

Minutes of a meeting of the Regeneration and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on Tuesday, 31 January 2023 in Council Chamber - City Hall, Bradford

Commenced 5.32 pm
Concluded 6.25 pm

Present – Councillors

LABOUR	CONSERVATIVE	GREEN	BRADFORD INDEPENDENT GROUP
Mohammed Kamran Hussain Dearden Hussain Rowe	Davies (Alt)	Watson	

Apologies: Councillor Chris Herd and Councillor Simon Cunningham

Councillor Kamran Hussain in the Chair

57. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received in matters under consideration.

58. REFERRALS TO THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

There were no referrals received by the Committee.

59. INSPECTION OF REPORTS AND BACKGROUND PAPERS

There were no appeals submitted to review decisions to restrict documents.

60. REPORT ON THE USE OF GLYPHOSATE FOR WEED CONTROL WITHIN BRADFORD METROPOLITAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

The report of the Interim Strategic Director, Place (**Document “V”**) was submitted to the Committee following a referral made from the meeting of Full Council held on 12 July 2022 that requested the Regeneration and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee, which had recently completed work on climate emergency, green space, water management, biodiversity and single-use plastics, progress the report, which was inevitably delayed by the Covid pandemic, at its earliest opportunity.

That the Local Nature Recovery Strategy, which was under development and incorporated the existing Strategic Action Plan for bumblebees, be sent to the Regeneration and Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee for review and feedback by members before it was adopted.

Officers summarised a report that updated members on the situation regarding the use of herbicide glyphosate. Descriptions of alternative options that should be considered for when the Council must cease using glyphosate in 2025 were provided. Officers gave a detailed report on the issues that surrounded the alternative options and the wider debate around the use of glyphosate.

The Committee Members were advised that the Council needed to think about financial and risk implications when taking the alternative options into consideration.

Officers referenced trials undertaken in Sheffield and Calderdale that tested a reduction in glyphosate usage and stated that they aimed to schedule meetings to discuss the findings. Officers recommended that Solution 2 was the best option moving forward and added that any developing alternatives to glyphosate would be considered in the future.

Following the presentation of the report, the Committee sought further clarity regarding the impact glyphosate had on biodiversity and specific species of interest in Bradford and queried whether it was broad based or targeted. Officers advised that it was targeted to plants, the active ingredient present in glyphosate did not act on animals, so it was safe. The other issue related to the effect on pollinators as glyphosates had adverse effects on their gut (specifically bees), it also reduced the number of flowering weeds that provided food. Fungi was also adversely affected as a result of changes to nutrient absorption leading to soil enrichment which was not a positive thing – this in turn, reduced the range and type of plants and affected water courses.

A Member queried whether manual weeding via community payback had been considered and if the public could be further advised about why weed growth could be beneficial to biodiversity. In response Members were informed that manual removal was slow, so it carried certain implications. Furthermore, officers acknowledged that public acceptance was a huge issue and that public views on weed growth varied across the district as there was differing opinion of how a street should look. Community payback was still under consideration as one option.

It emerged during the discussion that some options could inhibit weed growth such as the use of more tarmac. Mechanical sweeping was also a possible

option, however, officers advised that this would be expensive and hence was not considered a viable option.

A Member asked about the usage of glyphosate near play areas in parks and whether there was any data available about the impacts it had on children. Officers advised glyphosate was sprayed in a diluted form near play areas making it a lower strength. It was also noted that work was underway to reduce usage near play areas. An 11,000-page report being investigated by the EU was referenced in consideration of the impacts of glyphosate as the available data was being legally contested. This highlighted the necessity of protective equipment and Officers were able to confirm that all staff from the external contractor had appropriate protective equipment and held the correct qualifications and training to use glyphosate (COSHH).

Discussion moved onto a trial that was scheduled to take place in two parks in the Shipley ward that would reduce the use of glyphosate. Officers advised that the trials were still in the early stages, but they planned to work with Shipley Parish Council and local schools in relation to public communication and engagement. The result of the trials would indicate whether the reduction of glyphosate could be looked at in other areas across the District. Members agreed that communication and engagement with the public was essential and asked that it be incorporated into any future approach.

The Committee asked questions regarding funding and the value of contracts in relation to glyphosate application. In response officers noted the limited funding currently available and advised Members that due to inflation contract prices were also subject to increase but the exact figure was unknown.

A Member also asked about Japanese knotweed and was advised that glyphosate was the only effective measure but had a minimum impact on any other plant species as it was injected directly into the plant stems.

There was also a brief discussion relating to weeding on verges and the effects on pathways, with a trial underway in Shipley to manage the impact of reduced intervention and to evaluate public response.

Communications with other local authorities would be increased to ascertain what measures they were taking and how successful they were.

Resolved -

- (1) That, following consideration the solutions set out in Document "V", that Solution 2: Reduced Use of Glyphosate, be recommended to the Executive for adoption. This would see a reduction in the use of glyphosate, primarily by avoiding those areas of the highest environmental sensitivity, whilst allowing for some form of weed control on the rest of the highway network.**
- (2) That it be further recommended to the Executive that public engagement and communication regarding the reduced use of glyphosate in some areas be undertaken and that Officers continue to engage with other Local Authorities that are also reducing the use of**

glyphosate.

- (3) That an update report be presented to this Committee by the Strategic Director, Place, in 12 months' that includes information on the trial involving no use (or exceptional use) of glyphosate within 2 parks within the Shipley ward that is planned for 2023 and learning from other Local Authority areas.

Action: Strategic Director, Place

Chair

Note: These minutes are subject to approval as a correct record at the next meeting of the Regeneration and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

THESE MINUTES HAVE BEEN PRODUCED, WHEREVER POSSIBLE, ON RECYCLED PAPER