

Deputations

Transport and Environment Committee

10.00 am Thursday, 14th September, 2023

Dean of Guild Court Room - City Chambers

Deputations

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CITY OF EDINBURGH COUNCIL

Item No 3

TRANSPORT AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

14 SEPTEMBER 2023

DEPUTATION REQUESTS

Subject	Deputation
3.1 In relation to Item 7.4 on the agenda – Phased Reduction in Use of Glyphosate	Pesticide Free Balerno

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Deputation from Pesticide Free Balerno in relation to item 7.4 Phased Reduction in Use of Glyphosate.

The urgent need to end the non essential use of Glyphosate for weed control in the residential streets and areas of Edinburgh is long overdue.

The city petition is now touching 5,000 with members of the public requesting their public funds are used more wisely to apply safe alternatives for weed control and not for harmful to health and environment chemicals.

Despite this request, the chemical continues to be applied on our streets, pavements, around trees, bus stops, medical centres, playparks and schools.

Where this chemical is routinely applied is areas which are assumed safe to walk our dogs, let kids play and where we encourage ourselves or others to walk, run or cycle.

The risks to health are well known to Edinburgh Council who have been allowing continued applications of this chemical despite this topic being discussed since 2016 after The World Health Organisation linked Glyphosate to Cancer in humans and animals.

The harmful nature of this chemical is also well documented in the 1000s of studies available for public scrutiny, free from vested interests.

The Transport and Environment committee itself decided to stop using Glyphosate in 2017 following WHO's announcement, then one year later returned to Glyphosate use and have applied ever since.

Residents in Balerno raised their concerns in 2018, after reports of ill health following local applications.

By 2020 there was reported bee death, damage to property and human and pet illness following local applications of Glyphosate.

It took a substantial community petition and a deputation to this committee in 2020 before gaining agreement from to stop applications of Glyphosate.

A volunteer weeding group was arranged to support the council whilst they looked into safe alternatives (already used successfully around the U.K.)

In 2021 a mini trial of Foamstream by Edinburgh council gave the feedback of 'non viable'

Equipment used for trial was defective, methods used were clearly inefficient and the motivation for a successful result was absent.

An unsurprising 'non viable' was thus the result and as yet we still await substantive quantitative evidence to support this.

Health impacts were also not factored in, which was odd, considering it was the very reason the trial took place.

Emphasis focussed on any negative factors , so in the interest of unbiased reporting we would like to share some positive results witnessed by ourselves and residents.

The trial did give excellent results in one particular area which is notoriously difficult and laborious to manually weed . Large slabbed areas throughout the trial area were addressed efficiently using Foamstream.

Interestingly we have been told this year that these particular areas are also unsuitable for mechanical weeding . This clearly illustrates the need to introduce safe alternatives like Foamstream or Hot Water systems into Edinburghs Safe 'Integrated Approach' to meet areas such as these.

Great to read from the report that certain streets have been listed for no Glyphosate applications.

Does this mean all other streets have agreed to have the chemical applied?

If no attempt has been made to seek consent despite the known , well documented risks to health..this may be seen as inequality and discrimination?

We also feel that consideration should be given to each individuals unique health vulnerabilities - When decision makers see an 'acceptable level of risk' this may be the case for some individuals but often can be hugely unacceptable level of risk for another

Risk and consent must surely always be assessed and given by the individual, not assumed and presumed by council.

We also note with interest the suggestion that a third party involvement may be required to fund safe alternatives!?

But not for chemicals or quad bikes etc etc

Seems like a ludicrous suggestion

Clear maladministration of Public Funds and if there is not £20,000 for an essential purchase of a Foamstream machine why not?

Council surely has a duty to protect the public funds it administers.

In conclusion to offer a thoroughly diluted version of what is required as a minimum change in procedure after nearly 4years of support from the Balerno community and Pesticide Free Balerno is entirely inadequate.

An introduction of some level of safe alternatives is the very minimum required.

To offer to stop applying Glyphosate in areas where it should never have been applied in the first place- is not a great offer.

When Glyphosate was narrowly relicensed by EU states in 2017 it was done so with strict advisory to limit use in parks, green spaces.

PAN interprets this advisory to mean to be used for Invasive Species only!

Admitting that this has been ignored over the last seven years is nothing to be proud of, as is offering 'plans' years long

This is nothing short of protecting continued use for which there is no excuse.

While council protects continued use of Glyphosate we will protect health and biodiversity , which if we wait on any specific action from Edinburgh Council it looks like it will be gone by the time any proposed plans are complete.