

WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET

24 NOVEMBER 2011

SUBJECT:	HIGHWAYS WINTER SERVICE ARRANGEMENTS 2011/12
WARD/S AFFECTED:	ALL
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR OF TECHNICAL SERVICES
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	COUNCILLOR HARRY SMITH, STREETSCENE AND TRANSPORT SERVICES
KEY DECISION?	NO

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise Members of the Highways Winter Service arrangements for 2011/12 (previously termed Winter Maintenance).
- 1.2 Under Section 111 of the Railways and Transport Act 2003, the Council, as highway authority for Wirral, has a duty "...to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that safe passage along a highway is not endangered by snow or ice".

2.0 RECOMMENDATION/S

- 2.1 Members are requested to note the contents of this report and also to approve the revised Highways Winter Service Operational Plan including gritting route proposals recommended following a review of the highway winter maintenance operations in 2010/11.

3.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 3.1 The Highways Winter Service Operational Plan document details proposals of the manner in which Highways Winter Service operations will be carried out during the winter period for the treatment of carriageways, footways and other areas where required.
- 3.2 Highways Winter Service operations have been reviewed to consider the findings made in the Review of Winter Weather Resilience report submitted to the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 7th June 2011 (Minute 4 refers).

4.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

4.1 Full details of the Council's Highways Winter Service Operational Plan and Highway Winter Service arrangements are attached to this report at **Appendix 1**.

4.2 A brief overview is set out below:

- Council officers and Contractor, Colas Ltd, staff will be on standby 24 hours a day, seven days a week from Monday 14th November 2011 until Monday 2nd April 2012. However, this period may be extended depending on the weather conditions.
- Winter Service forecasts are provided by MeteoGroup UK, who have staff available for consultation at all times.
- The decision to salt is initially considered between 1.00pm and 2.00pm on a daily basis however, weather conditions frequently require decisions to be made after this time including throughout the night.
- 10 full size gritters and 2 mini gritters are used for Highways Winter Service operations, with snowploughs available for each of the main gritters.
- There are ten main gritting routes and each of these have been amended and extended following the review of the winter maintenance operations 2010/11. The amendments reflect bus routes, certain school routes and strategic vehicle routes across the Borough.
- The gritting of shopping areas, footways and footpaths is undertaken in prolonged periods of freezing weather conditions. When similar conditions occurred during the last two winters the operation to grit shopping areas was prioritised by the level of potential use of the retail area, and the anticipated pedestrian footfall. The list of shopping centre locations and their operational priority is shown in the Highway Winter Service Operational Plan and details regarding their gritting arrangements are provided on the Council's website.

4.3 The 11 Area Forums have allocated funding to the Technical Services Department for the provision and maintenance of additional grit bins; currently 286 in total. These will be installed, filled and available for use by 14th November 2011.

5.0 RELEVANT RISKS

5.1 The Council has a duty under Section 111 of the Railways and Transport Act 2003 "... to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that safe passage along a highway is not endangered by snow or ice".

6.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

6.1 None. These are statutory services provided in accordance with Council policies.

7.0 CONSULTATION

7.1 Consultation during this review has taken place with a range of partner organisations, Wirral NHS, Merseytravel and Merseytunnels; and in respect of grit bins, with the Area Forums.

8.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

8.1 This report has no impact on such groups although their continuing role in helping and supporting, particularly vulnerable residents during periods of severe weather is invaluable.

9.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING; AND ASSETS

9.1 The revenue budget allocation for 2011/12 is £269,700. However, the actual spend for an average winter of 33 call outs is likely to be approximately £350,000.

9.2 If it is not possible to contain the expenditure within the budget allocation in order to meet policy, then options will be presented to Members in terms of funding the additional expenditure.

10.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 Members should note that the Council, as a Highway Authority, has a statutory responsibility to maintain the road network.

11.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

11.1 The consequences of severe weather are felt by all members of the community but are especially pertinent to those more vulnerable members of society.

11.2 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

(a) Is an EIA required? No

12.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

12.1 There are no carbon usage implications specifically identified within this report.

12.2 The Government has stated a requirement to minimise the usage of rocksalt on the highway, both to restrict the run off into watercourses and drainage systems and to conserve national stocks. Rock salt used for road gritting is a non- renewable resource.

13.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

13.1 There are no planning implications arising from this report.

REPORT AUTHOR: **Shaun Brady**
Highway Asset Manager, Highway Management
telephone: (0151) 606 2098
email: shaunbrady@wirral.gov.uk

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Highways Winter Service Operational Plan

REFERENCE MATERIAL

None

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Cabinet Winter Maintenance Arrangements 2009/10	30/11/2009
Cabinet Review of the Impact of Severe Weather in January 2010	14/01/2010
Cabinet Winter Maintenance Arrangements 2010/11	14/10/2010
Cabinet Winter Resilience Update	13/01/2011
Cabinet Highways Winter Maintenance Overspend	17/03/2011