
REPORT 2
(1215/52/IM)

SUBMISSION ON PROPOSED GREATER WELLINGTON REGIONAL COUNCIL REGIONAL PEST MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

1. Purpose of Report

To present a submission (see Appendix 1) on the Greater Wellington Regional Pest Management Strategy for the Committee's consideration. The submission is due with the Greater Wellington Regional Council by 28 April 2008.

2. Executive Summary

This is the five year review of the Greater Wellington Regional Pest Management Strategy (RPMS). The purpose of the strategy is to provide a strategic and statutory framework for effective management of selected pest animal and pest plant species in the Wellington Region. Wellington City Council is a significant stakeholder, required to control pests on City Council owned or occupied land in accordance with the RPMS rules.

Overall, the proposed Regional Pest Management Strategy fits with relevant Wellington City Council policies and we support the changes and recommendations made in the review. We do not anticipate any major changes to the City's pest operations.

3. Recommendations

It is recommended that the Committee:

- 1. Receive the information.*
- 2. Agree to the submission, attached as Appendix 1, on the proposed Greater Wellington Regional Council Pest Management Strategy subject to any amendments recommended by the Committee.*
- 3. Agree to delegate to the Portfolio Leader, Environment the authority to make any minor drafting changes before forwarding the submission to the Greater Wellington Regional Council.*

4. Background

The Greater Wellington Regional Pest Management Strategy (RPMS) has a 20 year life span and under the Biosecurity Act (1993) must be reviewed every 5 years. The current strategy was approved in 2002 and this is its first review.

Greater Wellington Regional Council (GWRC) is the management agency responsible for implementing the strategy.

The purpose of the strategy is to provide a strategic and statutory framework for effective management of selected pest animal and pest plant species in the Wellington Region. Wellington City Council is a significant stakeholder, required to control pests on City Council owned or occupied land in accordance with the RPMS rules.

5. Discussion

5.1 Relationship to Wellington City's Pest Management Plan (2004)

The review of the RPMS has only minor implications for the Council's Pest Management Plan. There are several changes to Council's responsibilities, but this will not result in major changes to the Pest Management Implementation Plan (2005), or in any change in expenditure. The RPMS lays down rules for how certain pests will be managed, and as such provides a basis for Territorial Local Authorities (TLA's) to both benefit and be supported in their own efforts to manage pests where individual policies may not be in place at a local level. The vision and objectives of the Wellington City Council Pest Management Plan (2004) are consistent with the proposed strategy.

5.2 Responsibilities under the proposed RPMS

The Council's responsibilities under the proposed RPMS are detailed below. This is consistent with the current RPMS and is provided as background to the submission.

Regional Surveillance species: The focus of this programme is on potential pest species not yet known to be in the region and/or those of limited distribution that have arrived recently. Landowners are required to notify GWRC of locations of any of these species on land owned or managed. If infestations are located, then Greater Wellington may carry out and fund control.

Total Control: Landowners are required to notify GWRC of any locations of these species which they will then control by direct service delivery at no cost to the owner/occupier. This targets pests of limited distribution but with potentially serious adverse effects eg moth plant, woolly nightshade.

Containment: Landowners/occupiers outside the containment zone are required to notify GWRC of the presence of these species. GWRC shall be responsible for control of the included species outside designated Containment zones.

Suppression: GWRC will control rabbits (currently the only proposed suppression pest) on riverbanks, esplanades and other similar public commons but on the whole responsibility for control lies with the landowner.

Site-led boundary control: Landowners/occupiers are required to control these species a specified distance within their boundary following a complaint to GWRC by an adjoining landowner/occupier whose land is clear or being cleared of that species.

Site-led human health: Similar to site-led boundary control, this allows GWRC to enforce boundary clearance a specific distance into neighbouring properties if the adjoining neighbour complains to GWRC and is clearing or has cleared their property of these specie(s).

Site-led biodiversity: This category contains species that GWRC will control in selected Key Native Ecosystems (KNEs) and TLA reserves to protect biodiversity values.

Site-led Key Native Ecosystems: This is a holistic management approach undertaken by GWRC. Where KNEs are on TLA land, partnerships with the TLA will be sought.

