



To: Executive Councillor for Environmental and Waste Services  
Report by: Head of Streets and Open Spaces  
Relevant scrutiny committee: Environment  
Wards affected: All

**Winter Gritting  
<KeyDecision>**

**1. Executive summary**

1.1 This report sets out the improvements made to the Council's response to winter gritting in 2010/11 and seeks to strengthen this approach for 2011/12.

**2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 The Executive Councillor is recommended:
- a) To note the approach taken during adverse weather conditions 2010/11.
  - b) To support the approach for 2011/12

**3. Background**

- 3.1 During the adverse winter conditions of 2009/10 the Council received some complaints regarding the response to the icy conditions that prevailed for several weeks over the December 2009 and January 2010 period.
- 3.2 Responsibility for maintaining the highways in a safe manner lies with the County Council as the Highways Authority. Highways include roads, footpaths and cycleways.
- 3.3 Traditionally the Council have supported the County in their endeavours when front line staff are unable to carry out their normal activities due to adverse weather conditions.
- 3.4 The Council also has a responsibility as a landowner and landlord to take reasonable steps regarding safe access to and from its buildings and other assets.
- 3.5 It is with these points in mind that officers worked closely with the County Council in developing a range of improvements for 2010/11. These improvements included:-
- Following a workshop with City and County officers better communications with the County Council emerged including dedicated points of contact for both parties.
  - Daily updates on activities both from the County and City perspective.
  - Better access to grit with a supply being delivered by County and located at the Mill Road depot, thus lessening unnecessary journeys.

- Coordination of activities and priorities for the City Council with clearly defined objectives.
  - County Council trialled Quad Bike for highways and cycle paths.
  - County supplied two spreaders for use on cycleways.
  - City supply of grit for own use increased ten fold.
  - Grit and salt made available for community use.
  - Crews deployed to brush away slush at strategic locations to prevent refreezing of ground conditions.
- 3.6 Teams were deployed to strategic sites including sheltered housing, underpasses, car parks, cemeteries, cycleways, neighbourhood shopping precincts and also footpaths as directed by the County Council.
- 3.7 The County also undertook a revision of its strategic and primary routes for winter maintenance.

#### **4. Implications**

- 4.1 The approach to winter gritting in 2010/11 was very successful and a number of compliments were received regarding the improvements to the service.
- 4.2 15 community groups were issued with a total of 16 tonnes of grit. A further 7 enquiries were on received in January but did not require delivery due to better weather arriving. Small bags of grit are not cost effective or suitable for wider distribution so the introduction of 'builder's bags', which will comfortably hold up to one tonne of loose grit/salt, are being introduced for 2011/12. These reusable bags can also be sited more easily and removed after the grit/salt has been spread thus not cluttering the footpath.
- 4.3 It is important that links with recognised community groups are further developed to encourage better take up of the offer of grit and to ensure usage on footpaths and communal areas. The grit/salt given by County is for use on the public footpaths and there has to be a level of certainty that it is being used in this way.
- 4.4 All costs for the improved level of service were met within current budgets. It should be noted that an additional sum of £3,500 was spent on non-County supplied grit/salt.
- 4.5 It should be noted however that the adverse weather in 2010 was a less significant period than in 2009/10 and resilience of the new approach has not been tested over a prolonged period.
- 4.6 It is suggested that the approach adopted in 2010 be continued in 2011 with the additional improvement of the use of builders bags and that during a prolonged period of adverse weather conditions budget implications are reviewed on a week-by-week basis.

#### **5. Background papers**

Nil

#### **6. Appendices**

#### **7. Inspection of papers**

To inspect the background papers or if you have a query on the report please contact:

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