

Wigan Council

Highway Winter Service Policy

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 The purpose of this policy is to clarify both the standard and extent of the winter maintenance service the Council will provide by:

- Maintaining key elements of the highway network and facilitating public transport's accessibility;
- Assisting business continuity and resilience to other public sector and private sector service providers;
- Supporting the delivery of the refuse collection service during the winter months;
- Confirming what areas **will not** receive winter maintenance provision;
- Signposting residents, community groups and businesses to self help information to ensure they can adequately prepare themselves.

The Council's aim is to respond effectively to the weather conditions, no matter how severe, to ensure key corridors of the highway network are operating satisfactorily to support residents, businesses and other service providers.

1.2 The Council as highway authority has responsibility to provide a degree of winter service provision. The Highways Act 1980 Section 41(1A) imposes a duty on a highway authority ***'to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that safe passage along a highway is not endangered by ice and snow'***. However, it is important to note that this does not create an absolute duty on the Council to remove ice and snow from our all our roads and footways.

1.3 This Highway Winter Service Policy aims to comply with legislation by its prioritised treatment of key areas of its highway network and thus ensure the Council acts in a reasonably practicable manner at all times within available resources.

2.0 Policy Statement

2.1 The Council aims to provide a winter service which, as far is reasonably practicable, will permit safe movement of traffic and minimise delays and accidents directly attributable to adverse weather conditions having regard to financial constraints and legal requirements.

3.0 Scope

- 3.1** This policy details the context for Wigan Council's winter service provision. It is compiled in conjunction with the recommendations of the Government's Code of Practice for Highway Maintenance (Well-maintained Highways) and covers all elements of the service. The Policy includes the Council's prioritised routes; arrangements of appropriate treatments; deployment of personnel and plant to enable precautionary salting; and snow clearance of the highway network in accordance with specified response times.
- 3.2** Underpinning this policy is a Severe Weather Deployment Plan (SWDP), which defines priority areas and how the Council will arrange and mobilise available resources in the event of such an occurrence.

4.0 Responsibilities and Management Arrangements

- 4.1** The Head of Highways and Traffic Management is responsible for implementing the Council's Highway Winter Service Policy.
- 4.2** The Highways Direct Labour Organisation (HDLO) Manager is responsible for the day to day operation of the Council's Highway Winter Service Policy.
- 4.3** The HDLO Manager and the HDLO Assistant Manager act as winter duty managers during the winter risk period (**1st October to 31st March**) and are operationally responsible for deploying the winter service when required.
- 4.4** The HDLO Manager or the HDLO Assistant Manager will implement the Council's SWDP (see paragraph 7.0) in consultation with the Head of Neighbourhood Services and the Grounds Maintenance Manager or their nominated representatives.

5.0 Route Prioritisation

- 5.1** Wigan Borough is the largest local authority in Greater Manchester maintaining a highway network in excess of 1,000Km of carriageway and almost 2,000Km of footway. Given the scale of the financial implications and other operational resources involved in delivering the winter service, it is not considered to be practically possible to:

- provide a winter service on all parts of the highway network in one operation; and
- ensure all running surfaces are kept free from ice and snow at all times, even on the treated parts of the highway network.

6.0 Treatment Types and Priorities

6.1 Precautionary Salting: This is the advanced application of salt applied to a road to prevent ice forming and snow settling.

To provide an effective salting operation aimed at ensuring the safe movement of vehicles, precautionary salting is carried out on roads prioritised in accordance with defined highway hierarchies contained in The Code of Practice for Highway Maintenance Management (Well-maintained Highways), published by the UK Roads Liaison Group. These hierarchies are based on the amount of vehicles using a particular road.

The precautionary salting route priorities are listed in Figure 6.1.1 and account for approximately 34 % of the total road length across the full borough.

Figure 6.1.1.

ROAD PRIORITIES (Precautionary Salting)	
Priority Number	Description
Priority 1	High Speed, Strategic and main traffic routes (typically A, B and C Class Roads).
Priority 2	Local bus routes and roads which provide access to: Hospitals, ambulance and fire stations, Industrial estate roads; Designated waste collection pick up stations as per the Severe Weather Deployment Plan (SWDP) see paragraph 7.0
No other roads will receive precautionary salting	

6.1.2 The existing policy prioritises gritting and snow clearance routes in accordance with road hierarchy and strategic importance in order to keep traffic moving and ensure safe access to the borough. However, in some instances during last winter the Council was informed of access difficulties to some of our larger, steeper estate feeder roads which prevented many residents going about their normal daily activities.

