REPORT FROM:	**ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OPERATIONAL SERVICES**
TO:	**CLIMATE EMERGENCY WORKING GROUP**
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PESTICIDE USE

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To update Members on the current position of herbicide usage across the Council.

RECOMMENDATIONS

(1) That Members note the report contents and support effective weed management.

(2) That Officers continue to monitor the market for new advances in weed control and reduce herbicide usage as much as possible.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

(1) To ensure Members are aware of the challenges faced in reducing weedgrowth through the use of alternative solutions.

(2) To effectively manage budgets and resources alongside improving biodiversity and promote pollinating species.

ISSUE

(1) Pendle Council declared a climate emergency in 2019 in response to climate change and the loss of biodiversity, in line with many other local authorities. This declaration includes a theme of improving biodiversity and the natural environment.

(2) Pendle Council has a 'Climate action plan' policy in place covering 2020 – 2025 with a strategic aim of reducing the use of herbicides

(3) Within Operational Services, Herbicide is used across the councils' assets, and on behalf of Lancashire County Council's highways department to control the growth of unwanted plant species and invasive species such as Himalayan balsam and Japanese Knotweed

(4) Pendle Council has a legal responsibility under the Environmental protection act 1990 and the Wildlife and Countryside act 1981 to manage invasive species

(5) Lancashire County Council has a legal responsibility under the Highways act 1980 to maintain highways to ensure they are accessible and free from obstructions

(6) Pendle Council use Glyphosate based herbicide on hard surfaces within urban areas such as town centres and car parks, public parks, cemeteries and playgrounds. Selective non glyphosate herbicide is also used within grasslands to target prolific Docks (*Rumex.spp*) within differential mowing sites

	Pendle Borough council	LCC
2019/2020	80 Litres	660 Litres
2020/2021	60 Litres	492 Litres
2021/2022	100 Litres (Increase due to covering some LCC sites post covid)	492 Litres
2022/2023	65 Litres	492 Litres
2023/2024	65 Litres	984 Litres

Table to show usage of Glyphosate over 5 years

(7) Over the past 4 years various alternatives to glyphosate have been explored, researched and trialled by Greenspaces / Parks teams within operational services to assess viability to actively reduce herbicide usage. The results of these investigations are shown below.

Alternative treatment	Positive Outcome	Negative Outcome
No treatment of weed growth	Zero herbicide usage, Zero cost if allowed to remain as is.	Excessive growth of unwanted plant species and complaints from members of the public regarding the aesthetics of streets plus health and safety issues of slip / trip hazards. Potential access infringements for mobility aids such as wheelchairs and pushchairs. Acceleration of hard surface friability due to weed root growth. Costs of removing excessive growth at a later time excessively increased vs an initial treatment.
Hand Weeding	Instant effect of weed removal, in some cases entire plants including roots can be removed, resulting in less rapid weed growth. Zero chemical usage.	Very high labour costs and increased workforce required, slow rate of work, increased chance of personal injury to staff from lower back injury or repeated bending.
Mechanical Strimming down of weed growth using existing landscape machinery	Initially instant result of limited greenery visible. Can be carried out using battery powered tools. Can be used in all weather	No roots are damaged leading to regrowth being visible again within 7 days. Health and safety hazards from resulting flying debris, especially in built up urban areas. Increased risk of creating airborne particles of dog foul in specific locations. Following strimming, manual sweeping is required to leave a tidy site, resulting in expenditure. High HAV rating concern for operative (Hand Arm Vibrations). Increased spread rate of seeds. Loss of plastic strimmer cord within grassed areas as micro plastics

