



Haringey Council

14

Agenda item:

[No.]

Cabinet

12th October 2010

Report Title: Winter Service Plan

Report of : Niall Bolger, Director of Urban Environment

Signed : *N Bolger* 21<sup>st</sup> Sept 2010.

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Wards(s) affected: All

Report for: Key Decision

### 1. Purpose of the report

- 1.1. The Council as a Highways Authority has an obligation to keep highways free of snow and ice as far as reasonably practicable. This report seeks approval for our 2010/11 Winter Service Plan which details the Council's policies and operational procedures for dealing with snow and ice on the highway.

### 2. Introduction by Cabinet Member

- 2.1. Following the severe weather experienced last winter, Members were consulted about how we could improve our winter service arrangements. The severe weather last winter created a national grit shortage, leading to all Highways Authorities being instructed by Government to reduce gritting operations to conserve supplies. This had an impact in Haringey on carriageways and pavements that were not within the Priority 1 category.
- 2.2. This review of the Winter Service Plan is intended to take account of the feedback from consultation with Members, as well as the feedback received from residents and other sources during last winter, to provide the best possible response to future severe weather events. Within the revised plan priority has been given to

carrying out actions aimed at keeping transport and the emergency services moving, keeping businesses, schools and essential services open, and providing assistance for vulnerable people where it is needed.

### **3. State link(s) with Council Plan Priorities and actions and /or other Strategies:**

#### **3.1 Council Priorities**

The Winter Service Plan links to all of the Council's priorities to some degree.

##### **3.1.1 Priority 1 – Making Haringey one of London's greenest boroughs.**

The Winter Service Plan sets out when, where, how and in what quantities salt grit will be used to treat ice and snow. Salt grit can be damaging to the environment and can cause harm to street trees and other plant and animal life. It can also affect bridges and accelerate corrosion of the steel when used in strong concentrations. Therefore it is important to use it only when necessary and only in the quantities required to deliver the required outcomes. The Winter Service Plan sets out the decision making process about when to grit as well as how and in what quantities grit will be laid to ensure it is only used when necessary and at recommended spread rates to avoid over-use.

##### **3.1.2 Priority 2 – Creating a Better Haringey: cleaner, greener, safer.**

The primary objective of the Winter Service Plan is to provide carriageways and footpaths that are free of ice and snow and so are safe to use, as far as reasonably practicable. It is not possible to guarantee that all carriageways and footpaths will be free of snow and ice and so resources will be deployed to benefit the most people by focussing on heavily used roads, as well as vulnerable people by focussing on roads where there are Residential Care Homes and schools.

##### **3.1.3 Priority 3 – Encouraging a lifetime of well-being, at home, work, play and learning.**

The Winter Service Plan has been designed to help residents and visitors to the borough do their usual activities through spells of cold weather when there is ice and snow to contend with.

##### **3.1.4 Priority 4 – Promoting independent living while supporting adults and children when needed.**

The Winter Service Plan has been designed to provide carriageway and pavement gritting at and leading to Residential Care Homes and schools at a level of priority that recognises how important they are, even though they are not necessarily heavily used by other road users.

##### **3.1.5 Priority 5 – Delivering excellent, customer focussed, cost effective services**

During severe weather it is not always possible to make every pavement and carriageway safe for pedestrians and drivers. However, it is important to ensure that the resources that are available are deployed to the best possible effect. The Winter Service Plan provides the details of how the Council will set out to achieve this so that, even those who find their own street has not been gritted, can get an

understanding of why this is and what the Council is doing for the borough as a whole that does benefit them, like making sure goods can be delivered to the shops they rely on, that public transport hubs are accessible and that bus routes are operational.

### **3.2 Use of Resources**

3.2.1 The activities in the Winter Service Plan are delivered through the Integrated Waste Management and Transport Contract. To demonstrate value for money this contract was competitively tendered and awarded to Haringey Accord Ltd who have now been taken over by Haringey Enterprise Ltd. This contract is due to expire and a competitive dialogue process is currently under way for a new contract due to commence next April. The winter service is included as part of the package of functions in the new contract. The procurement process for the new contract will ensure that value for money is achieved for the delivery of winter service operations.

