

## WEEDS CONTROL SUB-POLICY Transport and Environment Committee - 22 May 2025

One of the main reasons for the control of weeds in amenity areas is aesthetic, so that public spaces look neat and tidy.

In certain areas and circumstances, weeds can cause trip hazards or lead to damage of hard surfaces. They can lead to competition, with plants within beds, for light, moisture and nutrients. These usually only become a problem if weeds are left to grow to an advanced stage and normal maintenance levels usually remove or kill weeds before they get to this stage.

When managing any amenity area, the level of toleration needs to be identified- i.e. does an area require to be 100% weed free or can a lower tolerance level be set?

The level of toleration will determine the level of maintenance required and has a direct impact on identifying and agreeing different control methods. Management plans, cultural and chemical controls will all differ depending on the agreed tolerance levels.

The level of weed infestation that is acceptable depends on the function, the use and the location of the area. Consideration also needs to be given to the demands of the customer/user, as well as the environmental impact of removing what are regarded as weeds but can also be a source of rich materials for pollinators.

The City is divided into 6 zones which primarily reflect the zones identified in CoPLAR (Code of Practice on Litter and Refuse) which are driven by footfall. However, these have been reviewed and have also taken account of other factors, alongside COPLAR zone, such as Indices of Multiple Deprivation, historical cleanliness scores (LEAMS), type of waste collection service provided and proximity to communal bin (wind-blown and collection derived litter).

Zone 1 are areas of high footfall, e.g. City Centre, and Zone 6 are more rural areas with very limited footfall (rural West of Edinburgh). As part of the ongoing work all newly zoned streets/areas will receive cleaning to Grade A standard on a schedule appropriate to the zone they fall in. Cleaning to Grade A standard not only includes litter removal but also includes removal of detritus and dirt which largely, over time, becomes the growth medium for weeds.

As part of the planned phased reduction of chemical treatment for weeds, chemical treatment will continue to be applied on main roadways/gateways into the city and city and town centres. This will be applied using hand lances and spot treatments rather than use of quad bikes.

Two sprays are typically planned each year but due to chemical application being weather dependant, two applications may not always be achieved.

Chemical treatment will be supplemented by the manual weed removal, as part of normal cleansing duties, outlined above. The success of this will be reviewed and may alter subject to the success of the approach over time.

Where a complaint is received about weeds in a street these will be checked by a street inspector. Where the weed is not causing damage to the footway, kerb, or roadway it will be left until the next scheduled clean. Where the weed is causing damage or presents a trip hazard it will be removed by a rapid response team

Glyphosate will not be used in parks, other greenspaces and school environments.

Street/Resident associations can continue to request no application of glyphosate but as stated above, the type of environment that will be chemically treated is expected to gradually reduce considerably.

We can also help resident and street associations by providing clean up kits which include litter pickers for adults and children. We can lend out brushes and shovels to clear leaves, and scrapers to clear weeds, and remove the litter, leaves and weeds that have been collected from an agreed location which is accessible for a large vehicle. Please give us two weeks' notice for any event