

Auckland Council: Regional Pest Management Plan Deliberative Forum

Panel recommendations report to Policy and Planning Committee

August 2026

Background:

Three sessions:

1. Workshop 1 – 25 July – Fickling Centre
2. Catch Up Session – 06 August - Online
3. Workshop 2 - - 15 August - Fickling Centre
4. Workshop 3 – 22 August – Fickling Centre

40 participants were randomly selected by People for Information, using a sortition method to represent the diverse Auckland communities. Of those 1 elected not to proceed, 2 were not able to attend Workshop 1 due to family emergency and an injury but did attend a catch up session between Workshop 1 and 2, 4 were absent on Workshop 3 due to a bereavement and illness.

The Remit

The remit was presented to the participants in the welcome pack and in Workshop 1:

“What are the community priorities with regards to conservation and nuisance caused by pest plants and how should the available regulatory options give effect to those priorities in a fair and reasonable way?”

Forum Overview

Session 1.

Introduction of Richard Hills explanation of remit from committee point of view

What Auckland Council is and the role of the committee. Introduction of RPMP and the importance of this work.

Explanation of why we are doing the deliberative forum and the differences of this approach vs the traditional approach. Also, explanation of the rules of how it all works.

Icebreaker activities.

Discussion around setting group rule agreements with ideas of what was acceptable to the group. Prioritisation of rules.

Presentation by Margaret Stanley explaining what pest management is and the roles of conservation and weed management. The summary of the science and theory and

explanation of pest infestation curve, different types of pest plant control (Eradication, control, prevention and when they might use each one). Cost differences of each approach.

Imogen gave her presentation – Overview of role of Auckland Council. RPMP and operational plan. Regulatory instruments, community relationships, conservation vs nuisance. Large stakeholders NZ Rail NZTA.

Lunch

What is usually spent on conservation and weed management, how it was raised and who gets to spend it.

Farmers spoke about their land and what the cost of weed management with the land of their size how difficult it was to manage weeds.

Session 2

Action groups who presented to the group with brief history of their groups and key activities, aspirations and obstacles.

Action group split and more in-depth discussions had with each group.

Break out groups with different cases to discuss. Budget weighing machine to see how budget is spent.

Activity to establish vision, values and criteria for success. Pick of a card “ what does success look like to us”.

Panel Recommendations

Recommendation 1 Group 1

Title	Community education
Description	Council will work collaboratively with community groups across the Auckland region to build awareness and increase knowledge of weed identification and management. Partnering with community networks will help extend the reach of education and engagement activities, ensuring information is accessible to as many people and diverse communities as possible.
Rationale	Educating communities about weed identification and appropriate removal methods is an important component of building awareness and encouraging community participation. Providing accessible information empowers individuals and community groups to recognise priority weeds, understand the actions they can take, and contributes to successfully managing pest weeds long term. This approach supports a coordinated, community-wide response and helps build shared responsibility for protecting local environments.
Evidence	Success has been communicated via community action groups, the range of success is dependent on effort and community involvement and commitment. The more education on weed identification and appropriate removal methods is critical to building awareness, increasing participation, and supporting successful weed management outcomes. Providing accessible, practical information enables individuals and community groups to accurately identify priority weeds, understand appropriate management actions, and confidently contribute to their control. By spreading information or knowledge across diverse communities, this approach supports consistent and coordinated action, strengthens shared responsibility, and increases the likelihood of sustained weed management outcomes across the local environment.

Recommendation 2

Title	Shared Responsibility between government agencies
Description	-Apply good Neighbour role - Shared costs - Communication between groups -Limited Double Dipping - Community Action Group - Consider Land Maintenance with other projects- road closure, rail closure - Education
Rationale	Not one agency bares the full cost
Evidence	Problem shared, problem halved

Recommendation 3

Title	Community Involvement Integration Framework
Description	Integrate community group and council together, through a system that is facilitated by establishing a facilitating working group who can hold both sides accountable and share responsibilities.
Rationale	The responsibility sits with someone, building trust, consistency, and transparency between the council and community groups, resulting in better outcomes (e.g. KPI's, visual improvements, optics).
Timeframe	The system is an ongoing process, with regular meetings to review progress and ensure every side is meeting their obligations (both morally and legally)
Evidence	A formal common platform helps provide a data system for both the council and community. Actions groups who visited brought up the disconnect between them and the council.

Recommendation 4

Title	Council to prioritize the most heavily weed infested 1% of properties and that will make the biggest difference.
Description	● Use Current Technology, eg Satellite to identify heavily infested properties ● Prioritize weed list define most economic and environmental dangerous weeds. ● Differentiate property locations and property types. ● Define areas to tackle, eg -urban location with heavy infestations. ● Ignore Means testing – too hard, too costly, too difficult for council . ● Define most infested property type. ● Already paying targeted rate.
Rationale	● Focus outcomes which will be actionable by council. ● Prioritization focuses efforts, resources, more controllable.
Evidence	● Technology already available to council. ● Prioritizing weeds ● Properties already defined in General Rate, Targeted rates classification.

Recommendation 5

Title	Penalties for Enforcement and Non-Compliance
Description	Auckland Council should adopt a risk and responsibility-based approach to Pest-Plant management; Landowners, developers and government agencies should be responsible for managing pest plants on land they own or control, with monitoring and escalation consequences for ongoing non compliance. Council should prioritise cost recovery from those responsible for creating or allowing Pest-Plant risks, while rates and public funding should focus on regional conservation and areas where there is a clear public benefit. This would improve accountability and ensure the costs are borne by those responsible rather than ratepayers generally. This should be via enforcement of the non-compliant, via rates or if land banking, enforce through the Building consent or Resource consent formality.
Rationale	Establishes fair and consistent penalties for non-compliance. Clear outlines of a landowners responsibilities and accountability. Everyone is treated the same.
Evidence	Penalties and deterrents work

Recommendation 6

Title	Council and landowner working collaboratively together to protect endangered ecosystem.
Description	Everyone, ongoing and define the ecosystem
Rationale	If we dont look after ecosystems we will loose them in our region, specialist training required for council staff. Community Groups felt unsupported by council and contractors as well.
Evidence	Need more information

