



**Notice of a public
Decision Session - Executive Member for Environment and Climate
Emergency**

To: Councillors Kent and Ravilious (Executive Members)

Date: Tuesday, 27 February 2024

Time: 10.00 am

Venue: The Thornton Room - Ground Floor, West Offices (G039)

AGENDA

Notice to Members – Post Decision Calling In:

Members are reminded that, should they wish to call in any item* on this agenda, notice must be given to Democratic Services by **4:00 pm** on **Tuesday, 5 March 2024**.

*With the exception of matters that have been the subject of a previous call in, require Full Council approval or are urgent, which are not subject to the call-in provisions. Any called in items will be considered by the Corporate Services, Climate Change and Scrutiny Management Committee.

Written representations in respect of items on this agenda should be submitted to Democratic Services by **5.00 pm** on **Friday, 23 February 2024**.

1. Declarations of Interest (Pages 1 - 2)

At this point in the meeting, the Executive Member is asked to declare any disclosable pecuniary interest, or other registerable interest, they might have in respect of business on this agenda, if they have not already done so in advance on the Register of Interests. The disclosure must include the nature of the interest.

An interest must also be disclosed in the meeting when it becomes apparent to the member during the meeting.

[Please see attached sheet for further guidance for Members].

- 2. Minutes** (Pages 3 - 8)
To approve and sign the minutes of the Decision Session held on 21 November 2023.

- 3. Public Participation**
At this point in the meeting members of the public who have registered to speak can do so. Members of the public may speak on agenda items or on matters within the remit of the Committee.

Please note that our registration deadlines are set as 2 working days before the meeting, in order to facilitate the management of public participation at our meetings. The deadline for registering at this meeting is **5:00pm on Friday, 23 February 2024.**

To register to speak please visit www.york.gov.uk/AttendCouncilMeetings to fill in an online registration form. If you have any questions about the registration form or the meeting, please contact Democratic Services. Contact details can be found at the foot of this agenda.

Webcasting of Public Meetings

Please note that, subject to available resources, this meeting will be webcast including any registered public speakers who have given their permission. The meeting can be viewed live and on demand at www.york.gov.uk/webcasts.

During coronavirus, we made some changes to how we ran council meetings, including facilitating remote participation by public speakers. See our updates (www.york.gov.uk/COVIDDemocracy) for more information on meetings and decisions.

- 4. Service Developments - Public Realm** (Pages 9 - 64)
This report focuses on the everyday tasks of street cleansing, parks, open spaces and grounds maintenance.
- 5. Urgent Business**
Any other business which the Executive Member considers urgent under the Local Government Act 1972.

Democracy Officer: Louise Cook
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Email- louise.cook@york.gov.uk

For more information about any of the following please contact the Democracy Officer responsible for servicing this meeting:

- Registering to speak
- Business of the meeting
- Any special arrangements
- Copies of reports and
- For receiving reports in other formats

Contact details are set out above.

This information can be provided in your own language.

我們也用您們的語言提供這個信息 (Cantonese)

এই তথ্য আপনার নিজের ভাষায় দেয়া যেতে পারে। (Bengali)

Ta informacja może być dostarczona w twoim własnym języku. (Polish)

Bu bilgiyi kendi dilinizde almanız mümkündür. (Turkish)

یہ معلومات آپ کی اپنی زبان (بولی) میں بھی مہیا کی جاسکتی ہیں۔ (Urdu)

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Declarations of Interest – guidance for Members

- (1) Members must consider their interests, and act according to the following:

Type of Interest	You must
Disclosable Pecuniary Interests	Disclose the interest, not participate in the discussion or vote, and leave the meeting <u>unless</u> you have a dispensation.
Other Registrable Interests (Directly Related) OR Non-Registrable Interests (Directly Related)	Disclose the interest; speak on the item <u>only if</u> the public are also allowed to speak, but otherwise not participate in the discussion or vote, and leave the meeting <u>unless</u> you have a dispensation.
Other Registrable Interests (Affects) OR Non-Registrable Interests (Affects)	Disclose the interest; remain in the meeting, participate and vote <u>unless</u> the matter affects the financial interest or well-being: (a) to a greater extent than it affects the financial interest or well-being of a majority of inhabitants of the affected ward; and (b) a reasonable member of the public knowing all the facts would believe that it would affect your view of the wider public interest. In which case, speak on the item <u>only if</u> the public are also allowed to speak, but otherwise do not participate in the discussion or vote, and leave the meeting <u>unless</u> you have a dispensation.

- (2) Disclosable pecuniary interests relate to the Member concerned or their spouse/partner.
- (3) Members in arrears of Council Tax by more than two months must not vote in decisions on, or which might affect, budget calculations,

and must disclose at the meeting that this restriction applies to them. A failure to comply with these requirements is a criminal offence under section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

City of York Council

Committee Minutes

Meeting	Decision Session - Executive Member for Environment and Climate Emergency
Date	21 November 2023
Present	Councillor Ravilious (Executive Member)
Apologies	Councillor Kent
Officers in Attendance	Claire Foale, Assistant Director of Policy and Strategy Paul McCabe, Strategic Manager (Strategy and Policy) Shaun Gibbons, Head of Carbon Reduction

13. Declarations of Interest (10:01 am)

The Executive Member was asked to declare, at this point in the meeting, any personal interests not included on the Register of Interests or any prejudicial or disclosable pecuniary interests she might have in respect of the business on the agenda. None were declared.

14. Minutes (10:01 am)

Resolved: That the minutes of the Decision Session held on 17 October 2023 be approved and signed by the Executive Member as a correct record.

15. Public Participation (10:02 am)

It was reported that there had been no registrations to speak at the session under the Council's Public Participation Scheme.

16. A Climate Ready York (10:02 am)

The Executive Member considered a report that recognised the increasing threat facing the city, and region, by climate change. The report outlined progress towards strengthening York's resilience to climate change and set out key climate risks, as identified through a climate risk and vulnerability assessment.

The Assistant Director of Policy and Strategy emphasised that the report sought to ensure the city was ready for increased

threats faced by extreme weather events and potential water insecurity, as well as flooding, for which the city was already well prepared, and included recommendations for strengthening the city's approach to climate adaptation.

The Strategic Manager provided an overview, noting that:

- Met Office data suggested that heavy rain leading to flooding, extreme heat and extended dry periods were all likely to increase in prevalence and impact.
- following Council's steer, and building on the 2019 Climate Emergency Declaration, an initial assessment in 2022 identified 46 risks to the city from climate change, as detailed in Annex A of the report.
- consultations with national, regional, local and city partners had been drawn on to produce a revised York Climate Change Risk and Vulnerability Assessment (CCRVA), as set out in Annex D of the report.
- paragraph 49 of the report set out recommendations for the Executive Member to consider, including strengthening the Climate Change Strategy ambition to be net zero by 2030, by adding that by 2030 York would have set the conditions to be Climate Ready.
- a task and finish group would be established to ensure all new and emerging strategies clearly referenced climate adaptation.

The Executive Member thanked officers for the work on this issue and she recognised the need to further explore the cost of delaying action, and to consider the impact the wider UK risk would have on York.

Resolved:

- i) That the assessment of identified climate risks, as set out in Annex D of the report, be approved.
- ii) That the recommended next steps, as set out in Paragraph 49 of the report, be approved.

Reasons:

- i) To provide a basis for ongoing climate action.
- ii) To strengthen the approach towards a Climate Ready York.

17. Annual Carbon Emissions Report 2022/23 (10:10 am)

The Executive Member considered a report on York's carbon emissions from corporate activity in 2022/23, which monitored progress towards the city's 2030 net zero goal and identified areas of improvements.

The Head of Carbon Reduction provided an overview noting that:

- this year's reporting incorporated emissions associated with energy used in maintained schools, as well as indirect emissions from building maintenance materials, staff commuting, and homeworking. This improved the accuracy of reporting, although it made like-for-like comparisons with previous years more challenging.
- corporate emissions for the financial year 2022/23 had been calculated as 5490tCO₂e; with the additional data sources removed, this represented a 10% reduction from 2021/22. The majority of corporate emissions came from two sources: gas used for heating and hot water in council buildings, and fuel used by the council fleet.
- heat decarbonisation plans had been completed for 33 of the council's highest energy consuming sites, and funding was being sought through the Decarbonisation Scheme and the York and North Yorkshire Net Zero Fund to undertake capital works to deliver improvements.
- the Solar for Schools programme had continued to expand with two maintained schools receiving free solar panels and two more were due to complete this year.
- further light-emitting diode (LED) streetlighting work was scheduled with support from the Net Zero Fund.
- the fleet electrification programme had reduced emissions from council vehicles and once completed was expected to save a total of 800tCO₂e.
- the inclusion of staff commuting and homeworking had shown areas where improvements could be made, and the Council Travel Plan was being updated with suggestions for reducing these emissions.

The Executive Member thanked the officer for the work on this issue, and in answer to her questions regarding the scope for further reductions, staff travel, and homeworking the Head of Carbon Reduction confirmed that:

- the majority of the emissions reductions was associated with the fleet electrification programme, which covered all

council vehicles under 3.5 tons, and decarbonising council heavy goods vehicles could lead to significant improvements in emissions.

- the heat decarbonisation plans for the 33 sites identified would deliver a 65% reduction in emissions across those sites, but capital funding was needed to support this initiative.
- there was scope within the staff travel plan to provide advice to staff on reducing energy consumption when commuting and working from home.

Resolved: That the Corporate Emissions Report be approved for publication.

Reason: To monitor progress against the ambition for the council to be net zero by 2030.

18. York Emissions Inventory Report 2023 (10:17 am)

The Executive Member considered a report that presented the Emissions Inventory for the city of York, which would be used to monitor the progress towards the city's 2030 net zero goal.

The Head of Carbon Reduction provided an overview noting that:

- there was a 12% reduction in city-wide emissions from 2019 to 2020, due in part to restrictions on travel and services during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- the report was based on UK Greenhouse Gas Inventory (GHGI) data, as the SCATTER tool had been temporarily discontinued. This did not significantly alter the outcome of the report, as GHGI was also used as the source data for SCATTER.
- since the production of the report, the council had been notified that York had retained its A-List status as a climate-leading city with the international climate organisation CDP (formerly Carbon Disclosure Project).

