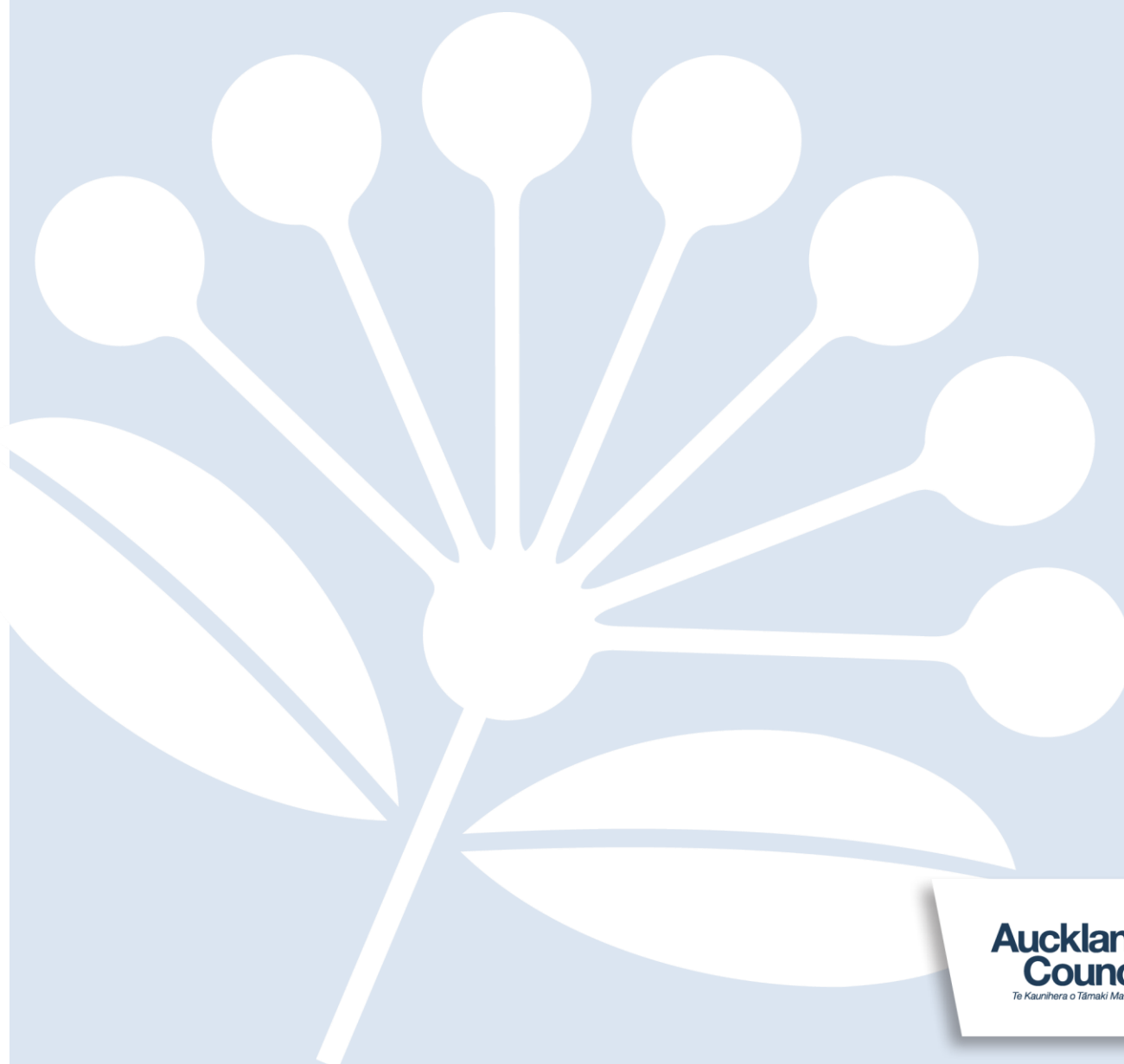


Auckland Council Weed Management Policy for parks and open spaces

15 August 2013



**Auckland
Council**
Te Kaunihera o Tāmaki Makaurau



Table of contents

1. Introduction	3
1.1. Development of the Auckland Council Weed Management Policy	3
1.2. What we mean by a weed	3
1.3. What we mean by parks and open spaces	5
1.4. Relationship of the Auckland Council Weed Management Policy to the Auckland Regional Pest Management Strategy 2007-2012	5
1.5. Responsibility for the Auckland Council Weed Management Policy	6
2. Vision statement	8
3. Objectives	9
Objective 1. Take an integrated approach to weed management and vegetation control	9
Objective 2. Ensure best practice in weed management and vegetation control	10
Objective 3. Minimise agrichemical use	10
Objective 4. Minimise non-target effects of agrichemical use	11
Objective 5. Ensure public health and safety	11
Objective 6. Protect and enhance the environment	12
Objective 7. Empower the community to manage weeds in accordance with the policy	13
Objective 8. Deliver weed management which is value for money	14
4. Action plan	16
Action 1. Planning, policy and regulation	16
Action 2. Operations	17
Action 3. Identification and mapping	17
Action 4. Governance, monitoring, research and reporting	18
Action 5. Advocacy and education	19
Action 6. Funding	19
Glossary	20

1. Introduction

1.1. Development of the Auckland Council Weed Management Policy

We have developed this weed management policy to guide the management of weeds in Auckland's parks and open spaces, including the road corridor.

