



**REPORT TO LOCAL COMMITTEE
(MOLE VALLEY)**

**WINTER PERFORMANCE TASK GROUP DRAFT CABINET
REPORT**

13 SEPTEMBER 2010

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT: Policy Development and Review

To seek responses from Local Committees prior to the report's submission to the Transportation Select Committee and Cabinet.

OVERVIEW:

1. In order to allow Surrey County Council to be better prepared in the event of extreme winter weather conditions, its Safer and Stronger Communities and Transportation Select Committees undertook a Joint Scrutiny Review to assess how the services in Surrey responded to the snow and ice last winter. The report made a number of recommendations, which have been reviewed and scrutinised by the Winter Performance Task Group. The following members were appointed to the Task Group:

Stephen Cooksey
David Goodwin
Steve Renshaw (Spokesman)

The Task Group has met six times throughout July, August and September. It has received information from Surrey Highways Officers and a representative from its Legal Services.

2. The Task Group examined Surrey County Council's current Winter Service Policy and agreed that a number of issues needed to be addressed. These issues are reviewed in the attached draft report in terms of:

- Background
- Duties and Liabilities
- Salt Stock Levels
- Use and Provision of Salt Bins
- Footways Policy
- Borough/District Responsibilities
- Gritting Contractors and Equipment
- Member Input
- Recommendations

3. The attached report is in draft form and subject to change prior to its submission to the Transportation Select Committee and Cabinet. Local committees are asked to meet informally and review the content and submit any comments/input they may have to the report contacts by Friday 17th September 2010. Comments received will be included in an annex to the final report. If a Local Committee response is received after this date it will be included as a supplementary annex to the Cabinet report.

NEXT STEPS:

The report will be considered by the Transportation Select Committee and the Cabinet on 28th September 2010.

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SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL

CABINET

DATE: 28th September 2010

REPORT OF: Winter Performance Task Group

SPOKESMAN: Steve Renshaw

SUBJECT: Winter Performance

**KEY ISSUE/DECISION:**

1. Following the report and recommendations of the Joint Scrutiny Review of Severe Winter Weather on 13th July 2010, Cabinet is now asked to approve the winter response policy recommended by the Winter Performance Task Group. Cabinet is also asked to decide whether it supports additional levels of service and discretionary winter service activities to provide an enhanced level of winter service provision. This report also summarises feedback from members and officers and sets out options for Cabinet's consideration and decision.

DETAILS:**Background**

2. Between December 2009 and February 2010 Surrey and the rest of the UK experienced the most severe winter weather conditions for thirty years. Compared to the winter of 2008-2009, the mean temperature dropped from 3.1 degrees Celsius to 1.5 degrees Celsius, making it the coldest winter since 1978-1979. In addition, the highest recorded depth of snow in 2010 was 6cm higher than the previous winter, rising from 55cm to 61 cm.

Unlike more 'routine' winters, in 2009-2010 heavy snowfall and low temperatures occurred across a number of months, rather than during short periods. As a result 72 salting runs were instructed countywide, together with two extended periods of snow clearance activities. A routine or 'average' Surrey Winter has previously been calculated as 38 precautionary salting runs per season, based on data from the previous seven years. This 'average' winter figure has now been revised upwards to 51 runs per season due to events over the last two seasons and operations in excess of this figure may be regarded as an 'extreme' winter. As a consequence of these unusually prolonged and severe conditions, whole communities, businesses, schools, hospitals and other vital services were badly affected by widespread disruption throughout the County and nationwide. Because the Council's winter

planning and budget setting for winter service, which takes place in November of the preceding year, was based on the experience and knowledge of an 'average' Surrey winter there was severe pressure caused by the exceptional demands that resulted in 09/10.

3. The Council's Highway services, including its response to adverse weather conditions, is the only one with which all residents interface and, as such, is a very important factor in determining the public's perception of the Council overall.
4. In order to allow Surrey County Council to be better prepared in the event of further extreme winter weather conditions, its Safer and Stronger Communities and Transportation Select Committees undertook a Joint Scrutiny Review to assess how all services in Surrey responded to the snow and ice. Several witnesses were invited to give evidence to the Joint Committee which resulted in a series of recommendations, detailed below. Last year, Surrey was 2nd from bottom of the table of local authorities' customer satisfaction rating of our winter performance. Key to improving this is clearly communicating Surrey's Levels of Service (LOS) to residents so that they are made aware of what service they can reasonably expect.

The Joint Scrutiny Review aimed to address these issues. The report made a number of recommendations, including the establishment of a Winter Performance Task Group to oversee their implementation. The recommendations deemed to be 'out of scope' of the work of the task group are listed in **Annex A** – including 14 of the 25 recommendations that applied to Highways - and contain information regarding who is responsible (the task group is now aware that a meeting of all other services was held on 9 September). The 'in scope' work is as follows:

- Prioritisation of independent schools and schools on hills for gritting.
- Maintenance of salt stocks at the maximum level that storage permits.
- Review of criteria for the allocation of salt bins.
- Seeking of advice through local committees and groups showing maps of locations of salt bins.
- Prioritisation of access to public transport services for gritting.
- Making gritting routes for various levels of salt availability available to local communities for consideration prior to the winter season.
- The dispersion of salt stocks/bins down to boroughs, districts and parishes to be investigated through local committees.
- Consideration of county councillors' ability to co-ordinate local resources.
- More advice and information being made available to the public and encouragement of self-help.
- Informing the public of their legal position if they were to clear their pavement of snow and ice.
- That an updated and revised Winter Service Plan be considered by the Transportation Select Committee and local communities before Winter 2010.

