

CABINET – 13 SEPTEMBER 2018

Written Question from Ms Tanja Rebel of Cowes to Cllr Ian Ward Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Transport

QUESTION

As the PFI contract with Island Roads is currently being re-negotiated at considerable cost and as the Council has expressed green ambitions, can the Isle of Wight Council please make sure to include the following in the renewed contract?

- A ban on the use of glyphosate and other harmful chemicals in parks, verges, hedges as well as other public spaces. The recent court case in the US regarding the carcinogenic effects of glyphosate should make this an absolute priority. Kindly see: <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2018/aug/10/monsanto-trial-cancer-dewayne-johnson-ruling>

RESPONSE

The council is not re-negotiating the Highways PFI contract with Island Roads but is working with the Service Provider on a savings programme to deliver savings as part of the council's wider savings initiative. Some of the changes to the highway services may result in changes to some service standards. All chemicals that are used by Island Roads, including those containing glyphosate, are approved for use to control weeds on the public highway.

- Proper tree protection so that iconic trees like the Umbrella Tree in East-Cowes are not chopped down as a cost-saving exercise and so that trees in general are not removed to make room for new-build, new roads or 5G technology. The latter will also be harmful to humans, wildlife and plant crops. Kindly see: <https://ehtrust.org/wp-content/uploads/Scientist-5G-appeal-2017.pdf>

RESPONSE

Island Roads is contracted on behalf of the council to keep the public highway network safe and this includes reducing the risk to members of the public that may be presented by diseased trees. The umbrella tree in East Cowes has been identified as a diseased tree following a specialist tree inspection and has been identified as presenting a risk to members of the public. Island Roads is currently working with interested parties to identify a solution which meets local wishes whilst trying to minimise the risk to the public.

- Clear specifications for the Colour Temperature of street lighting - maximum 2700K instead of the current 5700K - so that the Island finally gets lighting which is benign to Public Health, Ecology and Sky Glow. Kindly see: <https://gizmodo.com/the-switch-to-outdoor-led-lighting-has-completely-backf-1820652615>

RESPONSE

I would refer you to previous communications that you have had with the council and Island Roads on this matter. As previously advised, the council's position is that there is no definitive proven evidence which has yet to change the industry and/or British Standards that define the LED Street Lighting specification. It is generally agreed that until conclusive research is undertaken by an approved industry body and subsequently agreed by Government, the relevant standards and legislation will remain unchanged.