

Traffic, Environment and Community Safety Scrutiny Panel

Appendix B

Scrutiny Panel's Recommendations and Officer Responses

	Recommendation	Contact / Service	Officer response / commentary
1	To continue to work at pace. Even if none of the recommendations in this report are accepted by the Cabinet - continuing to work as now will be significant.	Regeneration Housing Culture & Leisure	Regeneration: BAU and included within our SLA with our PFI delivery partner, Colas. Housing: BAU (pesticides used by exception) e.g. Japanese knotweed. C & L: BAU, restricting use to a minimum within current staffing and financial resources.
2	To aim for continued reduction in the use of pesticides on Portsmouth City Council owned and managed land at the same rate as 2021 to now, to 25% by November 2024. Accept slower progress in 2025 and aim to achieve a reduction to 5% of 2021 use in 2026.	Regeneration Housing Culture & Leisure	Regeneration: BAU as above, albeit there needs to be an understanding that we have to achieve this as well as fulfilling PCC's statutory requirements as the Local Highway Authority, which means that there will always need to be a minimum base level of pesticide use, as alternative methods of reducing unwanted plants in highways would not be viable logistically, financially & operationally (e.g. closing roads & footpaths in order to weed by hand). Housing: BAU (pesticides used by exception) e.g. Japanese knotweed. C & L: BAU, if operating within current staffing and financial resources, the Parks Team expect to achieve a further 20% reduction in the use of glyphosate by 2025. To achieve a reduction to 5% of 2021 use in 2026 will require additional operative resource or new product availability.

3	<p>To monitor the development and marketing of safe affordable alternatives and adopt as quickly as possible. To replicate the success of the Estates Department with no additional costs, continuous communication with residents, learning new ways of working together and experimentation on the job.</p>	<p>Regeneration Housing Culture & Leisure</p>	<p>Regeneration: as per response to point 2, above. Housing: BAU (pesticides used by exception) e.g. Japanese knotweed. C & L: BAU with alternatives evaluated as they become available on the market. To replicate Housing approach will require additional operative resource as presented to Scrutiny Panel.</p>
4	<p>Using other methods to reduce the prevalence of unwanted plants, by reducing the extent of ground requiring weed control (such as replacing paving with planted areas, changing the type of planting and reducing the frequency of some operations). Accepting green areas that are generally wilder and therefore better for biodiversity.</p>	<p>Regeneration Housing Culture & Leisure Public Health</p>	<p>Regeneration: BAU and balancing this with PCC's statutory requirements as the Local Highway Authority, and that some alternative methods of reducing unwanted plants would logistically, financially & operationally not be viable (e.g. closing roads & footpaths to weed by hand). Housing: BAU (pesticides used by exception) e.g. Japanese knotweed. C & L: BAU - is extension of measures already adopted to reduce pesticide usage. Public Health: Delivery as per Greening Strategy communications plan.</p>
5	<p>The reduction in the use of pesticides should be continued to be overseen by the three departmental cabinet members. They will need to report to the Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Greening the City who will hold</p>	<p>Regeneration Housing</p>	<p>Regeneration: we will continue to update Cabinet & relevant Scrutiny Panels as part of our BAU activity. Housing: Estate Services will continue to update Cabinet Member on this BAU activity.</p>

	accountability for the overall reduction of the use of pesticides and improving biodiversity	Culture & Leisure Public Health	C & L: Parks Team will continue to update the Cabinet Member as part of our BAU activity. Public Health: As per actions identified within the Greening Strategy and Delivery Plan, and also to fall within our mandatory consideration and action planning for the Enhanced Biodiversity Duty.
6	The Cabinet should consider a full report of progress annually starting in November 2024. The report and cabinet decisions should be then reported to Full Council.	n/a	For Cabinet to consider.
7	Each department should report on achievements since 2022, planned reduction in the coming year and achievements against targets.	Regeneration Housing Culture & Leisure	Regeneration: We will continue to update Cabinet & relevant Scrutiny Panels as part of our BAU activity. Housing: As per point 5. C & L: Parks Team will continue to update the Cabinet Member as part of our BAU activity.
8	Parks department needs to break these figures down into different land uses.	Culture & Leisure	C & L: Usage is not currently measured by land typology. Parks Team will consider what further information can be recorded by site in 2024 within existing resources, but the value derived from such data is not clear.
9	The main reason for eliminating the use of pesticides is to improve biodiversity. The City Council needs to develop a methodology for measuring changes in biodiversity (over and above the land	Public Health	Public Health: As per actions identified within the Greening Strategy and Delivery Plan and also to fall within our mandatory consideration and action planning for the Enhanced Biodiversity Duty.

