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CORRESPONDENCE FOLLOWING THE COMMITTEE MEETING

Committee ENVIRONMENTAL SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date and Time of Meeting THURSDAY, 12 JANUARY 2023, 4.30 PM

Please find below correspondence send by the Committee Chair following the meeting, together with any responses received.

For any further details, please contact scrutinyviewpoints@cardiff.gov.uk

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Ref: Scrutiny/Env/12/01/2023

Date: 17 January 2023

Councillor Burke-Davies

Cabinet Member, Culture, Parks and Events

Councillor Dan De'Ath

Cabinet Member, Transport & Strategic Planning



Dear Councillors Burke-Davies and De'Ath

Environmental Scrutiny Committee – 12 January 2023

On behalf of the Environmental Scrutiny Committee a sincere thank you for attending Committee to facilitate our consideration of the **Weed Control Trial Report**. Please also relay our thanks to the officers and Dr Dan Jones, who attended the Committee meeting to support this item. Members agreed that I pass on the following observations. You will find our recommendations and requests, listed at the end of the letter.

The Committee welcomed the thoroughness of the report and the holistic approach to the environmental impact of the different methods used in the trial.

Use of Glyphosate

Members applauded the reduction in the use of Glyphosate as noted in Councillor Burke-Davies's introductory statement and asked if areas treated are regularly reviewed. Officers confirmed that following reviews the areas around the bottom of mature trees and hedgerow bases are no longer treated with herbicides.

Members asked what the impact of reducing the if the number of applications of Glyphosate from three to two per year would be. Officers informed the Committee that the herbicide is most efficient when treating small plants with small doses, and by leaving a longer time period between application the plan grows a bit bigger and therefore more product is needed to treat it. So over the year the same amount of Glyphosate would be used. The committee also asked about the integrated weed management approach as used by Exeter City Council. Officers also confirmed that this approach had been undertaken

on the highways and rear lanes previously and the number of complaints received increased. It was noted that by reducing the number of applications and that and that introducing an alternative solution, e.g., weed ripping machines and deep cleaning teams, to supplement the reduced applications of glyphosate required additional costs to be found that currently are not available. They also confirmed that monitoring of the work undertaken by contractors is monitored to ensure it is being effective.

The Committee also noted that *the Vale of Glamorgan have managed to become herbicide free in a number of parks by using alternative weed control and management practices*, and asked what we could learn from them. Officers stated that they understand that foam stream is used in the Vale alongside other tools as mentioned below under alternative solutions.

Officers also confirmed that they report annually on the use of Glyphosate and the Committee requested sight of these reports, geographically if possible.

Licensed use of Glyphosate

The Committee noted that Glyphosate is currently only licenced for use until 2025 and asked what the situation would be following this date. It was noted that if the licence is not renewed for Glyphosate that an alternative would need to be sought and that any potential solutions would need to be looked at holistically and that any decision would be evidence based.

Alternative Solutions

Officers also clarified that a range of tools are used to prevent uncontrolled weed growth that include hand weeding, hoeing, forking, mulching, mechanical and hand sweeping alongside herbicides. It was also noted that the Council supports the 'Love Where You Live' and deep clean 'blitz' operations co-ordinated by the Street Scene services.

Members asked if an 'opt-out' scheme such as the one run by Exeter City Council had been explored. Officers were unaware of the scheme but would investigate how the scheme operates.

Officers concluded by noting there is a balance between aesthetics and access in relation to weed control and that intervention will be needed at

some point and highlighted a garage on Newport Road that has not been in use for approximately three years where the weed growth is out of control and unsightly and does not enhance the area.

Dr Jones also concluded by stating that the removal of weed growth on the highways and pavements will not negatively impact on the biodiversity of an area, as it is not sufficient to be a meaningful habitat.

For ease of reference, the requests detailed in this letter are:

- Annual reports on the use of Glyphosate, with geographical representations if possible.
- Officers investigate the Exeter City Council street 'opt-out' scheme
- Further details of the most effective IPM approach as noted in the Advanced Invasives report

No formal recommendations were made.

Once again thank you once more for attending Committee and for considering our comments and recommendations.

I look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,



Councillor Owen Jones

Chairperson Environmental Scrutiny Committee

Cc: Members of the Environmental Scrutiny Committee

Jon Maidment, Operational Manager, Parks, Sport & Harbour Authority

Dr Dan Jones, Director, Advanced Invasives

Gary Brown, Head of Highways, Infrastructure and Operations

Cllr Adrian Robson, Group Leader, Conservatives

Cllr Andrea Gibson, Group Leader, Common Ground

Cllr Rhys Taylor, Group Leader, Liberal Democrats

Chris Pyke, Audit Manager

Tim Gordon, Head of Communications and External Relations

Alison Taylor, Cabinet Support Officer

Mel Jackson, Cabinet Support Officer

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