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Committee Council
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Regional Pest Management Strategy 2002-2022: Operational Plan Report 2013/14

1. Purpose

To report on the performance of the 2013/14 Operational Plan for implementation of the Regional Pest Management Strategy 2002-2022.

2. Background

Greater Wellington Regional Council (GWRC) is responsible for the Wellington Regional Pest Management Strategy 2002-2022 (RPMS). The Council approved the current RPMS on 17 September 2002. This is the twelfth progress report against the overall RPMS 2002-2022.

Under Section 100B of the Biosecurity Act 1993, Council is required to prepare an annual Operational Plan outlining the activities under the RPMS. Following the end of the financial year, Council is required to produce an Operational Plan Report, detailing the results of the Operational Plan.

The Operational Plan Report is made available to the public and a copy forwarded to the relevant Minister(s).

3. The Operational Plan Report

- 3.1 During 2013/14 the Biosecurity Department continued implementation of the RPMS as outlined in the Operational Plan. Control activities are based on the biology of the pest plant and pest animal species and best practice pest control methodology. Resources are allocated according to the impact of the species and the subsequent requirements of the management programmes.
- 3.2 The control and management regime for each pest species is considered against the impacts, spread, costs and benefits of the species. All pests in the strategy are listed in one of five management categories; Regional Surveillance, Containment, Total Control, Suppression and Site-Led.

- 3.3 The majority of resources continued to be allocated to the Total Control and Site-Led species. Intensive surveys for Total Control plant species were undertaken across the region. All 1,343 Total Control sites were inspected at least once during the year and any plants found were controlled. Good progress is being made, with 240 of the 1,343 Total Control sites now determined to have the target species eradicated.
- 3.4 The Total Control rook programme was successfully completed, with a continued reduction to only 42 known nests, all in the north of the region. In 2009/10 there were 150 nests across the region. There were problems this season with strong equinox winds destroying the nests before control could occur, but every known nest was treated at least once. It is unknown what long term impact this reduced control will have on the success of the programme. The programme is aiming to achieve eradication of rooks in the region by 2025.
- 3.5 The successful suppression of feral rabbits continues across the region with numbers remaining at low levels overall. The mild start to winter, which usually favours rabbits, appeared to have little impact on the rabbit population. The rabbit haemorrhagic disease continues to cycle naturally assisting with the management of rabbit numbers.
- 3.6 The Regional Possum and Predator Control Programme (RPPCP) controlled possums across 27,000 hectares during the 2013/14 year. This involved work that commenced in the Wairarapa in 2010/11 and Kapiti District in 2012/13, including 15,500 hectares in North Wairarapa and 11,500 in Kapiti. The RPPCP continues to expand, now encompassing rural Porirua. This part of the region has never received coordinated possum control before.
- 3.7 Site-Led programmes remain a primary focus of RPMS implementation, with successful management of a wide range of plant and animal pests in specific sites. The long-running Key Native Ecosystem programme, now administered by the Biodiversity Department, continues to be successfully implemented. A realignment of the work programme has seen pest control expand into a number of new vulnerable ecosystems. Work has also ceased at a number of sites that were previously part of the KNE programme. The funding for many of these pest animal control programmes is being continued by local City or District Councils, allowing pest management to continue.
- 3.8 An essential part of implementing the Strategy is successful relationship building and providing advice and education to the community. The Biosecurity department retains strong partnerships with Central and Local Government, iwi, science providers, community groups and the general public. Advice and education remains an important tool to ensure that the public are aware of their responsibilities under the RPMS, and can access resources and information for successful pest management.
- 3.9 Enquiries from the public remain an important part of the RPMS, with 1,012 enquiries for information, advice and assistance with pest control during the 2013/14 year. Many of these required site visits or inspections, often followed

by control advice and sale of equipment. The GWRC website continued to receive regular enquiries seeking information and advice on pest management.

- 3.10 The attached 2013/14 RPMS Operational Plan Report further details the achievements against the objectives of the Operational Plan, and lists the spending and outcomes of the control programmes.

4. Communication

Public notices will be issued to inform the public that the RPMS Operational Plan Report 2013/14 is available for inspection. Copies will be forwarded to the appropriate Minister(s) for their review and comment.

5. 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.

5.1 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 is considered to have low significance.

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

6. Recommendations

That the Council:

1. *Approves the Operational Plan Report 2013/14 (Attachment 1) for the Regional Pest Management Strategy 2002-2022.*
2. *Notes that a copy of the Operational Plan Report 2013/14 will be forwarded to the relevant Ministers.*
3. *Notes that the Operational Plan Report 2013/14 will be made available for public inspection.*

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Report approved by:

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Attachment 1: Operational Plan Report 2013/14 for the Regional Pest Management Strategy 2002-2022