

Chapter 14: Use of the Rural Environment

Draft Marlborough Regional Policy Statement Provisions

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Introduction

Marlborough's rural environments can be broadly grouped as the Rai and Pelorus catchments, the Wairau Plain, the southern valleys of the Wairau Plain, the Wairau Valley, the Awatere Valley and the Ward/Flaxbourne areas, high country areas and rural areas within the coastal environment, including in the Marlborough Sounds and along the south Marlborough coast.

The Pelorus and Rai areas have steep to moderately steep hill country. The upper Pelorus River catchment comprises land that is mostly indigenous forest while in the lower catchments there is a more modified environment of exotic forestry, scrub and pasture. A substantial number of Marlborough's dairy farms are based within the Pelorus and Rai catchments.

The Wairau Plain around Blenheim is, with its flat land and alluvial soils, the most intensively developed rural area of Marlborough. The environment here is highly modified being the subject of an extensive flood management and drainage system, which benefits some 10,000 hectares of productive land. Favoured by mild climatic conditions, close to centres of population and water resources, a wide range of land uses have developed on the Wairau Plain including viticulture and horticulture, tourist facilities and rural industrial activities, traditional livestock farming and the farming of crops and other intensive farming enterprises. There are also many people living in the Wairau Plain on small rural lifestyle blocks. Within this environment are the airports of Blenheim and Omaka servicing the District nationally and regionally.

The Southern Valleys of the Wairau Plain are a mix of valley floors and ridgelines separating the Omaka, Benmorven and Brancott valleys. The valleys generally comprise smaller land parcels related to lifestyle blocks but contain viticulture, some boutique wineries, other crops, and homestays.

The Wairau Valley surrounds the Wairau Plain and comprises flat land extending up the Wairau Valley and into valleys bordering the Plain – Taylor, Tuamarina, Kaituna, Onamalutu, Waihopai, Branch and Leatham. A significant river system, the Wairau River, runs through the valley into which the tributaries of the Waihopai, Branch, Tuamarina and Onamalutu drain. Land use is predominantly pastoral but forestry is evident on the hills on both sides of the valley and towards the top of the valley there are extensive areas of conservation estate as well as on the Richmond Range.

Further south, the Awatere Valley and Ward areas have historically had a strong pastoral farming focus. However, in more recent times this area has been distinguished by contrasting land use pressures. On the one hand, these areas are vast and relatively isolated from major centres of population, with the dominant and traditional land use being pastoral farming, producing wool and meat. On the other hand, there are some areas where there has been a significant conversion of land from pasture to viticulture and other horticultural activities. There have also been pressures for rural lifestyle living.

In Marlborough's high country, the area above 1000 metres, extensive pastoralism, historically was and still is the predominant land use activity. The relative isolation and topographical and climatic limitations of hill country areas means that pastoralism is likely to remain the major land use activity well into the future.

There are significant parts of Marlborough's rural environments that lie within the coastal environment. The most extensive of these areas is in the Marlborough Sounds. While much of this land area is in public ownership and is managed by the Department of Conservation, there are also significant areas in private ownership. These areas in private ownership were extensively modified from the original vegetation cover to allow for pastoral farming and exotic forestry. Today many farms have been left to revert to indigenous forest and bush cover. Mixed in with the areas of indigenous vegetation, farming and forestry are areas of residential development, reflecting a desire of people to live or holiday in the Marlborough Sounds.

A narrower strip of rural land within the coastal environment also exists along the south Marlborough coast. The values and nature of this environment and the activities undertaken in it are markedly different to that of the Marlborough Sounds. There is less indigenous vegetation present, less land in public ownership, less residential development (except for that around Rarangi) while the activities undertaken are essentially the same as those found the Awatere and Ward areas.

Issue 14A - Safeguarding the potential of Marlborough's rural resources for primary production

The varied nature of Marlborough's physical environment has led to a wide range of land uses, including primary production activities such as agriculture, viticulture, horticulture and forestry, and non-primary production activities including residential, commercial and industrial development. Marlborough's towns, roads and other infrastructure are also important occupiers of the land resource. It is important to recognise therefore, that as a community there is a reliance on the use and development of rural resources for social, cultural and economic wellbeing.

Chapter 4: Use of Natural and Physical Resources recognises the significance of this point and establishes a high level framework for the provisions that follow in this chapter. Notably the approach in Chapter 4 sets up a framework that:

- Recognises the rights of resource users by only intervening in the use of land to protect the environment and wider public interests in the environment;
- Enables sustainable use of natural resources in the Marlborough environment; and
- Maintains and enhances the quality of natural resources.

Given this, the first issue identified in Chapter 14 concerns the ability of primary production activities to be able to operate, thereby continuing to contribute to the wider economic wellbeing of Marlborough. Within this however, it is also important to acknowledge that activities in rural environments do have the potential to affect the quality of rural resources and can also affect interactions between different parts of the community. These types of issues can create tensions within the community. The viability and versatility of the rural resource for primary production activities can be adversely affected by non-rural activities, land fragmentation and the proximity of sensitive receiving environments, such as those found in adjacent towns.

Land use, subdivision and development activities in rural environments can have adverse effects on a range of matters including indigenous biodiversity, landscape values, water quality and availability, soil quality, natural hazards, transportation etc. Other chapters of the Marlborough Regional Policy Statement/Resource Management Plan (RPS/RMP) assist in responding to effects on these matters so given the integrated nature of this document, it is important these other chapters are considered in helping to inform the management framework for use of Marlborough's rural environment. This includes rural environments that are also within the coastal environment.

Objective 14.1 - Rural environments are maintained as a resource for primary production activities enabling these activities to continue contributing to economic wellbeing, whilst ensuring the adverse effects of these activities are appropriately managed.

Marlborough benefits from rural environments that have a range of attributes necessary for primary productive rural activities including a variety of soils, water resources and landscapes that are able to sustain a diverse range of economic activities. A productive rural environment is important to the economic health of the district, and this environment needs to be recognised as a productive resource. Primary production activities are those activities that use rural resources for economic gain and which cannot be carried out easily or appropriately in an urban setting. They include soil-based production and some processing of primary products.

At the same time as providing an enabling approach it is important that primary production activities are undertaken in a sustainable manner in order to achieve the purpose of the Resource Management Act (RMA). The objective therefore also seeks to ensure there are appropriate management regimes in place to deal with adverse effects that may result from primary production activities in rural environments.

Policy 14.1.1 – Enable the efficient use and development of rural environments for primary production.

