

CABINET 26 JULY 2011

ITEM 5a: WINTER PERFORMANCE TASK GROUP REPORT

Cabinet Member response to Winter Service Development for 2011/12 report

I want to personally thank Steve Renshaw, the task group and the highways team for this extensive report.

The additional £1M provided by the county council for the winter service was critical when we were again faced with unusually severe periods of ice and snow in November and December last year. I was very pleased to see how well the county services ran and the significant improvements in terms of communications.

I found the regular flow of information and twitter updates invaluable in keeping my local residents and businesses informed. It was also good to see so many residents and businesses out helping each other to get out and about during the bad weather.

Turning to more recent events, the hard work of May Gurney and the Highways team mean that we've been able to achieve real financial savings of £700,000 and still maintain the level of service. The savings give us an opportunity to further enhance the services we provide to our residents such as:

- Extend the P1 precautionary salting network by 172 kms (107 miles), helping to reach some of our more isolated communities
- Further increase our salt stocks, helping us cope with even the toughest winter
- Provide 40 tonnes of salt to our district and borough colleagues, helping to keep some key pavements and town centres clear
- Establish a new grit bin supply, enabling residents and local community groups to buy a grit bin for four years at a cost of just £1,000.
- Further increase our pool of farmers willing to help out in the toughest of weather conditions to 50.

Overall, I strongly support all the recommendations bar one, recommendation g – to remove grit bins scoring less than 100. This is a very emotive subject, so instead I propose that bins scoring less than 100 remain in situ, until they come to the end of their serviceable life and then they are removed. The local member will be informed and they, or their community may choose to fund a replacement.

So, I would like all councillors to familiarise themselves with the gritting routes and to make sure their local committees know which roads will be gritted and to help their residents prepare for bad weather. In September all county councillors will be provided with a hard copy of the gritting routes for their borough or district, which will also be published on the Internet. I urge county councilors to share this information with their residents, district, borough and parish colleagues.

ITEM 5.1

Once again. I would like to thank Councillor Renshaw, his task group, officers and May Gurney for their sterling work.

Ian Lake
Cabinet Member for Transport

APPROVAL OF SURREY PRELIMINARY FLOOD RISK ASSESSMENT

As part of the Flood Risk Regulations 2009, all Unitary Authorities and County Councils had been designated as Lead Local Flood Authorities and tasked with producing a Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment for their area. The Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment for Surrey will be submitted to the Environment Agency for inclusion in its River Catchment Basin Area Reports to the European Commission.

The Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment applies only to flooding from surface water, groundwater, ordinary watercourses and canals and does not include flooding from main rivers. The responsibility for managing and reducing river flooding remains with the Environment Agency. The Environment Agency is responsible for building flood defence schemes where funding is available, and works with Lead Local Flood Authorities (of which Surrey County Council is one) and local communities to identify local priorities and shape schemes accordingly.

The Flood Risk Assessment, which had been based on a set specification from Defra and the Environment Agency, had not identified any areas of indicative flood risk within Surrey. It was, however, noted that it was not possible to model flooding caused by factors unrelated to the geography of the area, such as sudden localised cloudbursts. Responsibility for potential flooding factors at a local level rested with the boroughs and districts. Co-ordinating work with the County Council, including an officer working group and encouraging links to the County's GIS database, was noted to be ongoing.

The Chairman expressed his concern that, although the County Council had met its flooding obligations, flooding from rivers was the responsibility of the Environment Agency. It was important that there was appropriate linkage between the two systems and so the Council would look to enter into discussions with the appropriate agencies to ensure that the different responsibilities tie up and there is a clear understanding in place.

RESOLVED:

That the Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment be agreed and confirmed to the Environment Agency by 19 August 2011 for inclusion in their River Catchment Basin Area Reports to the European Commission.

Reasons for decisions:

To comply with the statutory duty to produce a Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment Report.