Brighton & Hove City Council

Report of the Winter Service Plan Review Scrutiny Panel

March 2010

Winter Service Plan Review

Volume One

DRAFT

Panel Members

Councillor Warren Morgan (Chair)
Councillor Tony Janio
Councillor Sven Rufus
Councillor David Watkins

CONTENTS

1. **Chairs Forward**
2. **Introduction**
3. **Methodology**
4. **Findings and Recommendations**
    - **Partnership Working**
    - **Gritting Routes**
    - **Cross Team Working**
    - **Schools**
    - **Communication**
    - **Supporting Residents**
    - **Capital Investment**

Volume Two contains all of the Evidence and Appendices

Chairs Foreword

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.

We have made a number of recommendations as to how working practices can be improved, often building-upon and formalising changes that were implemented between the two snow events. We have also made recommendations on how the council might better prepare and equip itself in terms of resources, finances permitting. It will be up to the Administration to judge what further expenditure is essential, affordable or proportionate to the risk of further significant winter weather events occurring.

Whilst everything may not have been perfect, recognition needs to be given to the council officers and others who worked long hours in often very difficult conditions to try and keep the city moving.

We have not sought to criticise the response, rather suggest positive service developments that will mean the council and our partners are better prepared for events of a similar nature in the future. The preparedness for, and response to, events such as this should be kept under review and compared to that of other comparable authorities.

Particular thanks are offered to the witnesses who gave their expertise to the panel, and especially to the Head of Network Management and her team for their advice. Finally I would like to thank my scrutiny colleagues Councillors Tony Janio, Sven Rufus and David Watkins for working on this scrutiny review panel.



Councillor Warren Morgan
Winter Service Plan Review Panel Chair

Introduction

1.1 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.[1] 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 Accumulations of snow of up to 10cm on higher ground were experienced from the 6 January 2010. There were repeated snowfalls from 6 through to 9 January and again on the 12 & 13 January, with each snowfall bringing between 2–10cm of additional accumulation. There were accompanying strong winds leading to significant snow drifts on outlying roads. Less ice was formed than during December, however repeated snowfalls meant that gritting was needed continually on the same routes after each snowfall.

1.4 Despite significant improvements in the response provided between the two snowfalls there was recognition within the council that there would be benefits from reviewing how the council and its partners responded, lessons learnt and whether good practice from other authorities could be replicated. It was therefore agreed by the Environment & Community Safety Overview & Scrutiny Committee (ECSOSC) on 8 February 2010 to undertake a short scrutiny review of the Winter Service Plan.

1.5 The council received large number of complaints regarding the support offered to residents during the snow. A summary of these is available as Appendix G. A constant theme was that residents felt isolated, their area had been forgotten and that insufficient gritting had been carried out across the city. The remit of this panel was not to examine or make judgements on any individual incidents or cases; those were for the appropriate departments and legal processes within the council to deal with in.

1.6 The recommendations in this report suggest improved working practices for the council and its partners to consider as part of the

[1] http://www.metoffice.gov.uk/corporate/pressoffice/2010/pr20100301.html

Winter Service Plan (WSP). In many cases these seek to formalise and build upon changes initiated between the two snowfalls. There is a theme of 'Communications' and 'Information Sharing' throughout the recommendations.

1.7 The WSP details the actions the council will undertake to ‘prevent or remove accumulations of ice and snow from the Public Highway’. It was prepared in accordance with LGA’s Code of Good Practice for Highway Maintenance and Winter Maintenance Supplement and Best Value Code of Practice.

1.8 The requirement to prepare a WSP stems from legal obligations on the Highway Authority from the 1980 Highways Act, the Railways & Transport Act 2003 and Traffic Management Act 2004 that requires removal of snow and ice on the public highway as far as is reasonably practicable. This is to permit the safe movement of traffic on designated roads and to minimise accidents and delays brought about by adverse weather conditions.

1.9 The Council treats 40% of its highway network exceeding the Audit Commission Target of 24 – 38%. The current Winter Service Plan was approved with no objections at the Environment Cabinet Member meeting on 5 November 2009.

1.10 Winter Service is undertaken from November to March encompassing the predicted coldest temperatures and treats a priority network of approximately 250km of the council’s 630km of public highway with rock salt and grit using vehicle mounted spreaders or ‘gritters’.