The policy does not intend to prescribe when and where Auckland Council or Auckland Council controlled organisations (CCOs) can undertake weed management, nor does it provide a basis for authorising weed management operations to be undertaken in any specific circumstances or location. We will make these decisions based on management aspirations, statutory requirements, agreed levels of service and operational policies and guidelines. In some instances, the applicant may need specific approvals before taking on such work (e.g. resource consent). This policy does not remove the need for applicants to obtain all the appropriate approvals before they can undertake weed management operations.

The policy will help deliver the strategic priorities of the Auckland Council's Parks and Open Spaces Strategic Action Plan 2013 and will also support the strategic outcomes of the Auckland Plan and the priorities identified in the 21 local board plans.

While the weed management policy is a non-statutory document, there are a range of regulatory tools that will be used to implement the policy vision and objectives. These include the Unitary Plan, the Auckland Council Regional Plan: Coastal and the Auckland Regional Pest Management Strategy 2007-2012 (RPMS) or its successors.

We have developed this weed management policy following a review of weed management policies developed by the legacy councils, national and international best practice, current trends in weed management, and iwi, stakeholder and public consultation.

Together with the development of the weed management policy, Auckland Council is undertaking a weed management operational review. This will include a review of current weed management operational approaches, practices and costs, consider alternative approaches and their financial implications, and resulting changes to levels of service. The output of the operational review will be a weed management policy implementation plan.

1.2. What we mean by a weed

Different plant species may be considered a weed in different locations, often depending on land use or the environment in which it is growing. This is why we have adopted a broad definition of weeds for the purposes of the Auckland Council Weed Management Policy.

For the purposes of this policy, a weed is defined as any plant growing where it is not wanted and which has an adverse effect as defined within the policy.

In the context of this policy weeds include, but are not limited to, pest plants identified in the RPMS or its successors.

To be considered a weed, as defined by this policy, a plant needs to be growing in the wrong place and having an adverse effect on people, Māori cultural values, infrastructure, other built assets or the natural environment.

Adverse effects include where plants are:

- competing with and/or displacing native vegetation or planted exotic species, either directly or through habitat modification
- negatively impacting, or having the potential to negatively impact, on indigenous flora, fauna, ecosystems or ecosystem processes
- presenting an invasion risk to other parts of Auckland as defined by its pest plant status in the RPMS or its successors
- damaging infrastructure, increasing maintenance costs and reducing its lifespan
- negatively impacting on system performance (e.g. impeding the flow of stormwater resulting in flooding)
- reducing the usability of sports parks and turf areas
- damaging heritage sites
- conflicting with Māori values
- negatively impacting on human health.

A plant may be considered to be in the wrong place, but if it does not have an adverse effect as defined by this policy it will not be considered a weed in that specific location or context unless the species is identified as a pest plant in that location within the RPMS or its successors.

This includes, as an example, trees and shrubs which are considered to be obstructing views, overgrowing walkways or interfering with the transport functions and/or safe operation of the road corridor. Decisions regarding what, if any, action is appropriate in such circumstances is controlled by operational policies and guidelines, tree protection rules, requirements for resource consent for vegetation removal, rules of the Unitary Plan or other legislative requirements. The weed management policy does not and, as a non-statutory document, cannot supersede such requirements.

In some circumstances, plants identified as weeds in a particular location may not be removed or only partially controlled if there is some tangible benefit in retaining them (e.g. erosion prevention). However, this must be weighed up against the current or future adverse effects of their presence.

The weed management policy recognises that weed management also encompasses a broader definition of vegetation control. In the road corridors and street environments this includes the control of grass verge edges where growth occurs over footpaths, kerbs and channels, and drainage culverts. There are differences between urban and rural road environments in terms of their roadside vegetation and the needs and

potential options for weed and vegetation control. This means that we need different approaches to weed and vegetation management. In parks, vegetation control includes edging of turf areas where vegetation grows up against hard surfaces such as paths, buildings and furniture, as well as edge control around gardens. Weed management in parks encompasses weed control in gardens, sports fields, and pest plant control in native bush and natural areas.

1.3. What we mean by parks and open spaces

We have developed the weed management policy to guide the prevention and management of weeds and the control of vegetation within all parks and open spaces owned or administered by Auckland Council or its CCOs. Parks and open spaces include: parks and reserves, cemeteries, road corridors, public transport facilities, public walkways, civic spaces, riparian margins, wetlands, beaches, volcanic landscapes, and areas of wilderness and native forest.

1.4. Relationship of the Auckland Council Weed Management Policy to the Auckland Regional Pest Management Strategy 2007-2012

The RPMS was developed under the Biosecurity Act 1993 and provides the statutory framework for the efficient and effective management of plant and animal pests in the Auckland region.

