

# **OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**6<sup>th</sup> March 2012**

## **GRITTING AND SNOW CLEARANCE UPDATE**

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Brandon Clayton, Portfolio Holder for Housing, Local Environment and Health
Portfolio Holder Consulted	√
Relevant Head of Service	Guy Revans, Head of Environmental
Wards Affected	All Wards
Ward Councillor Consulted	√
Non-Key Decision	

### **1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS**

This report follows a report to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 8<sup>th</sup> November 2011 and a report to the Executive Committee on 15<sup>th</sup> November 2011. It provides the Committee with further information on the recommendations made in the final report of the Gritting Short, Sharp Review (May 2011) and on progress that Officers have made working with Worcestershire County Council colleagues to improve the gritting and snow clearance services in the Borough.

### **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

**The Committee is asked to RESOLVE that**

- 1) Members note the content of the report and the partnership work with Worcestershire County Council to improve gritting and snow clearing services in the Borough; and**
- 2) Members also note the feedback that is provided in Appendix 1 to the recommendations made in the Gritting Short, Sharp Review that Overview and Scrutiny completed in 2011.**

### **3. KEY ISSUES**

#### **Financial Implications**

- 3.1 Worcestershire County Council (WCC) has contributed £15,000 towards a total of £26,000 which has been used to purchase snow clearing equipment that will be used to assist WCC in clearing routes within the Borough and other routes that have been locally identified. The cost of procuring this equipment has been met from within existing budgets. Gritting and snow clearance work and the purchase of rock salt is carried out using existing resources at no additional cost to the Council.

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## **Legal Implications**

- 3.2 Redditch Borough Council has no responsibility for gritting or clearing snow from roads or footpaths, this falls to WCC as the Highways Authority. However, as an owner of land the Council needs to undertake reasonable endeavours to make that land safe.
- 3.3 Clare Flanagan, Legal Services Manager, has been consulted in the preparation of the report that contains the Council's policy on gritting/snow clearance that was agreed in November 2011 and in the preparation of this report.

## **Service/Operational Implications**

- 3.4 In November 2011 the Council agreed the following policy with regards to gritting/snow clearance:

Redditch Borough Council will strive to keep the following areas, listed in priority order, clear of snow and ice and safe to use:

- a) Crematorium and cemeteries to allow funerals to continue;
  - b) Redditch Borough Council staff car parks to ensure that there are suitable parking areas for Council staff who are getting into work to provide essential services;
  - c) Key Council sites like the Town Hall and District Centres to assist local shops and businesses and enable residents to access services;
  - d) Gritting / snow clearance at other areas will only be carried out subject to available resources.
- 3.5 This report is to provide the Committee with feedback on the recommendations made in the final report of the Gritting Short, Sharp Review (May 2011), on progress that officers have made working with WCC colleagues to improve the gritting and snow clearance services in the Borough, since the Committee considered the report in November 2011 and on local gritting and snow clearance routes.
- 3.6 The Gritting Short, Sharp Review made a number of recommendations and an update on each of these is included at Appendix 1. Members will note that a number of improvements have been made and there are strong partnership working arrangements between WCC and the Council. Updates on actions which were agreed at a meeting between the Leader, Chief Executive and Leader and officers of WCC are also included in Appendix 1.

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- 3.7 A list of sites for gritting/snow clearance is included at Appendix 2. Members will be aware that the majority of gritting/snow clearance in the Borough is carried out by WCC. The majority of gritting/snow clearance which is carried out by Redditch Borough Council is carried out by Environmental Services cleansing teams. Staff from other service areas will be used in severe weather emergencies where they are unable to undertake normal duties.
- 3.8 We have agreed defined locations within each of the listed areas where gritting takes place where an approximate 1m pedestrian route gritted/snow cleared through the defined areas marked on plans of each site. The list at Appendix 2 is intended as a guide and there may be variation as to the route that is followed depending upon weather conditions and available resources.
- 3.9 Whilst the list at Appendix 2 is provided as a guide, it is important to note that our gritting/snow clearance routes will be subject to change and input from WCC who may need us to deal with an area that they are unable to reach – e.g. a primary or secondary route. Decisions will be made on a case by case basis as part of the conference calls with operational teams during bad weather events.

### **Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications**

- 3.10 There has been no public/stakeholder consultation or service sampling on this subject. However, when there are bad weather events of snow and ice, the Council will receive a large number of calls from residents and businesses. It is therefore important to have a clear approach to gritting and snow clearance and to provide as much information as possible through the website. Frequently Asked Questions and information are available on the council's website and on the WCC website.
- 3.11 Direct.gov provides advice regarding clearing snow and ice from pavements as follows:

#### ***“Prevent slips***

*Pay extra attention to clear snow and ice from steps and steep pathways - you might need to use more salt on these areas. If you clear snow and ice yourself, be careful - don't make the pathways more dangerous by causing them to refreeze. But don't be put off clearing paths because you're afraid someone will get injured. Remember, people walking on snow and ice have responsibility to be careful themselves. Follow the advice below to make sure you clear the pathway safely and effectively.”*

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## **4. RISK MANAGEMENT**

There are two key risks associated with this issue:

Business risk – failure to carry out effective gritting/snow clearance at prioritised agreed locations will result in a loss of business and negative impact, both financial and reputation.

Social risk – failure to carry out effective gritting/snow clearance at prioritised agreed locations can have a negative impact on local residents and communities – e.g. access to local shops.

## **5. APPENDICES**

Appendix 1 - Detailed update on each of the recommendations made by the Gritting Short, Sharp Review in May 2011.

Appendix 2 Redditch Borough Council's Gritting and Snow Clearance Routes

## **6. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Report to Overview & Scrutiny Committee, 8<sup>th</sup> November 2011;  
Report to Executive Committee, 15<sup>th</sup> November 2011.

## **7. KEY**

WCC – Worcestershire County Council.

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