apse association for public service excellence

Glyphosate and Integrated Weed Management

Where do local authorities stand?



Briefing 26/70
October 2026

Table of Contents

Results at a glance **3**

1 Executive Summary **4**

2 Purpose of the report **5**

3 Background **6**

4 Legislative and policy context **8**

5 Survey results **10**

5.1 Current position on glyphosate 10

5.2 Policy development 12

5.3 Where glyphosate use has reduced 13

5.4 Current uses of glyphosate 15

5.5 Integrated weed management 16

5.5.1 Trials *16*

5.5.2 Adoption *17*

5.6 Monitoring and evaluation 19

5.7 Drivers for reduction 20

5.8 Barriers to reduction 21

5.9 Cost implications 22

5.9 Public perception 23

5.10 Future direction 25

Conclusion: Gradual and pragmatic reduction **27**

How can APSE help? **28**

ISSN: 978-1-917305-01-3

Glyphosate and Integrated Weed Management: Where do local authorities stand?

This analysis was conducted by Matt Ellis, APSE Principal Advisor for Parks.

For any enquires in relation to the survey, Matt may be contacted on:
Tel: 0161 772 1810 Email: mellis@apse.org.uk

Results at a glance

Current position

Authorities with no reduction programme	**28%**
Reduction programme underway *(<50% reduction)*	**32%**
Significant reduction achieved *(50% or more reduction)*	**20%**
Eliminated for most routine uses *(only limited or exceptional use remains)*	**14%**
Completely eliminated glyphosate	**5%**
Authorities with a formal policy	**25%**

Drivers of change

Environmental concerns driving reductions	**79%**
Biodiversity objectives driving reductions	**66%**

Barriers to further reduction

Effectiveness of alternatives	**84%**
Cost	**66%**

Future direction

Authorities expecting continued reductions	**38%**
Increase glyphosate use	**6%**

1 Executive Summary

The 2026 APSE Glyphosate and Integrated Weed Management Survey reveals a sector continuing to move towards reduced reliance on glyphosate whilst simultaneously grappling with significant operational, financial and public expectation challenges.

Whilst nearly three-quarters of responding authorities have either implemented glyphosate reduction programmes or have significantly reduced usage, only a small minority have fully eliminated glyphosate from routine operations.

The survey demonstrates that local authorities increasingly recognise the environmental and biodiversity benefits associated with reducing chemical weed control. Environmental concerns (79%) and biodiversity objectives (66%) were identified as the most significant drivers behind reduction programmes.

However, the findings also highlight the continued use of glyphosate within operational service delivery. The majority of respondents continue to use glyphosate for invasive species control (87%), footway weed control (81%), kerbside weed control (72%), parks maintenance (64%) and cemetery maintenance (53%).

The principal barrier to further reduction remains the effectiveness of alternatives. More than four-fifths of authorities identified effectiveness as a barrier, whilst two-thirds cited cost pressures.

The public response to reduction programmes remains mixed. Authorities report conflicting pressures from residents who wish to see pesticide use reduced and those who expect weed-free streets and public spaces.

Looking forward, the survey suggests that gradual reduction rather than outright elimination will continue to be the dominant direction of travel across UK local government.

2 Purpose of the report

Glyphosate remains one of the most contentious issues affecting grounds maintenance, parks, highways and environmental services.

Over the past decade debate surrounding glyphosate has intensified following concerns regarding potential health impacts, legal actions overseas, increasing public scrutiny and a growing policy focus on biodiversity recovery and sustainable land management.

This level of interest is reflected in the volume of APSE member enquiries on the subject, with almost 40 network queries issued on the topic since 2019.

APSE conducted this survey during August and September 2026 to establish the current position of local authorities regarding glyphosate use, reduction programmes and integrated weed management approaches.

The report examines:

- Current levels of glyphosate use
- Adoption of integrated weed management
- Policy development
- Alternative technologies
- Costs and operational challenges
- Public responses
- Future trends

3 Background

Glyphosate is the world's most widely used herbicide and has formed a core component of local authority weed management strategies for several decades. Valued for its effectiveness, affordability and broad-spectrum control of weeds, it has been commonly used across highways, parks, cemeteries, housing estates and other public spaces.

However, since 2015 the use of glyphosate has become the subject of increasing scrutiny following the International Agency for Research on Cancer's (IARC) classification of glyphosate as "probably carcinogenic to humans"[1]. Although regulatory bodies in the UK, Europe and elsewhere have continued to conclude that glyphosate can be used safely when applied correctly, concerns regarding potential health and environmental impacts have prompted many local authorities to review their approach.

The future regulatory position of glyphosate also remains uncertain. The current approval for glyphosate use in Great Britain has been extended until 15 December 2026 while the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) undertakes a renewal assessment.[2] The assessment covers a range of uses including home gardens, schools and playgrounds. In October 2026, the UK Government announced that the HSE would undertake a 60-day public consultation on its draft scientific assessment. As a result, local authorities continue to plan weed management programmes against a backdrop of ongoing regulatory review.

APSE previously examined this issue in its 2019 briefing, Glyphosate: Where do Local Authorities Stand?[3] which highlighted growing concern amongst councils regarding the continued use of glyphosate, driven by emerging evidence, increasing public scrutiny and legal challenges relating to glyphosate-based products overseas. Whilst the briefing recognised that glyphosate remained a lawful, effective and widely used tool for weed management, it also identified a growing appetite amongst local authorities to explore alternative approaches and reduce reliance on chemical controls where practical.