The Executive Member thanked the officer for the work on this issue, and in answer to her questions regarding opportunities for further reductions, the officer confirmed that:

- the largest emissions reductions related to commercial premises and transport, and due to the rise of post-pandemic hybrid working, there was potential for those reductions to be maintained or reduced further.

- public transport usage, alongside other modes of active travel, would be promoted more effectively.

Resolved: That the York Emissions Inventory Report be approved for publication.

Reason: To provide transparency of progress against the ambition for York to be net zero by 2030.

Cllr Ravilious, Executive Member

[The meeting started at 10:01 am and finished at 10:21 am].

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Meeting:	Decision Session - Executive Member for Environment and Climate Emergency
Meeting date:	27/02/2024
Report of:	James Gilchrist, Director of Transport, Environment and Planning
Portfolio of:	Executive Member for Environment and Climate Emergency; Cllr. J Kent / Cllr. K Ravilious

Decision Report: Service Developments – Public Realm

Subject of Report

1. This report focuses on the everyday tasks of street cleansing, parks, open spaces and grounds maintenance.
2. York is regularly recognised as a great place to live as well as attracting 8 million visitors per year. It has long been recognised these everyday services are important to our sense of place and pride in our city and neighbourhoods and the role that they play in our economy.
3. However, just as important is how we undertake these tasks, ensuring that our actions reflect our commitments to the environment. This commitment is defined by our various strategies and plans which detail the commitment to the climate emergency and seeking where possible to reduce our impact on the environment and reverse the change where possible.
4. There are a number of options contained within the report which broadly cover three key areas; verge and open space management, sustainable planting and bedding and weed control. The proposals contained within the report can be achieved within the budget proposed for 2024/25.

Benefits and Challenges

5. There are a number of benefits and challenges in respect of verge and open space management. There are opportunities to increase biodiversity and deliver the aspirations within the Council's Pollinator Strategy, with the obvious benefits to the environment. It is obviously important that the city and surrounding villages and areas remain clean and well maintained but there are opportunities to offer more diverse habitats through effective land management practices.
6. In terms of sustainable planting then there are some real benefits in changing the ways in which some of our bedding areas are managed. A move to more sustainable planting should encourage greater biodiversity and a wider plant mix and a reduction in emissions and resources involved in the planting and removal of bedding plants and watering of bedding plants. The proposed changes will see a move away from traditional bedding in certain locations to more sustainable planting schemes. The challenge will be in ensuring that perceived benefits are delivered in practice, and this is why a number of trial areas are suggested for development initially.
7. There are a number of benefits and challenges the Council, and indeed the world faces, in effective weed control. The Council has a duty to manage its highway and footway network effectively; this is especially important given the Council's focus on accessibility and extends to all the public realm not just highways. This needs to be balanced with a move to protect the environment and seek to reduce where possible, the amount of glyphosate used across the city. The Council will seek to ensure that all areas remain accessible and effectively controlled. Therefore, there are some proposed changes to weed control methodologies in the report which seek to reduce the amount of glyphosate used.

Policy Basis for Decision

8. In the new Council Plan, there is a key core commitment to the climate. This commitment is about understanding and reducing our impacts on the environment and enhancing it. One of the priorities identified within the Council Plan is to "increase biodiversity and plant an additional 4,000 trees across the city" and another is to

“understand and consider the climate and biodiversity impacts when taking council decisions”.

9. At full Council in July 2023, a motion was passed on safeguarding York’s future and recognised that the ‘ecological crisis should be tackled shoulder to shoulder with the climate crisis through a more joined up approach, with a focus on reversing the destruction of nature by 2023, not just halting it’. The Council committed to deliver actions that deliver on the Pollinator Strategy to achieve a measurable increase in biodiversity.
10. In March 2023, the Council adopted a 10-year Climate Strategy that outlines the commitment to “protect green spaces, for less air pollution and an increase in biodiversity”.
11. The Council adopted a Pollinator Strategy in 2021 with a commitment to “ensuring the Council will consider the needs of pollinators in the delivery of its duties and work. CYC will seek to protect and increase the amount and quality of pollinator habitat and manage its greenspace to provide greater benefits for pollinators. We will ensure local people are provided with opportunities to make York more pollinator friendly”. There was also a specific objective to increase the value of parks and other green spaces for pollinators. There was a further objective to reduce the use of glyphosate with trials.
12. In 2019, the Council declared a Climate Emergency and committed to a target of making York carbon neutral by 2030.

Financial Strategy Implications

13. The proposals within the report are in accordance with the proposed budget savings for 2024/25. Saving PLA 12 is ‘sustainable and climate resilient planting from 2024 onwards’, representing future years savings on winter and summer bedding. Residential grass verge cutting reduced to 6 times per year, that offer cost savings as well as increased biodiversity benefit, with a first year saving of £100k.
14. There are some set up costs to enable the move to sustainable planting and therefore the savings have been split over two years with a total saving of £130k. The savings have been achieved by

reducing the number of general operatives by two and reducing the number of vehicles in the Public Realm fleet by two.

Recommendation and Reasons

15. The Executive Member is recommended to:

- i. Note the content of the report and agree to the commencement of the proposed changes in the management of verges and open space in selected areas identified in the report.

Reason: To build climate resilience and adaptation to climate change and improve the biodiversity of our green spaces by determining how these spaces will be managed in the future; recognising that not all changes can be made immediately

- ii. Note the content of the report and agree to the commencement of the proposed changes in the management of sustainable planting across the city.

Reason: To initiate a move to more sustainable and pollinator friendly planting across the city by trialling new approaches commencing with key locations around the city centre

- iii. To note the report and reduce the amount of glyphosate used in the treatment of weeds across the city by moving to two sprays citywide.

Reason: To reduce the amount of glyphosate used in the treatment of weeds across the city delivering on the Council Plan.

- iv. To give delegated authority to the Director of Transport, Environment and Planning and in consultation with the Chief Finance Officer and Head Procurement, and take all steps necessary to procure, award and enter into contracts to deliver and effectively implement weed control treatments across the city.

Reason: To enable a contract to be put in place in a timely manner to ensure the treatment of weeds is delivered by an approved contractor and effectively monitored in line with budget commitments.

- v. To delegate authority to the Director of Environment, Transport and Planning to trial alternative weed treatment options not previously trialled in York, so they can be appraised for their effectiveness and ability to be replicated across the city.

Reason: To inform the future direction of weed treatment approaches and to ensure the Council can trial any emerging technologies in an effective manner and can reduce glyphosate usage as soon as possible.

Background

- 16. Public Realm are the outdoor spaces in our city and villages which are publicly accessible; this includes roads, paths, verges, parks, strays and play areas. Highways and Public Realm teams manage these spaces across the city.
- 17. The Public Realm team are responsible for urban and rural grass cutting, mechanical and manual sweeping, emptying dog/litter bins, litter picking, cleanliness of the city centre, cleansing of the A64, leaf clearance works, removal of fly tipping, dealing with dead animals, treatment of highway weeds and weeds around verge obstacles, shrub beds and planting, management of hedges, opening and closing of the bar walls, inspection and maintenance of play areas, tree planting, inspection and arboriculture works, inspection and maintenance of lifebuoys and riverside safety equipment, safety inspection of headstones and memorials, management of closed churchyards, farm tenancies and the management of parks and open spaces across the city. In Parished areas, some of these activities are undertaken by Parish Councils.
- 18. A review of the service has taken place to ascertain whether there is a better way to manage our assets and approaches in order to achieve our environmental commitments.
- 19. The report identifies some immediate changes and trials which reduce our impact on the environment and sets out a number of options in relation to verge management and grass cutting, planting and opportunities to improve biodiversity and reduce our impact on the environment.

20. However, it is an environment that needs to continue to serve our residents and visitors alike. The changes also need to be delivered within the budget that was approved by Executive on 25th January 2024 and which is due to be considered by Budget Council on 22nd February 2024 (which is after the publication of these papers).

Consultation Analysis

21. Officers have worked closely with colleagues in Public Health teams and the Council's Ecologist in developing these proposals. Officers and Executive Members have talked to city partners at a range of meetings including the re-launch of the York Climate Commission on 11th January 2024, such as St Nick's, York Cares, City Nature Challenge, University of York and will continue to work together where possible for the benefit of the environment.

Options Analysis and Evidential Basis

Verge and Open Space Management

22. The Council is responsible for the management of all verges that are adopted highway except the verges along the A64 and the roundabouts over the A64.
23. The Council also cuts grass in communal housing areas on City Council housing estates and parks and open spaces managed by the City Council.
24. The way grass is cut varies between rural and urban areas. In urban areas, we currently cut grass including highways verges, communal housing areas and open public spaces. Subject to weather conditions we have historically aimed to cut grass every 3 to 4 weeks between late March and October. In practice, due to a combination of staff shortages, weather and other factors this has not been consistently achieved in recent years.
25. In rural areas, the standard service is the same for communal housing areas and open public spaces. For rural grass verges of 'A' and 'B' roads, footpaths and cycleways, we cut a 1 metre wide strip to ensure grass does not impede the passage of traffic.

26. On other rural roads, grass cutting is restricted to priority locations, bends and corners, areas where grass may obstruct the line of sight leading to a public hazard (for example, bridleways and footpath exits but not private drives). Subject to weather conditions, we aim to cut grass in rural areas twice per year; the first cut is in June/July and the second cut in September/October. The remaining areas in the verge are left long to encourage natural habitats to form which encourage biodiversity.

Options for Improved Verge and Open Space Management

27. There is a growing body of evidence of the benefit of managing verges and grassland differently. Plantlife's Managing grassland has been used in developing these proposals; see <https://www.plantlife.org.uk/our-work/road-verges/>
28. Generally, the rural verges on 'A' and 'B' roads are already managed for biodiversity with the only cutting being for road safety reasons. The variety of grass species would be increased by removing the grass cuttings from rural verges. However, the Council is only cutting the first metre of the verge and the impact would be minimal compared to the cost of collecting the arisings from two cuts per year.
29. Some rural verges have historically been cut by farmers and landowners, whilst cutting visibility splays does indeed assist, it is not always in accordance with our environmental, climate and flood management policies. Therefore, officers have drafted a verge management policy and commit to consulting with farmers and landowners, drawing on their experience and knowledge to co-develop a robust set of guidelines (see Appendix 5). The Council is legally responsible for the grass, wildflowers and trees in verges and not landowners; the Council will consider legal action if damage or inappropriate maintenance is undertaken on verges.
30. In relation to urban highway verges and housing land, there is a balance to be struck between the environmental value and amenity value it provides. Through reducing the amount of grass cutting, there is less disruption to insect communities and it may give shorter plants like clover an opportunity to flower and seed, increasing biodiversity. Further information on ecological advice from the Council's Ecology Officer is included in Appendix 1. Therefore, officers recommend that grass in these locations is maintained at a

height of approximately 15 cm (this will effectively mean approximately 6 cuts per year). This will obviously be subject to weather conditions.