- Encouragement of farmers to take up offer of snow ploughs to assist rural communities.
 - Encouragement of schools, hospitals, boroughs, districts and parishes to purchase low cost winter safety equipment.
 - Review of techniques to clear snow and ice and also of the number, type, control, manning and deployment of gritting vehicles.
5. Following the introduction of section 41a of the Highways Act (as amended by the Railways and Transport Safety Act 2003), Highway Authorities have to ensure that, **so far as is reasonably practicable**, safe passage along a highway is not endangered by snow or ice. A Highway is normally defined as boundary to boundary and therefore includes carriageways, footways etc. As such, the Council has a responsibility to safeguard the movement and well being of all the residents of Surrey and those passing through the County, including buses, cyclists, motorcyclists and pedestrians during severe winter weather.
 6. The effects of snow can also impact on the local and national economy due to the delays and congestion on the roads. Last year, the adverse conditions were estimated to have cost the UK economy £900 million per day.
 7. As a consequence of the relatively short timescale in which the Winter Performance Task Group has had to operate, there will be limitations as to which recommendations can be implemented into Surrey Highways' Winter Service Plan in time for the coming winter. However, the recommendations not accounted for this year will allow for a much more effective winter response in 2011/2012 and will rely on the new Highway Maintenance Term Contractor to be directly involved also.
 8. This report puts forward recommendations, with indications of cost where appropriate, made by the Winter Performance Task Group for consideration and adoption as policy by Cabinet.

Duties and Liabilities

9. Section 41a of the Highways Act 1980 states that local authorities 'have a duty to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that safe passage along a highway is not endangered by snow or ice'. The qualification of 'reasonably practicable' means that it is not an *absolute* duty. However, Surrey County Council takes its Winter Service responsibilities very seriously. County legal opinion indicates that the arrangements Surrey County Council has in place are at least adequate to discharge this duty. However, highway authorities are permitted to take preventative measures against the accumulation of snow and ice and protect the highway over and above the minimum statutory requirements. While recognising the difficulties of limited finances, the recommendations are made for the Cabinet to consider

as amendments to current policy and to fund as they consider appropriate within the overall Surrey County Council budget.

10. Section 58 of the Highways Act provides local authorities with a statutory defence against claims made as a result of ice and snow on the highway on the basis that they have taken reasonable measures to ensure that problems are dealt with swiftly. Provided that these measures have been implemented properly, a claim can be rejected. However, when this defence cannot be maintained any successful claim is paid from the Highways service revenue budget which results in further budgetary pressures on all Highway activities.
11. There is currently no definitive case law on the question of legal liability of members of the public who spread salt and it is thought to be a very remote possibility that an individual would ever be held legally liable in such circumstances. As a general guide, members of the public are unlikely to be held to account following an incident related to their snow clearance or salt spreading as long as the condition they leave the road/footway they have gritted in is no worse than it was before they carried out the work. This information will be communicated to the public including a feature in this year's winter edition of Surrey Matters.
12. As the total highway network cannot be treated simultaneously within the resources reasonably available to the County Council, priorities have been established as outlined in **Annex B**.
13. A breakdown of the percentage of the network salted in each borough/district is contained in **Annex C (to be completed)**.
14. The response time to mobilise the gritting fleet for precautionary salting is one hour from the time the contractor's decision-maker has indicated treatment is required. The operational requirement is then to complete the treatment of all pre-defined precautionary salting routes (P1) within three hours, following the one-hour response time. At present, these 'routine' operations are considered to be managed and undertaken effectively.
15. The P1 precautionary salting network was reviewed and rationalised for countywide consistency prior to the 09/10 winter season and approved by Cabinet as part of the Annual Winter Service Plan. During the severe winter events and emergency situation of 09/10 senior officers and members were involved in regular discussions on the identification and management standards to be applied to a reduced highway network in Surrey for the duration of the national salt shortage. The County Risk and Insurance Manager was also involved and in agreement. A revised and improved communications strategy is proposed for the 10/11 season to ensure all members, residents and staff are provided with greater clarity of information.

16. Districts, boroughs and town and parish councils have no official winter 'duties' on the public highways in their own areas (for more information see points **24-27**).
17. The estimated cost of various winter service activities (both fixed and variable costs), are included for reference in **Annex D** (*to be completed*).

Salt Stock Levels

18. Surrey has 8,000t of salt already in stock across the seven county barns and further orders bringing this total up to a minimum of 13,000t have been confirmed by Salt Union with delivery expected in October/November. It is understood that due to ongoing production and stock shortages further orders placed may take six months to complete and, as such, are planned well in advance. Orders can be sourced from abroad but this is more expensive and not the preferred option although certainly an essential course of action during 09/10. If possible, salt stocks should be maintained at the maximum level that storage permits, with orders placed in summer to achieve optimum prices, in order to limit the possibility of a shortage. Stocks should be systematically rotated for use on a 'first in/first out' basis as salt has a limited shelf life of approximately two years although all our stocks are held in closed barns. However, it is recognised that national demands may result in no further significant deliveries being received by highway authorities for the remainder of 10/11 and Salt Cell operation could again be implemented by Government. The Salt Cell formulae has previously disadvantaged Surrey as a council which conserves salt stocks while rewarding other authorities who do not conserve or who may operate less efficiently. The Task Group believes that the Transport Portfolio Holder and Leader of the Council should jointly contact central government in order to have the formulae changed so as not to 'penalise' efficient counties, such as Surrey.

