

Environment Scrutiny and Performance Panel

26 July, 2011

**Agenda
Item No.**

6

Update on Winter Service Working Group

Ward(s) All

Portfolios: Cllr Ansell – Transport and Environment

Report:

The Environment Scrutiny and Performance Panel, at their meeting held on 16 June, 2011, resolved that a working group be established to look at the Winter Maintenance Service.

This report sets out a summary of the first two meetings of the Winter Service Working Group. It also informs the Panel of the planned future work of the group and seeks approval of the terms of reference attached at Appendix 1 to this report.

The Working Group consists of:

Councillor R. Carpenter (Lead Member)
Councillor Creaney
Councillor Illmann-Walker
Councillor Westley
Councillor Fitzpatrick

To date the Working Group has met on two occasions.

At its first meeting, held on 5 July, 2011 the Working Group met with Officers from the Council and considered matters including:-

- The draft terms of reference;
- The move to the new depot location at Apex Road Brownhills;
- The additions to the gritting routes to take into account schools and bus routes;
- The most effective snow clearance methods for the Town and District Centres;
- The possible reduction of grit bins;
- The Winter Maintenance Service Plan.

Arising from the ensuing discussion, the Working Group acknowledged that considerable work was being undertaken with Vaisala who were revising gritting routes to make them more effective. Budget considerations, bus routes and possible opportunities for community based gritting were also discussed. Overall, the Working Group identified key areas for further consideration at their second meeting including the location of grit bins and

community based gritting. Members also requested that the Town and District Centre Managers, or a representative thereof, together with the Markets Manager. This was to enable the Working Group to gain a broader perspective on the winter service and better understand the issues from different perspectives.

At their second meeting, held on 13 July, 2011, Members considered in more depth the issue surrounding provision and location of grit bins. As part of this discussion Members considered the fact that new equipment had been purchased. This new equipment enabled Officers to grit areas previously inaccessible for vehicles which could mean that grit bins may not be required. Members requested further information from Officers to facilitate their investigations at the next meeting. The Working Group also received further information on the possible introduction of community gritting whereby volunteers could be utilised to assist with the service. Members also received views from the Markets Manager and a regeneration officer on the concept of community gritting and the winter service.

In conclusion, Members agreed that the issue of Community Gritting be considered by the Environment Scrutiny and Performance Panel once the concept had been considered in greater depth. The Working Group also agreed to consider the provision and location of grit bins again at their next meeting together with the following matters:-

- New depot and gritting routes;
- Possible additions to the routes;
- The most effective winter service for Town and District Centres;
- Working time directive;


Recommendations:

That:

1. That the Environment Scrutiny and Performance Panel approve the draft terms of reference as appended to this report and;
2. the progress made by the Winter Service Working Group be noted.

Councillor R. Carpenter
Chair of Environment Scrutiny and Performance Panel and
Lead Member of the Winter Service Parking Working Group

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