

Report 11.405
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Committee Environmental Wellbeing Committee
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Regional Pest Management Strategy: Operational Plan 2011/12

1. Purpose

To seek adoption of the 2011/12 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 2010/11 Plan will be presented to the Catchment Management Committee on 22 November 2011.

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 2010/11 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 (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 2011/12 seeks to implement the third year of the reviewed Strategy and year ten of the overall strategy document.

During 2011/12, 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 site-led biodiversity programmes in our Key Native Ecosystems (KNE) and local authority reserves

- Continued implementation 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. These partnerships are formalised by Memoranda of Understanding agreements, which detail annual resource commitments of both parties. Commitments have increased in recent years as biodiversity values and benefits are becoming more recognised and appreciated by the Authorities and the wider public.

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 MAF Biosecurity New Zealand (BNZ) and other major contributors to biosecurity activities. The Group will also work to ensure national consistency in pest management methodologies and to influence national priorities in biosecurity research.

Biosecurity staff continue close co-operation with government departments on the following matters:

- Undertaking surveillance and eradication of the National Interest Pest Plants on behalf of BNZ
- Active participation in National Plant Pest Accord activities with BNZ and other regional councils
- Playing a significant role in the lower North Island Didymo monitoring and response preparation
- Representation on the BNZ National Biosecurity Co-ordinating Committee
- Continuing to co-ordinate activities with Department of Conservation staff on the operation of the Mt Bruce mainland island and other biodiversity projects.

5. Communication

Copies of the Plan will be made available to the public. The GW website will also contain a copy of the Plan. 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 2011/12 Plan.

6. Recommendations

That the Committee:

1. **Receives** the report.
2. **Notes** the content of the report.
3. **Approves** the proposed Operational Plan 2011/12 (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 2011/12 (enclosed separately)