

Agenda Item 5i

Report to Cabinet

Date: Tuesday 2nd March 2010

Title: Winter Arrangements for the Refuse, Recycling and Street Cleaning Services.

Wards: All

Portfolio Holder: Cllr Geoff Churchard
Environment and Sustainability

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1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1** To advise members of the arrangements made for the Refuse, Recycling and Street Cleaning Services during the prolonged winter weather in December 2009 and January 2010 and
- 1.2** To make proposals for the improvement of services in the event of prolonged winter weather in the future.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1** That the proposals detailed in paragraph 9.2 and 9.3 be implemented immediately
- 2.2** That the proposals detailed in paragraph 9.4 be prepared for implementation before the winter of 2010/11, but in the event of an emergency this winter that they be introduced immediately where practicable and
- 2.3** That the Refuse Collection Working Party consider the options referred to in paragraph 9.5 of this report and report back to Cabinet in October 2010 with recommendations to improving the Council's winter performance.

3.0 Corporate Policy Implications including Equalities and Equalities Impact Assessment

- 3.1** There are no Corporate Policy or Equalities Implications arising from this report.

4.0 Financial Implications

4.1 There are no financial implications arising directly from this report. However there are cost implications, both revenue and capital associated with the options contained in paragraph 9.5 which the Refuse Collection Working Party will need to consider as part of their report back to Cabinet in October. Details of the types of expenditure involved are included in paragraph 9.5 of this report.

5.0 Legal and Property Implications

5.1 There are no legal or property implications arising directly out of this report. However there some legal and property issues that will need to be resolved should Cabinet wish to proceed with one or more of the options reported to in this report. These issues which will be considered by the Refuse Collection Working Party include:-

- Whether our contractual arrangements can require our contractors to work Sundays or Bank Holidays.
- Whether the use of snow tyres or chains on our contractors vehicles would be legal and if so what are the Road Traffic Requirements
- Whether the Waste Management Licence (and the planning permission) will allow for the bulk storage of salt/grit at the Council depot.
- Whether the Council's contractors are liable for the purchase of additional snow clearance equipment or whether this should be the responsibility of the Council to purchase and the implications regarding the use of this equipment on their vehicles.
- Liability should the Council require the contractor to store waste on their vehicles as a result of Sunday / Bank Holiday working.

6.0 Workforce Implications

6.1 There are no implications for the Council's workforce arising from this report

7.0 Background Information

7.1 Timetable of Winter events

7.1.1 Attached as appendix A are details of the timetable around December and January showing the Christmas and New Year holidays and the days when refuse, recycling and street cleaning were suspended by the Head of Environment and Regulatory Services

The chart shows that 6 working days were suspended in all due to the snow and ice. 4 working days were also taken up by Bank Holidays which effectively means that two working weeks were lost during a period spanning just over 5 weeks.

The Contract Manager and supervisors drove the routes every morning before the crews were allowed to commence collections to assess the

conditions. However, once the decision, in liaison with the Head of Environmental and Regulatory Services was made that the collections would commence, the onus was left to the drivers of the collection vehicles to decide whether a particular road was accessible or if they were confident to manoeuvre the vehicle along the roads.

- 7.1.2** Members were asked to notes two milestones on this chart – one is on the 24th December when 100% of refuse had been collected, 70% of green waste and 50% + of dry recycling.
On the 23rd January 2010 – all refuse and recycling collections had been completed.

7.2 Issues Arising

- 7.2.1** The impact of the snow and ice arriving on two different periods and the time it took to thaw gave rise to a number of issues :-
- The Refuse, Recycling and Street Cleaning service was suspended for a total of six days between 18th December 2009 - 9th January 2010. The effect of this was that some residents had to wait over four weeks for a collection of either refuse or recycling.
 - The weather effected the same collection weeks on both occasions
 - Residential roads and footways were not gritted making access treacherous. (HCC only gritted priority routes).
 - Boxed recycling was hit hardest due to icy footways. This was because the footways were not gritted and there was the danger that the operatives could slip whilst carrying boxes to the vehicle especially those full of glass.
 - Residents were concerned about both non-collection of refuse and green waste as there was food waste in both. This influenced the decision to maintain green and black bin collection schedules rather than change to black bin only collections.

7.3 Remedial Action Taken

- 7.3.1** All street cleaning operatives were deployed on clearing snow and gritting footways. Salt was ordered and delivered by HCC as per the agreed winter arrangements to our depot and this was used to treat priority footways as designated by HCC
- 7.3.2** The Council's contact centre and website were updated daily to ensure residents were kept up to date as regularly as possible as to the status of service.
- 7.3.3** There was no opportunity to use Saturdays to catch up missed collections as these were already scheduled collection days over the Christmas and New Year holiday.
- 7.3.4** As all crews were committed to maintaining scheduled collections during the period in question, there was little opportunity to catch up on roads

missed due to their inaccessibility (either too slippery or parked cars). However the following additional measures were taken

- Flats where bagged refuse is bulked in collection areas were collected on Saturday 9th January although the overall service was suspended
- An extra team was deployed to collect bagged refuse in the street prior to the delayed scheduled round.
- Two extra collection vehicles were sourced to help with missed collections
- During the second period of disruptions, missed roads were listed on the “Recyclingforapremier” website as accurately as possible.