The RPMS lists 192 introduced pest plants that meet the criteria for inclusion in the document. Each pest plant is considered capable of causing serious adverse effects to people or the environment and has passed a cost-benefit analysis for control. The RPMS specifies the responsibility for management, be this eradication by the council (Total Control Pest Plants), control by landowners in certain locations (Containment Pest Plants) or restrictions on sale and distribution (Surveillance Pest Plants).

Our weed management policy applies to the management of all pest plants listed in the RPMS. It also provides a policy direction for the management of other plants, which although not considered such a significant threat as to be included in the RPMS, are considered weeds as defined by this policy.

The council has decided to approve a rollover of the RPMS, to take account of the requirements of the Biosecurity Law Reform Act 2012 and the consequent national policy direction from the minister. We anticipate that the review of the RPMS will start in 2013. The review will include full public and sector consultation.

The new document will be in the form of a regional pest management plan, rather than a strategy, in accordance with the amendments to the Biosecurity Act 1993 brought about by the Biosecurity Law Reform Act 2012. Once the review of the RPMS has been completed and it is superseded by a regional pest management plan our weed management policy will apply to the management of all pest plants listed in the new plan or its successors.

1.5. Responsibility for the Auckland Council Weed Management Policy

Auckland Council is responsible for the development and implementation of the weed management policy.

The policy applies to all land owned or administered by Auckland Council and its CCOs. All council and CCOs staff and contractors will be required to adhere to the policy.

Weed management on private land and other public land not owned or administered by Auckland Council or its CCOs is outside of the scope of the weed management policy. However, the policy will influence and empower others to take action on their land to prevent the establishment of weeds, to effectively manage their control and to stop them spreading to other locations.

Weed spread occurs at the landscape scale, so weed management must also happen at that scale. To achieve this, we must foster a coordinated and cooperative approach to weed management.

