

## **Scope – Weed Control Review**

### **Background**

Moray Council's Economic Development and Infrastructure Committee of 7 February 2023 considered a [report](#) on the Council's use of Glyphosate to control weeds in open spaces and accepted the recommended proposals to reduce the use of Glyphosate in certain settings through a managed approach without additional cost to the Council.

Following consideration, the Committee agreed to:

- (i) note that, although there are public concerns, Glyphosate is legally approved for use in Great Britain until December 2025 and that it continues to be the most cost effective and efficient method of managing weeds;
- (ii) approve the proposals to reduce the use of Glyphosate through a managed approach in certain settings, and note that, whilst these can be introduced without additional cost, a greater presence of weeds and longer vegetation would need to be accepted and tolerated within the environment;
- (iii) note that Officers will continue to monitor the cost and effectiveness of alternative approaches of weed control; and
- (iv) that a further report be brought to a future meeting of this Committee detailing how Glyphosate will be phased out by 2025.

Also, on 3 February 2023 Moray Council declared a Nature Emergency. The declaration recognises the current state of nature, its intrinsic value to society and highlights the urgent need to aid its recovery and restoration, which in turn plays a part in recognising climate targets. The Council also welcomed the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy, which brings statutory targets for public authorities, to meet the challenges of the nature crisis.

In addition, the Council's Economic Development & Infrastructure Committee agreed a [Nature and Biodiversity Position Statement](#) at its meeting on 2 May 2023. This includes an action to increase nature positive management of council land.

The Council's Environmental Protection/Open Space service manages and maintains parks, amenity green spaces, core paths, woodlands, and burial grounds. This includes circa: 65 Schools, 74 football pitches, 700 hectares of grass, 105,000 m<sup>2</sup> shrub beds, 11,000 m<sup>2</sup> rose beds, 5,000 m<sup>2</sup> annual flower beds, 60,000 m<sup>2</sup> hedges, 964 core paths totalling over 1,000 kilometres of path, 260 litter bins, 1000 park benches, 120 picnic benches, 118 fixed outdoor play areas, 19,000 m<sup>2</sup> woodchip safety surfacing, 210 hectares of community/amenity woodlands, control of non-native invasive species, 65 Burial grounds and 44 war memorials.

### **Brief**

Moray Council wishes to procure external services to:

## **1. Review the Council's current methods of weed control:**

- Identify and quantify the range of weed control processes (sweeping, herbicide applications, manual removal etc.) being undertaken by the Council's operational services, including Open Space Operations and Waste Services Operations
- Outline the benefits, challenges and risks with the current processes.
- Identify any improvements relating to the processes
- Undertake an Environmental Impact Assessment of the current processes used. This should include carbon emissions, waste production and biodiversity and climate change impacts

## **2. Use of Herbicides with Glyphosate**

- Carry out a review of the current position regarding products containing Glyphosate and detail the benefits, challenges and risks of using this type of product

## **3. Review of potential alternatives to replace the use of Glyphosate**

- Identify measures currently being applied by other local authorities within Scotland and outline any benefits, challenges and risks
- Identify measures currently being applied outwith Scotland and outline the benefits, challenges and risks
- Undertake a cost comparison between each method, broken down into plant, labour and materials for each option and including both revenue and capital costs
- Undertake an Environmental Impact Assessment of the potential alternative methods of control. This should include carbon emissions, waste production and biodiversity and climate change impacts

## **4. Develop and cost an integrated weed management action plan for Moray detailing how it can phase out the use of Glyphosate by December 2025:**

- Outline the benefits, challenges and risks with this alternative approach
- Develop a costed action plan to identify and detail the actions and changes the Council must make to phase out the use of Glyphosate by December 2025. To include options for managing invasive non-native species.
- Costs must include all capital costs and annual revenue costs to clearly detail the financial benefits and / or implications compared to current costs and methods of control – this should include costs for labour, vehicles, plant, fuel and material
- Undertake an Environmental Impact Assessment for the integrated weed management action plan and approach. This should include carbon emissions, waste production and biodiversity and climate change impacts
- Set out key information on risks/benefits of removing the use of all herbicides for weed control

Note:

- It is anticipated that a committee report covering all areas of the review scope would be developed as a result of this study. This would likely be reported to a future council / management meeting for consideration
- Sources for references made to other case studies should be included along with scientific data to objectively demonstrate the effectiveness and success rates for each of the options. The inclusion of visuals to illustrate the methods of control and before, during and after treatments is expected to be included.
- Proposals must align with national policies and legislation, including the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy
- Risks should include the link to some forms of cancer, impacts on biodiversity including pollinators