

Milly Southworth

From: Lisa Grigg (Communities Support Assistant) <Lisa.Grigg@cornwall.gov.uk>
Sent: 31 March 2026 17:00
To: Torpoint T C (Clerk, Milly Southworth)
Cc: Councillor Rob Parsonage; Councillor Kate Ewert
Subject: Public Realm Improvement and Re-introduction of Weed Treatment
Attachments: 1. All Member Briefing - Public Realm Improvement 06-03-26.pdf; 2. Public Realm Improvement and Weed Management FAQ.pdf; 4. Draft Town & Parish Council Weed Opt-out agreement.pdf; 5. Town and Parish Council Opt-out guidance.pdf; 6. Town & Parish Council Opt-out form.pdf; WEED TORPOINT.pdf

Information Classification: PUBLIC

Circulation: Clerks of Town & Parish Councils, South East Cornwall Community Area Partnership
 c.c. Cornwall Councillors and Chair & Vice-Chair of CAP

Dear Colleague,

Public Realm Improvement and Re-introduction of Weed Treatment

Cornwall Council's Cabinet has instructed Cornwall Highways & Environment Services to begin a new programme of weed treatment and public realm improvements across Cornwall. This decision follows evidence of declining standards since routine weed management stopped in 2013, resulting in increasing complaints, narrowing footways, damaged surfaces, and perceived reduced community pride.

We have reviewed options and have directed Cormac Solutions Limited to carry out the following on the adopted highway network:

- **Targeted manual and mechanical weed removal** on the very worst-affected estates (one per CAP)
- **Carefully controlled, limited chemical treatment** only on the urban highway network where weeds are present, using modern Controlled Droplet Application methods to minimise quantity and footprint.
- **Improvements to amenity and environmental areas**, including enhanced cutting and better management of urban verges.
- **Partnership working with local councils and volunteers**, supporting local pride and community involvement.

Please note this directive does not apply to private areas or areas maintained via the waste contract.

The aim of this recovery programme is to restore safe, accessible streets and deliver consistent standards across Cornwall. We want to support strong, safe, clean and well-maintained communities and to ensure Cornwall's neighbourhoods reflect the pride residents have in where they live.

The default position is that all Cornwall Council maintained areas are opted in, this will include all adopted highway within urban areas as it was in 2013. An opt-out option is available for Town and Parish Councils that wish to manage their areas without chemical treatment, provided they can meet the required standards and protect asset integrity.

In the first instance Town and Parishes should send responses and Opt-out forms before the **20th of April 2026** to your Community Link Officers (CLO) who will collate responses and feed this information through to Cornwall Highways who will then pick up further contact.

We appreciate this is short notice, given the operational need to commence weed treatment at the beginning of May. However, if meeting this deadline is not possible because you will not be able to consider this at a council meeting before this date, please can you let your CLO know the earliest you will be able to make a decision.

Please disregard this correspondence if you already undertake weed management on behalf of Cornwall Council under a previous agreement.

Please find enclosed (in suggested order of review):

1. The all-member briefing provided to members on the 6th of March 2026.
2. The Public Realm Improvement and Weed Management FAQ
3. The 2013 maps which will be used for the first treatment (NOTE: **Green** = new treatment area, **Red** = area as treated via the Waste contract in 2013.) We have attached the maps relevant to your parish area.
4. A draft copy of the Town and Parish Council Opt-Out Agreement
5. Town and Parish Council Opt-Out Guidance
6. Town and Parish Council Opt-Out Form

Yours sincerely,
Dhywgh hwi yn hwir

Cornwall Council
Connectivity and Environment Service

Circulated by Localism team

Lisa Grigg | Communities Support Assistant | Localism Team
Cornwall Council | Communities Service | Community Wellbeing Directorate
lisa.grigg@cornwall.gov.uk | Tel: 01872 322222 and say my name
Localism, Cornwall Council, New County Hall, Treyew Road, Truro, TR1 3AY
www.cornwall.gov.uk | 'Onen hag oll'

This e-mail and attachments are intended for above named only and may be confidential. If they have come to you in error you must take no action based on them, nor must you copy or show them to anyone; please e-mail us immediately at enquiries@cornwall.gov.uk. Please note that this e-mail may be subject to recording and/or monitoring in accordance with the relevant legislation and may need to be disclosed under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 or the Environmental Information Regulations 2004. Security Warning: It is the responsibility of the recipient to ensure that this e-mail and any attachments are virus free. The Authority will not accept liability for any damage caused by a virus.

Opt-out Guidance for Town and Parish Councils

1. What's happening?

Cornwall Council's Cabinet has instructed the Highways and Environment Service to improve weed management and the overall condition of the public realm. Over the next three years, our contractor, Cormac Solutions Ltd, will deliver a recovery programme that includes:

- Spot mechanical or hand clearance in areas with significant weed growth
- Enhanced environmental maintenance to better manage urban green spaces within housing developments
- Targeted, carefully controlled chemical treatment on urban highways only, and only where weeds are present

Further details are provided in the enclosed Member Briefing and FAQ document.

All town and parish councils are 'opted in' by default unless an opt-out application is submitted.

2. Can we opt out of Cornwall Council's treatment programme?

Yes — but only for whole parish areas and where a town or parish council can demonstrate that it can maintain standards equivalent to or better than those planned by Cornwall Council.

Councils choosing to opt out will need to enter into an agreement similar to existing grass-cutting agreements.

Please note opting out of chemical treatment also means opting out of the proposed spot mechanical clearance & enhanced environmental maintenance.

3. Will funding be provided if we opt out?

Cornwall Council will provide funding equivalent to the cost of chemical treatment that would otherwise have been applied locally — provided the Town or Parish council demonstrates through the application process that it will deliver an equivalent level of treatment and customer complaint management.

