

Report of	Meeting	Date
Director of Business Development and Growth (Introduced by the Executive Member for Economic Development and Public Service Reform)	Executive Cabinet	15 November 2018

CONTROL OF INVASIVE NON NATIVE SPECIES IN THE BOROUGH OF CHORLEY

PURPOSE OF REPORT

- To provide information about the control of Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS) in the Borough of Chorley

RECOMMENDATION(S)

- The report to be noted
- To note that Council has a history of supporting collaborative funding bids with key partners in order to control INNS across the Borough and that small amounts of match funding may be required on a case by case basis for future, collaborative activity focusing on Council land and public open spaces.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF REPORT

- The majority of Invasive non-native species are found along river corridors, for example Giant Hogweed, Himalayan Balsam and Mink. Others are in wooded valleys, such as Rhododendron; and Japanese Knotweed can invade anywhere.
- The Borough of Chorley lies entirely within the catchment of the River Ribble and the sub-catchments of the Rivers Darwen and Douglas, the latter including the Yarrow and its sub-catchment, the Lostock. The majority of the Borough drains into the Douglas, but an area stretching from Wheelton Moor to Withnell/Abbey Village, to Hoghton and Brindle, drains into the Darwen.
- In terms of River Catchment Partnerships, Chorley lies within the Douglas Catchment Partnership (No. 20 of 100 in England), administered by Groundwork Cheshire, Lancashire and Merseyside from Wigan. Chorley Council site on the Partnership and play a key role in the Action Plan delivery.
- The control of INNS can only be a success if carried out through a collaborative partnership approach amongst all council directorates, landowners and the community throughout the whole catchment. A great deal of work has already taken place throughout the Borough over many years to control INNS and this is proposed to continue.

Confidential report Please bold as appropriate	Yes	No
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Key Decision? Please bold as appropriate	Yes	No
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Reason	1, a change in service	2, a contract worth £100,000
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Please bold as appropriate	provision that impacts upon the service revenue budget by £100,000 or more	or more
	3, a new or unprogrammed capital scheme of £100,000 or more	4, Significant impact in environmental, social or physical terms in two or more wards

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)

(If the recommendations are accepted)

8. To be noted

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

9. To not control INNS and allow the spread of them across the Borough.

CORPORATE PRIORITIES

10. This report relates to the following Strategic Objectives:

Involving residents in improving their local area and equality of access for all	*	A strong local economy	
Clean, safe and healthy homes and communities	*	An ambitious council that does more to meet the needs of residents and the local area	*

BACKGROUND

11. In 2011 The Conservation Volunteers (TCV, formerly BTCV) secured £50,000 funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund for a three-year pilot project in the Yarrow catchment to trial different ways of controlling Himalayan Balsam (bashing, hoeing, pulling, scything, strimming and using herbicide). Between 2011 and 2013, the project delivered 151 balsam clearing days involving 1,185 person-days on sites in and around Astley Park, Duxbury Woods, Healey Nab, Rivington Reservoirs and Yarrow Valley Country Park. The project also delivered LANTRA accredited brushcutter/trimmer training to 30 volunteers.
12. In 2012 Lancashire Wildlife Trust undertook some field work using volunteers to map the upper limit of Himalayan Balsam, Japanese Knotweed and Giant Hogweed in the catchment of the Douglas.
13. In 2012 Lancashire Wildlife Trust was commissioned by the Environment Agency to produce a feasibility report for controlling Invasive Non Native Species on the Rivers Douglas, Wyre, and Lune. The report was published in May 2013.
14. In 2014 Lancashire Wildlife Trust applied to the Veolia Environmental Trust for £35,450 to cover a two-year project controlling Giant Hogweed, Himalayan Balsam, Japanese Knotweed and Rhododendron at priority sites with landowner consent in the Yarrow catchment. The bid was successful and match funding was provided by the Environment Agency (£12K) and Chorley Borough Council (£4K). Between May 2016 and February 2018, the project delivered 116 balsam clearing days involving 303 volunteers controlling INNS on Biological Heritage Sites including Astley Park woodlands, Clay 'Ole, Copperworks Wood, Cuerden Valley Park, Duxbury Woods, Foxhole Wood (United Utilities), the Leeds Liverpool Canal, Plock Wood, and Yarrow Valley Country Park. The project also delivered NPTC accredited pesticide and stem injection training to 14 staff.
15. Sustainable Management of INNS is identified as a project in the Action Plan for the Douglas Catchment Partnership 2016.

16. In February 2018, the government launched a new EU-funded grant, the Water Environment Grant (WEG) for projects that deliver local Water Framework Directive objectives, focussing primarily on in-channel work in rural areas, but can include controlling INNS as well as creating riparian woodland and wetlands. The deadline for bids was May 2018. Grant offers are expected to be made in December 2018 and funding must be spent by March 2020. A bid was submitted for a project on Carr Brook in Whittle/Clayton and this has got through the 1st round.

17. Suggested Action Plan for Himalayan Balsam in Chorley

Himalayan Balsam has spread so widely, and become so prevalent in Chorley, that complete eradication is probably now impossible, unless the rust fungus trial is successful, or another biological control comes along. Hence, unless resources were infinite, the idea of eradicating Himalayan Balsam from river catchments as big as the Darwen, Douglas and/or Yarrow from source to sea isn't going to work and is no longer the right approach. It may, however, still be possible to eradicate balsam from some of the smaller sub-catchments of the River Yarrow, e.g. Eller Brook and the River Tawd, but ongoing vigilance and control would inevitably be required.

