



**OFFICER REPORT TO LOCAL COMMITTEE  
(GUILDFORD)**

**UPDATE ON WINTER MAINTENANCE ARRANGEMENTS**

**22 SEPTEMBER 2011**

**KEY ISSUE**

To update the Committee on the Winter Plan for 2011/12 which sets out provisions for keeping roads and footways accessible during winter weather.

**SUMMARY**

The Council has again reviewed its Winter Plan following a second consecutive severe winter. This report summarises revised arrangements for preventative salting, clearing footways, the provision of grit bins and snow clearance. The Council also encourages self-help and supports residents and businesses taking appropriate action in their own neighbourhoods.

**OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS**

**The Local Committee (Guildford) is asked to agree to:**

- (i) Note the revised winter maintenance arrangements for Guildford.
- (ii) Comment on the proposed precautionary salting networks and suggest any adjustments on a like for like basis.
- (iii) Ensure that the information contained in the report is shared widely within the Borough.

## **1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

1.1 As a result of the efforts of May Gurney and the County Council's Highways team this year's countywide winter maintenance programme can be delivered for £700,000 less than last year, with no degradation to levels of service. The Cabinet has decided that the additional £700,000 provides an opportunity to further enhance the service to residents over the coming winter as follows:

- Extending the Surrey P1 precautionary salting network across the County by 172 kms (107 miles), helping to reach some of the more isolated communities
- Increasing our salt stocks to 16,000 tonnes, increased from 10,000 tonnes two years ago
- Fill all 1,743 existing grit bins by the end of October. If necessary a second fill will be varied out over the winter, but with resources deployed on clearing roads and footways, it will not be possible to refill during a snow event.
- Providing 40 tonnes of salt to District and Borough Councils, helping to them to keep key pavements and town centres clear.
- Supply new grit bins, allowing residents and local community groups to buy a grit bin for four years at a cost of £1,000.
- Enlist the help of an extra 15 farmers equipped with ploughs, taking the total to 50 across Surrey.

## **2 DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS**

### **2.1 Priority Salting Network**

The Surrey P1 network includes roads carrying over 12,000 vehicles per day and includes all A and B roads, access routes to A&E hospitals, major bus routes and links to gritting routes in adjoining counties. The P1 network is routinely treated overnight whenever frost or ice is forecast.

The Surrey P2 network includes roads carrying over 5,000 vehicles per day, access roads to secondary schools, important industrial establishments, ambulance stations and railway stations. The P2 network is not routinely pre-treated unless snow is forecast. If snow settles, the P2 network will be treated, but only once the P1 network has been cleared.

The review upgraded any road on the P2 network that met at least two of the P2 criteria (e.g. carrying more than 5,000 vehicles *plus* access to secondary school) to P1 status.

For Guildford, this resulted in the P1 network increasing from 190miles to 205miles, an increase of 15 miles. With roads upgraded from P2, the P2 network decreases from 42 miles to 31miles (15 miles upgraded to P2, and 4 miles of entirely new P2 added).

(The total road network in Guildford is 428 miles, so the new P1 at 205 miles represent 48%, the new P2 at 31 miles represents 7%).

A schedule of the updated P1 and P2 networks for Guildford is included as an Annex to this report. Schedules and maps for the whole of Surrey will be published on the SCC website.

## **2.2 Footways**

The discretionary aspect of responsibility for gritting footways allows the Council to focus resources on maintaining the road network as the main priority. The County Council does not carry out precautionary salting of the footways, and will only clear priority footways once resources deployed on clearing roads become available.

To assist in the footway snow clearance, negotiations have taken place with the Borough/District Councils to agree a Statement of Understanding whereby they will give priority for gritting/snow clearing when their crews are unable to undertake their own primary function. In recognition of their support they have been supplied with hand salt spreaders and 40 tonnes of salt. Through the agreement footways will be cleared by a combination of District/Borough and County Council resources, with the overall responsibility remaining with the County Council.

## **2.3 Grit Bins**

Cabinet agreed that the proposed rationalisation of grit bins raised concerns. It has therefore been agreed that all 1,743 existing bins will be retained and serviced. However, those scoring less than 100 points on the need assessment system will not be replaced when they come to the end of their serviceable life or are destroyed/damaged beyond repair. The local County Councillor will be informed at this point and they, or the community, may choose to fund a replacement.

Through the grit bin purchase scheme Members (through their local allocation), residents and local community groups will be able to buy a grit bin stocked for a period of four years at a cost of £1,000.

All County Council grit bins will be restocked, refurbished as necessary and labelled by the end of October. Should circumstances prevail, there will be a second fill during the winter, but due to availability of resources bins will not be refilled during a snow event.

A schedules of all grit bins will be available on the County Council website.

#### **2.4 Farmers**

Up to 50 farmers and/or contractors countywide will be under agreement to the Council to carry out snow clearance on certain minor roads and also assist the main Service Provider on the primary network. The farmers are being provided with designated routes and will immediately commence snow ploughing once accumulations have occurred.

#### **2.5 Members of the Public**

The County Council would also like to stress the importance of the personal responsibility of Surrey's residents, businesses and other organisations. People have been worried about being held liable for claims against them, but this is highly unlikely unless they deliberately do something that makes the situation worse. As requested by residents last winter, the Council is providing a clear legal statement:

“As with all actions taken by members of the public, people should act sensibly and consider the effect their actions might have on other highway users. Provided any salting or snow clearance is carried out responsibly and without creating further hazards which could lead to a passer by injuring themselves, then there would be no liability for such actions.”

So residents and organisations need to prepare themselves and their communities for severe weather. This could include, for example:

- Clearing the snow from in front of their own buildings using a wide bladed shovel, but not hot water as this will cause black ice;
- Ensuring elderly relatives and neighbours are safe;
- Travelling with warm blankets, a shovel and even warm drinks;
- Considering buying snow tyres or chains.

The Council will again be running an extensive communications campaign starting in the autumn and continuing through the winter season. This will give advice and suggestions as to how people can also prepare for winter themselves.

### **3 OPTIONS**

3.1 The report is provided for information and comment.

### **4. CONSULTATIONS**

4.1 The review was undertaken by the Winter Service Task Group whose recommendations were endorsed by the Cabinet meeting on 26 July 2011.

**5 FINANCIAL AND VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 As mentioned above, savings of £700,000 on last year's winter service costs have been re-invested to achieve the enhancements described in this report.

**6 EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 The implications for elderly and vulnerable residents are noted in 2.5.

**7 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 There are no specific implications.

**8 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 8.1 Members are requested to familiarise themselves with the proposed gritting routes and help their residents prepare for bad weather. County Councillors are encouraged to share the information contained in the report with their residents and with their Borough and Parish Council colleagues.

**9 WHAT HAPPENS NEXT**

- 9.1 The Winter Service Plan will be implemented in October.

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**BACKGROUND PAPERS:** Report of the Task Group to the Cabinet – 26 July 2011  
"Winter Service Development for 2011/11"