Mechanical strimming down of visible growth with wire brush	Initially instant result of limited greenery visible. Can be carried out using battery powered tools on a small scale or larger battery / petrol sized push machinery. Can be used in all weather	No roots are damaged leading to regrowth being visible again with 7 days. Health and safety hazards from resulting flying debris, especially in built up urban areas. Increased risk of creating airborne particles of dog foul in specific locations. High HAV rating concern for operative (Hand Arm Vibrations) Following strimming, manual sweeping is required to leave a tidy site, resulting in expenditure. Wire brush can cause damage to friable infrastructure. High carbon output on petrol versions. Push variety machinery circa £5000 plus consumables, new brushes required daily. Increased spread rate of seeds.
Hot foam	Rapid result within 24 hours of wilted greenery. Can be applied in all weather conditions as the foam traps the heat which affects the plant	Limited accuracy, and only suitable for hard surfaces, visually untidy with blooms of foam blowing around streets. 7.5t LGV licence required for transport due to vehicle weight. Limited usage around streets due to length of hoses required, parked cars and blockages on back streets such as skips and vehicles. Trip hazard of hoses for public and staff. Slip hazard of foam on hard surface. Vehicle needs to return to depot hourly to refill tank. Excess noise and vibration of vehicle and machinery. High carbon emissions of vehicle and machinery. Extremely slow application. Health and safety hazard related to high temperature. Roots of plant not affected so regrowth within 7 days is possible. Extreme high cost base of vehicles, foam additive, staff, time and machinery
Hot Water	Rapid result within 24 hours of wilted greenery. No additives or chemical usage	7.5t LGV license required for transport due to vehicle weight of sufficient size. Limited usage around streets due to length of hoses required. Trip hazard of hoses for public and staff. Vehicle needs to return to depot or a suitable standpipe location regularly to refill tank. Excess noise and vibration of vehicle and machinery. High carbon emissions of vehicle and machinery. Extremely slow application. Health and safety hazard related to high temperature. Roots of plant not affected so regrowth within 7 days is possible. Extreme high cost base of vehicles, staff, time and machinery.
Acetic acid (vinegar)	Quick response of wilting within a few days, accurate application with knapsack sprayer. Reasonably cost	Strong odours, application time must be in dry conditions, classed as ‘corrosive’. Not as effective as glyphosate and requires

	effective, but substantially more volume required vs glyphosate	additional treatments resulting in approx. 3-4 times the cost of glyphosate.
Glyphosate	Effective within 7 days with a life cycle of a minimum of approximately 8 weeks. Whole plant of greenery and root killed. Very cost effective. No additional staff, machinery or vehicles required. No additional carbon output. Approved for usage in the UK until December 2025 currently (The EU has relicensed until 2033). Only know effective treatment for invasive Japanese Knotweed. Can be applied via manual knapsack or quad bike. Minimal HAV dependent on application method. Very quick to apply	Can only be used in dry weather, concerns on effect to the environment. PA1,PA2 & PA6a safe use of herbicide qualifications required by operatives

(8) Operational Services have made substantial efforts to reduce usage of Glyphosate over recent years* and only do so where there is a determined need and desired outcome. This is balanced against health and safety risks, cost and public perception. In many instances there are situations where the damage that a mature weed can cause to surfacing or the built environment needs to be effectively managed and cannot be allowed to continue unchecked.

*It should be noted that the increase in volume used by LCC is due to the highways authority providing funding for two applications per annum over the original single application.

(9) Several councils that have previously banned the use of Glyphosate such as Brighton and Hove, North Lanarkshire and Isle of Wight, have had to initiate a U turn in policy due to either the vast number of complaints received, or the damage to the highway network. The common occurrence across local authorities currently appears to be to reduce chemical usage as much as feasible whilst still delivering a positive approach for the public within reasonable budgetary constraints.

IMPLICATIONS

Policy: None arising from this report.

Financial: None arising unless alternative weed control measures are considered.

Legal: None arising from this report.

Risk Management: None arising from this report.

Health and Safety: None arising from this report.

Sustainability: None arising from this report.

Community Safety: None arising from this report.

Equality and Diversity: None arising from this report.

APPENDICES: None.

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS: None.