Being realistic the answer is to work out which areas are the most valuable and in need of protecting from Himalayan Balsam. Most resources should be directed to sites with active friends of group, or to set up a friends of group and support them in managing balsam on the valuable sites. This has been successful on Lower Burgh Meadows, Carr Brook, Throstle Nest Wood and parts of Astley Park to name a few sites.

18. Suggested Action Plan for Giant Hogweed in Chorley

Giant Hogweed hasn't spread so widely, or become so prevalent in Chorley, that complete eradication is impossible. It has the added Health and Safety issue of its sap producing a photo-chemical reaction that can damage skin permanently.

It is not recommended that private landowners and volunteers deal with Giant Hogweed, but both these groups can play an active role in mapping and/or alerting the council, the Environment Agency, and/or the relevant Catchment Partnership to the presence of Giant Hogweed at sites in, or adjacent to, Chorley Borough. Giant Hogweed should be tackled by trained people working for the council (Chorley and/or Lancashire County Council), Catchment Partnership Project Officers, private contractors (including Lancashire Wildlife Trust's contracts team), government agencies (Environment Agency, Highways Agency, Natural England) and utility companies (e.g. Network Rail and United Utilities).

Giant Hogweed should be comprehensively and systematically eradicated from the Borough and any future infestations controlled ASAP after discovery or notification. Staff working for the councils and government agencies should work with private landowners to treat Giant Hogweed growing on their property. If any landowners are not cooperative, then staff should use their statutory powers to access private land to control Giant Hogweed and charge the costs back to the landowner(s). Chorley Council ranger team are very proactive and eradicate 100s of giant hogweed plants each year.

19. Suggested Action Plan for Japanese Knotweed in Chorley

Japanese Knotweed hasn't spread so widely, or become so prevalent in Chorley, that complete eradication is impossible, however, it is spreading and is much more damaging to property, much more difficult and expensive to treat.

It is not recommended that private landowners and volunteers deal with Japanese Knotweed, but both these groups can play an active role in mapping and/or alerting the council, the Environment Agency, and/or the relevant Catchment Partnership to the presence of

Japanese Knotweed at sites in, or adjacent to, Chorley Borough. Japanese Knotweed should be tackled by trained people working for the council (Chorley and/or Lancashire County Council), Catchment Partnership Project Officers, private contractors (including Lancashire Wildlife Trust's contracts team), government agencies (Environment Agency, Highways Agency, Natural England) and utility companies (e.g. Network Rail and United Utilities).

Staff working for the councils and government agencies should use their statutory powers to access private land to control Japanese Knotweed, which should be comprehensively and systematically eradicated from the Borough and any future infestations controlled ASAP after discovery or notification. The cost of treating Japanese Knotweed should be borne by the landowner.

Chorley Council are very proactive in eradicating knotweed from Council land and have a rota of biannual visits programmed in to both treat and check sites that are known to have had knotweed present.

20. Suggested Action Plan for Rhododendron in Chorley

Rhododendron is mainly a problem in woodlands, where it was deliberately planted in the Victorian era, and more recently, as cover for game, especially Pheasants, but also for its stunning flowers in ornamental parks and gardens. The main issues with Rhododendron are:

1. It being a carrier for the tree disease from North America called sudden oak death (*Phytophthora ramorum*), which attacks oaks in America, but the two native oaks in England are resistant. However, Larch trees, are susceptible and infected trees, and carriers such as Rhododendron, have to be felled if a plant health disease order is issued, e.g. as occurred at Rivington Terraced Gardens and in Astley Park.
2. Detrimental impacts on ancient woodland* flora, fauna and fungi as a result of its shade, acidification and poisoning of the ground.

However, Rhododendron is also spreading onto moorland in Lancashire, including the West Pennine Moors, some 7,615 hectares of which has been designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). There are an estimated 230 hectares of ancient woodland in the Borough of Chorley.

It is recommended that Rhododendron is controlled, ideally removed, from ancient woodland* in the Borough of Chorley and from within, or adjacent to, the West Pennine Moors SSSI. Woodland management grants are available from the Forestry Commission to landowners who have registered their landholding(s) with the Rural Payments Agency, which can fund the removal of Rhododendron.

Chorley Council with the help of volunteers have removed rhododendron from within Astley Park, Duxbury Woods and Plock Wood. This is an ongoing process.

* Ancient woodland in Britain is defined as having been continuously wooded since at least AD1600. This date is used because the first accurate maps were being produced and it wasn't until the 1700's that people really started planting trees, often introduced species, on a large-scale. Much of our ancient woodland is derived from the original woodland cover that recolonised Britain after the retreat of the last ice age some 10,000 years ago.

21. Controlling INNS should be a standard condition attached to all planning consents and built into ongoing landscaping and maintenance or management contracts. It should also be a condition that projects receiving funding from the Council should control any of the major INNS on the site(s).

Timetable showing optimum time for treatment

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Ma	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
INNS												
Hogweed												
Japanese Knotweed												
Himalyan Balsam												
Rhododendron												

IMPLICATIONS OF REPORT

22. This report has implications in the following areas and the relevant Directors' comments are included:

Finance	✓	Customer Services	
Human Resources		Equality and Diversity	
Legal	✓	Integrated Impact Assessment required?	
No significant implications in this area	*	Policy and Communications	

RISK

A risk register has been completed	Yes	No
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COMMENTS OF THE STATUTORY FINANCE OFFICER

23. Future match funding from Chorley Council for external funding is not envisaged to be more than £5k at a time and as such can be managed within existing revenue budgets.

COMMENTS OF THE MONITORING OFFICER

24. No comments.

MARK LESTER
DIRECTOR OF BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT AND GROWTH

There are no background papers to this report.

Report Author	Ext	Date	Doc ID
Lindsey Blackstock	5218	18/10/2018	***