



INVASIVE WEED CONSULTANCY SERVICES

ADVICE NOTE

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Introduction

This advice note aims to help anyone involved with invasive weed control and in particular Japanese Knotweed. At PBA Solutions we specialise in providing technical expertise in the control of invasive weeds, enabling our clients to implement the most appropriate control method and achieve best practice throughout the control programme.

At PBA Solutions we operate in several ways:

- Fully implemented by PBA Solutions under contract.
- PBA led solutions, PBA undertake Surveys, complete Management Plans and provide site supervision through qualified Clerk of Works.
- Specialist services including root barrier installation and herbicide application are routinely completed by PBA Solutions.
- PBA solutions sell a comprehensive range of root barriers.
- Clerk of Works only – PBA act as a watching brief.
- Skilled labour (we can provide skilled labour to install root barrier, apply herbicide or supervise excavations).

The following pages introduce some of the consultancy services that we can offer.

Surveying

We suggest that any invasive weed control solution starts with a survey. It is fundamental that the location of invasive weeds is accurately plotted. There are also many benefits from accurately plotting the location of invasive weeds. If land is sold, it is important to document the location of invasive weeds or where they have been treated.

Accuracy is most important, particularly if invasive weeds have been contained using root barriers, as there is a residual risk that the root barrier may get disturbed, rendering them useless as a control method.

Surveying using GPS data collection equipment

We recommend that landowners such as councils, rail networks and highway operators record invasive weed locations using GPS data collection. If you have a number of invasive weed stands that need treating over a vast area, the utilisation of GPS data collection is very efficient. At PBA Solutions we have experienced GPS Surveyors who can map & treat invasive weed with herbicide at the same time. Once mapped herbicide technicians can efficiently locate invasive weed stands using GPS or Satellite Navigation at a later date. In short, PBA offer a very efficient and effective survey & control solution!

Ground penetrating Radar (GPR) & Invasive weeds

At PBA Solutions we are able to offer Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) to map root growth. GPR is like a virtual excavator. We all have a responsibility when we excavate and there can't be anything better than knowing what is below the ground before excavating. It is also possible to locate services, badger sets, review root barrier locations and underground services. At PBA Solutions we don't leave anything to chance.

Knotweed Management Plans/Invasive Weed Management Plans

At PBA Solutions we promote the use of Management Plans and in particular Knotweed Management Plans (KMP's). The Environment Agency suggest that KMP's are 'essential' and are an integral part of any Japanese Invasive weed control programme. In addition our consultants can undertake the role of Clerk of Works so that KMP's can be implemented as per the Environment Agency Code of Practice for controlling Japanese Knotweed 2006.

KMP's bring together important information to which a landowner must have access, both during and after invasive weed control. Documents that have legal implications, such as waste transfer notes, cell burial location plans, herbicide records and landfill exemption certificates, should be retained and recorded. KMP's enable this to happen. If for any reason a control programme is disputed in a Court of Law then it is important to prove due diligence. KMP's record the decision-making processes used to determine a control solution and go a long way to prove that due diligence has been taken.

Finally, there is always a residual risk attached to invasive weed control. At PBA Solutions we look to uncover any potential residual risks and highlight them to our clients. It would be foolish in the long run to make false promises. KMP's help with the process of understanding the residual risk attached to a control programme.

An example of residual risk is that of using root barriers on the perimeter of a development site. In time to come a service provider may want to install a new pipe, which would breach the root barrier allowing invasive weed to re-establish itself.

It is vital that landowners are furnished with information that highlights these issues. At PBA Solutions we combine KMP's with Operation & Maintenance Manuals to provide documentation required for building manuals, which are necessary to comply with building regulations.

Site Hygiene Plan

On a development site it is paramount that everyone associated with the site understand what Invasive weeds look like. Often a development starts with good intentions, in that people are confident that invasive weeds will not be disturbed. Our experience shows that in most cases invasive weeds get disturbed, often unintentionally, but never the less it happens!

It is our recommendation that an Invasive Weed Hygiene Plan is implemented. This involves us providing simple documentation for site use, pictures to help site staff identify invasive weeds and recommendations for fencing off and protecting invasive weed. We regard this as a fundamental part of any Invasive Weed Management Plan.

The single most important aspect of good hygiene is to have all known invasive weed stands fenced off. This vastly limits the risk of disturbance. Because fences need to be installed so to allow for root spread, it is beneficial to have a specialist such as PBA Solutions to install or specify fencing to ensure it is correctly located to stop invasive weed roots from being excavated.

Application for landfill tax exemption

Customs & Excise tax waste that goes to landfill. Currently the rate is £32 (April 2008) per tonne increasing year on year.