31. The suggested changes are being put in place to tackle biodiversity loss and nature recovery, climate adaptation and resilience etc, whilst also recognising the challenges the Council face in terms of budget. The Council doesn't currently have the resources for machinery to cut and remove arisings so we are looking to work in partnership with the community and partners in developing this work as we move forward.
32. It should be noted that if this is approved then there will be implications in terms of double taxation. The concept of double taxation is that a resident shouldn't pay twice for a service; so if a Parish Council cut the grass in an open spaces, then the City Council should fund the grass cutting to the level that the City Council does it elsewhere in the city. If the grass cutting across the city is reduced to 6 cuts per year, then this will affect the amount of double taxation Parish Councils can claim.
33. In addition, the following areas are identified to highlight where it is possible that a more relaxed approach to mowing or the planting of wildflowers can be trialled. The areas can be used as a possible test of cut and collect with one cut (please note we will need to source the equipment and welcome suggestions and offers of help with equipment sharing from city partners). This will allow the Council to pilot areas to judge the impact that a new management approach can generate from a biodiversity and wildlife perspective. As part of this development, the Council will seek to evaluate the approaches to the management of verges and use different methods to inform the position for future years.
34. Scrutiny Committee has previously heard about Agrisound devices which can monitor insect biodiversity that the Council have trialled and these should be focused on these trial areas. The Council is also aware of citizen science projects that have already taken place to establish biodiversity and follow up work on these trial areas below is welcomed.

Road	Location	Local considerations	Voluntary / community involvement
A166 Hull Rd	Grimston Bar to B&Q	Central reservation / sponsorship signs will need to be strimmed around	No - 40 mph
	B&Q to end of Bus Lane	Central reservation / daffodils (need to allow daffodils to die back before cutting)	No - 40 then 30 mph
	end of Bus Lane Black Bull	In bound verge / poss. crocus bulbs	Yes *
Field Lane	Deramore Drive to B&Q roundabout	Outbound verge (expansion of TCV work)	Yes *
A1036 Tadcaster Rd	Section in front of Tesco	Need to remove old timber planters / sponsorship signs	Yes *
Moor Lane	Woodthorpe	Outbound verge near A1237 balancing pond - already wildflower seeded	Yes *
A19 (North) Rawcliffe	Shipton Road	In bound verge	Possibly* 40 mph
Monks Cross	Jockey Lane	Central reservation / sponsorship signs on southern section only	No - 40 mph
A1237	12 Roundabouts	Chevrons and sponsor signs. Suggest cutting a braid up to road or sponsorship signs and leave rest to long grass	No - 60 mph

*subject to site risk assessment and nature of work

35. Planning and Highways colleagues have confirmed that it is permissible to erect signs in the verge to ensure that residents and visitors are clear that we are operating relaxed mowing areas for the above trials. The signs must be under 1.15 square metres in size and the service will require Streetworks permits in certain locations. to gain approval and undertake the erection of the signs.
36. In terms of larger green spaces, the Council already has a number of well established arrangements to manage land sustainably (e.g. Hob Moor etc). There are other opportunities where reduced mowing could be undertaken in the future and these are outlined below:-

Location	Ward	Existing Yes/No	Future opportunity	Voluntary / community involvement / comment
Millennium Bridge – Fulford side	Fishergate	Yes	No - not without losing sports / games / picnic area	St Nicks lead on site management and development
Millennium Bridge – Bishopthorpe Rd side to Terry's snicket	Micklegate	No	Yes – poss. 25-40 % of area – would need ward buy in	Has potential – Friends of Nun Ings?
Location	Ward	Existing Yes/No	Future opportunity	Voluntary / community involvement / comment
Rowntree Park	Micklegate	Yes	Additional 10 % of grassland could be set aside	Friends supportive / part of Green Corridors project
North Street Gardens	Micklegate	No	Parts of perimeter being developed for wildflower planting	York Cares active
Victoria “stray” – Scarborough Bridge to Clifton Bridge	Holgate	Limited to woodland development areas	Yes, would need ward buy in community said no last time tried	Possible – Friends of Leeman Park
RSPCA / Clifton Landing	Holgate	Yes	No, area now fully developed with meadow / grassland	
Riverside near St Peters	Clifton	Yes	Must watch out for EA maintenance obligations for flood bank	
Rawcliffe Country Park	Rawcliffe and Clifton Without	Yes	Approx. 50 % grassland already set aside as long grass, too soon to expand due to ongoing EA works	
Rawcliffe Lake	Rawcliffe and Clifton Without	Yes	No, only marginal mowing takes place along footpaths	
West Bank Park	Holgate	Yes	Limited - could expand margins	Friends of West Bank Park

Hull Road Park	Hull Road	No	Could develop margins to complement beck naturalisation	TCV / St Nicks already active on site
Glen Gardens	Heworth	No	No. Community value old Bowling Green too much as kick about / dog area	Friends of Glen Gardens
Melrosegate playing field	Heworth	No	Unlikely – woodland planting being explored	
Clarence Gardens	Guildhall	No	Yes, opportunity to repurpose one or both old Bowling greens as meadow	Possibly
Location	Ward	Existing Yes/No	Future opportunity	Voluntary / community involvement / comment
Scarcroft Green	Micklegate	Limited to orchard	Limited - could expand margins	
Little Knavesmire	Micklegate	No	Yes - could create margin area – avoiding sports pitches	Indicative support for idea from sports clubs
Main Knavesmire	Micklegate , impact on Dringhouses and Woodthorpe	Yes	Yes, expansion of woodland meadow along Tadcaster Road once drainage work is completed. Test/ trial area within the southern sector of the racecourse	Yorkshire Wildlife Trust may be able to bring in some assistance. Racecourse interested in participating.
Monk “Heworth” Stray – section bounded by Malton Rd and Stockton Lane	Heworth Without	Limited to small margin by boundary hedge	Yes, could expand. Very negative feedback when most of this section was allowed to grown long circa 2018	
Batchelor Hill	Westfield		Need to check further on existing regime (conservation concerns)	
Chesney’s Field (off Thanet Rd)	Westfield	No	Yes, untested in this area – approx. 50 % - likely complaints about dog faeces	

Acomb Green	Westfield	No	Yes – could develop margins	
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37. The Council is responsible for managing the bankings on the bar walls (City walls ramparts). Specialist mowing equipment is used to manage this site due to steep banks. A number of stretches of the bar walls are planted with daffodils which flower between April and June. It is proposed to move to a cut once per year on the outer walls and two cuts on the inner walls. Please note that at certain corners of the outer bar walls there may need to be a trim at the end of the year to ensure there is no encroachment onto the pavement (e.g. Moatside Court, off Lord Mayor's Walk, Piccadilly etc). There will continue to be no collection of arisings.
38. The Council will continue to cut grass at sites such as West Bank Park (main lawn / football goal areas), Millennium Bridge (games / picnic area), parts of Scarcroft Green, Woodthorpe Green etc with an aim for a cut every three weeks in the growing season. This will continue to allow the use of these recreation spaces for general play.

Sustainable Planting and Bedding

39. It is proposed that a trial is undertaken on selected sites in the city centre to move to more sustainable planting and away from bedding plants that are currently planted twice a year (summer bedding is planted in June and winter bedding in October). These proposals mainly centre on the Inner Ring Road area in the initial phase.
40. There are options to extend the move to more sustainable planting to other areas but it is important that the service assesses the success of the move to more sustainable planting and to ensure that the perceived ecological benefits are achieved. It is important that the public are updated about the changes, and it is proposed that some form of promotional material is displayed in beds to outline the benefits of making the changes. The table below highlights areas where a move to more sustainable planting can be achieved. It may be possible to work with ward councillors and local community groups to become actively involved in managing some of these spaces. This can be reviewed and refined as we move forward:-

Location	Ward	Bed No.	Est bed area (m ²) inc. edge curb *	Proposal Rationale / Notes
Current bedding areas				
Blake Street traffic Island	Guildhall	1	22	Pollinator planting, too shallow for tree
		2	17	Pollinator planting, too shallow for tree
Lendal Bed Bank	Micklegate	1	10	Fill and seed with grass, Longer term - explore wildflower bank
		2	33	Fill and seed with grass
Leeman Road traffic Island	Micklegate	1	20	Needs to cope with shade from trees
Triangle Gardens	Micklegate	Left	30	Pollinator planting
		Right	30	Pollinator planting
Station Road / Station Rise traffic island	Micklegate	1	3	Pollinator planting
		2	32	Pollinator planting
		3	39	Pollinator planting
City walls opposite Station entrance near bus shelters	Micklegate	1		Fill and seed with grass. Poor visibility / out of context with city walls grass
		2		
Prices Lane	Micklegate	1	8	
Skeldergate traffic island (Nb this is a regimental Boer War Memorial)	Micklegate	1	14	Pollinator planting Southern African inspired plants?
		2	11	Pollinator planting
		3	11	Pollinator planting
		4	11	Pollinator planting
Fishergate traffic island	Guildhall / Fishergate	1	9	Very poor location for safe working – possibly test wildflower turf or plant lavender?
St Aubyns Place	Micklegate	1	5	Fill and seed with grass - brings into line with all other residential verges, further offset by proposed change to grassland on Knavesmire
		2	5	
West Bank Park	Holgate	1	n/a	Pollinator planting to complement the permanent planting which can be expanded
		2	n/a	
Crematorium	Bishopthorpe	1		Options to discuss with the Crematorium to move to more sustainable planting (currently we purchase bedding that they change twice per year)
		2		
		3		

Location	Ward	Bed No.	Est bed area (m ²) inc. edge curb *	Proposal Rationale / Notes
Non Bedding areas				
Nunnery Lane car park – Micklegate Bar end	Micklegate			Pollinator planting, currently overgrown with poor quality shrubs
St George's Field Car Park Raised Beds	Fishergate	X 2		Needs to be both drought and flood tolerant
Barbican Flats	Fishergate	X 2		Pollinator planting, currently overgrown with poor quality plants. Recent interest from Ward Cllrs, possibility of community involved
Rosemary Place / Navigation Road play area	Guildhall	3		Pollinator planting. Beds recently of over mature shrubs cleared as part of play area re-fresh
Jewbury car park rotunda	Guildhall	1		
Monk Bar (opp. Monk Bar Hotel)	Guildhall	1		Pollinator planting, currently overgrown with poor quality shrubs
Thief Lane (raised bed)	Fishergate	1	33	Pollinator planting, currently overgrown with poor quality plants. Recent interest from Ward Cllrs, possibility of community involved
Cherry Hill (horse trough)	Micklegate	1		
Lawrence Street (horse trough)	Fishergate	1		

*Please note that in table above bed sizes need on site measurement to confirm

Weed Control

41. For a number of years, the highway weed control has been undertaken by an external contractor.
42. It is important to recognise that managing the Council's highway and footway infrastructure (keeping our pavements and highways accessible to all), whilst doing all it can to minimise the use of glyphosate is a difficult balancing act for the Council. The Council Plan contains a commitment to reduce the use of glyphosate/

herbicides. The current weed contract expires in March 2024 and there is no option to extend the contract as the Council previously extended the contract 2 years ago.

