Transport Corridors

Pilot Pollinator Management
Motorway Networks

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Transport infrastructure Ireland
• All Ireland Guide

• TII, Iarnród Éireann, Translink, Dept of Infrastructure NI

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• No 9 Sector Specific Guide Series

• 21 Actions for Pollinators for the Transport Sector
• 5 year contract +2

• Now into 2nd generation contracts

• 21 Local Authority areas + 10 PPPs

• Area A chosen as it is a more visible/urban area with more established landscapes

**MMaRC = Motorway Maintenance and Renewal Contracts**
PILOT TEAM Area A

• TII Network Managers
• TII Landscape Architect
• Atkins MMAc Contract Managers
• Globalvia Jons MMAc Contractors
• Austen Associates, MMAc Landscape Architects

SCOPE OF INITIAL PILOT

• Grass Cutting
• Weed Spraying
ACTIONS 7 and 8

Delay first cut – date based programme rather than condition / height based programme

Reduce frequency of cutting to immediate verges

Reduce median cuts

SCOPE OF INITIAL PILOT

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Action 19
Reduce the use of Herbicides and Insecticides
Insecticides harm pollinators directly, but equally importantly, the use of herbicides can greatly reduce the wildflowers that pollinators depend on for food, making it hard for them to survive.
All pesticides should be avoided, unless in very specific circumstances, for instance, on hard surfaces for Health and Safety reasons or when dealing with invasive species.
ACTION 19

Team review of why areas were being sprayed – Safe functioning of the network or to look ‘tidy’?

Reduce frequency of spraying to tie into weed life cycles rather than contract requirements

SCOPE OF INITIAL PILOT

- Grass Cutting
- Weed Spraying

Reduce the use of pesticides (Herbicides, fungicides, insecticides)
ACTION 19

Team review of why areas were being sprayed – Safe functioning of the network or to look ‘tidy’?

Eg for safety inspections the vehicle containment systems need to be visible. Safety considerations.

Eg weed growth is not going to impact on the sign visibility/foundation/stability of the gantry.
ACTION 19

Reduce frequency of spraying to tie into weed germinating rather than contract times

There are obligations to control invasive and noxious weeds that needs further examination. Outside of this pilot scope.

SCOPE OF INITIAL PILOT

- Grass Cutting
- Weed Spraying
1. Grass cutting move from condition based maintenance to as per programme
   - Grass cutting commence 1st April (medians) and 15th April (verges and interchanges)
   - 2m strip only to be cut for immediate verge
   - Agreed trial medians cut only to pavement edge 2m
   - Non feature roundabouts to be given a 2m edge cut and central grass island cut once only per year

2. Weed spraying moved from contract requirements to target weed growing patterns
   - April / May to prevent weeds emerging
   - August / September to prevent weeds seeding
Pilot Results

(Decided to carry on with trial even with COVID 19 restrictions. But grass cutting did not actually commence until 20th April 2020 due to lockdown)
PRINCIPLES and ACTIONS
AGREED and ADOPTED

RESULTS of TRIAL

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- Covid late start did not cause grass to be unmanageable so agreed all areas commence 15th April next year.
- 5 timed cuts per year rather than condition is sufficient to keep the network maintained.

REVIEW OF INITIAL PILOT

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- Not all median areas were successful as depended on the width of medians. Review median cuts based on width.

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- Non Feature roundabouts cut to edge only.

**REVIEW OF INITIAL PILOT**

- Grass Cutting
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PRINCIPLES and ACTIONS AGREED and ADOPTED

2. Weed spraying moved from condition based maintenance to as per programme to target weed growing patterns

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RESULTS of TRIAL

- Weed spraying was carried out as agreed which resulted in a 26% like for like reduction in herbicide use compared to 2019.

- There was a clear increase in weed growth on the network. But no increase in complaints from the public or local officials (Covid?). Continue with this approach for the 2021 season.

REVIEW OF INITIAL PILOT

- Grass Cutting
- Weed Spraying
The volume of Ragwort removed in 2020 was far in excess of that removed any other year. Was the changed mowing a factor? Review 2021 volumes.

The 5th grass cut in 2020 was a full width grass cut. For 2021 this full cut will be moved to 3rd cut in June and the impact on Ragwort will be monitored.
Pollinator plan signs on M7 & M11

**Action 20:** Promote the aims of the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan when designing new linear transport schemes, and make staff aware of management actions for pollinators.
FAQs

What is TII’s Landscape Strategy?

TII landscapes are based on an ‘ecological design approach’ using native species (but not exclusively) and species with high ecological value. Our aim is to develop a functional, cost effective and healthy landscape that fits within the overall objectives of TII road and rail safety and performance. Our management approach in many areas, once the landscape has established, is a limited intervention and self-sustaining approach. For more information on TII’s landscape strategy for our road network, refer to Guidelines on the Implementation of Landscape Treatments on National Road Schemes in Ireland and A Guide to Landscape Treatments for National Road Schemes in Ireland.

Is TII promoting landscape management for our pollinators?

TII has collaborated with the All Ireland Pollinator Plan in developing a sector-specific guideline to improve the design and landscape management of our Transport Corridors for our pollinators but also for overall biodiversity. It is planned to implement the actions of the plan over the network on a phased basis. For example, as part of our grassland management, TII is committed to reducing the frequency of grass mowing in certain areas in order to enhance the value of our grass areas for wildlife and biodiversity. The Guide can be found at Pollinator Friendly Management of Transport Corridors.

Why aren’t there more wildflowers in TII unmown grass banks and verges?

TII grasslands are managed as self-sustaining meadows where the overall value of the grass areas for all biodiversity is considered. While some areas are managed specifically for wild flowers with annual cuts, most areas are managed as longer grass meadows. These require less frequent cuts, perhaps only one cut per three to five years. Although maybe not as colourful as wildflower areas, these grasslands support many species of insect and grasses and provide important undisturbed nesting sites, food sources and shelter.
THANK YOU

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