



NOTICE OF MEETING

TRAFFIC, ENVIRONMENT & COMMUNITY SAFETY SCRUTINY PANEL

TUESDAY, 25 JULY 2023 AT 5PM

THE EXECUTIVE MEETING ROOM - THIRD FLOOR, THE GUILDHALL,
PORTSMOUTH

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If any member of the public wishing to attend the meeting has access requirements, please notify the contact named above.

Membership

Councillor Judith Smyth (Chair)
Councillor Charlotte Gerada (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Simon Boshier

Councillor Chris Dike
Councillor Jason Fazackarley
Councillor Mark Jeffery

Standing Deputies

Councillor George Fielding
Councillor Graham Heaney

Councillor Leo Madden

(NB This agenda should be retained for future reference with the minutes of this meeting).

Please note that the agenda, minutes and non-exempt reports are available to view online on the Portsmouth City Council website: www.portsmouth.gov.uk

A G E N D A

- 1 Apologies for Absence.
- 2 Declarations of Members' Interests
- 3 Minutes of the Previous Meeting. (Pages 3 - 8)
- RECOMMENDED that the minutes of the meeting held on 13 June 2023 be agreed as a correct record.
- 4 Scrutiny review into reducing the use of pesticides on council land.

(Pages 9 - 42)

Witnesses

1. A representative from Colas, if possible.
2. Councillor Kimberley Barrett, Cabinet Member for Climate Change & Greening the City.
3. Councillor Steve Pitt, Leader and Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure & Economic Development.
4. Councillor Gerald Vernon-Jackson, Cabinet Member for Transport.
5. Adrian Rozier, Parks Development Manager.
6. Richard Stocks, Highways PFI Deputy Contract Manager (Technical).

Reports

The panel will discuss the following papers which will follow:

1. Land Management techniques used by other local authorities.
2. Notes from the site visit that took place on 14 July to view the effect of the reduction of the use of pesticides and herbicides on the appearance and management of the Buckland estate.
3. The responses to the questionnaires sent to local organisations seeking their views on pesticide use.

5 Future Items for the Panel's Workprogramme.

The panel will discuss next possible topics for review this year.

Members of the public are permitted to use both audio-visual recording devices and social media during this meeting, on the understanding that it neither disrupts the meeting or records those stating explicitly that they do not wish to be recorded. Guidance on the use of devices at meetings open to the public is available on the council's website and posters on the wall of the meeting's venue.

Agenda Item 3

TRAFFIC, ENVIRONMENT & COMMUNITY SAFETY SCRUTINY PANEL

Minutes of the meeting of the Traffic, Environment & Community Safety Scrutiny Panel held on Thursday, 13 July 2023 at 3pm at the Civic Offices, Portsmouth

Present

Councillor Judith Smyth (in the Chair)
Charlotte Gerada
Chris Dike
Jason Fazackarley
Mark Jeffery

10. Apologies for Absence. (AI 1)

Councillor Simon Boshier sent his apologies for absence and Councillor Mark Jeffery sent his for arriving late to the meeting (he arrived at 4:30pm).

11. Declarations of Members' Interests (AI 2)

No interests were declared.

12. Minutes of the Previous Meeting. (AI 3)

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 8 June 2023 were agreed as a correct record.

13. Scrutiny review into reducing the use of pesticides on council land. (AI 4)

Information on glyphosate product usage over the last five years by the three maintenance teams was circulated to the panel. Richard Stocks, Highways PFI Deputy Contract Manager (Technical) explained that Highways/ Colas has used 100 litres so far this year and he expects that usage will continue to decrease. In response to questions, he explained that:

- It would be difficult to break down the usage by area as spraying is only carried out where it is required.
- Colas is considering using a less concentrated product. The effect would not be as immediate but the impact on the environment would be reduced. The same objective would be achieved.
- Pesticides are not sprayed near schools in accordance with the guidance.

In response to a question, Adrian Rozier, Parks Development Manager explained that equipment is not currently shared, but this could be considered. This is not necessarily practical as in the example of mechanical sweepers, these would be used on a fairly constant basis by one team. In response to the suggestion that teams could share a foam-stream machine if the council were to be pesticide-free, he explained that the aim of the trials is to see which method works best and the outcome may not recommend the council invest in this

During the discussion that followed, the panel raised the following points:

- Although the PAN Toolkit was published in 2016, it is still relevant and will be useful for this review.
- The toolkit reports that some local authorities imposed an immediate ban. However, the council decided not to do this.
- The panel was pleased that use is reducing.
- Colas works for other LAs too.
- There must be a change in attitude to appreciate that although some areas will be less neat, wild plants are beautiful in their own way. It is important to take residents along with us in the journey.
- Instructions regarding land management must be clearly communicated to operatives on the ground.
- It is important that Cabinet has the opportunity to consider the report so that it can feed into next year's budget.
- It is important to understand that certain areas may still require pesticide treatment.

