

## **SOUTHPORT AREA COMMITTEE – 3 FEBRUARY 2010**

### **126. WINTER SERVICE**

Further to Minute No. 113(d) of 6 January 2010, the Committee considered the report of the Planning and Economic Regeneration Director on the winter service provision.

The report indicated that the current winter service policy was approved by Council in 2004; that there were set gritting routes for both footways and carriageways; that 209 miles of carriageway were on the gritting schedule, 35% of the total network whilst best practice suggested gritting a minimum of 20%; and that footway gritting was undertaken in the town centres of Bootle, Crosby, Formby, Maghull and Southport.

The report also detailed the problems experienced due to the extreme adverse weather conditions in winter 2009/10.

The report concluded by detailing that a highway authority had a statutory duty to maintain the highway and must take such care as in all the circumstances was reasonably required to secure that the highway was not dangerous; and that legal advice was such that by virtue of the fact that Sefton Council had published a Winter Service Policy and Operational Plan and had documentary proof that it had used its best endeavours to ensure compliance with and delivery of that policy it could demonstrate that it had complied with its statutory duties.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the report on the winter service gritting provision be noted; and
- (2) the Cabinet Member - Technical Services be requested to explore the possibility of gritting roads and pavements on approaches to schools.

**Meeting:** Southport Area Committee  
Cabinet Member – Technical Services

**Date of Meeting:** 3 February 2010  
24 February 2010

**Title of Report:** WINTER SERVICE

**Report of:**  
Strategic Director Regeneration

**Contact Officer:**  
Jeremy McConkey Network Manager  
0151 934 4222

This report contains	Yes	No
<b>CONFIDENTIAL</b> Information/		√
<b>EXEMPT</b> information by virtue of paragraph(s).....of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act, 1972 (If information <u>is</u> marked exempt, the Public Interest Test must be applied and favour the exclusion of the information from the press and public).		√
Is the decision on this report <b>DELEGATED?</b>	√	

**Purpose of Report**

To respond to Area Committee request for a report on Winter Service Provision

**Recommendation(s)**

Area Committee are requested to:

1. Note the report

Cabinet Member requested to:

1. Explore the possibility of gritting roads and pavements on approaches to schools

## **Corporate Objective Monitoring**

<u>Corporate Objective</u>		<u>Positive Impact</u>	<u>Neutral Impact</u>	<u>Negative Impact</u>
1.	Creating a Learning Community		√	
2.	Creating Safe Communities	√		
3.	Jobs and Prosperity		√	
4.	Improving Health and Well-Being		√	
5.	Environmental Sustainability	√		
6.	Creating Inclusive Communities		√	
7.	Improving the Quality of Council Services and Strengthening local Democracy	√		
8.	Children and Young People		√	

## **Financial Implications**

	<b>2008/ 2009 £</b>	<b>2009/ 2010 £</b>	<b>2010/ 2011 £</b>	<b>2011/ 2012 £</b>
<b><u>CAPITAL EXPENDITURE</u></b>				
Gross Increase in Capital Expenditure				
Funded by:				
Sefton Capital Resources				
Specific Capital Resources				
<b><u>REVENUE IMPLICATIONS</u></b>				
Gross Increase in Revenue Expenditure				
Funded by:				
Sefton funded Resources – allocation requested from Southport Area Committee budget				
Funded from External Resources				
Does the External Funding have an expiry date? Y/N	When?			
How will the service be funded post expiry?				

## **Departments consulted in the preparation of this Report**

None

## **List of background papers relied upon in the preparation of this Report**

### Network Management Winter Service Policy and Operational Plan

#### **1.0 BACKGROUND TO WINTER SERVICE POLICY**

- 1.1 Members will be aware that Sefton operates a Winter Service Policy and Operational Plan, copies of which have been provided previously to all Elected Members. The same information is available on the internet.
- 1.2 The current winter service policy was approved by Council in 2004 and the basic service is detailed below:
- 1.3 Trained officers are on duty 24 hours a day during the winter season, monitoring the weather through computer forecast models and actual data from two weather stations located within the borough plus further stations in neighbouring authorities. The consultant forecaster is also available for discussion and advise 24 hours a day
- 1.4 There are set gritting routes for both footways and carriageways
- 1.5 We currently grit 209 miles (335 kilometres) of carriageway representing 35% of the total network. Best practice suggests gritting a minimum of 20%. We put an additive in our rock salt which allows us to reduce the amount we whilst maintaining and even enhancing performance. We therefore grit at 8 grams per square metre at a spread width of 7.2 metres.
- 1.6 The gritting is undertaken by 8 gritters and the whole process takes 4 hours to complete.
- 1.7 Footway gritting covers the town centres of Bootle, Crosby, Maghull, Formby and Southport and is undertaken by 3 small tractors with gritting hoppers attached
- 1.8 55 grit bins are placed throughout the borough and are restocked as needed throughout the season
- 1.9 The policy clearly states that Sefton do not accede to requests for additional gritting at locations which do not form part of the approved gritting routes

#### **2.0 WINTER 2009/10**

- 2.1 After a relatively mild start to the winter we have recently been subjected to an extended period of extreme weather conditions with road surface temperatures dropping lower than previously experienced in the borough. This has resulted in a substantial increase in gritting requirements to meet Sefton's

statutory duty. Officers have been vigilant in monitoring the weather 24 hours a day to provide as much help as possible to keep main roads throughout the borough accessible. The gritting operation has been enacted over 45 times during the present winter.

- 2.2 To be effective, the rock salt relies on the movement of traffic and many roads, although gritted, can still suffer due to reduced traffic flows, particularly over the recent period of limited movement. Sefton also puts an additive in the rock salt which makes it more effective than the standard product. As much as possible is done with the resources available to us to help to keep traffic and people moving throughout the borough.
- 2.3 Snow and freezing rain has been a major problem this winter with people experiencing difficulty as a result. Currently, the policy does not call for the removal of snow prior to the footway gritting operation however this issue has been raised by a number of Elected Members and is due to be discussed at Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 2nd February 2010. A verbal report on that meeting can be provided at Southport Area Committee meeting.
- 2.4 Salt supplies have been limited as Central Government has stepped in to limit the amount of salt provided to local authorities. Indeed, they are pressing local authorities to reduce their salt usage by 25%. Members should be aware, however, that the intervention has not resulted in any adverse effect on service delivery. Whilst we have not had as much salt in reserve as I would like, regular small deliveries have so far been sufficient for our needs. We are in daily contact with Government officials regarding our stocks and requirements.

### **3.0 LEGAL ISSUES**

- 3.1 The Highways Act 1980 Section 41 and 58 clearly state that the Highway Authorities have a statutory duty to maintain the highway and must take such care as in all the circumstances is reasonably required to secure that the highway is not dangerous.
- 3.2 The Railways and Transport Safety Act 2003 (section 111) has inserted an additional section 41[1][A] to the Highways Act 1980 which places a duty on Highway Authorities in respect of winter conditions, as follows:-

‘In particular, a Highway Authority is under a duty to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that safe passage along a highway is not endangered by snow or ice’.
- 3.3 “Legal advice” is such that by virtue of the fact that Sefton Council has a published Winter Service Policy and Operational Plan, and has documentary proof that it has used its best endeavours to ensure compliance with and delivery of that policy, it can demonstrate that it has complied with its statutory duties.