3.2.2 This contract is the most appropriate place for the winter service. It is almost always the case that at the on-set of severe weather requiring major gritting activities, street cleansing - and sometimes refuse and recycling collections - are suspended leaving a pool of skilled staff and fleet that cannot do their usual work. These resources can be deployed to gritting work. It is also appropriate because the winter service operation is based at Ashley Road Depot where the Council salt store is located. The combined effect of bringing together staff, fleet, depot and storage ensures the best use of resources is achieved to deliver the winter service.

## **4. Recommendations**

- 4.1. That Cabinet approves and adopts the Winter Service Operational Plan 2010/11 for the coming winter including the policies that determine when gritting will be undertaken and the prioritisation of locations for gritting activity (see paragraph 5.6).
- 4.2. That Cabinet approves the extension of the grit bin network to include 44 new sites of high and medium priority at a cost of £15,000 (see paragraph 5.8.1).
- 4.3 That Cabinet approves the maintenance of minimum grit stock levels throughout the winter and where stock falls below these minimum levels then in-season grit top up orders will be placed to bring the stock back up to at least the minimum levels (see paragraph 5.9.2).
- 4.4 That the Winter Service Operation Plan be reviewed annually.

## **5. Reason for recommendation(s)**

- 5.1. Haringey Council's policy is to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that safe passage along a highway is not endangered by snow or ice. The Council considers that the best way to achieve this is to prioritise certain locations and surface types based on risk assessment. The detailed operational procedures and

prioritised locations are provided in the Winter Service Operational Plan attached as Appendix 1 to this report.

## 5.2. Gritting Service

5.2.1 There are three types of gritting activity, these are as follows:

- Frost patrols, to deal with the formation of ice at low temperatures
- Pre-treatment, to provide gritting in advance of forecast snowfall
- Post-treatment, to provide gritting after snowfall and during continued snowfall

5.2.2 Also provided as part of the gritting service is a network of grit bins and a grit store at Ashley Road Depot.

## 5.3. Frost patrols

5.3.1 It will be the Council's policy to continue to carry out Frost Patrols when there is a forecast of near zero or sub-zero overnight temperatures, suggesting the risk of formation of frost and ice. Frost patrols are the most common form of gritting activity and happen on average 20 to 30 nights per winter season. They will provide for a programme of mechanical and manual gritting of a network carriageways and pedestrian areas based on the following criteria:

- Carriageways with the steepest gradients;
- Carriageways with steeper gradients and/or that are more likely to ice over and for longer due to exposure and/or due to elevation; and
- Heavily used pedestrian areas with steepest gradients, bridges and steps in exposed locations that are most likely to ice over and for longer than other pedestrian areas.

5.3.2 The list of carriageways for treatment on frost patrols is detailed in Appendix B of the Winter Service Operational Plan. Muswell Hill is an example of a frost patrol carriageway. The list of pedestrian areas for treatment on frost patrols is detailed in Appendix M. The steps at Tottenham Hale Station is an example of a frost patrol pedestrian area.

## 5.4. Pre-treatment

5.4.1 It will be the Council's policy to carry out pre-treatment when there is a forecast of snow falling, combined with low temperatures giving rise to the risk of the snow settling to any depth likely to cause highway surfaces to become slippery.

5.4.2 Pre-treatment will provide for a programme of mechanical and manual gritting of a network of Priority 1 carriageways and Priority 1 pavements based on the following criteria:

- Carriageways with the steepest gradients, highest elevation/exposure and heaviest traffic, or any combination of these factors, including all bus routes and any road serving hospitals, emergency service premises and special

education needs schools; and

- Pavements in Town Centres and around Residential Care Homes, hospitals, emergency service premises and other essential services.

5.4.3 The list of Priority 1 carriageways for pre-treatment on the forecast of snow is detailed in Appendix B of the Winter Service Operational Plan. Wood Green High Road is an example of a Priority 1 carriageway. The list of Priority 1 pavements for pre-treatment on the forecast of snow is detailed in Appendix M. Green Lanes is an example of a Priority 1 pavement.

5.4.4 If a snow event occurs during school term time, carriageways leading to schools will be gritted directly after the gritting of the Priority 1 carriageway network has been completed.

