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## PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL

John Allen

9 August 2021

Dear John Allen

### Environmental Information Regulations 2004, Reference: FOI-9800-2021

The council has completed its search relating to your request about weed control received on Wed, 14 Jul 2021.

#### Request

I would be grateful if you could provide me with the following information:

1. What method do you use for weed control?
2. Do you use Chemicals?
3. If you use chemicals is the council looking to using a more environmentally friendly method?
4. Does the council carry out weed control duties in-house or is this contracted out?
5. (If contracted out) who is the contractor responsible for street cleansing duties?
6. Contact details for the person(s) responsible for managing weed control within the council

#### Response

The council does hold information within the definition of your request.

1. Weed spraying activities are undertaken by a sequence of activities, agreed with the contractors involved.

The sequence of activity required by the Council is summarised as:

Prior to taking any vehicle, the driver shall complete a 'Vehicle Daily Check' form and ensure that any defects are reported.

The driver shall ensure that there is enough fuel and oil in the vehicle to last the duration of the shift and the return journey to the yard.

The Supervisor briefs the team leader on the work to be done and the traffic management arrangements.

Traffic management arrangements are set up or the team move into an existing safe system of work, provide by the Council.

Once the work site is set up and secure and all traffic management is in place; warning signs indicating work operations must be placed at both ends of the area of work before works can commence.

The team leader shall complete a site-specific risk assessment - identifying the hazards, assessing the risk, and specifying control measures to be applied on site. The team are briefed on site with both the specific method statement and the risk assessment.

All work is to be carried out by fully trained and competent operatives. If an operative is being trained, then they can use a piece of equipment prior to being assessed in the use of the equipment so long as they are fully supervised in a pre-arranged training situation.

Safety documentation will identify the weed or other problem to be controlled, the appropriate chemical to be used, the correct dose rate, the correct water quantity to be used and any additive (oil); the correct spray nozzle to be used, the need for any buffer zone and associated local environment risk assessment for pesticides (LEARP); and any other technical issues.

An operator who holds an appropriate NPTC certificate of competence will have calibrated all application equipment used. The nozzle type selected will consider the volume of application, product label recommendations, specific area to be treated and weather on the day of application.

Before commencing work the operators will check that light levels are acceptable and that the weather and ground conditions are suitable, other people are not going to be put at risk and that due regard has been taken for wildlife.

All equipment will be inspected to ensure it is in safe operating condition, including the checking of any safety cut-out or emergency stop system fitted to the machine.

Before starting the application, the operator will check that the weather is suitable, and members of the public are not going to be put at risk; that due regard has been taken of nearby watercourses, drains, other environmental factors, and neighbouring properties.

In the event of weather or other conditions changing in such a way as to make the continued treatment inadvisable, work will be suspended, and the Council informed of this. Treatment will begin again once conditions are suitable.

Having determined how much chemical mix is required, the operator will normally fill the tank with half the required quantity of water, introduce the correct amount of chemical and add the remaining quantity of water. Agitation of this mixture will then take place for a suitable period prior to application.

During application, the operators will maintain a constant forward speed as established during calibration. Each bout or swath will be made of even width and with parallel passes. Where appropriate, a marking process will be used to prevent the missing or overlapping of swaths, the sprayer will be switched on and off smartly on starting and stopping to maintain accurate application.

The operator will take full responsibility for the removal of all unused pesticide and its return to a BASIS registered store or suitable locked container. Empty containers will be rinsed and together with other packaging, collected by a registered waste disposal contractor or taken to an approved site for recycling wherever possible. The operator will also ensure that any warning signs are removed or where necessary, allowed to remain in place for a suitable period.

The operator will complete the record of work covered as soon as the work has been completed.

All quantities of chemical used will be recorded, together with details of the weather and any other relevant information.

2. All contractors must be a BASIS qualified pesticide advisor able to give recommendation and chemical advice to the council.

The weed killer is 'Round up pro bioactive' and 'Rosate 360TF' mixed with vegetable oil at a ratio of 3:1 to prevent wind blown droplets.

The treatment is dependent upon the contract award location within Cumbria.

3. The council has explored other options including boiling water, steam, acid and burning of weeds. Initial trials were found not to be effective and did nothing prevent regrowth of weeds within three weeks of treatment.

4. All activities relating to weed control, within Cumbria is contracted out.

5. Clark Davidson Contractors.

Empire Ground care

Please note: These contractors are responsible for weed spraying treatments only.

6. The management of weed control is not managed by one central person but the lead 'Local Area Highways Network Manager' who manages the budget allocation and management of activities, within their own district. This is delegated within the Highways teams.

Please note: Cumbria County Council only spray within the highway boundary, other areas outside the adopted highway will be done by the Borough Council or Town Councils.

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Further information can be found on the council's website: <http://www.cumbria.gov.uk/council-democracy/accesstoinformation/internalreviewscomplaints.asp>

Yours sincerely

Information Governance Team