

Report of the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Climate Change

Use of Glyphosate – Update Report

1. Purpose of Report

On 13 September 2021, a report on glyphosate usage was taken to the Environment and Climate Change committee. A number of actions were agreed as an outcome of the meeting, along with a recommendation to bring back an update report to Members. The purpose of this report is to inform Members on progress to date and provide an update on current glyphosate usage across the Borough.

2. Recommendation

Cabinet is asked to NOTE progress to date and RESOLVE that the current methods of treatment be approved.

3. Detail

Since their introduction in the 1970s, glyphosate based herbicides have been a cost effective weed control method for local authorities. In recent years there has been greater interest in its use, following concerns about its effects on public health and the environment. However, failure to control weeds can create longer term problems, as it can lead to damage to pavements and other hard surfaces.

Across the Borough, glyphosate is used to control weeds growing in the following areas:

- On the highway. Managed as part of the grass cutting and weed control contract with Via East Midlands.
- On parks, green spaces and cemeteries. This is used to treat areas around the base of young trees and memorials as it helps to prevent damage by Grounds Maintenance machinery.

The Council has been exploring a variety of methodologies to support the reduction of glyphosate usage across the Borough. Since 2018, glyphosate usage on parks, green spaces and cemeteries has reduced by 27%. Since 2021, its usage for highway weed control has been reduced by 44%. These reductions have been achieved by advancements in spraying technology used by contractors on their vehicles and by increasing the dilution levels of glyphosate. Further detail is provided in the **Appendix**.

Glyphosate usage has been approved in the UK until at least 2025 and it remains a cost-effective weed control tool for the Council. However, due to public health and environmental concerns, the Council continues to look for ways

to reduce its use including exploring the use of other complementary methodologies for weed removal.

4. Key Decision

As the use of glyphosate takes place across the Borough, this report will be a key decision as defined under Regulation 8 of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012.

5. Updates from Scrutiny

Not Applicable.

6. Financial Implications

The comments from the Head of Finance Services were as follows:

There are no additional financial implications to consider with ongoing operations continuing to be met within existing budget resources.

7. Legal Implications

The comments from the Monitoring Officer / Head of Legal Services were as follows:

The Council has a duty of care to the public, including ensuring weeds do not pose a hazard. Untreated weeds in hard paved surfaces may create a trip hazard and contribute to accelerated wear and tear of paving and tarmac. Sufficient control of weed growth on the public highway therefore helps to reduce the risk of injury, damage to property, and any related insurance claims. Additionally, glyphosate a non-selective systematic herbicide remains approved for use in the UK until 2025.

8. Human Resources Implications

The comments from the Human Resources Manager were as follows:

Not Applicable.

9. Union Comments

The Union comments were as follows:

Not Applicable.

10. Climate Change Implications

The use of glyphosate for weed killing raises concerns due to its potential implications on climate change as it can contribute to environmental degradation and biodiversity loss. Its impact on soil health, water quality and non-target plant/animal species can disrupt ecosystems, which could lead to an exacerbation of climate change impacts. Therefore, careful consideration and alternative strategies are essential to minimise the environmental footprint associated with glyphosate usage, which will help to mitigate its contribution to climate change.

11. Data Protection Compliance Implications

This report does not contain any OFFICIAL(SENSITIVE) information and there are no Data Protection issues in relation to this report.

12. Equality Impact Assessment

Not Applicable.

13. Background Papers

Nil