#### 5.5. Post treatment

5.5.1 It will be the Council's policy to carry out post-treatment activity to deal with fallen snow and compacted ice following and during a snow event where low temperatures are forecast that will prevent natural melting. Where necessary, post-treatment will be undertaken as repeat treatment for Priority 1 carriageways and pavements to keep them safe and operational throughout any snow event. Provided that the gritting of Priority 1 carriageways and pavements has been satisfactorily completed, further gritting will proceed on other carriageways and pavements and pedestrian areas based on the following criteria:

- Priority 2 Carriageways, those that carry significant levels of traffic and/or have less steep gradients, followed by Priority 3 Carriageways which are those remaining carriageways that have no significant gradient and carry light levels of traffic.
- Priority 2 pavements, those that serve schools (term-time only), followed by Priority 3 pavements, to support refuse and recycling collections, followed finally by Priority 4 pavements, any other pavement not already gritted.

5.5.2 The lists of Priority 2 and 3 carriageways to receive post treatment gritting activity are detailed in Appendix B of the Winter Service Operation Plan. The list of Priority 2 pavements to receive post treatment activity is detailed in Appendix M. There is no list for Priority 3 or 4 pavements. The work undertaken as part of these priorities would depend on the day of the week when the work is required with due consideration of what catch-up arrangements might be required for refuse and recycling collections delayed due to the weather.

5.5.3 It should be noted that during any given weather event it is unlikely that every carriageway and pavement priority will be completed. This is because weather events usually do not last so long that it is physically possible to carry out this level of work output and when they do last a long time it is often the case that higher priority work has to be repeated. It will be the Council's policy to ensure that work has been satisfactorily completed at each level of priority before proceeding to the next.

5.5.4 Cycle paths that are within carriageways will be gritted at the priority level of the carriageway that they are within. Gritting of separate cycle lanes has not been set out as a priority in the Winter Service Operational Plan. The reasons for this are;

- cycle paths only form part of any cycle journey, there can be no guarantee that the non-cycle-path parts of any cycle journey will have been gritted, therefore gritting of cycle paths does not result in safe cycle journeys;
- gritting of cycle paths that are separate from carriageways requires manual gritting in the same way that pavements are gritted, which is inefficient and slow. Carrying out manual gritting of separate cycle paths would benefit less people and services than would benefit from the pavement gritting priorities as set out above; and
- cycling in good conditions carries some innate risk factors for cyclists, cycling in snow and ice conditions carries much higher risk factors for cyclists. The Council could be more exposed to the possibility of claims if gritting of cycle paths is prioritised in a way that would appear to encourage an activity that should not be encouraged in snow and ice conditions.

5.6 It is recommended that it will be the Council's policy to activate frost patrols, pre and post treatment gritting activity in accordance with the arrangements set out in paragraphs 5.3.1, 5.4.1 and 5.5.1 above.

5.7 It is recommended that the Council approves of the carriageway and pavement priorities for gritting activity as detailed in Appendices B and M of the Winter Service Operational Plan. The Winter Service Operational Plan is Appendix 1 of this report.

#### 5.8 Grit Bins

5.8.1 There is currently a network of 103 grit bins in the borough. These have been placed mainly at locations where there are footpaths with gradients where gritting of footpaths can be undertaken to deal with ice or snow when appropriate. Following the extreme weather last winter the council received requests for 47 more grit bins. These are detailed in Appendix N of the Winter Service Operational Plan. The suggested sites have been inspected by officers and graded as to priority for installation based on risk factors such as gradient and proximity to junctions as follows – 27 high priority, 17 medium priority and 3 low priority. There is no case for installing grit bins at the low priority sites suggested as these locations were flat and with no specific risk factors. It is recommended that grit bins are installed at the 44 high and medium priority sites a cost of £15,000.

#### 5.9 Grit Store

5.9.1 The grit store is located at Ashley Road Depot and can hold approximately 1,500 tonnes of grit. Haringey uses Cleveland Potash, one of only two major suppliers of grit in the UK, for its grit supplies. Last winter there was a national shortage of grit and a National Salt Cell was established, meaning that the

Government took control of all grit supplies. The usual expectation is that grit supplies are delivered within 4 weeks of any order being placed but this does not apply when a National Salt Cell has been established.

5.9.2 The rate of use of grit can be unpredictable but consideration should be given to what the minimum stock of grit should be at any point during the winter. Therefore it is recommended that the following minimum stock levels should be maintained throughout the winter and where stock falls below these minimum levels then in-season grit top up orders will be placed to bring the stock back up to at least the minimum levels;

- 1st November, minimum of 1,500 tonnes;
- 1st December, minimum of 1,200 tonnes;
- 1st January, minimum of 900 tonnes;
- 1st February, minimum of 900 tonnes; and
- 1st March, minimum of 900 tonnes.