The briefing concluded that the most effective long-term approach was unlikely to involve replacing one method with another, but instead adopting integrated weed management strategies which combine methods to achieve environmental outcomes whilst maintaining service standards.[4]

---

[1] https://www.iarc.who.int/featured-news/media-centre-iarc-news-glyphosate/
[2] https://www.hse.gov.uk/pesticides/active-substances/glyphosate-renewal.htm
[3] https://apse.org.uk/index.cfm/apse/members-area/briefings/2019/19-32-glyphosate-where-do-local-authorities-stand/
[4] This briefing did not constitute direct legal advice to local authorities and local authorities and other parties should always secure their own independent legal advice on the matters of litigation, risk and health and safety of workers and the public referred to in this briefing.

Since 2019, councils have engaged in pilot projects, adopted reduced spraying programmes as well as alternative weed control methods. For others, concerns regarding biodiversity, environmental impacts and public health have accelerated efforts to reduce or eliminate its use altogether.

The wider context for this shift can be found in APSE's 2026 State of the Market Survey for Parks and Greenspaces.[5] The survey found that 95% of local authorities identify biodiversity as a priority for their parks service, whilst 66% identify climate change as a key service priority. As councils increasingly view parks and green infrastructure as tools for biodiversity recovery, climate resilience and environmental improvement, traditional approaches to weed management are coming under increasing scrutiny.

Seven years on from APSE's original briefing, this survey provides an opportunity to assess how far councils have progressed towards implementing glyphosate reduction programmes and integrated weed management approaches in practice.

[5] https://apse.org.uk/index.cfm/apse/members-area/briefings/2026/26-10-state-of-the-market-on-parks-and-greenspaces-2026/

4 Legislative and policy context

The use of pesticides by local authorities remains regulated through a range of legislative requirements.

Local authorities are required to comply with the Plant Protection Products (Sustainable Use) Regulations[6] and associated pesticide legislation, which require users to take all reasonable precautions to protect human health and the environment whilst minimising pesticide usage wherever practicable.

Authorities should also remain aware of the ongoing HSE review of glyphosate.[7] Whilst glyphosate remains approved for use, the outcome of the current renewal process may have implications for future weed management strategies and procurement decisions.

Authorities must consider:

- Health and Safety at Work legislation
- Environmental protection legislation
- Biodiversity duties
- Pollinator strategies
- Climate adaptation objectives

Across the UK there has been an increasing emphasis on biodiversity and nature recovery, supported by national policy frameworks such as England's Environmental Improvement Plan[8], Scotland's Biodiversity Strategy[9], Wales' Nature Recovery Action Plan[10] and Northern Ireland's Environment Improvement Plan[11]. These initiatives have helped place greater focus on more environmentally sensitive approaches to land management.

This has encouraged local authorities to review traditional weed control practices and consider alternative approaches that support pollinators and habitat creation. Consequently, many authorities have incorporated glyphosate reduction targets within wider biodiversity and nature recovery strategies.

---

[6] https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2012/1657/contents
[7] https://www.hse.gov.uk/pesticides/active-substances/glyphosate-renewal.htm
[8] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/environmental-improvement-plan-2025
[9] https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-biodiversity-strategy-2045/
[10] https://www.gov.wales/nature-recovery-action-plan-2026-html
[11] https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/environmental-improvement-plan-northern-ireland

Northern Ireland

Under the terms of the Windsor Framework, EU plant protection regulations continue to apply directly in Northern Ireland. The EU's recent decision to renew glyphosate therefore permits authorised products to be sold and used in Northern Ireland.