Provision and Use of Grit Bins

19. Whilst it is recognised that the provision of grit bins is very popular with the public there is no legal duty for Surrey County Council to provide grit bins or maintain them. It is also noted that some authorities, including East Sussex, provide no grit bins. However, the Council recognises that by encouraging self-help they can further assist local communities – particularly those not on the P1 precautionary salting network. Grit spread by hand from these bins is a very inefficient use of a valuable and currently limited resource and the wider use of hand operated machinery would be far more efficient and provide value for money. In the circumstances our own contractors, local authorities and residents should be actively encouraged to follow this course of action.

The content of grit bins is exclusively for use on the highway, not for personal use, although this is recognised to be an issue. As a result the

Task Group recommends that suitable warning and identification signing should be stencilled on the County grit bin asset. This will also serve to differentiate highway grit bins from those provided by other authorities with different criteria. At present there are approximately 1500 grit bins in Surrey, and the County Council will, without additional resources, continue to prioritise their provision and future replacement based on the previously agreed safety related criteria at the following locations:

- Difficult road junctions
- Slopes
- Acute bends
- Concentration of pedestrian commuter use
- To assist with service to those in isolated rural communities off the primary and secondary precautionary treated routes.

It is noted that not all of the 1500 grit bins currently sited on the highway network meet this criteria. However, for the 10/11 season all bins that are not damaged will be filled in advance of the winter season. Where bins are damaged to the extent that water ingress and leaching of the contents is an issue, they will be individually assessed and only replaced when they meet the criteria. There is no specific budget for grit bin provision, replacement, or their maintenance/refilling at present, and requests for grit bins are assessed to ensure that those provided by Highways meet the approved criteria and service the highest priorities. This system was established by highways officers following benchmarking with other Councils, was previously approved by Cabinet in September 2009 and is explained in **Annex E**.

20. The ten-year cost of a grit bin in Surrey is currently £2500 no matter who provides and maintains the asset and this figure should be maintained until a further review in April 2012. Where members or other stakeholders wish to pay for a grit bin, as a service, at any safe location the full amount should be paid to Highways, in advance as a commuted sum, for the supply, single annual refill and maintenance of the asset over the ten year period with the funding accounted for separately and ringfenced in Highway allocations specifically for this purpose. Surrey County Council provides grit bins when the location meets the aforementioned criteria. The task group supports this continued approach but is also supportive of a 'self-help' initiative enabling Members and other stakeholders to request bins for other locations. As an option to increase uptake, Members may wish to consider advertising on grit bins although officers, and the Task Group by a majority vote, do not support this due to the resulting inflexibility of repair, replacement and relocation of bins and the potential for driver distraction. Furthermore there is a risk of conflicting with planning law concerning 'detrimental impact on the street scene' and successfully defining what is acceptable in terms of commercial sponsorship/advertising that would require some prominence. Any grit bin provided on the highway network, by whatever means, will be

identified and managed as County asset. It is noted that, in order to preserve valuable salt stocks and improve performance during snow events particularly, either a mix of salt and grit or grit alone may be provided in bins.

21. Current details of grit bin locations can be found in **Annex F**. Furthermore, the Highway grit bin asset has now been substantially surveyed and plotted across the county. It is expected that a full inventory, together with a criteria check and condition assessment will be completed by relevant Highways officers for use next winter season with the new contractor. However, past problems with recording bin locations and responding to issues during the 'normal' winter season lies in the fact that the historic distribution of grit bins has been of an ad-hoc nature. As such, the continued use of provision/prioritisation criteria, together with a more stringent system of grit bin identification is considered good practice in asset management terms, subject to funding. Where, over the next six months, an existing grit bin is assessed as non-compliant with the criteria it will be removed from the network at the end of the 10/11 winter season, refurbished or repaired if necessary and then redeployed to a site that is assessed as compliant.

Footways Policy and Self-Help

22. There is currently no case law to suggest that Surrey County Council currently has a legal responsibility to grit footways although they do form part of the highway as referred to in paragraph 5. Although central government's Code of Good Practice states that Council's should consider a service for pedestrians and cyclists, this is discretionary. As a result most associated winter weather claims can be successfully refuted.
23. The discretionary aspect of responsibility for gritting footways allows the Council to focus resources on maintaining the road network as the main priority. It is recognised that footways often clear without specific treatment by the time roads have been fully gritted to an appropriate standard. As such, the Task Group believes that the public should be clearly informed that the County will not be responsible for gritting footways, and that this should be promoted, through negotiation, as a Borough, District, Town and Parish council function in future.

Borough/District Responsibilities

24. Borough, District, Town and Parish Council winter service responsibilities on the public highway are limited, however partnership-working opportunities are being progressed. These limited responsibilities include issues relating to indemnification – because local authorities' staff are not currently indemnified, they may be reluctant to engage in winter activities as a result of potential insurance liabilities. Highways and Legal Services have progressed further from

last year on this subject and it is also a key part of the new contract discussions, although any arrangements will not be completed in time for the 2010/2011 season.