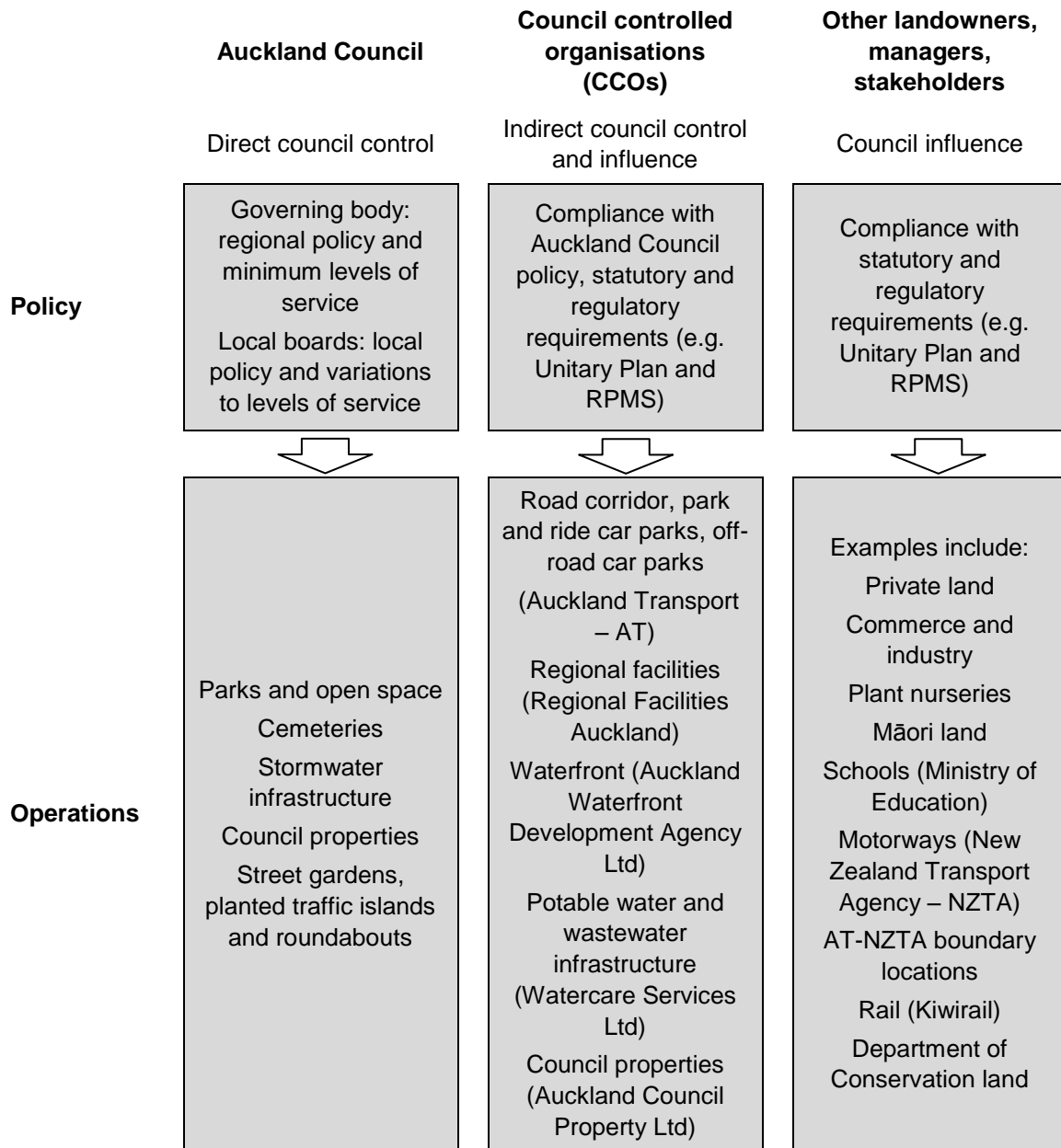


Figure 1. The different roles and responsibilities of Auckland Council, its CCOs and other landowners for weed management across the Auckland Region and the level of control and/or influence the council has over the various parties.

2. Vision statement

The vision of the weed management policy is as follows.

Working together to reduce the adverse effects of weeds and their management on people and the environment.

The policy vision statement acknowledges that weed management is the collective responsibility of all Aucklanders and that a partnership approach between Auckland Council, its CCOs and the community is the best way to achieve the desired outcomes.

The policy vision statement recognises that weeds can have adverse effects on Auckland's people and the environment. Weeds can cause allergies and health problems in some people, damage infrastructure, affect heritage sites and impact on Māori cultural values, reduce amenity values in public spaces, negatively impact on sports fields and other playing surfaces (including artificial turf), increase the cost of asset maintenance and shorten the lifespan of assets. Exotic weeds can also invade areas of native vegetation, adversely affecting the integrity of ecological systems and the diversity of indigenous flora and fauna in our region. Weeds can also adversely impact on the rural production sector by competing with trees in forestry plantations, horticultural and agricultural crops and desirable pasture species.

The policy vision statement also acknowledges that weed management and vegetation control practices have the potential to adversely affect peoples' health and that of the environment. Therefore, the process of managing weeds and controlling vegetation must be undertaken in a way that minimises adverse effects.

We must also acknowledge that Māori place great significance on both the physical and spiritual environment by way of kaitiakitanga (guardianship). This document recognises the importance of Auckland Council working in partnership with Auckland's mana whenua to achieve the aims of the policy, as weeds and the methods used to manage them can negatively impact on Māori cultural values.

To achieve the vision of reducing the adverse effects of weed management and vegetation control, this policy promotes the concept of best practice. Best practice weed management takes an integrated approach to the control of weeds and vegetation, and uses methods that have the least potential to adversely affect human health and the environment while achieving the desired outcome.

3. Objectives

The objectives of the weed management policy are as follows.

1. **Take an integrated approach to weed management and vegetation control**
2. **Ensure best practice in weed management and vegetation control**
3. **Minimise agrichemical use**
4. **Minimise non-target effects of agrichemical use**
5. **Ensure public health and safety**
6. **Protect and enhance the environment**
7. **Empower the community to manage weeds in accordance with the policy**
8. **Deliver weed management and vegetation control which is value for money**

Auckland Council and its CCOs must consider all eight objectives when determining options for weed management and vegetation control.

Objective 1. Take an integrated approach to weed management and vegetation control

An integrated approach involves the use of a range of different techniques to effectively prevent and manage weeds and control vegetation. This requires taking a site-led approach, tailoring management and control to address the specific plant species and site conditions at a particular location.

An integrated approach would include the following.

- **Prevention** – Methods for preventing and/or reducing the establishment of weeds, including: biosecurity at borders; best practice weed hygiene to prevent spread by people and machinery, including appropriate transportation and disposal of weeds through the waste management system; designing infrastructure with regard to reducing or eliminating sites for weed establishment; using native or non-weedy exotic plant species in amenity plantings and appropriate land management practices (e.g. revegetation of weed-infested riparian margins with appropriate native plant species to suppress exotic weeds).
- **Control** – Methods for the effective control of established weeds, including: manual control using hand tools, mechanical control (e.g. mowing, slashing, felling, frequent grading of unsealed roads), biological control using selected invertebrates or pathogens, habitat modification to remove establishment sites, trialling and adopting new technologies and the judicious use of herbicides.

Control methods used should reflect current best practice to achieve the desired outcome.

- **Education** – Training of council and CCOs staff and contractors on the full range of effective weed management and vegetation control techniques in keeping with current best practice. This also includes the role of public education, engagement, advocacy and support, specifically including mana whenua, to encourage effective weed management on land not owned or managed by the council or CCOs.
- **Restoration** – Ecosystem restoration and the wider use of native plants, including species for rongoa (medicine), mahi toi (arts and crafts) and kai (food) where appropriate.
- **Cooperation** – Facilitating inter-agency cooperation to prevent, control and eradicate weed species. Encouraging partnerships between the council, mana whenua, relevant stakeholders and the community.

Objective 2. Ensure best practice in weed management and vegetation control

Ensuring the integrated use of current best practice methodologies in the prevention and management of weeds is critical to the success of the weed management policy.

