

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Executive Decision Record

Decision Maker:	Cabinet
Date:	27 September 2010
Title:	Final Report of the Review of the Severe Winter Weather Experienced in Hampshire in 2009/10 undertaken by the Policy & Resources Select Committee
Reference:	2014
Report From:	Policy & Resources Select Committee

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1. The decision:

1.1 That the Cabinet agreed the following recommendations made by the Policy and Resources Select Committee following their scrutiny review of the severe winter weather experienced in Hampshire in 2009/10:

- 1) Recommend that the Environment Department consider reviewing the network covered as priority 1, to ensure current traffic volume and identified community priorities are taken into account, including clusters of schools that collectively serve over 500 pupils. NHS Hampshire and other key partners will be invited to inform this work.
- 2) Recommend that the Environment Department include in 'community' gritting routes, access to:
 - smaller schools
 - residential areas with high numbers of elderly residents
 - large industrial estates (beyond those covered as priority 1)
 - locally significant health centres
 - 'community hubs' (e.g. parade of local shops)
 - access to key bus depots and train stations
 - black spots including steep gradients, informed by local knowledge
- 3) Recommend that the Environment Department explore the feasibility of putting in place a framework contract for salt procurement, and consider suppliers that can deliver to the ports of Southampton or Portsmouth.
- 4) Recommend that Human Resources encourage departments to identify 'non essential' staff in advance and let them know that they

should not attempt to get to work when conditions are bad (particularly where passport can be used to work from home), to alleviate pressure on transport systems.

- 5) Recommend that Human Resources explore the possibility of providing crèche facilities at large office sites to enable staff to get to work when schools are closed (for essential services)
- 6) Recommend that Human Resources ensure messages are clear regarding the potential for staff to work from other locations (including small offices within walking distance of residential areas).
- 7) Recommend that Emergency Planning work with Parish/Town Councils (or other community groups such as residents associations in areas that are not covered by a Parish or Town Council) to develop community emergency plans
- 8) Recommend that Children's Services reinforce guidance to schools regarding the need to have their own 'snow plan'.
- 9) Recommend that once grit routes have been confirmed following review the Environment Department highlight this information to key partners including head teachers and business representatives.
- 10) Recommend that the Environment Department write to the appropriate Secretary of State to request a change in fuel exemption regulations to enable farmers to spread grit using agricultural vehicles. If regulations do not change, the County Council consider the feasibility of reimbursing farmers for the VAT on fuel used.
- 11) Recommend that the Environment Department review with retained farmers and other contractors as appropriate (once every two years, commencing in Autumn 2010) arrangements for responding to severe winter weather. This will provide an opportunity to up date farmers on any changes to policies and procedures as well as a forum for discussion. The equipment provided and routes allocated to farmers should be included in this review.
- 12) Recommend that the Environment Department work with Corporate Communications regarding provision of guidance to the public. This should include advice regarding driving, parking and abandoned vehicles, encouraging people to stagger journeys home to avoid congestion, updated advice regarding liability in relation to clearing pavements, and guidance regarding appropriate use of grit in gritbins.
- 13) Recommend that the Environment Department reinforce to partner agencies that car parks (and on site footways) are their owners responsibility (including in particular schools, health services and train

stations), and that individual sites should be encouraged to make appropriate preparations.

- 14)** Recommend that Emergency Planning identify which of the County Council's office buildings it is most important for staff to be able to access in order to provide essential services. Arrangements then be made such that at times of persistent snow and ice Facilities Management have plans in place to grit key car parks and access footways, to support provision of services.
- 15)** Recommend that Emergency Planning assess any practical measures that can be taken to support town centre evacuation at times of severe weather. Options for communicating information to help with staggering journeys and identifying priority areas for traffic management should be included as part of this work.
- 16)** Recommend that the Leader of the County Council write to the Coalition Government to support the position of the Local Government Association that the issue of liability when clearing pavements requires clarity, through legislation if necessary. The scope for the County Council to provide advice to local people about their liability when clearing snow and ice should be assessed by legal services and include consideration of the cost to the County Council of providing liability cover.
- 17)** Recommend that the Environment Department work with District/Borough Council's regarding priority areas the district's could grit in severe weather situations, giving particular consideration to car parks and pavements in town centres, and links to public transport
- 18)** Recommend that the Environment Department work with Local Resilience Forum partners on a Memorandum of Understanding, to ensure responses to winter weather are coordinated and prioritised, clarifying each organisations responsibilities and how they will work together.
- 19)** Recommend that consideration be given to the advantages of managing grit bins through Parish/Town Councils (or other suitable community groups such as residents associations in areas that don't have Parish or Town Councils). This could include locking bins to prevent misuse, and the County Council accepting liability on behalf of named volunteers allocated to spread the grit. If grit bins remain unlocked, wording regarding what the grit should be used for could be added to the lid of the bins
- 20)** Recommend that the Environment Department consider providing grit bins to NHS sites, industrial estates, parades of shops and schools, in return for a 'rental' and replenishment payment, in order to promote self help.

- 21) Recommend that NHS Hampshire quantify the costs to the NHS associated with the severe weather and consider contributing towards pavement gritting and 'community route' gritting, as an 'invest to save' measure.
- 22) Recommend that South Central Ambulance Service be encouraged to work with Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service with regard to major incident and business continuity planning, particularly in relation to severe winter weather scenarios.
- 23) Recommend that Hampshire Fire & Rescue Service be invited to lead on coordination of 4x4 vehicles for use in emergencies, in conjunction with the other members of the Hampshire & Isle of Wight Local Resilience Forum, taking account of opportunities to work with Hampshire & Berkshire 4x4 Response.
- 24) Recommend that Hampshire Councils of Voluntary Service be alerted to the contact details for Hampshire & Berkshire 4x4 response, and be encouraged to direct members of the public wishing to offer 4x4 capacity to them in future.
- 25) Recommend that the County Council work with Community Action Hampshire on the feasibility of co-ordination of spontaneous volunteering in relation to severe weather situations.

1.2 That the recommendations then be communicated to the relevant Heads of Department and partner agencies for their response.

2 Reason(s) for the decision:

2.1 To respond to the request by Cabinet at its meeting on 25 January 2010, that the Policy and Review Select Committee review the response to the severe winter weather experienced and to identify any improvements.

3 Other options considered and rejected:

3.1 To reject the findings of the Policy & Resources Select Committee.

4 Conflicts of interest:

4.1 Conflicts of interest declared by the decision-maker: none

5 Dispensation granted by the Standards Committee: none.

6 Reason(s) for the matter being dealt with if urgent: not applicable.

7 Statement from the Decision Maker:

Approved by:

Date:

27 September 2010

**Chairman of the Cabinet
Councillor T K Thornber, CBE**