

Parish Liaison Briefing Note - Winter Maintenance update.

The winter of 2009/10 was the harshest winter in 30 years and created a significant increase in demand for the Council's winter service. Nationally, over 1.8 million tonnes of road salt was spread on the Country's roads.

Within Bath and North East Somerset 72 individual salting runs were undertaken on the 253 mile long strategic network. This amounts to treating 37% of the network, well above the national average. The council's 9 vehicle gritting fleet spread over 4000 tonnes of road salt, with over 300 tonnes being used to refill grit bins during the winter.

During this period many parishes experienced the impact of the severe weather and all parishes were invited to contribute to the review of the winter maintenance service.

Parish Responses

A very helpful response was received from many parishes. The parish feedback had three recurring themes:

1. Requests for more grit bins

The council's officers have been investigating the requests for bins. Approximately 90 bins have been requested by the Parishes in addition to over 300 requests for bins received from other sources. These requests are still being evaluated against the grit bin policy and available budget.

Officers have also considered the issues in respect of refilling grit bins, which is a very labour intensive process and the subsequent hand spreading of salt is very inefficient. Therefore, alternative methods of providing emergency salt deliveries to communities in severe weather is being considered. The most effective appears to be deliveries of bagged salt. It is not proposed to withdraw any existing bins or stop filling bins currently being serviced.

Officers are visiting other authorities prior to making final recommendations to the Executive Member.

2. Requests for additional roads to be treated.

These requests are being considered against the salting capacity of our gritting fleet. In order to achieve the required treatment times for applying salt there is limited scope to increase routes. However, it is anticipated some minor route alterations will be made. These will be aimed at improving access for schools and details reported

to the Parishes. The Council will publish all routes and grit bin locations on a map accessible to the Parishes

3. Request for guidance on clearing snow and advice on self help.

This has also been requested by FOBRA and officers will be issuing guidance for the coming winter.

Other issues.

The ongoing review involves officers across the Council and in particular is considering the following matters;

- (1) Redeployment of staff from other services to support severe weather work
- (2) Supporting Emergency services, hospitals, schools and public transport
- (3) Drivers working hours restrictions
- (4) Providing more 'real time' information and keeping the public informed.
- (5) How best to use the external support from farmers
- (6) The use of snow ploughs.

Salt Stock

Parishes may be aware of recent media reports of a very cold winter ahead. The Council refilled the Clutton depot barn with salt during the summer and currently holds its maximum capacity of 1400 tonnes. A further 500 tonnes of salt is being held at Avonmouth in an emergency store and minor improvements to Braysdown depot should provide capacity for storage of a further emergency supply of 1000 tonnes. Emergency stock supplies will be transferred into Clutton and all gritting operations will continue to operate from Clutton.

Parishes will be advised of the final outcome of the review. In the meantime any queries in relation the winter maintenance service or the review should be addressed to either Kelvin Packer (Service Manager- Highways and Parking) or Craig Jackson (Team Leader – Highway Maintenance)

