



BLACKWOOD TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT GROUP – 27TH JANUARY 2011

**SUBJECT: INCLEMENT WEATHER OVER THE CHRISTMAS PERIOD (MEASURES
TAKEN IN THE TOWN CENTRE AND THE IMPACT ON TRADE)**

REPORT BY: CHIEF EXECUTIVE

1. The Winter Maintenance Service Plan is an operational document that is utilised to undertake winter maintenance activities throughout the winter. The document lists the authorities priorities. These priorities initially dictate that the primary highway network is maintained operational for vehicular traffic to allow essential goods and services to be maintained; these routes are listed within the document. Once the authority is satisfied that these routes are operational the limited resources are then dedicated to medical emergencies including access for ambulances to Dialysis patients of which there are more than 50 within the authority, other urgent medical appointments, funerals, meals on wheels, medical centres and hospitals, OAP complexes, access to surgeries and schools, transportation sites, town centre shopping areas, etc. Each of these areas have different priorities every time a severe weather event occurs so pre-planning for these to a local level must remain flexible, particularly with the unknown availability resources at that time. Side roads would be looked at after these have been attended to.
2. Even though the council operates on a 24-hour basis, and regularly grits throughout the night, due to the size of the authority and the appropriate level of resources it should maintain, it is not possible to be able to attend to grit every street. The authority has over 1150 kms (700 miles) of carriageway and approximately 2000 kms (1200 miles) of footway. It is therefore essential that prioritisation of urgent requirements are undertaken.
3. To provide some scale, if we have 100 mm of snow on our carriageways and footways this amounts to approximately 1,000,000 cubic metres of snow that needs to be removed.
4. In order to provide some self-help there are almost 800 salt bins strategically placed around the authority. The location of these salt bins is predominantly on steep inclines that are not on the gritting route. An assessment is undertaken each summer of requests for salt bins and again these are prioritised on risk of the location. Unfortunately it is not feasible to supply a grit bin to each and every location that requests a salt bin. The recent severe weather across the UK has resulted in unprecedented demand for grit bins.
5. This winter the authority has trialled placing additional grit bins within the three main strategic town centres, Caerphilly, Blackwood and Bargoed. An emphasis was also placed on ensuring that key Christmas events that would impact on trade in the approach to Christmas received appropriate attention to ensure that the town centres were fully accessible. Initial feedback indicates that this was a success during the recent snow and is something that can be built on for the future.
6. As an authority we try our best to meet the needs and demands of our residents. Unfortunately during times of exceptional inclement weather it is not always possible to respond to every single request due to resource availability. During such times hopefully you understand that prioritisation has to take place. As stated previously this is the reason the authority has documented procedures that are fully consulted upon to ensure that the service

provided is the most appropriate to the conditions being experienced and could result in two adjacent streets receiving different treatment.

Author: Marcus Lloyd, Highway Operations Group Manager