There is currently a wide range of primary productive land uses in Marlborough’s rural environments from viticulture through to extensive forestry and pastoral farming, dairy farming and cropping. This policy provides for those uses to continue to occur, which will assist in achieving Objective 14.1, although the management regime in the RPS/RMP will include controls to manage adverse effects. At times there may be a change in land use or management practices for primary production to enhance the efficient use of land resources and the RPS/RMP does not intend to unduly curtail any opportunity for this to occur. However, the management framework for rural environments, which includes rural areas within the Marlborough Sounds and elsewhere in Marlborough, does include standards to maintain environmental quality, character and amenity values.

Policy 14.1.2 – Parcel size in rural environments will be of a size that ensures adequate choice for primary production and which avoids the fragmentation of land for primary productive use.

Subdivision can both facilitate and constrain development, depending on its location and density. Subdivision in rural environments can have adverse effects on the ability to use rural land efficiently for productive purposes. For example, small lots for residential purposes remove land from production and can constrain rural activities through being sensitive to the effects of those activities. Rural land is a finite resource that can be vulnerable to small scale changes that cumulatively, have a significant effect on the ability of land to be used efficiently for primary production and other rural activities. The focus of this policy therefore is to ensure that the rural resource does not become so fragmented through the subdivision of land that its use for primary production is diminished.

Policy 14.1.3 – Activities and buildings in rural environments should be linked to land based primary production of Marlborough’s rural resources and require a rural location.

Policy 14.1.3 is directed at ensuring that the potential of rural environments for primary production options is not compromised by activities and/or buildings that do not need to be located within, or do not have an association with, rural environments, or which do not rely on the use of rural resources. While a wide range of activities are provided for within rural environments, their establishment will not be allowed to occur in a manner that threatens the sustainable and economic use of rural environments. The safeguarding of rural environments for activities that genuinely require a rural location will ensure that opportunities remain available for accommodating these activities.

Policy 14.1.4 – Manage primary production activities to ensure they are sustainably carried out through the implementation of policies and methods (including rules establishing performance standards for permitted activities) to address potential adverse effects on:

- (a) The life supporting capacity of soils, water, air and ecosystems;
- (b) Natural character of rivers, wetlands and lakes;
- (c) Water quality and water availability;
- (d) Areas with landscape significance;
- (e) Areas with significant indigenous vegetation and significant habitats of indigenous fauna;
- (f) The values of the coastal environment as set out in Issue 13A of Chapter 13 Use of the Coastal Environment; or
- (g) The safe and efficient operation of the land transport network and Marlborough’s airports.

Although it is important that there is an enabling approach to primary production this does need to be tempered with ensuring that use of rural resources is undertaken in a sustainable manner to address any potential adverse effects on the matters in (a) to (g). The other chapters of the RPS/RMP inform how the adverse effects are to be addressed, especially those in Chapter 5: Allocation of Public Resources, Chapter 6: Natural Character, Chapter 7: Landscape, Chapter 8: Indigenous Biodiversity, Chapter 13: Use of the Coastal Environment, Chapter 15: Resource Quality and Chapter 17: Transportation. For primary production activities within the coastal environment the provisions of Chapter 13: Use of the Coastal Environment will also be of relevance.

Policy 14.1.5 – Recognise that the Southern Valleys and the Redwood Pass are water short areas and that subdivision and residential activity in these area needs to be assessed to determine the amount of water required and how water is to be sourced for domestic or stock water supply

There are some areas within the rural environment where there is a known issue with the availability of water for domestic or stock water supply. The two identified areas in the policy have historically been acknowledged as water short areas. Applications for subdivision or for residential activity (for second dwellings or seasonal worker accommodation) will need to be assessed through a discretionary activity consent to determine the amount of water required to service the subdivision or residential activity and importantly where the water is to be sourced from.

Policy 14.1.6 – Recognise that primary production activities in rural environments may result in effects, including noise, dust, smell and traffic generation, but that these will require mitigation where they have a significant adverse effect on the environment.

The inherent nature of land based primary production activities, means that intermittently high noise levels will be produced when agricultural machinery is being used, stock is being moved or held, or crop protection mechanisms are activated. These activities may also result in increased odour and dust levels, in some cases reduced air quality and at times increases in traffic generation. This policy acknowledges this but also requires that these uses will need to mitigate effects where they will have significant effects on the environment. This will see the use of performance standards for permitted activities to ensure that primary production activities are undertaken in a sustainable manner.

Policy 14.1.7 – Ensure that the adverse effects of land disturbance associated with primary production activities or through the creation of access tracks on registered drinking water supplies are avoided, remedied or mitigated.

Land disturbance activities are often a significant component of primary production activities. In some cases there is the potential for land disturbance activities to affect registered drinking water supplies through sedimentation of surface water for example. Therefore there will be a requirement through permitted activity standards for land disturbance activities, including for the creation of access tracks, for a setback or buffer from the registered drinking water supply to protect that supply. Where resource consent is needed for the land disturbance activity, decision makers can consider how the effects on registered drinking water supplies can be avoided, remedied or mitigated through consent conditions.

Policy 14.1.8 – Some management activities associated with primary production produce effects that may adversely affect the environment (including human health) and will need resource consent to enable the Council to monitor effects.

Some machines and devices used in primary production activities have the potential to generate noise levels, which can create a nuisance to residential activities in the rural area. Frost fans are an example of equipment used by primary producers to protect crops from damage. These devices can generate significant off-site noise emissions affecting human health and can conflict with the typically quiet rural environment at night time and early morning. It is important that limits are placed on the establishment and operation of these devices to ensure the noise levels do not result in unreasonable or unnecessary noise, but not to an extent that diminishes the effectiveness of these devices in serving the purpose for which they are designed.

Policy 14.1.9 – Manage the effects of primary production activities to ensure the environmental qualities and amenity values in adjoining residential zones are not unreasonably degraded, bearing in mind their location adjacent to a primary production environment.

Activities within rural environments can generate effects that are unacceptable in residential environments. These effects include noise, smell, dust, and the utilitarian appearance of some rural buildings compared to those within residential environments. Therefore, effects will be controlled at the interface between rural and residential zones to minimise potential conflicts and protect amenity. Requirements for new or expanding activities in rural environments near a zone boundary may include more effective visual screening, setbacks of dense planting and buildings, and more restrictive noise levels than standards for rural environments would generally require.

Objective 14.2 - The sustainability of Marlborough's rural economy is not adversely affected by the spread or introduction of pests.

