

5. OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS

5.1 PREVENTING, ERADICATING OR CONTAINING PESTS

OBJECTIVES

1. Prevent, eradicate or contain new pest species as early as possible.
2. Eradicate or control pests even though the full details of their impacts may not be known.
3. Eradicate pests, potential pests or isolated populations of pests while populations are small and localised, following the principles used to establish work priorities.

ACTIONS

Biosecurity

- *Maintain a high level of vigilance and reporting by council officers of any unidentified or unusual organisms.*
- *Provide assistance to biosecurity officers as required, in the event of any biosecurity breach.*

Explanation

Council officers' work puts them in less frequented areas of open space where new organisms might establish undetected. As the city has a port and an international airport, the possibility of new organisms arriving undetected exists.

Preventing Infestations by Pests New to the City

- *Develop programmes to raise the awareness of community groups, landowning agencies and the wider population of the threats posed by new organisms, and what actions can be taken to reduce these threats, as part of wider education programmes.*
- *Work with other agencies to develop joint programmes to raise community awareness of the threat posed by new organisms.*

Explanation

Preventing pests established elsewhere in the country from arriving in the city is the most effective form of management. Human activities are a significant cause of infestations in new areas. Education of the public to raise awareness of the risks and to promote sound practices will help reduce the likelihood of new organisms arriving.

Because of the distances new pests can travel, particularly along roads and rail corridors, the co-operation of the controlling agencies will be sought. Joint programmes with other agencies with similar responsibilities and interests will also be pursued.

Early Identification, Eradication and Containment

- *Identify emerging pest problems through regular forums of Council staff, other agencies, weed and pest animal control contractors and members of the community to pass on observations.*
- *Discuss personal observations of species that may be becoming a problem, set timetables for control action and identify the need for any research or monitoring.*
- *Eradicate if possible or otherwise contain new pests.*
- *Eradicate if possible or otherwise contain new pest species while the infestation is small and/or isolated.*
- *Eradicate if possible or otherwise contain established pest species to prevent spread into new areas.*

Explanation

Early identification of new pests requires the assistance of a range of people throughout the community, particularly as the city has a large area of open space to manage, much of it expansive and some remote. Gathering a range of people together allows a wider picture to be established, and assists in clarifying the true significance of new pests.

There is often little information available about new pests, particularly on their impact on a new environment. Rather than waiting to find out the extent of the impacts, these pests should be controlled pro-actively.

Taking action when a population is small gives a greater likelihood of successfully eradicating the pest and is most effective financially. Using natural or man made barriers such as roads can allow larger populations of pests to be eradicated over a greater area. Eradicating outlying populations is also an efficient method of preventing the spread of pests.

Preventing established pests from spreading into new areas can also be an effective form of control, for example, preventing Darwin's barberry from spreading into new areas of the city.

5.2 MANAGING PESTS

OBJECTIVES

1. Develop a methodology to determine which areas and which pests are priorities for control programmes
2. Give highest priority to the prevention, control and management of pests that pose greatest threats to areas of greatest biodiversity values.

ACTIONS

Identifying Priority Sites

- *Prepare a methodology that allows sites to be ranked on the basis of the values they contain, the level of threat present from weeds and pest animals and the need for urgency in the control of weeds and/or pest animals.*
- *Assess sites and list them in order of priority.*
- *Prepare pest management programmes for each site and implement as resources allow each site to be dealt with.*
- *Review the site priority list each year.*

Explanation

Sites with high biodiversity values are those with the most to lose through the adverse impacts of weeds and pest animals. A system of assessing sites has been devised in Appendix II. Once priority sites have been identified using this methodology, individual pest management plans can be prepared to address the specific needs of each site and implementation can be started.

The list of sites will need to be reviewed each year to reflect progress with pest control and to allow for any changed circumstances that may arise.

Buffer Zones

- *Create buffer zones around priority sites to protect the control work that has been done.*

Explanation

A buffer zone is an area clear of the pests that may spread back into the priority area and re-infest it. The size of the buffer is dependent on the characteristics of the pests and factors such as topography, climate, dispersal by birds, and prevailing wind.

