

# Environment and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee

## Agenda

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**Date:** Monday, 17th May, 2010  
**Time:** 2.00 pm  
**Venue:** The Silk Room - Town Hall, Macclesfield SK10 1DX

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The agenda is divided into 2 parts. Part 1 is taken in the presence of the public and press. Part 2 items will be considered in the absence of the public and press for the reasons indicated on the agenda and at the foot of each report.

### **PART 1 – MATTERS TO BE CONSIDERED WITH THE PUBLIC AND PRESS PRESENT**

1. **Apologies for Absence**

2. **Declarations of Interest/Whipping Declarations**

To provide an opportunity for Members and Officers to declare any personal and/or prejudicial interests in any item on the agenda

3. **Public Speaking Time/ Open Session**

A total period of 15 minutes is allocated for members of the public to make a statement(s) on any matter that falls within the remit of the Committee.

Individual members of the public may speak for up to 5 minutes, but the Chairman will decide how the period of time allocated for public speaking will be apportioned, where there are a number of speakers

4. **Minutes of Previous Meeting** (Pages 1 - 4)

5. **Winter Learning 2009/2010** (Pages 5 - 40)

To provide recommendations to Cabinet about the priorities for future improvement and action.

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For any apologies or requests for further information, or to give notice of a question to be asked by a member of the public

**Contact:** Katie Smith  
**Tel:** 01270 686465  
**E-Mail:** [katie.smith@cheshireeast.gov.uk](mailto:katie.smith@cheshireeast.gov.uk)

6. **Exclusion of the Press and Public**

The reports relating to the remaining items on the agenda have been withheld from public circulation and deposit pursuant to Section 100(B)(2) of the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds that the matters may be determined with the press and public excluded.

The Committee may decide that the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items pursuant to Section 100(A)4 of the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 and public interest would not be served in publishing the information.

**PART 2 – MATTERS TO BE CONSIDERED WITHOUT THE PUBLIC AND PRESS PRESENT**

7. **Waste Treatment PFI Contract: Affordability Ceiling**

To consider a report of the Strategic Director Places.

*Please note that due to the very tight schedule that the Cabinet and Officers have been working to in order to put together the final report for Cabinet, it has not been possible to complete the report within the normal timescales, and therefore the report will be circulated to all Members 10 May 2010.*

**CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL****Minutes of a meeting of the Environment and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee**

held on Wednesday, 24th March, 2010 at Committee Suite 1,2 & 3,  
Westfields, Middlewich Road, Sandbach CW11 1HZ

**PRESENT**

Councillor G M Walton (Chairman)  
Councillor E Gilliland (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors Rachel Bailey, G Barton, H Davenport, R Fletcher, M Hollins,  
M Parsons, C Thorley, J Crockatt, M Simon, C Andrew and A Thwaite

**In attendance**

Councillors D Brickhill, J Jones and D Thompson

**Apologies**

Councillors S Broadhurst, M Hardy and J Weatherill

**61 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST/WHIPPING DECLARATIONS**

None

**62 PUBLIC SPEAKING TIME/ OPEN SESSION**

In accordance with the constitution Mr P Smith, addressed the Committee regarding the next Local Transport Plan and made reference to bus timetables being more readily available.

**63 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting held on 11 February 2010 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**64 STREET CLEANSING**

Consideration was given to a report on the Council's performance in relation to the place survey and peoples perception of street cleanliness in relation to street cleaning as measured by National Indicators 195 a, b, c and d. It was noted that the data and benchmarking used related to 2008/09 and that the updated Place Survey would not be available until June 2011.

Street cleansing scored low in the Place Survey, citizens identified it as the 3<sup>rd</sup> priority in terms of importance and 4<sup>th</sup> in terms of needing improvement for Cheshire East. Several possibilities were raised to rectify this issue such as

employing litter picking teams or offenders serving a community service order implementing a charter and raising awareness, particularly in schools. Members agreed that the authority also needed to improve the way it publicises the work currently undertaken to clean streets.

Members then went onto discuss the cutting of hedges and grass verges, it was agreed that a report should be brought back to the Committee on the standard, frequency of works and comparisons with past years.

### RESOLVED

1. That the Portfolio Holder be made aware of the issues highlighted above.
2. That the updated Place Survey be brought back to Committee in June 2011.
3. That a representative from Street Cleansing attend a future meeting of the Committee to explain how the issues around street cleansing are being dealt with.
4. That a report on the cutting of hedges and verges be brought to a future meeting of the Committee.

## 65 DEVELOPING THE BOROUGH'S NEXT LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN

Consideration was given to a report setting out the progress made in developing the Council's next Local Transport Plan, providing an early assessment of the emerging issues from the ongoing public and stakeholder engagement and examined the next steps in the process to develop the Local Transport Plan.

The Committee focussed its discussions around the emerging issues and agreed the following priority order:

1. Maintenance of roads and footpaths (timetable to be provided)
2. A more 'integrated' transport network and a need to reduce dependency on the car including improved public transport between our Market Towns and to the wider area (such as Manchester and Stoke)
3. The need for flexible/innovative transport solutions in rural areas.
4. The need to tackle congestion 'hotspots'.
5. The importance of 'sustainable' development, the importance of ensuring that the transport implications of development are fully mitigated and that 'Travel Plans' are much more strongly enforced.

The Committee also agreed that additional funds would need to be included in the budget for 2011/2012 to address the issues surrounding the condition of the roads particularly pot holes and that more effort should be made to ensure that Travel Plans are implemented.

### RESOLVED

That the Portfolio Holder for Prosperity be recommended to give consideration to the above priority order and additional funding requirements.

## **66 TOTAL TRANSPORT/ITU REVIEW UPDATE**

Consideration was given to an update on the emerging Total Transport Transformation Programme and the review of the Integrated Transport Unit (ITU) which is a transitional shared service with Cheshire West and Chester. The Committee was requested to identify the transport priorities for Cheshire East.

Members made the following comments and observations:

1. The Committee had no adverse reaction to the outsourcing of the current fleet.
2. The possibility of providing vouchers for taxis in rural areas be investigated.
3. The possibility of sharing costs with Cheshire West and Chester be investigated.
4. Transport systems need to be integrated with other cross boundary towns including Cheshire West and Chester.
5. Further use should be made of community transport schemes such as dial a ride and village rider.

RESOLVED

The Portfolio Holder for Prosperity be informed of the above comments and observations.

(Councillor Simon left the meeting during consideration of the above item)

## **67 FORWARD PLAN**

Consideration was given to the extract of the forward plan which fell within the remit of the Committee.

RESOLVED

That the extract of the forward plan be noted.

## **68 WORK PROGRAMME**

The Committee gave consideration to the work programme for the 2010/2011 municipal year. It was agreed that the Membership for the Task and Finish Panel on the Highway Maintenance Term Contract from 2011 comprise of Councillors Walton, Walker, Neilson, Davenport, Parsons and Hollins.

The following amendments were also made to the work programme:

1. Planning Enforcement be deleted from the work programme (this issue was being investigated by the Strategic Planning Committee).
2. Market Towns (Snowhills), Place Survey, street cleansing and verge cutting be added to the work programme for future meetings of the Committee.

RESOLVED

1. That a Task and Finish Panel comprising of Councillors Walton, Walker, Neilson, Davenport, Parsons and Hollins be established to review the Highway Maintenance Term Contract from 2011.
2. That Planning Enforcement be removed from the Work Programme.
3. That market towns (Snowhills), Place Survey, street cleansing and verge cutting be added to the work programme for future meetings of the Committee.

The meeting commenced at 10.00 am and concluded at 12.15 pm

Councillor G M Walton (Chairman)

## **CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL**

### **REPORT TO: ENVIRONMENTAL SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

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**Date of Meeting:** 14 May 2010

**Report of:** John Nicholson, Strategic Director, Places

**Subject/Title:** Winter Learning 2009/10

**Portfolio Holder:** Cllr Rod Menlove, Environment Portfolio Holder

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#### **1.0 Report Summary**

- 1.1 The attached report seeks to bring together and summarise the Council's learning from events of the longest and deepest winter for some thirty years.
- 1.2 The report has been framed to facilitate scrutiny of our performance and to highlight what could be key lines of inquiry by Scrutiny Committee Members. It is considered that by adopting this approach we can ensure with the direction of Members we are properly building the capacity required to respond to such challenging events, particularly understanding our role as the third largest unitary in the North West of England.
- 1.3 The attached report was considered by CMT and it was agreed that Environmental Scrutiny should be asked to examine the events of last winter and provide recommendations for the future.