All of Marlborough's primary producing industries are potentially vulnerable to incursions or infestations by pests. While there has been a long history of pest management in Marlborough in traditional farming sectors, pest management has not been so apparent for other primary producing activities. Pests could also have an impact on the tourism industry: for example, the spread of didymo into Marlborough's waterways could see a reduction in recreational opportunities. For Marlborough's economy to continue to be successful and thrive it is important that appropriate responses are in place to manage incursions or the spread of pests.

Policy 14.2.1 – The Council will support any national response to an incursion of a pest(s) where this occurs, which has the potential to reach Marlborough, or is within Marlborough, and/or has the potential to affect Marlborough's primary production sector.

Marlborough is vulnerable to incursions from pests from overseas and from around New Zealand. There are differing roles from central government down through local government to individual landowners for managing the spread of pests. The Ministry for Primary Industries has the main responsibility for dealing with incursions of unwanted organisms or pests entering New Zealand at its borders. The Council's role to date has been to support the Ministry in trying to contain these incursions where they do occur, including inspections and providing information and advice to the public. At times the Ministry for Primary Industries may implement national pest management strategies to deal with incursions of unwanted organisms, which the Council may help to implement at a local level.

Policy 14.2.2 - A strategic approach to the containment/eradication of pests that impact on Marlborough's primary production sector in rural environments will be developed and maintained.

The wide range of pest species present in Marlborough, their location, characteristics and spread, means a range of responses to deal with them is necessary. This includes through rules in the Council's regional pest management plan, national pest management strategies, provision of information and advice to landowners, consent holders and the public, biological and physical control, and monitoring and surveillance. An important aspect in this is acknowledging that landowners (including statutory organisations) have a significant responsibility for controlling and managing pest animals and plants on their land.

Often there are not the resources, either in terms of technology or finances to effectively manage pests with physical control methods across the entire district. The most effective and efficient approach will be used to target pests where containment or eradication are possible. This approach will rely on strong partnerships with landowners.

Policy 14.2.3 – Raising community awareness that everyone in the community has responsibilities in pest management, particularly land occupiers.

The Council recognises the advantages of a strong advisory and educational role in pest management and therefore takes a very active role in providing information and advice on the best methods for controlling plant and animal pests. This role relates to providing advice, promoting effective control action and creating a greater understanding and acceptance by land occupiers of the responsibilities of pest management. Raising awareness also extends to recreationalists such as fishermen who need to make sure they do not transport pests from one river to another or from region to region.

Policy 14.2.4 – Recognise subdivision of land and more intensive development of rural areas increases the potential for the spread of pests and the Council will use a range of methods to reduce the risk of spread including:

- (a) Where resource consent is needed for the subdivision or development, consideration will be given to measures to reduce the risk of spread;**
- (b) Undertake greater monitoring and surveillance of pests within areas where pests are present;**
- (c) Be proactive in coordinating the various groups involved with earth moving equipment to develop protocols and practices to assist with the reduction in the spread of plant pests;**
- (d) Provide information for new rural landowners and people subdividing rural property on their responsibilities in pest management including whether landowners have obligations for their property under regional or national pest management plans.**

With an increased desire for people to live in rural areas and development activities that involve earth moving equipment, there is a risk of pests being spread from property to property. The matters in (a) to (c) will help to address the risk from the spread of pests occurring in conjunction with the requirements of the Regional Pest Management Plan for Marlborough or a national pest strategy if one is in place.

Objective 14.3 – Activities that are not primary production activities are appropriate to be located within rural environments.

Primary production activities are those activities that use rural resources for economic gain and which cannot be easily or appropriately carried out in urban environments. The continued use of rural environments in Marlborough for primary productive uses and other land and soil resource dependent rural-based activities is important to the economic health and well-being of Marlborough. The use of rural environments for activities that are more appropriately located elsewhere reduces the availability of the resource and can increase pressure on existing activities through reverse sensitivity effects. The objective therefore seeks to ensure that the rural resource does not become so fragmented by activities not requiring a rural location that its attraction for legitimate based rural uses requiring a rural setting is diminished. There are some instances however, where activities that are not primary production activities can be located within rural environments and subsequently policy sets out the circumstances when this is considered appropriate.

Policy 14.3.1 – Enable through permitted activity standards small scale and/or low intensity activities not relying on the primary production potential of Marlborough’s rural environments where the adverse effects on the environment are minor and the activity is one of the following:

- (a) Outdoor recreation; or**
- (b) Events of a limited duration.**

There are some activities that while not relying on the primary production potential of rural resources are nonetheless closely linked with the rural environment. This includes outdoor recreation which frequently takes place in rural environments, whether this is organised through clubs etc or is informal recreation carried out by individuals. Additionally from time to time there are events of a limited duration that can occur within rural environments. Some flexibility is needed for the operation of these activities which provide for an important element in the economic and social wellbeing of the community. In both cases permitted activity standards will establish a framework to enable these activities to occur.

Policy 14.3.2 – Where an activity is not a primary production activity and is not otherwise provided for as a permitted activity then a resource consent will be required and the following matters must be determined by decision makers in assessing the impacts on primary production before any assessment of other effects is undertaken:

- (a) **The extent to which the activity is related to primary production activities occurring at the site;**
- (b) **The functional need for the activity to be located within a rural zone and why it is not more appropriately located within another zone;**
- (c) **Whether the proposed activity will result in a loss of land with primary production potential and the extent of this loss when considered in combination with other non-rural based activities;**
- (d) **The extent to which the proposed activity supports primary production activities including the processing of agricultural, viticultural or horticultural produce.**

Because rural environments can be vulnerable to small scale change that, cumulatively, can have a significant effect on their efficient use for rural production and other lawfully established rural activities, it is important that activities which are not primary production activities or are not otherwise provided for, are assessed through the resource consent process. This will allow an assessment and determination of whether there will be significant effects on the efficient use of rural land for primary productive purposes. Policy 14.3.2 requires that this assessment needs to be completed prior to a consideration of other effects that may arise from the proposed activity, such as on amenity, natural character, landscape, transportation, etc. The reason for this is that an activity requiring consent under this policy potentially challenges the reason for why there is a specific management framework for rural environments. This matter is critical to the determination of whether Objective 14.3 can be achieved or not.

Issue 14B – Inappropriate subdivision, land use and development can lead to the degradation of rural character and amenity values, as well as increased conflict with existing activities (reverse sensitivity).

Section 7 of the RMA requires that in managing the use, development and protection of natural and physical resources, particular regard shall be had to “*the maintenance and enhancement of amenity values*” [section 7(c)] and to “*the maintenance and enhancement of the quality of the environment*” [section 7(f)]. Amenity values are defined in the RMA as “*those natural or physical qualities and characteristics of an area that contribute to people’s appreciation of its pleasantness, aesthetic coherence, and cultural and recreational attributes*”. As in the coastal environment, the qualities and characteristics of Marlborough’s rural environments are a fundamental part of our quality of life. The amenity of these rural environments contributes to how people and communities provide for their social, economic and cultural wellbeing.

