



Ban on common weed killer could create £228 million council tax bombshell

Research made available to the Forum has concluded that:

- *A local authority ban on common weed killers used in the professional amenity and garden sectors which contain glyphosate would add £228 million to council tax bills each year*
- *This has been calculated as a cost equivalent to current funding for 11,438 adult social care workers*
- *The ban could force some UK councils to spend considerable sums in capital outlays to replace conventional spraying systems with alternative approaches*

New economic figures unveiled today reveal the cost to the local taxpayer of banning common weed killers to keep pavements, parks and public places weed free.

The figures come at a time when no less than 30 local authorities are being lobbied by some in their communities to ban the same weed killers that are used in amenity areas and gardens throughout the UK.

The research shows that a ban on weed killers containing glyphosate would add £228 million to the UK's council tax bill each year.

The additional tax requirements for funding the alternatives would require an increase in the average household council tax bill of £7.80 – half the band D rate increase in 2015/16.

Weed killers are used by local authorities for management of public spaces, including pavements, parks, schools and local authority play areas. The non-chemical alternatives to treating roads and pavements for weeds have a place in an integrated approach to weed management but, as extensive research has shown, cannot currently compete with weed killers in normal day to day operations on economic or effectiveness grounds.

Amenity Forum Chairman, Professor John Moverley OBE, commented:

“At a time when Local Authorities are faced with acute budget pressures, it is important that decisions are based upon science and evidence. Nobody working in the professional amenity sector would wish to do anything to endanger public health and safety and always makes use of all options available. Any weed killer coming to market undertakes rigorous testing before it is released and during its use.

Weed killers used in the amenity sector have been proven time and time again to be safe – no less than 28 independent global regulators and thousands of scientific studies over 40 years back this up. They are used across the diverse and important amenity sector as part of an integrated approach, keeping our railways running, maintaining our world class sports surfaces, for woodlands and much more. This

research has just highlighted the costs of keeping pavements weed free. The total amenity cost would be substantially more.

As the voluntary initiative for the sector, we seek to provide an independent voice promoting best practice in all aspects of weed and pest management. We recognize concerns can arise but, in dealing with them, we need a rational debate based upon science and facts. The management of weeds and pests in amenity impacts upon every UK citizen”

- ENDS -

Notes to Editors

- 30 local authorities are understood to be being petitioned to ban glyphosate based weed killers, or are undertaking trials of glyphosate alternatives. See below for the full list.
- The average band D rate in 2015/16 represented an increase of £16 on the previous year (DCLG).
- Any weed killer coming to market undertakes rigorous testing before it is released and during its use. Over 40 years of robust scientific evidence, supported by one of the most extensive human health, crop residue and environmental databases ever compiled on any pesticide shows no risk to safety.
- As the voluntary initiative for the sector, the Amenity Forum provides an independent voice promoting best practice in all aspects of weed and pest management.
- Adult social care equivalent calculated from existing government data: cost per social care worker is circa £19,333 (£228m / 19,333 = 11,438)
 - 1.55 million adult social care workers in the UK <http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/NMDS-SC-intelligence/NMDS-SC/Workforce-data-and-publications/State-of-the-adult-social-care-sector.aspx>
 - Total UK adult social care budget in 2016/17 is £29.9 billion
£<https://www.ifs.org.uk/uploads/publications/budgets/gb2017/gb2017ch5.pdf>
- A number of local authorities, including Bristol Council, have already rejected proposals to ban the common weed killer after trials proved alternatives would cost six times more, and were rejected by local residents. In addition local authority published data shows the huge up-front investment costs of alternatives to glyphosate based weed killers. For example:
 - Edinburgh council data suggests the local authority considered a capital expenditure which taken together would total £852,000 for non-glyphosate alternatives.
 - Aberdeen council have published analysis suggesting the local authority would have to find an additional £1m for capital outlays in the first year

About the Amenity Forum

The Amenity Forum is non-profit making and the independent body in the amenity horticulture sector promoting best practice in all aspects of weed, pest and disease management. It is recognized by Government for its activities and guidance provided. The amenity sector is a very diverse one responsible for the landscape management of urban areas, highways and rail network, sports grounds, parks, industrial and utility sites, golf courses and more. To establish and maintain these areas to a high

standard, the sector requires access to pesticides, efficient equipment and trained and qualified staff. The organisation was formed in October 2003 as a key action to support the Voluntary Initiative, an industry led project agreed with Government to reduce the environmental impact of pesticides.

This research was commissioned by the Crop Protection Association and conducted by Oxford Economics.

Local Authorities understood to be being petitioned to ban glyphosate weed killers

1. Hammersmith and Fulham (Hammersmith)
2. Brighton and Hove (Brighton Kempton and Peacehaven)
3. Frome (Somerton and Frome)
4. Glastonbury (Wells)
5. Erewash (Erewash)
6. Shaftesbury (North Dorset)
7. Bristol (Bristol West, North West, East and South)
8. Edinburgh (Edinburgh North, South West, South, East and West)
9. Salisbury (Salisbury)
10. Aberdeen (Aberdeen North and South)
11. Hackney (Hackney North and South)
12. Glasgow (Glasgow North, South, North West and South West)
13. Wadebridge (North Cornwall)
14. Havant (Havant)
15. Oxford (Oxford West and East)
16. Darlington (Darlington)
17. Waltham Forest (Walthamstow)
18. Somerset (Somerset North, West and North East)
19. Bournemouth (Bournemouth West and East)
20. York (York Central)
21. South Hams (Totnes)
22. Brent (Brent Central and Brent North)
23. Calderdale (Calder Valley)
24. Croydon (Croydon Central, North and South)
25. South Gloucestershire (Filton and Bradley Stoke)
26. Nottingham (Nottingham North, South and East)
27. East Grinstead (Mid Sussex and Wealden)
28. Barnet London (Chipping Barnet)
29. Lincoln (Lincoln)
30. Milton Keynes (Milton Keynes South and Milton Keynes North)