25. The Task Group feels that it would be difficult to establish a developed partnership with Borough, District, Town and Parish Councils in time for the 2010/2011 winter season. Furthermore, new Highway contracts are soon to be introduced covering functions and activities that local authorities have historically not had significant involvement in or responsibility for. In the interim it is still important, however, to continue to improve coordination between the county/local levels and determine clear roles and responsibilities for all partners in advance of the 2011-2012 winter season.
26. Because the county's response on footways and grit bins for example is discretionary, Borough, District, Town and Parish Councils could be encouraged to take action on these and other issues, with the support of the county. This could involve the provision of manual salt spreading equipment, sharing knowledge and experience and reviewing indemnification issues. This would help to clearly define roles and responsibilities between county and local authorities. The intention is that a more coordinated approach across local authority boundaries is achieved and recorded, possibly in the form of a service level agreement, and it is understood such matters are currently part of ongoing contract discussions within Highways.
27. There is currently no clear policy, or allocated funding, in place to support the allocation of salt to the boroughs and districts. In previous years there have been cases of vehicles taking salt from the county, reportedly for use in the boroughs/districts, but with no indication of management arrangements or outcomes achieved.

Gritting Contractors and Equipment

28. In order to aid the Council's gritting effort during times of severe winter weather, local farmers have been 'signed up' to provide additional assistance. Highways are continuing to pursue how farmers and potentially other contractors are trained and indemnified, together with the possibility introducing a retainer system for 2011/12, subject to availability of funds. Regardless of where the farmers are based, these individuals operate 'county-wide' and as such it is not just rural areas that benefit from their services. Details of these individuals have been recorded countywide in order that operational officers, who are solely responsible for their contact and deployment, can utilise their services effectively during periods of need. Ideally, they will be accredited with the correct tractor units, ploughs and capability. Pre-arranged gritting plans are to be issued to all these farmers again this year.

29. Surrey currently engages 35 farmers across the county and officers indicate this is an optimum number to manage snow events in rural areas while other contract resources and local authorities concentrate on more urban areas. Members have expressed support for the identification and retention of a 'pool' of 50 farmers and contractors in Surrey so that a minimum of 35 will always be available if circumstances require.
30. To further assist in the clearing of snow and ice on Surrey's roads, schools, hospitals, boroughs, districts, parishes and the relevant authorities should have already developed their own service resilience plans, which may include the provision and use of relatively low cost and efficient spreading equipment.. Every attempt should be made to implement this process this year within the short timescale and budget constraints, even if it is on a limited basis.

Member Input

31. Members have had the opportunity to contribute to the discussions through the Joint Scrutiny Committee in March 2010, two members seminars held in September and through Local Committee meetings and discussions held earlier this year and recently. Responses are reflected and included in the recommendations of this report. Members generally consider that, where approved by Cabinet, any of the recommendations below should be funded from allocations outside of the current Highways budget.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- a) That Cabinet approve the Surrey Winter Service Plan 2010/2011 (as attached in **Annex G**) (*to be completed*).

Overall Budget:

- b) That following consultation with Members, Surrey's Winter Service budget for 2010/11 and beyond be based around the current 'average' Surrey winter revised upwards from 38 to 51 precautionary salting runs and works on the priority two network in advance of snow and/or prolonged ice, at a cost of £2.523m, with the addition being funded from outside the existing highway revenue budget.
- c) That subject to the implementation of recommendation (a), a centrally held contingency fund is established from outside the Highways budget, of 20% of the Highways' winter budget. This fund should be ringfenced to cover extreme and emergency winter events and if it is not utilised should be returned to the central fund.

- d) That recommendations (a) and (b) become the basis for Surrey's winter budgeting in future years.

Salt Management:

- e) That, subject to availability, salt stocks be maintained at 13,000 tonnes distributed across Surrey's seven depots and be recorded on the Council's balance sheet to resource approximately ?? precautionary salting runs and ?? grit bin fills (at a cost of £?? tbc and added for Scrutiny/Cabinet paper)
- f) That the portfolio holder for Transport and Leader of the Council write to central government in order to have the Salt Cell formulae changed, as at present Surrey does not benefit as a consequence of its efficient salt usage.

Grit Bins:

- g) (i) That initially each Local Committee should bid for up to an additional 10% of the grit bins currently recorded on its network for immediate deployment (at a cost of £?? tbc and added for Scrutiny/Cabinet paper) and (ii) that consideration be given to subsequently providing up a further 10% increase in grit bin numbers over each of the following 3 years (at a cost of £?? tbc and added for Scrutiny/Cabinet paper) and (iii) any grit bin that is assessed not to comply with the current criteria will be removed at the end of the 10/11 winter season, refurbished and re-located as required (at a cost of £?? tbc and added for Scrutiny/Cabinet paper)
- h) That Surrey County Council compile a comprehensive list of grit bins to include those that belong to districts and boroughs, and also those that are not the responsibility of Surrey. (£ COST)
- i) That an fully updated records system for salt bins be completed. Specifically, that divisional/borough information is included in the asset management inventory and all highway grit bins are stencilled as 'SCC' with an improper use warning added, together with a GPS location or similar maintained (at a cost of £37,500)
- j) That Members or other organisations will be able to purchase bins that don't necessarily meet highways criteria provided it is safe, through Local Committees, for the commuted sum of £2500 (a figure valid until March 2012, subject to review after this time), for a ten-year fixed period. Additionally, Surrey County Council should contact those who have financed such bins after a period of nine years in order to establish whether they wish to continue funding for another period. If not, then the bin will be removed.