The rural environment has particular characteristics and amenity values that are quite distinct from urban areas. There are common perceptions, which many people share about the character of rural environments, including privacy, rural outlook, spaciousness, ease of access, clean air and, most of the time, quietness. Being able to see, hear and smell animals and a predominance of vegetation cover with dominant land uses associated with primary production (agriculture, viticulture, horticulture, forestry, pastoralism) are also characteristic of rural areas.

Rural character can also mean different things to different people, for example:

- People who live in the rural area as an alternative to living in a town may value a sense of open space, panoramic views and their perception of a rural outlook.
- People carrying out farming activities may share some of these values. They also perceive the rural area as a business area and expect to be able to carry out existing activities with effects associated with day-to-day activity such as the smell of crops, noise from frost fans or tractors, harvesting activities, traffic movement, etc. They also expect to be able to adopt new technology and practices and to diversify activities as markets change.

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- Some people value the rural area as a place to locate activities that need large areas of space. These people may value large areas of land and distance from neighbours.

Conflicts can be created by the combination of different activities, effects and perceptions of the character of the rural area. These conflicts are sometimes referred to as reverse sensitivity conflicts.

Objective 14.4 – Rural character and amenity values are maintained and enhanced and reverse sensitivity effects are avoided.

While other objectives in this chapter and in Chapter 4: Use of Natural and Physical Resources provide an enabling framework for primary production activities to occur, this must be within a context of achieving the purpose of the RMA. Objective 14.4 therefore, helps to achieve sections 7(c) and (f) of the RMA on amenity values and quality of the environment respectively, in terms of achieving sustainable management.

Policy 14.4.1 – Subdivision, use and development of Marlborough’s rural environments should be of a density, scale, intensity and location, which individually and cumulatively, recognises the following elements:

- (a) A lack of buildings and structures;
- (b) A very high ratio of open space in relation to areas covered by buildings;
- (c) Open space areas in pasture, trees, vineyards, crops or indigenous vegetation;
- (d) Areas with regenerating indigenous vegetation, particularly in the Marlborough Sounds;
- (e) Tracts of unmodified natural features, indigenous vegetation, streams, rivers and wetlands;
- (f) Farm animals and wildlife;
- (g) Noises, smells and sights of agriculture, viticulture, horticulture and forestry;
- (h) Post and wire fences, purpose-built farm buildings, and scattered dwellings;
- (i) Low population density;
- (j) The presence of Blenheim, Omaka and Koromiko airports;
- (k) Generally narrow carriageways within wide road reserves, often unsealed with open drains, low-speed geometry and low traffic volumes; and
- (l) A general absence of urban-scale and urban-type infrastructure such as roads with kerb and channel, footpaths, mown berms, street lights or advertising signs.

Rural environments are working and living environments. They provide much of the character and amenity values of the District as a whole. The character of rural environments needs to be recognised for its natural, social, cultural and economic values, as well as its role in enabling a range of lifestyles and activities. Subdivision or development by its density, scale or location has the potential, individually or cumulatively, to adversely affect the amenity values and rural character and this policy sets out the characteristics or elements of Marlborough’s rural environments that are to be recognised in the maintenance or enhancement of amenity values.

Policy 14.4.2 – Retain an open and spacious character in Marlborough’s rural environments, with a dominance of open space and plantings over buildings by ensuring that the scale and siting of development is such that:

- (a) It will not unreasonably detract from the privacy or outlook of neighbouring properties;**
- (b) Sites remain open and with a rural character as viewed from roads and other publicly accessible places; and**
- (c) The character and scale of buildings is compatible with existing development within the surrounding rural area.**

An important component of maintaining or enhancing amenity values is in relation to retaining an open and spacious character to such areas. Policy 14.4.2 identifies this as well as providing ways in which development can be sited to ensure these values are appropriately provided for.

Policy 14.4.3 – Ensure buildings are set back a sufficient distance from property boundaries and road frontages to:

- (a) Maintain privacy and outlook for people on adjoining allotments, including for existing houses on small allotments;**
- (b) Encourage a sense of distance between buildings and between buildings and road boundaries; and**
- (c) Maintain the pleasantness, coherence, openness and attractiveness of the site as viewed from the road and adjoining sites.**

In rural environments most houses and buildings tend to be set back greater distances from road boundaries than in urban areas. This positioning adds to the sense of space between buildings and the unrestricted views from roadsides. Policy 14.4.3 encourages a large setback from the road boundary to help maintain rural character and amenity values. It also helps to deal with reverse sensitivity issues in terms of mitigating effects of traffic noise, especially where development is to be located on major arterials or state highways.

Policy 14.4.4 – Ensure subdivision patterns and the location, size and dimensions of lots in rural areas:

- (a) Will not lead to a pattern of land uses, which will adversely affect rural character and/or amenity values; and**
- (b) Are of sufficient size for rural activities to predominate in rural areas.**

Control of subdivision is necessary to ensure rural environments can accommodate a wide range of rural activities and for these rural activities to be predominant in rural environments. This helps to support the elements of rural character described in Policy 14.4.1. The potential for subdivision patterns to influence subsequent land use patterns is an important consideration in determining the potential impacts on rural character and amenity.

Policy 14.4.5 – Noise limits have been established to provide for the protection of community health and welfare and which are consistent with the character and amenity of the Rural and Coastal Environment Zones.

The adverse effects of noise are an issue in rural environments where noise may impact on the health of people and communities and their enjoyment of the District. While there is always background noise, some noise can give rise to nuisance and even health problems through its character, duration, or time of occurrence. Rural environments contain a wide range of activities which result in levels of noise effects which may be contrary to the expectations of people more used to the amenity of urban areas. Traditional rural activities, such as late night and early morning use of machinery creating some noise are normally acceptable to people used to a rural environment, particularly where their livelihood is dependent on the land. However, to ensure that the character and amenity of rural areas is maintained, limits through permitted activity standards will be imposed.

Policy 14.4.6 – Mitigate nuisance effects on adjoining dwellings or adjoining properties caused by dust from earthworks or stockpiled material.

Marlborough's rural environments are exposed to wind, particularly north westerly winds and dust occurs from natural sources such as riverbeds or land. However, dust nuisance can be exacerbated by material blown from stockpiled material or extensive earthworks associated with subdivision or construction works. This policy addresses dust nuisance from activities in rural environments and through permitted activity standards requires steps to be taken to reduce potential dust nuisance, such as dampening down earth until it is consolidated, or covering and securing stockpiled material that can blow in the wind.

