

**Partner Agencies: review of 2010-11 winter**

In May 2011, the Head of Highway Operations contacted various partner agencies and other council sections in order to review the operation of the Highways Winter Service Plan during winter 2010-11, particularly regarding the two snow events which lasted several days each.

Council sections contacted were those represented on the Civil Contingencies' list for Major Incidents, which includes premises management, social care, housing, environmental health, seafront, communications team, etc. The response was that the Transport Cell was the main area of interest and that the highways issues had been previously well discussed. Winter discussions have continued through this forum, with the latest being in July 2011 at time of writing this report.

Partner agencies were those represented on the Brighton Resilience Forum which includes the emergency services, the NHS, the main bus company and certain businesses such as the Marina.

The responses received back are listed below:

**Police**

The police stated that from their perspective, the Highways Winter Service was handled well. Specifically the comments were that:

- \* All of the standard and main critical routes previously identified by the Roads Policing Unit were kept clear.
- \* The gritting of the roads worked well and re-gritting was our priority during the snow/ice event.

Road collision data for the period 30/11/10 to 04/12/10 showed 12 collisions. There was no specific pattern in where the collision took place and data does not show whether they are directly attributable to snow and/or ice.

**NHS**

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**Sent:** 27 April 2011 09:37

[Please see the following comments from Brighton & Sussex Hospitals NHS Trust:](#)

[This Winter's gritting in BHCC was much improved on the previous year .](#)

[The Royal Sussex County Hospital benefited from the Highways team kindly gritting right up the ambulance slope to A&E entrance.](#)

The pavements seemed much safer following the extensive pavement gritting programme the team carried out and we certainly did not see the huge surge in attendances due to slips and falls on ice as we had done the year before.

Most of the key bus routes were kept clear and the busses managed to continue running a reduced service where ever possible which made a big difference to our critical staff, many of whom rely on public transport to get to work

The communication plan was very effective and as the emergency planner at the trust I felt I was kept well informed of the gritting plans before the Winter came and also of issues that arose during the snow.

Thank you

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### Buses

Thank you for your email. It's my belief that your team did really well under very difficult circumstances and this observation was part of my submission to the Scrutiny Panel. I think we just need to keep doing what we do, keep the lines of communication open and make sure we don't lose sight of what we have learned when the going gets tough.

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**From:** Christina Liassides  
**Sent:** 03 May 2011 15:09

Thanks very much for your detailed reply. We will collate all of the information for our winter service plan review and we'll give fuller feedback at a later date, but in the meantime I wanted to let you know that the information that you gave us last year was incorporated into our plan – and gritting work – during this last winter.

Basically we included everything requested bar a couple of the outlying areas. We mapped all of the turn around points apart from one which was on a roundabout which would already be taken care of on a standard and priority route, so there was no need for this as an additional action. The drop off points for grit piles (emergency grit bins) were also identified using your turn around points so hopefully that will work in conjunction with your scheduled turn around points. I've attached the relevant maps for your information. We made sure that we carried out all these grit drops and ran these routes many times during both snowfalls. Perhaps you could let us know whether there were

specifics that prevented the buses turning around in cases where our priorities match up with yours?

Unfortunately as you know, some roads just don't respond well to treatment no matter what we put down, and these are usually the more lightly trafficked, hillier areas but a lot of the main roads were open quite quickly providing we weren't experiencing continuous snow. You can see from the summary I attached originally that we concentrated initially on main routes and then gave extra attention to those outlying areas in an effort to open them up as quickly as possible. I am not sure if there is much more we can do but happy to work further with you during summer on additional turn around points if this will help push your service outwards as we clear more routes.

As promised, we will look at all the points below in detail for our 2011-12 plan.

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**From:** Mike Best

**Sent:** 28 April 2011 11:52

Thank you for your email. All things considered I thought the City Council did very well in keeping the city moving in really tough conditions. The key issues for Brighton & Hove Buses are:

- Keeping North Street and Edward Street open as a top priority when conditions are at their very worst to enable a basic cross-city bus service from Portslade to Kemp Town via the RSCH. As Portland Road, New Church Road and Eastern Road are flat, the hilly North Street and Edward Street become critical for this route.
- Similar comments for Terminus Road as conditions improve because this gives buses access to large parts of the west and north of the city along the flat Cromwell Road and Dyke Road.
- As conditions further improve we can get to more parts of the city, but the key issue is then how to turn buses round at non-scheduled points. For example, we can often get as far as the Downs Hotel but no further, so as long as buses can turn round we can get that far. But unless buses can turn round there we can't get anywhere near Woodingdean. There are many other similar examples across the city.
- We need co-operation with East Sussex, because there are times when we can only serve Rottingdean and Saltdean along the A259 as long as we can turn round at Sutton Avenue roundabout in Peacehaven. If the section of the A259 within East Sussex (from Telscombe Tye to Peacehaven) isn't gritted then we can't serve Rottingdean or Saltdean because again we can't turn round.
- The attached PDF shows a map (over 2 pages) of key routes we can serve depending on the severity of the conditions. It is one I submitted to Andreas Homeyer earlier in the

year. It shows the network we hope to operate and locations of unscheduled turning points. It would be good to have grit available at these points to keep turning points clear.

