

Report 12.399
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Committee Environmental Wellbeing Committee
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Regional Pest Management Strategy: Operational Plan 2012/13

1. Purpose

To seek adoption of the 2012/13 Operational Plan (the Plan) for implementation of the Regional Pest Management Strategy 2002-2022 (RPMS).

2. The decision-making process and significance

The matter requiring decision in this report has been considered by officers against the requirements of Part 6 of the Local Government Act 2002.

2.1 Significance of the decision

Officers have considered the significance of the matter, taking the Council's significance policy and decision-making guidelines into account. Officers recommend that the matter be considered to have low significance.

The Council is required to prepare an annual RPMS Operational Plan under Section 85 of the Biosecurity Act 1993. However, there is no specific statutory requirement for an Operational Plan to be formally approved by the Council. It is considered appropriate to do so however, as it reinforces the Council's ongoing support for biosecurity functions and indicates our desire to be transparent regarding expenditure and means of achievement.

Officers do not consider that a formal record outlining consideration of the decision-making process is required in this instance.

3. Background

The Council approved the current Regional Pest Management Strategy 2002-2022 (RPMS) on the 17 September 2002. The Strategy has undergone its first statutory five year review and the reviewed RPMS became operative after the Council's approval on 12 June 2009.

Operational Plans are prepared annually for Committee approval. Annual reports on performance against objectives are also presented to the Committee. A report on performance against objectives in the 2011/12 Plan will be presented to the Environmental Wellbeing Committee on 23 October 2012.

The Biosecurity Act 1993 specifies a number of requirements for an Operational Plan. The Council must:

- Review the Plan annually and, if deemed appropriate, amend it
- Provide a copy of the Plan to the responsible Minister
- Prepare an annual report on the Plan, including the effectiveness of implementation, not later than five months after the end of each financial year
- Make copies of the Plan and annual report available to the public

The power to disallow a Plan, if it is deemed to be inconsistent with the Strategy, lies solely with the Council, as the agency that approved the Strategy.

4. The Operational Plan

The proposed Operational Plan 2012/13 is attached as **Attachment 1**.

Whilst the Act requires Plans to be developed, there is no advice on their purpose, form or content. It is presumed that their purpose is to assist the Management Agency (Greater Wellington Regional Council) to implement the Regional Strategy. Through the process of annual review and reporting, the Council, as Management Agency, details how the Strategies are to be implemented and the achievement, or otherwise, of stated performance targets. Secondly, the process enables stakeholders the opportunity to annually examine a Strategy's cost effectiveness for its duration.

The Operational Plan 2012/13 seeks to implement the fourth year of the reviewed Strategy and year eleven of the overall strategy document.

During 2012/13, resources will continue to be focused on regional surveillance and total control (eradication) species. These species are either not known to be in the region or are present but limited in distribution. These pests are all capable of becoming significant regional pests if left unmanaged.

Other focus areas will include:

- Ensuring that Containment pests are maintained within their current infestation zones
- Delimiting surveys of the Surveillance species and undertaking control trials to determine appropriate methodologies for some of the hardy pest plants that to date have proven difficult to manage
- Continuing with the extensive site-led biodiversity programmes in our Key Native Ecosystems (KNE) and local authority reserves

- Continued implementation of the third year of the Regional Possum Predator Control programme

One of the cornerstones of implementing the RPMS is improved public awareness through educational material and discussion. Biosecurity has a strong focus on education, ensuring our communications material is regularly reviewed and updated where required. Public interest in these publications remains strong. Staff are regularly providing presentations to schools, community and interest groups on RPMS related topics.

The site-led Key Native Ecosystem programme continues to be well supported by landowners and Territorial Local Authorities. The majority of Authorities are financial partners in site-led programmes on their land. There has been a review of the Key Native Ecosystem programme since the formation of the Biodiversity department, but the programme will largely continue in a similar form for 2012/13. A number of changes are proposed for the 2013/14 year.

Biosecurity staff will continue to work closely with other regional councils through the Biosecurity Managers Group to ensure consistency in addressing biosecurity issues of national significance, including partnerships with the recently formed Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI), previously known as Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries (MAF). The Group will also work to ensure national consistency in pest management methodologies and to influence national priorities in biosecurity research.

The Biosecurity team is continuing close co-operation with government departments:

- GW staff are undertaking surveillance and eradication of the National Interest Pest Plants on behalf of MPI
- Staff are also actively participating in the National Plant Pest Accord, including a recent review, with MPI and other regional councils
- GW continues to participate with a significant role in the lower North Island Didymo response
- GW staff are represented on the MPI National Biosecurity Co-ordinating Committee
- GW staff will continue to co-ordinate activities with Department of Conservation staff on the operation of the Mt Bruce mainland island and other biodiversity projects.

5. Communication

The Biosecurity Act requires that copies of the Plan be made available to the public at cost price. However, the GW policy is that all publications should be provided free of charge. Historically, public notices have been placed in the major regional papers drawing the public's attention to the availability of the Plan. This process will be repeated for the 2012/13 Plan.

6. Recommendations

That the Committee:

1. *Receives the report.*
2. *Notes the content of the report.*
3. *Approves the proposed Operational Plan 2012/13 (Attachment 1) for the Regional Pest Management Strategy 2002-2022.*

Report prepared by:

Report approved by:



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Attachment 1: Proposed Operational Plan 2012/13