The panel discussed what a pesticide-free city would look like and made it clear that no-one is suggesting that that wild plants would run wild on pavements. There are many alternatives to using pesticides to remove them. It is important that these alternatives are identified and trialled.

Councillor Darren Sanders, Cabinet Member for Housing and Tackling Homelessness outlined the overall strategy in his portfolio:

- The table circulated - which showed housing using 0.03 litres of pesticides this year - shows the diligence of the team in reducing pesticides.
- The Pesticide-Free Britain Website includes councils that have adopted a phased reduction in pesticide use, which is what this council and many other authorities are doing.
- There are some practical issues to consider. In housing, some workers are less well paid; he wants to tackle that.
- He has instructed the team to just do it in a practical, realistic and sustainable manner as part of reducing the environmental impact of the service, such as the decarbonisation of housing stock and the introduction of more recycling in the council estate.
- He is very pleased that the panel is going on a site visit to the Buckland housing area.
- Different parts of the council have different issues and have high-profile areas, such as the flower bed near Southsea castle, where looking good may be more important than having a mixture of plants. That difference should be understood when making conclusions and looking at the different rates at which pesticide use has been cut.
- The housing department has a separate budget, that has helped it a wider ecological, pragmatic approach to reducing the impact of its activities.
- In Brighton some pensioners sued the council after tripping on wild plants that were growing in the pavement.
- He was pleased that there had been a significant reduction in vibrations experienced by workers when using strimmers.
- The Baffins Pond Association has received the questionnaire.

- There are some fine examples of rewilding in the city.
- He was recently asked by a resident to remove wild plants in the road because they looked untidy. This shows that people's perceptions of what is acceptable vary.

In response to questions, he explained that:

- All members of the council should have an open discussion about what being pesticide-free means in practice.
- The impact on the tourist industry must be considered.
- He accepts that some people want to see all areas as wild as possible.
- The best alternative method should be used rather than the cheapest.
- There have been no complaints from residents about wild plant management.
- The remit of this review is quite narrow.

In response to questions, Phil Bentley, Head of Estate Services explained that:

- Wild plant growth is controlled by scraping except for Japanese Knotweed and grass control on the wildflower meadow.
- Cleaners have been given long handled scrapers to use if reasonable to do so.
- Staff are fine with the changes. Battery powered trimmers are used where possible and the petrol ones when the stems are thicker.
- The pesticide usage figures for housing (0.03L) shown in the table covers council stock houses in Portsmouth and the Havant Borough.
- Some alternatives come with as many issues as the glyphosate that is being replaced. The service will continue to seek alternatives.
- There is no integrated pesticide management plan.
- Work is planned but flexible depending on weather conditions.

Councillor Chris Dike left the meeting.

Adrian Rozier, Parks Development Manager explained that selective herbicide as a treatment is used on golf courses and sports pitches. The amount of pesticides used varies from year to year depending on the environmental conditions.

Councillor Sanders added that complaints are regularly received from the golf course users about wild plant management. The impact of the herbicides on the environment must be considered.

Future Reviews.

The panel discussed the following possible topics:

- At the last meeting community policing was proposed as a possible topic. Members noted that this area comes under the remit of the Health & Wellbeing Board.
- There is a notice of motion that will be considered at the following week's Full Council meeting regarding improving accessibility in Portsmouth taxis for disabled people.

- The council's progress in expanding plastics recycling. Phil Bentley informed the panel that work is being carried out in Portsea to ensure that the council is ready for the changes in law that are coming.
- The council's progress towards its Carbon Zero target. It was noted that it is important to know the baseline to be able to measure progress. Councillor Sanders suggested that the panel speak to the Principal Strategy Adviser for Carbon Management to understand how she might be able to support a review.

Rachel Hudson, Portsmouth Friends of the Earth suggested that the biodiversity in key areas could be monitored annually. She also recommended a book on pavement plants that had recently been published by the Pesticides Action Network.

Actions

1. A breakdown on pesticide use will be considered at a future meeting.
2. Colas will be invited to the next meeting to discuss:
 - Their company's policy on pesticide use.
 - How the reduction in pesticide use was achieved.
 - What alternative methods of wild plant management / removal they use in other local authorities.
 - Whether they work with any local authorities that have banned the use of pesticides.
3. A link to the Pavement Plants book will be sent to the Chair.

The meeting ended at 4:45pm

Councillor Judith Smyth
Chair

Glyphosate product usage over the last five years by the three maintenance teams.