Private Land

- *Undertake pest control on private land where this is of significant benefit to priority sites on Council open space.*
- *Establish a set of procedures to ensure that pest control on private land is warranted.*

Explanation

Occasionally, it may be beneficial to remove pests on private land adjacent to or in the buffer zone around a priority site, such as a seed source. Because the benefit is primarily to the priority site, this work would be done at no cost to the private landowner. Landowner consent to the work would be required.

5.3 STATUTORY OBLIGATIONS

The following sections deal only with the legal requirements to control the pests identified. Additional control may be required to protect specific sites, and this will be identified in the individual site pest management plans.

OBJECTIVES

1. Meet all statutory requirements relating to weed and pest animal management on Council owned or controlled land using Council staff or contractors as needed.

ACTION

Cathedral bells, banana passionfruit, wild ginger

- *Eradicate all known plants on open space and road reserve.*
- *Maintain a programme of checking known sites to eradicate any new plants.*

Explanation

Control operations will search for these weeds so that plants are destroyed before flowering, and will revisit sites to remove any seedlings that may establish later.

Ragwort and variegated thistle

- *Control these species on request.*

Explanation

These species are primarily agricultural weeds, and will be dealt with as required.

Old man's beard

- *Control old man's beard on all the Council's open space and road reserve land so that no plants are allowed to seed.*
- *Report to Greater Wellington Regional Council all occurrences of old man's beard within 10 metres beyond the boundary of any open space or road reserve.*
- *Review, annually progress in controlling old man's beard to determine if the level of control is sustainable.*

Explanation

Old man's beard has been the subject of considerable control work in the past. Although old man's beard is now on boundary control under the RPMS, the Council will continue controlling old man's beard on all its land to reduce its occurrence to a level that does not pose a significant threat to the environment.

Gorse

- *Control gorse along boundaries on request.*
- *Provide plants for adjoining owners to plant and maintain, where boundary control of gorse has been done.*

Explanation

Replanting boundaries cleared of gorse will reduce the need for future clearance and reduce fire risk.

Possums

- *Continue working in partnership with Greater Wellington Regional Council to control possums on Council land.*
- *Identify additional areas that would benefit from possum control, either in conjunction with Greater Wellington Regional Council or as part of a Wellington City Council programme.*
- *Create possum free zones within the city.*

Explanation

Possums are probably the most serious pest animal present in New Zealand and are controlled by Greater Wellington Regional Council as part of the Key Native Ecosystem programme. The success of the current programme means that expansion of the programme can be considered, with the intention of establishing widespread possum-free zones in the city.

Rooks

- *Notify Greater Wellington of any rookeries be discovered on Council land.*

Explanation

Periodically solitary rookeries of less than 10 rooks have been located and destroyed in the Ohariu district..

Rabbits

- *Control of rabbits to maintain populations below that specified in the RPMS.*

Explanation

Rabbit populations are generally localised and can be controlled by early intervention.

Magpies

- *Report all occurrences of aggressive magpies to Greater Wellington for control.*

Explanation

Research indicates that magpies are not a direct threat to birds. A close watch will be kept on research results to assess whether changes are needed to the management of magpies.

Key Native Ecosystems

- *Liaise with Greater Wellington in the preparation of management plans and pest management plans for KNEs, exploring the possibility of joint plans where appropriate.*
- *Use the list of species identified for Key Native Ecosystem Management as a guide to species that may need control in areas identified as priorities for pest control.*

Explanation

Parallels between the KNE programme and the directions of this plan provide opportunities to work closely with Greater Wellington Regional Council. The species

listed for inclusion in the KNE programme are those most likely to be significant in areas identified through this plan as priorities for pest control.

Climbing Asparagus/Snakefeather

- *Review the effectiveness of the Climbing Asparagus/Snakefeather control to date and determine if specific control continues to be appropriate.*

Explanation

Climbing Asparagus/Snakefeather may be more widespread than first thought, making it no longer appropriate to control it as part of an early eradication programme.