Best practice weed control requires constant research to keep up to date with evolving weed management techniques, both locally and internationally, and continual innovation to achieve effective, efficient and sustainable outcomes. The best practice approach needs cooperation and sharing of information between Auckland Council and its CCOs, other agencies and organisations, stakeholder groups, businesses and the public.

Auckland Council and its CCOs will set a best practice example for weed management on the land they own or administer. This includes managing the environment to reduce or eliminate habitat for weed establishment and selecting appropriate control techniques that minimise resource use and adverse environmental effects. The council will also ensure it is a good neighbour by managing weeds on land it owns or administers in a way that prevents adverse effects on adjacent land.

Objective 3. Minimise agrichemical use

This objective recognises that agrichemicals can be harmful to human health and the environment. It also recognises international best practice in integrated management of pests, including weeds, in which agrichemicals are used if non-chemical methods are not practical or adequate at achieving the necessary level of control.

The goal of minimising agrichemical use reflects national and international trends aimed at promoting environmental sustainability while still achieving desired weed control outcomes. To this end, the council and its CCOs will work to promote innovation

and continual revision of weed management practices to maximise efficiency and effectiveness while minimising the use and adverse effects of agrichemicals. The simplest way of achieving an overall reduction in agrichemical use is through restrictions on the application of chemicals in specific areas or at specific times. Reduction of agrichemical use may require changes to existing levels of service but this may be acceptable if stakeholders and the public are educated as to the relative benefits and cost-savings achieved.

Objective 4. Minimise non-target effects of agrichemical use

Agrichemicals can be a valuable tool for the management of weeds; where they are used, it is vital that non-target impacts are minimised, and wherever possible, eliminated.

Non-target impacts can be minimised through the use of targeted application methods such as cutting tall vegetation prior to spraying; or cutting and painting, drilling and injecting, or spot spraying of herbicide; rather than broadcast application. Where appropriate, the use of low toxicity herbicides or selective herbicides can be effective in reducing non-target impacts. The selection of herbicides and additives (e.g. dyes, stickers or surfactants) needs to carefully consider their suitability, including efficacy and relative toxicity, with respect to the situation in which they are to be used and the desired outcome.

In New Zealand, NZS 8409:2004 Management of Agrichemicals is the industry standard for the use of agrichemicals and sets minimum health and safety and training requirements for contractors and staff applying chemicals. This weed management policy considers NZS 8409:2004 to be the minimum standard. The council and its CCOs will further minimise non-target effects of their weed management and vegetation control operations through ongoing research and development and continual review of best practice guidelines.

Objective 5. Ensure public health and safety

Herbicides and their use are subject to legislation to protect public health and the environment, including: Resource Management Act 1991, Hazardous Substances and New Organisms Act 1996, Agricultural Compounds and Veterinary Medicines Act 1992, the RPMS and the Land Transport Rule: Dangerous Goods 2005.

Additionally, Auckland Council and its CCOs have obligations under the Health and Safety in Employment Act 1992 and other legislation to ensure the safety of its staff, contractors and the public when undertaking weed management in public open space.

Therefore, any agreements with external parties or the public to manage weeds on land owned or administered by the council or its CCOs must acknowledge this and safeguard them from undue risk.

Public health and safety can be maximised through:

- appropriate training for Auckland Council and CCOs staff, contractors and volunteers, including the requirement for anyone applying agrichemicals to obtain GrowSafe certification
- careful selection of appropriate weed management and vegetation control techniques and using non-chemical techniques whenever they are available and effective
- adherence to industry best practice by Auckland Council and CCOs staff, contractors and volunteers, noting that national standards such as NZS 8409:2004 Management of Agrichemicals set a minimum requirement, including:
 - notification of the use of agrichemicals in open spaces including effective notification in local newspapers and signage where agrichemicals are being applied (Auckland Council currently publishes spraying schedules for parks in local newspapers)
 - use of the lowest toxicity herbicide and additives (e.g. dyes, stickers, surfactants) to effectively achieve the desired outcome
 - providing the ability for the public to opt-out of chemical weed control on the boundary of their properties (e.g. No Spray Register: Auckland Council and CCOs staff, contractors and volunteers ensure non-chemical maintenance is carried out adjoining the registrant's property and the registrant commits to manage weeds and control vegetation to a specified standard)
 - providing effective notification of relevant agrichemical use to those on the No Spray Register who have requested to be notified
 - noting sensitive areas or locations, including schools, childcare centres, hospitals, rest homes, public places and amenity areas where people congregate, beehives, sensitive crops or farming systems (e.g. certified organic properties), public roads and times (e.g. when pupils are walking to or from school or there is an event taking place on a park). Auckland Council and its CCOs cannot be expected to know the whereabouts of all such facilities so we rely on their owners, occupiers, or operators to notify us and our CCOs of their existence or to arrange their inclusion on the No Spray Register).