6.1.3 Whilst it is not possible to treat all roads within the borough it is proposed that existing criteria is expanded to include the worst affected residential feeder roads on our priority 2 gritting list (where priority 1 is the strategic network) as part of this years revisions. Types of feeder/access roads that we may need to consider are;

- An estate with significant resident numbers that has only one road in and out;
- Feeder or loop roads to the estate, again with a significant number of residents that have a lengthy gradual incline;
- Large estate feeder roads with an abrupt gradient or sharp bends and

6.1.4 By adding these identified residential feeder roads to our precautionary and snow clearing routes, accessibility will be improved during severe winter conditions and thereby assist significant local communities to travel to work and their local amenities safely.

6.1.5 During severe winter conditions the Council will consider service requests for reactive gritting from members of the community where difficulties are being experienced, and in particular where assistance from us would benefit the wider community in terms of travel and accessing essential services. All requests for service can only be considered in accordance with the winter service priorities and available resources.

6.2 Response Times: Precautionary salting will be fully operational within 1 hour of the decision to commence operations. All Priority 1 roads will be completed within 3 hours of operations commencing; and Priority 2 roads within 2 hours thereafter.

6.3 Footways: No footways will receive a precautionary salting.

6.4 Post Salting: This is the action taken to remove ice and snow less than 40mm thick that has already formed on the road. These roads are prioritised as per Figure 6.1.1

6.5 Snow Clearance: When continuous snow is forecast the salting spread rate will be increased to help melt the initial snowfall and provide a wet surface from which to commence ploughing. For snow already on the road at depths over 40mm, a combined ploughing and salting operation will be carried out as per the priorities listed in Figure 6.1.1.

6.6 Route Review: The highway network and access it provides to various facilities will be reviewed annually following each winter season. The most comprehensive and current summary of roads and footways included in our designated gritting routes

and SWDP are available on the Council's web page and can be accessed by logging on to www.wigan.gov.uk/winterservice

7.0 Severe Weather Deployment Plan (SWDP)

7.1 The SWDP will be implemented by the Winter Maintenance Duty Manager if the following criteria is met:

- Snow falls to a depth greater than 40mm; or
- Ice, following rainfall, is forecasted and is to remain beyond a 24 hour period.

The Winter Duty Manager will activate the Plan by contacting a range of service managers or their nominated representatives whose normal services will have been temporarily suspended due to the severe weather conditions. These will include Street Cleaning, Highway Repairs, Street Lighting, Grounds Maintenance, Waste Collection, Wigan Leisure Cultural Trust and Leigh Building Services.

7.2 Footways will be cleared of ice and snow in accordance with defined footway highway hierarchies contained in The Code of Practice for Highway Maintenance Management (Well-maintained Highways), published by the UK Roads Liaison Group. These hierarchies are based on the amount of pedestrians using a particular footway. The priorities are listed in Figure 7.2.1.

Figure 7.2.1.

SEVERE WEATHER DEPLOYMENT PLAN PRIORITIES	
Priority Number	Description
Priority 1	Wigan and Leigh town centres (hierarchy 1 footways)
Priority 2	Main district town centres (Ashton, Atherton, Golborne, Hindley, Pemberton, Standish and Tyldesley - hierarchy 1 footways) These areas will be treated when all Priority 1 footways have been cleared.
Priority 3	Local community shopping areas Rail station access Bus station access Bus stops (hierarchy 1 footways) Pedestrian crossing points (hierarchy 1 footways) Main car parks access

	Public building access (providing essential services) Day centre access Clinics and GP surgery access Sure Start Children’s Centres Bus stops on Quality Bus Corridors Police, Ambulance and Fire Stations These areas will be treated when all Priority 2 routes have been cleared.
Note	No other footways will be treated

7.3 Deployment of Resources: A maximum of 316 operational staff will be available with 44 vehicles to transport this operational resource across the borough during suspension of the services listed in paragraph 7.1. However, this resource can reduce if the weather improves and some of these services can either wholly or partly be reintroduced. Depending on the severity of the weather, the duration, and the available resource, the facilities listed in figure 7.2.1 will be systematically attended according to their priorities. Priority 3 facilities will be attended on a borough wide township area basis.

7.3.1 Partnership Working

Historically during recent periods of severe weather the Council has operated independently in providing a response when dealing with access issues to public facilities on the adopted highway network.

7.3.2 Discussions have taken place with the Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service who have offered some support and resources during severe weather conditions. They have also offered to raise the matter with other public service providers to secure additional support. A co-ordinated approach to utilise our joint resources will be implemented in periods of severe conditions in accordance with the Severe Weather Deployment Plan (SWDP).

7.3.3 Any additional resource would be welcomed which would support and allow further development of the Council’s SWDP to help target access to public facilities across the borough affected by severe conditions.

