

Resident Questions for Housing Area Panel

Department	Environment
Date question raised	28/06/2022
Date of Area Panel	17/08/2022
Area in city	North
Star rating applied by residents	2 star – local area issue
Deadline for officer response	25/07/2022
Name of officer responding	Tomas Szalma
Officer job title	Lead Operations Manager • City Environment (Cityclean & Cityparks)
Title of Question:	Weeds on Pavements
Issue:	Weeds are growing along the pavements.
Background:	(None)
Action requested by residents:	When will pavements have weeds removed in North area?
Officer Response:	Tomas Szalma
Officer contact details:	Tomas.Szalma@brighton-hove.gov.uk
Response:	<p>The council ended the use of Glyphosate for weedkilling on hard surfaces in 2019. This followed agreement from Labour, Greens as well as Conservatives at the ETS committee. It was made clear as part of the discussions that this would result in more visible weeds. However, we do appreciate that there are more weeds on the pavements than we'd hope there to be at present– and that we need to be ensuring that the weeds and tree base growth does not cause a problem for mobility issues.</p> <p>The city council has been hard at work trying to find solutions. We started to try and recruit way back in January but the city council has managed to recruit only nine of the 26 seasonal staff we would normally take on to deal with the increased amount of weeding needed during the spring and summer months.</p> <p>As many of our seasonal staff used to come from European countries for the summer, the ability of European nationals to work in the UK after Brexit, alongside the pandemic, is continuing to have an impact on our recruitment.</p>

All our street cleaning staff who work on foot rounds are weeding when they can. We are having difficulty getting the equipment we would like to improve the efficiency of weed removal. We have equipment on order that was due to be with us weeks ago but has been delayed. This includes a small vehicle that can remove pavement weeds and which is due to arrive in August.

The city council is taking the following actions, including using the budget allocated:

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- We have received our delivery of low vibration Strimmers, and these will be a useful tool to help tackle and manage the weed problem around Brighton and Hove. However it should be noted that the weeds will be noticeable again in 3 to 4 weeks, but we still believe that the Strimmers will make a substantial difference in reducing the weed around Brighton and Hove. The Strimmers were originally due to be delivered in February but due to the global supply chain issues these were delayed.
- We have extended the use of contractors and we have two teams of contractors to focus on weed removal
- We also have tree basal sprouts (tree whiskers) emanating from trees and tree stumps which some residents report as weeds but need to be dealt with by arborists. We are currently under resourced and we have not been on top of these as we should be as a result, and this has been further exacerbated by our staff and our contractors needing to prioritise work to stop the spread of Elm disease. We do have a team of contractors working on cutting back tree whiskers prioritising those causing a potential hazard or restricting access. For verges and other grassed areas, we currently have 2 contractors working to help with mowing. Recruitment is ongoing and we continue to push for agency staff.
- We have ordered brushes to adapt one of our sweepers for larger pavement areas – this should be in action in August.
- We are looking at a range of options to improve our chances of recruitment.
- We are offering overtime to any operational staff in City Environmental Management to focus on weeding
- We will be promoting voluntary and community group weeding and provide advice, tools and support.

Some of the context to what is going on is explained here in this information: <https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/news/2022/tackling-weeds-our-pavements>

Specific Action:

Action:

To continue to make improvements to weed management

Timeline:

Start date: Ongoing

End date: ongoing