Policy 14.4.7 – Ensure significant adverse odour effects from rural activities are avoided or mitigated to protect lawfully established land uses.

The need to address adverse effects of odour comes from the presence of people in rural environments, whether they live, work or play within these environments. Rural activities that can potentially produce off-site odour effects include: the intensive farming of animals in buildings and associated treatment and/or disposal of collected effluent; the production of compost; and the construction of farm land fills and offal pits. The nature of farming activities means that odour effects can be transitory and also be weather and management dependent. Appropriate management, siting and design involves making use of currently available technology and best practice, which assist in avoiding and/or mitigating adverse effects.

Policy 14.4.8 – Avoid, remedy or mitigate adverse effects on the character and amenity of rural environments by controlling the number, size, location and nature of signs.

Signs are important tools for businesses to advertise their products and their location, and for people to obtain information. However, there is the possibility that signs may have adverse effects in rural areas as these areas are perceived as having an uncluttered appearance. This potentially makes rural areas susceptible to the potential adverse effects of signage dependent on the location, size or level of illumination of the sign and how these features conform to the characteristics of the surrounding environment and people's expectations. Controls will therefore be imposed on signage in the form of permitted activity standards which are appropriate for Marlborough's different rural environments. Where these standards are not met an application for resource consent will be required to allow for the necessity and appropriateness of the proposed sign to be assessed in terms of its impact on amenity values.

Policy 14.4.9 – Encourage the consolidation of information signs, by supporting the establishment of "welcome to" signs, and information laybys, at the entrance to Marlborough's larger towns, in order to reduce the effects of directional and commercial signs on visual amenity.

The establishment of information signs and laybys provide an important service to visitors and an opportunity for local businesses to notify their location and services. Therefore, encouraging the establishment of these strategic areas is considered an effective way of providing for signs and information, while protecting visual amenities of rural environments.

Policy 14.4.10 – Control the establishment of residential activity within rural environments as a means of avoiding conflict between rural and residential amenity expectations.

The development of pockets of residential development in rural areas can have an impact on the continued use of rural resources. The presence of residential activities in rural environments can make it very difficult for productive rural activities to continue to operate effectively and efficiently, to expand or to find new sites to establish. Therefore, the Council considers there is a need to control the extent of residential activity within rural environments to ensure these outcomes do not eventuate.

Policy 14.4.11 – The cumulative adverse effects of subdivision and/or development on rural character and amenity values are to be avoided.

Rural character is vulnerable to cumulative effects and can be lost through repeated subdivision and development, which significantly detract from the rural character and open space of the locality. As subdivision occurs, rural character becomes increasingly compromised due to changing land uses, particularly when residential activities become more prevalent. This can be particularly evident in areas already dominated by small allotments and non-rural land uses, where loss of open space, ribbon development, reduced setback distances and built features associated with urban living can be

characteristic. The cumulative effects of such development can be the urbanisation of rural areas and in terms of the policy are to be avoided.

Omaka Valley

Policy 14.4.12 – The Omaka Valley is characterised by the following:

- (a) Low broad ridges, parts of which have been identified as having high amenity value and are included in the mapped Wairau Dry Hills Landscape;**
- (b) Limited building on ridgelines;**
- (c) Open character due to a lack of tall vegetation within the valley;**
- (d) Meandering watercourse patterns and topographical variation in the upper valley;**
- (e) Viticulture is a dominant land use;**
- (f) With the exception of times around harvest of grapes there is generally a low volume traffic environment;**
- (g) Lack of through roads;**
- (h) There is a mix of land uses towards the lower valley where a more domesticated rural character is evident; and**
- (i) The roads located close to the broad ridges give a contained nature to the valley.**

The Omaka Valley has over time developed particular characteristics that are considered appropriate to be managed differently to the remainder of Marlborough's rural environments. This policy sets out the resource characteristics and values of this valley that separate it from other areas within Marlborough's rural environments. These characteristics and values are potentially under threat from inappropriate subdivision, use and development. To ensure that these threats do not adversely affect the characteristics and values identified, a specific management framework in addition to the general provisions for rural environments will also apply to the Omaka Valley.

Policy 14.4.13 – The Omaka Valley has been recognised as having specific amenity and rural character values which are to be maintained and enhanced as follows:

- (a) Enabling primary production activities as provided for in the underlying Rural Environment Zone;**
- (b) Requiring resource consent for commercial forestry to enable an assessment of this activity on the confined nature of the valleys in the overlay area;**
- (c) Including the ridgelines along the valleys within the Wairau Dry Hills Landscape;**
- (d) Avoiding development in the form of buildings on the ridgelines surrounding the valleys;**
- (e) Reducing the potential for 'industrialisation' within the overlay area through controls on the height and scale of buildings associated with primary production activities;**
- (f) Other than as provided for in Policy 14.3.1 and Policy 14.5.x, other activities not related to primary production in the overlay area are to be avoided;**
- (g) Maintaining a low volume traffic environment in order to maintain the peaceful and quiet environment within the overlay area; and**
- (h) Avoiding subdivision below 8 hectares on the valley floors or below 20 hectares on the slopes within the overlay area to help retain primary production options and retain a sense of openness within the Omaka Valley Overlay Area.**

Having identified the characteristics of the Omaka Valley in Policy 14.4.12, this policy sets out the ways in which the particular amenity and rural character values can be maintained and enhanced. This policy will in some cases be implemented through permitted activity standards that will restrict the height, location and scale of buildings.

An enabling approach to primary production activities that is consistent with the wider Rural Environment Zone is generally provided for as the Council does not wish to unnecessarily constrain the type of activity occurring. Two exceptions to this are the requirement for resource consent for commercial forestry to

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assess the impacts on areas with high amenity value within the overlay area and for dairy farming in order to protect water quality. The requirement for dairy farming is throughout the Rural Environment Zone and is not specific to the Omaka Valley.

A lower threshold for subdivision within the overlay area is provided for when compared with the subdivision provisions for the wider Rural Environment Zone. An 8 hectare threshold has been applied to those parts of the Omaka Valley that were in the Rural 3 Zone of the former Wairau/Awatere Resource Management Plan. This threshold reflected a desire to ensure the potential for land fragmentation, especially from non-productive uses, was avoided. The potential for land fragmentation also exists where rural living is proposed with land lost to dwellings, accessory buildings, access ways, disposal fields for wastewater etc. Rural character could begin to fray if residential lots are created sporadically within the overlay area and the policy seeks to avoid this occurring. Therefore a minimum allotment size of 8 hectares is provided for to help retain primary production options and to maintain rural character.