#### **2.0 Decision Requested**

**It is recommended that the Environmental Scrutiny Committee:**

- (a) accept this report and the contributions from across the Council as the basis for examining the challenges of the recent winter events and;**
- (b) make recommendations to Cabinet about the priorities for future improvement and action.**

#### **3.0 Reasons for Recommendations**

- 3.1 To ensure that this winter's events are considered and priorities for improvement and action are established following comprehensive challenge by Members.

#### **4.0 Wards and Ward Members Affected**

- 4.1 All

**5.0 Policy Implications including - Climate change  
- Health**

5.1 None arising immediately from this report.

**6.0 Financial Implications 2009/10 and beyond (Authorised by the Borough Treasurer)**

6.1 There are no immediate significant costs in the work proposed.

**7.0 Legal Implications (Authorised by the Borough Solicitor)**

7.1 None

**8.0 Risk Management**

8.1 The Authority has plans in place to address the risks attached to its statutory duties and routine delivery of services. For example, it maintains a Winter Service Plan to address the duties of a Highway Authority in relation to the removal of snow and ice.

8.2 To properly manage wider responsibilities for the well being of our people and communities in an extreme weather event it is crucial that the Council and its services understand their roles during these difficult events. Such clarity will allow risks to be assessed and mitigating measures established.

**9.0 Background**

9.1 The recent winter period has been dubbed the worst for 30 years and it proved problematic to meet all the expectations of both Members and the general public. There were several substantial falls of snow and continued very low temperatures with -18<sup>0</sup>C being recorded at Woodford one night, coinciding with 7 days when the temperature stayed at -2<sup>0</sup>C or less.

9.2 The longest and deepest winter for some thirty years has been testing for a new council in its first year. It is widely accepted, particularly as the challenge of the winter conditions were better understood by all commentators that the Council has worked well in most areas once the resources of the Council were fully mobilised. However, we know we can do better and expectations are high and rising. A determination to address this situation has led to this report.

9.3 In bringing this report together, contributors were asked to keep in mind:

- our wider responsibilities for the well being of our people, our communities and local businesses;



- the perspective of our customers, rather than the perspective of simply discharging our duties or doing what we usually do;
- the Leadership role of the Council during such events;
- how we could be more quickly aware and respond to the need of vulnerable groups, remote communities etc;
- how we could better involve our partners in protecting the well being of our people and communities; and
- could we better involve the Town and Parish Council network and the third sector in building greater resilience.

- 9.4 The appendices to the report include all of the contributions received because it seemed essential that Members should be fully and directly apprised of the comprehensive range of contributions received. Also, that they should be provided with as complete an aid to their deliberations as available. Further debriefs from the PCT and Police are expected later in March.

Contributions were as follows:

- Appendix 1 Chief Executive's & Partnerships Business Manager
- Appendix 2 Children's' Services
- Appendix 3 Asset Management
- Appendix 4 ICT
- Appendix 5 Waste & Recycling
- Appendix 6 Health & Wellbeing + Leisure Services
- Appendix 7 Transformation
- Appendix 8 Procurement
- Appendix 9 Emergency Planning
- Appendix 10 National Health Service
- Appendix 11 Adult Services
- Appendix 12 Customer Services
- Appendix 13 Highway Operations Winter Review
- Appendix 14 Rural Communities

- 9.5 Examining these contributions indicates that the main lines of inquiry for Scrutiny Members may be:

### **Minimising travel difficulties, particularly keeping highways open**

Highway Operations has a Winter Service Plan 2009 /10 to keep the borough moving safely. This was revised during summer 2009 and greater resilience was achieved by increasing rock salt stocks and driver training. This plan sets out the policy for our winter service, service and performance standards, network problems, operational procedure with a decision matrix guide, training guide, resources, routes, duty rota, etc.

Early in this winter period the Council required operational commitments at a substantially greater level than contained in this plan. It appeared that there were no other plans in place for winter or severe weather for this plan to dovetail with. Whilst this plan proved to be the backbone of our efforts to keep people and transport moving for most of this protracted winter period, it must to be

revisited as it does not fully recognise all of the wider needs and expectations encountered over this winter period.

A considerable number of comments were also made about the Council to try and do more in residential areas. Despite the difficulties this poses due to the volume of resources that would be required this is something that will be reviewed as part of future year's winter maintenance plans. Additionally the Council needs to review its policy in relation to grit bins with a view to deploying more in the future to allow people to self help during difficult conditions.

### **Supporting isolated communities**

Concerns for isolated communities, in particular the people of Wincle, being cut-off by road closures and/or roads being impassable were constant throughout the period. Parish Councils made contact regularly through their local Ward Members. These concerns extend to the well being of rural businesses as delivery of livestock feed was disrupted and milk production was dumped because the tanker collection vehicles could not access farms. Steps are already being taken to learn from and respond to many of the concerns raised and these will benefit all of our rural communities once implemented.

The deployment of snow ploughs to clear new snow falls in elevated areas has been necessary through to the end of February, which reinforces the significant winter risks to these communities.

### **Ensuring all vulnerable people are supported**

There is no central list of those members of our society that fall into the 'vulnerable' category. During this winter the absence of this information made it impossible to confirm the situation of all of the vulnerable in our communities.

If people receive regular care visits and/or attend for regular treatment, there is a strong probability they will be known. It has been suggested that the concept of a "shared client" list be developed by the differing caring units of the authority and its partners, particularly the PCT. During protracted events this perspective of all the vulnerable that may be at risk could be used to efficiently ensure that someone has checked on every person. It has also been suggested that we use other services such as libraries for information on who may be old and frail but not in receipt of care and therefore outside the network of professional carers.

The voluntary sector may be able to participate in the care of the vulnerable, as religious groups and Town and Parish Councils could be, although there is no defined method for their involvement. The LAP could be seen to be the lead body for this part of any future response to severe winter events. Certainly, the opportunity for local coordination of specific support for individuals may have significant practical advantages in circumstances when normal transport connectivity is disrupted.

## **Managing communications**

The Emergency Control Centre was brought into use on 5 January, it was found that communications were difficult and facilities need to be upgraded for future use.

Available information on road conditions, weather, school closures and other service changes improved during the winter period and greater use of internal briefings, press releases and local radio bulletins assisted significantly in reputational management.

Cheshire East has four weather domains and each has distinct and often different weather patterns. These differing conditions have been noted in some of the winter learning reports because global communication to leave work early, for example, was not appropriate to some areas.

## **Disruption/suspension of the waste collection services**

Waste collection was interrupted because of access problems in snow and subsequently over compacted ice. This caused a significant reputational issue for the Council.

The response may be to develop an action plan for adverse weather, to set priorities for types of waste collected and for the storage of certain types of waste, and finally to suspend services when a (yet to be decided) level of inaccessibility is reached. Although the service is category 1 in terms of emergency planning, there was little extra resource physical or human made available for waste collections during the period.

Some of the refuse drivers may be trained as gritter drivers as a means of further increasing resilience of the winter service. However, this would mean accepting waste collections would be disrupted or discontinued. To achieve this option, these drivers will need route training and refresher courses and significant costs will need to be met.

The bespoke Macclesfield recycling collection service was particularly difficult to support during this winter, causing long running concerns to our customers. Waste collection methods are being examined for the whole of the new borough and an outcome should be a service that is more closely aligned in working practice and vehicles and therefore more resilient.

The task and finish arrangement for waste collection operatives meant that collections continued whenever roads were accessible no matter how long the delays.

## **Avoiding school closures**

The decision to close a school rests with the head teacher and governors. The effects of doing this raised great concerns during as it had knock effects for

employment and businesses. It became important to ensure road access to all schools and immediate safe access to school buildings.

