

Environment Sub-Committee

9 March 2016

Present: Councillor B Burdis (Chair)
Councillors G Bell, L Bell, P Brooks, J Cassidy,
D Drummond, E Hodson, J O'Shea and M Thirlaway.

E33/03/16 Apologies

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors W Lott and G Madden.

E34/03/16 Substitute Members

The following substitute member was reported:

Councillor J O'Shea for Councillor W Lott.

E35/03/16 Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

There were no declarations of interest or dispensations reported.

E36/03/16 Minutes

Resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on 3 February 2016 be confirmed.

E37/03/16 Invasive Weeds

Consideration was given to a presentation which provided members with an overview of the non native invasive plant species in North Tyneside. It was explained that a plant was considered invasive if it had been introduced to a location and had established a breeding population which thrived in its new environment and negatively influenced the ecology and biodiversity of that location. It was noted that the majority of plants which had been introduced into the United Kingdom were harmless but a small percentage, around 5%, had been classed as invasive. Details of the most common invasive plants were outlined including:

- Yellow Azalea – *Rhododendron luteum*
- Himalayan Balsam – *Impatiens glandulifera*
- Cotoneaster – *Cotoneaster horizontalis*
- Virginia Creeper – *Parthenocissus quinquefolia*
- Giant Hogweed – *Heracleum mantegazzianum*
- Water Hyacinth – *Eichhornia crassipes*
- Japanese Knotweed – *Fallopia japonica*
- Rhododendron – *Rhododendron ponticum*
- Giant Rhubarb – *Gunnera tinctoria*

- Japanese Rose – *Rosa rugosa*
- New Zealand Pigmyweed – *Crassula helmsii*

A comprehensive list of non native invasive plants was circulated.

It was explained that Japanese Knotweed was the most dominant non native invasive plant in North Tyneside. It was known to be actively growing in around 80 places within the borough and was considered dormant in several other locations. Japanese Knotweed was one of the most damaging invasive species to be introduced to the UK and was capable of growing three metres in three months. It had originally been introduced in the early to mid nineteenth century as an ornamental plant. As there are no naturally occurring controls in the UK the plant had an advantage over native species and could reduce biodiversity in the area. It could also cause a number of other problems, such as damage to infrastructure including paths, walls and foundations of buildings, increasing flood risk and reducing access to riverbanks for amenity use. It had also been known to damage archaeological site, reduce land values and delay and disrupt development.

The methods by which Japanese Knotweed spread was outlined along with the methods used to control the plant. In North Tyneside a chemical control method using Glyphosate was employed to control the plant. It was applied either via a sprayer on the leaves or by an injection in to the stem of the plant. In accordance with Environment Agency guidelines one application of the chemical was applied to the plant each year. It was noted that it usually took at least 3 or 4 chemical treatments to eradicate the plant from a particular area.

Under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 Japanese Knotweed was classed as a controlled waste and required disposal at licensed landfill sites. An advice leaflet had been produced and information was available on the Authority's website for residents on how to deal with the problem of Japanese Knotweed. A copy of the advice leaflet entitled "Japanese Knotweed Advice for Gardeners" was circulated at the meeting.

The Committee was advised that although it was not illegal to have Japanese Knotweed on your land it was illegal to introduce it into the wild. Landowners were required to control non native invasive plants to prevent them becoming a problem in the neighbourhood. If there was a detrimental effect on the quality of life of those in the locality legislation could be used to enforce control. This legislation included:

- The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981;
- The Weeds Act 1959; and
- The Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014.

Members sought confirmation that there were sufficient resources available to adequately control invasive species in the borough. It was explained that although budgets were tight there were sufficient resources to deal with the issue.

The Chair thanked the officer for his presentation.

It was **AGREED** that the report be noted.