	Glyphosate Product Usage, in Litres		
Year	Parks	Housing	Highways / COLAS
2017	70	-	900
2018	80	-	860
2019	60	-	720
2020	80	166	540
2021	75	64	720
2022	55	10.73	560
2023	50	0.03	100

The above figures need to be read in conjunction with the following notes:

- Parks usage figures for 2017-2019 represented the grounds maintenance operations carried out by the newly established in-house team that covered the north, east and south areas of the city. These figures did not include any usage by the external contractors for the west, cemeteries, schools (under Traded Services) and golf course and unfortunately, we do not have a benchmark figure for these. In 2020, the west, cemetery and schools' maintenance also transferred in-house and in 2021 the golf course maintenance transferred in house. Therefore, the figures for 2020 and 2021, although higher than 2019, actually represented a continued reduction in overall use for all maintained areas and estimated to be a 25-30% reduction overall in those years. Since 2021, usage has continued to reduce through the adoption of alternative measures and maintenance practices and it is estimated to have reduced by 55% overall since 2017.
- Housing usage figures for 2017-2019 are not available for representation but show a 60% reduction between 2020 and 2021 and the latest figures show current practices are using alternative methods of weed control.

COLAS records represent a 35% reduction between 2017-2022, with latest usage figures to be provided. Colas are also trialling a reduced concentration product that reduces the glyphosates from 490g/l to 360g/l concentration. This represents an effective 26.5% reduction in glyphosates.

Tabled at the Traffic, Environment & Community Safety Scrutiny Panel meeting held on 13 July 2023.

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Agenda Item 4

In May, the Scrutiny Panel Chair, Councillor Smyth, asked that we look into the approach adopted by three councils: Bristol, Southampton and Oxford City Councils.

Bristol City Council - policy is to reduce Glyphosate use where it can and to use the minimum amount possible.

Trialled alternative weed control methods in 2017 and point of reference: [Weeds, treatment of unwanted vegetation \(bristol.gov.uk\)](#)

Conclusion in relation to Parks - will soon be testing newly licenced pelargonic acid along with other naturally occurring herbicides. The choices at the moment are acetic acid and pelargonic acid. This will require re-educating the spraying operators.

Conclusion in relation to street scene - for BWC to find a progressive contractor and find out technologies of spraying with sensors etc. for best reductions. This would require longer-term contracts to allow the contractors to invest in appropriate machinery and be able to follow latest developments in the industry.

Current reference policy is [Ecological Emergency Action Plan 2021-25](#) and Strategy Goal for pesticides is to **reduce the use of pesticides in Bristol by at least 50 per cent by 2030.**

Southampton City Council - no response to email questionnaire to date.

Online information available: [Appendix 2 - Green City Plan Final Draft Cabinet Feb 2020.pdf \(southampton.gov.uk\)](#) - references introducing a sustainable pesticides and herbicides policy in the future.

Oxford City Council - no response to email questionnaire to date.

Online information available: Council Minutes ([Public Pack](#)) [Minutes Supplement for item 82 - written responses to supplementary questions \(Questions on Notice\) Minutes Supplement for Council, 30/01/2023 17:00 \(oxford.gov.uk\)](#)

Has the Council trialled the use of any alternatives to glyphosate?

ODS has carried out extensive research on this issue, and concluded, that at present, there are no practicable/financial viable alternatives. The current approach is therefore to use as little as possible and only where strictly necessary.

Could you provide details of the extensive research that ODS has carried out into alternatives and about what alternatives are dismissed as unviable? Other cities similar to Oxford have made alternatives work, so it would be interesting to know why we can't do that here.

ODS' last detailed assessment of glyphosate against comparable alternatives to managing weeds on hard surfaces was pre-2020, and it would be appropriate to review this again, not least in the light of the fact that important EU regulators are due to come to a view about its continued licensing by the end of the year. The UK, as you know, has given weedkillers with glyphosate licence to be used till 2025 but may reconsider if the EU does come to a different view. In March we will be bringing a paper to Cabinet setting out the scope for developing a Biodiversity Strategy for

Oxford. Consideration of the use and impacts of herbicides and pesticides will naturally be part of the work proposed. ODS will in parallel undertake a further assessment of alternative processes for weed management. Taken together the information should provide new guidance for decisions on future use of glyphosate – balancing environmental impacts and costs.

The Scrutiny Panel also asked what information was available on the **Local Government Association** website:

- Climate implications toolkit published by Hammersmith and Fulham Council - [Climate implications toolkit.pdf \(local.gov.uk\)](#) - a self-assessment to help officers think about how their projects, procurements, commissioning, and services can align with H&F's net zero carbon target.
- Growing in the Community document - [growing-community-second--8f5.pdf \(local.gov.uk\)](#) - funded by the LGA in Sep 2006, the objective of the guide is to assist those who are responsible for managing allotments, either within local authorities or under schemes for devolved management, to work efficiently and effectively by emulating examples of good practice. Contents include section on herbicides and pesticides.