5.3 The Council's submission

Regional surveillance pest animals Support for these species, all of which are new additions; largely due to changing priorities and threat assessments.

Total control of rooks Support for moving rooks to the Total Control category from Containment. Reliance on occupier attempts to control them within the old containment zone was ineffective.

Boneseed containment Recommend that the entire 'south coast' from Makara Beach to the Owhiro Bay Entrance is included within the specific exclusion area of the containment zone.

Evergreen buckthorn Support for the containment zone which was previously smaller and in two parts. It now includes the Wairarapa, with exclusion zones around the region's coast where direct control by service delivery will be done in selected areas on an annual basis.

Old man's beard, banana passionfruit, cathedral bells and wild ginger are being moved from the Suppression category to the Site-led Boundary Control category. GWRC does not feel suppression is a viable option region-wide. For old man's beard in Wellington City there is no change from the current RPMS and the control programme will continue. However it is recommended that it be moved to 'site-led programmes for biodiversity' which better fits Wellington City Council's programme as well as the ecology of the weed. For banana passionfruit, cathedral bells and wild ginger the submission recommends their inclusion in site-led programmes for biodiversity as well as in boundary control which will better assist City Council operations.

Support for **Wasps, magpies, hemlock and blackberry** in the new category 'Site-led Human Health'.

Requests that **feral pigeons** are considered for inclusion in recognition of their public nuisance and health hazard.

Programmes for pest management in reserve and forest health areas (5.2.8) Clarification around which reserves these programmes will apply to, and how they are selected. This new programme is intended to formalise the management approach for existing, actively-managed reserves. It differs from the KNE programme in that it focuses on existing reserves; these may be of high biodiversity value but may not be in the KNE programme.

Asks that the **education and information** section is expanded and more clearly outlined as this is a significant component of any effective pest management programme.

6. Conclusion

Wellington City Council is a significant stakeholder in the RPMS, required to control pests on City Council owned or occupied land in accordance with the RPMS rules. As such, a submission has been prepared. The submission acknowledges the new focus on biodiversity management which is consistent with Wellington City Council policies and plans (eg Pest Management Plan 2004, Biodiversity Action Plan 2007). The submission makes recommendations to move some species to different control programmes to better fit the Wellington City situation as well as the ecology of the pest species. However, Council also acknowledges that there are key differences when approaching pest management from a local perspective as opposed to a regional one.

Contact Officer: *Justin McCarthy, Pest Officer, Parks and Gardens and Amber Bill, Acting Manager, Community Engagement and Reserves, Parks and Gardens*

Supporting Information

1) Strategic Fit / Strategic Outcome

This review fits with WCC's Pest Management Plan (2004), and provides an overarching framework for delivering this Plan's objectives via the Biodiversity Action Plan (2007).

2) LTCCP/Annual Plan reference and long term financial impact

This does not affect the Council's draft Annual Plan. The changes indicated in the review will not enforce an increase in operating expenditure in the coming year.

3) Treaty of Waitangi considerations

N/A

4) Decision-Making

This review has a regional focus, and details how pest management will be carried out across the region. Within TLA boundaries we have certain levels of service and obligations with respect to the Strategy. These are designed as minimum requirements, and do not affect Council's ability as TLA to increase levels of service within Wellington City.

5) Consultation

a) General Consultation

The attached is a submission provided in response to the Greater Wellington Regional Council consultation on the Regional Pest Management Strategy. No general consultation has been undertaken by the City Council to prepare this submission.

b) Consultation with Maori

As above.

6) Legal Implications

N/A

7) Consistency with existing policy

This review recommends measures and management approaches that are on the whole consistent with existing WCC policy. In some cases WCC's management approach will exceed the minimum requirements in the Strategy.

APPENDIX 1

Submission on the Proposed Regional Pest Management Strategy

Overall we support the Proposed Greater Wellington Regional Pest Management Strategy, including the proposed objectives. In particular, we support the emphasis on control of species that threaten biodiversity values which is consistent with our own Pest Management Plan and wider Environment Strategy.

As key stakeholders in the implementation of this proposed strategy we wish to comment on the proposed programmes that are most relevant to Wellington City Council.