8.0 Options for providing services during prolonged winter weather

- 8.1** A series of meetings have taken place with our contractors and officers within other authorities to look at the problems that have emerged during the snow and ice and the various options that could be considered if a prolonged spell of bad weather returns.
- 8.2** Attached as appendix B is an options report listing the various options, the advantages and disadvantages of such options and the timescale for implementation.

Using this options report, it has been possible to put forward a number of proposals for dealing with snow and ice conditions. There are a number of measures that could be considered for immediate implementation and these are detailed in paragraphs 9.2, 9.3 and 9.4 (in emergency situations only) below.

There are also some options that require further investigation to check all their feasibility, the contractual obligations and the financial implications. These are referred to in paragraph 9.5 below.

9.0 Proposals for Service Provision during disruptive winter weather

- 9.1** The following proposals are recommended to be put in place as part of the Council's winter maintenance plan for maintaining the refuse, recycling and street cleaning services
- 9.2** For disruptions lasting 1-2 working days duration
No change to current “catch up” arrangements re Saturdays used as a catch up day and first dropped day would be the first to be picked up when service resumes
- 9.3** For disruption lasting 3-7 working days duration
The option in these circumstances would be to adopt a collect all policy i.e. to collect whatever coloured bin is placed out, green or black together with any excess bags, but with all waste going to landfill. Residents then can choose whether to hang onto their green bin recycling until the next

scheduled collection or just get the bin emptied. The scheduled collections would then start the next week.

The street cleansing crews would continue to clear snow from footways and grit them while stocks are available and delivered to the depot.

9.4 Over 7 working days continuous disruption – Emergency Collection service only

The option in such circumstances would be to commence collecting refuse bagged up at specific location points (e.g. car parks) which could be reached by the refuse collection crews using the main roads throughout the district which it is assumed will be passable. These arrangements would remain in place until scheduled collections could recommence. During this catch up period, excess bagged refuse would be removed with the emptying of the black bins. These location points will have to be pre-arranged and possibly signposted. For the reasons given in the options report, this would only be in a severe emergency when the regular scheduled collections are still not possible after 7 working days. This option would allow residents to take their refuse and hopefully assist by taking the bags of other residents unable to manage (as part of a self help initiative) to the location points on specific days. The clearing of snow and the gritting of footways would continue as 9.3 above.

9.5. One option discussed in Appendix B not being recommended immediately is the use of chains on the collection vehicles. However some options require further investigation

- i.e. Sunday / Bank Holiday Working
- The storage of salt at the depot
- The use of snow clearing and grit spreading equipment on existing contractor's vehicles. and
- Use of snow/winter tyres and spiked footwear

It is suggested that these options be further investigated and a report be taken later in the year to the Refuse Collection Working Party for consideration and if agreed for a further report to be brought to Cabinet. This report should include the financial implications of such options which can then be considered as part of the budget considerations for 2011/12. These will include

- **Sunday / Bank Holiday working**
This would involve paying the work force double time in line with the schedule of rates as well as additional vehicle running costs. Indicative costs suggest this would be in the region of £8500 per day.
- **Use of chains / snow tyres**
The cost of purchase and fitting would arguably fall to the Council. Estimated costs are as follows:-
Snow chains approx £200 + VAT per set/vehicle

Snow tyres would cost in the region of £2100 +VAT per vehicle (there are 18 vehicle in the fleet for refuse and recycling). This would mean that re-negotiation of the contract would be required as this would be an additional cost.

- Purchase of snow removal and gritting equipment
Estimates have been obtained for various items of equipment that could be used with the available street cleaning equipment. These would be mini tow gritters (£995 - £1500 + VAT) and plough attachment for folk lift (£685 + VAT)

However, there are not financial implications for the following options:-

- Collect all week i.e. black and green bins
- Use of pre-arranged collection points
- Deployment of refuse, recycling and street cleaning operatives for snow and ice clearance.

9.6 Communication

9.6.1 Following discussions with other Councils regarding their performance, a number of ideas were put forward for consideration and further investigation. These details have been added to the options report, and include the following:-

- Information Boards
- SMS (text) messaging
- E-mail updates

9.6.2 As the legal position regarding the removal of snow from the footways has now been clarified, it has allowed this Council to deploy its contractors to remove snow without the necessity to treat with grit / salt.

This legal position will be a feature of future publications regarding winter arrangements with a view to encouraging residents to undertake this task in front of their properties to assist the early return of services as well as improving the mobility of the public.

9.6.3 Communications during the extreme winter conditions is considered in more detail in the review on the Winter Weather Management of the Council services which is found on a report elsewhere on the Cabinet agenda. This report includes arrangements made to keep residents advised of the status of the various services including refuse, recycling and street cleaning. This report also contains recommendations for future service enhancements to which the above ideas will be included.

10.0 Bibliography

None