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**8 July 2009**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ATTENTION: CHIEF REPORTERS  
CIVIC REPORTERS

### **Council Activates Pandemic Business Continuity Plan**

The Invercargill City Council is activating its Pandemic Business Continuity Plan after confirmation today that a staff member has the H1N1 virus.

The City Council's Pandemic Crisis Manager William Watt said the City Council's Crisis Management Team had met this afternoon and was taking immediate steps to manage the situation. The City Council employs more than 300 permanent staff.

Details about the staff member, who is based in the Civic Administration Building, would remain confidential but the person and their family had sought medical advice, he said.

Meanwhile the Council was putting in place procedures to try to minimise the spread of the virus among its staff and members of the public, and to ensure it could maintain essential services.

"City Council staff are in constant contact with people throughout the community and this will continue. However the Council will be displaying notices at all Council buildings, including the Civic Administration Building and Bluff Service Centre, asking people not to enter the building if they are displaying influenza-like symptoms.

"Members of the public are asked not to go to the Council's Civic Administration Building and Bluff Service Centre if their business can be conducted over the phone.

"For those people without symptoms, who cannot conduct their business with Council over the phone and who do go into the Civic Administration Building or Bluff Service Centre, hand sanitizer will be available at all reception areas. Face masks will also be provided to staff and members of the public involved in meetings and interviews," he said.

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Mr Watt said that the Mayor, Councillors and staff had been advised of the situation. Staff had been asked to use common sense and if they were unwell to stay at home. They had also been reminded about the increased importance of regular and thorough hand washing.

The staff cafeteria would remain open to dispense tea, coffee and water, but staff members would be discouraged from congregating there and asked instead to eat at their desks.

“Council is taking its responsibility to its staff and members of the public very seriously, but at the same time it is important not to overreact. We are trying to take commonsense measures to keep people safe and to make sure essential services are maintained,” he said.

Ends.

Inquiries, Pandemic Crisis Manager, William Watt, 2111-777.