Proposed programmes

Regional surveillance programme – We support the species that are listed here.

Total control – We support the species included in this category, particularly the inclusion of rooks in this category.

Containment – We request that the Containment zone for boneseed be altered to exclude the South Coast to the closed Owhiro Quarry. Currently only the west coast from Otaki to Makara is excluded. We believe boneseed numbers are low enough to warrant the eradication of boneseed all the way to the Owhiro Quarry.

We support the total control by service delivery of evergreen buckthorn in the specific exclusion zones.

Suppression – We propose that feral pigeons are included in this category. Feral pigeons are widespread in the Wellington area and are a significant public nuisance and health hazard. A suggested aim for this species could be to minimise the adverse impacts of feral pigeons. Means of achievement could include:

- Greater Wellington support with direct control by service delivery to control feral pigeons on public commons to ensure they do not exceed an agreed level of infestation.
- Provide information and publicity to enhance public awareness of the risks of feral pigeons and discourage public feeding at key sites.

Site-led Boundary Control – We propose that Darwin's barberry and climbing asparagus be included in this category as well as in the Key Native Ecosystems management programme. While there are issues with the seeds of both these species being distributed by birds, this would minimise local spread. We also propose that evergreen buckthorn is included in this category as well as in the containment category.

We do not agree that old man's beard fits in this category. The 10m boundary clearance rule is inappropriate for a species with wind dispersed seeds such as old man's beard, and will not meet the proposed objective to: "prevent its spread onto properties that are clear, or being cleared, of old man's beard in the region." We suggest the aim and objective for old man's beard would better sit with the biodiversity site-led programmes. This would recognise the potential

APPENDIX 1

impact of old man's beard on indigenous biodiversity and enable a more specific approach to better protect our native flora and fauna.

We support the reduced boundary clearance distance for gorse to 2m in a non-productive land situation. In addition, we request that the plan recognises the role of gorse for its ability to act as a nurse crop, enhancing the survival of native species.

Site-led programmes for biodiversity - This is consistent with our Pest Management Plan and Biodiversity Action Plan and we support the inclusion of the species listed. In addition, we request that cathedral bells, banana passionfruit, wild ginger and old man's beard be included in this category, not just in the Boundary Control category. We also request that mustelids are considered for inclusion, in addition to the Key Native Ecosystem programme.

We acknowledge your proposed approach with possum control and look forward to a continued positive relationship in possum management within Wellington in accordance with our Memorandum of Understanding. We do suggest that there is flexibility for direct control by service delivery for areas of 'low ecological significance' where these areas are adjacent to areas of high ecological significance. We would also like to see the plan include support for researching and promoting new and evolving trapping and poisoning techniques and materials.

Site-led programmes for human health – We support the species that are listed here.

Site-led programmes for Key native ecosystems – We support this approach and the on-going management in Key Native Ecosystems, but request clarification around the identification of Key Native Ecosystems.

We request that old man's beard, cathedral bells, banana passionfruit and wild ginger be included in the Key Native Ecosystem Management programme. In addition, we would like to see the inclusion of 'weedy natives'; those species that are native to different parts of New Zealand but are problematic in this region e.g. karo.

We would like mention of how GWRC plan to continue and improve relationships with landowners such as farmers who have KNEs on their land.

Reserves and forest health management – we support this in principle but request clarification around whether it refers primarily to GWRC reserves, or whether it also includes TLA reserves. If the latter are included, then we request guidelines around selection of reserve areas so that we can understand how and whether Wellington City Council will be affected.

Other issues

Section 4.3.3 Stakeholders

A timeframe or process for gaining agreement with 'Other Crown Agencies' bound to the RPMS should be provided. We would support this process and successful conclusions.

APPENDIX 1

Section 16.1 Education and Information

We wish to emphasise the importance of education and information for effective weed management. We suggest that this could be expanded and specific education programmes outlined e.g. incentives to encourage the identification and control of species in eradication and surveillance programmes; information about the impact of the species of the site-led biodiversity programmes; and education programmes to promote sustainable ecological behaviour (e.g. not exacerbating weed issues) around KNE or high value ecological sites.