

Abercynon Feeder Pipe Bridge Replacement

Method Statement – Invasive Non-Native Species

Report for Baker Hicks

Job Number	T7028		
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1 Introduction

BACKGROUND TO COMMISSION

- 1.1 Temple was commissioned in January 2023 by Rhondda Cynon Taff Borough Council to carry out a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) of land at the old feeder pipe bridge, Abercynon (hereafter referred to as 'the Site'). This Preliminary Ecological Appraisal survey was to complete a phase 1 habitat survey of the site to identify any potential ecological constraints which could cause problems to the planned bridge replacement works.
- 1.2 During the site visit it was identified that there was a variety of ecological constraints including, the need to remove areas of Japanese knotweed, *Reynoutria japonica*. As a result, Temple was commissioned to prepare an invasive species survey report (Temple 2023, T7028-TEM-AB-RP-EC-0003). In February 2024, Temple was further commissioned to prepare an Invasive Non-Native Species Method Statement to cover all invasive species recorded on Site.
- 1.3 This report includes advice from Japanese Knotweed Elimination Ltd, a removal specialist regarding the proposed procedures to deal with Japanese knotweed on Site. Contact details for Japanese Knotweed Elimination are:

Japanese Knotweed Elimination Ltd,
8 Parkfield,
Tonna,
Neath
SA11 3JN

SCOPE OF THE REPORT

- 1.4 A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) report, was produced by Temple Ecology in March 2023 (Temple 2023a). The PEA identified invasive non-native Japanese

knotweed within the Site on both the north and south sides of the river. Additionally, although not found during the February 2023 survey, Himalayan Balsam and Crocosmia were identified during a previous survey carried out by Redstart Ecology in 2021. Therefore, these will also be considered in this report.

- 1.5 The scope of this report is to produce an Invasive Non-Native Species Method Statement (INNS MS) regarding all invasive species within the Site and immediate vicinity, including Japanese knotweed to allow the bridge replacement works to be completed. Further details of the findings are contained within Section 2 of this report. Permission for the proposed work was granted, subject to the following condition:

Prior to the commencement of works, a method statement for Japanese knotweed shall be submitted to and approved by the local planning authority. The method statement shall provide a clear protocol for how this species will be safeguarded during vegetation clearance and building works on site. The measures shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the approved method statement.

Reason: To make sure of no further spread of the INNS Japanese knotweed during the vegetation clearance and bridge conversion works.

- 1.6 This INNS MS has been written to discharge this condition and provide appropriate measures to address the works required at Feeder Pipe Bridge, Abercynon.
- 1.7 This INNS MS is based on the information provided by the specialist contractor Japanese Knotweed Elimination Ltd to Temple and the information from the Invasive Species Survey Report (Temple 2023) provided to Rhondda Cynon Taff Borough Council in the report sent via Baker Hicks.

SITE CONTEXT

- 1.8 The Site consists of two areas located on the outskirts of the town of Abercynon, Rhondda Cynon Taff. The south Site is centred on Ordnance Survey National Grid

Reference ST 09209 95484 and the north Site is centred on ST 09128 95574. The Sites are adjacent, for the most part, to woodland and grassland with the A470 beyond on the north Site and woodland and the A4054 to the south of the South Site. The River Taff flows between and separates the north and south Sites.

- 1.9 There are 16 non-statutory sites designated as Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) present within 2km of the site. The nearest of these is Lower Taff and Edwardsville Woods which runs adjacent the Northern most part of the Site, north of the River Taff. This is also a Habitat of Principle Importance (HPI) as it is designated as area of Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland.

WORK PROPOSALS

- 1.10 The proposals for the north Site involve the need for access for building materials to be transported to the construction site. An area of Japanese knotweed will be impacted to allow access to the Site and as part of clearance works for the dismantling and rebuilding works to the bridge.
- 1.11 The proposals for the south Site involve the creation of a compound and platform on the south side of the river to allow for building materials to be craned across for construction of the new bridge. An area of trees and scrub (approximately 860m²) on the Site will be cleared to facilitate works. Japanese knotweed is present within this area.
- 1.12 Works are proposed to start end April/early May 2024 and continue for a period of 6 months.

