit to the electors “a proposal that a specified electoral system be used for the next two triennial general elections of the local authority and its community boards (if any).”

It is important that the proposal and resulting questions are unambiguous and easy to understand for the electors. The wording of any proposal is unfortunately not prescribed in the legislation.

The recommended wording for “the proposal” (as set below) is based on the wording we used in September 2002 and also what other local authorities have used in similar polls over the last few years.

“The Local Electoral Act 2001 gives local authorities a choice of two electoral systems for electing its members. The two options are the First Past the Post (FPP) electoral system and the Single Transferable Vote (STV) electoral system.

The Wellington City Council has used the STV electoral system to elect its members, and the members of its two community boards, since 2004. The Council has decided to hold a poll of electors to determine which system will be used to elect its members at the triennial elections to be held in 2010 and 2013.

If a majority of the votes cast in this poll are in favour of the present STV electoral system, as provided for in the Local Electoral Act 2001, the method of electing members of the Wellington City Council and its community boards at the 2010 and 2013 local authority elections will remain by way of the STV electoral system.

If a majority of the votes cast in this poll are in favour of the FPP electoral system, as provided for in the Local Electoral Act 2001, the method of electing members of the Wellington City Council and its community boards at the 2010 and 2013 local authority elections will be by way of the FPP electoral system.

To vote, place a “√” clearly within the box next to the option you wish to vote for. You can vote for only one (1) option.

*I vote for the **Single Transferable Vote (STV)** electoral system*

*I vote for the **First Past the Post (FPP)** electoral system”*

The actual format of the voting document will be based on the national guidelines issued by the Local Government Commission in this respect.

5.4.4 Voting Method

Section 36 of the Local Electoral Act requires the Council to determine, by resolution, the voting method under which any poll is to be conducted.

The Council has used the postal voting method for its elections and polls since 1989. All local authorities throughout the country currently use this method because it is more cost efficient and the turnout achieved is substantially higher than that previously obtained under the ballot box method. The feedback from electors also indicates that postal voting is the preferred voting method.

It is therefore recommended that the poll be held using the postal voting method.

5.4.5 Electoral System

Section 35 of the Local Electoral Act requires that every poll conducted by a local authority must be conducted using an electoral system adopted by resolution of the local authority.

Because there will only be the two options on the voting document the voting system which receives the most votes will be the system which will be used for the 2010 and 2013 local authority elections.

It is recommended therefore that the Council formally resolve to conduct the poll using the First Past the Post electoral system.

5.4.6 Progressive Processing of Voting Documents

The Council may determine, under section 79 of the Local Electoral Act, that the voting documents in any election or poll are to be processed during the voting period provided notice of any such resolution is included in the public notice the electoral officer is required to give when notifying the fact that a poll is to be held.

The security of the voting process is maintained during the polling period in a number of ways, the main one being through the appointment of a Justice of Peace who is required to be in attendance and oversee the processing of papers at all times prior to the close of voting.

The main benefits of progressive processing of voting documents are the significant savings in staff costs incurred (because a lot less staff need to be employed) and the release of a quicker provisional result following the close of polling at midday on election day.

It is therefore recommended that the Council agree to allow the electoral officer to process the voting documents in the three week voting period prior to election day.

5.4.7 Timing of the Poll

The legislation requires that any poll of electors (that has been initiated as a result of a public demand) is to be held no later than 82 days after the date on which the Electoral Officer is given notice that a poll is to be held. This poll must be held no later than 21 May 2008 if the results of the poll are to take effect at the 2010 triennial elections.

If the Council itself decides to hold a poll, it must make that decision no later than 28 February 2009 and the poll held by 21 May 2009 if the results of the poll are to take effect at the 2010 election.

It is proposed that the poll be held on Saturday 27 September 2008 and that the voting documents be sent out to all eligible electors commencing Friday 22 August 2008. The scheduling of the poll for this date will allow sufficient time for the Electoral Officer to inform electors of the various issues involved and the pros and cons of each system to enable them to make an informed decision.