Separately, the Parks Team has tried to make contact with **51 Council Bodies** (inc. those above) through email and telephone contact, including those shown on the PAN UK website as making a commitment to reduce or ban pesticides and/or glyphosates, to establish their current approach to managing unwanted vegetation. These councils are a split of Borough and District Councils, City Councils, and Town and Parish Councils.

Based on individual responses or documentation published on the council's websites or readily available, we understand:

- 33 councils are still using glyphosate and this is a mix of those working towards reduced usage and those who still wish to use for specific treatments (such as invasive species).
- 2 councils have re-introduced the use of glyphosate as part of their treatment programme.
- 8 councils stated as pesticide free, of which 1 is a city council and the others town and parish councils and one suburb (some of which do not actively manage some or all the green space)
- the remainder either have no information readily available or we are still carrying out research.

-

This is an ongoing piece of work, but to date, we have received 16 responses. Overall, the alternative methods and change of approach (where adopted) are reflective of those we are currently trialling or have already implemented as part of our approach to reducing pesticide use to a minimum.

We've also had conversations with Fareham Borough Council, Brighton and Hove Council and Lewes and Eastbourne Council. I will be able to give verbal response to any questions arising at the next Scrutiny Panel meeting.

Adrian Rozier, Parks Development Manager, Culture, Leisure and Regulatory Services.

A questionnaire was sent to 62 local organisations seeking details on their land management policies:

8 allotment associations

36 housing associations.

18 other local organisations.

Seven completed questionnaires were returned from:

- Durrants Allotments Association.
- CESSA Housing Association.
- Hants & IoW Wildlife Trust.
- Portsmouth Friends of the Earth.
- Baffins Pond Association.
- Milton Neighbourhood Forum.
- Portsmouth & Southsea Tree Wardens.

The University of Portsmouth said: Please accept my apologies. We are understaffed at present and will be unlikely to have time to complete the survey.

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Reducing the Use of Pesticides on Council Land Scrutiny Review Questionnaire.

Durrants, Rowlands Castle Allotment Association.

- 1. Does your organisation have a policy about the use of pesticides? If so, could you give us details including the date, scope and actions taken. Where appropriate, we would like to see a copy of the policy and any progress reports.**

No

- 2. Our aim is to make Portsmouth a pesticide free area - what would this mean for your organisation? What would and could you do?**

We have no authority over allotment holders, We can only recommend.

3. Have you done any research into what works to manage vegetation/ gardens and other green spaces without using pesticides? If so, can we see them?

No

4. Have you taken or would you consider taking any of the following actions?
(Tick all that apply).

	Have done	Will do	By when
Reducing total amount of use of pesticides (including Glyphosate you use)			
Reducing the dosage you use			
Reducing the places where you use pesticides			
Reducing the frequency of use			
Using alternative pesticide free solutions			

5. If you use alternative solutions, please identify them and comment below.

I don't use pesticides. I don't know what others do.

6. If you intend to achieve zero use of pesticides, by when?

7. If you intend to continue to use pesticides in certain situations, please explain your reasons.

8. Thinking about what a pesticide free city where there are more wild plants and lower control would look like, what do you think our policy should include?

I don't know.

Comments

I'm not sure what is expected of us here. We can put up posters and circulate literature but that is all. The association doesn't have a list of all plotholders, only half are members.

Contact details

Reducing the Use of Pesticides on Council Land Scrutiny Review Questionnaire.

CESSA Housing Association.

1. Does your organisation have a policy about the use of pesticides? If so, could you give us details including the date, scope and actions taken. Where appropriate, we would like to see a copy of the policy and any progress reports.

We haven't felt the need to have a policy since our gardening contractor (Jess Owens) doesn't use pesticides anyway.

2. Our aim is to make Portsmouth a pesticide free area - what would this mean for your organisation? What would and could you do?

We would welcome it and continue as now!

3. Have you done any research into what works to manage vegetation/ gardens and other green spaces without using pesticides? If so, can we see them?

We have it undertaken research, but e.g.
Jens uses a machine to remove
things like moss.

4. Have you taken or would you consider taking any of the following actions?
(Tick all that apply).

	Have done	Will do	By when
Reducing total amount of use of pesticides (including Glyphosate you use)	✓		
Reducing the dosage you use	✓		
Reducing the places where you use pesticides	✓		
Reducing the frequency of use	✓		
Using alternative pesticide free solutions	✓		

5. If you use alternative solutions, please identify them and comment below.

See previous

6. If you intend to achieve zero use of pesticides, by when?

Achieved

Comments

Contact details

Ian Wilson, Housing & Services Manager,
CESSA HA Ltd. Ian.wilson@cessaha.co.uk

7. If you intend to continue to use pesticides in certain situations, please explain your reasons.

Not applicable

8. Thinking about what a pesticide free city where there are more wild plants and lower control would look like, what do you think our policy should include?

