

Appendix A
**Recommendations from Worcestershire County Council's Gritting:
Winter Service Policy Review, (July 2010)**

Recommendation 1:

We recommend that the County Council discusses with NHS Worcestershire the possibility of using some public health funding to grit roads and pavements to reduce the number of accidents and the impact on health services.

Recommendation 2:

Whilst recognising that the precautionary network includes the principle road network we recommend that other roads should be prioritised for treatment if they meet the following criteria: steep gradient, above a certain height, north facing, a route to shops, medical supplies, emergency and care services and businesses.

Recommendation 3:

We believe that there is a special case for keeping routes to schools open and feel this should be a priority for the Council. We recommend the Council considers adding particular school routes to a secondary gritting route, where this would be sensible and cost effective, based on individual schools' experiences.

Recommendation 4:

We recommend that when determining gritting routes, a heavier weighting should be placed on gritting roads and pavements in areas with high numbers of disabled or vulnerable people in need of pharmacies and medical supplies/care.

Recommendation 5:

We recommend that the Council consults with businesses and bus companies on priority gritting routes.

Recommendation 6:

Hertfordshire has a Closure Notification System, where headteachers text updates on school closures directly to the Council's website. This has been very successful and the Council is looking to extend it to other high use services. We recommend that the Council considers adopting a similar system. The system will eliminate the need for teachers to telephone or email their status to the Council. It should reduce the stress on school websites, and the Customer Service Centre.

Recommendation 7:

The Panel noted that some roads (not on gritting routes) are particularly dangerous, such as where a steep downhill minor road joins a main road. Or where a road is above a certain height, north facing and known to be a problem previously during bad weather. These roads would benefit from grit bins and we recommend that these are considered when the current criteria are evaluated during the annual winter service review.

Recommendation 8:

We have found that whilst the Council is aware of known problem areas, there does not appear to be a system in place to prioritise the re-filling of grit bins. We recommend that the Council develops a “hotspot” system to prioritise the filling of grit bins (when stocks allow) with those in particularly hazardous locations being refilled most urgently.

Recommendation 9:

We also recommend that the phone number to ring to ask for a grit bin to be refilled is displayed on the grit bin, along with wording to make it clear that the grit bin is for use by the public on the highway.

Recommendation 10:

The Panel considers that twenty pre-accredited arrangements with farmers is comparatively few given the size of the county and that the number should be increased. Although the Council advertises for farmers to put themselves forward, we recommend that the Council asks Parishes to nominate a farmer in their area who might be willing to apply. We further recommend that the Council increases its efforts to advertise for farmers to help with gritting and road clearance.

Recommendation 11:

Currently we understand there is a degree of consultation with the emergency services about core gritting routes, however we believe it is important to take into account the views of the emergency services and therefore recommend that the Council consults fully with these groups.

Recommendation 12:

We recommend that the legal position should be made clear to the public and publicised at appropriate times.

Recommendation 13:

We also recommend that guidance on do's and don'ts for clearing snow, following the example of Westminster city Council, is promoted and made available on the Council's website.

Recommendation 14:

Hertfordshire, following their winter service scrutiny last year, are planning to review how they facilitate volunteer and local self help. We recommend that Worcestershire carry out a similar review.

Recommendation 15:

Currently the Council's website shows a countywide salting route map and maps of the salting routes in the main towns in each of the six districts. However, the Panel found it was still sometimes difficult to tell whether a particular road was on the gritting route, particularly for the countywide map and towns such as Tenbury or Droitwich, which don't have dedicated maps. Some of the maps appear side ways. We therefore recommend that the Council improves the clarity of precautionary and secondary gritting route maps on its website.

Recommendation 16:

The Panel consider it would be helpful to clarify which routes are gritted, why and when, to aid understanding of the policy. We recommend that clear information should be made available to the public on the winter service policy and on the flexibility for making a special case for additions to gritting routes.