1.11 The priority network of roads encompasses all A, B and C roads, all bus routes as well as key strategic destinations such as hospitals and premises related to emergency services.

1.12 Pavements are cleared and treated in exceptional circumstances such as severe and prolonged snowfall and arrangements exist with highway subcontractors to undertake this in specified areas in the Winter Service Plan. There are 350 grit bins located across the City.

Methodology

2.1 Chaired by Councillor Warren Morgan the cross-party panel consisted of Councillors Tony Janio, Sven Rufus and David Watkins. Unlike most previous scrutiny panels, the panel was set up as a one-off meeting. It was agreed at Environment & Community Safety Overview & Scrutiny Committee (ECSOSC) on 8 February 2010 to supplement the extensive report and discussion undertaken at that meeting with a one-day scrutiny panel, with a view to it reporting back to its parent committee with recommendations by the early summer. Agenda Item 46 of the 8 February ECSOSC meeting agreed the terms of reference as:

- The council's Highways Winter Service Plan
- The predicted regularity of severe winter weather
- The council's response to the initial snowfall
- Changes to the council's response at the time of the second snowfall
- Suggestions for alterations to service provision
- Comparative information available from other local authorities
- Financial implications of any service modifications[2]

2.2 In order to address the terms of reference, the panel issued invitations to council officers and representatives of organisations throughout the city who had involvement or experience of the severe winter weather.

2.3 Primarily, the panel wanted to hear from the Highways and Cityclean departments, as they oversaw the running of the Winter Service Plan. In addition it was felt necessary to hear from both frontline council services that were affected by the snowfall (in particular Adult Social Care) and teams that deal with future planning and preparation for severe weather and the impact of climate change.

2.4 The WSP relates to public highways and all service providers should have emergency/contingency plans in place for severe disruptive events. The panel therefore took evidence from service providers in the city that had been disrupted by the severe weather. These included Sussex Police, East Sussex Fire Authority, the PCT and the Brighton & Hove Bus Company. Additionally the panel wished to hear from the business and third sectors.

2.5 Other local authorities were sent a questionnaire about their WSPs. Information collected from 9 authorities is contained within Appendix L.

2.6 Finally, the panel sent out a press release inviting members of the public who wished to, "contribute innovative ideas or constructive views

[2] See Appendix F, 3.8

on how the council could improve its policy in response to severe weather in the future"[3].

2.7 On the day of the meeting, the panel heard evidence from:

- Councillor Geoffrey Theobald, Environment Cabinet Member
- Thurstan Crockett, Head of Sustainability and Environmental Policy
- Mark Prior, Assistant Director, Sustainable Transport
- Christina Liassides, Head of Network Management
- Gillian Marston, Assistant Director, Cityclean & Cityparks
- Paul Martin, General Manager, Adult Social Care
- Sally Howard, Director of Operations, Brighton & Sussex University Hospitals Trust
- Juliet Warburton, Head of Primary and Community care, PCT
- Mike Best, Operations Director, Brighton & Hove Buses Company Ltd
- Lynne Henshaw, GMB Representative
- 3 members of the public

2.8 Additional evidence was received from a number of different council departments, organisations and individuals including:

- Councillor Pete West
- Councillor Bill Randall
- Robin Humphries, Civil Contingencies Manager
- Brighton & Hove City Council Legal Services
- Brighton & Hove Economic Partnership
- Brighton & Hove Older People's Forum
- Community Voluntary Sector Forum
- East Sussex Fire Authority
- Sussex Police
- Hangleton & Knoll 50+ Steering Group
- North Moulsecoomb Tenants and Resident's Association
- Chair of Governors, Carden Primary School
- 2 members of the public
- 9 local authorities

2.9 From the evidence obtained 10 recommendations have been produced.

[3] See Appendix I

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 During the course of a 'normal' winter the WSP has proved sufficient for ensuring the city remains free of ice and snow, so much so it was agreed at the November Environment Cabinet Member Meeting without any significant debate.[4] The WSP can therefore been seen as fit for purpose during the normal course of events.

3.2 However over the Christmas and New Year period events threw the response of the council to the severe weather into the spotlight and attracted considerable criticism.[5] This review has focused on what is required to ensure the WSP is capable of withstanding abnormally severe winter weather. The findings below are based upon the evidence presented to the panel, and many of the recommendations build upon improvements in response which were developed between the two snow events.

