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Committee Catchment Management
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Proposed Regional Pest Management Strategy - Appointment of Sub-Committee

1. Purpose

To recommend that the Committee appoint a Sub-Committee to hear, consider and decide on public submissions to the Proposed Regional Pest Management Strategy.

2. Significance of the decision

The matters for decision in this report do not trigger the significance policy of the Council or otherwise trigger section 76(3) (b) of the Local Government Act 2002.

3. Background

The current Regional Pest Management Strategy (RPMS) was approved by Greater Wellington in September 2002. A twenty year term was selected to realistically reflect the expected time it would take to manage many of our regionally significant pests.

The aim of the RPMS is to:

- Minimise the actual and potential adverse and unintended effects of pests on the environment, economy, biodiversity and the community; and to
- Maximise the effectiveness of individual pest management through a regionally co-ordinated response.

The Biosecurity Act 1993 (BSA) requires the RPMS to be reviewed every five years. The Council may, following the review, decide to amend or revoke the Strategy or leave it unchanged. The five year review provides an opportunity to consider the relevance of new information gained in the preceding years. This information may indicate that some objectives and rules may no longer be appropriate or needed. Conversely, there may be a need to include new pests whose impacts have only recently become known.

The review is formally commenced when Greater Wellington publicly notifies the Proposed Strategy. It is proposed to notify on Saturday 15 March. The process then provides an opportunity for the community to have input into determining the pest management objectives for the region. The intended closing date for receipt of submissions is Monday 28 April.

Following consideration of public submissions on the Proposed Strategy, the Council may decide to amend the Strategy or leave unchanged. The Council is required to give a written response to each submitter outlining the reasons for its decision. Any submitter can appeal the Council's decision to the Environment Court. The Court can direct the Council to make amendments to the Proposed Strategy. The Strategy is 'made' once the Council seal has been affixed.

The approval process can be delayed for some months if appeals are received. The Act provides for the existing Strategy to remain operable until the new Strategy has been made.

4. Sub-Committee Appointment

The Catchment Management Committee is responsible for overseeing the review of the Strategy. However, the review timetable will see a number of required GW functions occurring between Committee meetings. During the previous review, a sub-committee was appointed to hear, consider and decide on submissions. This was considered a very useful process as it provided an opportunity for sub-committee members to fully understand the issues before decisions were made on submissions and any proposed amendments to the Proposed Strategy.

It is suggested that the sub-committee be involved until the final Strategy is approved by the full Council. This would enable greater flexibility than seeking Committee feedback through the formal reporting process. It would also be appropriate for all or some of the sub-committee members to constitute the hearings committee. The latter committee is likely to be required in the May-June 2008 period.

5. Communication

No particular communication initiatives are required on this matter.

6. Recommendations

That the Committee:

- 1. Appoints a sub-committee to consider the various tasks required to progress the development and implementation of the revised Regional Pest Management Strategy.*
- 2. Agrees that the sub-committee be delegated the responsibility of determining membership of the Hearings Committee.*

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Attachment 1:

Report approved by:

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