	use' mapping that will be part of the new Biodiversity legislation that will apply to our Local Plan to be enforced in 2024).		
10	The Cabinet to take advice from local environmental groups such as Friends of the Earth, RSPB, Hampshire and the Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust etc to develop an approach that involves local residents – such as annual or more frequent small-scale surveys (of vegetation, wildlife and soil quality) that would, if started soon, provide a baseline and enable scientific monitoring or the effect of reducing the use of pesticides and other greening policy. This would enhance other observations by professionals and others.	n/a	For Cabinet to consider.
11	The Parks and Highways departments continue to increase the use of non-mechanical ways of controlling unwanted plants and/or further increase the areas of land left untreated or with much reduced treatment. Vinegar (acetic acid) should be used in specific situations.	Regeneration Culture & Leisure	Regeneration: As mentioned above, there needs to be a minimum base level of pesticide use, as alternative methods of reducing unwanted plants in highways would not be viable logistically, financially & operationally (e.g. closing roads & footpaths in order to weed by hand). C & L: Increased non-mechanical treatment will require additional operative resource or new product availability. Acetic acid has short-term efficacy with increased product cost and will either require additional operative resource for the increased applications if to maintain the same standard or accept a decline in the treatment of areas.

12	<p>To request that the departmental staffing structures be reviewed to ascertain whether additional staff members are required.</p> <p>This process to conclude prior to the 2024/25 budget setting process, in order that any additional costs incurred (both for the 2024/25 financial year and taking into account the longer-term sustainability of any additional staffing in future financial years) can be considered for the relevant budget as part of the budget setting process.</p>	<p>Regeneration</p> <p>Housing</p> <p>Culture & Leisure</p> <p>Public Health</p>	<p>Regeneration: Additional staff are required and a recruitment campaign is starting at the end of 2023.</p> <p>Housing: No additional staff required.</p> <p>C & L: Based on the trial of alternative treatments in 2023, the information presented to Scrutiny Panel proposed that 2 to 4 additional operatives are required (best estimate) if to significantly reduce the use of glyphosate beyond that already being achieved.</p> <p>PH: The need for a strategic biodiversity officer has been identified as part of the cross-directorate delivery of the Greening Strategy.</p>
13	<p>Further work should be done to enable the Parks department to ascertain where pesticides are used at the moment and what reductions are planned in each situation.</p> <p>In this way the reduction in use in specific situations can be closely monitored. We recommend that this is completed by November 2024 for inclusion in the annual Cabinet report of progress.</p>	<p>Culture & Leisure</p>	<p>C & L: Parks Team will consider what further information can be recorded in 2024 within existing resources to inform what measures have been adopted by site.</p>
14	<p>To increase the number of notices to explain changes in land management including planting, biodiversity and the use of pesticides in future and enable staff on site to explain to people what is happening.</p>	<p>Regeneration</p> <p>Housing</p>	<p>Regeneration: See Public Health comment below.</p> <p>Housing: See Public Health comment below (and comment 19).</p>

		Culture & Leisure	C & L: A mix of temporary or permanent signage is installed to sites when changes in maintenance regimes occur and this will continue.
		Public Health	Public Health: As per developing Greening Strategy Naturally Wilder Programme and development of mandatory Enhanced Biodiversity Duty.
15	Regarding allotments, set target date of 2026 for the elimination of the use of pesticides following a full consultation with allotment associations and their members including the monitoring arrangements.	Culture & Leisure	<p>C & L: As landowners, the council can introduce such restriction, but enforcement would be difficult and require additional resources to monitor and act upon.</p> <p>Attention should be focussed on educating plot holders of the wider impacts of pesticide use and of the potential alternative methods of weed control. This is readily available via the National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners and the websites and social media pages of our allotment associations. Consultation with the allotment associations would inform on the effectiveness of educating plot holders, their perceived level of pesticide use and whether elimination is considered appropriate or practical.</p>
16	Development of a city wide pesticides policy	<p>Regeneration</p> <p>Housing</p> <p>Culture & Leisure</p>	<p><i>This will need a working group to comprise the following departments:</i></p> <p>Richard Stocks to represent Regeneration.</p> <p>Phil Bentley to represent Housing.</p> <p>Adrian Rozier to represent Parks.</p>