Encouraging private owners to do the same.

BPA TECS Questionnaire

1. Do we have a policy re use of pesticides? Can TECS panel see it?

We don't use pesticides at the BPA (we are an environmental centre) and we don't have a policy on pesticide use. However, we have recently been reviewing all of our policies and providing new ones where we don't have one and we will add a policy on pesticides and submit it to TECS when done.

2. Have we done any research into what works to manage vegetation/gardens/green spaces without using pesticides? If so, where and what are they

There are many alternatives to pesticides depending on what pests need controlling, the area to be covered and the impact .

Companion planting is one method, using for example strongly scented

Plants eg garlic, lavender, mint planted next to susceptible plants.

You can also use specific insects eg. Ladybirds that eat particular pests

NB Pests aren't just insects or slugs. They can be birds & rodents and physical may be needed eg. Non-lethal traps. So a variety of pest-control methods may be needed

3. What should organisations working under/within PCC do to

a) Reduce total amount of pesticides used including glucosphates?

Over a short space of time eg.3 years, significantly reduce the amount of pesticides used by a given percentage

b) Reduce the dosage used

Over that length of time reduce the strength of the pesticides used by a given percentage

c) Reduce places where used

Do not use on road verges or at the bottom of forecourt walls and in PCC Housing areas

d) Reduce frequency of use

If currently used twice a year, reduce to once/year

e) Use alternative pesticide-free solutions

Steam is used effectively to kill harmful pests

4. What principles should guide any new policy the council might adopt eg.

Using alternative solutions in exceptional circumstances or extending unmanaged greenspaces.

*The need to encourage the growth of `Pollinator Highways` should be at the core of any policy relating to the use of pesticides plus educating both organisations looking after the city`s green spaces, but also businesses/organisations and the general public. But exceptional circumstances where chemical pesticides are considered the only option, need to be clearly identified and restrictions made clear. **Glyphosate use should definitely be severely restricted.***

NB Many local councils already have policies and implementation plans to phase out the use of pesticides eg. Brighton Frome Croydon Lewes Eastbourne Hammersmith & Fulham Cambridge Colchester Sunderland and many more.

Reducing the Use of Pesticides on Council Land Scrutiny Review Questionnaire.

Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust.

Please answer the following questions as far as you can. All responses are useful so leave questions unanswered if you need to.

- 1. Does your organisation have a policy about the use of pesticides? If so, please can you share it with us?**

No specific policy but we reduce where possible

- 2. Have you done any research into what works to manage vegetation/ gardens and other green spaces without using pesticides? If so, can we see them?**

My team do not use pesticides on any of the reserves that we manage unless in extreme circumstances to manage invasives like Japanese knotweed.

Management of vegetation is done through strategic mowing/grazing or cutting regimes. Most control can be done like this and herbicides are not necessary.

3. What actions do you think organisations that own /manage land in Portsmouth should take?

	Actions	By when	Comments including evidence of what works
Reducing total amount of use of pesticides (including Glyphosate used).	A simple analysis should be available for each job. All pesticides use should be stopped unless no other option can be identified	Immediately	
Reducing the dosage used.	Probably pointless as will require more return visits		
Reducing the places where pesticides are used.	Cetrtainly ecologically sensitive areas and areas adjacent to these should have pesticides greatly reduced		
Reducing the frequency of use			
Using alternative pesticide free solutions	This should be the case wherever possible.		

4. Please suggest the principles that should guide any new policy that the council might choose to adopt. This could include any exceptional situations where pesticides might be necessary, the use of alternatives, the extent to which unmanaged green spaces should be extended etc.

Pesticides should be minimised in all cases, especially in or near ecologically important areas. Alternatives should be explored, and management options reviewed that minimise and preferably remove all pesticide usage.

Comments

Contact details

Redacted.

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Reducing the Use of Pesticides on Council Land Scrutiny Review Questionnaire.

Portsmouth Friends of the Earth (PFOE) comments

Please answer the following questions as far as you can. All responses are useful so leave questions unanswered if you need to.

1. Does your organisation have a policy about the use of pesticides? If so, please can you share it with us?

N/A

2. Have you done any research into what works to manage vegetation/ gardens and other green spaces without using pesticides? If so, can we see them?

N/A

3. What actions do you think organisations that own /manage land in Portsmouth should take?

It is PFOE's view that a key element for achieving PCC's Vision of Portsmouth as "a green city" by 2040 should include making the entire city pesticide free as soon as possible. This means that actions to eliminate the use of pesticides need to be taken by all landowners, INCLUDING householders with private gardens. PFOE would like to draw attention to findings from research by the University of Sheffield [<https://impact.ref.ac.uk/casestudies/CaseStudy.aspx?Id=11853>] which shows that domestic gardens are the most biodiverse part of urban green infrastructure.