43. In 2021, the Council undertook a trial of alternative weed treatment methods in an attempt to reduce the use of glyphosate across the city. The trial included the use of a nonanoic acid, an acetic acid, glyphosate and manual weed removal. The nonanoic acid and acetic acid were not as successful as glyphosate in the treatment of weeds and proved ineffective. The issue with the manual removal of weeds is this is a time consuming task and struggles to be replicated citywide due to the size of the highway network that we manage.
44. In 2022 and again in 2023, the Council undertook a pilot approach in relation to weed control. Ward Councillors were provided with an opportunity to reduce the number of weed sprays in their respective wards as part of the weed pilot. This saw the number of sprays reduced from three sprays to two sprays. Ward councillors could choose to be a 'pilot' ward and opt out of some of the glyphosate treatments for 2022 and again in 2023.
45. The following wards participated in the 2022 weed pilot by having two sprays; Guildhall (whole ward), Osbaldwick and Derwent (whole ward), Hull Road (whole ward), Micklegate (whole ward), Fishergate (whole ward), Rural West (whole ward apart from Skelton), Holgate (defined areas only had two sprays; no spraying on St Paul's Square) and Wheldrake (whole ward apart from Elvington which received no sprays). In addition to this, there were some single streets that received no sprays at all.
46. The following wards participated in the 2023 weed pilot by having two sprays; Osbaldwick and Derwent (whole ward), Micklegate (whole ward), Fishergate (whole ward with some back streets excluded from any spraying), Guildhall (whole ward), Copmanthorpe (whole ward), Holgate (defined areas only had two sprays; no spraying was extended on St Paul's Square which opted to self-maintain), Wheldrake (whole ward apart from Elvington which received no sprays). Dringhouses and Woodthorpe ward retained the 3 sprays on the highway but requested a strim not a weed spray of Public Realm areas in their ward. As part of the trial stiffer brushes were fitted on the street sweepers to aid with weed removal and this was successful and has been adopted and rolled out.

47. Feedback has been sought from ward councillors who participated in the weed pilot in 2023. The information returned from ward councillors is included in Appendix 3. In summary, the feedback can be summarised as follows:-
- The trial of the stiffer brushes in normal street cleansing operations did help and we are now using these across our fleet
 - Recognise the tension that residents want to reduce glyphosate but many want cleaner, weed free streets
 - Comments were made about the previous contract performance and coverage in certain areas across the city. Additional management capacity has been recruited which will more closely manage and monitor future weed treatments
 - Some wards would like to manage weed treatment themselves as a local service. At this stage, officers do not propose to do this as it would reduce the purchasing power of the Council for the main contract. Engagement of wards will be key to future decision making.
48. The trial of 2 sprays has not resulted in feedback that the principle of 2 sprays is somehow flawed. Neighbouring North Yorkshire Council undertakes 2 sprays county wide having previously trialled 1 spray; they did have issues and have moved to 2 sprays.
49. The Council has also sought to work with partners to discuss how they are managing weed control on their estates. Work has been undertaken with Yorkshire Wildlife Trust (YWT) and the Environment Agency to understand their current approaches to weed control and any other future options they may be considering. In addition, advice has been sought from the Pesticide Action Network (PAN). We have also consulted Friends of the Earth. Their Head of Policy stated “we have said in the past local authorities should move away from using the chemical glyphosate if it is practical to do so. But it is important to recognise that local authority use of glyphosate will have minimal biodiversity impacts if used sensibly and unlikely to have any human health impact (the main route for glyphosate entering the human body will be ingestion via food, for example many wheat farmers use it to dry their crop before harvest which leads to residues in bread). Glyphosate is not one of the more toxic pesticides. Local authorities will also be a tiny fraction of use compared to farmers. The question for the council, given tight finances, will be cost benefit. Focusing scarce resources on increasing biodiversity through measures such as better use of verges to encourage wildflowers and insects will

deliver more gain for nature with less outlay. This doesn't mean that reducing or eliminating glyphosate is a bad idea, instead it is a reflection that in hard times the council must choose between good ideas and there are better good ideas than eliminating glyphosate use.”

50. The EU have recently extended the authorisation of glyphosate for a further 10 years and the UK has licensed glyphosate until December 2025.

Options for Improved Weed Control

51. The Council, through its Public Realm team, are responsible for weed control in limited locations. In order to reduce glyphosate usage, we adapted the approach to weed control and no longer spray weeds in tree pits. The only areas that are currently treated are around street furniture and at perimeter fences of parks and playgrounds (no other spraying is done in parks and playgrounds).
52. The Council will continue to encourage areas that have consensus to opt out of spraying completely and manage weed removal themselves manually. We retain the ambition to decrease weed growth through mechanical sweeping and manual removal where possible. Residents are free to weed the pavement in front of their homes. Glyphosate is only effective when it lands on the leaves of a plant/weed. The contractor is instructed to only spray visible weed growth. Therefore, the manual removal of weeds by residents would also reduce the amount of glyphosate used. York is very lucky to have an active and civically engaged residents who support our city in many ways and this is clearly an opportunity to reduce glyphosate.
53. Officers have explored the option to deliver all weed control in-house rather than use a contractor. However, this would require the purchase of quad bikes and equipment which would be used for a limited number of weeks of the year (which does not really make economic sense). In addition to the equipment, additional staff resource would be required to undertake the spraying as existing staff are deployed on other tasks as this is the busiest time of year for the service. To use seasonal staff carries significant risk as skilled and qualified staff would be required for relatively short periods of time (the current contractor uses a team of 5 people for up to 3 weeks per spray). It should be noted that you are required to

hold a spraying licence to apply chemicals. Officers do not believe that appointing these staff on a seasonal basis would work and there is significant risk we would not have the resource or skills to deliver. On this basis, officers believe the investment required does not make an in-house service value for money and would require budget growth.

54. Officers have looked at not using quad bikes and undertaking an entirely walked spray. Although there is a limit to the speeds a quad bike can travel, they are significantly quicker and therefore able to cover an extended area as compared to a walked spray. Market engagement with providers has identified that this would increase the cost of the contract significantly and is therefore not affordable.
55. Manual weed removal would remove the need for glyphosate but for the Council to do this it would need to be a walked spray. Teams are already encouraged to remove any weeds if they are working in the area. To do this to a similar standard to that achieved via a glyphosate treatment would cost significantly more and is therefore not viable.
56. We have worked with other local authorities as effective weed control is not a challenge that York faces alone. Some authorities have had to reverse previous decisions to reduce or ban glyphosate as non-chemical alternatives were found to be too expensive or non-effective and damage to pavements and infrastructure was becoming apparent. This includes authorities such as Brighton and Hove Council, Isle of Wight Council and Cambridgeshire County Council who have reverted to chemical treatment.
57. In conclusion, glyphosate remains, at this time, the only affordable option within current structures and established ways of working. The contract also asks suppliers to indicate if they would be happy to participate in any future weed treatment trials so that if any new technologies or products emerge they can be trialled effectively in the city. The need to reduce glyphosate is real and the previous trial of 2 sprays appears to have been successful.
58. Therefore, the Council will seek prices and treatment options from suppliers. They have been asked to submit prices for up to 2 weed treatments per year, to identify their preferred treatment method and to outline which weed treatment materials they propose to use. This will be an open tender to encourage responses from the market. It is

proposed that this is a 2 year contract with an option to extend for a further 2 years to ensure timely review and that the service is as efficient as possible. The contract will be managed by the Council's Public Realm team.

Organisational Impact and Implications

59. The implications are as follows:

- **Financial:** The proposals in the report are consistent with the requirements to save £100k from the overall Public Realm budget.
Human Resources (HR): Any reduction in the number of staff required due to the proposals would be managed in accordance with the Council's normal processes. The service area anticipates however that these reductions can be managed through not filling vacancies and therefore no dismissals for reason of redundancy are envisaged.
- **Legal:** The Council has a duty to maintain the highway under section 41 of the Highways Act 1980. Grass verges are considered to form part of the highway. In addition, the Council has a power to maintain grass verges and to ensure that anything on the verge does not hinder the reasonable use of the highway by any person entitled to use it, or cause nuisance or injury to the owner or occupier of premises adjacent to the highway. The current weed control contract expires in March 2024. Officers from Legal Services are advising on the replacement contract to form part of any approved procurement process.
- **Procurement:** Any proposed works or services, will need to be commissioned via a compliant procurement route under the Council's Contract Procedure Rules and where applicable the Public Contract Regulations 2015. All tenders will need to be conducted in an open, fair and transparent way to capture the key principles of procurement. Further advice regarding the procurement routes, strategies and markets must be sought from the Commercial Procurement Team. Officers from Public Realm are working closely with procurement colleagues.
- **Health and Wellbeing:** When approached, the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) directed public health officers to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) guidance, which advises that in cases where there is a need for glyphosate

usage in the public realm, it is safe to do so if used within current guidance. The HSE state: 'All companies wishing to obtain approval for their pesticides are required to submit substantial data dossiers to support their applications. The extensive range of studies undertaken on pesticides is aimed at establishing acceptable safety for people, animals and the wider environment. This process has been applied to glyphosate which has been approved as safe and efficacious for a number of years now. The risks associated with the use of pesticides in amenity areas such as parks are specifically considered as part of the authorisation process. Legally enforceable conditions of use are imposed on the way products can be applied, to ensure the public are not exposed to levels of pesticides that would harm health or have unacceptable effects on the environment. It is important that users (or those who cause or permit others to use pesticides) not only comply with the authorised conditions of use but also use products in a responsible and sustainable fashion. The responsible use of pesticides in amenity areas as part of an integrated programme of control can help deliver substantial benefits for society. These include: management of conservation areas, invasive species and flood risks; access to high quality sporting facilities; and safe public spaces (for example, by preventing weed growth on hard surfaces creating trip hazards), industrial sites and transport infrastructure.'