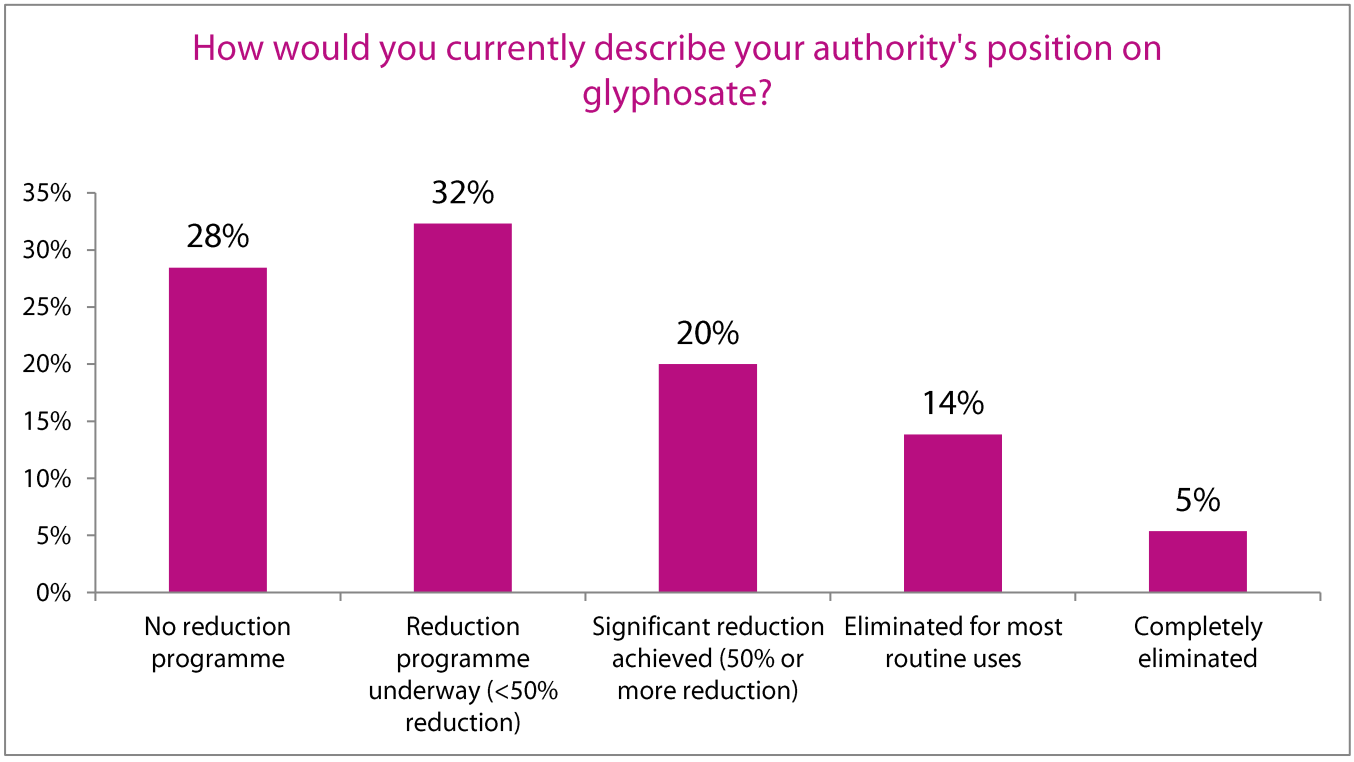
Workforce health and safety considerations

Alongside environmental, biodiversity and regulatory considerations, councils and parks and greenspace managers must remain mindful of workforce health and safety concerns and the views of recognised trade unions regarding the use of glyphosate. APSE encourages authorities to keep health and safety arrangements under regular review and to adopt good practice in line with their own local authority policies, risk management processes and legal responsibilities.

5 Survey results

5.1 Current position on glyphosate

The survey reveals a shift away from unrestricted glyphosate use.



Only 28% of responding authorities reported having no reduction programme in place.

Conversely:

- 32% have reduction programmes underway
- 20% have achieved reductions of 50% or more
- 14% have eliminated glyphosate for most routine uses
- 5% have completely eliminated glyphosate use

These findings suggest that more than seven in ten responding authorities have taken active steps to reduce dependence on glyphosate.

This approach is reflected in comments from respondents:

- *"We have reduced the amount of Glyphosate use by over 50%, we will continue to try to reduce further."*

- *"We don't spray Glyphosate in our formal parks or cemeteries and have stopped using it our local nature reserves."*

Comments indicate that authorities are increasingly avoiding glyphosate use in:

- Parks
- Play areas
- Schools
- Nature reserves
- Areas with high public footfall

In many cases, however, authorities continue to retain glyphosate for invasive species management and certain highway maintenance activities where alternative approaches can be more difficult to implement effectively (see 5.4 for more information on this).

This approach is reflected in comments from respondents:

- *"Whilst still in use for roadsides to avoid accidents etc., it's not supposed to be used elsewhere. There's an absolute ban on us using it where children are, i.e. in schools, sports fields and parks."*

- *"Only used for aggressive weeds such as Japanese Knotweed."*

- *"We have minimised application as far as possible but retain 3 treatments which is via localised droplet application. We also use Glyphosate for treating Japanese Knotweed."*

- *"Suspended rather than elminated, seeking to bring back selective use."*

- *"Significant reductions may have been achieved over the years, but reliable data is hard to come by. Focus and commitment may have reduced here following the May elections and new administration (not entirely sure if they remain committed to reducing or eliminating the use of herbicides or not) It has been said that members get more complaints about excessive weed growth than they do about herbicides…"*

- *"We were Glyphosate free from 2019 to 2024. Reintroduced glyphosate in 2025 with a two year extensive trial underway on alternative strategies."*

- *"Only used for stem injection to plants such as Japanese Knotweed, and eco plugs into tree stumps."*

These comments illustrate how many authorities are moving towards a targeted-use approach, restricting glyphosate to higher-risk or operationally necessary applications while eliminating routine use in public spaces and environmentally sensitive areas.

5.2 Policy development

Formal policy development remains at a relatively early stage.

