

Report on	Invasive Species Control and Maintenance on Council Property and maintained sites
Date of Meeting	8 th September 2020
Reporting Officer	Terry Scullion, Head of Property Services
Contact Officer	Eunan Murray, Grounds and Cemeteries Manager

Is this report restricted for confidential business?	Yes	
If 'Yes', confirm below the exempt information category relied upon	No	X

1.0	Purpose of Report
1.1	To update member's on Invasive Species control and maintenance on Council Property, and sites maintained by Council.
2.0	Background
2.1	For many years, non-native species have been introduced to Northern Ireland, and all are considered to have potentially harmful effects upon our native habitats and biodiversity. This is principally by out-competing and excluding the native species to form dense and often spreading patches of the non-native species.
2.2	<p>Schedule 9 of the Wildlife (NI) Order 1985, as amended by Section 27 Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Natural Environment Act (NI) 2016 lists 32 plants that are legally controlled. The terrestrial species below are considered to pose the most significant problem in the Mid Ulster Council Area as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Salmonberry (<i>Rubus spectabilis</i>) • Japanese Knotweed (<i>Fallopia japonica</i>) • Giant Knotweed (<i>Fallopia sachalinensis</i>) • Himalayan Knotweed (<i>Persicaria wallichii</i>) • Giant Hogweed (<i>Heracleum mantegazzianum</i>), and • Indian Balsam (<i>Impatiens glandulifera</i>) (listed as Himalayan Balsam in the Order)
3.0	Main Report
3.1	Council continue to maintain and regularly update a register of known invasive species on Council property, and areas maintained by Council. Feedback from Council maintenance operatives throughout the season helps to record the species location and extent. Based on this information a management control programme is established to define the priority for treatment. There are a number of different approaches to controlling these species, and a number of different

	<p>factors are taken into account when selecting the most appropriate procedure, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The required timescale for the elimination of the plant, • The extent and scale of the infestation • The nature of the terrain, the surroundings and the soil in which the plant is growing, and • The accessibility of the site
3.2	<p>Details of species identified on Council property and maintained locations is detailed in appendix 1. In the last 18 months there have been reports of invasive species at nine new locations, bringing the current total to thirty-six locations including:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Ardtrea River Walk, Coagh 2 Kings Bridge planting area, Cookstown 3 Coltrim Layby, Moneymore 4 Caledon Dredge Bridge 5 Cot Lane, Ballinderry 6 Orritor street Carpark, Cookstown 7 Perry Street East & West Carpark, Dungannon 8 Donaghmore Conservation Area, and 9 Ballysaggart Lough, Dungannon
3.3	<p>The Order does not make it illegal for a landowner to have a Schedule 9 plant growing on their property, but, it is an offence to cause it to grow in any new place regardless of how 'wild' that place is.</p>
3.4	<p>Control measures are proving effective to control the spread. However, the number of known sites continues to increase with improved awareness of maintenance and inspection staff. Removal of young plants and herbicide treatment will also continue to restrict its establishment across Council properties and maintained locations, or in line with alternative expert guidance. Where it is identified near the boundary of Council property, every effort will be made to inform the adjacent landowner.</p>
4.0	Other Considerations
4.1	Financial, Human Resources & Risk Implications
	<p>Financial: Removal of young plants and herbicide treatment is within existing resources. Extensive eradication would require additional financial resources for specialist third party expertise.</p>
	<p>Human: In house resources for routine maintenance with resources limitations during the Covid 19 period, updating the register and liaising with other in house client services as required.</p>

	<p>Risk Management:</p> <p>There is a duty of care to ensure the control of invasive species on council property, or knowingly remove it from council property leading to its further spread.</p>
4.2	Screening & Impact Assessments
	<p>Equality & Good Relations Implications:</p> <p>None.</p>
	<p>Rural Needs Implications:</p> <p>None.</p>
5.0	Recommendation(s)
5.1	Members are requested to note the contents of the report.
6.0	Documents Attached & References
6.1	Appendix 1 – Invasive Species Register Summary August 2020