2 Baseline Conditions

- 2.1 The preliminary ecological appraisal survey conducted by Temple on 21st February 2023 identified multiple areas of the Invasive Non-Native Species Japanese knotweed. Japanese knotweed was found along the riverbank, adjacent to the bridge, and throughout the planned compound site. Additionally, although not found during the February 2023 survey, Himalayan Balsam and Crocosmia were identified during a previous survey carried out by Redstart Ecology in 2021.
- 2.2 Japanese knotweed, Himalayan Balsam and Crocosmia are Schedule 9 plants under the provision of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and it is an offence to cause them to grow in the wild. Therefore, works which could cause disturbance and spread of these species is illegal. With the known close proximity of Japanese knotweed to the bridge, and in the planned compound area, and the potential for Himalayan Balsam and Crocosmia to be present, there is high chance that disturbance may occur during the commencement of works. Henceforth it is required to produce an INNS MS to make sure no spread of these species occurs. Being close to a watercourse, if material from Japanese knotweed in particular, enters the river this could re-establish further downstream.
- 2.3 Although no Signal Crayfish have been found on Site during survey works they are known to be within the River Taff. Under Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) it is illegal to distribute or allow the release of signal crayfish into the wild. Accordingly, as an invasive non-native species they are included within this Method Statement.

3 Legislation

INVASIVE PLANTS

- 3.1 Under Section 14 (2) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), it is an offence to plant or otherwise cause to grow in the wild any species of plant listed on Part II of Schedule 9. Schedule 9 plant species include Japanese knotweed *Reynoutria japonica*, Monbretia *Crocasmia x crocosmiliflora* and Himalayan balsam *Impatiens glandulifera*. In the main, Schedule 9 species are those that are already established in the wild, but which continue to pose a threat to the conservation of native biodiversity and habitats, such that further releases should be regulated.

How is the legislation pertaining to Japanese knotweed, Monbretia and Himalayan Balsam liable to affect development works?

- 3.2 Although it is not an offence to have these plants on your land *per se*, it is an offence to *cause* these species to grow in the wild. Therefore, if they are present on site and development activities (for example movement of spoil, disposal of cut waste or vehicular movements) have the potential to cause the further spread of these species to new areas, it will be necessary to make sure appropriate measures are in place to prevent this happening prior to the commencement of works.
- 3.3 As a rule, planting on managed land (private gardens, estates and amenity planting, for example), where it is expected that the spread of the plant will be kept under control, and where the plant will not have an adverse impact, is not regarded as planting in the wild and thus would not constitute an offence. However, where the plant is inadequately managed or contained and is likely to have an adverse effect, it may. Whether or not planting is an offence should therefore be judged on a case

by case basis, taking into account the potential impacts on habitats and native flora and fauna, and the existence or extent of management practices to be employed¹.

LIABILITY OF PERSONNEL

- 3.4 The Site manager, and the person carrying out the work are both responsible for the works being undertaken according to good practice and for making sure that no relevant law is contravened. Responsibility for works is specified as below.
- 3.5 Site Manager: Overall responsibility for implementation of this method statement.
- 3.6 Equipment Operators: Responsible for operating machinery in accordance with this method statement and cleaning procedures.
- 3.7 Ecological Clerk of Works: Advise on best practices and to make sure of compliance with regulations.