It may be that decisions to close schools could be better informed and made earlier. Early decisions would have the advantage of allowing parents to make child minding arrangements

The need to find better ways to keep schools open in severe weather appears to be high priority of learning from this winter and may relate to the supply of salt to each school and the means of spreading being available. Equally, the lack of reliable transport for Teachers during severe weather appeared to be disabling factor.

- 9.6 The most challenged services were Highways, Adult, Waste and Education. These are our key frontline services, which are heavily dispersed across the whole borough. These services rely entirely on our staff being at work within an area or at a specific location and least lend themselves to resilience based on the ability to work remotely or flexibly.
- 9.7 However, it is reasonable to stress that whatever the circumstances the central primary challenge was the inability to freely and reliably travel the highway network.

## **10.0 Access to Information**

The Winter Service Plan 2009/10 can be obtained by contacting the report writer:

Name: Phil Sherratt

Designation: Head of Environmental Services

Tel No: 01270 686638

Email: [phil.sherratt@cheshireeast.gov.uk](mailto:phil.sherratt@cheshireeast.gov.uk)

**Appendix 1 - Chief Executive's & Partnerships Business Manager**

**From:** BLACKBURN, Juliet  
**Subject:** RE: Winter Learning

I would like to add in the following comments:

- I think it would be fairly simple to improve community/voluntary sector involvement in our response to similar situations by channelling communications through 3 key networks:
  1. Voluntary organisations through the Council for Voluntary services
  2. Interfaith network
  3. Town and parish councils
- I spoke to representatives from each of these networks during the severe weather and they would all be willing to progress this. In order turn this into something practical we would need to identify key contacts, how networks would be activated, and how communication would be managed. I would have thought this was standard emergency planning procedures so it would help to have that teams input.
- The main issue which prevented us from activating those networks during the snow was we were not exactly clear message we wanted them to spread and/or what action we wanted their members to take.
- The LSP Executive had a discussion about this issue at its January meeting and highlighted the potential for LAPs to play a role, providing both a vehicle for emergency planning and also a communication network. A member of the partnerships team was looking into this in more detail but I will need to check where this is up to (Kirstie – can you help on this?)

I hope this helps. Please let me know if you want any more info.

Juliet

**Juliet Blackburn**  
Chief Executive's & Partnerships Business Manager  
Cheshire East Council

## **Appendix 2 - Cheshire East Children's Services – Winter learning**

**From:** HOWELL, Rick  
**Subject:** Winter learning

### **SUMMARY:**

Our overall aim is to keep children and staff safe while enabling continuity of all services. A primary role is to gather and distribute accurate and timely information, advice and guidance to support this.

On the whole we managed to deliver this role successfully but there are some critical learning points around the extent to which we managed to collect and present information in 'real time' in a coherent way and the quality of our knowledge and relationships with corporate colleagues.

### **Related issues and learning**

- 1) It is not the role of the LA to advise parents/children/staff of the opening/ closure of schools. The duty for this rests with individual schools (Heads/governors). It is our role to co-ordinate and manage the information flow regarding children's centres and other LA managed sites.
- 2) On a day by day basis we need to have an early as possible and accurate picture of which sites (including schools) were open/closed and liaise with relevant media, schools, transport, school meals and customer services. This information is also reported to members, corporate colleagues and our own Children and Families staff.

### **Key issues**

- ❖ A learning point is that particularly schools (but also children's centres) must have in place arrangements to deliver their duty to communicate via
    - Use of radio
    - Telephone answer-phone
    - (School) website
    - Notice on gates
  - ❖ Schools (and other sites) need a system in place with their staff regarding notification of opening and closure.
  - ❖ Schools (and other sites) need agreed contingency arrangements around what level of staffing is appropriate to open safely and considerations of additional costs to keep the school/site open
- 3) We need to support schools and other sites to open when the conditions prevent access or safe travel around or up to the school/site. To include Highways, United Utilities et al.

### **Key issues**

- ❖ A learning point is that we need to formalise the links between particularly Highways re names, contacts, plans etc
- 4) We have a specific role around offering 'advice' and support to Head teachers and Governors around risk assessment and decision making.

### **Key issues**

- ❖ A learning point is that we need to ensure schools have access to a number of staff at times when they need support to make decisions
- 5) The LA should ensure it delivers its monitoring and challenge role in ensuring that schools follow a formal process (after closure) to decide if and how they are able to make up some or all of the time lost.
- ❖ The LA should confirm the process for monitoring and reporting on closures and ensure that governing bodies confirm their approach to delivering the statutory 190 days of learning.
- 6) The LA ensures all statutory duties for assessment and delivery continue in relation to Children's Social Care.
- ❖ The LA should have knowledge of where all staff travel from to ensure that priorities can be co-ordinated in relation to reviews, home visits, or assessment.

### **How could we respond quicker to the needs of vulnerable groups?**

Need to identify in advance those schools, services and settings most at risk of being affected by adverse winter conditions. To include a forward plan to reference

- Staff access to sites: including home – work distance
- Transportation and travel management/support: including footpaths and site clearance
- Media and communications plans in place - need overall system to ensure 'real time' communications of open/ closures

### **How can we better involve partners?**

- Met office advice, information and guidance was excellent and needs to be briefed more widely
- Need to include particularly health partners in the emergency planning of services delivered, for example co-ordinating staff undertaking visits to children at risk when in need or at risk.

**How can town and parish network/third sector building resilience?**

- Town and parish councils could co-ordinate with head teachers a community effort to clear a school site

**Other Learning:**

- Media need managing to ensure appropriate passwords are used for reported closures
- Key contacts maps for whole LA
- Business continuity training for schools
- Central co-ordination needs single designated response point with a Children and Adults perspective
- Unannounced visits managed via having nominated staff, living locally
- Need to know where staff are travelling from to work place in advance of emergency
- Explore with Health potential for them to support safety/unannounced visits
- Issue about childcare and schools and our own emergency staff accessing information

**Rick Howell**

Cheshire East Children and Families Services



### **Appendix 3 - Asset Management**

**From:** BACON, Robert

**Subject:** FW: Winter Learning

Probably the biggest piece of work we have done over the winter/icy/snow period is the management of gritting staff car parks / walkways which was done only on a reactive basis and often in tight timescales whilst demand for everybody's time was high.

The learning from this is that we have no contractual arrangements at a corporate level for the provision of gritting only local ones. Over the forthcoming months CEC must engage with a proper contract to ensure next year we have effective coverage.

Regards  
Robert

## **Appendix 4 - ICT**

**From:** ESEGBONA, Par  
**Subject:** RE: Winter Learning

### **Mobile Phones**

#### **Issue**

Potential loss of service for senior management duty officers during times of extreme mobile network usage

#### **Actions**

Process improvement, provider harmonisation and centralised billing relating to mobile phones contracts

Ongoing requirement to identify and register key mobile phone numbers with the network providers

### **Emergency room**

#### **Issue**

Potential of a strategic emergency (i.e flu pandemic) would have compromised the ability to set up a fully functioning emergency facility within the expected timescales.

#### **Actions**

Mobile phone repeater has been installed to improve mobile phone coverage

Floor Boxes and Data access points have been replaced in order to provide data access and increase reliability

A longer term review has been carried out with the emergency review team to specify the requirements for telephony break out and emergency power

### **Click into Cheshire**

#### **Issue**

Increased dependency on F&MW exposed a licensing issue through Click into Cheshire

#### **Actions**

Negotiated short term burst licences which have provided additional capacity (500 – 1000 concurrent connections), pending a strategic review of our long term licencing requirements.

### **Network and resilience**

#### **Issue**

Increased dependency on remote and poor network links which were exposed during severe weather, these connections are used to support F&MW initiatives.

#### **Actions**

Agreed with the West and with the Shared service that there will be:

A major network review focused on the emerging and developing business requirements. This will cover many areas, but a practical example is the need to improve the connectivity of small libraries as local points of contact

An improved way of managing both strategic developments and operational problems on the network. The NHS would also have engagement.

The greater exploitation of existing support and consultancy services to tackle both short and long term problems on the network.