Public Health

- *Undertake rodent control operations in accordance with any request from Council Environmental Health officers.*
- *Deal with other factors which may be contributing to rodent numbers.*

Explanation

Rodent control will be done on request. Because rodents are often a symptom of a wider problem, the root cause of high rodent numbers or rodent visibility such as household rubbish dumping or garden waste, will be determined and either dealt with directly or passed to the appropriate agency for action.

Goats

- *Investigate, promote and if necessary initiate group landowner goat eradication and control programmes for areas of significant biodiversity values, in particular the south-western area of the city.*
- *Remind adjacent landowners of their obligations regarding goats under the Wild Animal Control Act 1977 and under section 15.2.2 of the District Plan and take enforcement action if appropriate.*
- *Take legal action against any person/s found to have deliberately released goats onto open space land.*

Explanation

Goats are a serious threat in some parts of the city. Controlling them is made more difficult by their ability to move from property to property. Those landowners who wish to keep goats and farm them, need to be reminded of their obligations to identify the animals and prevent the animals from escaping from their property. This is preferable to individual landowners who wish to keep their land goat-free having to fence their properties to keep out goats.

Those landowners and agencies that wish to eradicate goats from their properties can then combine forces to gain maximum effectiveness from control operations.

Deer

- *Investigate, promote and if necessary initiate group landowner deer eradication and control programmes for areas of significant biodiversity values, in particular the south-western area of the city.*

- *Remind adjacent landowners of their obligations regarding deer under the Wild Animal Control Act 1977, and pursue enforcement action if appropriate.*
- *Pursue legal action against any person/s found to have deliberately released deer onto open space land.*

Explanation

Those landowners and agencies that wish to eradicate deer from their properties can combine forces to gain maximum effectiveness from eradication and control operations.

The deliberate release of deer into open space presents a threat to biodiversity values found there. The damage that deer can cause and the costs associated with eradicating them mean that preventing their release is a priority.

Pigs

- *Investigate, promote and if necessary initiate group landowner pig eradication and control programmes for areas of significant biodiversity values, in particular the south-western area of the city.*
- *Remind adjacent landowners of their obligations regarding pigs under the Wild Animal Control Act 1977 and pursue enforcement action if appropriate.*
- *Pursue legal action against any person/s found to have deliberately released pigs onto open space land.*

Explanation

Those landowners and agencies that wish to eradicate pigs from their properties can combine forces to gain maximum effectiveness from eradication and control operations.

The deliberate release of pigs into open space presents a threat to biodiversity values found there. The damage that pigs can cause and the costs associated with eradicating them mean that preventing their release is a priority.

5.4 METHODS OF CONTROLLING PESTS

OBJECTIVES

1. Manage all pest control in a manner which avoids or minimises adverse effects on the environment, health, safety, public safety and cultural values.

ACTIONS

- *Minimise the use of chemicals used to control pests consistent with Council policies and the need for effective and humane treatment of pests.*
- *Regularly review the No Spray Register to ensure that it is up to date.*
- *Ensure all personnel undertaking pest control programmes receive appropriate training and are suitably qualified.*
- *Co-operate with and assist agencies responsible for the introduction of biological controls for pests.*

- *Require adjoining landowners to keep all boundary fence stock-proof, where stock may be located on adjacent land.*

Explanation

The range of options available for the control of pests continues to change and expand. New techniques are being developed as research and development solves pest problems. It is important for the most appropriate solution to be chosen, having regard to the policies of the Council for the protection of the environment, health and safety, and cultural values.

Biological control offers considerable benefits, but is expensive to develop. As a likely beneficiary, the Council will assist where possible the agencies involved

Livestock should be prevented from accessing open space unless specifically required as a management tool. Stock-proof fences are the most effective and efficient means of doing this. The Council as adjoining owner may be required to contribute a half share of fencing costs.

5.5 COMMUNITY EDUCATION AND PARTNERSHIPS

OBJECTIVES

1. Develop community awareness and education programmes.
2. Develop community partnership programmes to assist in the management of weeds and pest animals.
3. Recognise the cultural values associated with open space throughout the city and the need to manage weeds and pest animals to protect and enhance these values.