5.9.3 These minimum grit stock levels are in keeping with nationally recognised minimums designed to ensure that there is some consistency across different local authorities and to ensure that there is a minimum level of resilience to respond to severe weather events.

## **6. Other options considered**

6.1. [click here to type]

## **7. Summary**

7.1. The winter of 2009/10 was the worst for 30 years. This placed all local authorities under severe pressure and tested winter service plans to the extreme. There have been some useful learning points from last winter's experience but care needs to be taken not to put in place unnecessary and possibly costly changes to the Winter Service Operational Plan that might not be required for an ordinary winter.

7.2. The Winter Service Operational Plan contains a number of changes that should help to improve the Council's response to severe weather conditions. These are as follows:

- Thirty two carriageways have been lifted out of Priority 2 or 3 into Priority 1, these changes were due to review of risk factors and also the presence of certain types of premises like the Mortuary and SEN schools. Five carriageways have been taken out of Priority 1 for opposite reasons.
- A new Priority 1B Carriageway category has been devised so that in term time schools on Priority 2 or 3 carriageways can be given accelerated treatment if it is warranted.
- Sixty one carriageways have been lifted out of Priority 3 into Priority 2 in

recognition of the need to help support services gain access to Residential Care Homes from an earlier stage than would otherwise have been the case.

- Town Centre and Residential Care Home pavement gritting is now known as Priority 1 pavement gritting and has been extended to automatically include gritting outside transport hubs, hospitals and emergency service premises.
- A new Resilience Network has been devised in conjunction with Transport for London which ensures that in the event of another severe shortage of grit like last winter, there will be a recognised pan-London minimum gritted carriageway network that will keep London's main roads moving.
- Arrangements for gritting pavements for schools have been formalised into a new Priority 2 pavement gritting schedule that can be used in term time if required.
- There is a proposed extension of the grit bin network from 103 sites up to 147 sites.

7.3. Many of these changes have arisen as a result of feedback and suggestions from various sources which are explained in Section 12 of this report.

7.4. It is important to understand that the Winter Service Operational Plan is only designed to deal with gritting of public highways. Homes for Haringey, the Parks Service, CYPS, ACCS and Corporate Property Services all have responsibility for winter service and gritting arrangements within the external areas and premises they are responsible for. The same applies to HSP partners and Registered Social Landlords in regard to their own property. Guidance and support is available from the Environmental Resources Team to help with these arrangements if required.

7.5. The Winter Service Plan does not address the issue of pot-holes that may arise after severe weather.

## **8. Chief Financial Officer Comments**

8.1. The costs of the Winter Service Plan are included within the existing contract with Haringey Enterprise and are largely fixed and budgeted for within Environmental Resources. In the event of a particularly severe winter additional costs may be incurred largely due to the cost of purchasing additional salt supplies.

8.2. Winter Service functions will continue to be provided by an external contractor in the future and procurement for the new contract is at an advanced stage.

8.3. There is a one-off cost of £15,000 related to the recommendation to install additional grit bins. It is assumed these costs will be contained within existing funding for 2010-11. In future years all costs of winter maintenance will be contained within the cost envelope for the new contract.



## **9. Head of Legal Services Comments**

9.1 Corporate Legal Services have no comments to make on this report.

## **10. Head of Procurement Comments –[ Required for Procurement Committee]**

10.1. [click here to type]

## **11. Equalities & Community Cohesion Comments**

11.1. The Winter Service Operational Plan recognises that vulnerable people are placed at potentially greater increased risk than other people at times of severe weather. For this reason Residential Care Homes and schools have been given special consideration in the establishment of pavement and carriageway gritting priorities.

11.2. It is not possible to produce a Winter Service Operational Plan that addresses the needs of every vulnerable person in a pre-determined way. The Council will always endeavour to respond to an urgent call for gritting in isolated locations to help vulnerable people, but in doing so we must also focus on delivering the priorities set out in the plan. Similarly, we will respond to calls for urgent gritting where they are received from the emergency services.

11.3. Severe weather can sometimes promote a community spirit with neighbours helping each other in adversity. The Council will encourage this through the advice and guidance given out on the web-site.