Maintaining a low volume traffic environment in order to maintain the peaceful and quiet environment of the Omaka Valley is somewhat challenging given that the predominant land use is viticulture, which attracts for a period through vintage, a considerable number of truck movements. There are no through roads within the valley but this in itself presents a challenge when considering land use activities at the head of the valley. The policy recognises generally there is a low traffic environment within the Omaka Valley and that this is to be maintained.

In terms of 14.4.13(f) it is important to enable activities that do not rely on the primary productive potential of rural resource but which are appropriate in rural environments. However, it is considered that other activities not covered by the policies referred to in (f), should be avoided in the overlay area. Such activities, which can include rural living, commercial or industrial activities, have an option of locating within the urban centres of Renwick and Blenheim, which are relatively close. Some limited provision has been made for rural living on larger lots on the periphery of Blenheim (Urban Residential 3 Zone). Commercial and industrial activities are more appropriately located in the relevant urban zones where there these activities are not related to primary production activities.

Wairau Plain

Policy 14.4.14 – The Wairau Plain is characterised by the following:

- (a) Highly productive land resource and the most intensively developed and farmed rural area in Marlborough;**
- (b) Extensive area of flat land available for primary production;**
- (c) Generally reliable water resources;**
- (d) Extensive floodplain and drainage network;**
- (e) Large, braided Wairau River and its tributaries, floodplain terraces, associated backswamp wetlands, streams, coastal swamp deposits and minor inland sand dunes;**
- (f) Ground-fed springs in the lower Plain;**
- (g) Viticulture is a dominant land use;**
- (h) Open character across the Plain;**
- (i) Encompasses Marlborough's main urban centre of Blenheim;**
- (j) Arterial roading network traversing the Plain; and**
- (k) Regional airport and New Zealand Defence Force airbase centrally located.**

The Wairau Plain has historically been zoned as a separate zone (the Rural 3 Zone in the former Wairau/Awatere Resource Management Plan) as it has characteristics that are distinct from the surrounding rural environments. It has a long history of intense rural production and continues to be a significant source of economic revenue for the District, mostly from primary producing activities. With its large area of flat land, proximity to the major urban centre of Blenheim, generally reliable water resources and rich alluvial soils, it is the most intensively developed and modified rural area in Marlborough. This is why this area continues to be singled out for additional management. Policy 14.4.15 therefore reflects the resource characteristics and values of the Wairau Plain.

Policy 14.4.15 – The Wairau Plain has been recognised as having particular amenity and rural character values which are to be maintained and enhanced as follows:

- (a) Enabling primary production activities as provided for in the underlying Rural Environment Zone;**
- (b) Avoiding subdivision below 8 hectares to help retain primary production options and retain a sense of openness within the Wairau Plain Overlay Area;**
- (c) Controlling residential activity, other than that associated with primary production, to avoid conflict between rural and residential amenity expectations;**
- (d) Managing the establishment of subdivision, use and development to avoid, remedy or mitigate effects on the safety, functioning and efficiency of the arterial road network;**
- (e) Other than as provided for in Policy 14.3.1 and Policy 14.5.x, other activities not related to primary production in the overlay area are to be avoided.**

The characteristics identified in Policy 14.4.14 are potentially under threat from inappropriate subdivision, use and development. The matters identified in Policy 14.4.15 therefore are those considered necessary to ensure that appropriate subdivision, use and development occurs within the Wairau Plain Overlay Area.

An enabling approach to primary production activities that is consistent with the wider Rural Environment Zone is provided for as the Council does not wish to unnecessarily constrain the type of activity occurring. (It is important to note that there is a specific management framework for dairy farming in order to protect water quality.)

A lower threshold for subdivision within the overlay area is provided for when compared with the subdivision provisions for the wider Rural Environment Zone. An 8 hectare threshold has been applied since 1985 and reflects a desire to ensure the potential for land fragmentation, especially from non-productive uses, is avoided. The potential for land fragmentation also exists where rural living is proposed with land lost to dwellings, accessory buildings, access ways, demand for water supply, disposal fields for wastewater etc. Rural character could begin to fray if residential lots are created sporadically within the overlay area. This has begun to occur in several locations. Therefore a minimum allotment size of 8 hectares is provided for to help retain primary production options and to maintain rural character.

Maintaining the integrity of the arterial road network of the Wairau Plain is particularly important, especially with the district road network as a whole having been identified as regionally significant infrastructure in Chapter 4: Use of Natural and Physical Resources (Policy 4.2.2). Increasing development pressures, along with aspirations of commercial operators to locate on high traffic density routes have resulted in threats to the integrity of the road network on the Wairau Plain. The policies of Chapter 17: Transportation provide guidance about how to minimise the conflict between subdivision, use and development activities with the land transport network.

In terms of 14.4.15(e) it is important to enable activities that do not rely on the primary productive potential of rural resource but which are appropriate in rural environments. However, it is considered that other activities not covered by the policies referred to in (e), should be avoided in the overlay area. Such activities, which can include residential, commercial or industrial activities, have an option of locating within the urban centres of Renwick and Blenheim, which are centrally located. Some limited provision has been made for rural living on larger lots on the periphery of Blenheim (Urban Residential 3 Zone). Commercial and industrial activities are more appropriately located in the relevant urban zones where there these activities are not related to primary production activities.

Policy 14.4.16 – Control water levels in the Council administered drainage network to remove surplus water from the soils of the Lower Wairau Plain to enable primary production activities to continue.

This policy signals that the intent of the Council is to continue to maintain the Council administered drainage network as a means of allowing landowners and resource users to continue using the productive capacity of the soil resources of the Lower Wairau Plain. This will require the active control of water

levels within the drainage network and the maintenance of drains, small rivers and infrastructure (e.g., pumps, flood gates) that make up the network.

Issue 14C – Responding to pressure to use, develop and subdivide land within the rural environment for residential uses.

(It is important to note that policy guidance for residential activity in the rural areas of the coastal environment of the Marlborough Sounds is not covered in this chapter. This is provided in Issue 13D of Chapter 13: Use of the Coastal Environment.)

There are a range of residential uses that can be found within Marlborough's rural environments. Many of these are directly associated with primary production activities occurring within these environments. There is also demand to allow other residential uses in these areas whether it be in the Marlborough Sounds, on the Wairau Plain or in other parts of the District.