3.3 In making recommendations the panel have been acutely aware that a balance needs to be struck between being sufficiently prepared to cope with severe winter weather, and the need to be proportionate in allocating resources to cope with eventualities that happen only infrequently. For example there are 3,880 roads in Brighton and Hove; it is not possible to grit them all without diverting funds from other essential council activities. Nor is it feasible in terms of practical effectiveness within reasonable timescales.

3.4 Key to deciding how much resource to commit is an understanding of the probable frequency of such severe winter weather. During questioning the Head of Sustainability highlighted that it is 'difficult and dangerous to predict weather beyond the short term'.[6] A scrutiny review is currently being undertaken on climate change adaptation, a recommendation of which will be the allocation of resources to help the council and partners better understand future climatic trends, including through the Local Climate Impacts Profile (LCLIP). According to a range of projections and probabilities, it is, however, more likely that severe weather events will occur more frequently in future.[7] The panel are supportive of future work being undertaken to allow the city to better understand future climatic patterns.

Partnership Working

3.5 A lot of the evidence heard by the panel related to the manner in which service providers across the city worked together, and how effective this was. The issues can be broken down into two main areas:

[4] See Appendix B
[5] See Appendix G
[6] See Appendix M, p.133
[7] Ibid. p.135

- Understanding each others priorities and how these can be mutually supported and resourced.
- Actual lines of communication during the snow fall.

3.6 Evidence presented to the panel highlighted that there was good partnership working between the council and the Brighton and Hove Bus Company (BHBC).[8] Buses are used by a large number of people to get to work and so keeping them moving is vital to keeping the city moving. Additionally, heavy vehicles such as buses are very useful in ensuring the salt and grit is properly spread and worked into the road surface.

3.7 There were clear and regular communications between the BHBC and the council as to which routes were gritted and when, and which needed further treatment. The council was praised for, amongst other things, allowing the buses to continue running by opening up its Traffic Control Centre to the BHBC. Representatives of the BHBC and the council agreed that there should be greater co-ordination with regards to clearing bus stops of snow and ice in the future. The council should work to emulate this level of cooperation with other partners

3.8 The PCT recommended the creation of a joint 'communications hub' where agencies could feed back proactive messages to residents, hospitals and other partners that severe weather was coming.[9] It was felt, especially during conversations with health service providers during the meeting, that people should know who to turn to and who to call within each partner organisation. To some extent the health services had practiced this with their conference calls but its scope could be extended.

3.9 It was apparent from evidence given during the review that there was a general lack of understanding of the (sometimes) limited effects of gritting as a way of ridding highways of ice and snow. This was particularly true of instances where the temperature drops below a certain level and remains there throughout a period of several days and nights with no intervening thaw. As a result some partners and the public were under the assumption that the highways had not been fully gritted, when in fact they had.

3.10 A more streamlined chain of command during severe weather was deemed necessary to avoid the problem officers faced when all partners were on the same high alertness level. It was pointed out that the Sussex Resilience Forum had a similar set-up and that the balance of the chain of command needs to be such that it is senior enough to make key decisions but not too high so as to be moved too far from the operational level.

[8] See Appendix L, p.95-96 & Appendix M, p.145-147
[9] See Appendix M, p.142

3.11 Evidence from health partners showed that there was good communication within the health sectors to keep bed spaces open to treat a high number of fall victims. Regular conference calls between health partners ensured resources were coordinated and so bed spaces were kept open for emergencies.

3.12 There was a considerable discussion regarding the notion of prioritising support for partners' services during severe weather; namely that all partners (PCT, East Sussex Fire Service, Brighton & Hove Bus Company etc.) could consider themselves a priority and in most need of support from the highways team. This was recognised as being unsustainable on the grounds that:

- The Highways Team could not clearly differentiate between partners as to who to prioritise and who was most affected.
- No contingencies are made by the Audit Commission for additional salt supplies to anything other than the highways during severe weather.
- Clearing small roads, forecourts, cemeteries etc. means that main routes are invariably neglected.