## **Outlook and Exchange**

### **Issue**

In the event of a localised emergency, the opportunity to temporarily redeploy staff were limited due to the need to access local facilities

### **Action**

Migration to a single domain has enabled officers with access to any council building in Cheshire East to access their Exchange mailbox

### **Rural Broadband enablement and Next Generation Access**

'Digital connectivity underpins modern working life in the digital age and is the basis on which public sector delivers services to its customers. Cheshire East is challenging the status quo of ICT service delivery and seeking new opportunities to work in partnership with other public bodies, the 3rd sector and the private sector to deliver region wide locally focused services, where the customer needs them, when the customer want them.

A key enabler of customer focused local delivery is centred upon a digital connectivity platform which supports the appropriate sharing of systems, knowledge and data with like minded partners. A common Next Generation Access (NGA) digital platform will explore new opportunities of customer interaction and improve communications delivering better services and offering opportunities for economic simulation in rural areas and market towns. Such initiatives pave the way to deliver services locally maximising our extensive range of partners and more importantly ensuring the needs of the citizens and community are met.

An early proposition is a joint initiative to procure a high capacity broadband network to meet the needs of the NHS, Councils and the Cheshire Fire Service. This would be linked with a combined data centre strategy. The benefits of such a strategy could further extend to bring high capacity broadband to rural areas where presently it is lacking. (Communities without adequate broadband provision are often described as "not-spots").

## **Appendix 5 - Waste and Recycling**

**From:** SKIPP, Ray  
**Subject:** RE: Winter Learning

### Strategic

- Develop an 'Adverse Weather Action Plan' for each service - provide clear actions, set priorities within each service e.g. collect residual waste first, then garden and finally recycling, statements about what the Council will and won't do, what the Council expects from residents
- Corporate decision taken early on to either suspend service or not - avoids uncertainty for staff and residents, easier to manage the re-start of services

### Operational

- Avoid procuring specialised vehicles e.g. stillage vehicles at Commercial Road as they cannot be covered by vehicles from elsewhere
- Transfer of resources from one area to another e.g. staff and vehicles to manage the worst hit areas better - may mean suspension/reduction of services in some areas
- Develop more flexibility of staff resource by ensuring common operational practices, training and development, rotation of drivers to gain better knowledge of other collection rounds etc.
- Use the assisted collections database to identify those residents that may need additional support

**Ray Skipp**  
**Waste and Recycling Manager**

## **Appendix 6 - Health and Wellbeing**

**From:** KILMINSTER, Guy  
**Subject:** RE: Winter Learning

You have received separately some comments from Keith Pickton in leisure facilities.

Thoughts from rest of Health and Wellbeing:

General points -

- Could we list "interchangeable assets" such as 4 wheel drives that can be used between services to deliver support when needed. The transport assets could be easy as they would be held by fleet management. Important that any call on such assets is to deal with priorities. We provided details at John Nicholson's request of the vehicles we had, but that obviously took a little time to compile.
- It would be helpful to have details of who visits our vulnerable people. Obviously Social Services do some visits, my Service provides book delivery to house bound persons, other services may provide other services in the home. Rather than us all trying to check on our customers we could in times of crisis split clients between us to make better use of resources. May be data protection issues to overcome!
- My staff in the facilities were able to grit the areas around their buildings where they had local grit bins. We may need to review the distribution of such bins and ensure every building has one? We were able to keep most facilities open because of this.
- Communication was an issue. E-mails urging all staff to go home were being sent out (which is not helpful when running frontline services!)

Regarding your specific points below:

- There is a huge amount of information amongst staff regarding vulnerable users/customers and clients. Somehow we need to be smarter about joining this up. So for example a library assistant will know that Mrs Bloggs is a fragile older person, who lives alone. The library record will have the contact address and possibly a phone number. The library Assistant won't know if she receives a social care visit, meals on wheels etc. However, if we were going to deal with this effectively we could initiate a process that led to library service staff being designated to contact their identified vulnerable customers in times of severe adverse weather to ensure they were OK. We would probably need their (the customer's) permission to set something like this up, but if thought useful it could be done. Obviously this would mean frontline service in libraries would be reduced as staff were contacting customers, but probably lot less people coming through doors anyway because of weather.
- Something similar to the above may be relevant with some partner organisations particularly the PCT for example.

Guy  
Leisure Services

**From: PICKTON, Keith**  
**Subject: FW: Winter Learning**

Comments from the perspective of the leisure facilities;

1. Be very careful in issuing Council wide instructions to staff re “ leaving work early to go home” without recognising that many staff across Cheshire East work evenings and weekends and in jobs where they should not, or cannot, go home early.
2. Be careful not to assume that all parts of Cheshire East are equally affected by snow or other climatic conditions when deciding whether services and activities should continue or not. Local information and advice needs to be taken from our staff for different parts of our area to avoid decisions being taken that would involve curtailing services unnecessarily as frequently the western lower areas of Cheshire East had little or no snow at all when the higher Eastern areas of the authority were is in the midst of a blizzard.
3. Try to ensure that information submitted to the web team re the latest information on closures and/or service disruptions actually gets onto the relevant home page linked area promptly. We had a couple of examples where information sent to the nominated duty person (and particularly late on a Friday evening and at a weekend) regarding disruption to the services at a leisure centre did not appear at all.
4. I did hear some comments from staff across the Council who were forced by road conditions to stay at home and who tried to log onto ICT systems to deal with e-mail etc that on the worst days of disruption they had difficulty in logging on and even if they were successful the systems were very slow. This may be worth looking at from a system capacity point of view in such circumstances.

Hope this helps

Keith Pickton  
Leisure Facilities Manager

## **Appendix 7 - Transformation**

**From:** HARRISON, Ceri

**Subject:** RE: Winter Learning

My response revolves around developing the local service delivery model which I have now briefed the cabinet and CMT on. If we go fully down this route then each locality would be better connected and resourced to respond to such issues as bad weather etc in a manner which responds to local requirements / profiles, maximises contributions of local partnerships / groups, and ensures our own services give a more co-ordinated response. Happy to talk about this further if that would help.

Ceri Harrison

Head of Transformation  
People Directorate

**Appendix 8 - Procurement**

**From:** WHARTON, David

**Subject:** RE: Winter Learning

Although we were not called upon directly during the recent bad weather I was fully expecting a call to assist in securing alternative sources of supply. I am unaware of the contractual arrangements for grit. Does this responsibility for sourcing fall to Nuttall?

That aside I think we should identify those contracts where there is a high impact upon failure and look to develop a contract specific contingency plan of alternative sources of supply.

**David Wharton**

**Procurement Manager**

**Cheshire East Council**



## **Appendix 9 - Emergency Planning**

GRIME, Martin

**Subject:** WINTER LEARNING

### Generally

1. Please find attached my response arising out of the NHS Central and Eastern Cheshire Primary Care Trust (CECPCT) debrief recently held about the same issue. I have also attached the debrief format in order to assist you in interpreting my comments.
2. You may also be interested to know that there is to be a Cheshire Local Resilience Forum (LRF) Multi Agency Debrief at Police HQ on the severe weather event to be held on 15 March 2010 and it is a pity that I cannot pass on the findings and comments of our other partners at this stage prior to your deadline.
3. For your information, the Cheshire LRF is currently undertaking work at the present time via its Humanitarian Task Group, which I chair, in overseeing the identification of vulnerable people in a crisis. The detailed work is being done at a local level by each of the four Cheshire LRF local authorities. It is envisaged that following networking with our partners there will be "lists of lists" whereby relevant partner agency contacts may be contacted in order to let partners share information about vulnerable people. This will be in addition to our own contacts in adult social care / children's services and housing etc. The Fire and Rescue Service have also done a lot of good work with Age Concern in the vulnerable people field.
4. Moreover, I have recently had discussions with Marylyn Kerby, Local Area Partnerships Manager for Knutsford and Wilmslow in order to discuss how the new Local Area Partnerships in Cheshire East can be involved in the emergency planning process for their local areas (7 in all). This information was first requested by the Poynton Local Area Partnership following a recent helicopter accident, but since then the bad weather has given concerns locally as to how services are managed in emergency situations (with respect to vulnerable residents who may be isolated etc). Hopefully, we can harness the energy of these partnerships in order to assist us in the future regarding such issues. These include the emergency services, NHS and parish and town councils etc. The chairs of each of the seven partnerships meet together bi monthly and I have offered to speak to them on emergency planning issues at a future meeting.