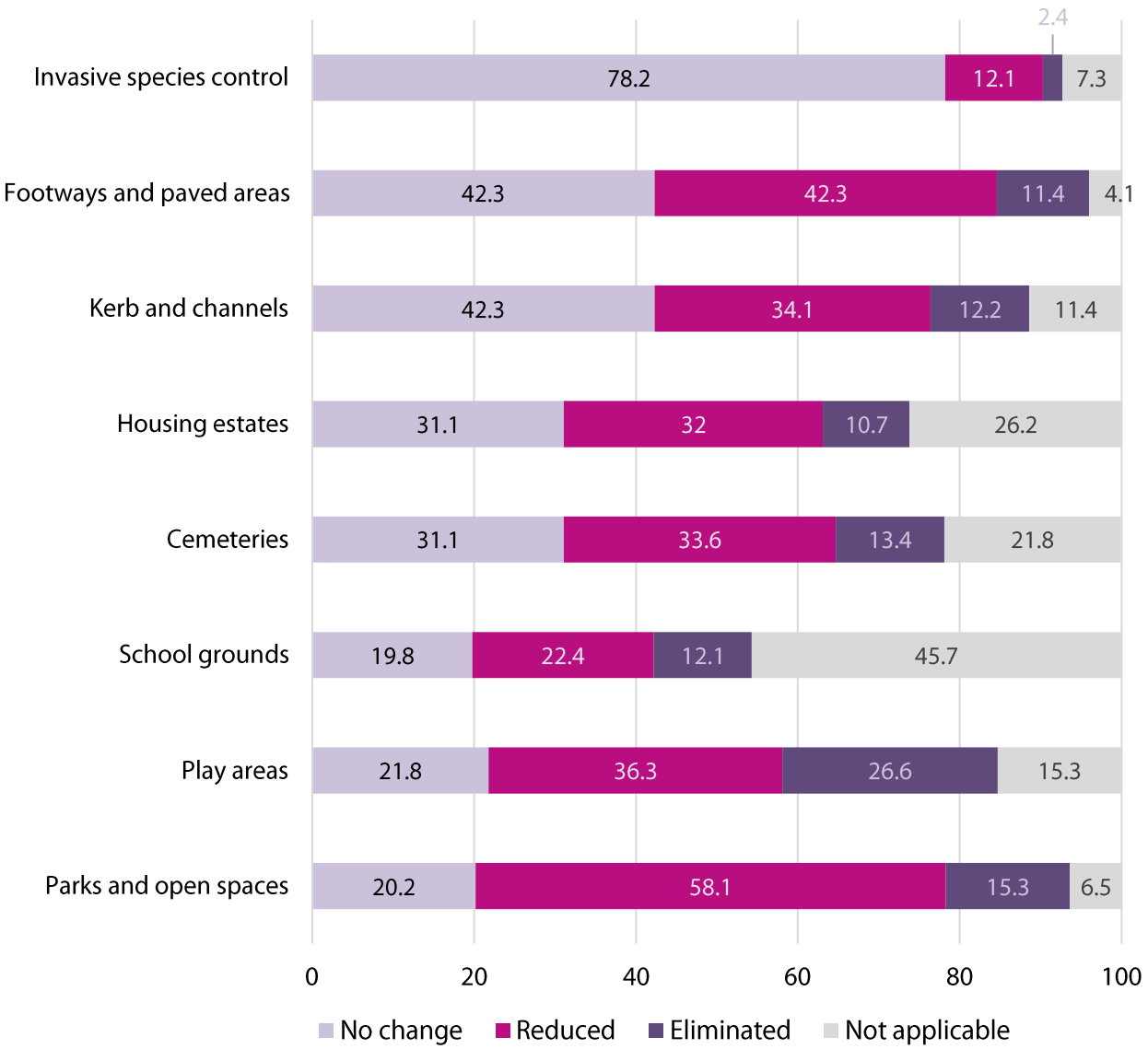
Only one-quarter of authorities reported having a formal weed management or herbicide reduction policy in place.

Position	2026
Yes	25%
In development	18%
No	52%
Not sure	5%

Despite this, almost one-fifth of respondents reported that policies are currently being developed, suggesting substantial future growth in formalised integrated weed management strategies.

5.3 Where glyphosate use has reduced

The greatest reductions have occurred in parks, open spaces and play areas.



Since 2020:

- 58% reported reduced use in parks and open spaces
- 36% reported reductions in play areas
- 34% reported reductions in cemeteries
- 42% reported reductions on paved areas

However, highway-related activities remain more dependent upon glyphosate.

Kerb lines, channels and footways continue to present some of the biggest challenges due to scale, accessibility and public expectations regarding cleanliness.

Survey comments also suggest that progress towards reduced glyphosate dependence is often occurring incrementally. Authorities reported achieving modest reductions through lower dilution ratios, fewer treatment cycles and more targeted application practices, indicating that changes in weed management are not always reflected by headline reductions in overall usage.

5.4 Current uses of glyphosate

While many authorities have reduced application rates, restricted use to specific locations or adopted alternative approaches, glyphosate continues to be used for a range of operational purposes.

The most common uses identified were:

Activity	% using glyphosate
Invasive species control	87%
Footways and paved areas	81%
Kerb and channels	72%
Parks/open spaces	64%
Cemeteries	53%
Housing estates	51%
Play area maintenance	41%
School grounds maintenance	29%

The continued reliance on glyphosate for invasive species control is particularly notable. Numerous authorities commented that alternatives have not yet proved sufficiently effective against species such as Japanese Knotweed and Giant Hogweed.

Comments included:

- *" Spot treatment in public spaces as a last resort, so minimal. Stem injection for Japanese knotweed."*

- *"In ecoplugs for felled tree stumps where the stumps cannot be removed and re-growth would present a significant issue, eg property subsidence or damage to notable memorials in cemeteries. On housing land, glyphosate may be used by external contractors for Japanese Knotweed treatment."*

5.5 Integrated weed management

5.5.1 Trials

Authorities reported trialling a wide range of integrated weed management measures, suggesting that many councils are actively exploring alternatives to conventional herbicide-based approaches.