Removing weeds can increase public safety by contributing to security and/or sight lines within public parkland, along public walkways or pathways and within the road corridor. Public health can be enhanced by reducing the incidences of allergies and other health problems that are caused by some weed species.

Objective 6. Protect and enhance the environment

Weeds can have adverse effects on both the natural and the built environment. Weed management and/or vegetation control is often necessary as part of routine asset

maintenance to protect infrastructure from damage and to maintain the quality and functionality of parks and other open spaces.

Weeds have the ability to out-compete desired plant species in both natural and planted areas. Over time, weeds can decrease indigenous ecosystem diversity through competition for establishment sites and other resources, and remove food sources and habitat for native birds, lizards, bats and invertebrates. Effective weed management is therefore essential to the conservation and enhancement of indigenous biodiversity.

As well as the impact of the weeds themselves, we must take care to avoid potential adverse environmental effects of the methods used to manage weeds, both immediate and long-term. Reducing non-target effects of weed management needs particular attention. This includes the adverse effects of spray drift, accidental removal of desired species or the contamination of soil and/or water. We must consider the positive and negative impacts on indigenous biodiversity, including the presence and location of native flora and fauna identified by the Department of Conservation as 'at-risk' or 'threatened' when deciding which weed management methodologies to employ at a site.

In some circumstances, weeds can provide beneficial functions in the form of habitat, environmental buffers, shelter, erosion control and shading for waterways. The retention or gradual replacement of exotic weed species can be particularly important in areas of low native biodiversity. However, we need to assess the potential adverse effects of weed retention on a site-by-site basis to ensure that the long-term protection and/or enhancement of indigenous biodiversity and ecosystems, including soil nutrient profiles, are not compromised for short-term gain.

Also, some locations, including sites of cultural significance, may require specific methods of weed management. Auckland Council and its CCOs recognise the kaitiaki role of mana whenua and will engage with them to determine appropriate management methodologies for such sites. Weed management must consider the heritage, botanical, amenity or other values provided by exotic species, including historic plantings and evaluate them in that context where appropriate.

Objective 7. Empower the community to manage weeds in accordance with the policy

Any effective long-term solution to managing weeds in Auckland must include measures to educate and empower the community to help, and in some instances lead, weed management across parks and open spaces. A lack of knowledge about specific weeds in Auckland can mean that people are unaware of the extent or implications of the weed problem. For those that can identify weeds, there is often misinformation about the most appropriate methods of control and particularly a lack of information on suitable non-chemical methods which are both practical and adequate at achieving the necessary level of control.

Empowering and partnering with the community provides an opportunity for local people to get involved in the care of parkland and roadsides. This includes local

management initiatives such as no-spray roads, through to the care of local parks by local people and volunteer groups, supported by the council.

Community education, advocacy and partnerships with mana whenua, relevant external organisations and stakeholders are an integral component of weed management. This is particularly important as Auckland Council and its CCOs manage only a small proportion of the region's land area. Educating the community will allow residential, industrial and commercial landowners to more effectively manage their land and will potentially reduce weed abundance across the region.

Encouraging adjoining property owners or occupiers to work together with the council's weed management endeavours is essential as weed re-infestation can occur on council-owned or administered land from seed sources on untreated neighbouring properties and vice versa.

Education can include changing peoples' perceptions of weeds and expectations of weed management. In some places, exotic plants perform beneficial functions and weed control may not be required. For example, weeds can sometimes provide valuable habitat for native animals (e.g. copper skinks, *Oligosoma aeneum*, use rank grass), act as a nursery for regenerating native forest (e.g. gorse, *Ulex europaeus*) and/or prevent other weed species from establishing and reduce overall maintenance requirements. Tree weeds can require staged removal while native trees are planted beneath them to gradually replace the weed species. In some countries, long grass on roadsides is acceptable and even encouraged as animal habitat. Changing peoples' perceptions of weeds can therefore deliver environmental benefits as well as cost savings in areas of low priority that can be transferred to target areas of higher priority.

Objective 8. Deliver weed management which is value for money

Auckland Council and its CCOs have a responsibility to ensure that ratepayers' money is spent wisely. Weed management and vegetation control is an operational expense and needs to be cost effective.

Achieving value for money requires that we do weed management and vegetation control as efficiently as possible while still being consistent with the objectives of the policy, and our responsibility to protect people and the environment. This places the responsibility on Auckland Council and its CCOs to ensure staff and contractors are appropriately trained and employ best practice. Weed management and vegetation control needs to be tailored to the specific site conditions and plant species under consideration. A blanket approach across all situations is inappropriate.

Weed management needs to consider the whole-life costs of the proposed methods. This includes the long-term effectiveness of the method, potential adverse effects on human health and the environment – including the toxicity and persistence of any chemicals used – and inputs of fossil fuels, personnel and other resources. Alternatives to existing management regimes will be considered as part of the implementation plan.

Changing current management practices and expectations of the extent to which weeds need to be managed can also deliver cost savings and value for money. We can

achieve this by managing weeds differently and changing public perceptions and expectations of what are acceptable levels of weed management or vegetation control.