Gritting Runs:

- k) (i) That although the Task Group recognises that there is currently no funding available to increase the size of the current Priority 1 precautionary salting network, that Local Committees be given the opportunity to recommend the prioritisation of certain priority two roads within the network. As a guide, every extra 50km will cost an additional £60,000 and (ii) Members may also wish to request that certain Priority 2 routes be 'upgraded' to Priority 1 in future years and be funded accordingly (subject to route optimisation and efficiency management).

Borough/District Responsibilities:

- l) That a clearer system for salt allocation be established, with the county making 50 tonnes available to each borough/district (at a total annual cost of £23,353).
- m) Alternately, that if boroughs collect salt then they should have a clear allocation for use on the public highway (50 tonnes) and be encouraged to provide their own stocks for use elsewhere.
- n) That boroughs/districts be encouraged to utilise mechanical spreading equipment within the existing budget, as it is much more efficient and will require a lower level of salt usage. Specifically, that Surrey County Council gives each borough/district five 'Cruiser Turbocast 300's' for which they are then responsible and can use to clear the highway, including pavements, and should be encouraged to add to subsequently (at a cost of £55,000).
- o) That clear Winter Service roles and responsibilities be established within Highways and between the county and boroughs/districts/town and parish partners for future winters in order to enable greater coordination between Highways Groups and at the county/local level.
- p) That all nominated borough/district and town and parish council winter activity staff are trained and indemnified from any legal implications associated with their gritting (at a cost of £?? tbc and added for Scrutiny/Cabinet paper).

Farmers and Contractors:

- q) That although officers believe that Surrey currently has a sufficient pool of farmers to assist with winter response activities, Local Committees be given the opportunity to suggest the names of addition farmers to Highways (at a cost of £?? tbc and added for Scrutiny/Cabinet paper).
- r) That Surrey Highways Operations Group establishes clear contact and deployment criteria and arrangements for their direct management of farmers and contractors during severe, emergency winter events.

- s) That Surrey takes steps towards legally indemnifying all farmers that are contracted to spread grit on the highways (at a cost of £?? tbc and added for Scrutiny/Cabinet paper).

Communication:

- t) That a publicity campaign be launched in order to make the people of Surrey aware of what level of service the Council is able to provide them during severe winter weather. This should be co-ordinated at the borough level and take the form of:
 - i. An item in the winter edition of Surrey Matters
 - ii. Advice on the SCC website
- u) To further encourage a culture of 'self-help' to residents in times of severe weather by clarifying what options are available to them. This should include the use of salt bins and communication of legal implications.
- v) That a call-centre or dedicated member contact point be developed in order to give members a resource for use in responding to public requests.

Local Committees are asked to consider/discuss the following:

Grit Bins:

- (a) Those grit currently on the highway network that are assessed as not meeting the current highway criteria will be removed at the end of the 10/11 winter season unless Local Committees/Members contribute £2500 for each
- (b) The sponsorship of grit bins and the fact that additional costs will be incurred because their repair/replacement will be non-standard
- (c) The encouragement of boroughs/districts to aid in the identification of existing salt bins.
- (d) That any requests for new salt bins must be submitted to Surrey Highways by the end of October.

Gritting Routes:

- (a) The amendment of current priority one/priority two routes, though within the existing budget no additional mileage can be accommodated.
- (b) If funding is available, the submission to Surrey Highways of an agreed, prioritised 'top 10 list' of routes that the Local Committee would like to elevate from Priority 2 to Priority 1. (Responses will be considered by officers and the Task Group to determine which could be incorporated into a sensible treatment operation and at what cost for decision by Cabinet) (at a cost of £?? tbc and added for Scrutiny/Cabinet paper).

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT:

The Cabinet are asked to consider the recommendations made above.

The Task Group will reconvene with its existing membership in March 2011 in order to review the recommendations made in this report.

Report Contacts:

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Peter Agent, Asset Planning Group Manager, Surrey Highways:
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Consulted:

Cabinet Member for Transport
Local Committees
Transportation Select Committee

Informed:

All County Councillors, public, and stakeholders.

Sources/background papers:

- Safer and Stronger Communities and Transportation Select Committees' Joint Scrutiny Review of Severe Winter Weather (13th July 2010).
 - Highways Act (1980).
 - Surrey County Council Winter Maintenance Policy.
 - 'Salt Bin Locations in Surrey' (available on the SCC website).
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Annex A

Services and officers responsible for recommendations contained within the Severe Winter Weather Joint Scrutiny Review

Joint Select Committee recommendation	Service responsible	Officer responsible
(a) That the Council explores further ways of working, community groups such as 4 x 4 clubs and neighbourhood watch to see how they can provide assistance and resilience in an emergency.	Chief Execs/Emergency Planning*	Susie Kemp/David Storey
(b) That a feasibility study takes place to examine whether school teachers who are unable to commute to their usual place of work could work at their local school to allow as many establishments as possible to stay open.	Schools & Learning	Alan Cottle
(c) That representations be made to the DCSF ¹ to ensure that schools are not deterred from opening by the effect high absenteeism may have on their attendance figures.	Schools & Learning	Alan Cottle
(d) That independent schools be given the same priority for gritting as county schools. That consideration be given to prioritising access to schools on steep hills or a short diversion from existing routes.	Surrey Highways*	Simon Mitchell
(e) That schools be encouraged to develop their own snow and ice plans involving the local community.	Schools & Learning and Emergency Planning*	Alan Cottle/David Storey
(f) That the text messaging system, Battle Baton, be extended to the rest of the county. Battle Baton Technology provides a secure web based infrastructure that includes a unique set of online tools that can improve the way people manage their Operational Resilience/Business Continuity in a far more effective way.	Emergency Planning*	David Storey

