

Report of the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Climate Change

Glyphosate Update

1. Purpose of Report

To provide Members with an update on pesticide usage across the Borough and to seek approval to implement a targeted trial of reduced pesticide use, including alternative management approaches, within selected parks and open spaces.

2. Recommendation

Cabinet is asked to RESOLVE that:

- 1. The development of a Pesticide Usage Policy be approved.**
- 2. The implementation of a trial to cease pesticide use in selected parks and open spaces be approved.**

3. Detail

The Council currently uses nonselective herbicide products to support the management of weeds across the Borough. This is to help maintain safe, accessible and well-maintained public spaces. Effective weed control remains essential as unmanaged vegetation can damage pavements and hard surfaces, obstruct drainage, reduce accessibility, and create trip hazards.

Glyphosate-based herbicides make up most of the pesticide use across the Borough and have historically provided a cost-effective and efficient method of weed control.

In recent years there has been increasing scrutiny of pesticide use, particularly in relation to potential impacts on human health and the environment. At the same time, there is a clear policy direction towards reducing reliance on chemical controls, while recognising the need to balance this with effective and safe management in the public realm.

Several reports have previously been considered by Members, including at the Environment and Climate Change Committee in September 2021 and at Cabinet in June 2024. These have established a consistent direction of travel towards reducing glyphosate use, whilst maintaining the ability to manage operational and safety requirements.

Although pesticide usage has reduced in recent years, there remains a need to review current practices and develop a more comprehensive and resilient long-term approach, particularly considering the uncertainty around the future approval of glyphosate beyond December 2026.

Across the Borough, glyphosate is currently used for:

- Highways (on behalf of Nottinghamshire County Council), which represents the largest area of pesticide use and covers the adopted highway network, including town centres.
- Parks, green spaces and cemeteries, where use is primarily targeted, for example around the base of young trees and memorials to prevent damage from maintenance equipment.

Proposed approach

To support the development of a more comprehensive and consistent approach to pesticide use, it is proposed that two complementary workstreams are progressed.

Firstly, the Council will develop a formal Pesticide Usage Policy, setting out a clear framework for the use, reduction and management of pesticides across all service areas. This will be developed during the current year and will be considered initially through the Policy Overview Working Group to enable Member input and feedback.

Secondly, to inform the development of this policy and provide an evidence base for future decision-making, it is proposed to introduce a targeted trial of reduced pesticide use. The trial will apply across selected Council-managed parks and open spaces, with particular emphasis on high-use areas, including major parks and those with children's play facilities.

Within the trial areas, routine pesticide use will cease. Alternative management approaches will be implemented and tested, including increased mechanical and manual weed control and other appropriate methodologies. The Council will retain the ability to apply targeted pesticide treatments where necessary for defined health and safety purposes or for the management of path surfaces.

The trial will apply across 38 parks and open spaces (**Appendix 1**) and will be used to assess impacts on site condition, maintenance requirements, resource implications, biodiversity and public perception. Opportunities to introduce complementary measures, such as no-mow areas and other sustainable landscaping approaches, will also be considered, alongside other emerging methodologies where appropriate.

Public consultation will also form part of the evaluation of the trial. This will be incorporated into the annual Parks Standard Survey undertaken by the Environment team in July and August, with additional questions included to capture resident feedback on the approach to reduced pesticide use. Findings from the trial will inform both the development of the Pesticide Usage Policy and future reporting to Cabinet.

4. Key Decision

This report is a key decision as defined under Regulation 8 of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012, as it effects communities living or working in an area comprising two or more Wards.

5. Updates from Scrutiny

Not applicable.

6. Financial Implications

The comments from the Interim Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer were as follows:

The proposed trial of reduced pesticide use may result in increased costs associated with alternative weed management approaches, including mechanical and manual methods. These impacts will be monitored and assessed as part of the trial.

The costs arising from the trial are expected to be managed within existing revenue budgets. Any wider roll-out of reduced pesticide use across the Borough may have additional resource requirements. These will be fully considered and reported to Cabinet as part of future proposals.

7. Legal Implications

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

There are no direct legal implications arising from this report, as Glyphosate is a non-selective, systematic herbicide that remains approved for use in the UK.

8. Human Resources Implications

Not applicable.

9. Union Comments

Not applicable.

10. Climate Change Implications

There are no direct climate change implications arising from the proposed approach to pesticide use. However, reduced reliance on pesticides and the adoption of alternative management practices may deliver indirect benefits through enhanced biodiversity and habitat quality across the Boroughs parks and open spaces.

This supports the Council's wider objectives in relation to blue-green infrastructure and aligns with the principles set out in the Climate Change and Green Futures Strategy.

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.