

Report on	Invasive Species Control and Maintenance on Council Property
Reporting Officer	Terry Scullion, Head of Property Services
Contact Officer	Nat Woodside, Grounds and Cemetery 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.
2.0	Background
2.1	As previously advised in 2016 a number of 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.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	<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) <p>See appendix 1 for a descriptor of each specie.</p>
3.2	<p>Not all occur within the Council's land holdings, there are a number of already known occurrences of some plants that are listed. Feedback by grounds maintenance operatives throughout the season helps to record the species location and extent. Based on this information a 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 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 nature of the terrain, the surroundings and the soil in which the plant is growing, and • The accessibility of the site

3.3	Details of species identified on Council property is detailed in appendix 2.
3.4	<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> <p>The current inventory of Council sites continues to be monitored. Refresher identification training will be carried out at the start of the 2018 growing season when plants become more visible and records updated. Removal of young plants and herbicide treatment will also continue to restrict its establishment across Council sites, or in line with alternative guidance from Biodiversity staff. 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	<p><u>Financial & Human Resources Implications</u></p> <p>Financial: Removal of young plants and herbicide treatment is within resources. Extensive eradication would require specialist third party expertise.</p> <p>Human: In-house resources for routine maintenance. Third party expertise to assist with specie identification training and inventory recording.</p>
4.2	<p><u>Equality and Good Relations Implications</u></p> <p>None.</p>
4.3	<p><u>Risk Management Implications</u></p> <p>There is a duty to ensure the control of invasive species on Council property or knowingly remove it from Council property leading to its further spread.</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 – Description of dominant Species locally
6.2	Appendix 2 – Species identified on Council property