		Public Health	Officer to be identified.
17	Further discussions with Colas about increasing the use of non-mechanical ways of controlling unwanted plants and reduce the areas of land left untreated or with much reduced treatment, within the existing contract as far as possible.	Regeneration	Regarding the Highway Network, we are working with Colas to look at ways of phasing out the use of pesticides on the highway network and encouraging its subcontractors to do the same. Colas has already trialled alternative ways to control weeds (electricity, steam) but to date they have had limited success - in fact, and principally due to the environment and nature of the live highway network, none of these have proved fully practical or effective. Colas and the PFI team are working together on this and keeping abreast of further developments within the industry.
18	When new service/contract arrangements are considered reducing the use of pesticides should be central to our requirements. (Highways contract)	Regeneration	As part of PFI expiry and linked to the provision of future services, there will be consideration of reducing the use of pesticides in the highways maintenance operation.
19	Estates department: Keep up the good work. At the right time when more estates have been 'greened,' consider publicising the Portsmouth approach in the housing and environmental press, encourage site visits. Our success is worth sharing.	Housing	Will share via House Talk, Social Media, etc to promote good work including signage / information boards regarding changes to land use link to action 14.
20	Land where services are externally procured: Reducing the use of pesticides (and enhancing biodiversity) should be added to the council's social, environmental and economic policy as part of its Social Value statement and policies.	Regeneration Housing	Regeneration: Current works are focussed around highway maintenance. This will be broadened to urban design and also the coastal schemes. Housing: N/A - all land managed in-house.

	<p>Anyone working with the city council including contractors and leaseholders, will be expected to comply and report on progress.</p>	<p>Culture & Leisure</p> <p>Corporate Services (Procurement)</p>	<p>C & L: A compliance and reporting requirement will need to be embedded within future tendering opportunities (if applicable) and the resulting contractual or legal agreement.</p> <p>CS: The existing social value policy includes for consideration of environmental impact on a relevant and proportionate basis when the council is procuring services, works and supplies from 3rd parties. This covers the specification of requirements, sourcing process, tender evaluation and contract management.</p> <p>This is also covered within the council's gateway process which applies to the letting of all in scope contracts with a lifetime value of £150,000 or more. Furthermore, the council's Contract Procedure Rules require that portfolio holders, directors and the responsible officers assigned to procure and manage contracts consider environmental impact irrespective of contract value.</p> <p>In view of the above there should not be any need to alter existing policy, rules and processes in order to implement. However, it is advised that implementation should be on a relevant and proportionate basis in relation to the object of the contract. This will ensure that the extra checks and ongoing monitoring that will be required are focused on areas of meaningful impact.</p>
21	<p>In the November 2024 report, the cabinet should conduct a review of and amendments to contracts and leases regarding compliance and progress in reducing pesticide use.</p>	<p>Regeneration (Property)</p>	<p>Regeneration: Any changes in the contract (and associated Deeds of Variation) will be presented to cabinet at this time.</p>

22	Wildlife does not respect land ownership and arguably all our efforts to improve biodiversity can be undermined if a neighbour is using pesticides. Cabinet should agree that the council should develop and publish a clear ambition to make Portsmouth a biodiverse city which is pesticide free.	Public Health	For Cabinet to consider. Public Health: Could be explored in Greening Strategy Naturally Wilder Programme and development of mandatory Enhanced Biodiversity Duty.
23	The council should lead the way in influencing and persuading external agencies to reduce the use of pesticides hand in hand with 'improving biodiversity' and that members and officers representing the city in bilateral and collective meetings with these agencies routinely include city policy on biodiversity/ elimination of pesticide use in order to influence them.	Regeneration Housing Culture & Leisure Corporate Services (Communications)	Regeneration: In addition, PCC and Colas attend regular Network Board meetings which include discussions on greening, biodiversity and decarbonisation. This will be broadened to the Urban Design and also Coastal Schemes. Housing: See point 19 for housing answer (NB Housing also hold land in Havant and is applying the same greening/biodiversity BAU work to those areas. C & L: BAU, particularly for countryside and grounds maintenance teams, when engaging or working with or on behalf of external agencies. CS: we can include an item in internal communications but suggest this is something to discuss at directors board and cascade from there.
24	The Local Plan has a chapter on biodiversity and now needs to include new government legislation on increasing biodiversity on new developments by January 2024.	Regeneration (Planning)	Regeneration: Biodiversity Net Gain opportunities, including the statutory requirements, and aspirational targets for strategic sites are set out within the emerging Local Plan.

