



Water courses and their environmental value – development of this asset’.

Presentation to Scrutiny Committee – 6th October 2015



Context/ Background

- Canals & rivers form a network of around 2000 miles across the UK.
- Rivers have provided locations for settlement over the ages, provided food and water supply and served the needs of trade and industry.
- Canals are man-made and were built as a transport system, the motorways of their day, to augment the navigable river systems.
- The network is to be overseen by the Canals & Rivers Trust, the canals already having been transferred from British Waterways and the rivers scheduled for 2015.
- Parts of the river network are owned by private owners and Bolton Council, who have responsibility for the bank and watercourse in their ownership.
- The watercourses provide a 'stream' of on-going benefits in areas of; Land Drainage & Flood Control, biodiversity, recreation & heritage.



Land Drainage & Flood Control

Bolton Council is the Land Drainage Authority and the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) for the area.

The Land Drainage Authority role involves:

- policing the functioning of watercourse and culverts and ensuring they are not blocked.
- issuing consents for the alteration of watercourses.
- ensuring development does not increase flood risk.

The Environment Agency undertake the above for the main river network.



Land Drainage & Flood Control (cont'd)

The 2010 Flood and Water Management Act places new responsibilities on Bolton Council, the main ones being:

- Locally leading on flood management.
- Mapping and registering flood defence assets including those in private ownership.
- Designating and protecting private flood defence structures.
- A duty to investigate the causes of flooding.
- The technical approval body for Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS).
- The management and maintenance of adopted SuDS systems



Land Drainage & Flood Control (cont'd)

- Bolton Council has developed, maintains, and monitors a strategy for local flood risk management, this includes a culverting policy.
- Conserving open watercourses is one of the Authority's major aims and, where possible, the Authority will encourage and promote the removal of culverts in order to restore a more natural river environment.
- The policy informs developers how watercourses can be culverted and what is expected as a way of mitigating against the effects of culverting.



Biodiversity - Ecological Designations

- Both canals and rivers may be designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Sites of Biological Importance (SBI), Local Nature Reserve (LNR).
- They are habitats listed in S41 of the NERC Act 2006 as being of principle importance for the conservation of biodiversity.
- Section 40 places a duty on public bodies to have regard for the conservation of these habitats – in all that they do!
- They are also UK and Bolton Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) habitats.



Biodiversity - Benefits

Waterways and their catchment corridors provide locations for:

- Designated habitats & Protected Species
- Fish – Brown Trout
- Amphibians – Great Crested Newt, Common Toad
- Invertebrates – Dragonflies, Butterflies
- Mammals & Bats – Otter, all UK species of bat
- Birdlife – Willow Tit, Red Data species Sparrow, Dunnock, Song Thrush
- Flora – Floating Water Plantain

Links with recreation as a main use of these corridors



Recreation

- Recreation activity along waterway corridors is often in conjunction with health, wildlife, heritage and aesthetics.
- Tow paths and riverside routes used for walking, cycling, horse riding and watching wildlife.
- In water recreation includes; boating, canoeing, fishing.



Heritage

Waterways have for centuries been at the heart of industrial development and human settlement, evidenced by:

- Old Buildings & Bridges
- Canalisation
- Industrial relicts & Adjacent mills
- Weirs & power for industry,
- Cotton & bleach works & other chemical works
- Manchester/Bolton/Bury Canal



Development

Local Projects:

- Kingfisher Trail Project – **LWT Presentation**. Improving Access & Habitats and awareness raising of, Heritage, Health & Education.
- Continue the project as a partnership with sustainable outcome of continued action across the watercourse network. Could be expanded to other river networks.
- Protection of valued habitats – land use of designated sites, moorland heath & blanket bogs to prevent downstream flooding and improve habitat biodiversity.