Local schools, community groups, volunteers and Department of Corrections Community work groups also provide an opportunity for the council to develop partnerships with external parties. These partnerships can be mutually beneficial by helping educate the wider community about weeds while obtaining their help in managing them across the region with the added benefit of reducing the financial burden on the council and its CCOs.

4. Action plan

The policy action plan sets out the range of tasks and actions that we will carry out to implement the vision and objectives of the weed management policy. The action plan does not directly address issues relating to specific changes to current operational approaches. The operational review will inform a subsequent implementation plan which will outline recommended new approaches to weed management.

The actions have been grouped into six categories, as follows.

- 1. Planning, policy and regulation**
- 2. Operations**
- 3. Identification and mapping**
- 4. Governance, monitoring, research and reporting**
- 5. Advocacy and education**
- 6. Funding**

Action 1. Planning, policy and regulation

- 1a incorporate the vision and objectives of the weed management policy into the Unitary Plan, the review of the RPMS, and other relevant Auckland Council or CCOs plans, policies and strategies as they are developed or reviewed by providing appropriate input during the consultation phase
- 1b explore incentives and regulation within the Unitary Plan to manage and prevent weeds on privately owned land
- 1c during consent processing, encourage the use of appropriate species for amenity planting, street trees and restoration plantings on public and private land (e.g. practice notes for planners, approved species lists)
- 1d prepare and promote a 'weed watch' list which contains plant species not recommended to be planted
- 1e remove impediments to weed control on public and private land, including the need for resource consents to remove tree species identified as weeds by Auckland Council, but not necessarily listed as pest plants within the RPMS, no matter how large or where they are located
- 1f explore rationalisation of rules regarding pest plants, as defined by the RPMS or successor documents, listed in the Auckland District Plan 2010 or Unitary Plan as scheduled trees
- 1g work with our CCOs, Crown entities and other relevant organisations to ensure compliance with the weed management policy (e.g. statements of intent, memoranda of understanding and service level agreements).

Action 2. Operations

2a undertake an operational review to:

- catalogue existing weed management approaches
- clearly document costs, benefits and risks of existing weed management approaches
- identify alternative approaches and their implications, including costs and changes to levels of service in accordance with the objectives of this policy
- consider opportunities to change levels of service where plants are not causing, or have the potential to cause, adverse effects as defined by the policy
- enable the development of a clear policy implementation plan which will become part of all relevant contract management procedures

2b develop and maintain best practice guidelines for weed management and vegetation control

2c assist local boards in setting levels of service for weed management across local parks and open spaces which align with the vision and objectives of the weed management policy by providing relevant technical assistance to inform decision-making

2d enable the development of a regional level of service which Auckland Council's CCOs can incorporate into their statutorily required statements of intent

2e include all weed management policy objectives within weed management and/or vegetation control contracts by reviewing and amending contracts where appropriate. This will include incorporating best practice methods into all weed management and/or vegetation control documents and contracts

2f effectively manage the council's contractors to ensure adherence with approved best practice methods by making appropriate amendments to auditing specifications and procedures

2g develop an implementation plan based on the findings of the operational review.

Action 3. Identification and mapping

3a locate populations of Total Control Pest Plants and any new weed species incursions across the region, with the objective of eradication

3b collate and use existing significant ecological area information we hold to prioritise weed management across the region:

- to identify areas that require more intensive weed management to protect infrastructure, assets or the natural environment to enable appropriately targeted and cost-effective prioritisation of investment
- for sites of high ecological value, develop park-specific weed management plans, including the identification and mapping of weed infestations.

Action 4. Governance, monitoring, research and reporting

- 4a form a governance group which will oversee the implementation and delivery of the Weed Management Policy. This group will comprise of representatives from the governing body, local boards, the council, key staff, mana whenua and, potentially, relevant external parties to ensure robust decision-making which takes account of both community and technical considerations. Composition of the governance group and its exact functions will be determined by the governing body. The governance group will meet at least twice annually and will audit the performance of both the weed management policy and all relevant operational programmes
- 4b form a best practice reference group, which will report to the governing body and the governance group to ensure that the weed management policy and all operational programmes maintain international best practice. The best practice reference group will comprise senior technical staff from the council and its CCOs, relevant external parties and independent national and/or international experts. This group will meet periodically to recommend improvements to procedures and will maintain a presence on the Auckland Council website. Group members will be expected to keep up to date with relevant research and trends in weed management
- 4c liaise with and provide weed management information to the Research, Investigations and Monitoring Unit so that the council's published State of the Environment reporting can include data on the council's weed control methods, types and volumes of herbicides used and areas being managed
- 4d collaborate and undertake research on potential and actual weed species and weed management methods, including biological control, with the council's biosecurity staff, Landcare Research, private sector weed management practitioners and any other relevant parties
- 4e disseminate information on research and best practice to council staff, CCOs and contractors, relevant external organisations and stakeholders and the general public
- 4f access government funding for research where possible
- 4g together with our CCOs, trial alternative methods of weed management and, where successful, promote them internally and externally.