Biodiversity Net Gain regulation is coming into effect in November <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/biodiversity-net-gain> . This states that large developments will have to show 10% gain in biodiversity. This will be followed by smaller sites next year. We should be aiming to adopt the strategy of Biodiversity Net Gain and the Biodiversity metric everywhere, across all land management and we should be looking for a greater % gain in our parks and green areas where it might be possible.

The sale of pesticides by retailers in Portsmouth should be banned.

All contracts should include a pesticide-free clause.

	Actions	By when	Comments including evidence of what works
Reducing total amount of use of pesticides (including Glyphosate used).			
Reducing the dosage used.			
Reducing the places where pesticides are used.			
Reducing the frequency of use			
Using alternative pesticide free solutions	100% . NB Alternatives to pesticides should not include plastic grass and paving/ tarmac such that plants cannot grow.	ASAP	

4. Please suggest the principles that should guide any new policy that the council might choose to adopt. This could include any exceptional situations where pesticides might be necessary, the use of alternatives, the extent to which unmanaged green spaces should be extended etc.

PFOE suggests the following principles:

- conserve and enhance biodiversity [this is a LA duty set out in the Environment Act 2021]
- create nature recovery networks [Environment Act 2021] to help mitigate climate change eg by absorbing heat, pollutants in the air and rainwater
- ensure accessibility is not compromised [The Disability Discrimination Act recommends that a minimum of 1200mm width of footway should be kept free of obstructions.]
- maintain 'good' aesthetics [bearing in mind that aesthetics are subjective]
- do not look at the reduction of pesticide use in isolation, but as one workstream in the plan to become a green city
- avoid alternatives to pesticides that include plastic grass and paving/tarmac such that plants cannot grow.

We accept that a nuanced approach is necessary in an urban environment, with some areas requiring greater and more frequent management than others; however ALL urban green spaces need some management.

No-mow areas should be significantly increased and signage used to help local residents and visitors understand the importance of and enjoy the results of increases in biodiversity.

Wild plants (sometimes known as weeds) grow in areas where soil builds up. In areas where there could be trip hazards (eg narrow streets) debris-build-up needs managing. This alternative approach will reduce the number of wild plants.

Many streets and public spaces have corners and build-outs where there is no footfall. Reduced management of pavement plants to create wilder areas in these places would be appropriate and an alternative approach.

Removing only those plants that would cause a trip hazard or structural damage to a pavement is an alternative approach mentioned in the Pesticide Action Network's recent publication [July 2023], "*Greener Cities: A Guide to the Plants on our Pavement*" [<https://www.pan-uk.org/pavement-plants/>]. This states that in most cases pedestrian footfall prevents annual plants from growing in busy areas so trip hazards are not that common, with annual plants mostly confined to areas where people do not use. Woody perennials (eg buddleia, valerian, ash & sycamore saplings) can cause problems – both to the structure of the pavement and as trip hazards and need removing when young. Training in the identification of woody perennials for pavement cleaners would help.

Comments

1. Removing pesticide use throughout the city is an essential pre-requisite for the achievement of PCC's vision of a 'Green City' with a biodiverse and healthy environment.
2. PCC should measure how successful they are in delivering a green city by monitoring biodiversity in a small number of urban areas, including streets and small parks.

There will be many different views amongst councillors and members of the public about what a green, more biodiverse and pesticide-free city should look like. One of the most contentious areas is likely to be pavement plants. The following comments may help:

3. Language such as 'nature recovery networks' (rather than biodiversity) and 'wild plants' (rather than 'weeds') is helpful.
4. It is important that PCC sets out on this journey with councillors, council officers, local residents and businesses from the start. PCC needs to explain (eg via Flagship magazine, events, displays, signage) why nature recovery networks are important, the benefits of leaving wild plants to grow where possible and of improving soil health (eg maintaining the web of life so we have more insects and birds, helping to keep the city cool in the summer, reducing the potential of flooding from heavy rain, increasing carbon capture).
5. Ensure the focus is on increasing biodiversity & creating nature recovery networks rather than on stopping pesticide use.
6. It is important to explain that accessibility is not to be compromised; that aesthetics remain important; and that the focus in streets will be on places where no-one is walking – on corners, buildouts and verges.
7. Explain to councillors, council officers, residents and businesses that creating nature recovery networks in our streets is a partnership; we are all stewards of the planet with a responsibility to look after nature; that urban gardens are vitally important habitats; and there are many things we can do to help in our forecourts and back yards (in particular, no pesticides, allowing plants to grow on forecourt walls and over fences, creating a small pond, having a compost heap, depaving) and in the wider community (eg community gardens).
8. Provide opportunities for positive stories and photos about increased nature in streets and public places to come forward, so PCC and the public does not just hear the complaints.
9. Support local residents and businesses who wish to know or do more eg gardening for wildlife signs; common pavement plant and insect 'bingo cards'; adopt-a-tree pit scheme; community street-weeding schemes that allow a small number of annual wild-plants to remain; wildlife garden/street/business category(s) in Portsmouth in Bloom.
10. Celebrate successes – perhaps with an exhibition of photos of increased biodiversity.

