

QUESTION 2

COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 21 JULY 2022

Question to Cllr David Williams Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport

By Cllr Oates

Question

Tamworth is in a unique situation being almost completely urban and without many rural roads, this means almost all roads have kerb stones.

Each year we see weeds growing up to 2ft high in these kerbs, not only are they unsightly but their roots will be creating gaps in between kerb stones and slabs which will fill with water then freeze and then become an expensive pothole or broken kerb stone/slab. These are our assets to maintain, so could the portfolio holder look to support more weed suppression in urban areas particularly Tamworth, in order to reduce future highways repair costs?

Reply

As part of the new vision and investment in highways we will be reviewing services that both improve the condition of our road network and have environmental benefits for our communities throughout Staffordshire.

Current weed control operations are undertaken to mitigate any structural damage to the highway infrastructure and improve visibility at key locations. However, there are number of factors that limit the effectiveness of this routine maintenance service.

To meet previous MTFS savings, the frequency of weed treatment was reduced to just once each growing season. Added to this, the chemicals used are environmentally regulated and the treatment is only effective on growing plants. This effectiveness can also be reduced if it rains after treatment.

Several alternative treatment methods do exist, some being more expensive and less effective at killing the weed at source. However, we are currently investigating new technologies, their cost to benefit ratios and what schemes can be employed to support our climate emergency ambitions.

However, a particularly useful method of weed prevention is through regular road sweeping activity. Therefore, part of any future weed treatment solution will include looking for support from local councils to maintain, and in some cases possibly increase, the amount of local road sweeping activity.