5.4.8 Cost of running a Poll

With the exception of the additional officer time involved in checking the validity of signatures if a poll is demanded, the cost of running a poll would be the same whether the Council decides to hold a poll of its own volition or one is demanded by the required number of electors.

The estimated cost of running a poll, by postal vote, would be \$185,000 (based on a 50% voter turnout). This includes a sum of \$40,000 for public education on the issues involved and the pros and cons of both systems. If a poll is held it is important to ensure that electors are in a position to make an informed decision on which electoral system is to be used. Currently there is no provision in the Democratic Services budget to hold a poll.

It is recommended that a sum of \$185,000 be provided for in the 2008/2009 budget to cover the costs of running the poll.

5.5 Representation review

The Council completed its last representation review in 2006, (in time for the 2007 local authority elections) and therefore is not legally required to carry out its next review until 2012 (in time for the 2013 election). Although there is nothing to stop the Council from carrying out another review in time for the 2010 triennial election, there is no proposal to do so at this stage.

However, if the Council does decide to hold a poll, and the result of that poll is to change back to the FPP system for the 2010 election, consideration should be given to carrying out another review in time for the 2010 elections. Officers will provide a report on whether another review should be carried out in the event a poll is held and the result of that poll supports a change to the current electoral system.

If, as a result of that further report, the Council decides that a further representation review is appropriate and/or necessary, then the following issues will need to be considered as part of that review:

- representation arrangements – by the ward system, at large or a combination of both
- number of elected members
- review of community boards
- possible establishment of Maori wards for electoral purposes

The following section sets out the required processes for the establishment of separate Maori wards for election purposes.

5.5.1 Establishment of Maori wards

The enactment of the Local Elections Amendment Act 2002 provided territorial authorities and regional councils with the ability to establish Maori wards or constituencies.

This legislation came into effect in December 2002 and was part of the extensive legislative reforms the Government undertook at that time aimed at modernising New Zealand's system of local democracy.

The process that councils must follow in establishing Maori wards is based on existing local authority representation processes and also that adopted for the Bay of Plenty Regional Council (Maori Constituency Empowering) Act 2001.

It is not mandatory for the Council to review the Maori ward/constituency provisions and, apart from the constituency established under the provisions on the Bay of Plenty Regional Council Empowering Act, no other Maori wards or constituencies have been established since the legislation was introduced in late 2002 (despite four or five polls having been held on the issue in various local authorities throughout the country).

In providing for their establishment the Government indicated at the time that their establishment should be seen within the overall context of engagement between local authorities and Maori. The option does not preclude other mechanisms the Council currently employs to enhance representation, such as appointments to committees and memoranda of understanding with iwi/hapu. The Council also continues to look at other ways to improve opportunities for Maori to contribute to local government decision-making processes as required under the Local Government Act.

The Council last considered this matter in February 2003 and decided at that time not to hold a poll of electors to determine whether the city be divided into one or more Maori wards.

6. Conclusion

The report sets out the various options and the processes the Council is required to follow when considering electoral systems.

The report is submitted to the Strategy and Policy Committee for its consideration and subsequent referral to Council for decision at its meeting on 28 February 2008.

Report prepared by: Ross Bly, Special Projects and Electoral Officer

APPENDIX 1

ADDITIONAL ELECTORAL DATA

Voter turnout

The following table shows the voter turnout for the election of members to the Wellington City Council, the Greater Wellington Regional Council and the Capital and Coast District Health Board for the last three elections. The table also shows the number of blank and informal votes cast by electors at these elections.