7.4 Support for Schools

7.4.1 Currently only 60% of schools benefit from the precautionary gritting of their access roads as many of their locations are in residential areas on minor roads which do not receive treatments at present.

- 7.4.2** To assist schools to remain open wherever possible the Council has introduced precautionary gritting on access roads to schools. In severe snow conditions the council proposes to introduce snow clearance of those access roads once the priority routes have been cleared. Additionally, we will clear snow from footways along the school's main entrance and exit in accordance with the priorities set out in our Severe Weather Deployment Plan (SWDP).
- 7.4.3** The Council has sent an advice note to all schools on how they may wish to treat their own premises during severe wintry conditions, the document "Top 10 Tips" is shown in Appendix C, which will assist schools to put in place a severe weather contingency plan of their own. The decision to open or close a school during severe weather will remain ultimately with the head teacher in consultation with the Chair of Governors.
- 7.4.4** A point of contact for schools has been established in order to implement a snow clearing priority list in times of limited resources. It is envisaged that some schools will have differing priorities during the winter season and therefore may need salt or snow treatment on a pre-determined priority.
- 7.4.5** The Council will take all reasonable steps to ensure public access to schools is maintained wherever practicable in order to minimise closures and support educational continuity. However, it will remain the schools responsibility to make their own provisions within the school grounds.

8.0 Weather Prediction and Information

8.1 Receiving the Forecast

The availability of accurate weather forecasts at appropriate times is essential in the decision making process to provide an efficient and cost effective winter maintenance service. The Council is equipped with the following management information systems to assist in that process.

8.2 The "Open Road" Service

The Meteorological Office provides the 'Open Road' service giving detailed 24 hour forecasts, a 2 to 5 day forecast, ice prediction forecasts and a telephone consultancy service enabling discussion with the Meteorological Office 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

8.3 Weather Station

Wigan's weather station is a road side sensor located on the East Lancashire Road (A580) at Leigh and provides localised information about the road and ambient conditions. The information received is processed by an ice prediction computer software system.

8.4 Ice Prediction System

The information gathered at the roadside sensor is sent direct to the Meteorological Office and they use the data alongside regional data to determine the weather forecast. This in turn is fed back to the Council providing updates on weather conditions every twenty minutes.

8.5 Thermal Mapping

Thermal maps are temperature profiles of given road lengths showing which parts of the road remain warmer or colder than others. This assists the Council to target specific roads in isolation rather than a full blanket gritting treatment across the borough.

9.0 Plant and Material Resources

- 9.1 Vehicles:** Currently, a fleet of eleven gritting vehicles are sufficient to cover the designated priority gritting routes; ten are used daily with one on standby in case of breakdown. All vehicles can accommodate a snow plough attachment, if required. The vehicles are serviced and made ready for use two weeks before the designated start of the winter period.
- 9.2 Salt Stock:** As of 2010, all salt stockpiles will be stored under cover in a purpose built salt barn situated in the Council's Highways Depot at Sovereign Road. Rock salt is supplied by Salt Union Ltd, based in Winsford, Cheshire. Supplies of rock salt are secured during the summer months when demand is historically low. Our capacity to now store higher volumes of rock salt in a better working environment will ensure we provide a more cost effective and resilient service.
- 9.3 Monitoring Salt Stocks:** This will be achieved using monthly checks comparing weighbridge measurements taken as gritters leave and return from the depot to ensure that minimum and maximum levels are maintained. These results are fed into a stock management computer software system which in turn is reported directly to the salt supplier for automatic deliveries.
- 9.4 Salt Bins:** There are currently 376 salt bins located across the borough with a combined storage capacity of over 100 tonnes of salt. Each bin is checked annually and refilled before the start of the winter season. Those that are either damaged or worn will be replaced as necessary. A register of salt bins is maintained by the Highways DLO Manager.
- 9.5** Salt bins are provided at locations where drivers face difficult conditions that may prove hazardous or prevent them from accessing designated salted routes. Typically these locations are at sharp bends, steep hills, junctions etc. Whilst the known locations have had a salt bin provided in the past new bins are still available on request for public use on roads that do not receive a precautionary gritting treatment.
- 9.6** It is important to note that the Council cannot service all requests for the provision of salt bins and before any new locations are agreed the Council will confirm that there is a genuine need for users of the highway. The criteria to meet will include the following:

- Only provided on sites with difficult conditions e.g. steep hills, sharp bends, junctions etc.
- There must be must sufficient space on the footpath or verge in order that the bin does not cause obstruction to pedestrians or traffic sight lines and the bin can be replenished safely.
- No bins will be provided to serve a road if that road is included in the precautionary salting route.
- No bins will be provided to serve a footway if that footway is included in the severe weather deployment plan.
- No bins will be provided on un-adopted roads.
- No bins will be provided for private areas or car parks for internal use by either Council, public or private property such as schools, parks, hospitals, old people's homes etc. unless a service level agreement is in place. (Please contact the Council 01942 404364 for further information on this service).