EQUIPMENT AND MATERIALS REQUIRED

- 3.8 In order to undertake works in a suitable manner for the prevention of spread of invasive species, the below equipment and materials will be required. Decisions on the best location for stockpiling areas for excavated materials on site will be made by the contractors in consultation with the suitably qualified ecologist on Site once areas of clearance have been established. These areas should be located as far as is practicable away from the watercourse to reduce risk of accidental spillage into the river:

- Tracked vehicles (e.g., excavators, dumpers)

¹ Defra (2010) Guidance on Section 14 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981. [\[ARCHIVED CONTENT\]
\(nationalarchives.gov.uk\)](https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk)

- Dedicated stockpile area for excavated material (with impermeable liner)
- Disinfectant wipes/spray (for cleaning tools, clothes, boots/wellies and equipment)
- Skip (for general non-invasive waste)

4 Method Statement

- 4.1 The following section sets out measures that must be followed during all phases of bridge replacement works, to make sure no spread of invasive non-native species happens during work commencements. Following the guidelines in this section will make sure that the development complies with this planning condition, and all relevant legislation regarding schedule 9 invasive non-native species.

JAPANESE KNOTWEED

- 4.2 Access routes for the works are as per the below.
- 4.3 Access Route 1: via the Tram Road to southern site compound, compound 1. This will be the primary access route. This access route is expected to allow materials to be craned into position. The crane is expected to extend all across the river with the swing radius managed and controlled.
- 4.4 Access Route 2: via the existing path from Alexandra Road. This route is just wide enough for small light plant to track along the existing informal path to the northern side of the bridge location. It is worth noting that this route was previously used by RCTC BC in the past to carry out emergency works to the bridge. The size of the plant using this route will be limited to the width of the path only. The route will be monitored by the Ecology Clerk of Works (ECoW) to ensure no damage occurs to the existing ecology along the route and that no disturbance of invasive plant species occurs. No removal of branches is expected. The contractor shall install track mats close to the bridge from the point where invasive plant species starts and from the point where the ancient woodland starts. The track mats need to continue up to the location of the works. The ECoW will monitor this route from the first major event that it is to be used and continue monitoring this route through the Construction period at each time the ECoW intends to visit site.
- 4.5 The following is a summary of the measures required to mitigate the potential impacts on the South side of the Site.

Pre-commencement

- 4.6 A pre-construction survey will identify the extent and location of Japanese knotweed on the site where removal is likely to be required.
- 4.7 Step 1: The existing topsoil within the compound area shall be stripped back (approximately 300mm in depth) to create the formation. The contaminated topsoil layer will be removed before being stored on site within the redline boundary. The topsoil shall be stored in this location for the duration of the works. After the topsoil strip has been completed, the wheels of the excavator and boots of the workers on site will be cleaned at a designated location away from the river edge as shown in Figure 2. A low pressure hose will be used to carry out this cleaning. After cleaning, the excavator will be relocated to an uncontaminated area. The cleaning process will be conducted in such a way that the runoff water will percolate directly into the subsoils.
- 4.8 No contaminated topsoil will be removed off site.
- 4.9 Step 2: After stripping the topsoil, an initial geotextile layer (consisting of terram or similar approved) will be laid at formation. A minimum thickness of 300mm of 6F5 stone will be then laid on top of this and compacted. Once this initial 300mm of 6F5 has been laid and compacted, a further geotextile layer (again consisting of terram or similar approved) will be placed. 6F5 stone will then be laid in 500mm steps above this and interwoven/ wrapped with geogrid (Naue Combei Grid or similar approved) up to finished platform level. The geogrid is needed to help reinforce the material for the crane platform. Figure 4 of the CEMP shows the location of the geotextiles, geogrids and stone layers.
- 4.10 Step 3: Once the crane platform is built, and the contaminated material is buried below the platform, the site compound will be ready to operate without the need for any further cleaning of vehicles. At this stage, the low pressure hose as required will be used to wash the wheels of the vehicles leaving the site to prevent any mud from being deposited onto the Tram Road.

Cleaning and Inspection

- 4.11 Wheel washing/hose down facilities will be provided for vehicles near the exit to remove any small traces of mud prior to leaving the site.
- 4.12 The wheel washing facilities will be equipped with low-pressure hoses.
- 4.13 Tools and equipment used within the Site compound will be disinfected with wipes or spray before being used in clean areas.
- 4.14 All site personnel should clean their boots with stiff brushes and water, within the Site compound before leaving the site.

