**Date:** Thursday 24 May 2018  
**Time:** 9.30am  
**Meeting Room:** Reception Lounge  
**Venue:** Auckland Town Hall  
301-305 Queen Street  
Auckland

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**Tira Kāwana / Governing Body**  
**OPEN MINUTE ITEM ATTACHMENTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ITEM</th>
<th>TABLE OF CONTENTS</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Local Electoral Matters Bill and trial of online voting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A. 24 May 2018, Governing Body: Item 10 - Local Electoral Matters Bill and trial of online voting, Presentation</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**Note:** The attachments contained within this document are for consideration and should not be construed as Council policy unless and until adopted. Should Councillors require further information relating to any reports, please contact the relevant manager, Chairperson or Deputy Chairperson.
Local Electoral Matters Bill
and online voting

Governing Body meeting of 24 May 2018
Purpose of today’s report

• To approve Auckland Council’s Submission on the Local Electoral Matters Bill

• To support in principle Auckland Council running an online voting trial for the 2019 elections, subject to four conditions
Promoting online voting since 2010

- The internet is an integral part of everyday life
- Online voting improves accessibility and offers a better experience
- Online voting may help reverse the trend of declining voter participation, especially among young voters
- The public want it – 74% of Aucklanders told us in 2016 they would prefer to vote online
- The postal system is declining and we may not be able to run a postal election after 2022
- Overseas experience has shown that it is possible
Background

- The Local Electoral Act 2001 already allows electronic voting, but:
  - for all electors of a local authority, not for a subset of electors
  - there are presently no enabling regulations
- Local government worked together to organise a trial for the 2016 elections, but:
  - Auckland Council excluded because “too big to fail”
  - The trial was ultimately cancelled by the previous government
- The present government, at the sector’s request, is changing the legislation to allow an online voting trial with a subset of electors
- In effect the Bill is “for us”, as it is giving Auckland Council (and others) the opportunity to run a trial
The Local Electoral Matters Bill

• An omnibus Bill amending the Local Electoral Act 2001 and the Electoral Act 1993, to:
  • enable online voting trials
  • allow the use of date of birth information to identify voters
  • enable access to voter age information to evaluate the effectiveness of a trial
• The Bill does not open the door to using online voting for future elections
• Regulatory changes will also be needed to give effect to the Bill once enacted
Our submission on the Bill

- Strongly supports the Bill
- Recommends that Electoral Officers be granted access not only to voters’ age group but also whether they are from Māori descent
- Recommends that a clause be included so nominations can be submitted electronically
- Takes the opportunity to reiterate Auckland Council’s desire for the LGACA to be changed to help with our representation arrangements, i.e.:
  - ability to change the number of Governing Body members
  - ability to modify local board boundaries to maintain alignment with ward boundaries
- signals that we want to appear in front of the Select Committee
Governing Body support for a trial

- Seeking Governing Body support in principle to conduct a trial in the 2019 elections with a subset of about 75,000 electors, subject to:
  - The legislation and regulations being passed on time
  - All risks being managed
  - Costs being acceptable
  - The Governing Body giving final approval

- Strong preference for the sector to work together and run one trial

- Will seek NSW Electoral Commission’s help / involvement as they have experience
Next steps

- Auckland Council will approach all interested councils to work together and enter into an arrangement either directly or through a commercial partner
- Run a selection process for an online system provider
- Work with DIA and sector partners to get regulations ready on time – they will set up technical and security requirements for the trial
- Get into 4th gear as there is a lot to do!
Risks

- Of not doing a trial:
  - Overall weakening of local democracy
  - Continuing decline in voter participation
  - Not ready to deal with the decline of postal voting
  - Not addressing current postal security risks

- Of doing a trial:
  - Will attract attention of nay-sayers, so will need strong communication campaign to educate voters
  - Security breach, so will need to ensure security requirements are met
  - Time constraint, so need for adequate resourcing