

Report

Report to:	Climate Change and Sustainability Committee
Date:	2 February 2022
Report by:	Executive Director (Community and Enterprise Resources)

Subject:	Pesticide Free Council Motion Update
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1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The purpose of the report is to: -

- ♦ provide an update on work done to date in respect of the motion approved at the full Council meeting on 16 December 2020 on a 'Pesticide free Council'.

2. Recommendation(s)

2.1. The Committee is asked to approve the following recommendation(s):

- (1) Note the content of the report;
- (2) that the next steps, as outlined in section 7 of the report, be approved.

3. Background

3.1. On the 16 December 2020, the Council considered a motion regarding a proposal for South Lanarkshire to become a Pesticide free Council. It was agreed that a report be submitted to the Climate Change and Sustainability Committee to look at the following:-

- ♦ Identify and audit the extent of the Council's spending on pesticides and herbicides (Task 1)
- ♦ Explain the current pesticide and herbicide policy stating, for public information, the uses made of pesticides and herbicides by the Council and where they were currently used (Task 2)
- ♦ Consider both the costs and efficacy of alternative weed control methods and to consider the use of pesticide and herbicide along with the feasibility of free zones in partnership with local groups, where appropriate (Task 3)
- ♦ Consider the implications of being a pesticide-free Council and whether to set a timetable for the phased elimination of pesticide and herbicide use by Council resources and their contractors (Task 4)

3.2. Update reports have been presented to the Climate Change and Sustainability Committee on 10 February 2021 and 25 August 2021 providing an update on each of the four tasks and it was agreed that a further report would be provided to a future meeting of this Committee.

4. Current Position

- 4.1. The Council's Grounds Services teams have continued to apply glyphosate-based herbicide using, water-based tank mixes in knapsacks or motorised vehicles. They have used CDA controlled droplet applicators on all council owned land, including hard stand public footpaths and roads, fence lines, gravel paths, cemetery head row borders, tree base and obstacles.
- 4.2. As indicated in previous reports, the service has, in the past, reviewed where and how it used glyphosate, with staff requested to only apply appropriately and where needed. If glyphosate was applied across all areas identified in the table below, the service should be using 5,250 litres per annum. Based on 2019 usage levels, information highlights that, through changes in practice pre-2019, the service had already reduced usage by 16%.

Areas	Size	Frequency of Operation
Road channel, pavements, kerb lines	5,240 km	2
Shrub Beds – spot treatment	1,400,000 m2	2
Care of Gardens – hard standing	2,600 properties	2
Grass Edging	1,963,000 linear metres	
Non-Native Invasive Species	6,500m2	
Hard Standing areas (paths etc)	2,500,000 m2	2
Base of Obstacles	21,000	2

- 4.3. As agreed, the service has also continued to review the use of glyphosate applications and treatments to reduce the volume of herbicide being applied. An analysis of herbicide usage in 2021 has indicated that there has been a reduction of 400 litres or approximately 9% compared to the 4,516 litres used in 2019.

5. Trials

- 5.1. As outlined in the previous Committee report, Grounds Services have also undertaken trials/demonstrations of four alternative methods of weed control throughout 2021, being:

- ◆ Hot Foam
- ◆ Hot Steam
- ◆ New Way Spray
- ◆ Mankar Ultra Low Volume lance

By way of comparison, Appendix 1 provides details of the findings of the pilots/demonstrations over a 1-hectare area. It should be noted that the total area as detailed in Table 1 above equates to 525 hectares

- 5.2. Unfortunately, the trials have not identified any suitable replacement that could be used across all land types, and this has made it impossible to accurately evaluate the financial implications. In addition, given the various environmental impacts associated with each of the alternatives, the service is still trying to identify a suitable environmental indicator that would allow a comparison across options. The service will continue to investigate ways of evaluating the environmental impacts of the alternatives.
- 5.3. The service, through piloting the Hot Foam alternative, established that, while not applicable for widespread usage, a suitable use for this type of machinery had been identified and have now purchased the machine that was on hire. The machine will

focus on those areas where we have stated that we will either reduce or not use herbicides (Green flag Parks) and in dealing with non-native invasive plants. It will also be piloted in other areas to identify if its use could be expanded into other areas, and this will hopefully further reduce future use of glyphosate.

