



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Parks and Leisure Committee
Subject:	Invasive Water Lily at Waterworks
Date:	14 August 2008
Reporting Officer:	Andrew Hassard, Director of Parks and Leisure
Contact Officer:	Robert Scott, Conservation and Promotion Manager Stephen Walker, Principal Parks and Cemeteries Development Manager

Relevant Background Information

In 2007 Officers from the Environment Heritage Service (EHS) identified a water lily present in the upper pond of the Waterworks as being the 'Fringed Water Lily'. This species is not native to Ireland and has almost certainly been introduced to the pond at some stage by individuals unknown. It is classed as an invasive species, which means that it grows very quickly and at present covers large areas of the upper pond. If it is permitted to grow unchecked it will eventually choke the entire pond.

Members may be aware that the upper pond of the Waterworks has been used for fishing by the group 'Families at the Waterworks' for several years and currently the water lily is making fishing difficult if not impossible from some of the fishing stands.

Officers from the Parks and Cemeteries Service have been in consultation with Environment Heritage Service (EHS) and Water Quality unit of EHS with regards to remedial action to remove the water lily.

There are two options:

- Option 1: 'mechanical removal' but this is generally considered to be counterproductive as it would leave fragments behind which would re-grow and could result in the lily being spread more quickly.
- Option 2: to spray the lily with an appropriate herbicide. As the Waterworks is part of a water system, any such proposal must be passed by the Water Quality Unit. Notwithstanding the necessary approvals, there is the risk of a small scale loss of fish stock as a result of spraying.

Officers have met with the relevant authorities and have agreed a proposed programme of spraying. It is intended that if spraying goes ahead that the 'Families of the Waterworks' will be advised of the possible loss of fish stock and a proactive press release will be issued to counter any possible adverse publicity.

Key Issues

The Committee is asked to note that:

1. there is an invasive species of water lily in the upper pond of the water works;
2. if unchecked the water lily will cover the entire pond;
3. remedial action is required;
4. discussions with EHS has concluded with a proposed programme of spraying to eradicate the water lily;
5. owing to the use of herbicides there is a risk of loss of fish in the pond;
6. there has been and will continue to be ongoing discussions with the users of the park and in particular the fishermen;
7. there may be some negative publicity as a result of the proposed action;
8. officers will seek to manage the publicity surrounding the spraying.

Resource Implications

Financial

There will be a cost for training staff in spraying, and for the cost of herbicide and sprayer.

Human Resources

There are no additional human resource implications.

Asset and Other Implications

This work will enable the pond to continue to be used for fishing.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Committee approve the course of action as outlined in this report.

Key to Abbreviations

EHS – Environment and Heritage Service

Documents Attached

None.