

Herbicide Policy

Herbicide Policy 2026–2029

Purpose

This policy operates in accordance with:

- Food and Environment Protection Act 1985
- Control of Pesticides Regulations 1986 (as amended)
- Plant Protection Products (Sustainable Use) Regulation 2012
- Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002
- The UK Pesticides National Action Plan 2025

Protecting and enhancing biodiversity is a priority for Havant Borough Council, as ecosystems face increasing pressure from climate change, habitat loss, and chemical use. In response to the Climate and Nature Emergency, this policy commits to reducing and ultimately phasing out glyphosate and other harmful herbicides on Council-managed land.

The Council will adopt integrated, sustainable approaches to vegetation management that balance environmental protection, public health, and operational needs. This policy applies to staff and contractors and sets out a framework for transitioning to safer, non-chemical alternatives.

The policy aims to:

- Provide a clear and transparent approach to herbicide use.
- Reduce reliance on chemical weed control.
- Promote and trial non-chemical methods.
- Ensure all herbicide use is justified, recorded, in line with national standards and regularly reviewed.

This aligns with the Council's Climate Change Strategy and Biodiversity Strategy, supporting net zero ambitions and nature recovery. By reducing herbicide use, the Council will help protect biodiversity, improve soil and water quality, and support resilient green spaces.



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Scope

This policy applies to all land owned, leased, or managed by Havant Borough Council, including parks and green spaces, roadside verges, town centres and highways (where managed under agreement with Hampshire County Council), playgrounds, cemeteries, allotments, housing estates, and other communal areas. It also covers hard surfaces such as pavements, car parks, and footpaths.

Contractor Use

The Council currently engages a contractor for grounds and environmental maintenance services. Glyphosate is the only herbicide used under this contract and is applied in selected locations and situations such as where there is excessive growth.

This policy builds on existing good practices and represents a shift toward a long-term strategy to reduce chemical inputs across Council operations, whilst still maintaining accessible, safe, and well-managed public spaces. Weed control is carried out across the Borough twice a year.

Sustainability in Weed Control

A sustainable approach to vegetation management includes:

- Environmental protection: Minimising harm to pollinators, soil organisms, aquatic life, and other non-target species.
- Public health and safety: Reducing potential exposure to harmful chemicals, especially among children and vulnerable groups.
- Cost-effectiveness: Evaluating the full cost of chemical use.
- Practicality: Balancing the need to keep areas tidy, safe, and accessible with environmental considerations.



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- Glyphosate is only used where no viable alternative currently exists. Specific use cases include:
- Spot treatment of hard surfaces, such as kerb edges and footpaths, where manual or mechanical methods are not feasible.
- Vegetation control around obstacles and street furniture.
- Occasional use in sports turf and amenity areas, with strict controls.

The Council does not permit blanket spraying, aerial application, or use of glyphosate in sensitive community areas such as play parks and schools.

Health & Safety

All use of glyphosate by contractors is governed by strict standards:

- All operatives applying professional use of herbicides must hold recognised certificate of competence (e.g PA1/PA6 or equivalent) in accordance with legal requirements.
- Glyphosate is applied using a knapsack sprayer incorporating Controlled Droplet Application (CDA) to reduce drift.
- Application is limited to targeted areas and carried out only in suitable dry weather conditions.
- All treatments must be recorded, with location, date, chemical used, quantity, and justification.
- Chemicals must be stored, transported, and disposed of in full compliance with COSHH and environmental regulations. A COSHH risk assessment must be carried out prior to any herbicide use, identifying risks to users, the public and the environment and specifying control measures.

Best Practice and Control Measures

To ensure transparency, safety, and compliance, the following measures are in place:

- Appropriate PPE must be worn as identified in the COSHH risk assessment and in accordance with product label



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requirements. It is recommended that a paper suit, rubber gloves, wellington boots and goggles are worn during application.

- No-spray buffer zones near watercourses, schools, play areas, and pollinator habitats.
- All applications must comply with product label requirements, including mandatory buffer zones. Where required, a Local Environmental Risk Assessment for Pesticides (LERAP) must be completed and recorded prior to application near watercourses.
- The contractor will consider whether glyphosate can be diluted during operations.

Alternatives to Glyphosate

The Council will prioritise and trial non-chemical methods, including but not limited to:

- Thermal weeding (hot foam, steam).
- Manual removal (hand-pulling).
- Mechanical removal (brush machines, strimmers with shields).
- Mulching and planting to suppress weed growth.
- Use of acetic acid or pelargonic acid where appropriate.
- All alternative methods will be evaluated for their effectiveness, safety, cost, scalability, and environmental impact. It should be noted that while alternative methods may require more frequent application and higher costs, they offer environmental benefits that align with the Council's sustainability goals.

Monitoring, Reporting and Review

All records of herbicide use must be maintained in accordance with legal and audit requirements and retained for an appropriate period determined by the Council's records management policy.

The Council will ensure the maintenance of records of all herbicide use, trials, and alternative methods. This policy will be formally reviewed every three years, or sooner if legislation or scientific evidence changes.



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Key Policy Statements

Minimise and Phase Out Glyphosate: The Council commits to minimising glyphosate use subject to viable alternatives subject to the need to meet statutory duties including highway safety and public health. The Council will aim to reduce glyphosate use by 10% each year and reduce concentration levels.

Legal Compliance and Best Practice: All herbicide use will comply with national regulations and apply best environmental practice.

Ensure Contractor Compliance: Compliance with this policy will form a contractual requirement, and the Council reserves the right to audit contractor performance and require evidence of compliance.

Innovation and Continuous Improvement: The Council will remain informed of emerging methods and adopt improvements through regular trials and evidence-based evaluation.

Conclusion

This policy reflects Havant Borough Council's commitment to environmental leadership, public health, and sustainable land maintenance. By reducing dependence on harmful chemicals, we aim to ensure that our public spaces are safe, vibrant, and ecologically resilient for generations to come.

Version number	Date	Author / reviewer	Comments / changes
V0.1	16/05/2026	Sonja Reames	Draft
V0.2	21/05/2026	Sonja Reames	Updated wording and layout
V0.3	01/06/2026	Sonja Reames	Legal update
V0.4	01/07/2026	Sonja Reames	Final – Cabinet approved