¹ Since the Committee agreed this recommendation, the department has been renamed the Department for Education

Joint Select Committee recommendation	Service responsible	Officer responsible
(g) That a strategy be put in place to state how the Council plans to identify residents who become vulnerable during emergency scenarios such as the snow.	Adult Social Care*/Emergency Planning*	Liz Uliasz/David Storey
(h) That consideration is given to establishing a 'buddying' system, through which residents are encouraged to check up on vulnerable neighbours.	Adult Social Care*/Emergency Planning*	Liz Uliasz/David Storey
(i) That a back-up resource for the Contact Centre IMT engineer is found as soon as possible.	IMT	Paul Jennings
(j) That consideration be given, within budget constraints, to maintaining salt stocks at the maximum level that storage permits.	Surrey Highways*	Simon Mitchell
(k) That additional salt bins be provided and that the criteria for the allocation of salt bins be reviewed.	Surrey Highways*	Simon Mitchell
(l) That the advice of local Members be sought through local committees showing maps of locations of bins, with the involvement of local groups as appropriate.	Surrey Highways*	Simon Mitchell
(m) That gritting routes prioritise access to public transport services including bus depots, train stations and that consideration be given to gritting more pavements particularly on steep hills in isolated communities.	Surrey Highways*	Simon Mitchell
(n) That gritting routes for various levels of salt availability be made available to local committees for consideration prior to the winter season.	Surrey Highways*	Simon Mitchell
(o) The possibility of dispersing some salt stocks and/ or salt bins down to boroughs, districts and parishes should be investigated through local committees. Assistance may be required from	Surrey Highways*	Simon Mitchell

Joint Select Committee recommendation	Service responsible	Officer responsible
Highways.		
(p) That consideration be given to how county councillors' ability to coordinate local resources can best be utilised at times of emergency.	Surrey Highways*	Simon Mitchell
(q) That more advice and information be made available to the public in advance of the winter and self-help encouraged.	Surrey Highways*	Simon Mitchell
(r) That when the high level County Council Coordination Group meets, a Cabinet Member is included.	Emergency Planning*	David Storey
(s) That the public be informed of their legal position if they were to clear their pavement of snow and ice.	Surrey Highways* & Legal	Simon Mitchell/Andrew Prior
(t) That the Chief Executive reviews an appropriate command and control structure to manage winter emergencies.	Emergency Planning*	David Storey
(u) That the use of Community Pay Back Offenders be considered to help in appropriate tasks.	Surrey Highways*	Simon Mitchell
(v) That an updated and revised Winter Service Plan be considered by the Transportation Select Committee and local committees before winter 2010.	Surrey Highways*	Simon Mitchell
(w) That more farmers be encouraged to take up our offer of snow ploughs to assist primarily rural communities.	Surrey Highways*	Simon Mitchell
(x) That schools, hospitals, boroughs, districts and parishes be encouraged to purchase low cost winter safety equipment such as grit spreaders and snow blowers etc.	Surrey Highways*	Simon Mitchell
(y) That as part of negotiations for the new highways contract, the techniques to clear snow and ice and the number, type, control, manning and deployment of gritting vehicles be reviewed.	Surrey Highways*	Simon Mitchell

Joint Select Committee recommendation	Service responsible	Officer responsible

*Executive summary available below.

Adult Social Care – Executive Summary

- We are doing a lot of work with the Local Education Officers to encourage schools to develop their own emergency plans and a series of workshops are currently being planned. We have a target in our business plan for this year for the number of schools with their own emergency plans. Only a handful of schools have specific elements in their emergency plans regarding severe weather as they are predominately generic to cope with any emergency.
- A lot of the points within the recommendations are intertwined - the town & parish planning for example ties in looking after vulnerable people in the community, and assisting to keep schools open through community resources and individuals and farmers assisting in snow clearing. Within town and parish planning vulnerable people is a big element of how communities can look after one another. In partnership with the Borough Councils we are helping promote community resilience with Parish Councils, which includes supporting them in developing their own local emergency plans which should outline how they will assist more vulnerable members of the community when an incident occurs. I would see voluntary buddying systems potentially coming out of these local arrangements.
- We now have arrangements with the South East 4x4 Response Group and are in the process of undertaking CRB checks for the volunteers.

Emergency Planning – Executive Summary

Recommendation (a): We are currently working with the South East 4x4 club to include them in the emergency response arrangements. They have around 90 members that would be available across the South East, not purely Surrey. To ensure service user protection CRB checks have been undertaken for 30 members and more will be completed shortly, (we will use non-CRB checked drivers if required on a risk assessment basis).

We will maintain our arrangements with the Red Cross to provide a more acute response for pressing cases.

Recommendation (e): We continue to provide support to schools in the creation of their emergency plans. These are generic, but would be able to deal with the closure of schools in a snow event. Schools cannot be required to do this work.

Recommendation (f): The EDI system is continuing to be rolled out to all services and training on its use is being provided. The requirement for service to have information in place on EDI is now included in the performance reporting for business continuity.

