

WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET – 14 OCTOBER 2010

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF TECHNICAL SERVICES

WINTER MAINTENANCE ARRANGEMENTS 2010 / 2011

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 To advise Members of the proposed Winter Maintenance Arrangements for 2010 / 2011
- 1.2 The Cabinet Member is asked to approve the proposed arrangements.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Winter Maintenance Policy and Arrangements document details proposals of the extent and manner in which winter maintenance operations will be carried out during the winter period for the treatment of carriageways, footways and other areas where required.
- 2.2 Following the severe weather, which occurred in January 2010, Cabinet requested that a review of the winter maintenance arrangements be undertaken via the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Minute 250 – 14/01/2010).
- 2.3 This review was led by the Health, Safety & Resilience Manager and he reported his finding back to the Sustainable Communities Overview & Scrutiny Committee on the 21 June 2010 (Minute 60 – 21/06/2010). The Committee noted the impact of the severe weather in January 2010. They endorsed the Council's response and recommended to Cabinet that the current winter maintenance provision be maintained.
- 2.4 The impact of the severe weather has also been reviewed on a sub-regional, regional and national basis. Some comfort can be drawn out as a result of these reviews and some highlights are:
 - The National Salt Cell will be activated far sooner and all agencies with a highways responsibility will be reporting their Salt stock levels on a far more frequent basis – allowing for a fair distribution in time of crisis. Cabinet should be reminded that Salt is ineffective as a thawing agent below minus 8°C.
 - The resilience fraternity has been building on the community spirit element of a response to severe weather – e.g. advice placed on the Councils internet, pre-prepared severe weather information leaflets for schools, communities and businesses plus registration schemes for 4x4 vehicles and other offers from the community to assist are all now in place.
 - More advanced weather forecasting and warning and informing has been put in place. Members will be aware of the benefit of this from the

more detailed weather forecasts and alerts they receive from the Health, Safety & Resilience Team.

- 2.5 Additionally, as part of the review, an Innovation Group was set up with Council Officers and Colas staff to examine ways of providing the service more efficiently.
- 2.6 This has resulted in a complete revision of gritting routes, the fitting of satellite tracking in gritters, revised administrative procedures and mutual aid agreements with other Merseyside Authorities.
- 2.7 Training in winter maintenance operations has been extended to more staff including trainees, ensuring additional cover in the event of severe weather.
- 2.8 Details of the proposed arrangements for 2010 / 2011 are appended, herewith.

3.0 WINTER MAINTENANCE ARRANGEMENTS 2010 / 2011

- 3.1 Full details of the Council's Policy and Winter Maintenance Arrangements are appended as follows:
 - i) Council Policy - Appendix 1
 - ii) Gritting Routes - Appendix 2
 - iii) Grit Bin Locations - Appendix 3

However, a brief overview is set out, herewith.

- 3.2 Council officers and Colas staff will be on 24 hour standby from 15 November 2010 until 3 April 2011, although this may be varied, depending on the prevailing weather at the start and end of the season.
- 3.3 Winter maintenance forecasts are provided by MeteoGroup Limited, who have staff available for consultation at all times.
- 3.4 Decisions whether to grit are generally made between 1.00 pm and 2.00 pm when the forecast is received, but weather conditions frequently require later decisions through the night.
- 3.5 10 full size gritters and 2 mini gritters are used for winter maintenance operations, with snowploughs available for each of the main gritters.
- 3.6 Minor additions to the gritted network have been incorporated at the request of Members, Merseytravel and as a result of a review of school routes.
- 3.7 The 11 Area Forums have each allocated funding to Technical Services for the provision and maintenance of additional grit bins. Details of these requests have now been received and subject to final checking will be installed, filled and available for use by 15 November. A supplementary list of these locations will be provided to Members in due course.

4.0 FINANCIAL AND STAFFING IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The budget allocation for 2010 / 2011 is £269,700. However, the actual spend for an average winter of 33 call outs is likely to be in the order of £500,000.
- 4.2 Should it not be possible to contain the expenditure within the budget allocation, options will be presented to Members in terms of funding the additional expenditure. In the event of an extreme winter it may be necessary to call on the Council's reserves / balances.

5.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no known ethnic minority implications.
- 5.2 The Winter Maintenance Arrangements increase accessibility for all highway users during periods of freezing weather, particularly the elderly and persons with disabilities who may find that winter conditions present particular problems.

6.0 PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no planning implications arising directly from this report.

7.0 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The safety of all highway users is a Council priority and these arrangements ensure that available resources are applied in the most effective way.

8.0 HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 There are no known human rights implications arising directly from this report.

9.0 LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The volume of salt spread on highways is commensurate with achieving a satisfactory road surface condition on those roads treated and complies with the recommendations of the Department for Transport.
- 9.2 Council will be aware of the Governments' requirement to minimise the usage of salt on the highway, both to restrict the run off into watercourses and drainage systems and to conserve national stocks. The current arrangements take this requirement into account.

10.0 SOCIAL INCLUSION IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 There are no social inclusion implications arising directly from this report.

11.0 ANTI-POVERTY IMPLICATIONS

11.1 There are no anti-poverty implications arising directly from this report.

12.0 ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT

12.1 A copy of the Winter Maintenance Arrangements document is available for viewing at the Technical Services Department, Cheshire Lines Building, Canning Street, Birkenhead, CH41 1ND and will be available for viewing on Wirral's website.

13.0 LOCAL MEMBER SUPPORT IMPLICATIONS

13.1 The report will be of interest to all Ward Members.

14.0 RECOMMENDATION

14.1 Cabinet is requested to approve the Winter Maintenance Arrangements for 2010/11 as detailed in this report.

DAVID GREEN
DIRECTOR OF TECHNICAL SERVICES