

Environment and Transportation Department,
Block 2, Floor 6,
Civic Offices,
Dublin 8.

19th November 2020.

**To Each Member of the
Climate Action, Energy and Environment Strategic Policy Committee**

Re: Glyphosate / Herbicide usage by Dublin City Council

Glyphosate has been one of the most commonly used herbicide worldwide for several decades and as recently as 12th December 2017, the European Commission made the decision to renew the approval for the use of glyphosate for five more years.

Dublin City Council is conscious however of the need to reduce, replace, and where possible eliminate the use of herbicides and particularly glyphosate due to the potential risk to the environment and human health as highlighted by the World Health Organisation (2015 Report on Evaluation of organophosphate herbicides).

Dublin City Council is also conscious of the widely held desire amongst the public to maintain a 'tidy' appearance in estates, neighbourhoods and along roads which traditionally has meant the widespread application of herbicides to eliminate the perception of untidiness which is created by the growth of weeds. Weed growth does not pose a hazard to the public, and herbicides are being used for aesthetic reasons.

Dublin City Council's policy with regards to herbicide use is to eliminate the use of herbicides by implementing alternative control methods, or where appropriate, allowing weeds to grow.

Alternative trials have eliminated weeds, however the degree of success heretofore achieved with one application of herbicide will probably require up to three or more applications annually of the alternative method. During the period 2018-2020, appropriate methods, or a combination of methods, were be trialled by departments within Dublin City Council to replace herbicide use.

The previous SPC met with Les Moore (Head of Parks Services) and put a policy together on the phasing out of glyphosate / herbicide usage. This Policy was adopted by the SPC in September 2018 which went as a breviat to the City Council to the November 2018 meeting of the City Council.

The Minutes of the November 2018 City Council Meeting state; “the Breviate was noted and the Chair of the SPC, Cllr Naoise Ó’Muirí drew members attention to the herbicide item on the breviate and the City Council approved that policy”

A subsequent Motion to the SPC by the Public Participation Network in relation to Glyphosate / Herbicide usage was considered and agreed by the Environment Strategic Policy Committee. This motion was due to be heard at the City Council meeting but was not reached.

Neither the Parks nor Environment & Transportation Departments use glyphosate nor herbicide in their operations save in the case of invasive species. Moreover, the Environment & Transportation Department recently entered into a new contract for weed removal which specifically prohibits the use of such chemicals. Clarification from the Housing and Residential services is awaited.

In order to meet Dublin City Council CCAP targets for 2030 the reduction in carbon emissions achieved by the non-use of chemical sprays will need to be formalised in a policy. This should clearly state that Dublin City Council and its approved contractors no longer use Glyphosate in particular, and herbicide in general, except in circumstances where invasive plant species are being treated. Otherwise there is no documented commitment that the current informal policy is in use or will continue.

Upon the completion of a written policy to cease the use of herbicide chemical applications by Dublin City Council, the Climate Action Team should then be requested to include the carbon emissions savings delivered. These would be included in the council’s own carbon emissions reduction target for 2030. The Climate Action Team will then require past volumes of chemical usage by the council and contractors from the relevant base line date.

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A further step should be taken to develop a corporate policy, subject to the approval of the City Council, to prohibit the use of glyphosate/herbicide in all City Council operations (including by contractors), save for use on invasive species. This will be a documented future commitment to the current no-glyphosate practice.

Michael Pidgeon
**Chairperson, Climate Action
& Environment SPC**

Robert Moss
Public Participation Network

