

Ecology response for DC/22/94340 Land to east of Stoneham Lane, south of Kingdom Hall, Stoneham Lane, Eastleigh, SO50 9HQ

Discharge of condition 4 (eradication/management of Himalayan/Indian balsam) of planning permission F/20/88820 for proposed scheme for nitrate removal and net biodiversity gain through ecological enhancements, creation of ponds and associated works.

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I have reviewed the Invasive Weed Management Plan by Japanese Knotweed Ltd (survey date 4/4/2022, report date not available). Here are my initial thoughts, there may be further concerns after discussion with colleagues.

The invasive weeds Himalayan balsam and horsetail have been identified on site. The proposal involves full excavation and on-site treatment of Himalayan balsam (total lateral and vertical extent within site) and reduced level excavation (remaining plant contaminated ground capped with root barrier) and on-site treatment for horsetail. How will the presence of the pipeline that runs through the site affect excavation to the required levels (0.2 m deep for Himalayan balsam and 0.3m deep for horsetail)?

Section 4.3, image 2 shows two areas that were not surveyed due to access. These may be the *dense areas of vegetation that could potentially harbour or cover further areas of invasive weeds* mentioned in the introduction to section 4. The horsetail seems to be confined to a discrete area on site which is close to but not adjacent to the areas marked not surveyed due to access. The visible Himalayan balsam marked on image 1 is spread over most of the site and is up to and adjacent to the boundaries of the areas marked not surveyed due to access. It needs to be established whether Himalayan balsam is in these areas also and how they will be treated.

Due to the spread of Himalayan balsam and the aquatic habitat being created it is possible that if not treated, these areas could act as a reservoir for re-introduction of Himalayan balsam to the cleared areas.

Section 3.1 states that the isolation zone should be to at least 5 m laterally from any above ground target weed growth. How will this be possible if some areas of the site are not accessible?

Section 3.1 states that a scheme for monitoring will be agreed with the site manager who will ultimately be responsible for overseeing the control of invasive weeds on site. It also states that the Management Plan will be reviewed on a regular basis and in any case every 12 months from site acquisition to completion of works. In section 4 introduction it also states that *However it should be noted that seed re-infestation at any time from off site sources is a high risk on this site. Likely to happen.*

Therefore, the management plan needs to extend past the completion of works, with annual monitoring and additional eradication to be done in perpetuity. This plan must be included before condition 4 can be discharged.

Japanese Knotweed Ltd is proposing to provide a watching brief to others undertaking a site strip and relocation of soils likely to be harbouring Himalayan balsam seeds into a soil bund along the boundary with Monks Brook. If there is any re-growth from this bund then it is possible that the seeds could be dispersed into Monks Brook, causing further infestations downstream. A toolbox talk must be provided to all operatives explaining appropriate biosecurity controls to be used when working in these areas. The tree officer must be involved to approve and monitor the soil strip works where mature tree root zones are involved. They also propose to place the cleared site areas and the bund under a long-term programme of monitoring and herbicide treatments.

IMAGE 2: SITE PLAN OF PROPOSED SITE LAYOUT SHOWING REMEDIATION WORKS

The LEMP submitted for F/20/88820 shows that there is a band of tree planting and native shrub mix infill planting proposed to enhance eastern boundary vegetation and provide connectivity and habitat for mammals, birds and invertebrates (under separate application currently approved, F/20/87451). How will the presence of this bund affect this band of trees and associated vegetation?

Lisa Malter

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