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From: Mary Gosling <Mary.Gosling@cornwall.gov.uk>
Sent: 17 September 2026 16:44
To: CornwallALC Enquiries
Subject: Key Update: Weed and Public Realm Management

Information Classification: CONTROLLED

Dear Local Councils,

Key Update: Weed and Public Realm Management

Earlier this year many CALC member councils raised concerns about Cornwall Council's weed management approach and future public realm arrangements. Since then, CALC and Cornwall Council have been working proactively with member councils to help shape a more practical and locally responsive solution.

Following the successful Public Realm Working Group held at County Hall and facilitated by CALC & Cornwall Council in August, Cornwall Council officers have confirmed that positive progress is being made on two key areas.

1. 2026/27 Hotspot Prioritisation Programme

Local Councils will shortly be invited to identify and rank weed-management hotspots for treatment from a Cornwall-wide long list, as well as nominate one additional location within their parish for consideration.

This exercise is intended to gather information and local feedback rather than act as a formal consultation. Councils will therefore be given four weeks to nominate a single representative, ideally the Clerk, to complete a short online form on behalf of the council. Further information to follow directly from Cornwall Council in due course.

2. Service Level Agreements from 2027/28

There is continuing discussion around the potential development of a two-year Service Level Agreement (SLA) style arrangement for public realm services from 2027 onwards.

This approach was a key recommendation of the CALC-led Working Group, which brought together Cornwall Council officers and representatives from town and parish councils to explore future options. The emerging model would provide councils with greater local choice over how and when weeds are managed in their area, supported by clearer mapping information and, subject to future decisions, a funding contribution linked to services undertaken.

While details of public realm funding for 2027/28 and beyond are still being determined through Cornwall Council's internal budget-setting processes, officers advised that work is continuing to explore potential future delivery models and that further correspondence to councils may be issued during the autumn.

Current indications suggest that updated parish-level maps could be issued by October. These will then need to be refined by the highway service with input from town and parish councils to determine the actual

treatment area, with indicative funding rates per kilometre available by January. Funding is, however, likely to be similar to the £343.45 per km of actual treatment previously proposed. Whilst this is not a definitive figure in time for budget setting, it should give councils sufficient information to estimate likely costs, determine whether they may wish to participate in the scheme, and make provision in their 2027/28 budget.

The proposed approach has similarities to the Local Maintenance Partnership (LMP). An agreed programme of work would be undertaken by the local council, with Cornwall Council providing an associated funding contribution. As with the LMP, that funding is unlikely to meet the full cost of delivery, particularly where more labour-intensive methods are used. Councils would therefore retain the flexibility to enhance the agreed standard locally, with any additional costs being met by the council itself. In simple terms, the arrangement would provide local control alongside a financial contribution towards delivery.

Working Together

CALC met last week with Cornwall Council officers Dan Evans and Steve Foster and was encouraged by the constructive and collaborative discussion. The meeting represents another important step towards resolving a significant issue raised by member councils earlier this year.

We would like to thank everyone who has contributed to this work, particularly those councils that participated in the Working Group and shared their experience, insight and ideas. CALC will continue to work with Cornwall Council officers and elected members, including the designated Cabinet Member for Public Realm, Cllr Loic Rich, to ensure town and parish councils have a strong voice in shaping future arrangements.

We know this issue has been a concern for many member councils. While there is still work to do, the progress made so far shows the value of local councils speaking with a collective voice through CALC.

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My normal working days are Monday – Thursday.



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