Contact details:

Redacted

Reducing the Use of Pesticides on Council Land Scrutiny Review Questionnaire.

Milton Neighbourhood Forum

Please answer the following questions as far as you can. All responses are useful so leave questions unanswered if you need to.

- 1. Does your organisation have a policy about the use of pesticides? If so, please can you share it with us?**

no

- 2. Have you done any research into what works to manage vegetation/ gardens and other green spaces without using pesticides? If so, can we see them?**

no

3. What actions do you think organisations that own /manage land in Portsmouth should take?

	Actions	By when	Comments including evidence of what works
Reducing total amount of use of pesticides (including Glyphosate used).	yes	asap	
Reducing the dosage used.			
Reducing the places where pesticides are used.			
Reducing the frequency of use			
Using alternative pesticide free solutions	yes	asap	

4. Please suggest the principles that should guide any new policy that the council might choose to adopt. This could include any exceptional situations where pesticides might be necessary, the use of alternatives, the extent to which unmanaged green spaces should be extended etc.

Insect life is deteriorating so rapidly due to climate change, it is essential that steps are taken to cease application of pesticides, another reason for reduction in their numbers, from the City.

Swifts which feed solely on insects have deserted the city whereas they used to be in quantity on Milton Common.

The Council put pheromone traps in bramble bushes on Milton Common some years ago. This was to kill the Brown Tail Moth which was harmless unless touched and few people would come into contact with them. The Council ignored the fact that Brown Tail Moth was the food of the cuckoos which visited the Common every year. The year before the traps were put out, 7 birds were in occupation but none have been there since.

I therefore, ask that not only glyphosate and other chemicals are not used but **also pheromone traps**. The aim should be to preserve as many different species of insect in this city to allow birds to feed their young on caterpillars etc, allow butterfly eggs to pupate and provide flying insects for the existing bat population, swifts, etc.

Comments

We do not own or control any land as an association, so have no policy on management of such spaces, though I did start a discussion on our neighbourhood Facebook page and it is safe to say that with the exception of the control of Japanese Knotweed, no participant was in favour of the widespread use of pesticides/herbicides on public spaces.

There were concerns about harm to pets and to wildlife, especially insects, comments about leaving things to grow more than PCC has done in the past, wishful memories of the days when people maintained the space outside their properties themselves. Most of the debate related to herbicides for control of pavement weeds and the like – with strong reservations about their widespread use. There was little or no opinion on vermin control – so I would say PCC's current policies are not upsetting anyone in that area.

I know this is vague and anecdotal, but I hope it helps inform your policy. If you have specific suggestions or ideas that you need feedback upon, do let me know or, if you prefer, ask the community direct – just post your question on the Keep Milton Green Facebook page. I have copied Cllr. Barrett as she obviously has an interest in this area but is also one of the Admin's for Keep Milton Green so she can watch out for any relevant discussions.

Contact details

Redacted.

Reducing the Use of Pesticides on Council Land Scrutiny Review Questionnaire.

Portsmouth & Southsea Tree Wardens.

Please answer the following questions as far as you can. All responses are useful so leave questions unanswered if you need to.

1. Does your organisation have a policy about the use of pesticides? If so, please can you share it with us?

The Tree Wardens and Charles Dickens Community Orchards have always had an unwritten agreement/ policy where we only use natural products to enhance growth and natural methods to control pests and diseases.

So, we would use soapy water to control aphids on trees or industrial vinegar (Acetic acid) to control weeds and use mechanical methods of removing weeds either by hand or with tools.

In some orchards (Marine Court in Southsea) they have introduced ladybirds to control aphids.

2. Have you done any research into what works to manage vegetation/ gardens and other green spaces without using pesticides? If so, can we see them?

Yes, we have researched on the internet and also via local practitioners.

The research has been through one of the founders of the Charles Dickens Community Orchards. Working with his employer who is a pharmacist and uses these methods successfully on his properties in and around the Portsmouth area. We have adopted these practices ourselves.

It would be best to talk with the person directly for more detail.

Research:

Wildlife and fish are the most affected. This is because pesticides applied to crops might be washed into streams or lakes, harming the fish, beneficial insects, and birds. Worst-case scenario, they may even find their way into drinking water sources and ultimately into the human body.