It will be important therefore to ensure that if glyphosate is used by City of York council public realm teams, it is done so:

- in accordance with the authorised conditions of the products;
- with operatives wearing the required PPE and adhering to exposure guidance;
- appropriately training provided to operatives; and
- a suitable method of application used for the product.

The guidance and emerging evidence on the use of the product internationally, should be regularly reviewed and taken into account by CYC.

- **Environment and Climate action:** The focus of this report is to adjust our Public Realm maintenance practices to align them to the Council's environmental intent building climate

resilience and climate adaptation through techniques such as biological carbon sequestration.

- **Affordability:** no specific comments on this report.
- **Equalities and Human Rights:** The Council has taken account of the Public Sector Equality Duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 (to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other prohibited conduct; advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it and foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it, in the exercise of a public authority's functions.
The changes are not envisaged that there will be any impact on these with protected characteristics. It is anticipated that the changes to regimes will continue to keep pavements free from hazards. Should these changes to weed control and/or grass cutting cause obstructions, an immediate review will need to be undertaken.
- **Data Protection and Privacy:** no specific comments on this report.
- **Communications:** Communications support will be required in the short term with web services to ensure that web pages are updated. Work will also be needed, should changes be made, to support staff and ensure that people are informed about what they will mean for their area.
- **Economy:** York is regularly recognised as a great place to live and to visit. Effective maintenance of public realm supports a sense of place and pride in our city and neighbourhoods and the important role they play in our local economy. The proposed introduction of sustainable planting trials in and around the city centre align with the 'Sustainable City' theme in the Council's updated 'Our City Centre' vision, approved by Executive in October 2023.

Risks and Mitigations

60. The key risk is if the suggested trials do not deliver the impacts in relation to biodiversity improvement or if there are any issues relating to accessibility as a result of the proposed changes in terms of grass cutting and weed control. There are not perceived to be any adverse impacts but this is something that the Council will keep

under review. Should any adverse impacts be identified than an immediate review will need to be undertaken.

Wards Impacted

61. All wards are impacted by the decisions contained within the report.

Contact details

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Background papers: None

Annexes

Appendix 1 – Ecological Advice

Appendix 2 – Rural Grass Cutting Areas

Appendix 3 – Feedback from ward councillors on the 2023 Weed Pilot

Appendix 4 - Equality Impact Assessment

Appendix 5 – Caring for York's verges

Ecological benefits / drawbacks of leaving grass to grow longer

Proposal	Pros	Cons	Comment
Reducing grass cutting to 6 cuts per year (highways verges and housing land)	Less disruption to insect communities. May give shorter plants like clover an opportunity to flower and seed, increasing diversity.	None perceived	A reduction in cutting frequency will still control more vigorous species. Creating a range of grass lengths will have the biggest benefit for biodiversity. The habitat for many of UK wildflowers is maintained in a natural landscape by wild grazing animals. See Plantlife guidance on 'Short grass and flowering lawns'.
Trialling a cut and collect once a year at some pilot sites (some verges like Hull Road central reservation)	Collecting the grass clippings reduces the soil fertility, resulting in lower growth rates, longer periods between cutting and a far better environment for wildflowers to establish, thrive and provide benefits to pollinators.	Collecting requires specialist equipment or can be labour intensive, both with cost implications	See Plantlife guidance on 'Mid length grass and meadows'.
Leaving roundabouts to grow and only cutting a braid around the directional signs	Good for wildlife	Woody vegetation may eventually dominate and require extensive work to keep sight lines clear	See Plantlife guidance on 'Year-round longer grass areas'.
More sustainable planting	More likely to provide prolonged habitat and food source for	Non perceived	

<i>Proposal</i>	<i>Pros</i>	<i>Cons</i>	<i>Comment</i>
Bar Walls currently cut twice per year. Would you support a move to one cut or one cut on the outer and two in the inner	Either option is suitable on the proviso cuttings are removed from site	If cuttings are left uncollected the nutrient levels will increase, dominant grass and 'weed' species (nettles, dock, thistle) will establish and require more intensive management.	If two cuts, make first cut in late March, second in September. If it is envisaged the cuttings can't be collected it is better to leave the grass uncut.

Trialling of Schemes:

Our native species have evolved in a wild and varied landscape. To support as many of them as possible we need to replicate this diversity where we can. This means there's no one 'best' way of managing the council's grassland for wildlife – using a diversity of maintenance methods will maximise the number of species our grasslands can support.

We are proposing 'cut and collect' mowing for the verge in certain areas – this is where we collect the vegetation clippings instead of letting them decompose into the soil. Collecting the grass clippings reduces the soil fertility, resulting in lower growth rates, longer periods between cutting and a far better environment for wildflowers to establish and thrive. This reduction in verge cutting allows wildflowers the time to complete their life cycles which benefits bees and other pollinators.

The key factor required for wildflowers is maintaining low soil nutrients (i.e. low levels of phosphates and nitrogen), this is usually the opposite to domestic gardens where fertile soils favour lush green grass, and fast-growing plants that would out-compete the delicate wildflowers. The seed produced by wildflowers would struggle to establish in nutrient rich soil conditions.

For further reading, please see well-established verge wildflower projects:

[Lincolnshire's Road Verges | Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust \(lincstrust.org.uk\)](https://www.lincstrust.org.uk/)

[Verge cutting information and maintenance standards in Dorset - Dorset Council](#)

Grass cutting location list**A1237**

A64 south - A57 - A19 north to A64 at Hopgrove	Inbound, Outbound, footpaths & cycle ways
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Rufforth / Knapton / Poppleton area

B1224 Wetherby Road City Boundary to A1237	Inbound & Outbound
Wetherby Road	Inbound Towards city centre
B1224 / Mill Lane	T junction
B1224 / Heightland Lane	T junction (YorWaste)
Bland Lane Knapton	T junction
Main Street Knapton	T junction
Mill Lane / Main Street Hessay	T junction
A59 City Boundary to A1237	Inbound, Outbound, footpaths & cycle ways
A59 / New Road Hessay	T junction
New Road Hessay	Entrance to industrial estate and around level crossing (NOT SHOWN ON PLAN)
A59 / Sirbutt Lane	T junction and both side of Lane to railway crossing
A59 / Longfield Grange	T junction
A59 / Cat Lane	T junction
A59 / Newlands Lane	T junction
A59 / Hodgson Lane	T junction
A59 / Black Dike Lane	T junction
A59 / Burlands Lane	T junction
A59 / Northfield / Station Rd	4 way junction
Millfield Lane Poppleton	Inbound, Outbound, footpaths & cycle ways
Newlands Ln to Cinder Lane	3 x T junctions
	Passing places

Rawcliffe / Clifton Without

B1363 Wigginton Road to Crichton Avenue	Inbound & Outbound
B1363 Level crossing approaches	Sightlines Especially outbound from city centre
Cycle path of Wigginton Road to New Earswick	Key may be required
Bumper Castle	T junction
Clifton Moor Gate / Water Lane	T junction
Water Lane as far as Burdike Avenue	Inbound & Outbound

Skelton / Strensall area

A19 (Nrth) city boundary to A1237	Inbound Outbound & Footpath
Moorlands Road	Bend sightlines
Moorlands Road / Moorlands Farm	T junction
Moorlands Road / Corban Lane	4 way junction
B1363 Wigginton Road to city boundary	Inbound
	Outbound
B1363 / Chipchase Farm	T junction
B1363 / Corban Lane	T junction
B1363 / Mill Lane	T junction
Moor Lane / Crossmoor Lane	T junction
Crossmoor Lane / Usher Lane	T junction
Usher Lane / Haxby Moor	T junction
Usher Lane	Bend sightlines
Towthorpe Road	Bend sightlines
Strensall Road from Earswick includes section by Willow Grove	Inbound Outbound
Strensall Road / Towthorpe Road	T Junction
Strensall Road / Towthorpe Moor Road	T Junction
Towthorpe Moor Road	Footpath near Amenity site
	Bend sightlines
Flaxton Road (Strensall)	Bend sightlines
Flaxton Road / Lords Moor Lane	T Junction
Lords Moor Lane	Bend sightlines near Level crossing
Sheriff Hutton Rd (Strensall)	Footpath next to cemetery
Sheriff Hutton Rd (Strensall) / Pottery Lane	T junction
Strensall allotments	Beckside - access via key

Huntington / Stockton on the Forest area

A1036 to A1237	Inbound & Outbound
Stockton Lane to Stockton on the Forest	Inbound & Outbound
Hopgrove Lane	Inbound & Outbound
Stockton Lane / Hopgrove Lane	T junction
Stockton Lane / Holtby Lane	T junction
Sandy Lane / Common Lane	T junction
Holtby Lane / Badbargin Lane	T junction
Holtby Lane	Bend sightlines
North Lane Section beyond ring road	Inbound & Outbound

Dunnington – Kexby area

A166 to city boundary	Inbound, outbound, cycle ways & footpaths
A166 / Murton Lane	T junction
Murton Lane	T junctions Near Mart
Murton Way - Osbaldwick business park to A64 flyover	Inbound Outbound
A166 / Church Balk	T junction
A166 / Eastfield Lane	T junction
Eastfield Lane	Bend sightlines
A1079 to city boundary	Inbound, outbound, cycle ways & footpaths
A1079 / Bore Tree bulk	T Junction
A1079 / York Road	T junction – deep cut back to field boundary
A1079 / Common Road	T Junction
A1079 / Common Lane	T Junction
A1079 / Dauby Lane	T Junction

