

Council

Tuesday, 26th January 2021, 6.30 pm
Microsoft Teams

Agenda No	Item
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4	Public Questions
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The response to the question is enclosed for information.

Gary Hall
Chief Executive

Electronic agendas sent to Members of the Council

If you need this information in a different format, such as larger print or translation, please get in touch on 515151 or chorley.gov.uk

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Public question received from Andy Hunter-Rossall.**Glyphosate use**

In 2019 almost 1000 people signed a petition to Chorley Council on Change.org calling for them to stop spraying Glyphosates in public spaces.

In March 2020 Chorley Council introduced thermal weeding equipment to reduce the use of herbicides.

In response to a complaint that glyphosates were still being used on Eaves Green Road in October 2020, I received a response that included the following:

“The council restricts [glyphosate’s] use to highway weeds and invasive species.”

“Due to health and safety concerns when working adjacent to the highway, all routes with high volume or speed are treated with glyphosate so that we can remove the need for someone walking in the highway.”

“This year the use of glyphosate across the borough has reduced by 35% compared to 2019.”

I have questioned this justification but received no further response. Can the council confirm that they don’t think walking down the pavement of Eaves Green Road is safe? And can they please tell me what they are doing to make it safe for residents. Or if it is safe, can the Council assure me that these subjective statements about volume and speed will not continue inappropriately in perfectly safe working environments to undermine efforts to eliminate the use of herbicides?

Given that only a 35% reduction has been achieved this year, can the council please let me know what they are doing to further reduce the use of glyphosates?

Further, glyphosates are still being used in the borough by the County Council, housing associations and various other landowners and grounds maintenance contractors. Can the Council confirm that their commitment to reducing the use of glyphosates extends to promoting the use of alternatives with partners and contractors, and does the Council have any measure of the total quantities of the herbicide still being used in the borough?

**Response from the Executive Member (Customer, Advice and Streetscene Services)
Councillor Adrian Lowe**

Thank you for the question regarding the council’s use of glyphosate.

Chorley Council is required to control weeds within the highways on behalf of Lancashire County Council which historically has been entirely achieved using glyphosate-based herbicides applied using a specially adapted quad bike.

The Council has recently committed to reducing its glyphosate usage for weed control following concerns raised by residents and more widely. We have done this through both the use of thermic hot air blowers and restricting use of glyphosate in our parks and open spaces.

In 2020 the thermic hot air kits were introduced as a way of reducing our glyphosate usage.

The main shortcoming of this method of application is that a fully mobile solution is not yet available. This makes it unsafe to use on roads with high traffic volume or speed as it is necessary to walk in the highway to treat weeds in the kerb side.

When working within 0.5 m of the highway traffic management safety measures need to be in place, this includes working on the pavements.

Unfortunately, these considerations have meant that the council has so far been unable to commit to ceasing herbicide application completely.

We continue to use the quad bike that allows for the safe application of herbicide as efficiently as possible. This reduces the amount of time spent working in the road and keeps our staff safe. For practical reasons, where a quad bike is deployed to treat the roads it will also be used to treat the pavements.

On quieter roads, where it is safe to do so, the hot air blowers are used and this has resulted in a 35% reduction in glyphosate usage.

We continue to look for alternative methods of weed control but will continue to use glyphosate to treat invasive non-native species such as Japanese Knotweed and Himalayan Balsam until effective, alternative methods are available.

I would like to emphasise that glyphosate is still a fully licensed product within the UK. Nonetheless, I can confirm the council's commitment to continue to work towards reducing its own usage.

Whilst the council does not hold information about the quantity of herbicide being used in the borough, we will reach out to partners and other organisations working in the borough to gain a better understanding of this and to promote and encourage the use of alternative methods of weed control where possible.