People enjoy the privacy, rural outlook, spaciousness, ease of access, clean air and, most of the time, quietness of rural environments and sometimes want to farm small blocks on a part time basis. However, with the numbers of people living and wanting to live in rural areas, there is greater potential for amenity conflicts to arise given the primary production activities that occur within rural environments. While tensions between lifestyle and primary production are not an issue in all locations, there is enough tension to suggest that there needs to be guidance about how residential activities are provided for within rural environments.

Importantly there are a range of other effects that can arise through having unconstrained residential uses occurring within rural environments. These include:

- Fragmentation of land holdings where the creation of small lots effectively removes the land from primary productive use options.
- Effects on amenity and reverse sensitivity, which is considered through Issue 14A and 14 B.
- On-site management of domestic wastewater where there are potential risks to groundwater where systems are not well managed or maintained. If areas are low lying or there is flooding, some systems may also fail.
- Effects on water quantity with a potential for water bodies, or groundwater sources, to be depleted if many small blocks are created and rights to take water for domestic purposes are exercised.
- Traffic issues in which local roads may not be able to safely handle increases in traffic. This is made worse when traffic from lifestyle blocks comes up against heavy vehicles, such as those from extractive industries.
- Effects on natural character, landscape and biodiversity values, depending on where residential uses take place.
- The potential for greater spread of pest organisms.

Objective 14.5 – Residential activity takes place within appropriate locations and limits within rural environments.

Given the range of effects that can arise through residential uses in rural environments it is important that any such use occurs in appropriate locations and limits. This will help to ensure that the purpose of rural environments being maintained for primary productive activities is able to continue. In addition this objective will also help to ensure the character of rural environments is maintained.

Policy 14.5.1 – Identify areas where residential activity is appropriate within rural environments.

There are a number of locations within rural environments that have been determined as appropriate for residential activity to occur. These include in areas zoned as Rural Living, in the Coastal Living Zone,

(which recognises the need and demand that exists for residential activity in Marlborough's coastal environment), the Township Residential Zone at Marlborough Ridge and on the periphery of Blenheim in which there is a transition from urban to rural. These areas have been historically recognised as providing for rural lifestyle living on a range of allotment sizes and in a range of locations.

Policy 14.5.2 – Residential activity and subdivision for residential purposes within rural environments should take place within land zoned Rural Living, Coastal Living, Township Residential at Marlborough Ridge and Urban Residential 3 to:

- (a) **Protect primary production options;**
- (b) **Protect rural character and amenity values;**
- (c) **Avoid sprawling or sporadic patterns of residential development;**
- (d) **Avoid any further over allocation of water resources;**
- (e) **Avoid adverse effects on water quality and soil quality;**
- (f) **Reduce the potential for the spread of pest organisms;**
- (g) **Reduce impacts on the land transport network;**
- (h) **Protect landscape, natural character and indigenous biodiversity values; and**
- (i) **Provide a transition from urban environment to rural environments.**

It is important that there are some limitations on where residential activity can take place within Marlborough's rural environment, in order to protect a range of values. These values are identified as are the areas considered to be appropriate for residential uses. Regard must be had to the other policies of this chapter and others of the RPS/RMP to determine situations where it may be appropriate for residential activity and subdivision for residential purposes outside of these areas.

Policy 14.5.3 – Except in the case of land developed for papakainga, residential activity on land zoned Rural Environment will be provided for by enabling one dwelling per Computer Freehold Register.

For property within rural environments but outside of the zones specified in Policy 14.5.2 it is appropriate that the RPS/RMP provides for residential activity. In some cases there will be ongoing primary production activities occurring and therefore it is appropriate provision is made for residential activity associated with this primary production activity where this occurs on the same land. There may also be smaller allotments where primary production activities do not occur but historically there has been a right, subject to performance standards, for a landowner to be able to erect a dwelling. The RPS/RMP continues with this approach as it provides in part a resource able to be developed for residential activity, without the need for further subdivision or rezoning of land. The exception recognises the need for Marlborough's tangata whenua iwi to be able to develop Maori land for papakainga to enhance the quality of life for whanau and iwi in a manner that is consistent with their cultural values and customs.

Policy 14.5.4 – Residential activity directly associated with the primary production activity occurring on the same land, homestays, seasonal worker accommodation or a second dwelling in remote locations will be enabled.

There are some activities that while not relying on the primary production potential of rural resources are nonetheless closely linked with primary production activities. This includes residential activity that is directly associated with the primary production activity and would most commonly be regarded as the primary dwelling for a property. Allowance is also to be made for homestay opportunities where these are carried out in the primary dwelling. Provision is made through permitted activity rules for this to occur.

Recognition is also made in the policy of a need in some locations to provide for seasonal worker accommodation or farm worker accommodation, especially where this is in remote locations. Provision needs to be made to house the labour force for a time period that lies between that typically considered short term and that considered permanent. The opportunity for that workforce to be accommodated in the same environment as the primary production activity needs to be considered where it can be incorporated without undue degradation to the amenity of the rural environment, and without adverse effects associated with servicing, dispersed housing patterns, reverse sensitivity and land fragmentation.

Policy 14.5.5 – Maintain the character and amenity values of land zoned Rural Living by the setting of standards that reflect the following:

- (a) **Predominance of residential activity by enabling one dwelling per Computer Freehold Register;**
- (b) **Low building density;**
- (c) **Relatively quiet background noise levels**
- (d) **Privacy between individual properties;**
- (e) **Ample sunlight to buildings;**
- (f) **Minimal advertising signs;**
- (g) **Views to the surrounding environment;**
- (h) **Low building height; and**
- (i) **Limited infrastructure and services and low volumes of road traffic.**

This policy sets out the characteristics, which are reflective of land that is zoned Rural Living, and for which standards have been considered necessary to be established through the permitted activity rules.

Policy 14.5.6 – Where resource consent is required within the Rural Living Zone ensure that residential development and/or subdivision is undertaken in a manner that:

- (a) **Is consistent with the matters set out in Policy 14.5.5;**
- (b) **Is appropriate to the character of the locality in which the property is to be subdivided;**
- (c) **Provides for the maintenance of the attributes contributing to amenity values of the locality as expressed in Policies xx;**
- (d) **Maintains and/or enhances the recreational values of the area for the wider community;**
- (e) **Is certain the site is able to assimilate the disposal of domestic wastewater; and**
- (f) **Makes sure the effects of any natural hazards are able to avoided, remedied or mitigated.**

Where resource consent is required for subdivision or development within the Rural Living Zone, the matters in this policy will help to determine whether the subdivision or development is appropriate or not. In particular the matters concerning the character of the locality and coastal amenity values are important in terms of having regard to 7(c) and (f) of the RMA. Other matters concerning the discharge of domestic wastewater are equally important and regard is to be had to the policies of Chapter 16: Waste to assist in giving effect to this policy.