Recommendation (g): The vulnerable people plan has been finalised and tested, the County Response was seen as good, but some Boroughs are unable to provide the information required when requested.

In a wide area snow incident any planning arrangements would be resource intensive to ensure that all vulnerable people known to the Council were identified and their needs catered for.

Recommendation (h): Buddying for individuals can be arranged through the Red Cross and other voluntary bodies. The wider use of the communities and neighbours for the purpose is promoted through the media. This is included in the 'Community Resilience' work stream, however due to resource constraints this work is not being progressed at this time.

Recommendation (r): This will be included as appropriate for all future incidents of this type.

Recommendation (t): The CEO and Corporate Leadership Team for an on-call rota to provide the strategic cover for the Council, with support from the services.

The arrangements are generic and would provide the necessary command and control for a snow incident. The arrangements are currently tested six monthly and link to the multi-agency arrangements in place in Surrey.

Surrey Highways – Executive Summary

Recommendation (d): Ongoing but significant piece of work that will continue during this winter and then involve our new Contractor Partner. Has budget implications.

Recommendation (j): Completed.

Recommendation (k): Completed, but has budget implications.

Recommendation (l): In progress at present.

Recommendation (m): Ongoing but significant piece of work that will continue during this winter and then involve our new Contractor Partner. Has budget implications.

Recommendation (n): In progress at present.

Recommendation (o): Good discussions underway but has budget implications.

Recommendation (p): Work with Councillors and Task Group prior to snow to identify resources.

Recommendation (q): Strategy prepared for joint implementation with Communications Team.

Recommendation (u): Will be looked at next year with our new Contractor partner.

Recommendation (v): In progress and substantially complete.

Recommendation (w): Completed – increased to 35 currently.

Recommendation (x): In progress through partnership development and technical advice offered on equipment and resilience as required.

Recommendation (y): ISOS / technical specification work completed and Competitive Dialogue with remaining bidders in progress.

Annex B**Current Gritting Route Priorities**

Treatment Route	Overview	Time of Treatment
Priority One and Two (SPN1 & SPN2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approximately 37% of network. • Roads with traffic flow greater than 15000 vehicles per day. • Main access routes to A&E hospitals. • Major bus routes (50 times per day urban, 25 times per day rural). • Roads passing through major shopping centres. 	Routine pre-salting in advance of any forecast frost, ice or snow.
Priority Three (SPN3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approximately 13% of network. • Roads with traffic flow greater than 5000 vehicles per day. • Main access routes to important industrial and large education establishments (500+ pupils). • Single access points to villages. • Access roads leading to other hospitals, ambulance stations, fire stations, railway stations. • Roads used by other bus routes and depots. • Steep hazardous gradients and over bridges where known local icing conditions occur. 	Prolonged and persistent frost, ice or snow which is expected to continue, or following snow, but only once SPN1 has been cleared.
Priority Four (SPN4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All other public 	Following

	highways covered by above.	not the	significant snowfall but only once SPN1 and SPN2 have been cleared.
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Annex C

Network Treatment* – Districts

District	Urban	Rural	Total	P1 Salting	% of Network Treated	SPN 1&2	% of Network Treated	Bus routes/ continuity	% of Network Treated
Surrey Heath	306	72	378	101	27%	89	24%	12	3%
Waverley	436	314	750	214	28%	208	28%	5	1%
Tandridge	368	156	525	157	30%	145	28%	12	2%
Reigate and Banstead	448	43	491	162	33%	144	29%	19	4%
Runnymede	235	46	281	93	33%	87	31%	6	2%
Elmbridge	379	22	401	138	34%	133	33%	5	1%
Epsom & Ewell	210	2	212	78	37%	67	32%	11	5%
Woking	283	23	306	115	38%	90	30%	24	8%
Mole Valley	362	173	534	217	41%	207	39%	10	2%
Guildford	420	265	685	305	45%	268	39%	38	5%
Spelthorne	270	11	282	138	49%	135	48%	3	1%
Total/ average	3717	1128	4844	1719	35%	1574	32%	145	3%

*The criterion that determines these figures can be found in **Annex B**.

Annex D

Fixed and Variable Costs of Winter Activities

Fixed Costs (cannot be influenced):

Vehicle Lease Costs	£1,216,735
Basic Facility and Standby Costs	£387,107
Forecast	£59,654
Saturators	£6,000

Variable Costs (subject to winter conditions and events and policy funding):

One Precautionary Gritting Route Run (35 Front Line Vehicles)	£11,476
One Refill of up to 1500 Grit Bins	£92,085
One Visit to Grit Bins to Check Condition on Stencil Markings etc.	£37,500
One Day's Snow Response (All Resources – Hand and Mechanical)	£120,000
10,000t of Salt at Summer Rates	£424,600
10,000t of salt at Winter Rates	£610,362
Cost of Making 50t of Salt Available to each District Borough	£23,353

Costed Options:

Current Budget	£1.546m	
Minimum duty based on previous Surrey 'average' winter – 38 runs on full priority network	£2.106m	+36%
Minimum current duty based on re-calculated Surrey 'average' winter – 51 runs on full priority network	£2.253m	+46%
Duty and discretionary – including 1 grit bin service and salt to partners	£2.503m	+60%
As above and priority 2 networks (in advance of snow and/or prolonged ice)	£2.523m	+62%
As above plus 2 days snow response	£3.018m	+94%