- Abandoned cars were a problem in some areas, in some cases like Queen's Park Road for some considerable time. I wonder if we can deal with this problem more effectively?
- There was one occasion when all the gritters went back to the depot to re-stock at the same time; as the snow was falling heavily we couldn't keep key roads clear and this made conditions difficult.
- We used snow chains on buses for the first time and this proved really successful. Snow chains are useful for breaking up the solid ice and working the salt into the snow. We hope to expand this next time.
- Communication with the gritting team through the mobile phone number was very good.
- We did receive some feedback from residents of Westdene after the event that it took a long time to get back into that area. It's really hilly but perhaps we could look at clearing Valley Drive more quickly? Most other places found themselves within a reasonable walking distance to a working bus route most of the time.

I hope this information is useful and do let me know if I can be of any further help.

Regards  
*Mike Best*

Operations Director  
Brighton & Hove Bus and Coach Company Ltd

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**Sent:** 26 April 2011 09:33

**Subject:** FW: Highways Winter Service: post-winter summary

Dear all

I am contacting you because although winter is now officially over, BHCC's Highway team carry out a continuous programme of review to our Winter Service Plan. So I'd be grateful for any feedback you may have from this winter. This helps with the review of our Winter Service Plan for 2011-12 as well as giving us general information about the whole city's services and resilience.

It's also an opportunity to feedback to you about our Highways Winter Plan for 2010-11 so below is a brief resume of what we did.

As you know, we worked with all of you last year on various aspects of winter service, including your own resilience plans as well as our Highway one. As a result, we made some additions to our gritter routes, increased the amount of grit bins in the city, mapped out our pavement clearance priorities and agreed

grit drop locations with specific partners, especially the bus company. We supplied and filled some grit bins for non-highway premises on the proviso that future refills would be the responsibility of that agency. This is because Highways has limited storage facilities and needs to ensure its salt stock is managed throughout the winter for public roads and pavements.

In consultation with our partner agencies, we also refined our priority routes which are designed to be used in extreme circumstances when it is necessary to concentrate resources on a reduced network.

- Full Routes cover 254 km or approximately 41% of the total road network in the city including all A & B roads, most C roads, roads to emergency services' premises and all bus routes.
- Priority Routes cover 212 km or approximately 33% of the total road network including all A roads, most B roads, roads to emergency services' premises and key bus routes.

We also worked hard on our communications plan, and made sure that during winter we kept our website and other social media up to date with information about what we were doing and with maps of our routes, grit bins and grit drop locations. Information was distributed to partner services prior to the winter season.

The original budget for the Highways Winter Service is based on 30 gritting runs per year plus a 2 day snow event. This year, we carried out 62 gritting runs in total, and the city experienced 2 snow events both lasting several days. For your information, I have attached a spreadsheet showing the breakdown of gritting runs. As you can see, Highways go out road gritting whenever it is cold enough to give frosty or icy conditions not just in major snowfall so general winter feedback is useful, not just on the snow events.

Our 400+ grit bins were filled 5 or 6 times over the entire winter period and we carried out additional grit drops to over 50 locations.

Pavement gritting was carried out daily throughout the city during and after both snow events although on one day of continuous snow fall, we concentrated on routes around the hospitals, station and main town centre only. The second snowfall left a fair bit of ice on untreated roads and pavements so we continued to carry out road/pavement gritting for several days up to the Christmas break.

I have attached a summary of Highway actions during the first snow event which I hope will give you a good flavour of the operation that goes on. In the time between the first December snow and the second, we carried out major logistical operations with regard to gritting materials. Salt supplies were hauled in from holding depots in East and West Sussex as well as receiving some direct from our salt supplier. Sharp sand was delivered to Hollingdean Depot, Stanmer Park and Hove Park so we could run operations out of various locations utilising Cityclean and Cityparks staff.

We used 1585 tonnes of salt and 487 tonnes of sharp sand mostly on road gritting with a further several hundred tonnes of grit on pavements and grit bin refills. Usage was not as high as expected due to very mild weather in October, February and March.

We held 1,500 tonnes of salt prior to the start of the season and received a further 800 tonnes during the winter.

If you have any comments, I'd be grateful if you could reply by 11 May to collate them for discussion at our Highways meeting later in May.

With regards  
Christina