Which integrated weed management measures has your authority trialled?	**%**
Manual weeding	78%
Mechanical weed removal	72%
Wildflower/meadow management	68%
Reduced mowing regimes	53%
Hot foam	52%
Increased sweeping	37%
Hot water	35%
Acetic acid	34%
Steam	32%
Electric weed control	31%
Pelargonic acid	17%

The most widely trialled measures were manual weeding (78%), mechanical weed removal (72%) and wildflower management (68%), although many councils reported testing several different approaches rather than relying on a single alternative.

5.5.2 Adoption

Despite widespread trials, operational adoption remains much lower for some technologies.

Which integrated weed management measures are now used operationally?	**%**
Manual weeding	78%
Wildflower/meadow management	65%
Mechanical weed removal	58%
Reduced mowing regimes	56%
Increased sweeping	31%
Electric weed control	6%
Acetic acid	6%
Hot water	4%
Steam	3%
Pelargonic acid	3%
Hot foam	2%

Cost and effectiveness challenges

While many authorities have trialled alternative approaches, respondents frequently cited concerns around value for money and the ability of non-chemical methods to deliver the same standard of weed control as glyphosate. Several authorities reported alternative treatments often require more frequent interventions, creating more resource pressures.

Comments included:

- *"None of the other methods were cost effective or reached quality standard of herbicide."*
- *"Effectiveness not currently matching budget."*

- *"We do not use any integrated weed management measures as, when trialled, they did not give us the longevity that we get with glyphosate."*

Scalability and operational constraints

- *"None of the above as they are not scalable for public realm/highway weed control."*

- *"In summary, the alternatives to glyphosate are improving and some of the non-glyphosate weed killers offer safer, faster-acting options for minor weed issues, but they require more effort and repeated applications for comprehensive control."*

Integrated approaches in practice

- *"Mechanical and manual methods are used across the boroughs in addition to thrice annual glyphosate spraying (incl. mechanical brushing of channels and manual removal of pavement weeds over 10 cm tall by operatives."*

- *"A trial of non-glyphosate chemicals and a reduced glyphosate chemical is underway in 10% of the borough as part of a two-year trial. Heat treatments are used near waterways."*

Emerging technologies and future potential

- *"Only trialled electric so far with plans to make it business as usual imminently."*

- *"We are looking at re-trailing a faster version of electric as the results on this test were 'interesting'."*

The comments reinforce the survey findings that integrated weed management is gaining traction across the sector, particularly through manual, mechanical and habitat-based approaches. However, concerns around cost, operational practicality and effectiveness continue to constrain wider adoption of some alternative technologies.

5.6 Monitoring and evaluation

Whilst many authorities are introducing alternative weed control measures, monitoring arrangements remain inconsistent.

Does your authority monitor the effectiveness of alternative weed management methods?	**%**
Yes	41%
No	34%
In development	25%

Only 41% currently monitor effectiveness.

34% undertake no monitoring, whilst 25% are developing monitoring frameworks.

Comments included:

- *"Very difficult to do this with the yoyoing weather of the past two years."*
- *"Yes. Annual review of Pesticide Policy, reviewing any emergent technologies and methods."*
- *"We are required to report annually through the committee cycle on weed control and grass cutting performance."*
- *"Studies show glyphosate remains most cost effective, effective, and minimal environmental option compared to others."*
- *"Alternative methods monitored but nothing coming through as effective as Glyphosate."*

These findings and comments reflect the challenges of measuring effectiveness where weather patterns, weed growth rates, species composition and public expectations vary considerably between locations.

5.7 Drivers for reduction

What factors have influenced your authority's efforts to reduce glyphosate use?	%
Environmental concerns	78%
Biodiversity objectives	66%
Political commitment	56%
Public pressure	55%
Health concerns	38%
Regulatory requirements	21%

Environmental concerns were the most commonly cited factor driving glyphosate reduction, followed by biodiversity objectives and public concerns regarding herbicide use.

These findings closely reflect wider trends identified through APSE's 2026 State of the Market Survey for Parks and Greenspaces. The survey found that 95% of parks services regard biodiversity as a priority and 66% identify climate change as a priority area. The alignment between the two surveys suggests that glyphosate reduction is increasingly being driven by broader ecological and sustainability objectives rather than solely by concerns regarding chemical use.

Comments included:

- *"Under the Environment (Wales) Act 2016, public authorities must maintain and enhance biodiversity, which requires less intensive grass cutting. Sympathetic mowing of road verges and amenity grasslands can help meet this duty, focusing on creating diverse habitats, supporting pollinators and allowing wildflowers (like clover, daisies) to seed, balancing this with essential safety cuts for road visibility."*

- *"No factors have encouraged this, I believe it's mostly reduced due to reduce need. Warmer weather causing slower weed growth."*

For many authorities, reducing glyphosate use is no longer viewed as an isolated operational decision but forms part of broader strategies focused on biodiversity recovery, pollinator support, habitat creation and climate resilience.

5.8 Barriers to reduction

The survey reveals a consistent set of operational challenges.

What have been the main barriers to reducing glyphosate use?	%
Effectiveness of alternatives	84%
Cost	66%
Public expectations	50%
Staffing	46%
Political considerations	19%
Availability of requirements	13%
Health and safety concerns	13%
Procurement issues	2%

Respondents repeatedly reported that alternative treatments:

- Require more applications
- Need more labour
- Deliver less effective results
- Increase costs significantly

These challenges should also be considered in the context of wider pressures facing parks and greenspace services. APSE's 2026 State of the Market Survey found that 57% of authorities expect revenue budgets to decrease over the next year, 37% have implemented recruitment freezes and 68% anticipate reductions in maintenance activity.