### What went well?

- Earlier swine flu exercises assisted the authority greatly.
- Good will of staff who also worked outside normal roles.
- Set up Emergency Centre to collate information and to co-ordinate the response.
- Prioritisation of which services to continue
- Website giving out information
- Many Schools kept open

- Prime road routes kept open with the exception of A54 Bosley Crossroads and A537 Cat and Fiddle
- All social care priority users had a delivery of a hot meal or were given a hot meal by other means.
- Frequent Corporate Management Team meetings in early stages
- Good partnership working
- Early liaison about closing transport for day care centres
- Staff being redeployed to other areas
- Responded to requests to grit hospitals.
- 4x4 vehicles identified and a staff rota arranged for their use for evenings and weekends
- Mutual aid in relation to assisting other nearby local authorities (Warrington and Halton) with critical level salt stocks
- Service plans being shared (eg Highways Winter Plan)
- Emergency Plan now prepared for next year by Police and British Salt

What could have been done better?

- With hindsight perhaps the Emergency Centre could possibly have been set up prior to the severe weather event.
- Issues arising out of use of the Emergency Centre in Committee rooms 1, 2 and 3, Westfields which need addressing
- Despite informing staff that the emergency centre was open there was little use of the emergency centre in the co-ordination of the response to the severe weather event and training is required (which has been held up by the response to swine flu)
- Wagons turning up at British Salt causing delays for staff and general public on A533 Sandbach to Middlewich Road
- Advice on level of salt stocks issued nationally by government to local authorities needs investigating
- Access to social care day services premises could have been gritted in addition to main access roads
- More 4x4 vehicles and a staff rota for their use out off hours to have been already established
- Misinterpretation by Gold Teleconference of amount of salt stocks held by Cheshire East Council. Reference to 230 tons of rock salt being delivered which was enough for two gritting runs was in ADDITION to existing stocks already held not total stocks.
- Self help by the public ie clearing their own and neighbours paths but concern by them about “risk” in relation to possible legal action
- 4x4 vehicles identified and a staff rota arranged for their use for evenings and weekends prior to severe weather
- More decisions should be made at local level because of the different topography and conditions across the Borough
- The Salt Cell was in operation which led to lesser salt stock levels for Cheshire East. Responding to Salt Cell / Government requests to cut down on salt usage.
- Footpaths in town centres in a poor state with rock salt providing only a limited remedy

Lessons identified for inclusion in future planning?

- Identify level of salt stocks
- Grit access to social care day premises in addition to main access roads
- Issues arising out of the use of the Emergency Centre in Committee rooms 1, 2 and 3, Westfields now being addressed
- Command and Control Exercise for the Emergency Centre, Westfields required in order to acquaint staff with procedures
- Investigate number of 4x4 vehicles required
- Flexible / Mobile / Home working had effects on human resources for staff able to access normal work locations.
- Was the starting point worse than it normally would have been due to the holiday period and staff on leave. As a consequence did we miss some warning points.
- Set up “dark emergency planning web site” for such events
- Communication issues in relation to salt stocks referred to in section above (What could have been done better) .
- Information given out about “risk” to the public ie clearing their own and neighbours paths and potential litigation
- 4x4 vehicles identified and a staff rota arranged for their use for evenings and weekends prior to severe weather
- More decisions made at local level because of the different topography and conditions across the Borough
- Expect the unexpected. If the peak of a swine flu pandemic had occurred during the severe weather period the effects could have been very serious. Build such events into exercise planning.
- Partner organisations should have their own salt stocks and not be reliant upon the local authority. Also could not partner agencies have made arrangements to remove / sweep away the snow in order to keep paths clear etc.
- Ensure partner agencies have sufficient 4x4 vehicles / ambulances etc and a staff rota to drive them. Also perhaps the Council could have assisted in this respect.
- CECPT to perhaps consider gritting footpaths along roads in order to cut down on A&E incidents
- Remedy poor state of footpaths by use of new technology ie hand held snow blowers etc and more provision of gritting boxes
- Have human resources advice in place of what working practices are expected for future events

M A Grime  
Lead Emergency Planning Officer for Cheshire East  
Joint Cheshire Emergency Planning Team

**Appendix 10 - National Health Service**

**From:** GRIME, Martin

**Subject:** RE: Winter Learning

The Central and Eastern Cheshire Primary Care Trust has had its own debrief on the Severe Weather episode, which I attended, and their report will be forwarded to Members and Officers in due course with the PCT's approval once it has been signed off.

M A Grime

Lead Emergency Planning Officer for Cheshire East

## **Appendix 11 - Adult Services**

**From:** LLOYD, Phil

**Subject:** Winter learning

- how we could be more quickly aware and respond to the need of vulnerable groups, remote communities etc,

*We clearly need a database shared across agencies. My particular concern is old people. Age concern and fire and rescue have a database that needs to be developed and shared.*

- how we could better involve our partners in protecting the well being of our people and communities - *See above*

Could we better involve the Town and Parish Council network and the third sector in building greater resilience?

*Genuine Locality working across the Council and partner agencies is the answer - I agree with the answer that Ceri sent you*

The extreme weather highlighted for us that some services were not as essential as we thought in that people seemed well able to cope without them or to benefit from some new thinking e.g. engaging local pubs to provide meals to vulnerable people rather than using the contract. This supports local communities and businesses and benefits vulnerable people.

We also learned that our shift to self directed care did not diminish safety of vulnerable people. It seems that their links to the wider community assisted their support and care. We also learned overall how good the community is in supporting vulnerable people and it is that capacity we need to build on.

We were also hugely helped by the prep we had done for swine flu. Our systems and communications were in better shape than might have been the case.

Phil Lloyd

Head of Adult Services

## **Appendix 12 - Customer Services**

**From:** BAYLEY, Paul

**Sent:** Fri 19/02/2010 09:38

**To:** SHERRATT, Phil

**Subject:** RE: Winter Learning

Phil,

Thoughts from Customer Services below:

- The primary issue for us was timeliness of information to enable us respond to telephone contacts and to update the websites. Updates on gritting, waste collection and school closures were often coming through in the middle of the day, by which time we had received a high volume of contacts from customers to which we were unable to provide up to date information. In these situations, the emergency planning process should be making plans at the end of the day for the next day, and these can then be communicated across all channels.
- There was also a lack of information from some key services, in particular school transport. We had children stranded at bus stops not knowing if the transport was coming to collect them, and we didn't know either.
- Can we also extend the distribution of information into the Town & Parish Council network to ensure they feel informed and part of a coordinated response?
- I think all of these lead me to question whether we should identify the services that need to have their own emergency planning set-up that then feeds into an overall emergency planning team. It felt like direction was coming downwards without good information coming upwards to enable informed decision-making around priorities.
- Some other suggestions include snow chains for waste collection vehicles; or where we are unable to get waste collection vehicles out, can we leaflet drop properties on foot to update customers and in particular instruct them to leave their bins out to ensure they are there for collection as soon as we can get out.
- Finally, what I think is a really good suggestion from one of my team is to ask Cheshire East staff that are unable to get to work due to snow to play a role in their local community, such as gritting footpaths, visiting vulnerable people, etc. Where people couldn't get into work, I expect that they either took a day's leave or worked from home. Was working from home on administration work the best use of their resource when they could be asked to get down to the local Town or Parish Council offices to help clear footpaths? Where they did make it into the office, would we have actually preferred them to stay in their communities and play a role there?

Regards,

Paul

## **Appendix 13 – Highway Operations**

The Highways Operations front line staff mainly the Superintendents and Inspectors worked very long hours managing the clearing operations. The average number of recorded overtime hours was about 170 for the 4 week period. Other staff also worked at weekends to plan salting and clearing operations in line with forecasts and gave up holidays to ensure that the service continued without interruption.

Drivers worked a shift pattern to keep within the lawful limit of driving hours and to keep the spreaders running throughout.