Waste Disposal (On-Site)

- 4.15 Excavated knotweed material will be left on site and wrapped for the duration of the works if required before being re-laid at the end.

Monitoring and Records

- 4.16 Daily inspections will be conducted to make sure of adherence to this method statement and biosecurity protocols.
- 4.17 Records will be maintained documenting cleaning procedures and inspections.

Contingency Measures

- 4.18 In case of a suspected spill of knotweed material on clean ground, the area will be immediately cordoned off.
- 4.19 Contaminated soil will be carefully collected within the designated knotweed stockpile.

Health and Safety

- 4.20 All personnel must wear appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) when working in the site.
- 4.21 Operators of tracked vehicles must be trained in the identification of Japanese knotweed and biosecurity protocols.
- 4.22 A risk assessment will be conducted to identify potential hazards associated with the work and implement control measures.

Post Completion

- 4.23 With respect to the removal of the 6F5 stone, the 6F5 material located above the 300mm 6F5 sacrificial layer will be excavated and recycled. The 300mm sacrificial 6F5 layer itself will be classed as contaminated and sent to a licenced waste management facility.
- 4.24 The stockpiled topsoil will then be replaced back where it came from before undertaking planting/ landscaping works. The wheels of all plant, materials (including temporary fencing), and boots of the workers on site, including the landscapers will be cleaned at a designated location away from the river edge as shown in Figure 2 of the CEMP. A low-pressure hose will be used to carry out this cleaning.
- 4.25 After cleaning, the plant and fencing will be loaded on a transporter at the edge of the Tram Road before it is transported off site. The cleaning process will be conducted in such a way that the runoff water will percolate directly into the soils.
- 4.26 Post works a Knotweed treatment plan will be implemented on land on the northside that is within the site boundary.

HIMALAYAN BALSAM & MONBRETIA

4.27 The following measures will be implemented as part of the works to make sure no spreading of Himalayan Balsam or Monbretia will occur if it is found on Site:

- The Site (bridge abutments, access tracks and southern compound area) will be checked for Himalayan balsam and Monbretia prior to works.
- If present within the works area all equipment and machinery exposed to either Himalayan balsam/Monbretia or contaminated soil will be cleaned with hoses or within the designated washing area before leaving the works area.
- No soils or plant debris are to be removed from site.
- All site personnel should clean their boots with stiff brushes and water within the designated cleaning zone before leaving the site.
- All vegetation to be impacted or potentially impacted is to be strimmed early in the season, before flowering has taken place and kept short throughout the works to prevent the balsam reaching maturity and preventing its spread via seed dispersal from mature plants.
- If found on Site, any material from the area containing Himalayan Balsam/Monbretia that needs to be removed temporarily will need to be treated as controlled waste and stockpiled. As soil cannot be removed from site it will remain within a stockpile area on Site until it can be replaced once construction works are complete.

OTHER INVASIVE SPECIES

Signal Crayfish

4.28 Although no signal crayfish have been recorded on site there are records of their existence within the River Taff.

4.29 All workers on site will be provided information on recognition of Signal Crayfish via a toolbox talk from the site ecologist prior to works.

4.30 To prevent individual crayfish being transported between waterbodies and to kill the potential spores from crayfish plague prior to entering another waterbody, biosecurity measures will be put in place. This includes cleaning of all equipment, for example boots, machinery, tools, prior to entry into the water and on leaving the water.

References

Defra (2010) Guidance on Section 14 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981. [\[ARCHIVED CONTENT\] \(nationalarchives.gov.uk\)](#)

Temple (2023a) Feeder Pipe Bridge, Abercynon. Preliminary Ecological Appraisal.

Temple (2023) T7028-TEM-AB-RP-EC-0003, Feeder Pipe Bridge, Abercynon. Invasive Species Survey.

Temple (2024a) Feeder Pipe Bridge, Abercynon. Precautionary Working Method Statement – Combined for Bats, Birds, GCN, and Hazel Dormouse.

Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (England and Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2016