Against this backdrop, the higher labour requirements, additional equipment costs and operational complexity associated with many alternative weed control methods can make further reductions in glyphosate use difficult to achieve. Whilst authorities may be committed to reducing reliance on glyphosate, doing so can be challenging where resources remain constrained and public expectations regarding maintenance standards remain high.

5.9 Cost implications

Compared with glyphosate use, how would you describe the cost of your alternative approach?	%
Much higher	42%
Slightly higher	21%
Similar	5%
Slightly lower	6%
Much lower	3%
Not known	23%

The financial implications of reducing glyphosate are considerable. Only 9% of authorities reported alternatives being cheaper.

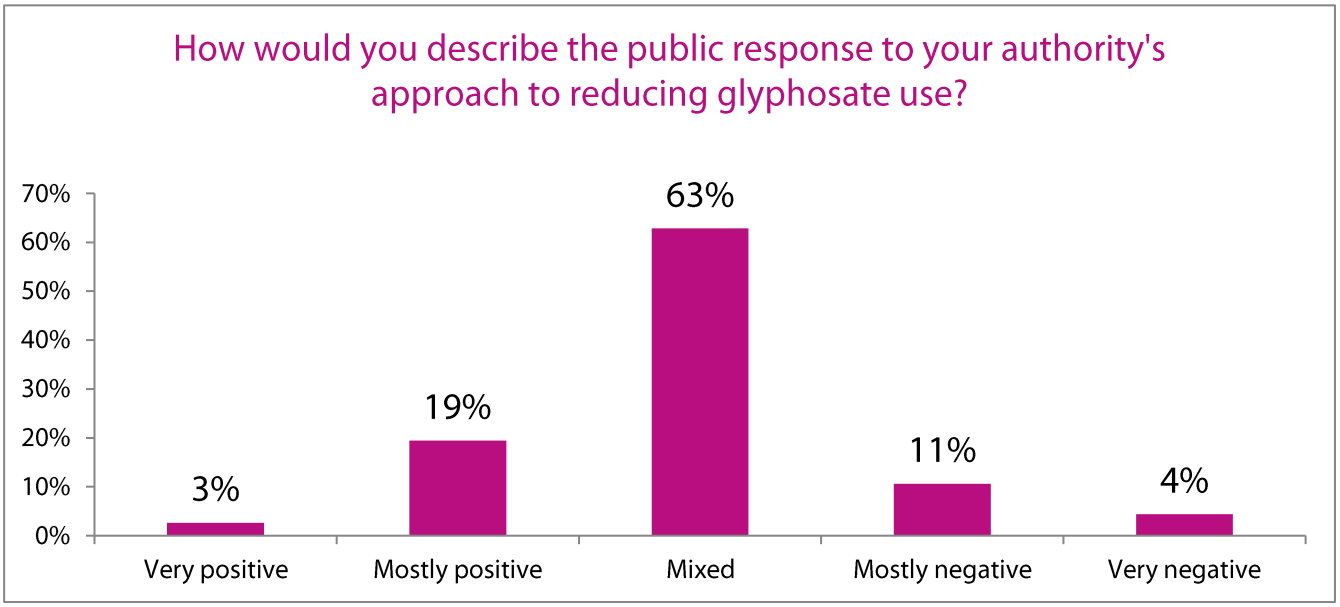
By contrast, 21% reported costs were slightly higher whilst 42% reported costs were much higher.

Numerous respondents highlighted increased labour costs associated with manual weeding and repeated treatment requirements:

- *"Currently completing a pilot of manual removal; cost data still to be finalised but evidence to date looking to suggest much higher."*
- *"Manually weeding takes more time and needs more staff."*
- *"Operative hours compared to weed killer. You can spray an area in a fraction of the time it would take to manually weed it. If you spray early enough you can avoid the need for scudding the dead growth as they usually would just shrivel up and melt off."*
- *"The labour costs required to manually replace what herbicides did is huge."*
- *"Significant investment of the order of 10x higher p.a. than previous glyphosate approach."*

The findings reinforce conclusions from previous APSE research which found that alternatives carry financial implications.

5.9 Public perception



Public opinion remains divided with nearly two-thirds of respondents describing public reaction as mixed.

Comments suggest the public generally falls into two broad groups:

- Those advocating for pesticide reduction.
- Those prioritising weed-free streets and public spaces.

Authorities frequently reported receiving complaints from both groups simultaneously:

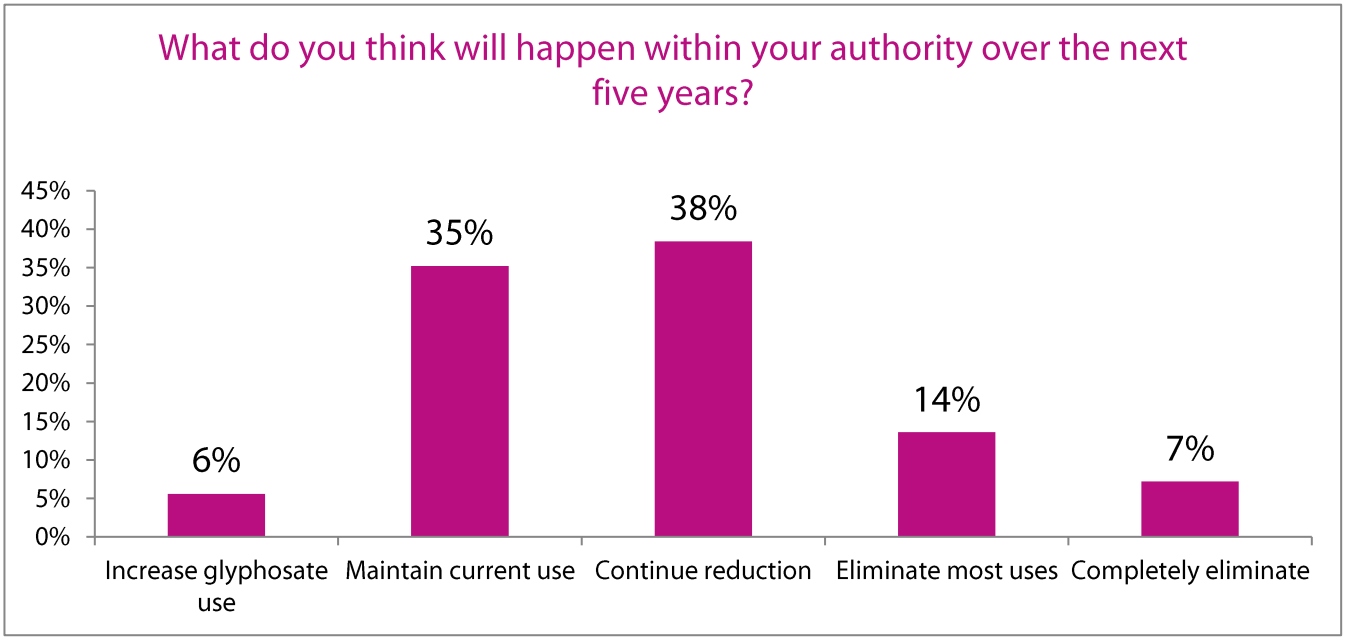
- *"They like Glyphosate not being used, but are then disappointed with the resultant weeds."*
- *"Very positive before trials, less so afterwards!"*
- *"Public awareness of environmental issues has increased, creating greater demand for reduced pesticide use and non-chemical alternatives. However, this can conflict with continued expectations for traditionally neat and highly maintained spaces, where appearance is sometimes valued more highly than environmental quality or biodiversity."*
- *"Complaints that we are using glyphosate and complaints that we aren't dealing with weeds. Alternatives aren't as quick and effective as glyphosate which was one solution for all."*

These findings mirror wider experiences reported across parks and greenspace services. APSE's research into grassland management and biodiversity-focused mowing regimes found that councils often encounter competing public expectations, with some residents strongly supporting environmental initiatives while others regard visible changes to landscape management as a decline in service standards.[12]

APSE research has shown effective communication and clear explanations of environmental objectives are important factors in building public understanding and support for changes in maintenance practices.[13]

[12] https://apse.org.uk/index.cfm/apse/members-area/briefings/2025/25-02-grassland-management/
[13] https://apse.org.uk/index.cfm/apse/members-area/briefings/2026/26-05-grassroots-messaging-visual-communication-for-biodiversity-areas/

5.10 Future direction



The survey suggests continued gradual reduction rather than wholesale elimination.

Looking ahead:

- 38% expect reductions to continue.
- 14% expect most uses to be eliminated.
- 7% expect complete elimination.
- 35% expect current usage levels to remain broadly unchanged.

Comments indicate that approaches continue to vary across councils, with some aiming for further reductions and others anticipating that current use levels will remain broadly the same:

- *"We don't have budgets for the alternatives at present and can't see this changing any time soon so unless public perception changes and either accepts a more relaxed approach to weed control or we are given more money for the more expensive alternatives, it's a challenge."*

- *"We have a change of contract in two years. Weed control will be written into that contract and therefore set for the long term."*

- *"We will need to consider its reduction based on public pressure."*

- *"Local government reorganisation will determine the direction of travel for adjoined policies and approaches."*

- ❖ *In 5 years LGR will have taken place and policies around glyphosate, and its likely that these will be standardised across the county.*

- ❖ *"The final version of our integrated weed control strategy is almost ready."*

- ❖ *"Depends on the licensing of glyphosate."*

- ❖ *"Given the amount of complaints that we get re weeds especially in pavements and hard surfaces I cannot see it reducing."*

- ❖ *"We will continue to look at reductions."*

Echoing the comments, the future will largely depend upon:

- Availability of effective alternatives
- Financial resources
- Political priorities
- Public expectations
- Regulatory developments

Regulatory developments are likely to be particularly significant. With the current glyphosate approval due to expire on 15 December 2026 and the HSE renewal assessment still ongoing, many authorities are adopting a cautious approach. Several survey respondents noted that future decisions regarding glyphosate use will depend on the outcome of the approval process. The regulatory decision may influence the pace at which councils continue to invest in integrated weed management and alternative technologies.

The future direction of travel is also likely to be influenced not only by developments in weed management technology and regulation, but also by broader changes within parks services.

APSE's 2026 State of the Market Survey found that 49% of authorities expect growth in conservation and climate management activities over the next twelve months[14]. As biodiversity enhancement, habitat creation and climate adaptation become increasingly important service objectives, pressure to reduce reliance on chemical weed control is likely to continue.