There is a lower rate currently £2.50 tonne (April 2008) applied if the waste contains less than 5% visible invasive weed. In addition, it is currently possible to get tax exemption from Customs & Excise in certain circumstances. Application for exemption requires survey data and information pertaining to historical land use. At PBA Solutions we can collect data and apply for exemption as part of the invasive weed management process.

Soil testing for other forms of contamination

It is important to ensure that waste designated for landfill is correctly described and not contaminated with anything else other than invasive weed. Contamination testing must be undertaken to accurately describe the waste. It is important that no other contaminants are present at levels which would make the proposed waste "Hazardous Waste".

Only invasive weed contaminated waste can be buried. The Environment Agency will want contamination test analysis to verify this and must be notified 1 week in advance of burial.

If a residual chemical has been applied to treat invasive weeds it may be necessary to understand how persistent it is in the soil. This is especially important if waste is going off-site or is to be buried, at PBA Solutions we can arrange for this kind of soil testing.

At PBA Solutions we can organise soil testing. When taking waste to landfill it is important to understand that testing has to be relative to the amount of waste that is to be disposed. If large volumes of soil are to come off-site, then several samples should be taken.

It is important that soil sample locations are plotted on a site plan and retained in the Invasive Weed Management Plan. The depth of sample needs to be relative to proposed excavation depth to get accurate contamination analysis data.

As invasive weed roots extend several metres in the soil profile it may be necessary to excavate to these depths to get sample material.

Environment Agency application for on-site burning

As part of a solutions package, on-site burning may be implemented. If waste is to go off-site to landfill then the method of burning dead stems is seen as a form of pre-treatment. To undertake this operation, it is important to get permission from the Environment Agency and the local council. If permission is granted, a procedure for burning must be adopted that enables burning to be completed in a safe and organised manner. It is worthy to note that even if permission is given, it is still possible to be prosecuted for causing a public nuisance. Because invasive weed stems generate a thick white smoke, it is suggested that the later point is given due consideration.

Environment Agency application for applying herbicides near water

It is important to realise that if chemicals are to be applied near water there is a risk that the chemical may contaminate the water body, and potentially kill fish or endanger humans.

The Environment Agency takes this very seriously and requires applications (WQM1 notification) to be made if herbicide is applied within 5 metres of a water body. The definition of a water body includes: drainage channels, streams, rivers, ponds, lakes, reservoirs, canals and dry ditches. PBA consulting is experienced in completing WQM1 applications and can assist clients in making application on their behalf.

Viability tests to assess rhizome status (Japanese Knotweed)

We can test samples of Knotweed rhizome, usually at the end of a treatment programme. The test is undertaken to stimulate re-growth by putting the sample in an artificial situation that is near to perfect for stimulating re-growth. A viability test helps to substantiate that invasive weed has been suitably controlled. The Environment agency (EA CoP 2006) states that Knotweed roots can stay dormant for 20 years, making viability testing an important aspect of a control programme. Where clients want to ensure that they have done everything reasonable and practical to control Japanese Knotweed this additional test should be undertaken.

At PBA we offer viability tests, either on their own or as part of an invasive weed solutions package. Viability tests should not be regarded as conclusive evidence. The service is no more than a scientific experiment and subject to a number of factors which could adversely effect the results. However at PBA we undertake to complete this work professionally using accepted scientific protocols.

Clerk of Works (watching brief)

At PBA Solutions we offer a Knotweed Clerk of Works Service throughout the UK and have staff positioned in the Midlands, London and on the South Coast.

Furthermore, once appointed we can usually get personnel on-site within 48 hours. The Environment Agency state "We recommend that you have a Clerk of Works responsible for the management of Japanese Knotweed".

They also recommend that a Japanese Knotweed Management Plan is in place. In fact they are quite forceful in the way they push this recommendation onto developers. They state that "it is essential that you set up some form of Japanese Management Plan (KMP)". They go on to say that "You need to identify a clerk of works to oversee the plan". In short, developers are obliged to seek professional advice.

Method statement for local authority approval

Planning Departments may request method statements for invasive weed control as part of the planning process. At PBA Solutions we have the expertise to provide this kind of report and are always happy to interface with Developer and Planning Departments alike, to ensure that current best practice is implemented from the outset.

Site Waste Management Plans

Since April 2008 there has been a legal requirement to complete Site Waste Management Plans. This is mandatory on all development projects over £300K. At PBA Solutions we believe that invasive weed control can have a significant impact with on-site waste management. We can advise on methods that can be used to reduce the waste generated from invasive weed control. Our innovative approach to on-site invasive weed control enables us to utilise Environment Agency current best practice with our unique services, to divert invasive weed waste from landfill.