Note that policy guidance for Township Residential and Urban Residential 3 Zones can be found in Chapter 12: Townships and Small Settlements and for the Coastal Living Zone in Chapter 13: Use of the Coastal Environment.

Methods of Implementation

The methods listed below, which are to address Issues 14A, 14B and 14C, are to be implemented by the Council unless otherwise specified.

14.M.1 Zoning

A range of matters help to determine appropriate management approaches to ensure the sustainable management of rural environments. These include the nature of existing primary production activities, proximity of these activities to urban areas, the presence of flood hazards, presence of the coastal environment, the occurrence of regionally significant infrastructure, the location of conservation estate and river systems and the character and amenity of rural environments.

Some of these factors warrant different management approaches to ensure the long term sustainability of those environments. The matters identified are reflective of considerations used historically in previous management regimes for rural environments and two rural based zones have been established for the RPS/RMP to sustainably manage use, development and subdivision activities within Marlborough's rural environments. These are the Coastal Environment Zone, which includes land areas within the Marlborough Sounds where a coastal influence is evident and the Rural Environment Zone, which includes the balance of rural areas in Marlborough.

There are other zones within the broader rural environment to management activities within a specific context, for example, Open Space Zones, Floodways Zone and Skifield Zone. In addition there are some areas that have been identified for additional management that reflects particular characteristics of the area concerned. See Method 14.M.2.

14.M.2 Area Overlays

Two areas have been identified as needing more specific management within the Rural Environment Zone and these are the Wairau Plain and the Omaka Valley. The areas are identified through an overlay and in addition to the rules and policy for the Rural Environment Zone, there will be specific policy and rules for some subdivision, use and developments activities within these overlay areas.

The Wairau Plain has historically been zoned as a separate zone (the Rural 3 Zone in the former Wairau/Awatere Resource Management Plan) as it has characteristics that are distinct from the surrounding rural areas. With its large area of flat land, proximity to the major urban centre of Blenheim, generally reliable water resources and rich alluvial soils, it is the most intensively developed and modified rural area in Marlborough. This is why this area has been singled out for additional management.

Although the Omaka Valley has not been previously identified as having characteristics that are different from surrounding rural areas, this valley has developed particular amenity values over the life of the former Wairau/Awatere Resource Management Plan that are worthy of maintaining through application of specific policy.

14.M.3 Regional and District Rules

A range of regional and district rules will apply to subdivision, use and development activities in rural environments. In general primary production activities are provided for as permitted activities subject to performance standards. A limited range of other activities not related to primary production activities will also be provided for as permitted activities where these have only minor adverse effects on the environment.

Rural activities with the potential to cause significant adverse effects such as dairy farming, factory farming and intensive livestock farming are provided for as discretionary activities. A number of other activities are also provided for as discretionary activities, including subdivision and residential activity within areas identified as water short.

Land disturbance rules will control non-point sedimentation laden runoff from rural land use activities, and will avoid, remedy or mitigate the effects of land use activities on riparian margins.

Regional rules will provide for the deposition, application or administration of such chemicals, biological controls, poisons and hazardous substances necessary for the control of plant and animal pests as provided for within an approved national or regional pest management strategy.

District rules will be used to establish minimum allotment sizes for the Rural Environment Zone and for the areas within the Wairau Plain Area Overlay and the Omaka Valley Area Overlay. Additional amenity standards will also be used within the overlay area.

14.M.4 Regional Pest Management Plan and Biosecurity Strategy

The Regional Pest Management Plan for Marlborough (prepared under the Biosecurity Act 1993) classifies a range of plant and animal species as pests, because they cause or have the potential

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to cause significant adverse effects on Marlborough's economy and/or environment. The Plan includes pests that have a regional, rather than national significance and includes rules setting out landowner obligations about how listed pests are to be managed.

Because the Regional Pest Management Plan for Marlborough is a very specific management tool for particular species, the Council is preparing a Biosecurity Strategy that will provide a broader management framework for managing pests. The Strategy will include roles and responsibilities for pest management, surveillance activities, monitoring, research, community programmes, how pests get included within the Plan, etc.

14.M.5 Information on pests

The Council takes a very active role in providing information and advice on the best methods for controlling plant and animal pests, including providing advice, promoting effective control action and creating a greater understanding and acceptance by land occupiers of the responsibilities of pest management.

14.M.6 Monitoring animal and plant pests

Monitoring and surveillance is probably the most important method in the Council's overall pest management role. Without being aware of what pests are present in Marlborough, the extent to which they are present, and also being on the lookout for potential new pests, the Council's responsibilities for pest management would be very difficult to carry out. In general therefore, the Council's programme of monitoring and surveillance helps to determine the location, nature and extent of pest infestations and also establish the extent to which the objectives set out in the Regional Pest Management Plan for Marlborough are being achieved.

14.M.7 Council Works

The Council has historically maintained the drainage network on the Wairau Plain in a hydraulically efficient state to ensure primary production activities can continue to occur. The works involved include the following:

- (a) Establishing a range of acceptable water levels for the drains and small rivers that make up the Council administered drainage network;
- (b) Removing, when necessary, aquatic vegetation and sediment from the drains and small rivers to achieve the acceptable water levels; and
- (c) Installing and using pumps, where necessary, to assist with the removal of excess water.

The determination of acceptable water levels for each of the drains and small rivers allows for more efficient control of water levels. This will effectively provide triggers for active intervention and, in doing so, minimise the cost of drainage maintenance work. The use of acceptable water levels will also provide criteria for determining when further intervention, such as pumping, is required to control water levels.

The drains and small rivers that make up the drainage network also provide habitat for indigenous flora and fauna and provide opportunities for the development of ecological corridors. The development and use of triggers for drain maintenance will assist to mitigate the impact of the works on the habitat that the drainage network provides. It may also be appropriate to undertake drain maintenance works in a certain manner to further mitigate any adverse effect on habitat values. (See Chapter 8: Indigenous Biodiversity for further details.)

Anticipated Environmental Results and Monitoring Effectiveness

The following table identifies the anticipated environmental results of the rural environment provisions of the RPS/RMP. The anticipated environmental results are 10 year targets from the date that the RPS/RMP becomes operative, unless otherwise specified. For each anticipated environmental result, there are a series of indicators that will be used to monitor the effectiveness of the rural environment provisions.

Anticipated Environmental Result	Monitoring Effectiveness
14.AER.1	

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