Education and Awareness

ACTIONS

- *Develop community awareness programmes to:*
 - *explain the change in focus of pest control for the city*
 - *highlight the threats to biodiversity that pests present*
 - *show how people's actions contribute to the pest problems*
 - *encourage community support for pest control programmes*
 - *promote practical actions that the community can take to help prevent or control pests*
 - *show where the city's priorities for biodiversity protection include working with other agencies, organisations and groups and utilising the resources that they have available.*

Explanation

The change in focus will result in changes to some of the areas that are currently being managed to control pests. The community needs to know why the programme has changed and what the changes will look like.

The support of the community is a key ingredient in the success of pest control programmes. It is important that the whole community understand the need for pest control programmes and where possible, assist in the process.

Community Partnerships

Iwi

ACTIONS

- *Liaise with iwi in the preparation of individual pest management plans.*

Explanation

Liaison with iwi in the preparation of individual site pest management plans will provide for a working partnership in the management of pests, and ensure that sites that have significance to local iwi are managed appropriately.

Community Groups

ACTIONS

- *Work with community groups to protect the biodiversity values within the city.*
- *Consult community groups with known interests in a site or pest, in the preparation of individual pest management plans.*

Explanation

Recognition of the need to protect biodiversity values and a desire to assist the regeneration process and beautify local open space have resulted in an increasing number of community groups becoming involved in protection and restoration of open space. Pest control is an essential part of that process and the Council provides assistance to groups, while encouraging them to take responsibility for the range of actions needed to undertake such projects.

5.6 MONITORING / RESEARCH

OBJECTIVES

1. Establish and maintain monitoring programmes to measure changes in biodiversity of priority areas.
2. Establish monitoring programmes to determine the effectiveness of weed and pest animal management programmes being used.

ACTIONS

- *Maintain the biodiversity monitoring programme using the four indicators identified.*

- *Develop a programme to monitor the abundance and distribution of weeds in open space as a matter of priority.*
- *Regularly audit all pest control operations to ensure that the work is performed to the required standard and in accordance with all relevant policies and requirements.*
- *Undertake literature searches on a regular basis to ensure that the latest information is available to managers and programme operators.*
- *Identify specific research that can usefully be done and will have a practical application to the management of pests on Council open space.*
- *Assist other agencies with research and share research results.*

Explanation

Monitoring is focused on measuring how well biodiversity and ecosystem strategic outcomes are achieved, of which pest control is an integral part. Audits provide a measure of how well the operators are performing to ensure standards are maintained and financial performance criteria met.

Much research of relevance to pest control on open space is being done by other agencies. The results need to be readily available so that staff and those managing pests are aware of the latest findings and can apply them to best effect.

Specific pests of particular interest to the Council, such as Darwin's barberry, can be targeted by other agencies on the Council's behalf or by the Council itself.

5.7 IMPLEMENTATION

OBJECTIVES

1. Following the adoption of the Pest Management Plan, initiate work on the implementation plan (see *Appendix VI*) to:
 - prevent new pests arriving
 - eradicate or contain pests or limited populations
 - prevent the spread of pests into new areas
 - identify and prioritise ecologically important sites.
2. Submit the completed implementation plan to committee for approval.

ACTIONS

Implementation Plan

- *Consult with community groups and those with known interest and/or expertise in specific sites and/or pests*
- *Identify operational programmes to*
 - *prevent new pests establishing*
 - *identify pests that should be prevented from spreading*
 - *prioritise sites.*
- *Prepare individual pest management plans for each priority site that*
 - *address all significant weeds and pest animals present*

- *identify how eradication, containment or control will be carried out*
- *identify any revegetation or other work required following weed or pest animal control operations.*
- *Identify options and service levels and the additional resources required to implement each option.*
- *Identify public expectations for service levels.*
- *Submit the completed implementation plan to the committee for approval.*

Explanation

The Draft Pest Management Plan was the first stage in developing pest management for the city. The second stage was preparing the implementation plan for approval, detailing how the Draft Pest Management Plan will be put into effect. These have been collated into the final Pest Management Plan.

The implementation plan considers options for the level of control to be achieved and the speed with which weed and pest animals can be controlled. Increased service levels will increase demands for financial resources or create a corresponding decrease in service levels. Public expectations about the level of weed and pest control that will be achieved need to be determined and managed.