3.13 It was proposed that each partner should provide the council with a snow resilience plan, laying out what their own responsibilities would be and under what circumstances they would need support and to what extent it would be needed. The Highways Team could then prioritise them accordingly. The snow resilience plan should be extended to internal departments such as ASC who require assistance during severe weather.

3.14 The panel also discussed that supporting partner organisations in prioritising gritting routes may necessitate exploring the viability of partners providing additional resource. It was mentioned by a panel member that Durham PCT had paid the County Council £1 million to such ends.

3.15 Other coordination of resources was discussed and the panel were supportive of following up the PCT's idea of a transport hub[10] to co-ordinate the purchasing and distribution of 4x4 vehicles amongst partners.[11] It was mentioned that the Civil Contingencies Team would be best placed to co-ordinate such an initiative. This idea was to be discussed at the PCT's Brighton & Hove Winter Planning Review seminar.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1) Greater coordination within the council and between partners is required, building upon examples of good practice. The WSP should be developed with input from partner organisations.

---

[11] See Appendix M, p.143

2) All relevant services should have regularly updated snow resilience plans that feed into the WSP.

Gritting Routes

3.16 A review of gritting routes is undertaken on an annual basis. The current gritting routes already cover all bus routes and main roads. The WSP sets out a priority network of approximately 250km of the Council's 630km of Public Highway with rock salt and grit using vehicle mounted spreaders or 'gritters'.

3.17 The priority network of roads encompasses all A, B, and C roads, all bus routes as well as key strategic destinations such as hospitals and premises related to Emergency Services.

3.18 Pavements are only cleared and treated in exceptional circumstances such as severe and prolonged snowfall, and arrangements exists with highway subcontractors to undertake this in specified areas in the WSP. The panel was supportive of the prioritisation approach taken in the WSP; however there was debate as to increased importance being place upon treatment for pavements.

3.19 Staff were drafted in to assist with snow clearance from other teams within the council, for example Cityparks. This was a welcome and necessary step which should be formalised and extended to increase the resource available.

3.20 During the severe weather there were competing demands for routes to be gritted with various organisations contacting the council requesting specific roads be prioritised. Gritting routes are developed to cover those roads that are deemed most important to priority services. Future reviews of gritting routes should ensure that partners feed their priority service requirements into the review of gritting routes. A similar scheme was carried out for the WSP in 2009-10 whereby the plan was sent to all emergency services, the NHS, some internal sections and the Bus Company with invitation to comment and update. Following recent experiences, this procedure can now be refined.

3.21 It was suggested by the Adult Social Care team and the PCT that information of accident black spots be reported to the Highways team to assist with post-treatment. Health statistics (to the extent they were available) showed most pedestrian falls to have occurred on areas that were already prioritised for footpath post-treatment – for example North Laines and Churchill Square.[12] However because only post-treatment is currently viable as an option, there would always be a time lag between the formation of snow and ice and its removal. Moreover,

[12] See Appendix E

post-treatment is only viable itself if the footfall is high enough to allow the grit and salt to work, it is labour intensive and has sustainability implications. Nevertheless, health statistics could be a useful tool for reviewing gritting routes in the future.

3.22 It was also discussed that partners of BHCC could aid the Highways team in their job of clearing the road network. Then BHCC in turn could extend its help to its partners. The BHBC was particularly keen to do this, wanting to see more snow and ice clearance at bus stops and improved turnaround points for its fleet and offering to expand the use of buses as heavyweight vehicles to aid the gritting process.[13] It was also suggested that snow ploughs could be used by vehicles owned by partners such as Churchill Square, although the suitability of snow ploughs was questioned.

RECOMMENDATION

3) A review of gritting routes is made on an annual basis. This review should explicitly ask partners whether existing gritting routes support their priority services. This review should also take into account health statistics available regarding accidents during the severe weather.

Cross Team Working

3.23 It was clear from the evidence presented to the panel that a large number of council staff worked extremely hard during what were clearly challenging conditions. Staff in a number of teams were overstretched and demand for information, support and services outstripped capacity to deliver.

3.24 The panel were presented with a number of good examples of staff being drafted in from other areas of the council to support various services.[14] The panel feel that the council should formalise the ad hoc practice of drafting in extra staff from other departments such as Cityparks and parking attendants to help the Highways team.