Annex E

Highway Salt Bin Assessment Criteria

Characteristic	Severity	Points weighting	Points allocated
Is site on Priority One precautionary treatment route?	Yes		Void location rejects application
	No	Continue assessment	
Is treatment area off priority one routes on which bin will be safely located?	Yes	25	Continue assessment
Surface gradient	Less than 1:10	75	
	1:10 or over	Nil	
Difficult junction requiring precise timing to exit, or within 25m of and falling towards junction with:	(Exit traffic at peak times)	75	
	Moderate traffic Light traffic	30	
Bends on slope location	Yes	25	
	No	Nil	
Concentration of use by pedestrian's steps, ramps, footbridge, subway	Yes	100	
	No	Nil	
Traffic density at peak times	Moderate traffic	40	
	Light traffic	Nil	

Annex F**Salt bin locations in Surrey**

Borough/District	Location
Elmbridge	Claygate (x4) Cobham (x4) East Molesey (x1) Esher (x1) Hinchley Wood (x4) Long Ditton (x3) Oxshott (x7) Stoke D'abernon (x3) Thames Ditton (x2) Walton on Thames (x3) Weybridge (x7)
Epsom and Ewell	Ashted (x1) Chessington (x1) East Ewell (x12) Epsom (x27) Epsom Downs (x6) Ewell (x10) Stoneleigh (x21) Tolworth (x1) West Ewell (x6) Worcester Park (x6)
Guildford	Albury (x4) Artington (x1) Ash (x6) Ash Green (x2) Ash Vale (x4) Bellfields (x2) Brook and Farley Green (x4) Burpham (x1) Chilworth (x2) Eashing (x3) East Clandon (x1) East Horsley (x3) Effingham (x1) Fairlands (x3) Gomshall (x4) Guildford Town area (x57) Hogs Back & Puttenham area (x7) Holmbury St Mary (x5) Hurtmore (x2) Merrow (x11) Ockham (x2) Park Barn (x3) Peaslake (x5) Peasmarsh (x1)

	<p>Rydes Hill (x4) Seale and Sands area (x8) Send (x2) Shackleford (x2) Shalford (x2) Shere (x2) Stoughton (x1) Sutton and Holmbury (x2) Tongham (x4) Wanborough (x3) West Horsley (x6) Westborough (x5) Wood Street Village (x3) Worplesdon (x3)</p>
Mole Valley	<p>Abinger (x4) Ashtead (x3) Beare Green (x3) Betchworth (x1) Bookham (x10) Box Hill (x3) Brockham (x4) Buckland (x1) Charlwood (x4) Dorking (x29) Fetcham (x10) Forest Green (x3) Headley (x8) Leatherhead (x10) Mickleham (x1) Newdigate (x1) North Holmwood (x5) Ockley (x4) South Holmwood (x6) Wescott (x6) West Humble (x3) Wotton (x3)</p>
Reigate and Banstead	<p>Banstead (x27) Chapel (x1) Chipstead (x10) Earlswood (x6) Epsom Downs (x27) Hooley (x8) Horley (x1) Kingswood (x7) Lower Kingswood (x7) Meath Green (x2) Merstham (x10) Nork (x14) Redhill (x46) Reigate (x20)</p>

	<p>Salford (x2) Tadworth (x17) Walton (x1) Walton on the Hill (x4) Woodmansterne (x7)</p>
Runnymede	<p>Addlestone (x12) Chertsey (x6) Egham (x4) Englefield Green (x5) Ottershaw (x2) Virginia Water (x6) Woodham (x1)</p>
Spelthorne	<p>Ashford (x6) Shepperton (x2) Staines (x5) Stanwell (x4) Sunbury (x5)</p>
Surrey Heath	<p>Bagshot (x12) Camberley (x67) Frimley (x58) Lightwater (x11) West End and Bisley (x4) Winlesham (x5)</p>
Tandridge	<p>Bletchingley (x9) Blindley Heath (x1) Burstow (x1) Caterham (x40) Caterham Hill (x1) Chaldon (x2) Dormansland (x3) East Grinstead (x2) Fickleshole (x1) Godstone (x9) Hamsey Green (x1) Haxted (x1) Limpsfield (x5) Lingfield (x2) Nutfield (x6) Oxted (x12) Smallfield (x5) South Godstone (x3) Tatsfield (x11) Warlingham (x11) Whyteleafe (x11) Woldingham (x5)</p>
Waverley	<p>Blackheath (x1) Boundstone (x3) Bowlhead Green (x3) Bramley (x1) Brook (x1)</p>

	Chiddingfold (x7) Churt (x5) Compton (x2) Cranleigh (x5) Docketfield (x5) Dunsfold (x3) Elstead (x2) Ewhurst (x7) Farncombe (x4) Farnham (x6) Farnham (East) (x46) Farnham (South) (x4) Farnham (West) (x36) Frensham (x3) Godalming (x26) Grayswood (x2) Hambledon (x3) Haslemere (x68) Middle Bourne (x1) Milford (x1) Rowledge (x5) The Sands (x1) Thursley (x4) Tilford (x3) Weybourne (x2) Witley (x4) Wonersh (x1)
Woking	(x64)

Further information on grit bin locations (including specific roads) can be found on the Surrey County Council Website at:

http://www.surreycc.gov.uk/sccwebsite/sccwspages.nsf/LookupWebPagesByTITLE_RTF/Salt+bin+locations+in+Surrey?opendocument