



**LOCAL COMMITTEE RESPONSE
TO THE JOINT SCRUTINY REVIEW
OF THE SEVERE WINTER WEATHER**

**SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL
LOCAL COMMITTEE (GUILDFORD)**

23rd JUNE 2010

KEY ISSUE

To consider and comment on the joint report of the Safer and Stronger and Transportation Select Committees regarding the severe winter weather.

SUMMARY

Surrey County Council's Safer and Stronger and Transportation Select Committees undertook a joint scrutiny review to assess how services in Surrey responded to the severe winter weather between December 2009 and February 2010. Their report, amended as they agreed, is attached as **ANNEXE A**.

REPORT BY

SURREY ATLAS REF.

LOCAL HIGHWAYS MANAGER

N/A

GUILDFORD B.C. WARD (S)

COUNTY ELECTORAL DIVISION (S)

ALL

ALL

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is asked to agree:

- (i) that **ANNEX A** to this report be noted
- (ii) that any comments made by the Committee be passed to the Cabinet Member for Transport with a request that they be taken into consideration in any decision taken by the Cabinet on this issue.

INTRODUCTION

- 1 A report of the joint scrutiny review of severe winter weather was considered by a joint meeting of the County Council's Safer & Stronger and Transport Select Committees on 28 April 2010.
- 2 The following key points were raised during the discussion:
 - i. David Harmer spoke to the Committee to reflect some of the concerns of local parish councils. They agreed self-help was important and were willing to contribute, but felt resources would be required if there were additional expectations placed on them. Mr Harmer also questioned whether the Council made self-help possible.
 - ii. Some issues were raised in relation to the accuracy and Surrey context of the report's introduction and it was agreed that this would be reviewed.
 - iii. Members noted in relation to paragraph 10 that the emergency plans mentioned are in relation to all types of local risk, not just snow. It was suggested town and parish councils might not always be the most appropriate local mechanism. Community policing teams should also be seen as a resource for community support. Members felt that it was important that local members were kept informed of any discussions taking place with local groups.
 - iv. Paragraph 13 should be revised to reflect that schools were not praised for keeping open, but for their efforts to open when they had to meet exam requirements. More reference should also be made to the high priority that should be placed on keeping special schools open. Schools should be encouraged to develop their own emergency plans in consultation with the local community.
 - v. Members noted that the absence code referred to in paragraph 14 had since been rescinded by the Department for Children, Schools and Families.
 - vi. In relation to paragraph 20 it was noted that the problems with power companies had been escalated to regional level for discussion. The Cabinet Office had also been in discussion with the regulator.

- vii. It was noted that in times of emergency each head of service is responsible for making decisions affecting their service. Officers would keep the relevant cabinet member and if appropriate the Leader/ Deputy Leader informed of the latest position and consult them on decisions. Reference to cabinet members providing 'political guidance' was considered unnecessary. The Head of Surrey Highways reminded Members that in this instance, some decisions were taken nationally which overruled earlier decisions taken with Members.
- viii. Members felt that if salt stocks are to be given to District/Borough councils there should be a clear plan as to what they should do with it and that the local committee would be best placed to advise.
- ix. In relation to gritting vehicles and techniques, it was noted that this would be part of the new highways contract and it was anticipated that these issues would be explored during contract negotiations with potential suppliers advising on how they would carry out this work and supply appropriate vehicles.
- x. It was noted that no instruction for the removal of any grit bins had been given until a full review had been carried out. Officers felt that it was important for there to be some agreed criteria for their provision in order to inform discussions with local committees.

3 The joint Select Committee meeting resolved:

- (a) That the report of the joint scrutiny review of severe winter as set out at Annexe 1 to Item 5 be updated to reflect the comments outlined above and in particular the recommendations to be amended as follows:

Recommendation

- (a) A reference to neighbourhood watch schemes to be added
- (j) Add a final sentence "The advice of local Members should be sought through local committees showing maps of locations of bins."
- (m) Add to the final sentence "...through local committees.
- (n) "mobilise" to be replaced by "co-ordinate".
- (p) Delete "to give political guidance if required."
- (q) Delete "definitively".
- (t) Replace with "That an updated and revised Winter Service Plan be considered by the Transportation Select Committee and the local committees before winter 2010.
- (w & x) to be combined to read "As part of the contract negotiations for the new highways contract the techniques to clear ice/snow and the number, type, control, manning and deployment of gritting vehicles should be reviewed."

Add additional recommendations

- All schools to be encouraged to develop their own snow and ice plans involving the local community.
- That gritting routes should prioritise access to schools on steep hills or a short diversion from existing routes following consultation with local committees.

(b) That the amended report be shared with local committees and their views appended to the final report to Cabinet.

4 The revised report is attached as **ANNEX A**.

5 The matter will be discussed again at the meeting of the Cabinet on 13 July 2010. In the meantime the matter is being reported to all Local Committees, which are invited to comment on the attached report. Any comments made will be passed to the Cabinet Member for Transport.

FINANCIAL AND VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS

6 This report has no immediate financial implications; the implications of any decisions taken by the Cabinet will be reported at the appropriate time.

CONSULTATIONS

7 This report seeks the views of the Local Committee in order that the Cabinet may take these into account.

EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

8 This report has no implications for equality and diversity.

CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

9 This report has no implications for crime and disorder.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

10 Any views expressed by the Committee will be reported to the Cabinet to be taken into consideration at its meeting on 13 July 2010.

LEAD OFFICER DEREK LAKE
LOCAL HIGHWAYS MANAGER (GUILDFORD)

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BACKGROUND PAPERS: **ANNEX A**, attached