- 5.4. Findings to date on the alternative methods of control clearly demonstrate the increased costs and efficacy of alternative weed control methods. Whilst the alternatives can be far more costly and less effective with reduced kill periods, consideration should be given, going forward, to some of these alternatives in particular situations or locations.
- 5.5. The service has been approached by several groups/individuals regarding the introduction of herbicide free areas. The service, through discussions with local groups/individuals will look to progress the removal of herbicides from an agreed area during 2022, allowing an evaluation of the actual impact and subsequent feedback by residents/users of the area.

6. Best Practice

- 6.1. Ground Services attended the annual Amenity Forum conference in October 2021 which, although providing detailed insight in relation to alternative methods confirmed that the areas currently being considered are appropriate and that integrated approaches in dealing with weed control are most likely to be the way forward.
- 6.2. It also provided additional information on new legislation which will be detailed in the “New National Action Plan on the Sustainable use of Pesticides”, this is a five-year plan which aims to minimise the risks and impacts of pesticides to human health and the environment. It will be national legislation covering all areas of the UK and will be delivered in support of Government targets across the UK on biodiversity and carbon net zero. The service will continue to participate in Forum meetings and events to ensure that it is up to date with current best practice.
- 6.3. Grounds Services, in partnership with Rotherham City Council, led a workshop on alternatives to Glyphosate, at the APSE awards ceremony held on the 2/3 December in Blackpool. This highlighted that the approach being taken by the Council is at a more advanced stage than the majority of Councils in attendance.
- 6.4. The Service continues to await the outcomes of the Scottish Government led Weed Control survey completed in January 2021. Timescales for this are not available at this time, however, the Service will continue to seek an output from this survey through the APSE Grounds and Streets Advisory Group so that it can inform the final report.

7. Next Steps

- 7.1. Although good progress has been made in 2021, with a reduction in herbicide usage of approximately 9% and the introduction of one of the alternative treatment methods for a specific area, further work is required to identify other potential opportunities to expand their use.
- 7.2. The service is also of the view that, before further significant changes are implemented, it would be beneficial to see the outcomes of the Scottish Government led Weed Control survey and the “New National Action Plan on the Sustainable use of Pesticides” to ensure any potential changes to our service align with national strategies.
- 7.3. The Service would, therefore, propose that in 2022 it undertakes the following actions in relation to alternative methods and in preparation for the new legislation.
 - ◆ Continue to review how and where Glyphosate based products are applied targeting a further 10% reduction in 2022.
 - ◆ Investigate opportunities to expand use of hot foam alternative
 - ◆ Investigate opportunities to introduce Mankar Ultra Low Volume lance alternative in some areas
 - ◆ Continue to investigate alternative methods of control as a further two options were identified through attendance at APSE/Amenity Forum events, with demos planned for 2022.
 - ◆ Investigate an accurate method of evaluating the environmental impact of all options to allow comparison
 - ◆ Continue to participate in the amenity forum and work with colleagues in other authorities and APSE to implement best practice
 - ◆ Undertake consultation with residents of SLC with regards to agreeing at least one pilot herbicide free area to allow accurate evaluation of the impact and views of residents
 - ◆ Provide an update report on the impact of pilots/changes made in 2022 to a future meeting of this Committee

8. Employee Implications

- 8.1. There are no employee implications based on this report, however some employees may be diverted from their current duties to support the ongoing trials.

9. Financial Implications

- 9.1. There are no financial implications based on this report, however, the service may be required to fund additional costs during 2022 if it pilots further alternative products.
- 9.2. Depending on the final decision on how the Council will manage weeds, then there may be significant financial implications in the future.

