



COMMUNITY COUNCIL LIAISON SUB-COMMITTEE – 17TH FEBRUARY 2010

SUBJECT: WINTER SERVICE PLAN

REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF THE ENVIRONMENT

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The main purpose of the Winter Service Plan is to “ensure, so far as is reasonably practical, that safe passage along a highway is not endangered by snow and ice. This law was made under section 111 of The Railways and Transport Safety Act, which received royal assent on 10 July 2003. Commencement order 31st October 2003.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The winter service plan explains Caerphilly County Borough Council’s responsibilities, strategy/policy and operational procedures in respect to the management and maintenance of the Caerphilly County Borough highway infrastructure network during the defined winter maintenance period, covering precautionary salting operations and clearance of ice and snow.
- 2.2 The County Borough Council aims to provide a winter service which, as far as possible, facilitates the safe movement of traffic and keeps to a minimum delays and accidents caused by adverse winter weather conditions. In practice this is achieved by taking precautionary measures to pre-salt certain routes, taking account of weather forecast and local observations.
- 2.3 In order for essential goods and services to be maintained, priority is primarily given to the ‘A’ and ‘B’ routes (the authorities core transportation network). The primary objective is to achieve the precautionary application of salt to specified elements of the network prior to the predicted time for the onset of sub-zero conditions

3. CCBC’S WINTER SERVICE PLAN

- 3.1 The Authority has an established Winter Maintenance Plan, which is subject to annual review, CD copies of which have been made available to Members via the Resource Centre at Ty Penallta and to all Community Town Councils. Details of service arrangements have previously been presented to Members.
- 3.2 Service provision requires 6 main cost functions: -
- The purchase and storage of rock salt.
 - The purchase of new footway salting equipment.
 - The provision and maintenance of a fleet of winter maintenance vehicles and resources available on a guaranteed standby basis during the winter maintenance period.
 - The provision and maintenance of a network of local salt bins.
 - The undertaking of precautionary salting and clearance of snowfall and/or build-ups of ice on a designated salting route network.

- Clearance of snowfall and/or build-ups of ice on the remainder of the network, depending on priorities during adverse weather conditions.

3.3 As a result of a severe winter this year, it has been decided that a comprehensive review of the Winter Service Plan is required. The new plan is to be produced in readiness for the winter period 2010/2011 and an action plan has been drafted to manage the outcomes of this review.

4. FINANCE

4.1 The budget provision for 2009/2010 is £674,000.

4.2 There are no other financial implications other than those arising from an unusually severe winter.

Highways Facts and Figures

- 1100 km of highway that has to be maintained
- 480 km of the highway gritted
- 43% of CCBC highways gritted compared to a national average of 37%

5. PERSONNEL

5.1 New directive on drivers hours, does not allow drivers to exceed their driving hours for routine winter maintenance, except in emergency conditions.

5.2 Secondment of personnel from other departments has taken place during the recent snowfall conditions to assist in the clearance of town centres and doctors surgeries etc.

6. NORMAL WINTER MAINTENANCE PRACTICE.

6.1 Prior to the winter season, Caerphilly's stock of salt is at a maximum capacity of 4000t at three strategic locations.

6.2 When stock reduces to 75% (3000t) it is practice to reorder additional 1000t to return to full capacity within 48hrs.

6.3 Pre-salting of the network requires approximately 70t per salt run. This can increase to 140t in snow conditions per run.

6.4 In snow conditions, national guidance is to hold approximately 6 days stock levels. Caerphilly usually holds between 10-12 days.

7. AMENDMENTS TO NORMAL PRACTICE DURING RECENT EXCEPTIONAL SNOW FALL.

7.4 It has been well publicised that there has been a widespread national shortage of rock salt for treating highways.

7.5 During the significant shortfall of rock salt, officers have had to make difficult decisions to conserve critical salt supplies. These decisions consisted of:-

- (a) Not refilling salt bins / salt tips. This would take approximately 250t of salt.
- (b) Reducing the spread rate of salt in marginal circumstance.
- (c) Only salting the core critical network and patrolling the remainder, monitoring for any

dangerous formations of ice.

8. SUMMARY

- 8.1 It has to be appreciated that in the current economic climate and with the demands placed on the highway budget, unfortunately there will be occasions where public demands cannot be met.
- 8.2 Whilst we will endeavour to clear snow from non-priority highways as soon as possible, there will be certain circumstances when higher priorities will take precedence e.g. Medical Emergencies, Hospitals, Surgeries, OAP accommodation and Funerals.
- 8.3 Following the recent severe weather event and the evidence of how the national salt shortage has impacted on service delivery, a group chaired by the Chief Executive has met to undertake a debrief. It has been agreed to hold a seminar for Caerphilly County Borough Council Councillors and further details will be circulated to all Clerks in due course.

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