

Report 16.33
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Committee Environment Committee
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Regional Pest Management Strategy Review

1. Purpose

This report is to advise the Environment Committee of the commencement of the Regional Pest Management Strategy (RPMS) review. The current RPMS has a twenty year life period from 2002 to 2022. Changes to the Biosecurity Act (the Act), and the recent development of a National Policy Direction (NPD), mean that parts of the RPMS no longer meet the statutory requirements of the Act. Once reviewed the RPMS will become the Regional Pest Management Plan, in accordance with the Act.

The Greater Wellington Regional Council (GWRC) has 18 months to determine whether the current RPMS is inconsistent with the NPD and then commence a review. GWRC has also been party to the development of the Coordinated Regional Pest Management Plans project. This project aims to improve consistency between RPMSs across New Zealand. The review process will allow GWRC to align our RPMS to the agreed collective template.

2. Background

The first GWRC RPMS was developed in 1996 following the introduction of the Act. The RPMS was developed to deliver a coordinated response to the pest management needs of the Wellington region.

The Biosecurity Law Reform Bill was introduced to Parliament in November 2010 to update the Act in response to changing biosecurity requirements. In particular, amendments have been made to Part 5 of the Act 'Pest Management', which legislates for regional pest management. Regional Councils were involved through a range of consultative processes to ensure that the amended Act met the requirements for regional pest management. The subsequent amendments to the Act led to the development of a NPD for Pest Management 2015 to guide the review and development of RPMSs.

Since 1996 the GWRC RPMS has been reviewed twice. It was last reviewed in 2007, and the amended document was implemented in 2009. The review period

for RPMS has historically been five years. The current review was delayed because of the pending changes to the Act. When the reviewed RPMS is in place, it will now only need to be reviewed every ten years. A partial review can take place within those ten years if required.

3. Review process

The NPD came into effect on 24 September 2015. The Regional Council has 18 months from that date to determine whether the RPMS is inconsistent with the NPD. The Coordinated Regional Pest Management Plans project has been approved by the Regional Chief Executive Officers' Group. These documents will guide the review process.

Alongside our statutory obligations, the Wellington community has indicated that there are species that need reconsideration or consideration in the RPMS (eg. feral cats, Canada geese). There are other species that GWRC Biosecurity Officers have identified as no longer suited to their categorisation in the current RPMS (eg. madeira vine, African feathergrass, freshwater fish species) and will need reconsideration how they fit in the new RPMS.

Biosecurity staff are attending a Ministry for Primary Industries workshop on February 11 which will focus on the formal review process. A project plan has been developed for the review. The project plan will be finalised following the workshop.

4. 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. Part 6 sets out the obligations of local authorities in relation to the making of decisions.

4.1 Significance of the decision

Part 6 requires Greater Wellington Regional Council (GWRC) to consider the significance of the decision. The term 'significance' has a statutory definition set out in the Act.

Officers have considered the significance of the matter, taking the Council's significance and engagement policy and decision-making guidelines into account. Officers recommend that the matter be 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.

4.2 Engagement

Engagement on the matters assessed contained in the report aligns with the level of significance assessed. In accordance with the significance and engagement policy, no engagement on the matters for decision is required.

5. Recommendations

That the Committee:

1. ***Receives the report.***
2. ***Notes the content of the report.***
3. ***Notes the commencement of the Regional Pest Management Strategy Review.***

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