

Scrutiny Committee – 5th October 2010

14. Adverse Weather (Ice and Snow) - Task and Finish Review Conclusions

Review Chairman: Cllr Sue Steele

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Purpose of the Report

To present for consideration the recommendations of the Adverse Weather Review. The Task and Finish Group was set up to review the response of SSDC during times of ice and snow, and to ensure / ascertain that adequate procedures are in place to respond to similar occurrences in future years.

Action Required

- (1) That the Scrutiny Committee notes and comments on the findings of the Task and Finish Review as shown in Appendix A.
- (2) That the Scrutiny Committee endorse the recommendations of the Task and Finish Review to District Executive for consideration as part of the SSDC Car Park Winter Maintenance Policy (due for consideration October 2010).

Background

An initial assessment by officers of Somerset County Council on the winter salting was discussed at the Scrutiny Committee of Somerset County Council on 11 May 2010, as part of an overall review of winter salting and gritting. A member of the SSDC Scrutiny Committee was invited to attend to participate in the discussion.

At the June meeting of the SSDC Scrutiny Committee members agreed that a Task and Finish Review should be convened to look at:

- the strategic salting routes in the district and their priority;
- communication planning and managing public expectation;
- indemnity / liabilities for clearing snow or ice

The ambition of the review group was to:

- ensure SSDC effectively contributed to the SCC review
- to identify what, if anything, SSDC is specifically responsible for and ensure this is being done as effectively and efficiently as possible.

The members of the Task and Finish review were Cllrs Sue Steele, Tony Lock and Ros Roderigo.

Recommendations:

An SSDC Car Park Winter Maintenance Policy is being developed which will include proposed changes to the current winter maintenance arrangements in order to increase operational efficiency and to minimise the risks associated with severe ice and snow

weather conditions. It will cover the operational areas of SSDC owned public car parks and SSDC office car parks only.

The Task and Finish Group had the opportunity to view the initial draft of the Car Park Winter Maintenance Policy document and feedback comments to the officers. Based on the initial draft document the Task and Finish Group make the following recommendations:

- The car parking space availability signs (the illuminated signs) should be used to indicate car parks which are closed during times of ice and snow etc.
- There should be signs in the treated/salted car parks to explain what, if any, pathways from the car park have been salted.
- There needs to be clear communication to staff and the public about the office car parks and public car parks to be treated during times of adverse weather. e.g website, local radio, and email bulletins. Email bulletins should be sent to parish clerks, other parish contacts and staff as a minimum.
- To manage public expectation clear messages need to be circulated to the public about:
 - The role of the Salt Cell
 - Limitations of the SSDC winter maintenance policy – in particular it is the salting of public car parks and not the pavements through the town centre.
 - Sources of information in times of adverse weather
- The list of car parks mentioned in the report should be further prioritised, or ranked, in preferential order of gritting. Car parks on highway gritting routes should be the higher priority.

Note:

At the time of writing this report the policy was in a draft format. At Scrutiny Committee on 5th October 2010, the final version of the policy should be published for consideration by District Executive on 7th October. Therefore, it is possible that some of the above recommendations may have been incorporated into the policy.

Financial Implication

There are no financial implications in receiving this report. There will be financial implications regarding the adoption of the Car Park Winter Maintenance Policy referred to in this report.

Background Papers: *Report, outcomes and minutes of SCC Scrutiny Committee of 11 May 2010.*
SCC email to parishes dated 21 July 2010 regarding review of winter maintenance services and invite to open evening on 19 August 2010.
SCC Winter Maintenance 2009/2010 Maps.
