



TRAFFORD
COUNCIL

Weed Control Programme 2024

Review and Proposed Way Forward

Trafford Council's Sustainability Commitment

As part of our commitment to reduce the use of glyphosate agreed by the Executive in June 2020 [Report \(trafford.gov.uk\)](https://trafford.gov.uk)

- Trafford now only hard surface spray the highway / Town Centre's once a year reducing glyphosate by 50% in these areas.
- Weeds are sprayed with a low toxicity herbicide.
- The herbicide is a foliar-applied, translocated herbicide product, for the control of annual and perennial weeds.

We have also introduced an 'Opting-Out' and self-weeding scheme

- If you or your community want to adopt the tree pits on a stretch of frontage in your area, to plant them with flowering plants, you can request that they are not sprayed providing that the community agree to their ongoing maintenance and weeding.
- If all Residents on the street agree, they can also request to opt out of routine weed spraying in their street provided that the residents remove weeds in those streets themselves.

Moving from two highway weed sprays to one

Year	Volume (Litres)
2018	4400
2019	4400
2020	2200
2021	2200
2022	2200

- Annual quantities of Glyphosate used over the past 5 years reduced by 50% on highway.
- Weeds are sprayed with a low toxicity herbicide Glyphosate.
- Area covered approximately 800km of highway
- Although we have chosen to continue to use chemicals as a way of controlling weeds, they are used only in a minimal spot spray and in highly targeted manner

Trafford Council's Sustainability Commitment

We have now stopped weed spraying in all public parks, green spaces and cemeteries...

- We are looking to introduce more wildflower, meadow areas and long grass regimes to encourage bees and other wildlife.
- This means these spaces may now look a little different.
- The council has not completely stopped using chemicals to control weeds in green spaces as part of its strategy to control invasive weeds such as Japanese knotweed that need specialist control.
- We will continue to review our long-term strategic plans on controlling invasive weeds and as a Council we have reduced the amount of chemical weed control to date.
- Stopping the use of glyphosate in parks and green spaces in addition to one spray on highway has reduced our overall total glyphosate usage by 70%.

Alternatives to spraying

Due to Trafford's commitment to environmental sustainability we have and will continue to research and trial alternative options to chemical application in anticipation of glyphosate being no longer available for use.

Weed brush machine.



Hot water weed control equipment for hard surface use.



Weed Control Programme Purpose

Weed control of the highway is primarily undertaken to prevent longer term damage to hard surfaces and infrastructure including footpaths, road surfaces and drainage systems.

- Trafford is responsible for weed control on roads, footways and paved areas on all adopted roads
- We have an annual weed spraying programme where we treat key areas of our **adopted** highway network.
- These areas include channels, the top of kerbs, the back of footways and alleyways (where it borders a wall or fence) and footpaths.
- Treatments usually only work on established plants and won't stop new weeds from growing in the locations we treat.
- We use Glyphosate to treat most weeds.
- Glyphosate is still considered safe if used under manufacturer's instructions and by trained personnel.



Weed Control Programme Timelines

The programme typically takes around two or three months to complete subject to weather conditions

- The programme is planned to start in mid-May/June each year as the treatment is only effective in dry weather.
- Rain and wet conditions may cause delays to the spraying programme and can change the locations that are treated.
- It is estimated that in any typical year the programme will take around 12 weeks to complete, however current and more recent wet weather conditions can mean that the programme can take much longer to complete.
- In previous years with 2 sprays the first spray would commence in April-May and a second spray would follow in August-September
- Treatment of weeds with 2 sprays tackles weeds when they are smaller and less visible
- Treatment with 1 spray can mean that weeds in certain areas will be larger and more widespread before being treated





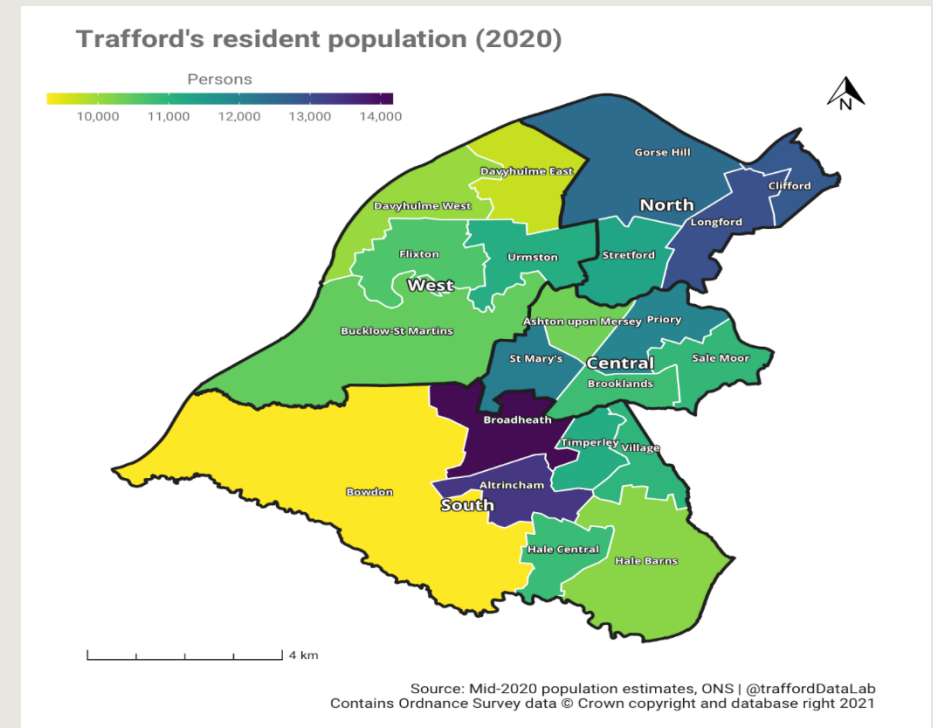
Weed spraying programme undertaken by Amey on behalf of the One Trafford Partnership has always started in the **North of the Borough.**

