

CABINET MEMBER – TECHNICAL SERVICES – 26 JANUARY 2011

128. WINTER SERVICE INTERIM REPORT

The Cabinet Member considered the report of the Environmental and Technical Services Director that provided information on the recent extreme weather event and identifying initial opportunities for consideration; and indicating that a decision on this matter was required because the Cabinet Member - Technical Services had requested a report on the response to the recent extreme weather event and a re-evaluation of the effectiveness of the existing Winter Service Policy in light of that event; and that many of the options for changing or increasing service provision had cost implications that would require Member approval.

The report indicated that the Environmental and Technical Services Department provided a Winter Service to the borough in accordance with the Council's Winter Service Policy and Operational Plan; that Officers monitored the weather conditions 24 hours a day throughout the winter season and enacted the plan when weather conditions dictated; that a local contractor, who had secured the contract twice consecutively in open competitive tendering, provided the actual gritting operation; and detailed that there were eight specific gritting routes identified for the borough's roads that treated 209 miles (35%) of Sefton's total highway network, which exceeded the Audit Commission guidelines that suggested that between 12% and 25% of the carriageway network should be treated.

The report also detailed the extreme weather event that commenced on 17 December 2010 and the implemented response to the event relating to:

- Winter Service Policy/Highways
- Schools
- Health and Social Care
- Communication and Co-ordination

The report concluded that, despite the efforts of Council staff and the Council's contractor, the unprecedented conditions experienced over the ten days from 17 December 2010 resulted in an outcome that was below the expectations of elected Members, residents and highway users; and highlighted possible improvement actions for consideration and recommendation to Cabinet relating to the following:

- snow ploughing
- grit bins
- additional gritting
- gritter GPS - tracking
- salt
- additional resources
- Winter Service Policy
- co-ordination and escalation of the Council's response

- engagement with the community
- voluntary, community and faith organisations

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the report updating on the recent extreme weather event be noted;
- (2) the initial findings identified in paragraphs 29 to 36 of the report be acknowledged;
- (3) the approach outlined in paragraphs 37 to 40 be approved subject to the submission of further reports of the Environmental and Technical Services Director and the Cabinet be advised accordingly; and
- (4) **Cabinet be requested to approve the procurement of 6 additional snow ploughs at an approximate cost of £35,000 (option (a) in paragraph 41) and consider and determine the possible immediate/short term and longer term options as detailed in (b) to (h) of paragraph 41 of the report**