



WRITTEN QUESTION FOR SUBMISSION TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES COMMITTEE ON 21 JUNE 2022

QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR WARREN

Many constituents have been in contact regarding the process the Council use for weed control, many seeing it as a blanket, indiscriminate use of weedkiller along many of our paths, parks and playing fields. I've been informed by officers that the weedkiller that we use contains glyphosate, which can be harmful to wildlife, humans and our environment. It is also my understanding that some authorities have already stopped using Glyphosate for weed control.

Can details be provided in regard to the process that is used to decide which areas are treated in this manner, if other alternative methods can be used for weed control in these areas; what best practice can be learned from other authorities, and whether this includes stopping the use of weedkillers containing glyphosate?

Cllr Sonya Warren

RESPONSE

The Council does use weed-killer to manage vegetation growth on paths, verges and hard standing where the active ingredient used is glyphosate, a legally approved (UK and Europe) non-selective systemic weed killer.

The effective use of this weed killer allows us to manage our open spaces (e.g. around obstacles such as lampposts, cemetery paths and Highway streets) in a cost effective manner. That said we do try to minimise usage and we also utilise other forms of weed/vegetation control such as strimming and mulching of shrubberies.

Benchmarking has recently been carried out via APSE (Association for Public Service Excellence). Some authorities have used Foam Stream Systems. These systems do work on hard standing areas, but more frequent visits are required. Also, due to the restriction of the hoses, packing and unpacking when the

vehicle needs to move means that they have limited use. They wouldn't be suitable for treating long linear areas along footpaths, highways and housing estates, although could well be a great alternative for play areas, game courts, public realm etc. We understand that they can't be used on landscaped areas as they would have a detrimental effect on plants and soil structure.

In conclusion there are some alternatives to glyphosate however they all come with their own factors or environmental factors that must be considered when making a decision on what control measures are being used, this would also include additional treatments due to weed control being less effective.

- Additional or increased costs for alternative products,
- Increased resources and costs for additional labour and vehicles including fuel.
- Environmental factors, additional significant water usage, CO2 emissions.
- Public disruption, application in busy areas, hoses, foam, hot steam. (hoses, pipes trailer, generators are not suitable for many areas tangled / a trip point)
- Effectiveness of treatment/need for additional treatments and site visits (resources and costs)

Officers are keeping an open mind regarding alternatives and continue to use all chemicals intelligently.