

**From:** Community Services - Headquarters

<[CommunityServices@highland.gov.uk](mailto:CommunityServices@highland.gov.uk)>

**Subject: HC0226-6373 - Use of glyphosate and glyphosate based products**

**Date:** 12 November 2019 at 11:57:28 GMT

**To:** [REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED]

Request for information under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002

I would like to request all information relating to the use of glyphosate and glyphosate based products by the council. I would also like to request all correspondence, and all information relating to discussions, within the council and between the council and members of the public, regarding the use of glyphosate and glyphosate based products. Please provide this information for the period January 2015 - present.

Specifically, for each year (2015 - 2019), please state: • The quantity of glyphosate or glyphosate based products used, in litres, and method of application • The amount spent on glyphosate or glyphosate based products: purchase, storage and application • Where were glyphosate based herbicides used - for all weed control or only on certain surfaces/ground types/areas? If the latter, please specify where these products were used - in school grounds, parks, pavements, tree bases, flowerbeds, only on hard surfaces etc.? Are there certain neighbourhoods or facilities where it was not used?

**Please see answers given to previous FOI request:**

1. Has the council or its contractors used any glyphosate-based herbicides in the year 2018/2019?

Answer: Yes

2. Can you confirm the total litres of glyphosate-based herbicides applied either by the council or its contractors in 2018/2019?

Answer: 2040lt of roundup or its equivalent.

3. What is the percentage change (increase or decrease) in litres usage of glyphosate-based herbicides from 2017/2018 to 2018/2019?

Answer: Nil

4. Can you confirm the total £ amount spent on glyphosate-based herbicides by the council or its contractors in 2018/2019?

Answer: £97,448

5. What was the brand name of the glyphosate-based herbicides used in the year 2018/2019?

Answer: Roseate-Roundup Pro Bio -Asteroid-Duplex

6. Were glyphosate-based herbicides used on any playgrounds in the year 2018/2019?

Answer: Yes

7. Were glyphosate-based herbicides used on any school grounds in the year 2018/2019?

Answer: Yes

8. Were glyphosate-based herbicides used on any housing estates in the year 2018/2019?

Answer: Yes

9. Were glyphosate-based herbicides used on any hospital grounds in the year 2018/2019?

Answer: please refer to NHS Highland – no information held by THC

10. Were glyphosate-based herbicides used on any NHS doctor surgeries in the year 2018/2019?

Answer: please refer to NHS Highland – no information held by THC

11. Were glyphosate-based herbicides used within a 10m radius of any playgrounds, schools, hospitals, housing estates or private homes in the year 2018/2019?

Answer: Yes

12. Has the council or its contractors currently used any other herbicides or methods of weed killing in 2018/2019 i.e. not glyphosate-based? If yes, what other herbicides or methods were used in 2018/2019?

Answer: No

13. Has the council or its contractors used any insecticides in the year 2018/2019?

Answer: No

14. If yes, what is the brand name, or active ingredient, of the insecticides used in 2018/2019?

Answer: N/A

15. Has the council or its contractors used any fungicides in the year 2018/2019?

Answer: Yes

16. If yes, what is the brand name, or active ingredient, of the fungicides used in 2018/2019?

Answer: Syngenta Instratia

- Number of complaints about weeds

**Answer:** We are unable to extract data about complaints by Topic.

The public are encouraged to report any issues on this link: <https://www.highland.gov.uk/report>

- Number of complaints about herbicide or pesticide use Additionally, please answer the following: • Are there plans to reduce or discontinue the use of glyphosate and glyphosate based products? If so, please detail the decision making process and timescale of this, and which alternative forms of weed control are being or going to be used. • What safety measures are in place to protect the worker applying the product, the public, pets, the environment, and wildlife?

**Answer:**

Highland Council have previously been using Glyphosate-Based Herbicides, so previously we have stated that Highland Council has a Member approved weed killing programme and operational procedures based on best practice, legislation and industry standards. We weed kill when there is no viable alternative.

- Operative hold appropriate certification for all herbicide application
- Highland Council operatives within the guidelines of H&S regulations and use weed killer as directed by the manufacturer.
- Roundup has been given a seal of approval by the UK and European Union for use in Amenity areas. It is Classified as Non-hazardous by COSHH.

- Glyphosate is also approved for use in dealing with invasive aquatic plants.
- Operatives use specific nozzles with a downward action so they can pinpoint the application. They do not blanket spray.
- Roundup biodegrades in the soil with days. It dries within minutes and is of nil consequence if touched when dry.
- We only apply glyphosate once in the year.

With limited resources, the use of weedkilling along fence lines/edge of pavements allows for a larger, quicker machine to cut grass closer to these edges. This facilitates labour savings and is safer for our operatives. There is no obligation to advise of weed killing taking place and due to the length of distance that may be covered in one application, it would be logistically impossible to signpost large areas. Grass edges and obstacles are treated with Glyphosate (Roseate) and Flazasulfuron (Paradise). These are chemicals that are not harmful to animals or humans and are in line with EU regulations. They are similar products readily available for sale to householders for use in their own properties and gardens and advertised as harmless to animals.

**At its meeting in June 2019 the Council agreed a motion to:**

- a. immediately ban the use of weed killing products containing glyphosate in all sports recreation facilities / play grounds and schools; and
- b. prepare a Business Case for consideration at the next council meeting on options for a complete ban on the use of such products, except for invasive species control and at dangerous road junctions where its use will be risk assessed on a case by case basis.

This followed an earlier decision in September 2018, to review the policy on weed killing.

A business case requires consideration of costs involved. Initial work to identify the operational and financial implications of alternatives to glyphosate showed that whilst savings could be realised if chemical weed control was stopped or significantly reduced; there would be increased operational costs of the alternatives (for example, steam, foam or manual weed removal) plus the cost of repairing damage to infrastructure caused by weed growth. Further work is required to confirm the cost of all the options identified.

The Council spends approximately £0.5 million per annum on weed control.

Please see links to our reports available to read online.

[https://www.highland.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/4017/highland\\_council/attachment/74632](https://www.highland.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/4017/highland_council/attachment/74632)

[https://www.highland.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/4140/highland\\_council/attachment/75457](https://www.highland.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/4140/highland_council/attachment/75457)

Under Section 20 of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 you have the right to request that the Highland Council reviews any aspect of how it has dealt with your request. This requirement for review should be put in writing to the Freedom of Information Officer, Chief Executive's Office, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness IV3 5NX, within 40 working days of receipt of this letter. The request should include details of the information requested and the aspects of the Highland Council's response which you are not satisfied with.

If you are subsequently dissatisfied with the outcome of the Council's review, you have the right to appeal to the Scottish Information Commissioner under Section 47 of the Act, within six months of receiving the Council's review response.

Further guidance on information request reviews and right to appeal can be found on the Scottish Information Commissioner website at [www.itspublicknowledge.info](http://www.itspublicknowledge.info).

Yours sincerely

██████████ on behalf of Service Support Officer

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