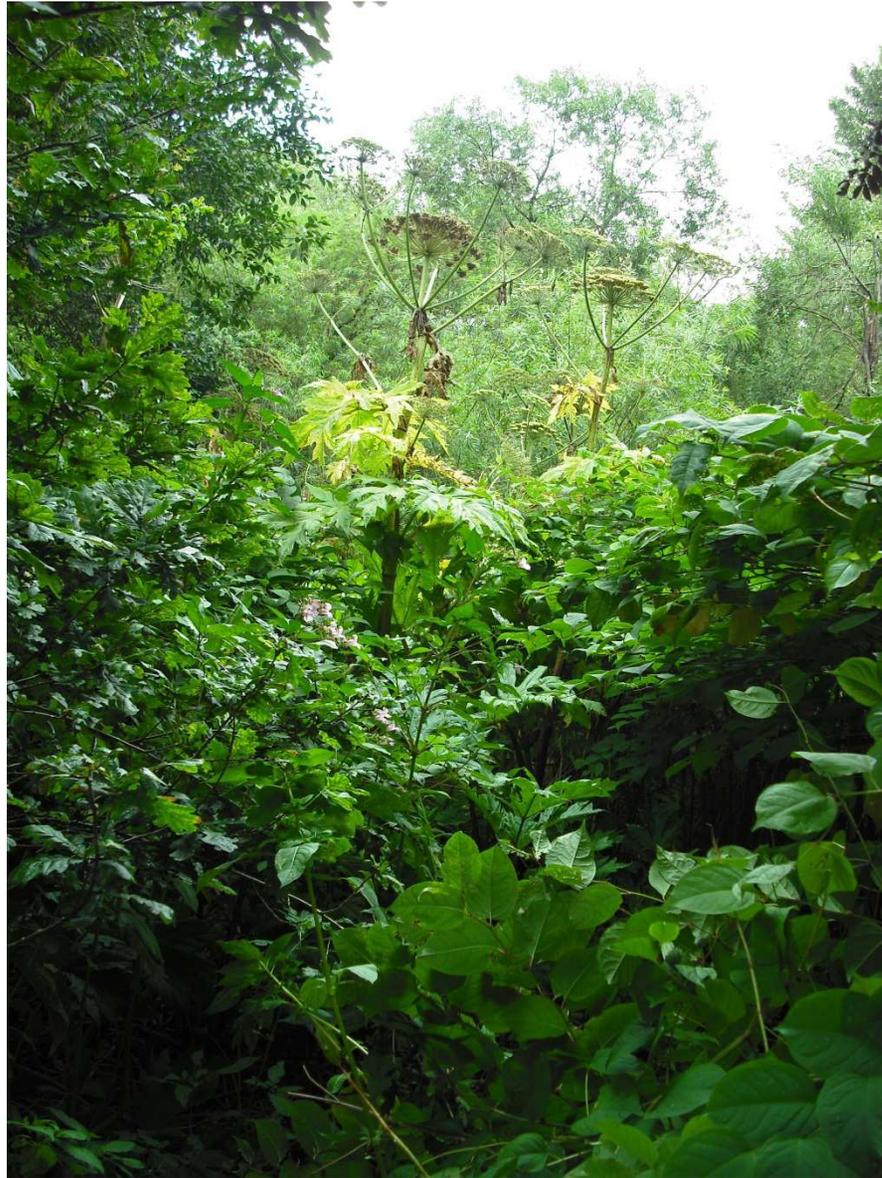




Development

- Power generation – in conjunction with wildlife benefit provision (fish pass creation)
- Development and marketing of waterside locations – Eagley Mills, Church Wharf, other brownfield sites where biodiversity benefits may accrue from development.
- Catchment wide partnerships to address issues
 - old Mersey Basin Campaign
 - address invasive weeds in a strategically planned way - on a catchment wide basis.
 - INNS project on Ribble/Douglas catchment & G.Hogweed on Croal/Irwell catchment. Mersey Basin Rivers Trust.

Giant Hogweed & Japanese Knotweed Treatment at Leverhulme LNR



Weir Re-profiling at Moses Gate LNR in partnership with the Environment Agency