Elvington – Wheldrake area

B1228 Elvington Lane to Elvington	Inbound & Outbound
A1079 / B1228	T junction – deep cut back to field boundary
B1228 / Common Lane	T junction
B1228 / Air Museum entrance	T junction
B1228 Greengales Lane	T junction
Greengales Lane	Bend sightlines
Church Lane	Bend sightline includes chevrons
Broadhighway	Inbound & Outbound
Broadhighway / Hagwood walk	T junction
Wheldrake Lane / Benjy Lane	T junction include chevrons
Wheldrake Lane / Pool bridge	T junction

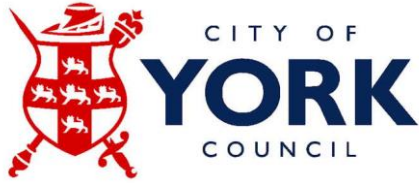
Hull Road / Heslington / Fulford / Naburn area

Hull Road – A64 to Field Lane Roundabout -	Inbound, outbound, footpaths and cycle ways, central reservation (NOT ON PLAN) Cut 1 – 1 width Cut 2 – whole central reservation – A64 to P&R access
Field Lane – Heslington - Lord Deramores School to Field Lane mini roundabout	South (University grounds) side only
Windmill Lane	West (University) side only
Heslington Lane - Golf course to mini roundabout	Both sides
A19 South starting at B1222 Naburn Lane to city boundary	Inbound, outbound, footpaths and cycle ways
A19 – Farm entrances x 2	T junction
A19 – Wheldrake Lane	T junction
A19 – Howden Lane	T junction
A19 – Farm entrances x 2	T junction Rush farm area
A19 – Deighton	Footpaths
A19 – Farm entrance	T junction Swan Farm
A19 – New Road	T junction
A19 – Naburn Lane	T junction
B1222 York Road from city boundary to A19	Inbound, outbound, footpaths and cycle ways
Naburn Lane – Howden Lane	T junction
Naburn Lane – Moor Lane	T junction

Bishopthorpe / Acaster Malbis / Copmanthorpe / Woodthorpe

A64 / Tadcaster Road	Inbound Outbound Footpath Includes central reservation
Sim Balk Lane	Inbound Outbound Footpath
Bishopthorpe Road / Racecourse / collage area	Inbound Outbound Footpath /cycle path
Appleton Road / Temple Lane / Cowper Lane	4 way junction
Appleton Road / Darling Lane	T junction
Appleton Road / Foss Field Lane	T junction
Mill Lane / Hauling Lane Acaster Malbis	T junction
Appleton Road / Broad Lane	T junction
Intake Lane / Broad Lane	T junction
Intake Lane – Mount Pleasant estate	T junction (NOT SHOWN ON PLAN)
Broad Lane	Bend sightline x 2
Temple Lane Opposite no. 51	T junction Bus stop
Hallcroft Lane / Manor Heath	T junction Farm side
Manor Heath / A64 access	T junction
Askham Fields Lane / A64 access	T Junction
Askham Fields Lane	Both sides
Askham Fields Lane / York Rd	T junction
Chapel Field Lane / York Road	T Junction
Buckles Inn Lane to York Road	House side
Above Lane / York Road	4 way junction Offset
School Lane / Low Moor Lane Askham Richard	T junction
Low Moor Lane	Bend sightlines
Moor Lane roundabout Woodthorpe	T junctions x 4
Moor Lane Woodthorpe to urban boundary	Include Chevrons (NOT CLEAR ON PLAN)

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Ward Weed Treatment Assessment (2023 Weed Pilot)

Please State your Ward: **Micklegate (Cllr Kilbane)**

Q1. Did you undertake any weed control activities in your ward (outside of the sprays undertaken by the Council or it's weed contractor)?

Yes No

If yes, what activities were undertaken? We spent 3 hours clearing the paths around Scarcroft Green.

Q2. How do you rate the quality of weed spraying in your ward? (please tick)

Very Good	
Good	
Average	
Poor	X
Very Poor	

Please outline below why you have made the assessment you have

Back alleys, especially gated ones, do not get sprayed. Pavement sprays are not directed carefully and sometimes appear to be quite random.

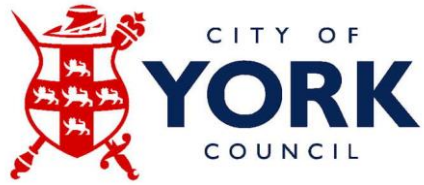
Q3. Have any issues been expressed to you by local residents regarding weeds? (please identify affected streets/areas)

Numerous residents have complained about weed growth. In particular the following streets were raised as an issue

- Fenwick St
- Alley between Trafalgar and Kensington Streets
- Alley between Curzon and Knavesmire Crescent
- Back alleys both sides Lower Ebor St
- Charlton St

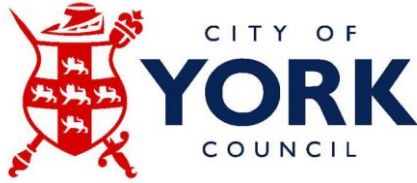
Q4. Are there any observations you wish to make about the trial in 2023 in your ward?

This is a tricky problem to solve. Many residents do not mind the weeds, yet it greatly upsets others. We need to keep on top of the problem to prevent future costs with



Appendix 3 – Ward Responses

pavement repairs, yet we must also phase out glyphosate without delay. In our experience more residents are concerned about the use of glyphosate than the predominance of weeds.



Ward Weed Treatment Assessment (2023 Weed Pilot)

Please State your Ward – **Holgate (Cllr Taylor)**

Q1. Did you undertake any weed control activities in your ward (outside of the sprays undertaken by the Council or it's weed contractor)?

Yes No

If yes, what activities were undertaken? I'm reading this question to mean extra weed control in the Ward outside of CYC services, rather than me personally, so:

- Residents within the St Pauls "area" of the Ward undertook some manual weed control, as per their total opt out of all sprays last year following the community-led survey. This area is effectively everywhere north of Holgate Road between its junctions with Wilton Rise and St Pauls Church.

- Ward Councillors, with the help of a few residents, undertook some manual weed control within the Leeman Road "island" area. This is the densely populated terraced estate between Leeman Road, Water End, and the Rise Ouse. This was in response to most of the non-tarmacked alley ways becoming inaccessible, and overgrowth across many streets.

Q2. How do you rate the quality of weed spraying in your ward? (please tick)

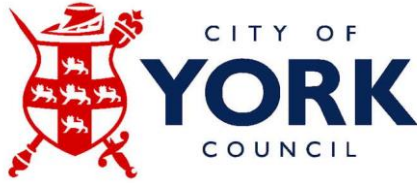
Very Good	
Good	
Average	
Poor	
Very Poor	X

Please outline below why you have made the assessment you have:

I have no confidence in the contractor to do what they are supposed to be paid to do. I have little confidence in the Council's ability - or even appetite - to manage the contractor.

I have used strong language here because I feel like what I'm about to say I've said before, and we don't seem to get any further.

It feels completely futile raising concerns with the Council whenever it's clear that the contractor is running behind, or has done the job but poorly, or not done the job at all. There is no regular point of contact, the replies we get are usually slow, full of ifs,



but, and maybes - almost as if we are beholden to the contractor and not the other way around! It's not good enough and ends up wasting loads more time through the chasing that's created.

The bottom line is we are paying somebody, who is doing this presumably to make some form of profit, with public money, and they are reliably unreliable. We should be all over them, and anybody else profiteering from public service provision, whenever problems arise. In fact, I bet the contractor makes much more money off the contract than we think – their margins will naturally be higher because they're not doing what they're being paid to do.

If this renders outsourcing unviable then so be it. The financial pressures that the Council are under are a challenge but also a huge opportunity to justify working differently and trying something new; outside of the limited question of "how many sprays?"

Q3. Have any issues been expressed to you by local residents regarding weeds? (please identify affected streets/areas)

We deliberately kept certain parts of the Ward - the Leeman Road area, the Lindsey Avenue / Sowerby Road area, and either side of upper Poppleton Road - at the maximum three sprays due to knowing, from experience, that these are the places where weed growth is most aggressive and where, every single year, we have the same problems of either no or weak weed control. Yet, once again, it is these areas where I have received feedback - all negative - about the service.

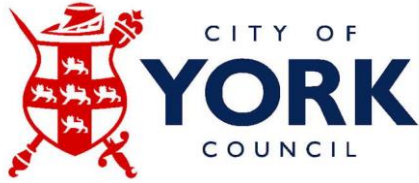
Q4. Are there any observations you wish to make about the trial in 2023 in your ward?

Interestingly, I have received zero complaints about weed control in areas where we have reduced or completely removed sprays.

We need to phase out glyphosate use as much as we can, wherever we can. *In some areas this could be zero sprays, in many others, fewer.* However, the environmental / toxicity issue needs completely separating out away from the question about control - the Council has previously, disingenuously, merged these two considerations.

Whatever different method(s) are hopefully used, the Council still needs to get a proper hold on the areas it knows have recurring problems with weed growth.

The final thing to say would be that if this survey leads to no meaningful change or credible response then, with respect, it'll be the last time I fill one in. Officers are extremely busy but so too are we. I have been raising issues about both poor control reliability and environmental concerns since 2019. The only thing that has changed is a so-called "pilot" allowing us to reduce sprays – nothing serious about different methods (not just of application but also organisation and deployment), nothing about contract management, nothing about better and faster responses to issues when they arise, or a proper point of contact.



Ward Weed Treatment Assessment (2023 Weed Pilot)

Please State your Ward – **Holgate (Cllr Steels-Walshaw)**

Q1. Did you undertake any weed control activities in your ward (outside of the sprays undertaken by the Council or it's weed contractor)?

Yes No

If yes, what activities were undertaken? I'm reading this question to mean extra weed control in the Ward outside of CYC services, rather than me personally, so:

Councillors, with the help of a few residents, undertook some manual weed control within the Leeman Road area around Stamford Street East. This is the densely populated terraced estate around Leeman Road, Water End. This was in response to most of the non-tarmacked alley ways becoming inaccessible, and overgrowth across many streets and resident concerns about access.

Q2. How do you rate the quality of weed spraying in your ward? (please tick)

Very Good	
Good	
Average	
Poor	
Very Poor	X

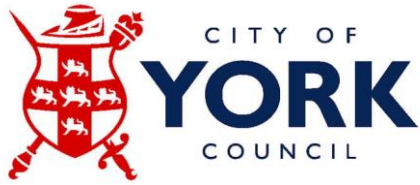
Please outline below why you have made the assessment you have:

As a ward Councillor I have had many ongoing complaints around the weed control particularly in the gated areas of the Leeman Road Alleys.