For 2026/27, the expected contribution is £343.45 per km.

Additional costs, such as increased manual clearance, must be funded by the Town or Parish Council.

Please note that if councils intend to deliver a lower standard than Cornwall Council (2 effective treatments per year and arising waste collected) they will not receive funding.

4. How do we apply to opt out?

We recognise that time is limited ahead of the planned start date. For this reason, we propose an initial notification with a temporary hold, followed by a formal agreement process.

Initial notification – due by 20th April 2026: submitting the enclosed opt-out form by this date will place a temporary hold on Cornwall Council carrying out treatment in your area.

Formal agreement – due by 20th May 2026: to confirm the opt-out for the 2026/27 financial year, councils must submit an operational plan by this date including:

- a marked-up plan showing streets that will be maintained by the Town/Parish
- proposed method(s) of treatment
- expected frequency of visits – minimum of 2
- how weed-related complaints will be managed
- how promptly issues will be addressed
- evidence of trained staff or contractors
- appropriate insurance
- details of safe working procedures

Submitting this information will extend the temporary hold while both parties work to finalise the agreement.

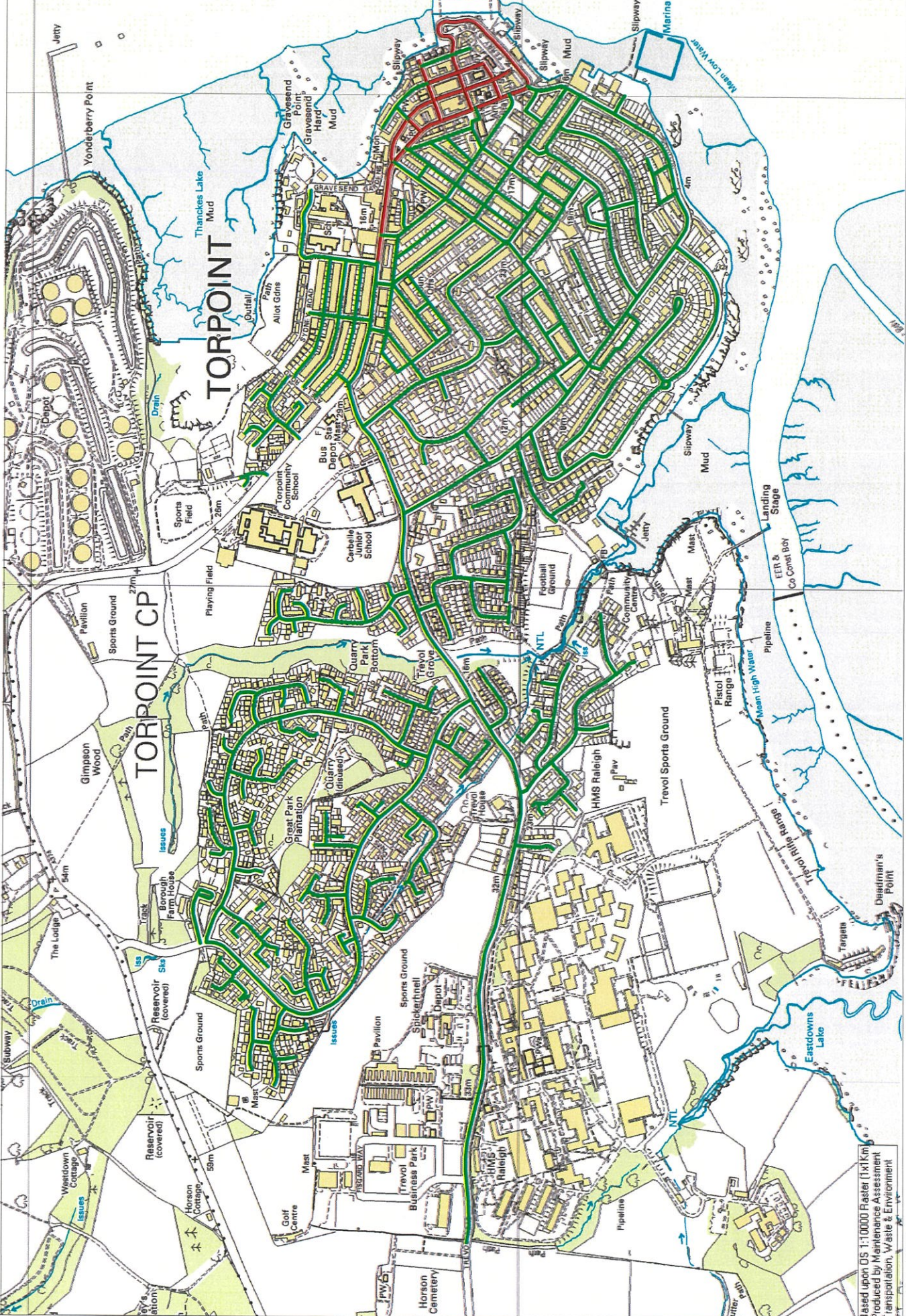
Following review, we will draft the formal opt-out agreement. An example draft is attached, though still subject to legal review. Once signed, the agreement will apply to the full financial year.

5. What if we cannot deliver what we are committed to?

We will work with councils to help improve performance where needed.

However, if standards fall below the agreed level and do not improve despite support, the opt-out will be withdrawn for the following season and the area will return to Cornwall Council's treatment programme.





Scale 1:7000

Based upon OS 1:10000 raster (1x1Km) © Crown copyright and database rights 2013 Ordnance Survey 100045647
 Produced by Maintenance Assessment
 Transportation, Waste & Environment

