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Committee Catchment Management  
Author Davor Bejakovich, Manager, Biosecurity

## **Regional Pest Management Strategy: Operational Plan 2009/10**

### **1. Purpose**

To seek adoption of the 2009/10 Operational Plan for implementation of the Regional Pest Management Strategy 2002-2022.

### **2. Significance of the decision**

The matters in this report do not trigger the significance policy of the Council or otherwise trigger section 76(3)(b) of the Local Government Act 2002.

### **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. The RPMS review started in August 2006 with publication and distribution of a public consultation document. After extensive consultation the Proposed RPMS was notified in March 2008. The submissions on the proposed document closed at the end of April 2008. A total of 23 submissions were received. After hearings and subsequent amendments to the proposed document, the reviewed RPMS was adopted by resolution on 9 March 2009 and the Strategy became operative after the Council's approval on 12 June 2009.

The reviewed strategy has added to, expanded and updated the original species and corresponding aims and objectives of the strategy. A review of rook populations and extent following intensive control work indicated that the status should be changed to Total Control with the aim of eradication long term. Possums and several other pest species were re-categorised to the Site-led biodiversity category to align with the proposed regional possum control and biodiversity programmes. Containment zones for several pest plant species were changed as a result of the review, while a number of pest plant species were reclassified to a site-led boundary control category. The new category of Site-led human health plant and animal pest species has been introduced in the RPMS.

The reviewed RPMS is based on current knowledge of the targeted plant and animal pest species biology and contemporary pest control methods available.

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 2008/09 Plan will be presented to the Catchment Management Committee on 24 November 2009.

The Council is required to prepare an annual 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.

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 2009/10 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 Operational Plan 2009/10 seeks to implement the first year of the reviewed Strategy and year eight of the overall strategy document.

During 2009/10, 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;
- 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.

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 Memorandums 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 bovine Tb programmes, roles and responsibilities for the marine and freshwater pests, and obligation of the Crown as a responsible landowner. The Group will also work to ensure national consistency in pest management methodologies and to influence national priorities in biosecurity research.

The Biosecurity team is continuing close co-operation with government departments:

- GW staff are undertaking surveillance and eradication of the National Interest Pest Plants on behalf of MAF Biosecurity New Zealand (BNZ)
- Staff are also actively participating in the National Plant Pest Accord activities with BNZ and other regional councils
- GW will play a significant role in the lower North Island Didymo response
- GW staff are represented on the MAF BNZ National Biosecurity Co-ordinating Committee
- GW staff will play a significant role in projects supporting the Future of Pest Management in New Zealand programme

- GW staff will continue to co-ordinate activities with Department of Conservation officers on the operation of the Mt Bruce mainland island and other biodiversity projects.

## 5. Communications

The Biosecurity Act requires that copies of the Plan be made available to the public at cost price. However, the GW policy is that all publications should be provided free of charge. Historically, public notices have been placed in the major regional papers drawing the publics' attention to the availability of the Plan. This process will be repeated for the 2009/10 Plan.

## 6. Recommendation

*That the Committee:*

- (1) ***Receives the report.***
- (2) ***Notes the contents of the report.***
- (3) ***Approves the proposed Operational Plan 2009/10 (Attachment 1) for the Regional Pest Management Strategy 2002-2022.***

Report prepared by:

Report approved by:

Davor Bejakovich  
Manager, Biosecurity

Wayne O'Donnell  
Divisional Manager, Catchment Management

Attachment 1: RPMS Operational Plan (enclosed separately)