

Iminster Town Council Pesticide Policy

1. Summary

1.1 This document aims to outline and control the way that Iminster Town Council and contractors working on our behalf use pesticides in a sustainable way reducing risk to health and the environment.

1.2 This policy can be summarized into seven policy statements which can be used by officers and Members to guide decision making.

No	Description
1	Non pesticide control will always be considered as a 'first choice'. Approval will be given for pesticide application on the land under our management only in specific and defined circumstances as defined in Section four.
2	We will continually review and trial, where appropriate, new methods of non-pesticide control as and when they become available, with the view to adopting these as soon as possible where they offer a viable alternative to pesticide use.
4	That this policy will be considered when considering new projects or developments with the aim of reducing the need for weed control through design.
5	We will eliminate the use of glyphosate-based weed killers wherever possible.
6	Where there is no alternative but to use pesticides, the council will ensure full compliance with all legal requirements. Maintain detailed accurate records of pesticide application and ensure staff and appointed contractors are fully trained and competent.
7	We will ensure that all future contracts and, where possible, existing contracts are consistent with the council's policy on pesticides.
8	We will use what mechanism is available to us to ensure that third parties maintaining council owned land comply with the policy.
9	Where the council maintains land on behalf of a third party it will be to ensure that as far as reasonably possible the principles of this policy will be delivered.
10	Where possible the council will work with stakeholders to encourage the perceptions of 'weeds' to bring the public on board.

2. General

2.1 The Council is committed to undertaking maintenance of its parks, open spaces and other areas of responsibility by using methods which have minimum damaging impact on the natural environment. In keeping with this, the Council will:

- Keep pesticide use to a minimum, and only use if absolute necessary.
- Increase the use of green recycled waste as mulch, reducing the need for the use of herbicide on shrub beds and hedge lines.

- Reduce the need for chemical application by using horticultural techniques and actions in the first instance.

3. Weed Control

3.1 It is a legal requirement and Good Practice that those who use pesticides aim to minimize pesticide use in public spaces. Herbicides are the primary plant protection products used in the UK. Glyphosate has been used to control weeds for over three decades and is the predominate herbicide applied in the amenity sector.

3.2 In recent years Glyphosate herbicide has been linked to many studies that suggest it has potential risks to health and the environment and will be phased out. Other techniques will be researched and used to suppress weeds on hard surface areas, shrub beds, obstacles and fence lines with the aim to eliminate pesticide use as soon as a viable alternative is found.

3.3 Although every effort will be made to use non-chemical control, there will still be some instances where alternative methods are not practical, acceptable, or effective or available. Wherever this is the case, integrated control will be practiced wherever possible, i.e., a combination of cultural and pesticide use, to resolve a problem with the least impact on the environment.

3.4 Some examples of where pesticides will still be likely to be used in the immediate future are stated below. The list is not exhaustive, however.

- **Sports pitch surfaces.**

These areas are maintained to a high standard to allow the games to be played to a good standard. However, the council will work closely with the sports clubs where possible to reduce pesticide use, and to identify alternative sustainable methods when they arise.

Selective herbicides will be permitted for use on fine turf and sports pitches to control broadleaf weeds where they impact the playing pitch quality, selective weed killing will only take place

- **The maintenance of some hard surfaces**

Some hard surfaces such as paths in the churchyard or cemetery where a certain level of cleanliness is required on a large scale, may still require the use of herbicide where other methods cannot be used i.e. areas inaccessible to a hot foam machine.

However, when this operation is carried out, weeds will be individually targeted (reduced volume spraying) by the applicator, therefore considerably reducing the amount of herbicide used, and preventing any excess herbicide being lost into

the environment. In the past, paths etc. were often “blanket treated” i.e. spray was applied to cover the path, whether weeds were present or not. This practice will not be carried out on our sites.

We will limit the use of Glyphosate use to 1 spray per season, this has historically been used several times throughout the growing season and use a herbicide with an Acetic acid as its active ingredient. Acetic Acid dilutions can be effective in controlling weeds on hard surfaces in a variety of situations. Acetic acid is biodegradable and poses no risk of bioaccumulation.

Where Glyphosate is used, an environmental survey will be undertaken, and records kept ensuring that weather conditions and environmental factors are considered to prevent damage.

- **Scrub clearance and control of regrowth**

The control of tree stump regrowth and self-set saplings, to restore and maintain valuable ecological grassland and habitats and to also stop the spread of invasive non- native trees is sometimes delivered by the use of pesticides.

The traditional methods of control for these areas such as grazing, may not be viable due to high incidences of dog walking or difficulties in implementing fencing. Other alternatives will be used such as to increase the use of volunteers to clear such areas when there is no alternative.

The pesticide method of control will usually be in the form of pesticide plugs inserted into the stump, or by targeted stump painting.

4. Approved Pesticides

4.1 The Council will only use UK government approved pesticides and comply with the Plant Protection Products (Sustainable Use) Regulations 2012 governing the use of pesticides. Pesticides will be checked against a database of authorized pesticide products on the Pesticides Register Database which can be accessed on the Health and Safety Executives website.

5. Training

5.1 Any employee engaged to apply pesticides will have the correct formal training and specified certification to apply pesticides properly and safely complying with Health and Safety legislation.

5.2 The Town Council will ensure that any contractor acting on our behalf is suitably qualified for the application method being used complying with health and safety regulations.

6. Storage, Handling and Disposal

6.1 The council will take reasonable precautions to ensure that storage, handling and disposal of products, their remnants (old products and unused tank mixes) and packing and cleaning of equipment do not endanger human health or the environment. The following measures will be undertaken:

- In the case of non-professional products - following instructions on storage and disposal of the product in accordance with instructions on the product label.
- In the case of professional products - identifying and mitigating any risks and following good filling, storage and disposal practices.
- Limited stock will be held on any pesticide product to ensure that it is used by the expiry date.
- Any pesticide product found to be identified as being withdrawn from use will be used prior to other products serving the same purpose that are authorized for use, up to being withdrawn from use.
- Should a product become withdrawn from use, any remaining product will be disposed of via an authorized hazardous waste carrier.

7. Record Keeping

7.1 Records of pesticide applications will be kept for a minimum of 3 years and will detail date, location, area covered, operator and weather conditions

7.2 Store records will be kept on site, in the chemical store, in the Warden's office and digitally to be able to assist emergency services in the event of an incident.

8. Future Design and Planning Considerations

8.1 Where opportunity exists to influence the design of new features or modify existing ones on council property, control of weeds will be considered when determining materials, siting, angles etc. This may include ground covering plants and using asphalt instead of paving slabs.