



# Northumberland County Council

All County Councillors &  
All Town & Parish Clerks

**Your ref:**  
**Our ref:** Weedcontrolbluedye1  
**Enquiries to:** Greg Gavin  
**Email:** greg.gavin@northumberland.gov.uk  
**Tel direct:** (01670) 622278  
**Date:** 17 April 2018

Dear Councillor/Clerk

## Weed Control

I am writing to inform you about improvements to the way we tackle weeds in towns and villages in Northumberland.

The county has a well-deserved reputation as a green and pleasant place to live and visit and it is important to do all we can to keep it looking its best.

In recent years, most weed spraying treatments on hard landscape areas have been contracted out. However this year, the County Council is employing ten extra staff members across our Local Area Councils to ensure the in house teams have the capacity to undertake the work themselves.

The County Council is investing £125,000 in this improvement programme which includes adding a harmless blue coloured dye to the treatment so the public can see for themselves where has been treated.

The blue dye being added is completely harmless and will allow the teams to see exactly where they have sprayed, potentially reducing wasted or overuse of spray and ensure that any areas that have been missed will be immediately apparent.

While it is not possible to prevent weed growth altogether, County Council staff know their own areas and can be more responsive to local weather conditions, ensuring improvements to the quality and coverage of the spraying operation.

The public will also be able to see where has been sprayed and as the chemical itself can take up to two weeks to kill the weeds, the addition of the blue dye will remove any uncertainty about whether or not an area has been treated. The equipment used to treat weeds in some road channels means that the blue dye cannot be added but in areas where road meets pavement there will be a white residue left instead of a blue one.

### Place Directorate

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The dye itself is water soluble, does not affect the environment and also breaks down in the sun so it will not be visible for more than the 10 to 14 days it takes to kill the weeds.

Please get in touch with your local team if you would like further information about this new approach to weed control; the contact details for your Neighbourhood Services Area Manager can be found below.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Greg Gavin', written in a cursive style.

Greg Gavin  
**Head of Neighbourhood Services**