9.7 Due to an increasing demand for salt bins a criteria for their placement was included in last years policy revision. The criterion introduced was to ensure a consistent approach across the borough and that the salt was only used for the adopted highway at recognised sites of difficulty. Unfortunately during the last winter season it was apparent that salt from some of the bins was being taken and used for private areas and not in the immediate vicinity of the bin. The council in order to discourage this abuse attached advisory notices to all bins.

9.8 The reported misuse of salt resources will continue to be closely monitored this winter. However it is recognised that Councillors receive many requests for salt provision form their constituents which in some cases do not meet the bin placement criteria. In these instances it is proposed to introduce a service of a "green community salt bin" whereby a community group will be able to provide a bin at their cost which will be replenished at an agreed location.

9.9 In order to distinguish between the different salt bins around the borough this coming season, we have introduced 3 alternative colours of bins;

- Yellow – Winter service salt bin for use the adopted highway at and around the bin location
- Black – For use in Wigan, Leigh and district town centres and
- Green – For use as a community funded bin

Examples of the salt bins provided are shown in Appendix C

9.10 By discouraging the misuse of salt we expect that road safety is not compromised. A green salt bin facility offers assistance in non designated areas and will hopefully assist and satisfy community need and concern.

Note: Salt bins will only be replenished during and immediately after periods of adverse weather as resources allow. Also, should a site prove problematic because of regular misuse of salt for the treatment of private driveways, or vandalism of a bin, the Council reserves the right to remove the bin.

9.11 Requests for salt bins can be made by contacting the Council's customer help line on 01942 404364 or e-mail eshelpline@wigan.gov.uk. Alternatively a request can be made on the Council's web site www.wigan.gov.uk/winterservice

9.12 Supplies of salt are not provided to members of the public or local businesses who will need to make their own provision for salting on their own premises. It is common for residents in winter to spread rock salt (also known as grit salt) on their walkways and driveways to melt ice and thin layers of snow. The Council would advise the public to keep up to date with weather forecasts throughout the coldest months and spreading some rock salt in the evening if low temperatures are forecast. Another spreading of salt in the morning can help ensure safety for residents and their visitors. This is especially beneficial for properties at the top or bottom of a steep path or drive and even more so if steps are involved. However care always needs to be taken regardless of spreading salt.