Issue	Year	Number of Electors	Voter Turnout	%	Number of Valid Votes	Number of Informal Votes	%	No of Blank Votes	%
Mayor	2001*	122,732	58,642	47.8%	57,768	874**	1.5%	-	-
	2004	126,798	53,483	42.2%	52,149	268	0.5%	1066	2%
	2007	132,051	52,325	39.6%	51,328	218	0.4%	779	1.5%
Council	2001*	122,732	58,642	47.8%	55,616	3,026**	5.2%	-	-
	2004	126,798	53,483	42.2%	51,573	563	1.1%	1,347	2.5%
	2007	132,051	52,325	39.6%	50,366	490	0.9%	1,469	2.8%
Community Boards	2001*	9,788	5,074	51.8%	4,844	230**	4.5%	-	-
	2004	9,999	4,382	43.8%	4,209	40	0.9%	133	3%
	2007	10,199	4,466	43.8%	4,237	16	0.4%	213	4.8%
GWRC	2001*	302,115	119,467	50%	111,406	8,061**	6.7%	-	-
	2004*	311,949	109,026	43%***	101,620	920	0.84%	6,486	5.95%
	2007*	325,181	127,908	43%***	113,004	5,399	4.2%	9,505	7.43%
CC DHB	2001*	183,536	87,617	47.7%	77,861	9,756**	11.1%	-	-
	2004	185,636	80,802	43.5%	72,845	2,245	2.8%	5,712	7.1%
	2007	194,623	81,038	41.6%	69,818	4,449	5.5%	6,771	8.4%

* All elections held under the First Past the Post (FPP) electoral system.

** Prior to the 2004 elections, electoral officers were not required to record blank and informal votes separately. These figures therefore include both blank and informal votes.

*** Not all constituencies were contested. Of those that were, 43% of the eligible electors voted.

The following table shows the voter turnout for the last three elections for a number of the larger authorities, including three District Health Boards:

Local Authority	Number of Electors	Voter Turnout	Number of Informal Votes	%	Number of Blank Votes	%
2001						
Auckland *	253,681	43%	203 (Mayor)**	0.2%	-	
			211 (Council)**	0.2%	-	
Christchurch *	228,082	49%	2,050 (Mayor)**	1.8%	-	
			5,049 (Council)**	4.5%	-	
Dunedin *	83,960	56%	386 (Mayor)**	0.8%	-	
			1,218 (Council)**	3.4%	-	
North Shore *	130,758	38%	1,254 (Mayor)**	2.5%	-	
			1,169 (Council)**	2.4%	-	
Wellington *	122,732	48%	874 (Mayor)***	1.5%	-	
			3,026 (Council)**	5.2%	-	
Auckland DHB *	228,290	48%	850**	0.8%	-	
Canterbury DHB*	308,062	52%	13,142**	8.3%	-	
C & C DHB *	183,536	48%	9,756**	11.1%	-	
2004						
Auckland (FPP)	269,424	49%	264 (Mayor)	0.21%	985 (Mayor)	0.77%
			213 (Council)	0.16%	10,602 (Council)	8.00%
Christchurch (FPP)	235,930	39%	255 (Mayor)	0.28%	3,344 (Mayor)	3.65%
			125 (Council)	0.14%	2,470 (Council)	3.00%
Dunedin (STV)	84,434	53%***	207 (Mayor)	0.45%	225 (Mayor)	0.49%
			493 (Council)	1.41%	1,231 (Council)	4.00%
North Shore (FPP)	139,912	35%	234 (Mayor)	0.47%	1,483 Mayor)	3.00%
			171 (Council)	0.35%	1,221 (Council)	2.00%
Wellington (STV)	126,798	42%	268 (Mayor)	0.50%	1,066 (Mayor)	1.99%
			563 (Council)	1.05%	1,347 (Council)	3.00%
Auckland DHB (STV)	268,559	49%	12,493	9.58%	20,541	15.8%
Canterbury DHB (STV)	320,454	40%	8,986	6.94%	11,582	8.9%
C & C DHB (STV)	185,636	44%	2,245	2.78%	5,712	7.1%
2007						
Auckland (FPP)	285,470	39.6%	340 (Mayor)	0.3%	1,449 (Mayor)	1.28%
			330 (Council)	0.29%	8,202 (Council)	7.25%
Christchurch (FPP)	250,622	42.01%	229 (Mayor)	0.22%	1,544 (Mayor)	1.47%
			141 (Council)	0.13%	3,855 (Council)	3.66%
Dunedin (STV)	86,196	47.45%	307 (Mayor)	0.75%	459 (Mayor)	1.12%
			327 (Council)	0.80%	1,150 (Council)	2.81%
North Shore (FPP)	148,661	35.41%	114 (Mayor)	0.22%	1,286 (Mayor)	2.44%
			363 (Council)	0.69%	971 (Council)	1.84%

Wellington (STV)	132,051	39.6%	218 (Mayor)	0.4%	779 (Mayor)	1.5%
			490 (Council)	0.9%	1,469 (Council)	2.8%
Auckland DHB (STV)	284,691	39.57%	15,134	13.43%	16,805	14.92%
Canterbury DHB (STV)	336,436	42.98%	12,262	8.48%	12,983	8.98%
C & C DHB (STV)	194,623	41.6%	4,449	5.5%	6,771	8.4%

* All elections held under the First Past the Post (FPP) electoral system.