The main clearance that we did took place the week after they alleys were meant to have been sprayed and there was no evidence of many of the weeds having been sprayed. The weeds were very dense and thick.

When I have raised concerns about the state of the weeds and the overgrown areas there has not been concrete answers given on how this can be improved or when it can be done to a better standard. There has been a lot of time spent on chasing up responses that have been that the contractor has not got round to it or it has already been done.

There has been a struggle to see what if any work the contractor has actually done and little clarification on what has been done when trying to ascertain this.



Q3. Have any issues been expressed to you by local residents regarding weeds? (please identify affected streets/areas)

Yes, by residents in Leeman Road, Lindsey Avenue, Poppleton Road, Chatsworth Terrace.

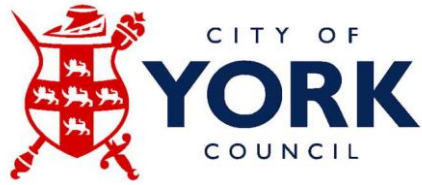
Residents have repeatedly requested when the sprays will be happening and if they have been done.

Q4. Are there any observations you wish to make about the trial in 2023 in your ward?

We need a clear timetable and timings for sprays and which areas are going to receive which service. We need active and timely responses to residents concerns about weeds and what is taking place in the areas in the ward.

Active discussions need to take place with contractors/officers and residents about glyphosate and what the options are around this and the implications for using it.

I really hope that this survey will lead to some improvements for people in the ward and some positive actioned answers that we can pass onto people.



Ward Weed Treatment Assessment (2023 Weed Pilot)

Please State your Ward – **Copmanthorpe (Cllr Steward)**

The feedback from Copmanthorpe is that generally people would rather have three sprays than two. What is the financial saving of two sprays in Copmanthorpe rather than three? Would it be possible that the village could have two sprays but the monetary difference to use more locally? I appreciate you are unlikely to be able to say yes, but hopefully could ask about the principle.

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Weed control / verge management

Wheldrake Ward 2023

This year, as previously, Elvington was the only village in Wheldrake Ward that committed to keeping pesticides away in favour of mechanical interventions to manage vegetation. There remain a strong commitment, from the parish council and from many residents, to keep glyphosate out of the village, except for spot treatment of dangerous plants.

Being a rural area, the verges in the ward are a mixture of ribbons of grass and roadside verge that can vary from 30cm in width to 7 or 8 metres. The kerbs are the same as everywhere else.

Trial of wire brushes to clean kerbs

Last year, I trialled mechanical intervention, using strimmers at selected areas in the villages, as can be seen in my report for that year. This year, following a meeting I had with Ed Bland in the village where we looked at the types of issue that weeds present, Elvington welcomed the council's trial of a wire brush sweeper. The results of the trial can be seen in the photo on the pages that follow.

The trial was quite small and didn't cover as many different types of kerb as I would have liked. The photos show clearly - at four separate locations in Elvington - that mechanical intervention successfully clears vegetation. Because the trial was conducted in the summer, the weeds had had all year in which to grow. To be successful, the brushes need to be used three times a year - just a glyphosate is to be sprayed three times a year - once in the spring to remove all the leaf matter and organise detritus that has collected in the kerb, to remove the vector that weeds grow in, and then twice more to remove any plants that have grown.

From my own investigation, I believe wire brushes would also be effective at removing vegetation/weeds on tactile kerbs as the brushes can successfully get inbetween the lumps and bumps on the tactile kerb.

Contrary to officer assertions, villages that were expecting glyphosate sprays three times a year have reported either not seeing any evidence of spraying or seeing only a single spray after complaining loudly. The lack of a GIS mapping system is clearly a challenge to any attempt to manage weed control in a coherent way across the city. The contrast between the city council's operation - involving printed A4 sheets and felt pens - and the Internal Drainage Board (IDB) approach - with effective mapping technology to monitor and manage what is cut or sprayed where - is clear for all to see. The IDB are more than willing to show CYC how their system works and, I believe might be willing to share their software with CYC to ensure better coordination of vegetation management to the betterment of biodiversity across York.

Wildflower Verges are expanded

Three years ago, Wheldrake created a wildflower verge on the road between Wheldrake village and Escrick. Some 7000 square metres in size, we saw 56 species of wildflowers flourish the first year, and the presence of a wide variety of insects and other pollinators, wildbirds and harvest mice.

The first year was not without its challenges as a number of landowners / farmers were unhappy about the creation of the verge and had to be cautioned by the police when they repeatedly flailed sections of the verge despite the presence of clear signage that the area was now a biodiversity habitat managed by the city and Natural England. Since then things have steadily improved. Natural England has invested in flailing equipment that removes the arisings. This means that we can begin to reduce the fertility of the soil, to the advantage of wildflowers and biodiversity. This autumn we have expanded the verge programme to include other routes out of the village. We believe that this approach could be used across the city to enhance biodiversity. It would still be of benefit if the arising could be sent to Allerton biogiester to produce power and an income stream but we are on our way.

My thanks to officers for the wire brush trial, to Natural England and Ad Astra for the flailing and arising removal, and to Cllrs Jenny Kent and Kate Ravillious for their help and their commitment to make this work. It is clear that we can move on from the bad old days of spraying pesticides over everything in sight!

Cllr Christian Vassie, 30 November 2023

Wire Brush Kerb Clean in Elvington



**Stretch of B1228
between doctor's
surgery and
primary school,
(towards doctor's
surgery)**



B1228 by doctor's surgery towards Elvington primary school ▶



Junction of B1228 and Dauby Lane, outside Elvington Primary School ▶



Kerb along B1228 opposite Elvington Primary School ▼



Junction of
The Conifers
and Wheldrake
Lane ▶



Wildflower Verge - Wheldrake Ward 2023



Wheldrake wildflower verge heading north from Wheldrake towards Crockey Hill 2023

Flail and remove arisings

By flailing the verges and removing arisings, we are managing the verge in a way that reduces soil fertility, promoting diversity and wildflowers ahead of a tall and thick monoculture of grasses. The arising can either be baled or left in piles by the hedgerow to provide habitat for wild animals



City of York Council Equalities Impact Assessment

Who is submitting the proposal?

Directorate:	Place		
Service Area:	Environmental Services – Public Realm		
Name of the proposal :	Service Developments – Public Realm		
Lead officer:	Ben Grabham; Head of Environmental Services		
Date assessment completed:	14 th February 2024		
Names of those who contributed to the assessment :			
Name	Job title	Organisation	Area of expertise
Ian Hoult	Head of Fleet and Operations	City of York Council	Fleet/Operations
Dave Meigh	Strategy and Contracts Manager	City of York Council	Public Realm management, arboriculture
Edward Bland	Strategy and Development Manager	City of York Council	Public Realm Operations Management

Step 1 – Aims and intended outcomes

EIA 02/2021

1.1	<p>What is the purpose of the proposal? Please explain your proposal in Plain English avoiding acronyms and jargon.</p>
	<p>The Council is considering adopting some revised approaches to the management of verges, open spaces and weed control across the city. This is the result of a review of the Public Realm service and to ascertain if there is a better way to manage the Council's assets and approaches in order to achieve our environmental commitments.</p>
1.2	<p>Are there any external considerations? (Legislation/government directive/codes of practice etc.)</p>
	<p>The Council has a duty to maintain the highway under section 41 of the Highways Act 1980. Grass verges are considered to form part of the highway. In addition, the Council has a power to maintain grass verges and to ensure that anything on the verge does not hinder the reasonable use of the highway by any person entitled to use it, or cause nuisance or injury to the owner or occupier of premises adjacent to the highway.</p> <p>Public Realm are the outdoor spaces in our city and villages which are publicly accessible; this includes roads, paths, verges, parks, stray and play areas. Highways and Public Realm teams manage these spaces across the city. There are some proposed immediate changes and trials which reduce our impact on the environment and sets out a number of options in relation to verge management and grass cutting, planting and opportunities to improve biodiversity and reduce our impact on the environment.</p>
1.3	<p>Who are the stakeholders and what are their interests?</p>
	<p>All residents of York are considered to be stakeholders. The Council has a duty to manage its highway and footway network effectively, but this has to be balanced with a move to protect the environment and seek to reduce where possible, the amount of glyphosate used across the city. The Council also has to protect the visual amenity of the city.</p>

1.4	What results/outcomes do we want to achieve and for whom? This section should explain what outcomes you want to achieve for service users, staff and/or the wider community. Demonstrate how the proposal links to the Council Plan and other corporate strategies and plans.
	<p>In the Council Plan, there is a key core commitment to the climate. This commitment is about understanding and reducing our impacts on the environment and enhancing it. One of the priorities identified within the Council Plan is to “increase biodiversity and plant an additional 4,000 trees across the city” and another is to “understand and consider the climate and biodiversity impacts when taking council decisions”. At full Council in July 2023, a motion was passed on safeguarding York’s future and recognised that the ‘ecological crisis should be tackled shoulder to shoulder with the climate crisis through a more joined up approach, with a focus on reversing the destruction of nature by 2023, not just halting it’. The Council committed to deliver actions that deliver on the Pollinator Strategy to achieve a measurable increase in biodiversity.</p> <p>In March 2023, the Council adopted a 10-year Climate Strategy that outlines the commitment to “protect green spaces, for less air pollution and an increase in biodiversity”. In addition, the Council adopted a Pollinator Strategy in 2021 with a commitment to “ensuring the Council will consider the needs of pollinators in the delivery of its duties and work. CYC will seek to protect and increase the amount and quality of pollinator habitat and manage its greenspace to provide greater benefits for pollinators. We will ensure local people are provided with opportunities to make York more pollinator friendly”. There was also a specific objective to increase the value of parks and other green spaces for pollinators. There was a further objective to reduce the use of glyphosate with trials. In 2019, the Council declared a Climate Emergency and committed to a target of making York carbon neutral by 2030.</p>

Step 2 – Gathering the information and feedback

2.1	What sources of data, evidence and consultation feedback do we have to help us understand the impact of the proposal on equality rights and human rights? Please consider a range of sources, including: consultation exercises, surveys, feedback from staff, stakeholders, participants, research reports, the views of equality groups, as well your own experience of working in this area etc.	
	Source of data/supporting evidence	Reason for using
	Internal work at the City Council	Officers in Public Realm have worked closely with colleagues in Public Health teams and the Council’s Ecologist in developing these proposals.

