

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
21 MAY 2010
SCRUTINY REVIEW OF THE IMPACT OF THE WINTER WEATHER AND THE RESPONSE TO IT

SUMMARY OF ISSUES RAISED IN RESPONSES BY HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCIL COUNCILLORS, TOWN AND PARISH COUNCILS AND THE PUBLIC

(Note:

- (1) This is a summary of the main issues raised. A full list of respondents and a summary of their responses have been made available to Members of the Committee).*
- (2) Some respondents referred to problems at specific locations. These will be reflected in an appendix to the Committee's final report.*

Gritting - Roads

Gritting of main roads was good.

Modern tractors would allow for a snow plough on the front and a spreader of grit on the back. Request this be considered.

Bus Services did not run on the housing estates. Gritting could have been co-ordinated with bus services.

Questioned whether gritting was always done at right time and was effective eg – gritting in the rain.

People and Parish Council do not know what the Council aims or intends to do. Website does not make the situation or prioritisation of gritting clear beyond primary routes.

One route gritted at start of severe weather but not gritted again for remainder of period.

Adherence to gritting routes queried.

Scope for gritting school routes

Scope for self- help gritting in particular by Parish Councils – development of the lengthsman scheme. Clarification of liability issues.

Contact with Amey over holiday periods.

Absence of gritting of side roads/unclassified roads.

Grit Bins

Replenishment of Grit boxes.

Unclear as to whether all grit boxes had been replenished prior to this winter.

Some respondents say grit bins were kept full others say bins were not refilled promptly.

Concern about unauthorised removal of grit to other locations.

Suggestion that the grit bins should be locked, with a number of people living near the bin (or other key people) having keys.

Responsibility should be placed on Parish Councils to review the position and fill status of their bins each Autumn.

Concern about the condition of some grit bins.

More grit bins needed for which parish councils should be invited to submit prioritised bids.

Grit bins should be provided where there are steep inclines.

Inconsistency in level provision of grit bins across the County.

Frustration over arrangements for grit distribution.

Adverts placed by a Parish Council on local notice boards and in local newsletter reminding residents that the salt is only there for use on the public highways.

Snowploughing

Snowploughing of Minor Roads. Several farmers clear the roads with their own equipment. Snow ploughs in some cases make things worse as their blades are wider than the JCB used by these farmers. A trawl across all parishes would establish all such roads so that Amey could strike them from their snow-plough plan.

Snowploughing caused entrances to some houses to be blocked.

Advantages of use of local contractors.

Snowploughing not followed by gritting.

Gritting – Pavements

Consideration of gritting of pavements in areas where there is a high concentration of elderly people

People confined to houses because pavements not gritted.

The issue of icy pavements at the sheltered housing development in Burton Gardens. Housing Association not allowed to grit the pavements for insurance reasons.

Real benefits in treating footpath network within half mile of city centre.

Draw on advice from Ward Councillors on what routes are well-used.

Clearance of pavements in the City where most walk to school would have kept routes open.

Consideration of benefits for Council and Primary Care Trust as partners of the cost benefits of gritting pavements compared with the costs of accidents

Scope for using specialist pavement gritting machinery.

Clearance of car parks also queried.

Care Provision

Homecare delivery hampered

Emergency planning could arrange for local people to look after the vulnerable.

Clearance of snow by individuals

The issue of liability for clearing snow from outside properties.

That if council employees are unable to attend place of work, that they could do some voluntary work in our own locality such as clearing the snow from the paths of the elderly.

Council's fear of litigation over footpath clearance questioned and suggests council could have a disclaimer.

Potholes/Road Maintenance

Tackle drainage problems.

Highways maintenance issues – evidence of previous inadequate and ineffective patching.

Level of Highway Maintenance Budget

School Closures

Number of schools closed and duration of closures and associated impact on working parents and employers.

School Closures – should the Council have been more proactive/made blanket closure decisions. Central/local decision

If Teachers unable to reach distant schools they could be deployed at local schools.

Scope to improve communication of closures.

School Buses

During the school term, we would also like to see an improvement in communication from the school bus companies. Families would benefit if they could find out which stops would be in operation during snow/ice conditions.

Waste Collection

Some questioned why waste collections did not take place when other services were running. There was inconsistency.

Scope for local people to collect waste and take it to a central point where it could be collected by the Waste collection service. Suggested role for the proposed emergency coordinator.

Communciation of collection arrangements.