Council	Agenda Item 34
21 October 2010	Brighton & Hove City Council

Subject:		**Overview & Scrutiny Report: Winter Service Plan**
Date of Meeting:		**21 October 2010**
Report of:		**The Acting Director of Strategy & Governance**
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Wards Affected:	All	

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

1.1 The Council's Constitution requires reports from overview & scrutiny panels, together with the Executive response to these reports, to be submitted to Full Council for information.

1.2 This report presents the Overview and Scrutiny Commission (OSC) scrutiny panel report on the "Winter Service Plan" (**Appendix 1**) and the responses to the recommendations from the Cabinet Member Meeting (**Appendix 2**).

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

2.1 That Member's note the OSC scrutiny panel report on the Winter Service Plan (**Appendix 1**) and the response to the recommendations from the Environment Cabinet Member Meeting (**Appendix 2**).

3. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

3.1 The Met Office reported the winter of 2009/2010 to have been the coldest in 30 years, punctuated by severe snow events during 16-21 December 2009 and 6-13 January 2010. High levels of snowfall during the Christmas period caused severe disruption across both Brighton & Hove and the country as a whole.

1.2 Deposits of up to 15cm of snow fell across the city throughout the evening of Thursday 17 December and early morning of Friday 18 December 2009. This was followed by an unusually prolonged period of day time temperatures consistently below freezing. The resulting

impacted frozen snow and ice resulted in very difficult driving and walking conditions throughout the city on treated and untreated routes, including footways. This in turn led to criticism that the Council hadn't met its service obligations, in spite of 'gritting' and pavement clearance operations undertaken in accordance with normal 'Winter Service' procedures.

1.3 Following the extensive disruption caused by the severe snow and ice over the Christmas and New Year period, a cross-party scrutiny panel of councillors have reviewed how the council and other partners responded using the Winter Service Plan as a starting point.

1.4 Chaired by Councillor Warren Morgan the panel consisted of Councillors David Watkins, Tony Janio and Sven Rufus. The panel held a one-day information gathering session with witnesses from the council, partners such as the PCT, bus company and residents.

1.5 The panel made a number of recommendations as to how working practices could be improved, often building-upon and formalising changes that were implemented between the two snow events. They also made recommendations on how the council might better prepare and equip itself in terms of resources, finances permitting.

3.6 The scrutiny panel report was endorsed by ECSOSC at its June meeting and the response to the recommendations was agreed at Environment Cabinet Member Meeting in July.

4. CONSULTATION

4.1 No formal consultation has been undertaken in relation to this report. The Scrutiny Review undertook extensive consultation with interested parties.

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

5.1 No specific implications for this report, as this report is purely for the Council to note

Legal Implications:

5.2 As indicated in paragraphs 1.1 and 2.1 above, and in accordance with the council's procedure rules on overview and scrutiny, this report is purely for Council to note. There are no further legal implications arising directly from the report.

Lawyer consulted: Oliver Dixon Date: 07 October 2010

Equalities Implications:

5.3 No specific implications for this report, as this report is purely for the Council to note.

Sustainability Implications:

5.4 No specific implications for this report, as this report is purely for the Council to note.

Crime & Disorder Implications:

5.5 No specific implications for this report, as this report is purely for the Council to note.

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

5.6 No specific implications for this report, as this report is purely for the Council to note.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

5.7 No specific implications for this report, as this report is purely for the Council to note.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. Report of OSC into the Winter Service Plan
2. The Executive Response

Documents in Members' Rooms:

None

Background Documents:

The Council's Constitution