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Invasive species method statement

Planning consent 66745 – condition 11

Development of railway servicing facilities at Buckley Wells, Bury

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On behalf of East Lancashire Railway



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1 Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide a method statement in line with planning condition 11 of consent 66745 to ensure invasive species are dealt with legally and to avoid spread and that:

- Japanese Knotweed (JK) is eradicated from the development site before works begin.
- Any JK beyond the site boundary is either eradicated or securely fenced to ensure it is not disturbed during works.
- Any residual JK and rhizome-contaminated soil is identified and removed safely.
- Himalayan Balsam is not spread further.

This report should be read with the Control Plan dated 19 May 2022, and the plan showing the location of the 11 clumps of JK identified. It is understood that funding issues mean that works will not start before Autumn 2023. This gives enough time for JK to be eradicated.

2 Introduction

A survey of invasive species was carried out by an experienced ecologist on the application site and embankment outside the application site including the embankment that adjoins the school on 4 October 2021 and a further site visit on 21 July 2022 mapped locations in detail.

Japanese Knotweed (JK) is present in several small clumps on the application site itself. Outside the site there are more substantial clumps on the perimeter to the school playing fields, near the pond in the northwest part of the site, and in the regenerating woodland to the east of the site. JK will not set viable seed (male and female flowers are on separate plants and only the female plant is present in the UK), but it is very easy to spread the underground stems (rhizomes) in soil on boots or machinery. Even small rhizome fragments will establish a new colony.

Himalayan Balsam (HB) is present throughout application site and surrounding area. It is annual and spreads seeds significant distances. There will be a large seed bank both on land within the application site and outside.

Giant Hogweed (GH) - no evidence was found of GH either within or near the application site. There are several large specimens of the harmless native Hogweed (*Heracleum sphondylium*) which can sometimes be confused with GH.

Planning condition 11 states:

'Prior to any earthworks a method statement detailing eradication and/or control and/or avoidance measures for himalayan balsam and japanese knotweed should be supplied to and agreed in writing to the LPA. The agreed method statement shall be adhered to and implemented in full. The approved management plan shall include a timetable for implementation. Should a delay of more than one year occur between the date of approval of the management scheme and either the date of implementation of the management scheme or the date of development commencing, a further site survey must be undertaken and submitted to the Local Planning Authority. Reason. The scheme does not provide full details of the actual extent of Japanese Knotweed and Himalayan Balsam in the interest of UDP Policy EN9 - Landscape and pursuant to National Planning Policy Framework Section 11 - Conserving and enhancing the natural environment.'

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3 Japanese Knotweed

- The smaller clumps of JK (A, B, C, D, G, I, J and K) on the application site marked on the plan will be treated by stem injection in summer 2022, with any residual growth treated in late spring 2023.
- The larger clumps (E, F and H) will be treated by chemical spray in summer 2022 and late spring 2023.
- The perimeter of the site will be securely fenced to prevent access by contractors and ensure any residual JK will not be disturbed.
- Before works start, an experienced ecologist will survey the site at a suitable time of year.
 - If **JK is not present** within the work site, and clumps outside are securely fenced, then the development can be carried out with no need for special JK precautions.
 - If **JK is present within** the work site, then JK and contaminated soil will be removed in line with the method statement in appendix one.

7 Himalayan Balsam

HB is present throughout the application site and is so common that there is no suitable habitat in the immediate area where it is not growing already. Therefore further spread is unlikely. There is little evidence that it harms biodiversity. As the plant is annual and there is probably a large seed bank, it is unlikely that any control measures that could be taken would either be effective or would have a biodiversity benefit.

Soil contaminated with HB seeds should be treated as controlled waste if it is moved off-site. **It is therefore proposed that no material is moved off-site. No further control measures are recommended.**

End of report appendix follows.

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Appendix one – Japanese Knotweed method statement

1. An experienced ecologist will mark out the extent of Japanese Knotweed (JK). All JK and soil infested with rhizomes will be excavated and removed and dealt with as controlled waste.
2. If the work is undertaken during the growing season, the JK will be sprayed with herbicide two weeks before the operation.
3. A 'permit to dig' must be obtained from the site supervisor.
4. Soil contaminated with rhizomes will be excavated in layers with the formation of each layer and sides of the excavation being visually inspected by the ecologist. The material will be placed directly into wagons for disposal. - The wagons will reverse into position to avoid entering contaminated areas.
5. As the excavation deepens it will be necessary to ensure the wagons keep a safe distance from the edge of the excavations. Wagons will only be loaded to 90% capacity to avoid transit spillages, and wagons will be sheeted. The area will then be checked for any spillages, to be placed in the next wagon.
6. This process will be repeated until the ecologist is satisfied that all JK contaminated material has been removed.
7. All plant, tools, and equipment (including vehicle tyres, and boots) used during the process will be cleaned under supervision. Any contaminated material will be placed in the last wagon to leave site.
8. All excavations will be made safe at the end of every working day, and when the ecologist has agreed that all rhizome contaminated soil has been removed, the excavation will be backfilled with clean material.

End of JK method statement

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Appendix two Appendix two – photos



Figure 1 Japanese Knotweed near wetland area (2019)



Figure 2 Himalayan Balsam