Integrated weed management approaches are therefore likely to play an increasingly important role in balancing environmental ambitions with operational requirements.

---

[14] https://apse.org.uk/index.cfm/apse/members-area/briefings/2026/26-10-state-of-the-market-on-parks-and-greenspaces-2026/

Conclusion: Gradual and pragmatic reduction

The 2026 APSE Glyphosate and Integrated Weed Management Survey presents a picture of a sector in transition.

The survey demonstrates that local authorities are continuing to review and adapt their approach to glyphosate use. In many respects, the findings reflect the direction of travel identified in APSE's 2019 briefing Glyphosate: Where do Local Authorities Stand? Whilst complete elimination remains relatively uncommon, many authorities have implemented reduction programmes and are increasingly adopting integrated weed management approaches.

This suggests a gradual shift away from routine reliance on chemical herbicides towards more targeted and environmentally sensitive approaches to weed management. However, progress remains uneven, with financial pressures, operational practicalities and the limitations of alternative methods continuing to present challenges.

The survey findings should also be viewed within the broader context of parks and greenspace management. As local authorities place increasing emphasis on biodiversity enhancement, climate resilience and habitat creation, expectations surrounding weed management continue to evolve. The challenge for authorities will be balancing these ambitions with the financial and operational realities of service delivery. Integrated weed management is likely to remain the most practical route forward, enabling councils to reduce dependency on glyphosate whilst maintaining safe, accessible and well-managed public spaces.

While much of the discussion around glyphosate focuses on environmental and biodiversity considerations, councils must also continue to consider workforce health and safety alongside the views of recognised trade unions. APSE encourages authorities to keep their arrangements under regular review and to follow best practice in line with local policies and risk management processes.

The most likely future scenario is one of gradual and pragmatic reduction rather than rapid elimination. Integrated weed management will continue to evolve, balancing environmental ambitions with operational realities and public expectations.

How can APSE help?

All APSE members can sign up to APSE's Parks, Horticulture and Grounds Maintenance network, which is an online network providing four learning events across the year, with expert speakers from across local government and the wider parks and greenspace sector. You can sign up to the network using this link.

Training

APSE Training has also designed several special interactive online course for parks professionals:

1. **Introduction to Parks Management (CPD).** This preliminary course provides an introduction to the key issues and principles of parks management. If you are looking to move towards a more senior position, or you want to grow the skills to understand, develop, and cope with the demands faced by managers, this course will provide a robust overview. You can book your place on the course here.
2. **Advanced Parks Management: Sustainable Finance (CPD).** This particular course is the first in what is expected to become a suite of advanced modules for senior parks professionals. Focussing on sustainable funding, it provides an insight into the key issues and best practice techniques for creating a more sustainable basis for future funding. You can book your place on the course here.
3. **Biodiversity Net Gain: Preparing Parks Professionals**. This training has been specifically designed to familiarise parks and greenspaces colleagues with this legislation. Through a variety of interactive activities, learners will have the opportunity to gather information and discuss strategies for practical application. You can book your place here.

Benchmarking

APSE Performance Networks is the largest voluntary public sector benchmarking organisation in the UK. With over 200 authorities in membership, Performance Networks assists local councils by:

- Demonstrating progression on carbon reduction/ecological actions
- Helping to set a clear baseline on which competitiveness, efficiency and value for money can be measured in a systematic manner.
- Identifying the impact of service changes and interventions for your own local authorities and for others.
- Assessing the quality, cost and competitiveness of the services that councils provide on a regular basis.
- Helping to report data in meaningful ways to both elected members and the public.
- Identifying direction of travel and pace of change with regard to service delivery.
- Identifying inefficiencies such as poor productivity and high cost.
- Supporting service improvement through process benchmarking and sharing best practice examples.

For more information about how your parks service can benefit from Performance Networks membership, click here.

Sign up for APSE membership to enjoy a whole range of benefits

APSE member authorities have access to a range of membership resources to assist in delivering council services. This includes our regular network meetings, specifically designed to bring together elected members, directors, managers and heads of service, together with trade union representatives to discuss service specific issues, innovation and new ways of delivering continuous improvement. The networks are an excellent forum for sharing ideas and discussing topical service issues with colleagues from other councils throughout the UK.

Networks are a free service included as part of your authority's membership of APSE and all end with an informal lunch to facilitate networking with peers in other councils. If you do not currently receive details about APSE Network meetings and would like to be added to our list of contacts for your service area please email enquiries@apse.org.uk.

Our national networks include:-

- FM and Building Cleaning
- Catering (School Meals)
- Cemeteries and Crematoria
- Highways and Street Lighting
- Housing, Construction and Building Maintenance
- Social Value, Procurement and Commercialisation Network
- Parks, Horticulture and Grounds Maintenance
- Renewables and Climate Change
- Roads, Highways and Street Lighting
- Sports and Leisure Management
- Vehicle Maintenance and Transport
- Veterans and Military Champions Network
- Local Government Reorganisation Network
- Waste Management, Recycling and Street Cleansing

Visit www.apse.org.uk for more details.

Association for Public Service Excellence
3rd floor,
Trafford House,
Chester Road, Manchester M32 0RS.
telephone: 0161 772 1810
web: www.apse.org.uk

Carbon Literate Organisation Platinum

INVESTORS IN PEOPLE™ We invest in people Gold

NEW MUNICIPALISM
Delivering for local people and local economies