Hill roads are particularly vulnerable to drifting snow and the elevation exacerbated the cold making ice difficult to clear. Drifting snow repeatedly blocked roads that had been cleared and despite 24 hour snow clearance operations we were unable to keep the A537 and A54 open and many minor roads were also blocked several times during the 5 week period.

There were many reports that roads had not been salted throughout the authority, that ploughing was not working and that we were not fulfilling our duty.

Residents and Members made numerous requests for non priority road salting and for salt bins to be filled. We had many requests for footway clearing.

We also have been criticized for not helping stranded vehicles; one instance cited was that a spreader (gritter) passed an articulated vehicle that was stuck without stopping to help.

In the first days after the holiday some schools closed, it is not clear whether the reason was the highway network not being clear or the school grounds or a combination of the two, but it a number of complaints placed the blame on icy roads,

Our current policy excludes pre-salting access to primary schools but does include secondary and higher education establishments.

It is clear from this synopsis that there was a perception that we were not working to clear the streets; expectation apparently exceeded our ability to deliver.

### Highway Authority Duty

We should examine what we are required to do:

Cheshire East Borough Council is the highway authority for the eastern part of Cheshire; its duty to maintain the highway is set out by Section 41 of the Highways Act 1980 as amended by S111 of the Railways and Transport Safety Act 2003:-

111 Highways: snow and ice

After section 41(1) of the Highways Act 1980 (c. 66) (duty of highway authority to maintain highway) insert—

“(1A) In particular, a highway authority are under a duty to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable.

### How Cheshire East Council fulfils its duty

The Policy and Strategy of the Highways Operations Winter Service Plan is designed to satisfy the duty set out above. Current government guide lines indicate that highway authorities need to pre-salt between 30 and 35% of the highway network, Cheshire East salts over 40%. Special provision is made for isolated communities in the Pennines (like Wincle) where roads that do not comply with the normal requirements of the Policy for treatment are cleared. The Council employs on contract 2 local farmers (recently joined by a third) who have winter service equipment, spreaders, snow blowers and snow ploughs to work in the hills.

The existing Winter Service Policy (Appendix 2) states that we do primary routes first; ‘A’ class roads as priority 1 within 2 hours and ‘B’ class and major commuter routes as priority 2 within 4 hours of the start of treatment.

Other roads such as estate roads footways and cycleways are specifically excluded from treatment until the primary routes are clear and there are sufficient resources to carry out salting or ploughing.

The basic highway treatment is covered by 17 frontline spreaders; 8 start from Lyme Green Depot and are filled from our salt store on site, 9 are filled directly from the salt mine. There are 2 spare spreaders, 3 snow blowers and 1 footway snow plough available.

The routes have been designed for the pre-salting to be completed within 4 hours; pre-salting is defined as preventative treatment to be completed just before the forecast onset of freezing or snow fall.

We have a contract with The Met Office to provide daily forecasts and have ice stations that provide information about temperatures and road surface conditions that enable us to plan treatment. Because we have such information Winter Service is now not treated as emergency work and all the restrictions of drivers’ hours, working day and rest periods have to be observed. To keep operational around the clock therefore needs a minimum of 3 drivers per machine and in falling snow or restricted visibility a second man is needed to accompany the driver. This winter stretched the drivers and machines to the limit.

### Additional Measures taken

Grounds Maintenance based at West Park Macclesfield also has winter service equipment – ploughs and spreaders – and undertook additional street clearing.



BAM Nuttall employed 7 sub-contractors to help clear snow and ice; they provided a variety of spreaders and ploughs including 2 footway spreaders towed by quad bikes.

CEC staff from waste also contributed to snow clearance. (South area)

These resources were deployed from 21<sup>st</sup> December on until the end of the cold period and the thaw has set in.

### Salt

Cheshire East has a main salt store at Lyme Green which has a capacity of 2500t and was full on 18<sup>th</sup> December. There is a store at Wardle that had 1000t and in December Green Street (1600t capacity) was re-commissioned as a salt store and was being filled when the cold weather started. Green Street was MBC's salt barn and has been used as a waste paper transfer station in recent years.

We also draw salt directly from the salt mine, running 9 routes from there. This has enabled CEC to continue salting when other authorities no longer had supplies.

In snow conditions with salting set to a maximum level of 40g/m<sup>2</sup> the main fleet at Lyme Green uses 200t for each run. In snow we averaged 6 hours for each run which will total 800t salt per day.

We therefore have 3 day resilience of supply at Lyme Green, 1 day at Wardle and if Green Street in full use 2 days there.

Currently one of the regular farmer contractors has a small stock pile on his farm and the other loads his spreader at Lyme Green Depot.

The other sub contractors were also supplied from Lyme Green as were the salt bins. Salt bins need 75t for each filling.

Salt deliveries:

The contract with Salt Union is for them to deliver sufficient salt to keep supplies at LG between 1800t and 2500t; this is done using 30t loads.

The maximum daily delivery has been 300t; the normal delivery is between 120 and 200t and since the Salt has been rationed deliveries has been spasmodic with no more than 90t in any one day.

Even without rationing salt cannot be delivered fast enough to keep pace with use for the primary routes in snow conditions, the 6 day resilience in stock does not allow for extended use for secondary and tertiary route clearance and salt bin replenishment. To meet these needs a stock of 7000t is needed in the north and 2000t in the south.

Supplies at Green Street and Wardle were exhausted in early January; on instruction BAM Nuttall hauled an extra 1000t to Lyme Green between Christmas and New Year when most hauliers were on an extended break.

### Meeting Expectations

There is only one way to meet the expectation or demand that CEC clears more carriageways and footways and that is to increase the Winter Service fleet, reduce the time for route completion and have some over capacity to bring into play for the exceptional weather.

The demand for salt bins on the highway has grown; we began the winter with 260 (117 north 143 south) and have added another 25 (13 north 12 south) locations and requests for more than 200 more. These additional bins do not meet the current criteria for CEC to supply.

There is also a demand for salt bins at offices, care homes, libraries and other authority buildings. School may also benefit from standardizing salt supplies to their premises.

### Staff Mobility

A number of respondents noted the advantages of 4 x 4 vehicles in tackling icy streets. The Highways Operations hired a number of 4 x 4 pickups and should consider having some within the permanent fleet rather than 2 wheel drive vans, Ground Maintenance and Ranger Services have a number (?) of Land Rovers as part of the permanent fleet.

It is suggested that there may be sharing of such vehicles. Where such vehicles are front line staffs' transport that is not possible and the type of vehicle is probably unsuitable for Adult Services and others that need basic transport. The only viable option would be to have a number as pool cars with 4 x 4 capability such as Fiat Panda 4 x 4 diesel that can be used year round.

Consideration should be given for CEC buildings to have salt bins and for car parks to be salted. Instruction from the Highways Operations Duty Officer when ice formation likely to be sent to all salt bin managers.

### Human Resources

We perhaps need guidance from HR on the Working Hours directive as it applies to CEC front line staff. The Area Operations Managers had to make judgements when to send staff home to rest after long day and night hours had been worked. The whole period put a considerable strain on the front line workers who were dedicated to keeping the relief work going and often kept working to direct the contractor to places where some clearing was required.

