

Request 9808 – Use of Glyphosate-Based Herbicides

I live in Lolworth and write regarding SCDC's use of glyphosate-based herbicides.

In this letter I set out a request for environmental information, which I make in accordance with the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (the "EIR 2004") and/or the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the "FOIA 2000"). Where the Information Sought is available online, I am happy to receive that information by way of link to the respective online source.

Information Sought - I request the following information:

1. Which glyphosate-based herbicides[1] are currently used by or on behalf of the Council and/or on land owned by, managed by, or under the control of, the Council?
2. For the most recent 12-month period for which information is available, please could you tell me the amount and brand of each glyphosate-based herbicide in question, as well as the size of the area over which they were used.
3. Please could you explain the basis for (i) the Council's choice of particular product(s), and (ii) the Council's decision to use glyphosate-based herbicides rather than alternative methods. Please could you provide me with copies of any policy or other document which informs that decision-making.
4. I understand that, if the Council uses, or instructs other to use, plant protection products (including glyphosate-based herbicides) then the Council is required by law[2] to ensure that[3]:
 - all reasonable precautions are taken to protect human health and the environment;
 - the application of the plant protection product is confined to the crop, land, produce, buildings, contents of buildings, materials or other areas intended to be treated;
 - and when the product is used in places of heightened concern (which includes, among others, areas used by the public or vulnerable groups[4], areas in the close vicinity of healthcare facilities, and on or along roads, railway lines, very permeable surfaces, or other infrastructure close to surface water or groundwater) that the amount used and the frequency of use are as low as reasonably practicable.
5. Please explain how the Council ensures that it complies with the requirements set out above in paragraph 4, particularly in terms of operational decision-making by the Council?
6. Please provide me with copies of any policy or other document which informs the Council's decision-making in relation to compliance with the legal requirements set out in paragraph 4 above. Please also provide copies of evidence of the Council's decision-making over the past 12 months relating to the records of decisions taken to ensure the amount of plant protection products used and the frequency of use are as low as reasonably practicable.

Response

Thank you for your request for information above, which we have dealt with under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

I hope the following will answer your query:

No Information is stored online, I have answered the questions directly which relate to an extremely small usage and no set program or schedule of works.

1. Which glyphosate-based herbicides[1] are currently used by or on behalf of the Council and/or on land owned by, managed by, or under the control of, the Council?

The awarded watercourse team use Roundup Glyphosate herbicide for spot application only.

1. For the most recent 12-month period for which information is available, please could you tell me the amount and brand of each glyphosate-based herbicide in question, as well as the size of the area over which they were used.

Details of exact quantities are not recorded / available, nor are the sizes of the areas of use, this is because the product is typically used in very small quantities as required for spot application and not as part of a program where works are scheduled or pre planned.

1. Please could you explain the basis for (i) the Council's choice of particular product(s), and (ii) the Council's decision to use glyphosate-based herbicides rather than alternative methods. Please could you provide me with copies of any policy or other document which informs that decision-making.

The council uses Glyphosate Roundup as a means of dealing with individual invasive plants that cannot be dealt with using mechanical or alternative means, this would typically be where the use of burning or use of non-Glyphosate products are not suitable or effective. A good example would be where a plant needs to be eradicated but the risk of field fire could be a hazard if a burning method were employed.

There are no specific policies for the use of herbicide as the quantity and frequency of use is very small however, staff are fully trained and certified by Shuttleworth agricultural college in the application, use and storage of herbicides under the requirements of the PA1 and PA6aw (Around Water) certification.

1. I understand that, if the Council uses, or instructs other to use, plant protection products (including glyphosate-based herbicides) then the Council is required by law[2] to ensure that[3]:
 - all reasonable precautions are taken to protect human health and the environment;
 - the application of the plant protection product is confined to the crop, land, produce, buildings, contents of buildings, materials or other areas intended to be treated;
 - and when the product is used in places of heightened concern (which includes, among others, areas used by the public or vulnerable groups[4], areas in the close vicinity of healthcare facilities, and on or along roads, railway lines, very permeable surfaces, or other infrastructure close to surface water or groundwater) that the amount used and the frequency of use are as low as reasonably practicable.

No answer required, this is a statement.

1. Please explain how the Council ensures that it complies with the requirements set out above in paragraph 4, particularly in terms of operational decision-making by the Council?

Staff are fully trained and certified by Shuttleworth agricultural college in the application, use and storage of herbicides under the requirements of the PA1 and PA6aw (Around Water) certification. Within the certification the dilution, application technique, storage and external considerations are all supported by an end assessment exam for which the staff are required to pass to enable them to use herbicides or spraying equipment.

Staff are particularly trained on the more specialised application around water where the PA6aw training is most appropriate, a supervisor accompanies all applications to ensure that the correct techniques and training requirements are followed. Levels of use are very low and a supervisor will make the decision to use Glyphosate only when all other eradication means are deemed unsuitable or ineffective.

1. Please provide me with copies of any policy or other document which informs the Council's decision-making in relation to compliance with the legal requirements set out in paragraph 4 above. Please also provide copies of evidence of the Council's decision-making over the past 12 months relating to the records of decisions taken to ensure the amount of plant protection products used and the frequency of use are as low as reasonably practicable.

There are no specific policies or documents that forms part of the Councils decision making process.

The watercourse team do not have any pre planned application works for the use of herbicides, the use of such is very low and only used when spot application is required. On considering use a supervisor would make a decision on use based on suitability of alternative methods and products known within their specialist areas of work. A typical application would be to a particular single plant in a discovered location whilst performing their daily inspections and remedial watercourse maintenance work, herbicides are not used to treat large areas.