3.25 The ability to do this should be set out in the WSP, with lists of staff available to cover specific roles established. By necessity however it will need to remain an operational decision as to whether staff will be needed or kept on standby. Clearly decisions of this nature can have significant training, financial and health & safety at work implications. Discussions with unions will need to be held in order to take this recommendation forward.

3.26 A very clear example of where this approach would have benefits can be seen in that call centre capacity was exceeded during the snowfall.

[13] See Appendix M, p.145-147
[14] See Appendix D, p.30-38 & Appendix M, p.136-141

Other departments could cover calls during future spikes in call traffic. A list of staff prepared to answer diverted calls could be provided up front and the necessary procedures and technical steps necessary should be put in place.

RECOMMENDATION

4) Building upon action taken during the severe weather events, policies and procedures regarding the temporary transfer of staff to support specific services in the event of snow should be agreed across the council and wider public sector. Lists of staff available to support other services should be compiled, for example call centre capacity needs to be enlarged during periods of prolonged snowfall to deal with the increased volume of calls.

Schools

3.27 Evidence was presented to show that greater clarification as to when and why schools would be closed is needed, and that this should be communicated clearly to parents.

3.28 There was an underlying frustration and confusion as to why some schools remained open whilst others closed. In a number of cases this was due to staff being unable to journey to work.

3.29 The panel decided that the CYPT should be asked to work with schools to produce clear guidance to headteachers on school closures that can be communicated to staff and parents.

RECOMMENDATION

5) Schools closure policy in the event of snow should be clarified and then communicated to all school heads and parents.

Communication

3.30 Much of the feedback the council received following the initial snowfall indicated that there was a need for improved communications; such as which roads were being gritted, advice on clearing snow, which schools were likely to be open and changes to waste collection.

3.31 The panel noted that the levels of communication offered by the council improved greatly between the first and second snow falls. There are, however, a number of learning points.

3.32 It was agreed that, as in January, the initial message to people should be, “all information is on the website” as a means of streamlining the council’s response to the public’s queries.

3.33 However the panel noted that the website could not be updated on weekends because staff were unable to get into work to do so. This problem was acknowledged by the Communications Team and needs to be addressed.

3.34 The use of social media as way of quickly and conveniently communicating with residents was supported. However more traditional media such as radio also need to be used to ensure all residents have access to the necessary information.

3.35 It was agreed that information should be published in Citynews in the autumn offering advice to people on what to do during severe weather and how to obtain information from the council.[15]

3.36 BHBC explained how their RealTime bus signs would soon be able to update residents on route alterations once their software was updated later in 2010.[16] This is to be welcomed.

3.37 There was also a clear need for advice as to liability for snow removal. An urban myth was in evidence that residents clearing snow from the pavement outside their property would be liable should any accidents occur.

3.38 Legal clarification was published between the snow events which stated 'the claimant would have to show that:

- The way the householder tried to clear the ice created or made the situation worse
- The injury sustained was the result of the actions of the householder and not just snow/ice
- The actions of the householder were not what one would expect a reasonable householder to have undertaken
- It was reasonably foreseeable that their action would cause damage or injury to passers by

"It is therefore unlikely that any such claims would succeed.'[17]

3.39 Had this been communicated to residents earlier it seems likely that a greater number would have cleared the pavements, the cumulative affect of which would be to substantially increase the accessibility of the city.

3.40 It was discussed during the meeting how residents tended to understand and support council decisions (such as buses terminating at earlier points on their routes) if they were communicated to them. It was recommended that links should be established with the CVSF, LATs, Older Peoples' Councils, Residents Associations and shopkeepers to help disseminate information and mobilise communities

[15] See Appendix M, p.133
[16] Ibid. p.147
[17] See Appendix K, p.90

to help their neighbours and vulnerable people during severe weather or similar emergencies.