## **12. Consultation**

12.1. On the 1<sup>st</sup> February 2010, the then Cabinet Member for Environment and Conservation, Cllr. Bevan, wrote to all Councillors asking to hear about experiences from the last two winters to contribute to a review of the winter service. The responses that were received from Councillors, along with the feedback and suggestions received from a wide range of other sources have been captured and summarised in Appendix 2 of this report, Summary of Consultation and Feedback.

12.2. Included in the Summary of Consultation and feedback are the details of who and where feedback was received from, what the feedback was and how the Environmental Resource Service has responded to the feedback. The feedback is quite varied in nature ranging from simple grit bin location suggestions to more analytical questions about why some pavements or carriageways are higher or lower priority than others. In most cases it has been possible to respond positively

to the feedback and reflect this in the changes that have been made to the Winter Service Operational Plan, as summarised in Section 7 above.

12.3. The Environmental Resource Service was required to work very closely with the Emergency Planning Team, CYPS, ACCS and other Council services during the worst of the weather last winter. This helped all of the respective services to get a good understanding of the challenges and demands faced by each other. A good deal of what was learnt during this time has been used to make changes to the Winter Service Operational Plan. It has also helped to clarify lines of responsibility so that each service is aware of and can prepare to meet its own responsibilities for treatment of ice and snow.

12.4. Further consultation is planned with Emergency Services, neighbouring London Boroughs, TfL and other key partners prior to Cabinet on 14<sup>th</sup> October 2010. Appendix 2 will be updated with any feedback from this consultation.

12.5. The Winter Service Operational Plan should be regarded as a dynamic document and subject to annual review to ensure that it continues to reflect the needs of people in Haringey and changes in the nature of the borough. It is planned that Haringey People and Area Assemblies be used to promote awareness Winter Service Operational Plan giving residents the opportunity to comment on it, thereby helping to inform next year's review. It is recommended that the Winter Service Operational Plan be reviewed annually.

### **13. Service Financial Comments**

13.1. The cost of providing the winter service within the current contract is fixed so that for an average winter the Council would not expect to pay any significant additional cost to or make any significant deduction from the contractor. As such there is a reasonable level of cost certainty. The changes to the winter service explained in this report and set out in the Winter Service Operational Plan have been explained to Haringey Enterprise Ltd, the service provider. Enterprise has stated that there will be no additional cost for the provision of the revised winter service operation for the coming winter.

13.2. Looking further ahead, a draft of the revised Winter Service Operational Plan has been provided in confidence to the two bidders taking part in competitive dialogue process for the new waste management contract due to commence in April 2011. Both bidders are aware that there is an overall cost envelope for the new contract and that the winter service is required to be provided within this cost envelope. Therefore, the provision of the revised winter service will not lead to additional costs in the new waste management contract.

13.3. There is a one-off additional cost of around £15,000 associated with the installation of the 44 new grit bins recommended for installation as detailed in Section 5 of this report. This additional cost can be managed within the budget of

the Environmental Resource Service.

#### **14. Service Comments, Advice to Residents**

14.1. The Council does not expect or encourage residents or businesses to clear snow or ice from the pavements or footpaths that are part of the highway outside where they live or work. This is because:

- they could injure themselves doing this work
- they may not be fit enough to do such work
- they may not have the correct tools or protective equipment to do this work or know how to use them properly and safely
- they could injure other people or create conditions that cause injury to others
- they could damage property

14.2 The Council will provide advice and guidance to residents through the web-site about how to prepare for and cope with severe snow and ice weather conditions.

#### **15. Comments from the Emergency Planning and Business Continuity Manager**

15.1 The plan reflects the lessons from the last winter. In particular, the need to keep essential services running and schools open through severe weather has been thoroughly incorporated. The plan also aligns properly with London-wide arrangements for dealing with severe weather emergencies. In preparing the plan, officers have been mindful of limitations in the national supply arrangements for gritting salt which means there is an unavoidable risk that demand exceeds supply. The plan takes precautions to manage this risk effectively by strengthening the management of the Council's salt supply.

#### **16. Use of appendices /Tables and photographs**

Appendix 1 – Winter Service Operational Plan  
Appendix 2 – Feedback and Consultation Table

#### **17. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985**

Highways Act, 1980

Well Maintained Highways - Code of Practice for Highway Maintenance Management

Highway Winter Maintenance Guide

Pollution Prevention Guidelines Highway Depots: PPG10