10. Climate Change, Sustainability and Environmental Implications

- 10.1. Action 12 in the Council's Biodiversity Duty Implementation Plan commits to the review of herbicide application and subsequent reduction in use.
- 10.2. Although there is an environmental benefit from the reduction in the use of herbicides, the findings from the trial of the alternative methods to date has identified the introduction of additional environmental impacts e.g., an extensive increase in the use of water in both the Hot Foam and Hot Water treatments, increased use of diesel-powered generators to heat the water and additional use of diesel vehicles to transport the plant and staff.

11. Other Implications

11.1. There are no implications for risk in terms of the information contained within this report

12. Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements

12.1. This report does not introduce a new policy, function or strategy or recommend a change to an existing policy, function or strategy and, therefore, no impact assessment is required

12.2. There is no requirement to undertake any consultation at this time in terms of the information contained in this report. However, as detailed proposals are developed, these will be subject to appropriate consultation arrangements.

Alistair McKinnon

Interim Executive Director (Community and Enterprise Resources)

12 January 2022

Link(s) to Council Objectives and Values

- ◆ Improve the quality of life of everyone in South Lanarkshire
- ◆ Make communities safer, stronger and sustainable
- ◆ Improve health, care and wellbeing
- ◆ Work with communities and partners to promote high quality thriving and sustainable communities
- ◆ Improve the road network, influence improvements in public transport and encourage active travel

Previous References

- ◆ Climate Change & Sustainability Committee 25th August 2021 – Pesticide Free Council Motion Update
- ◆ Climate Change & Sustainability Committee 10th February 2021 – Pesticide Free Council Motion Update
- ◆ South Lanarkshire Council Committee 16 December 2020 – Pesticide Free Council Motion

List of Background Papers

- ◆ None

Contact for Further Information

If you would like to inspect the background papers or want further information, please contact: -

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Appendix 1

Appendix 1 Comparison based on treating 1 Hectare 10,000m2			Environmental Impact				Financial Consequences	
Method Used	Appliance Method	Time taken	Chemical	New Equip	Fuel	Water used	Recurring	One Off
Glyphosate (Current method)	Quad Bike	5hrs (2 hrs 30 minutes x 2 visits) £137.20	10 Litres (5 Litres x 2 visits) £60.00	N/A £0.00	1.2 Litres (0.6 Litres petrol x 2 visits) £1.50	400 litres (200 litres x 2 visits) £0.00	£198.70	£0.00
Glyphosate (Current method)	Knapsack	10hrs (5 hrs x 2 visits) £274.40	10 Litres (5 Litres x 2 visits) £60.00	N/A £0.00	N/A £0.00	400 Litres (200 litres x 2 visits) £0.00	£334.40	£0.00
Hot Foam	Hot Foam application	280hrs (10 days x 7hrs x 4 visits) £7,683.20	160 litres (20 litre drum x 2 x 4 visits) £1,400	Foam Unit + trailer £23,000.00	200 (50 Litres deisel x 4 visits) £200.00	120000 litres (30,000 litres x 4 Visits) £0.00	£9,283.20	£23,000.00
Hot Steam	Hot Steam application	280hrs (10 days x 7hrs x 4 visits) £7,683.20	No Chemical £0.00	Foam Unit + trailer £23,000.00	200 (50 Litres deisel x 4 visits) £200.00	120000 litres (30,000 litres x 4 Visits) £0.00	£7,883.20	£23,000.00
New Way Spray	Knapsack	20hrs (5 hrs x 4 visits) £548.80	1000 Litres (250 Litres x 4 visits) £6,000	N/A £0.00	N/A £0.00	3000 Litres (750 litres x 4 visits) £0.00	£6,548.80	£0.00
Manquar ultra low volume	ultra low volume applicator	21hrs (1.5 days x 7 x 2 visits) £576.24	6 Litres (3 Litres x 2 visits) £40.00	Lances £600	N/A £0.00	No Water £0.00	£616.24	£600.00