With 2 sprays weeds were not as visible and regrowth can be tackled on a second spray with less visible reshew of weeds in any given season

Review of Weeding Programme 2023

Spread across Trafford's 21 wards, Weed spraying started at Stretford and Humphrey Park in the North and finished at Hale Barns and Timperley in the South.

- The Council's client team works closely with operational colleagues within AMEY.
- Operational decision-making is made by jointly considering how best to manage and communicate the programme of works as it moves across the Borough.
- Trafford Data Lab supports decision-making in Trafford by revealing patterns in data through visualisation.
- This informed the decision to start in the North has been based on density of residential areas and length of highway in those areas.



North Trafford



Stretford and Humphrey Park.

Stretford is a densely populated ward.

Old Trafford.

Old Trafford is a small and densely populated ward. Physically it is characterised by dense residential areas of Victorian terraced housing and a diverse range of housing stock

Gorse Hill and Cornbrook.

This is the northern most ward in Trafford. It is the third largest ward in area size and contains most of Trafford Park Industrial Estate.

Lostock and Barton.

The ward is home to the Trafford Centre, separated from the residential areas by the M60,

South Trafford

Altrincham

Altrincham is a sub-regional shopping centre, and Trafford's largest town. It's at the hub of south Manchester's modern transport infrastructure, complemented by an integrated rail, Metrolink and bus Interchange. It also acts as the commercial centre for the area, providing extensive office accommodation.

Bowdon

Bowdon is the largest ward in Trafford and is a combination of several small, rural villages surrounded by open countryside. Bowdon is a semi-rural ward and has a low population density.

Hale

Hale is a densely populated ward located to the south-east of Altrincham town centre. The heart of the ward is Hale village which enjoys a good variety of independent shops and fashionable bars and restaurants.

Hale Barns and Timperley South

Hale Barns and Timperley south ward contains a large amount of agricultural land .





The residents and roads in the **South of Trafford** are now considered at a disadvantage as a result of only one weed spray per season as **these wards are visited last.**

It is often **October** that the Programme **finally reaches the South.**

Contractor Procurement and Challenges

Weed treatment programmes can be subject to delays when contractor procurement is delayed or when contractors are unavailable.....

- As a team, we intend to have contractors procured and agreed between end of January to early March.
- We look to agree for the programme to start in May, with early June being the latest date.
- It has always been a challenge to procure contracts for this work due to the reduced volume of work that is required across the borough.
- Other Council's volume can be more than double in size hence can secure contracts much more easily in a competitive arena.
- Due to national reductions in weed spraying programmes availability of contractors has also reduced.



Looking Ahead

It is the intentions of the One Trafford Partnership to work towards an alternative approach...

- Teams are to start in both the North and South of the Borough **at the same time**.
- Both teams will be **working towards the centre** as the programme progresses.
- One team starting in the North working towards the West.
- One team starting in the South working towards Central.
- We believe this will allow for different deployment strategies to be developed as the work progresses through the Borough, i.e. Town centres could be sprayed as a cluster group.



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Looking Ahead

- Despite significant media publications about Glyphosate, the current stance in legislation and guidance from the UK's relevant regulatory bodies is that the product is deemed to be safe and efficacious for use as a herbicide and is licensed in the UK until December 2025 for both food production and treatment of broad-leaved weeds in the public realm.
- However, academic studies such as Tarazona et al (2017) suggest that the positive implications of reducing Glyphosate could include benefits such as healthier populations of invertebrates, birds and mammals including bees (and other pollinators) which are fundamental to the health of ecosystems.
- It is considered more appropriate to set a performance led programme for weed control rather than a programme which looks to increase the number and volume of chemical applications.
- Increasing the number of weed spray visits would have a detrimental impact on the environment and would require increase in revenue to support such a change.



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Re-wilding initiatives

Re-wilding and use of Parks, Green Spaces and Verges for wildflower meadows, community gardens and increased tree planting is being rolled out

Meadow areas in Parks – in collaboration with Friends Groups some parks have had areas converted by re-wilding with the introduction of differential mowing in and around tree planted areas.

Rewilding and wildflower meadows are also being trialled on grass verges with some examples for 2025 being looked at including:

- Bemrose Ave – some of the central grassy area.
- Richmond Road / the Mount – there's a couple of green areas both sides of the junction onto the Mount from the A56.
- Stamford St / Stamford New Road junction green space.