RECOMMENDATION

6) Consideration needs to be given to communication with the public both during and prior to snow events:

- **a) Regular updates during periods of severe weather are required, thought needs to be given as to how this occurs if staff cannot reach their place of work.**
- **b) Use of social media should be expanded as it allows for frequent updates to reach large numbers of people. People should be directed towards the website for information, but that every effort should be made to maintain a sufficient call centre capacity to deal with calls from people who do not have internet access.**
- **c) Traditional media such as radio should also be used to communicate with residents.**
- **d) City News in the autumn should contain information on what to do during severe cold weather.**
- **e) Clear legal advice regarding liability for clearing snow from the pavement should made widely available.**
- **f) Discussions should be held with the CVSF and other third sector organisations so that information could be passed on to residents prior to or during severe weather to reassure, inform and mobilise them.**

Supporting Residents

3.41 The panel received a suggestion regarding the purchase of a large number of plastic shovels for use by communities in the event of significant snowfall where people were unlikely to be able to store their own.[18] Community sheds as a depot for such shovels were also mentioned but were deemed unadvisable due to the possibility of vandalism. The panel were however supportive that the council has a role in encouraging local communities to have the capacity and resources to take independent local action during severe weather events. Further discussions should be held through LATs as to the best way to support local communities in this regard.

3.42 Over 450 requests for grit bins have been made following the snowfall. There are already 350 bins in the city located in areas off gritting routes, precisely to allow residents to grit their local area. They are however comparatively expensive to stock, taking around 10 days to replenish the existing network, and are often the subject of complaints by resident associations as eyesores and the target for vandalism. This has resulted in a significant number being removed in recent years.

[18] See Appendix J, p.70

3.43 A strong desire was voiced by many residents, both directly to the panel and in much of the social media commentary that accompanied the snow, that whilst they didn't expect the council to grit everywhere they wanted support in being able to grit their own areas.[19]

3.44 The panel has chosen to recommend that gritting stations should be established. These would be locations where grit will be deposited by the council immediately prior to expected severe snow/ice. Further research will need to be carried out by officers as to the best way to integrate this into the WSP.

RECOMMENDATION

7) There is a need to support local residents in being able to clear and grit roads not on gritting routes. Gritting points should be established and marked where grit will be dropped off by the council when required.

Capital Investment

3.45 The replacement of the current fleet of gritting vehicles was agreed as part of the capital budget for 2010/11 and the need for acquisition of a new fleet was clearly illustrated to the panel. The current gritting vehicles are 10 years old and are less effective than modern vehicles, especially post-snowfall. A complete replacement of the fleet is needed and whilst a staggered purchase programme has some advantages this would eventually leave the fleet with some vehicles up to 15 years old.

3.46 Therefore the panel were supportive of the purchase of a new gritting fleet. However they were also of the opinion that in future a rolling programme of replacement should be timetabled to avoid the requirement for such large one-off capital purchase.

3.47 The exact type and specification of vehicles to be purchased is being investigated and the panel is concerned that officers are given sufficient time to research and market test the best options. The possibility of multi-purpose vehicles that could be used for other roles in Cityclean and Cityparks was discussed, creating a more flexible fleet and the panel felt this was worth further investigation.

3.48 The panel discussed investment in additional vehicles such as snow ploughs. However, they were dissuaded from recommending this course of action following advice that the topography of Brighton & Hove renders them ineffective. Whilst they can aid the passage of cars by depositing snow to the side of roads they negatively impact bus travel and pedestrian access.

[19] See Appendix L, p.123-127 & Appendix M, p.150-152

3.49 It was agreed that a covered salt barn would provide both environmental storage and cost benefits to the council. The shelf life of uncovered salt can be seriously reduced compared to covered salt due to the affects of moisture on the consistency of the salt over time. It was also agreed that a covered salt barn would need to be in the centre of the city to maximise the efficiency of the gritting machines' routes. However recognising constrained resources a covered salt barn would be considered an aspirational recommendation due to its high cost.

3.50 It was agreed that the suggestion by the GMB of providing Highways, and possibly ASC, staff with studded shoe attachments would be beneficial in the event of further prolonged freezing of footways. Other winter clothing was considered adequate.

RECOMMENDATIONS

8) A new fleet of gritting vehicles is recommended and the panel support the agreed allocation of funds for this; in future vehicles should be replaced on a rolling programme and reviewed more frequently than every 10 years. Adequate staff time should be given to research the best available vehicles. This should include adaptations to existing pavement sweeping vehicles to enable them to clear snow if appropriate.

9) A covered salt barn at the Hollingdean Depot would be of benefit. This should be prioritised as part of any future upgrades to the Depot.

10) There should be immediate investment in relatively inexpensive equipment such as shoe adaptors for priority council staff to enable them to work during severe snow events.