

Mid and East Antrim Council Herbicide Use Policy

Mid and East Antrim Council is conscious of the need to reduce, replace, and where possible, eliminate the use of herbicides due to the potential risk to the environment and human health increasingly highlighted in research and media.

Glyphosate has been one of the most commonly used herbicides worldwide for several decades. In December 2017 the European Commission made the decision to renew the approval for the use of glyphosate for five more years, as such, the current approval of glyphosate expires in December 2022.

Mid and East Antrim Council currently uses a number of weed control products which are based on the active ingredient glyphosate. These are primarily used for the treatment of invasive species such as Japanese Knotweed and perennial and annual weeds in parks and open spaces.

Public expectation has demanded a 'tidy' appearance which traditionally has meant the widespread application of herbicides to eliminate the perception of untidiness created by the growth of weeds.

This policy will guide both internal operations and residents/community groups involved with 'in bloom' and similar community initiatives. This policy will also enable the Council to continue to develop sites for regional accreditations (eg In Bloom, Green Flag) which require minimisation of herbicide use.

This policy aims to reduce the reliance on herbicides by:-

- Designating herbicide free zones
- Implementing alternative control methods
- Creating 'wild' areas where appropriate
- Developing of a communication campaign to raise awareness and encourage acceptance of alternative management techniques.
- Supporting resident/community groups carrying out clean ups in local areas through the provision of 'Green Clean Up' kits
- Promoting of the importance of pollinator insects; developing and promoting pollinator friendly areas and maintenance techniques.

Mid and East Antrim Council's policy with regards to queries, complaints or requests for weed control by members of the public should not be to revert automatically to herbicide application but to encourage residents, communities and business groups to manage weeds in their area as part of their contribution to the 'in bloom' campaign and Local Biodiversity Action Plan.

It is important to note that this Herbicide Use Policy will not apply to the management of Invasive Species, sports pitches or bowling greens, where chemical control is the most appropriate control option currently.

This document will be reviewed in April 2023 and, if relevant, annually thereafter.