



Report 04.578
Date 22 September 2004
File WB/01/11/04

Committee Policy, Finance and Strategy Committee
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Regional Pest Management Strategy: Operational Plan 2004/05

1. Purpose

To seek adoption of the 2004/05 Operational Plan for the Regional Pest Management Strategy.

2. Background

The Council approved the new Regional Pest Management Strategy 2002-2022 on the 17 September 2002. An Operational Plan for the 2003/04 year was approved and implemented. A report on performance against objectives in that Plan will be presented to the Rural Services and Wairarapa Committee on the 18 November 2004.

The Council is required to prepare an annual Operational Plan under Section 85 of the Biosecurity Act. 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 recognises Council's ongoing support for the Plan and reinforces the desire to be transparent regarding expenditure and means of achievement.

Normally the Rural Services & Wairarapa Committee would consider this Plan, but its completion has corresponded with a break in meetings because of the elections.

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; and
- 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.

3. The Operational Plan

The proposed Operational Plan is enclosed separately 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 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 2004/05 Operational Plan seeks to continue the progress made in the first two years of the Strategy. Division of the target pests in to Eradication, Containment, Suppression and Site Led categories has been very beneficial in terms of prioritising and focusing resources to maximise benefits for the Region.

A number of excellent publicity and community awareness campaigns that were initiated in 2002/03 will continue to be supported and strengthened under the new Plan. There has already been positive spin-offs from the awareness campaigns with public reportings of new pest plant and animal infestations steadily increasing.

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. These partnerships are formalised by Memorandums of Understanding agreements, which detail annual resource commitments of both parties.

Community and private landowner interest and participation in site led pest control programmes continues to grow. The development of a private land assistance campaign by the Council during 2004/05 is expected to boost interest further.

4. Communications

The Biosecurity Act requires that copies of the Plan be made available to the public at cost price. 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 2004/05 Plan. A summary of the Plan contents will also be included in the next Rural Services Newsletter.

5. Recommendation

That the Committee recommends that the Council approve the proposed Operational Plan 2004/05 (Attachment 1) for the Regional Pest Management Strategy 2002-2022.

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