** Prior to the 2004 elections, electoral officers were not required to record blank and informal votes separately. These figures therefore include both blank and informal votes.

*** Not all wards were contested. Of those that were, 53% of the eligible electors voted.

Voter Turnout – Ballot Box versus Postal

Election Year	Voting Method	Representation Method	Voter Turnout	National Average (City Councils)	National Average (District Councils)
1983	Ballot Box	At- Large	36%	38%	62%
1986	Ballot Box	Ward System	37%	N/A	N/A
1989	Postal	Ward System	50%	52%	67%
1992	Postal	Ward System	53%	48%	61%
1995	Postal	Ward System	53%	49%	59%
1998	Postal	Ward System	49%	51%	61%
2001	Postal	Ward System	48%	45%	57%
2004	Postal	Ward System	42%	43%	51%
2007	Postal	Ward System	40%		

Voter turnout for local authorities using the STV electoral system

Local Authority	2001	Voter Turnout	2004	Voter Turnout	2007	Voter Turnout
Chatham Islands District	FPP	77%	STV	68%	STV	63.92%
Dunedin City	FPP	54%	STV	53%	STV	47.44%
Kaipara District	FPP	56%	STV	51%	STV	43.11%
Kapiti Coast District	FPP	63%	STV	51%	STV	53.47%
Marlborough District	FPP	66%	STV	62%	STV	50.92%
Matamata-Piako District	FPP	52%	STV	42%	FPP	42.14%
Papakura District	FPP	42%	STV	40%	FPP	34.66%
Porirua City	FPP	43%	STV	43%	STV	38.74%
Thames-Coromandel District	FPP	61%	STV	56%	STV	52.98%
Wellington City	FPP	48%	STV	42%	STV	39.76%

- Apart from the Kapiti Coast District Council (whose turnout increased in 2007) the voter turnout for those local authorities who use the STV system has decreased over the last three elections

Numbers on the electoral roll

The number of electors on the electoral rolls has increased quite significantly over the past three elections as the following table shows:

Year	Number of Electors on Roll	Percentage Increase over Previous Roll	Number of Electors Who Voted	% Who Voted
2001	122,732	3.2%	58,642	48%
2004	126,798	3.3%	53,483	42%
2007	132,051	4.1%	52,325	40%

- Number of people enrolled has increased by 9319 since 2001
- The number of people who have voted has dropped by 6317 since 2001.
- To have maintained a 48% voter turnout (achieved in 2001) for the 2007 local elections, an additional 11,060 electors should have voted.

Number of candidates standing for election

Year	Mayor	Council	Community Board	Regional Council	District Health Board
1992	11	61	13	36	-
1995	14	40	21	32	-
1998	6	64	14	33	-
2001	14	57	18	38	70
2004	6	37	17	27	40
2007	11	38	16	37	21

- The number of candidates standing for election to the Wellington City Council has decreased since the introduction of STV

Supporting information

1) Strategic Fit/Strategic Outcome

This project supports Long-term outcome 7.2.2 “Wellington will operate an open and honest decision making process that generates confidence and trust in the democratic system”.

2) LTCCP/Annual Plan reference and long term financial impact

The project relates to C534: Elections, Governance and Democratic Process.

3) Treaty of Waitangi implications

There are no Treaty of Waitangi implications.

4) Decision-making

This is not a significant decision.

5) Consultation

No general consultation or consultation with Maori is required at this stage.

6) Legal implications

The legal implications are covered in the report.

7) Consistency with existing policy

This report is consistent with existing Wellington City Council policy