	<p>The use of pesticides should be taken into account in this as far as possible.</p>	<p>Public Health</p>	<p>Matters related to pesticides lie within detailed assessments of BNG, and the consideration of such matters with individual planning applications.</p> <p>BNG encourages the provision of habitat types of greater distinctiveness the management and maintenance of which would not be compatible with the use of pesticides.</p> <p>Draft national template guidance for biodiversity net gain advises that where on site biodiversity improvements are proposed that these will be likely to be subject to habitat management and maintenance plans, in the same way as occurs currently.</p> <p>The use of pesticides or weedkillers is discouraged. Any potentially damaging actions would have to be fully justified in such management and maintenance plans, in consultation with Hampshire Ecology colleagues.</p> <p>Public Health: As per developing Greening Strategy Naturally Wilder Programme and development of mandatory Enhanced Biodiversity Duty.</p>
25	<p>The City Council (Director of Public Health) be asked to include information about the risks to health of using pesticides on our website and to contribute to the November 2024 Cabinet report on progress.</p>	<p>Public Health</p>	<p>Public Health will consider the best way to share information on pesticides so that it is publicly accessible (e.g. PCC website; links to Health and Safety Executive website). Public Health can contribute health risks on pesticides to November 2024 Cabinet report on progress.</p> <p>.</p>
26	<p>Use 'low cost' existing channels such as Flagship and social media to inform</p>	<p>Corporate Services (Communications)</p>	<p>CS: Can implement once relevant/specialist information is provided by services to the communications team.</p>

	people about improving biodiversity including reducing pesticides - what the council is doing and what residents and businesses could do.	Public Health	Public Health: As per developing Greening Strategy communications plan
27	Raise biodiversity and elimination of the use of pesticides at forums such as Shaping Portsmouth, Hive, meetings of landlords, Registered Social Landlords etc	Regeneration Housing Culture & Leisure Corporate Services Public Health	Regeneration: In addition, PCC and Colas attend regular Network Board meetings which include discussions on greening, biodiversity and decarbonisation. This will be broadened to the Urban Design and also Coastal Schemes. Housing: Can bring to residents' consortium to update housing tenants / leaseholders, also RSL forums. C & L: Part of BAU engagement with allotment associations, Friends Groups and volunteer activities. CS: can include in engagement with business through social value engagement (Procurement & Economic Development teams). Public Health: As per developing Greening Strategy communications plan.
28	Create a website page providing a regular source of information and advice about improving biodiversity including reducing pesticides (including health and safety risks of use). This is to include gardening advice for homeowners and those wanting to care for tree pits etc in their neighbourhoods. It should also include, after discussion with allotment associations, advice for	Regeneration Housing	<i>Webpage to be created by Communications, information to be provided by directorates</i> Regeneration: See comment by CS below. Housing: introduction of social housing act requires social housing to publicise all aspects of its service on web site and relevant channels which will include this work of estate service. Including distinct neighbourhood/estate policies.

	<p>allotment holders as we move towards a ban of pesticide use there by 2026.</p>	<p>Culture & Leisure</p> <p>Corporate Services</p> <p>Public Health</p>	<p>C & L: new online information and advice will require joint working between the council's parks and web teams and allotment associations, when there is a great deal of information available online already which most allotment association signpost members and plot-holders to. It may be more effective to support and co-ordinate messaging through existing channels.</p> <p>CS: Cabinet to decide which service will own this page. Service to then provide the initial set up information and regular updates to keep the page up to date.</p> <p>Public Health: As per developing Greening Strategy communications plan.</p>
<p>29</p>	<p>Communicate with all council officers, community workers and voluntary organisations who may be approached by residents concerned about changes in local landscapes and land management so that they can inform and reassure people.</p>	<p>Regeneration</p> <p>Housing</p> <p>Culture & Leisure</p> <p>Corporate Services</p>	<p><i>Communications & Marketing, with information to be provided by directorates</i></p> <p>Regeneration: Internal and external communications can be developed in line with green strategy once relevant/specialist info is provided.</p> <p>Housing: All estate services staff briefed on current working practices. Will include volunteers at the community garden.</p> <p>C & L: Front-line staff aware of current practices and when changes of land management are introduced to their area of responsibility.</p> <p>CS: Internal communications can be developed once relevant/specialist information is provided.</p>

		Public Health	Public Health: As per developing Greening Strategy communications plan.
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