Partners and interested parties	Officers and Executive Members have talked to city partners at a range of meetings including the re-launch of the York Climate Commission on 11 th January 2024, including St Nick's, York Cares, City Nature Challenge, University of York and will continue to work together where possible for the benefit of the environment. The Council has also sought information and advice from the Pesticide Action network (PAN) and Friends of the Earth.
Other organisations	Work has been undertaken with Yorkshire Wildlife Trust (YWT) and the Environment Agency to understand their current approaches to weed control and any other future options they may be considering.
Comparison to other local authorities	The Council has sought to learn from experiences in other local authorities to share best practice, seek information and advice on various matters contained within the report..

Step 3 – Gaps in data and knowledge

3.1	What are the main gaps in information and understanding of the impact of your proposal? Please indicate how any gaps will be dealt with.	
	Gaps in data or knowledge	Action to deal with this
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council will not be expected to know or record which residents decide to remove weeds manually. The Council will need to understand the impact on biodiversity of some of the proposals contained within the report 	<p>The Council, through its management of the weed contract will only permit spraying where weed growth is present.</p> <p>There are devices which can monitor insect biodiversity that the Council have trialled and these should be focused on these trial areas. The Council is also aware of citizen science projects that have already taken place to establish biodiversity and follow up work on these trial areas below is welcomed.</p>

Step 4 – Analysing the impacts or effects.

4.1	<p>Please consider what the evidence tells you about the likely impact (positive or negative) on people sharing a protected characteristic, i.e. how significant could the impacts be if we did not make any adjustments? Remember the duty is also positive – so please identify where the proposal offers opportunities to promote equality and/or foster good relations.</p>		
Equality Groups and Human Rights.	Key Findings/Impacts	Positive (+) Negative (-) Neutral (0)	High (H) Medium (M) Low (L)
Age	The Council has a duty to ensure that it maintains pavements that are clear of obstruction so there are no adverse impacts in terms of people who may have visual or mobility issues. Should these changes to weed control and/or grass cutting cause obstructions, an immediate review will need to be undertaken in terms of accessibility.	(0)	
Disability	The Council has a duty to ensure that it maintains pavements that are clear of obstruction so there are no adverse impacts in terms of people who may have visual or mobility issues. Should these changes to weed control and/or grass cutting cause obstructions, an immediate review will need to be undertaken in terms of accessibility.	(0)	
Gender	n/a	(0)	
Gender Reassignment	n/a	(0)	
Marriage and civil partnership	n/a	(0)	
Pregnancy and maternity	The Council has a duty to ensure that it maintains pavements that are clear of obstruction so there are no adverse impacts in terms of people who may have visual or mobility issues. Should these changes to weed control and/or grass cutting cause obstructions, an immediate review will need to be undertaken in terms of accessibility.	(0)	

Race	n/a	(0)	
Religion and belief	n/a	(0)	
Sexual orientation	n/a	(0)	
Other Socio-economic groups including :	Could other socio-economic groups be affected e.g. carers, ex-offenders, low incomes?		
Carer	n/a	(0)	
Low income groups	n/a	(0)	
Veterans, Armed Forces Community	n/a	(0)	
Other	n/a	(0)	
Impact on human rights:			
List any human rights impacted.	n/a		

Use the following guidance to inform your responses:

Indicate:

- Where you think that the proposal could have a POSITIVE impact on any of the equality groups like promoting equality and equal opportunities or improving relations within equality groups
- Where you think that the proposal could have a NEGATIVE impact on any of the equality groups, i.e. it could disadvantage them

- Where you think that this proposal has a NEUTRAL effect on any of the equality groups listed below i.e. it has no effect currently on equality groups.

It is important to remember that a proposal may be highly relevant to one aspect of equality and not relevant to another.

<p>High impact (The proposal or process is very equality relevant)</p>	<p>There is significant potential for or evidence of adverse impact The proposal is institution wide or public facing The proposal has consequences for or affects significant numbers of people The proposal has the potential to make a significant contribution to promoting equality and the exercise of human rights.</p>
<p>Medium impact (The proposal or process is somewhat equality relevant)</p>	<p>There is some evidence to suggest potential for or evidence of adverse impact The proposal is institution wide or across services, but mainly internal The proposal has consequences for or affects some people The proposal has the potential to make a contribution to promoting equality and the exercise of human rights</p>
<p>Low impact (The proposal or process might be equality relevant)</p>	<p>There is little evidence to suggest that the proposal could result in adverse impact The proposal operates in a limited way The proposal has consequences for or affects few people The proposal may have the potential to contribute to promoting equality and the exercise of human rights</p>

Step 5 - Mitigating adverse impacts and maximising positive impacts

5.1	Based on your findings, explain ways you plan to mitigate any unlawful prohibited conduct or unwanted adverse impact. Where positive impacts have been identified, what is been done to optimise opportunities to advance equality or foster good relations?
The Council has a duty to ensure that it maintains pavements that are clear of obstruction so there are no adverse impacts in terms of people who may have visual or mobility issues. In the report the Council has identified some proposals to trial arrangements in relation to the management of verges and weed control. Should these changes to weed control and/or grass cutting cause obstructions, an immediate review will need to be undertaken in terms of accessibility.	

Step 6 – Recommendations and conclusions of the assessment

6.1	Having considered the potential or actual impacts you should be in a position to make an informed judgement on what should be done. In all cases, document your reasoning that justifies your decision. There are four main options you can take:
- No major change to the proposal – the EIA demonstrates the proposal is robust. There is no potential for unlawful discrimination or adverse impact and you have taken all opportunities to advance equality and foster good relations, subject to continuing monitor and review.	

- **Adjust the proposal** – the EIA identifies potential problems or missed opportunities. This involves taking steps to remove any barriers, to better advance quality or to foster good relations.
- **Continue with the proposal** (despite the potential for adverse impact) – you should clearly set out the justifications for doing this and how you believe the decision is compatible with our obligations under the duty
- **Stop and remove the proposal** – if there are adverse effects that are not justified and cannot be mitigated, you should consider stopping the proposal altogether. If a proposal leads to unlawful discrimination it should be removed or changed.

Important: If there are any adverse impacts you cannot mitigate, please provide a compelling reason in the justification column.

Option selected	Conclusions/justification
<p>No major change to the proposal – the EIA demonstrates the proposal is robust.</p>	<p>There are not perceived to be any adverse impacts of the proposed changes within the report.</p> <p>However, there is a clear commitment that should these changes to weed control and/or grass cutting cause obstructions, an immediate review will need to be undertaken in terms of accessibility.</p>

Step 7 – Summary of agreed actions resulting from the assessment

7.1 What action, by whom, will be undertaken as a result of the impact assessment.			
Impact/issue	Action to be taken	Person responsible	Timescale
Accessibility	Should these changes to weed control and/or grass cutting cause obstructions, an immediate review will need to be undertaken in terms of accessibility.	Head of Environmental Services	Ongoing

Step 8 - Monitor, review and improve

8.1	How will the impact of your proposal be monitored and improved upon going forward? Consider how will you identify the impact of activities on protected characteristics and other marginalised groups going forward? How will any learning and enhancements be capitalised on and embedded?		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council will undertake monitoring in respect of the weed contract for each spray. • The Council will monitor trial sites to assess the biodiversity impact of the proposals. • The Council will keep abreast of any developments relating to weed control treatments and there is provision to undertake trials in the future if new technologies emerge. • The Council will assess the trials to see if schemes can be rolled out in other areas in the future. 		

Caring for York's Roadside Verges – Statement for Landowners and Farmers

The Council publishes maps that show the extent of the adopted highway <https://www.york.gov.uk/RoadAdoption>, which means it is the Council's responsibility to maintain it.

The Council has a contract to cut a 1 metre wide strip of grass along the kerbside on grass verges of 'A' and 'B' roads. On other rural roads, grass cutting is restricted to priority locations, such as road junctions, bends and corners, areas where grass may obstruct the line of sight, leading to a hazard. The remaining areas in the verge are left long to help natural habitats to form which help to enhance biodiversity. Subject to weather conditions, the Council aim to cut this 1 metre wide strip of grass in rural areas twice per year; the first cut is in June/July and the second cut in September/October.

All vegetation within the adopted highway, including verges, are the responsibility of the Highway Authority who can determine how it should be maintained. Trees in hedges and boundaries are usually the responsibility of the landowner/occupier whose property abounds the highway. Trees on land adjoining the adopted highway are the responsibility of the owner/occupier but the Highway Authority has a duty, and powers of enforcement, to ensure that such trees do not endanger the highway or its users.

Some farmers and landowners, across the local authority area, mow grass verges but there are no specific arrangements in place which cover this. The Council recognises that farmers and landowners play an important role in the management of field edges, of which roadside verges are an integral part. Sensitive management ensures that these important wildlife habitats are maintained in good condition and we are keen to work with farmers and landowners to help the Council meet its climate, environmental and flood management policy objectives and to manage verges in an environmentally sensitive and responsible way, to maximise natural habitats and enhance biodiversity.

Below we outline some draft recommendations for roadside verge management. We commit to consulting with farmers and landowners during Spring 2024, to draw on the experience and knowledge that farmers and landowners bring, and to co-develop a robust set of guidelines.

Draft guidelines

- Only cut verges when necessary. Removing arisings will help to create a suitable environment for wildflowers and increase the wildlife value of verges.
- Leave a 1 metre uncut strip along a boundary/hedge edge to provide refuge for wildlife and encourage natural habitats to form.
- Allowing thick hedges to flower and fruit provides birds with nest sites and winter food. Uncut hedges also provide essential shelter for overwintering insects and their larval young. Rotational management can help support this.

- Avoid cutting all hedgerows at once. Consider a 3 to 5 year rotation to allow flowers and berries to grow in alternate sections.
- Avoid or reduce the use of herbicides (spot spray only).
- Do not cut hedges between 1st March and August (bird nesting season).
- Avoid driving on verges, especially in wet conditions when machinery may rut the verge.

Some areas of verge are being actively managed for biodiversity and climate resilience, with wildflower management and/or tree planting. The Council will install signage to alert farmers and landowners to areas of wildflower management and ask that these areas are left un-mowed. Trees will be demarked using tree guards. Care needs to be taken when mowing or flailing near trees. No trees are to be removed without consultation with the Council first. We welcome farmers and landowners adopting sections of the verge and extending the wildflower and tree planting programme.