

Appendix C - Cambridge City Council Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

1. Title of strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service

Herbicide Free Weed Management Work Programme

To reduce the reliance on herbicides for vegetation management across the city's public spaces.

To enhance biodiversity and habitat quality within parks, open spaces, and the highway estate.

To decrease public health and safety risks associated with unwanted vegetation growth on hard surfaces.

To improve public awareness and engagement regarding the importance of biodiversity conservation and sustainable land management practices.

2. Webpage link to full details of the strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service (if available)

[Environment and Community Services Scrutiny Committee 27th January 2022](#)

[Environment and Community Services Scrutiny Committee 23rd March 2023](#)

[Environment and Community Services Scrutiny Committee 21st March 2024](#)

3. What is the objective or purpose of your strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service?

The Council, in response to the escalating Biodiversity Emergency, has unanimously voted in favour of a policy to reduce and eventually eliminate the use of herbicides on highway verges, roads, and pavements. This policy aims not only to address the pressing need for biodiversity conservation but also to enhance habitat quality and minimise public health and safety risks associated with traditional herbicide use.

On 18th July 2019, the Council declared a Biodiversity Emergency, recognising the urgent need to safeguard and restore natural ecosystems. As part of this commitment, the Council was dedicated to finding viable alternatives to herbicides for vegetation management across the city's public spaces. Collaborating with our Highway Authority partner, Cambridgeshire County Council, we have identified an opportunity to transition away from herbicide usage within the next year (2024).

The excessive use of herbicides poses significant risks to biodiversity, soil health, water quality, and human health. By transitioning away from herbicide usage and adopting alternative vegetation management strategies, we can minimise these risks while simultaneously enhancing habitat quality and biodiversity within our city. Additionally, addressing unwanted vegetation growth on hard surfaces is crucial for maintaining the structural integrity of public assets and reducing public health and safety hazards.

4. Responsible service

City Services

5. Who will be affected by this strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service?

(Please tick all that apply)

- Residents
- Visitors
- Staff

Please state any specific client group or groups (e.g. City Council tenants, tourists, people who work in the city but do not live here):

The presence or absence of unwanted vegetation is an important element of an accepted public realm environmental quality standard. If a public road or street has lots of unwanted vegetation, it looks rundown and uncared for, and can attract environmental crime such as littering and fly-tipping. If vegetation is left to grow unchecked, its roots can cause damage to road surfaces, pavements, and adjoining property walls. Roads/ streets that are free from unwanted vegetation, on the other hand, look cleaner, tidier, and more welcoming, all residents, visitors and staff will be impacted by this change in policy to support the trial however some groups of residents may have other priorities and wish to manage weeds in different ways and with alternative methods. This Plan aims to support these different approaches and the proposed mechanical methodology will have a positive impact.

6. What type of strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service is this?

- New
- Major change
- Minor change

7. Are other departments or partners involved in delivering this strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service? (Please tick)

- Yes
- No

If 'Yes' please provide details below:

Cambridgeshire County Council – Highways team and City Homes.

8. Has the report on your strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service gone to Committee? If so, which one?

Environment and Community Services Scrutiny Committee 27th January 2022, 23rd March 2023, 21st March 2024

9. What research methods/ evidence have you used in order to identify equality impacts of your strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service?

Desk based research, sharing of information with other local authorities and training courses.

Best Practice Guidance Notes for Integrated and Non-chemical Amenity Hard Surface Weed Control

<https://beta.lambeth.gov.uk/parks-sports-and-leisure/parks/integrated-pest-management-policy>

[https://www.apse.org.uk/apse/assets/File/John%20Moverley%20presentation\(1\).pdf](https://www.apse.org.uk/apse/assets/File/John%20Moverley%20presentation(1).pdf)

https://www.apse.org.uk/apse/assets/File/Debbie%20Sutton%20-%20Glyphosate%20presentation%2030_10_19.pdf

https://www.pan-uk.org/resources/#pesticide_alternatives

Practical demonstrations and testing of new machines.

10. Potential impacts

For each category below, please explain if the strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service could have a positive/ negative impact or no impact. Where an impact has been identified, please explain what it is. Consider impacts on service users, visitors and staff members separately.

(a) Age - Please also consider any safeguarding issues for children and adults at risk

There is a potential positive impact when linked with age related to mobility. An assessment of weeds in pavements and footpaths prior to mechanical cleaning ensures the work is targeted and removes slips, trips, and falls.

(b) Disability

There is a positive impact for disabled people with mobility or sight impairments relating to the new mechanical methodology. If rights of way are not maintained to reduce weed growth, regrowth can cause obstacles that reduces accessibility and increases risk of trips and falls. Each street or space will be assessed before work is carried out and this assessment will identify potential slips, trips and falls.

(c) Gender reassignment

None identified

(d) Marriage and civil partnership

None identified

(e) Pregnancy and maternity

There is a potential positive impact especially when linked with mobility. An increase of weeds in pavements and footpaths does create a higher risk of slips trips and falls. Each street or space will be assessed before work is carried out and this assessment will identify potential slips, trips and falls.

(f) Race – Note that the protected characteristic ‘race’ refers to a group of people defined by their race, colour, and nationality (including citizenship) ethnic or national origins.

None identified

(g) Religion or belief

None identified

(h) Sex

None identified

(i) Sexual orientation

None identified

(j) Other factors that may lead to inequality – in particular, please consider the impact of any changes on:

- **Low-income groups or those experiencing the impacts of poverty**
- **Groups who have more than one protected characteristic that taken together create overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage. (Here you are being asked to consider intersectionality, and for more information see: https://media.ed.ac.uk/media/1_159kt25g).**

None identified

11. Action plan – New equality impacts will be identified in different stages throughout the planning and implementation stages of changes to your strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service. How will you monitor these going forward? Also, how will you ensure that any potential negative impacts of the changes will be mitigated? (Please include dates where possible for when you will update this EqIA accordingly.)

The policy delivers the aims to address the Biodiversity Emergency by reducing herbicide usage and promoting alternative vegetation management strategies. By working collaboratively, engaging the public, and monitoring progress, we can achieve our goal of enhancing biodiversity, protecting public health and safety, and creating a more sustainable and resilient urban environment.

12. Do you have any additional comments?

None

13. Sign off

Name and job title of lead officer for this equality impact assessment: Alistair Wilson

Names and job titles of other assessment team members and people consulted: HRP Project Team

Date of EqIA sign off: 5th March 2025

Date of next review of the equalities impact assessment: March 2026

Date to be published on Cambridge City Council website: [Click here to enter text.](#)

All EqIAs need to be sent to Helen Crowther, Equality and Anti-Poverty Officer at helen.crowther@cambridge.gov.uk.