**Cheshire Highways – Term Contract Highways & Vehicles 2004**  
**Winter Service Review Meeting – 02 February 2010**



Present:

From Cheshire East Council (CEC):

Rod Brown	(RB)	Area Engineer (Contract Delivery)
John McGowan	(JM)	Area Highways Manager North
Chris Shields	(CS)	Area Highways Manager South
Mark Swindells	(MS)	Highway Superintendent

From Cheshire West & Chester Council (CW&C):

Rob Brooks	(RBr)	Highway Shared Services and Contract Manager
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From BAM Nuttall Limited (BAMN):

Steve Addison	(SA)	Project Manager
Steve Gee	(SG)	Operations Manager
John Gibbon	(JG)	Area Manager (CW&C)
Mark Hughes	(MH)	Network Steward (CW&C)
Ian Jackson	(IJ)	Area Manager (CEC)
Alan Smith	(AS)	Network Steward (CEC)

Apologies: Phil Tyrrell (CEC)

Item	Minutes	1.1.1.1.1.1 A c t i o n
1.0	<b>Instructions – Forecasting - Ordering</b>	
1.1	<p><u>Instructions</u> - All agreed that this season had seen improvements in the issuing of the daily winter maintenance instructions and that these were generally received by 1330hrs each day. During the prolonged spell of cold weather this had been strongly in evidence.</p> <p>However in more recent weeks, instructions had been unhelpful at times in CEC as the Duty Officers (DO) had deferred the decision at 1330hrs until later in the day. This can create problems with drivers' hours and BAMN would prefer that the agreed protocol of a definite instruction at 1330hrs be adhered to. If conditions change the DO always has the option to change the instruction later and proceed in accordance with the agreed winter maintenance operational note. MS agreed to inform other DO of the need to confirm a definite instruction by 1330hrs each day.</p> <p>CECs' DO, are complying with the agreed procedure in as much as notification is given by 1330hrs for the first pre-salt and if required second drivers on-call, but whilst current arrangements with Salt Cell are in place, DO are also looking to reduce salt usage, therefore on some occasions are delaying action to check conditions still warrant a pre-salt.</p> <p>Due to low salt stock levels at Lyme Green depot it has been necessary, at times, to send the gritters to the Salt Mine to load. IJ highlighted that this</p>	MS

	adds some two hours to the route times and causes severe problems with drivers hours, it can foreshorten the working day and / or result in deem time becoming applicable. IJ stated that an option was to use additional drivers during the day to load at the Salt Mine in preparation for the night-time gritting. BAMN would then have the option to use additional non-winter trained drivers or subcontractors. CEC to consider and also to ensure that DO are aware of the problems that loading at the Salt Mine creates.	CEC
<b>Item</b>	<b>Minutes</b>	<b>1.1.1.1.1.2 A c t i o n</b>
1.2	<u>Forecasting</u> – The forecasting in general has been good and all agreed that they had been issued early enough to allow an instruction to be issued by 1330hrs each day. It was noted that the forecasting over the last week had been poor and that the snow showers experienced over the weekend had not been predicted. However other forecasting sites including the Met Office, Metcheck and BBC Weather had all shown similar forecasts.	CEC/CW&C
1.3	<u>Ordering</u> – Raising and receiving of orders through SBS and Works2 seems to be working well. All were asked to remind DO that instructions issued over the weekend need to be confirmed and orders raised first thing on the following Monday morning.	
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Resources</b>	IJ/JG
2.1	<u>Drivers &amp; Drivers' Hours</u> – All agreed that despite the severe and prolonged spell of weather, the gritting and snow clearing operations had generally gone well. Resource levels appear to have been able to cope with the demands put on them. BAMN commented that they had been severely stretched at times and despite having over 100 trained drivers they had been pushed to their limits. IJ is looking at training additional subcontract drivers to supplement the in-house volunteer teams particularly when 24 hour operations are in place. JG is also reviewing numbers.  Due to the complexity and number of routes it is acknowledge by all that Satnav technology in the cabs would be of tremendous benefit. Currently drivers that are new to routes are accompanied by a mate who talks them through the route; this takes time and wastes valuable resources. MS confirmed that various systems are being reviewed with a visit to Wrexham BC planned for 11.02.10.  JM commented that he believes the high routes in particular require experienced drivers; all agreed that this is the case and that this is considered and actioned at an operational level.  CEC has had ten staff members trained up to operate gritters and these resources had been contacted during the severe spell of weather. The drivers had only been called upon once on a Sunday afternoon without any prior warning when the conditions were poor. Only one driver had been able to volunteer out of eight contacted. MS believed that some of these	

	<p>inexperienced drivers may have been intimidated by the extreme conditions. JM suggested that if CEC is serious about offering these backup resources then further familiarization training should be undertaken by them during the summer months.</p> <p>MH commented that it would be of assistance at weekends to consider any on-call requirements ie. additional drivers over and above those on stand-by, on the preceding Friday. It can be difficult at weekends to call drivers at the last minute to cover on-call. This is not a problem during the week provided the instruction for on-call drivers is issued at 1330hrs as agreed. It should be recognised by all that the good will of the drivers to respond at weekends is relied on to some extent.</p>	CEC
<b>Item</b>	<b>Minutes</b>	<b>1.1.1.1.3 A c t i o n</b>
2.2	<p>There had been an instance recently where drivers had been put on-call for weekend duty early in the week only for this to be cancelled on the Friday afternoon. The situation was then exacerbated by an instruction over the weekend to put them back on-call; some drivers were not impressed.</p> <p>JG commented that the DO arrangement in CW&amp;C had recently changed and that the handover from one DO to another, particularly early morning handover, may need reviewing to ensure that there is continuity of cover. RBr agreed to review.</p> <p><u>Gritters</u> – The fleet had been stretched to the limit in the recent period and with only two spare gritters to cover both CEC and CW&amp;C we had at times been left short of gritters to cover all routes. The fleet had been supplemented by gritters supplied by BAMN and their subcontractors and at times one gritter had covered two routes consecutively. The review should include consideration as to whether two spares are required in the long term by each authority; two new gritters are due for delivery during 2010 so this should be achievable.</p> <p>AS commented that problems can occur when 4-wheel drive gritters are off the road and the only replacement is a 2-wheel drive; these are not suitable for the high routes in particular or during severe weather conditions. Future capital purchases should take this into consideration.</p> <p>JM believed that a comprehensive review of the fleet is required and that options for smaller demountable gritters should be considered as these are more appropriate for narrow lanes and estate roads. SA commented that for future term contracts a combination of prime movers supplied by the authorities and a fleet of smaller multi-function vehicles supplied by the contractor could be considered. All agreed that the authorities needed to review gritting policies; expectations are currently high given that CW&amp;C treats some 40% and CEC in excess of 45% of the network. CEC's fleet being supplemented by subcontract resources employed directly by CEC to treat some sections of the high routes. (National average is some 28%)</p>	<p>All</p> <p>RBr</p> <p>CEC/CW&amp;C</p> <p>CEC/CW&amp;C</p> <p>CEC/CW&amp;C</p>

	<p>There has been a higher expectation than in previous years to clear snow from roads and footpaths and all agreed that there needed to be investment in the snow ploughs. Many are extremely old with loose couplings which cause the ploughs to vibrate. MH commented that a slush plough had been supplied and used by one of our subcontractors and this was very effective if used in conjunction with salting before the snow had compacted.</p>	
2.3	<p><u>Fuel</u> – Fuel supplies at the depots and the deliveries from suppliers had not been a problem; BAMN had used a number of suppliers depending on availability. Fuel tanks appeared to be adequate however the redundant tank from Wardle depot is due to be relocated to Phoenix House during the summer as it has a larger capacity.</p>	
2.4	<p><u>Subcontractors</u> – It was acknowledged by all that BAMNs' subcontractors had provided exceptional service during the prolonged spell and all had performed above and beyond. The services provided included:</p>	
<b>Item</b>	<b>Minutes</b>	<b>1.1.1.1.4 A c t i o n</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provision of prime movers and agricultural spreaders for gritting</li> <li>▪ Wagons for collection and /or movement of salt supplies</li> <li>▪ Provision of salt / grit sand mix from British Salt to supplement dwindling rock salt supplies</li> <li>▪ Gritter drivers, second men and labour for footpath clearance</li> <li>▪ Plant and equipment for snow clearance and gritting of footpaths; included the provision of quad bikes fitted with mini ploughs and towable spreaders</li> <li>▪ Labour for control of vehicles collecting salt from the salt mine</li> <li>▪ JCBs and other plant for snow clearance</li> </ul> <p>Consideration should be given to establishing more formal arrangements for providing emergency resources from the subcontractors.</p>	
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Salt Supplies</b>	
3.1	<p><u>Ordering</u> – Orders had been placed well in advance and as supplies were used from the depots, however Salt Union was not able to provide the quantities requested neither locally nor nationally.</p> <p>Salt Union had also been unable at times to deliver due to problems in transport. BAMN had enlisted the help of their subcontractors in the period between Christmas and New Year to provide wagons to collect approx. 1,000t of rock salt without which the service could have been compromised.</p>	
3.2	<p><u>Monitoring / Barn Capacities</u> – Stock levels had been adequately monitored</p>	

