



Neuadd y Sir / County Hall, Llandrindod, Powys, LD1 5LG

QUESTIONS AT ANY TIME TO CABINET PORTFOLIO HOLDERS

Response by the Cabinet Member:

In Powys we are determined to deliver on the Climate and Nature Emergency commitments we have made as a council and my role is to ensure that we achieve that in all the services we are responsible for. We have committed ourselves to reducing the amount of herbicides we use for many reasons as you will see below.

There are more alternatives methods to herbicide application becoming available each year and hopefully the costs of these will reduce as competition increases, and we are actively exploring suitable alternatives. We have looked at options, such as electricity and weedburners but these bring other health and safety issues when used in amenity areas. I have attached an interesting guide to 'Alternatives to herbicides for the Amenity Sector'.

We arranged a demonstration earlier this month of the Foamstream system (Fact sheet attached) and it was by far the best alternative we have seen to date. The set up costs were quite reasonable and we have applied for Grant funding to proceed with the purchase of this equipment. As with all the alternatives we have seen, there is still the issue of requiring more staff resource. It is more time consuming than the herbicide treatment methods. We then have the added pressure of requiring more budget for weed control/street cleansing when the existing budgets are being reduced.

The Trunk Road network is managed by the North & Mid Wales Trunk Road Agency through a Service Delivery Agreement with Powys, where they specify one herbicide treatment of kerbs and channels during May and also one herbicide treatment of filter drains sections, again during May. Welsh Government are reviewing this process and currently looking at alternative methods.

One of the reasons for the need to spray is to reduce the amount of strimming that our staff need to carry out, as this reduces their exposure to HAV (hand arm vibration). The HSE recently issued an improvement notice to the Authority on how we manage HAV's, so we need to ensure exposure is reduced to a minimum. Another reason is the likelihood of causing damage to people, property or vehicles as a result of objects been thrown by strimmers.

As far as Powys' treatments on our own network are concerned, we limit herbicide treatment to the bare minimum. This is to a large degree due to the reduced available budget, but also in consideration of the balance between the environmental impact and our duty to maintain the highways. The core areas of town centres, housing estates and amenity areas receive one routine treatment in May, with any other area only receiving treatment on a reactive needs basis. Currently this herbicide application is the 'Nomix Total Droplet' system (details attached). We do not apply a glyphosate based product via a conventional knapsack sprayer in any amenity area.

Welsh Local Government Association have issued the attached information from APSE on the topic of glyphosate use by local authorities.