

## **Discontinue Use of Pesticides on ECDC playgrounds**

### **Council Notes:**

1. That ECDC, through its trading company ECTC, ~~uses~~ has limited and carefully controlled use of herbicide and germination retarding chemicals on its own playgrounds for chemical weed control, limiting use to once or twice a year, early in the morning, under calm weather conditions by trained professionals using a recognised industry standard for minimizing immediate drift and public contact.

2. In comparison to ~~sidewalks pavements~~ and marketplaces, playgrounds are areas where children will be in close contact ~~to~~ with the ground and touch the floor. Especially smaller children will touch faces and put hands in the mouth.

23. That children are particularly vulnerable to chemical exposure due to their developing physiology and lower body weight, and herbicide and pesticide exposure can cause serious health issues.

34. That many playground surfaces are hardstanding — tarmac, concrete, or rubber — on which herbicides such as glyphosates cannot break down biologically through soil microorganisms, causing them to persist or wash directly into surface drains untreated.

5. That allowing weeds to establish roots in rubber playground surfaces breaks apart the rubber, creating trip hazards. That mechanical wire brushes, weed rippers, or aggressive hand weeding can tear polyurethane binders holding the rubber crumb together.

6. That several UK local authorities, such as Hackney, Lambeth, ~~Southward~~ Southwark and Guildford have ~~already largely~~ adopted pesticide-free policies for public spaces frequented by children, mainly using integrated pest management and non-chemical alternatives, noting that these councils continue to use pesticides for invasive weed control.

7. That in the UK glyphosate remains approved for use until 15<sup>th</sup> December 2026 pending the outcome of a full regulatory review by the Health and Safety Executive. The outcome of the review is expected to be announced in December 2026.

### **Council Believes:**

1. That the Council has a duty of care to protect the health and safety of children using its own managed playgrounds and should balance the risks involved to maintain safe and accessible playgrounds.

2. That the precautionary principle should apply where credible evidence links a practice to potential harm to children.

3. That wherever practical and effective ~~and affordable~~ non-chemical alternatives to pest and weed control ~~exist and are in use by other local authorities should be used.~~

4. ~~That the use of herbicides on hardstanding playground surfaces presents an unnecessary and avoidable risk.~~

### **Council Resolves:**

1. To request ECTC to continue to review and limit the use of chemical weed control in playground areas through an integrated weed management approach.

2. To request ECTC to provide a report to the Shareholder Committee setting out what course of action will be taken if the Health and Safety Executive review of glyphosate limits or prohibits the use of glyphosate based products.

~~To request ECTC to discontinue the use of synthetic chemical pesticides, herbicides, and insecticides on or within 10 metres of all playground facilities that it maintains on behalf of the Council within the district and consider adoption of integrated pest management or non-chemical alternatives in playground areas.~~

~~2. To commission a review of the current grounds maintenance contract to ensure compliance with this policy by the next contract renewal date.~~

~~3. To report annually to the relevant committee on compliance and the alternatives in use.~~

Proposer - Cllr Sharp

Seconder - Cllr Goldsack