	<p>but demand had outstripped supply.</p> <p>An additional uncovered storage area for approximately 1,000t of salt has been identified by CW&amp;C at Guilden Sutton depot. This is adjacent to the existing barn on an area used for seasonal storage of surface dressing chippings; salt deliveries will need to be coordinated for after the end of August but prior to any price increase and the salt properly sheeted.</p> <p>An additional covered storage area for approximately 1,800t of salt has been identified by CEC at Green Street in Macclesfield. This should mean that maximum stocks levels for CEC will be 4,200t with stocks to be held at Green Street, Lyme Green and Wardle depots.</p> <p>A review of future stock levels should be undertaken given that salt usage already this season is approximately 10,000t in CW&amp;C and over 16,000t in CEC. Stock levels have been gradually reduced over the years, at one time stocks were held at some 8,500t in Congleton and Macclesfield which equates to an average seasons usage.</p> <p>3.3 <u>Intervention</u> – The situation regarding salt stocks would have been far worse had we not had the facility to load direct from the Salt Mine. The intervention by Salt Cell whilst restricting deliveries to the depots has not impacted too badly. RBr warned against misuse of the facility for fear of it being withdrawn and us having to wait in line with others.</p>	CW&C/JG
<b>Item</b>	<b>Minutes</b>	<b>1.1.1.1.5 A c t i o n</b>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Winter Service Fleet</b>	
4.1	<p><u>Maintenance &amp; Repairs</u> – Fleet maintenance had performed well and in testing circumstances had generally kept the fleet on the road. There is growing concern with the attitude of Transport Coordination (TC) to repairs and maintenance. In one instance IJ had agreed with CS to stand down the fleet in Lyme Green for one day to enable the fitters to catch up and carry out routine checks and ongoing maintenance, TC is now trying to recharge BAMN for these essential works.</p> <p>Other issues raised include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ TC refusing to pay for replacing worn rubbers on the ploughs – claiming driver error</li> <li>▪ JM has repeatedly requested that the asymmetric spread pattern adjuster on the Whale controllers be reinstated – TC has had these disabled or has not sanctioned repair</li> <li>▪ Damaged springs have been a problem this season – all believe this is due to the increased use of the Salt Mine and the poor condition of</li> </ul>	

	<p>their haul roads</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Spinner damage resulting from poor condition of the haul roads in the Salt Mine</li> <li>▪ Refusal to pay for replacing shear pins, including sending a driver to collect, to enable the vehicle to be returned to duty</li> </ul> <p>Other issues were discussed and it was agreed that SG would liaise with BAMNs' Area Managers and prepare a list of issues that were giving cause for concern.</p> <p>MH to liaise with Lawson Welsh to ask a representative from Whale to check the control systems on the gritters to determine if all the controls are operable. MH believes that at times the float facility on the plough is not operating correctly. JM requested an independent report.</p>	SG/JG/IJ
4.2	<p><b><u>Breakdowns &amp; Feedback</u></b> – BAMN operational teams receive 'vehicle off the road reports' (VOR) from fleet maintenance daily, usually around 1600hrs. IJ commented that DO should have this information provided to them by TC by 1330hrs each day to enable them to instruct BAMN how to proceed. This information is currently provided to them second hand from BAMN operations.</p> <p>Taken in conjunction with the comments above there is a need for closer liaison between TC and CEC and CW&amp;C teams. A TC representative attended management and core group meetings prior to the implementation of LGR in April 2009 however this is no longer the case. RBr agreed to review the line of communication between operations and TC.</p>	MH
5.0	<p><b>Outside Influences</b></p> <p>It was noted that at times resources had been diverted from carrying out treatments as instructed by the DO and contrary to the stated policies. It is believed that these were usually in response to political pressures.</p>	RBr
<b>Item</b>	<b>Minutes</b>	<b>1.1.1.1.6 Action</b>
6.0	<p>All, including senior officers and members, should be aware that resources, including salt stocks, may be exhausted and that priority one &amp; two routes may suffer accordingly. Senior officers must always be fully apprised of the situation including the implications on drivers' hours, salt stock levels, etc.</p> <p><b>Change Management</b></p> <p>Operations teams can always respond to changing requests and could provide a better service if more resources and budget are provided.</p> <p>MS commented that fewer complaints had been received during the latter weeks of the cold spell as the public expectations reduced ie. secondary routes had stopped being treated. Drivers started to drive to the conditions.</p>	



	It was noted that the decision was eventually taken to only treat priority one and two routes at a relatively late stage. Long range forecasts had been predicting the cold weather lasting for a number of weeks; it was suggested that the decision could have been taken earlier in order to preserve the dwindling salt stocks.	
<b>7.0</b>	<b>Innovations</b>	
7.1	<u>Footway Treatment</u> – There was increased pressure this season to treat and clear footways. If this becomes a policy change then consideration should be given to providing quad bikes fitted with mini ploughs and towable spreaders together with additional resources to operate them. Footways should then be addressed in a similar manner to roads with priority footways identified, response times established, etc to enable the operation to be adequately resourced and planned. JM commented that this will be a costly operation which members should be made aware of.	CEC/CW&C
7.2	<u>Future Methods</u> – The benefits of Safecote were discussed and it's effectiveness particularly when used on lying snow. The operational teams did not believe that spread rates had been reduced in line with stated practice for Safecote and that if Thawrox had been used then similar quantities would have been involved with a consequential saving on the cost of the salt. RBr confirmed that CW&C is reviewing the use of Safecote and may well revert back to Thawrox.	RBr
<b>8.0</b>	<b>Any Other Business</b>	
8.1	<u>Website Information</u> - MS commented that information on winter service had been provided on a daily basis to the public via the CEC website. SA agreed that this information was excellent and it gave details of treatments carried out the previous night, proposed treatments, weather forecast, resources being used, etc. CW&C provided information but not in as much detail.	
8.2	All agreed that the conditions had been dealt with in a professional manner and through the cooperation and working together of all those involved. CS & RBr confirmed that the respective authorities will be writing to all thanking them for their efforts.	

## Appendix 14 - Rural Communities

### Meeting - 09-Feb 2010 CEC Environmental Services/CEC Highways with Wincle/Wildboarclough Parish representatives

**Topic:** problems encountered on roads in the Wincle/ Wildboarclough areas caused by snow/ice during December 2009 and January 2010.

**Action:** CEC Environmental Services and CEC Highways to review:

- Number of snow plough and snow blowers currently available and if this is sufficient to meet network demands;
- Identify milk tanker routes and school locations to consider whether these could be included with high priority gritting/clearance routes as it should be a CEC responsibility to keep these clear and open;
- Expanding current 'farmers' network' of local subcontractors to help salt roads/clear snow during severe winter periods and clearly define all subcontractors' roles and area they're responsible for within the CEC road network;
- These subcontractors being given 'empowerment' to prioritise their 'local' problem areas to ensure:
  - identification of problem roads;
  - speedy resolution;
  - minimum travel distance;
  - unnecessary administrative involvement.
- Distribution of salt to be stored 'locally' by these subcontractors to avoid having to travel to collect from central depots;
- Distribution of snow-blowers and ploughs for use by these subcontractors to ensure even coverage throughout the region;
- Procedures for when to grit, when to snow plough or use snow-blower, so that grit not wasted spreading it on roads covered in thick snow;
- CEC Highways representatives to discuss with Staffordshire CC Highways to discuss what SCC did differently to CEC to enable them to keep their roads open especially in the Heaton/Swythamley/Gradbach areas;
- Set up of 'priority' CEC Highways emergency helpline in extreme winter conditions so that 'local' focal points can report severity of conditions as well as difficulties for trapped residents and farm deliveries/collections to enable CEC to get early indication as to the extent of the weather problem and resources needed. (Focal Points could be Parish Council/Meeting representatives);
- Liaise with Police authorities about the A54 road closure signs being more specific as to which point the road is impassable. This would ensure that farm feed deliveries/businesses on the clear section are not affected;
- Use of 'salt piles' in more remote areas, similar to Staffordshire CC.
- Use of different type of salt mix for country roads.
- Consider driver education regarding schedules v stranded drivers (example given of jack-knifed lorry being driven past without stopping to assist).