

## **CORPORATE HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE – 21ST NOVEMBER 2011**

**SUBJECT: INCLEMENT WEATHER PREPARATIONS**

**REPORT BY: DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

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### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To provide the committee with an overview of preparations for inclement weather for the coming winter months.

### **2. SUMMARY**

- 2.1 The Authority has seen two particularly poor winters where snowfall has significantly affected the county borough. Following each winter a de-brief has been led by Highways Operations in order to review and improve preparations for the following winter. This has proved very successful with preparations starting earlier each year. The following report provides an overview of the arrangements in key service areas to reduce the risk to staff, service users and residents from inclement weather.

### **3. REPORT**

#### **3.1 General Preparation**

##### **3.1.1 Driving in Inclement Weather**

Highways have trained 40 employees in winter maintenance which includes driving in inclement weather a further 40 staff in DLO and 10 in Countryside are currently receiving training on driving in winter conditions.

##### **3.1.2 PPE**

Over a 1,000 YakTrax (shoe attachments) have been issued to staff who deliver front line services in the winter months, this includes Social Services, Catering, Waste and Highways staff. The devices have allowed staff to continue with service delivery while conditions underfoot have been very poor. The feedback from staff has been excellent. Health and Safety have recently opened up the offer to staff to purchase at cost price for personal use, an order has already been placed.

##### **3.2 Highways Network**

The authority has secured greater supplies of salt than it has ever held previously. There is currently approximately 10,000t available. This level of salt stock is more than the Authority has used over the last two winters. During the last winter period Highways Division used 9,000t throughout the whole winter. Highways have previously held stocks of approximately 4,500t and have restocked when necessary.

In addition three new gritting vehicles have recently been delivered and an additional four 7.5t lorries have been fitted with snow plough attachments.

Highways Operations Group have also provided funding to convert two Grounds Maintenance tractors to be fitted with plough attachments should they be needed to support snow clearing activities this winter.

Highways Operations have led inclement weather planning, working closely with other service areas in preparation for the coming winter and the revised Winter Service Plan has been circulated following widespread consultation.

### **3.3 Catering Services**

#### **3.3.1 Meals on Wheels**

Two 4 x 4 vehicles will be hired from the 1st of December through until 31st of March. The vehicles are strategically placed to be used to collect key staff to cover emergency service provisions if road conditions are not passable and public transport is not available. This ensures all emergency services have sufficient staff to supply continuity of service.

Catering have a local agreement in place with a 4 x 4 company to draw off additional vehicles if required and work very closely with the emergency planning department and countryside to utilise any additional 4 x 4 vehicles that may be available. In addition to the 4 x 4's, Catering have a continuity plan to pre-deliver frozen meals to vulnerable clients that we may fail to reach in extreme weather conditions. This allows Catering to pre-plan routes on a rota basis if needed in the knowledge that vulnerable customers needs have been met.

The meals on wheels sites have grit boxes on site to enable routes to be kept clear by the DLO and YakTrax have been issued to all key members of staff.

#### **3.3.2 Sheltered Housing**

Catering have two sheltered housing sites that need to be staffed at all times. The 4 x 4 vehicles are used in emergency situations to ensure staff are available at each site. Catering also carry a supply of frozen meals on site that can be issued by resident care staff if Catering are unable to reach the sites for any reason.

### **3.4 Schools**

Inclement weather guidance to schools has been revised and will be re-issued once approved by the Director for Education. Schools have been offered a snow clearance kit to enable caretaking staff to keep school footpaths and entrances clear. To date only 16 schools have taken up the offer. All caretaking staff have been issued with YakTrax to assist in snow clearing activities.

To assist Highways Operations in planning clearing of school entrance roads a prioritised list has been produced by H&S and was used last winter. The list considers topography of the area, if the school has a special resource base etc. in assigning a priority rating for clearance. The list will be used again this winter.

Schools will be asked to test the school closure site on the Authority's website as well as their own communication arrangements to ensure that they are prepared to communicate disruption during inclement weather.

### 3.5 **Social Services**

Social Services have developed detailed plans to ensure that essential services are maintained during periods of inclement weather. Seven 4x4 vehicles will be available for use and staff have been provided with YakTrax.

Strategic closure of non-essential services such as Day Centres is planned if additional staff are required to support essential services.

In preparation for the flu season, 300 social care staff will be offered the flu vaccine during work time to assist with business continuity for essential services and to protect clients vulnerable to infection.

## 4. **RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS**

That the contents of the report are noted.

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