

# REPORT FOR DECISION



<b>DECISION OF:</b>	<b>Cabinet</b>
<b>DATE:</b>	<b>Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> June 2019</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Councils use of Glyphosate Herbicide</b>
<b>REPORT FROM:</b>	<b>Cabinet Member for Environment</b>
<b>CONTACT OFFICER:</b>	<b>Neil Long - Assistant Director (Operations)</b>
<b>TYPE OF DECISION:</b>	<b>Non key decision</b>
<b>FREEDOM OF INFORMATION/STATUS:</b>	<b>Within the public domain</b>
<b>SUMMARY:</b>	<p>This report updates Members with regard to the Council's use of glyphosate herbicide for weed control and concerns raised by residents.</p> <p>The Council should take a balanced and proportionate approach to the use of herbicides, taking account of the latest scientific research on health, environmental and biodiversity impacts.</p>
<b>OPTIONS &amp; RECOMMENDED OPTION</b>	A review will be carried out of the latest evidence of the impact of glyphosate and the effectiveness and cost of the alternatives. A further report to be submitted to Cabinet by the end of September 2019. This will include a pesticide and herbicide reduction strategy.
<b>IMPLICATIONS:</b>	
<b>Corporate Aims/Policy Framework:</b>	Do the proposals accord with the Policy Framework? Yes
<b>Statement by the S151 Officer: Financial Implications and Risk Considerations:</b>	There are some minimal costs (circa £6000) associated with trialling alternatives to Glyphosate, which can be funded from within the existing 2019/20 budget. On that basis, this proposal is supported.

<b>Equality/Diversity implications:</b>	
<b>Considered by Monitoring Officer:</b>	Yes JH There are no legal implications at this stage and it is to be noted that the review will be based on the latest research and evidence.
<b>Wards Affected:</b>	All
<b>Scrutiny Interest:</b>	Overview and Scrutiny Committee

## TRACKING/PROCESS

## DIRECTOR:

Joint Executive Team/CCMT	Cabinet Member/Chair Briefed	Ward Members (if necessary)	Partners
	Environment Portfolio 14 <sup>th</sup> June 2019		
Scrutiny Committee	Other Committee	Council	Comms
	Cabinet 19 <sup>th</sup> June 2019		

## 1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Glyphosate is a highly effective herbicide with one of the broadest spectrums of control, killing many different weed species effectively and systemically. It is absorbed by leaves and moves inside the plant to the growing points and roots. It is widely used in agriculture prior to sowing crops and is available to the public in well-known products such as Roundup.
- 1.2 Bury Council staff and contractors have been using glyphosate herbicide to control weeds on footways, carriageways, cemeteries, parks, playgrounds, schools and SixTown housing sites. All spraying operations are carried out in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations. The Council also uses glyphosate to control invasive species (e.g. Japanese Knotweed) in parks and other open spaces such as river banks.
- 1.3 Weed spraying is carried out twice per annum. The first spray is usually carried out in spring (weather permitting) and the second spray in late summer. In 2017/18 a single spray was trialled but this resulted in high levels of weed growth and many complaints. In addition to the visual impact of weeds, they can result in claims from trips and damage to hard surfaces.
- 1.4 Glyphosate was first registered for use in the United States in 1974. There is a rigorous approvals process for use of pesticides and herbicides such as glyphosate. Through this process glyphosate has been approved as safe when used in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations. In addition, there is a regular EU approval and review programme for active substances. Glyphosate was last reviewed by the EU in 2017 and received approval for continued use as a herbicide from

6<sup>th</sup> December 2017 to 15<sup>th</sup> December 2022 based on a review of current scientific and technical knowledge.

- 1.5 Public Health England acknowledges the European Chemicals Agency (EChA) declaration that glyphosate should not be classified as a carcinogen and advises that the public should continue to use weed killers containing glyphosate in accordance to manufacturer's instructions.
- 1.6 The International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) has identified that glyphosate is a class 2a carcinogen. This classification as a 'probable human carcinogen' falls between class 1 'human carcinogen' for which regulation is needed and class 2b 'possible carcinogen' for which more research is needed. A classification is used to undertake risk assessment and inform risk management and mitigation. For example, processed meat is classified by IARC as a class 1 human carcinogen. This classification is used to inform recommendations on levels of dietary intake.
- 1.7 Unfortunately scientific evidence is not always clear. For example, formulations and exposure patterns to glyphosate have changed over time and some of the studies on which the IARC based their classification reflect older exposure circumstances.

## **2.0 ISSUES**

- 2.1 The Council has recently received enquiries from concerned residents regarding the use of glyphosate. Reasons for concern generally relate to biodiversity, wildlife and whether there may be any harmful effects of using or being in contact with glyphosate. There has been an increased interest following recent court cases in the United States where the use of glyphosate was suggested as a potential cause of cancer.
- 2.2 An on-line Bury Council petition went live on 7<sup>th</sup> May 2019 submitted by a Prestwich resident. The petition requests the Council to 'stop the use of Glyphosate herbicides in Bury'. The petition will be live for 3 months until the 7<sup>th</sup> August 2019.
- 2.3 A group of residents have also raised their concerns with their Local MP, the Leader of the Council and the Cabinet Member for Environment. The residents group are particularly concerned that glyphosate is being used in parks and playgrounds where children may have greater contact. The use of glyphosate in play areas and parks has been stopped while the Council carries out a review of the evidence and options.
- 2.4 The Council recognises the importance of biodiversity and protecting ecosystems from environmental harm. Irrespective of the health issues, the Council is seeking ways to carry out its operations in more environmentally friendly ways.
- 2.5 Over the next 3 months the Council will carry out a review of the latest research on the impact of using glyphosate on health the environment and biodiversity. The effectiveness and cost of alternates will be considered. The alternatives to glyphosate include:

- Manual weeding;
- Thermal systems (hot foam, steam or flame); and
- Natural products (pelargonic or acetic acid).

### **3.0 CONCLUSION**

- 3.1 The Council should take a balanced and proportionate approach to the use of herbicides, taking account of the latest scientific research on the health, environmental and biodiversity impact.
- 3.2 A review will be carried out of the latest evidence of the impact of glyphosate and the effectiveness and cost of the alternatives. A further report to be submitted to Cabinet by the end of September 2019. This will include a pesticide and herbicide reduction strategy and a community engagement strategy (i.e. residents, volunteers and volunteer groups to work with the Council to control weed growth and where appropriate).
- 3.2 An immediate moratorium on the use of glyphosate herbicide in play areas and parks is in place while the review is carried out.

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#### **List of Background Papers:-**

None

#### **Contact Details:-**

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