Action 5. Advocacy and education

- 5a support and/or work with volunteer groups to establish weeding and planting programmes to reduce weeds and weed habitat on public land
- 5b develop initiatives around educating mana whenua and the public on how to eliminate weeds and prevent weeds establishing or re-establishing on their land, and provide information that encourages the planting of appropriate non-weedy, preferably native, plant species
- 5c publicise the council's and its CCOs' weed management rationale and educate mana whenua and the public on the relative threats that weeds pose to change public perceptions and expected levels of service (e.g. long grass on roadsides may look messy but in some situations it may be the most environmentally sustainable and cost-effective way to manage that environment)
- 5d encourage collaboration between existing weed control programmes and initiatives across Auckland to prevent and control weeds, improve ecological health and increase community participation in weed management operations
- 5e assist local boards in advocating, partnering and supporting community initiatives and education, including mana whenua
- 5f promote exemplary weed management on private and public land (e.g. through well-publicised environmental sustainability awards).

Action 6. Funding

- 6a ensure that we provide appropriate budget and resourcing for us and our CCOs to implement this policy successfully
- 6b provide funding and/or technical support for weed control by mana whenua, community groups, other relevant organisations and the public
- 6c ensure that all recipients of council funding for weed management programmes adhere to council-approved best practice methods.

Glossary

Term	Definition	Source
Agrichemical	Any substance, whether inorganic or organic, man-made or natural occurring, modified or in its original state, that is used in any agriculture, horticulture or related activity, to eradicate, modify or control flora and fauna.	New Zealand Standard 8409:2004, Appendix A.
Best Practice	A 'best practice' is a method or technique that has consistently shown results superior to those achieved with other means, and that is used as a benchmark. In addition, a 'best' practice can evolve to become better as improvements are discovered.	Wikipedia 16 May 2013 Retrieved from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Best_practice
Containment Pest Plant	Refers to pest plants that landowners/occupiers are required to treat throughout or in defined areas of the region, or in boundary situations, as described in section 7 of the RPMS. Plants are to be treated by a recognised method, at intervals that ensure the pest plant is completely controlled or controlled to or from a stipulated distance from a property boundary.	Auckland Regional Pest Management Strategy 2007-2012
Health	In relation to human health, a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.	Auckland Regional Pest Management Strategy 2007-2012
Herbicide	An agrichemical that is specifically designed to kill or eradicate unwanted plants.	New Zealand Standard 8409:2004, Appendix A.
Kaitiakitanga	The exercise of guardianship by the tangata whenua of an area in accordance with tikanga Maori in relation to natural and physical resources; and includes the ethic of stewardship.	Resource Management Act 1991
National Pest Plant Accord (NPPA)	The NPPA is a cooperative agreement between the Nursery and Garden Industry Association, regional councils and government departments with biosecurity responsibilities. All plants on the NPPA are unwanted organisms under the Biosecurity Act 1993. These plants cannot be sold, propagated or distributed in New Zealand.	National Pest Plant Accord 2012
Naturalise	Introduced plants that form self-sustaining populations outside cultivation, either through the production of viable seed or by vegetative reproduction.	Auckland Regional Pest Management Strategy 2007-2012
Parks and open spaces	For the purposes of this policy, parks and open spaces include: parks and reserves, cemeteries, road corridors, public transport facilities, public walkways, civic spaces, riparian margins, wetlands, beaches, volcanic landscapes, as well as areas of wilderness and native forest owned or administered by Auckland Council or its CCOs.	
Pest	An organism specified as a pest in a pest management plan.	Biosecurity Act 1993

Pest Plant	Introduced plants subject to control or restrictions under the RPMS. Includes Total Control Pest Plants, Containment Pest Plants, and Surveillance Pest Plants. Can also refer to species listed in the NPPA.	Auckland Regional Pest Management Strategy 2007-2012
Plant	Any grass, tree, shrub, flower, nursery stock, culture, vegetable, or other vegetation, and also includes the fruit, seed, spore, portion or product of any plant. Includes all aquatic plants. Note that algae and lichens are not considered plants for the purposes of this policy but the use of agrichemicals for their management shall be guided by the principles of this policy.	Auckland Regional Pest Management Strategy 2007-2012
Surveillance Pest Plant	Refers to pest plants for which there is no requirement prescribing control of field infestations, but for which the sale, propagation, distribution and exhibition has been prohibited, in order to arrest the further spread of these plants by humans, as described in section 8 of the RPMS.	Auckland Regional Pest Management Strategy 2007-2012
Total Control Pest Plant	Pest plants that are of limited distribution or density within the Auckland region, or defined areas of the region, and are considered to be of high potential threat to the region, for which Auckland Council and its CCOs shall assume responsibility for funding and implementing appropriate management programmes. The aim is to eradicate these plants.	Auckland Regional Pest Management Strategy 2007-2012
Weed	For the purposes of this policy, a weed is defined as any plant growing where it is not wanted and which has an adverse effect as defined within the policy. Therefore, whether a particular plant species (other than those identified as pests in the RPMS) is considered a weed is site and/or context-specific.	