The other potential source of pesticides is pesticide manufacturing plants, where spillage occurs during transportation or usage either in treatment plants, waste disposal areas, or wastewater recharge facilities (Mohamed & Paleologos, 2018). These pesticide residues may also enter the river from the farming area and paddy field, caused by heavy rain, mishandling during the application, or disposal of pesticide products. The pesticide residues may be washed away from agricultural soil to surface waters through the drainage area. The concentration of residues has been proven to increase during the rainy season (Wittmer et al., 2010).

Acute toxicity:

Pesticides can be acutely toxic. This means that they can cause harmful or lethal effects after a single episode of ingestion, inhalation or skin contact. The symptoms are evident shortly after exposure or can arise within 48 hours. They can present as:

- respiratory tract irritation, sore throat and/or cough
- allergic sensitisation
- eye and skin irritation
- nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea
- headache, loss of consciousness
- extreme weakness, seizures and/or death

Chronic (or long term) toxicity

Pesticides can cause harmful effects over an extended period, usually following repeated or continuous exposure at low levels. Low doses don't always cause immediate effects, but over time, they can cause very serious illnesses.

Long term pesticide exposure has been linked to the development of Parkinson's disease; asthma; depression and anxiety; attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder (ADHD); and cancer, including leukaemia and non-Hodgkin's lymphoma.

<https://www.pan-uk.org/health-effects-of-pesticides/>

3. What actions do you think organisations that own /manage land in Portsmouth should take?

	Actions	By when	Comments including evidence of what works
Reducing total amount of use of pesticides (including Glyphosate used).	Please stop using these pesticides	Straight away	<p>Industrial vinegar for weed control</p> <p>Bicarbonate of soda for weed control</p> <p>Spray neem oil to protect trees from pests</p>

Reducing the dosage used.	Please stop using these pesticides	Straight away	
Reducing the places where pesticides are used.	Please stop using these pesticides	Straight away	
Reducing the frequency of use	Please stop using these pesticides	Straight away	
Using alternative pesticide free solutions	Please use these now	Straight away	

4. Please suggest the principles that should guide any new policy that the council might choose to adopt. This could include any exceptional situations where pesticides might be necessary, the use of alternatives, the extent to which unmanaged green spaces should be extended etc.

Portsmouth City Council would hopefully support the increase of natural capital through increasing biodiversity within the soil and above ground. This could be done by avoiding the use of pesticides.

We support the removal of anything that could be harmful to humans due to air borne exposure, ingestion and through skin contact. The policy should aim to reduce run-off from spraying treatments on pavements that could damage trees in the neighbourhood and stop pesticides getting in the water and damaging any aquatic wildlife near ponds and lakes. Trees do such a great job in Portsmouth and are valuable assets especially in the clean air zone.

Use natural methods of controlling weeds and allow many more areas to grow and encourage pollinators. Lift paving in some more built-up areas to encourage plants and insects to thrive. No bees = no food.

Tree Wardens have suggested the use of mechanical methods to remove weeds. Hand pulling weeds, using mechanical tools, strimmers with guards and scythes.

We understand that some pests need to be controlled. E.g. Cock roaches, rats and mice. Tree pests e.g. The oak processionary moth/pine processionary moth infestations.

Japanese knotweed - burning out this weed to eradicate it.

So, we would suggest that in exceptional circumstances these are controlled with highly regulated amounts of pesticide. That would degrade quickly and not seep into the ground.

However, we would suggest that alternative approaches should be investigated first. E.g. burning out the weed or introducing a natural predator, e.g. ladybirds or nematodes for garden pests in parks.

It would be highly beneficial to use plants that are perennial and drought tolerant that would flower and attract pollinators such as bees. E.g. lavender. Some experimentation with single flowered species will be needed, to encourage greater biodiversity.

There could be more swathes of wildflowers in the city, There could be naturalised bulbs planted among them. Use plants that flower in the winter too, to help overwintering insects. Increasing natural capital.

Areas may be set aside where tree stumps could be left for the natural colonisation of fungi and insects to establish and thrive.

Stop spraying around tree pits. This can damage the trees, protect our trees. Grow wildflowers around tree pits or mulch them to help retain moisture.

Protect priority habitats from spraying pesticides in the city e.g. the orchards and oak trees.

We need to increase the wildlife corridors within the city. Where spraying does not take place. Where birds and wildlife can feed on fruiting hedges. Like the fruiting hedge planted in the Ark Dickens school grounds. Foxes have been seen eating the fruit there. Also the Hilsea Fruiting hedge.

Limiting when the weed removal practices happen so they don't interfere with the natural life cycles of plants and animals.

Comments

Thank you for including the Portsmouth & Southsea Tree Wardens in this consultation.

Contact details

Information redacted.