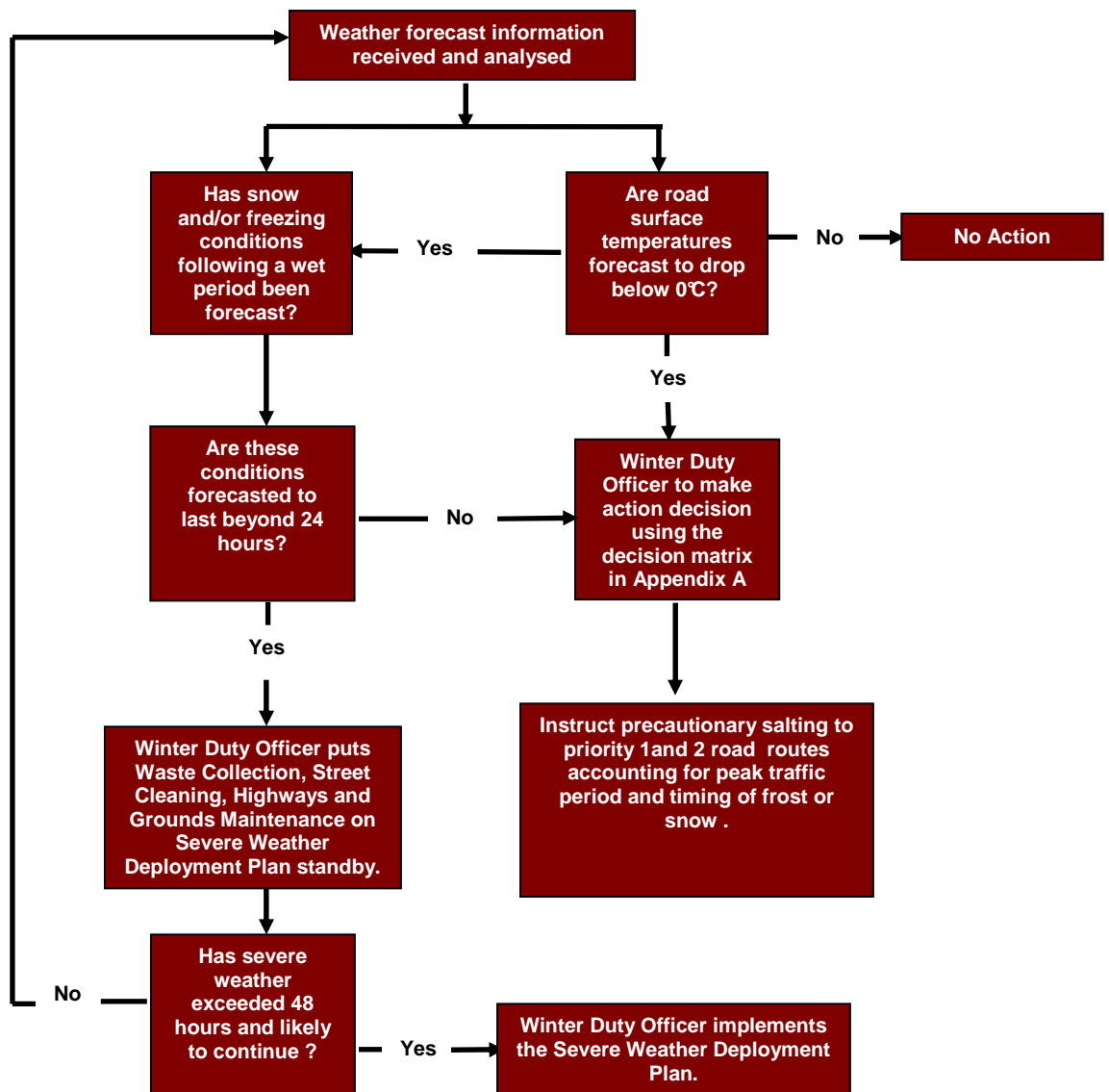
9.13 Salt can quickly become in short supply especially during severe weather conditions and the Council would advise people to be prepared and have the necessary supplies and equipment in place for these conditions. Bagged crushed rock salt for thawing ice and snow is ideal for gritting paths and driveways. For a relatively small cost a bag of rock salt can offer some insurance against winter accidents. Businesses or people with large properties might even consider purchasing a grit bin to store extra amounts of salt.

9.14 Supplies of salt, salt storage facilities etc. that will help the public through the winter weather periods are readily available at local DIY, general hardware stores as well as a list of alternative suppliers listed on the internet.

10.0 Decision Making Process

10.1 The decision to carry out winter service operations in accordance with the designated route priorities will be made by the HDLO Manager or his deputy. Their decision is made based on the weather forecasting information they have received and aided by cross referencing the Decision Making Matrix depicted in Appendix A and the Decision Flow Chart depicted below in Figure 10.1.1.

Figure 10.1.1 Decision Flow Chart



11.0 Standard Operating Procedures

11.1 The Winter Duty Manager or his deputy will be responsible for organising gritting operations required from Monday to Friday during normal working hours. In addition, these officers will be on stand by rota from 16:00 p.m. to 07:30 a.m. 7 days a week including bank holidays over the Christmas and New Year period. They will also ensure that sufficient operational staff is available during these periods. Throughout the gritting operation the Winter Duty Manager will interrogate the computer forecasting system and use information from the Meteorological Office to make further decisions and amendments to the gritting operation and relay any changes to the prescribed routes to the operational staff.

11.2 Generally, operations will consist of a pre-gritting exercise in which designated road Priority 1 roads are treated first. Dependant on the weather forecast pre-gritting operations will commence early evening and be fully completed by 23:30 p.m.

11.3 Treatment to Car Parks

11.3.1 There are 12 pay & display car parks within the Borough which have not historically benefitted from precautionary treatments, and whilst it is not an intention to add these to precautionary gritting routes, we will however treat them during times of severe ice or snow.

11.3.2 Pay & display car parks have been identified to be treated in severe conditions or when severe conditions are forecasted. These will be treated once the priority 1 and 2 lists have been gritted, and a list of these car parks can be found in Appendix C.

11.3.3 As the Council are taking steps to ensure safe travel around the borough wherever possible during severe conditions, then it is appropriate that car parking facilities can be used on arrival. This allows the travelling public to carry on with their daily activities which in turn promotes business continuity.

Training and Development

12.1 All operational staff are trained to City and Guilds Winter Maintenance Training and Assistance Units 2, 3, 5 and 8.

12.2 Decision making administrative staff are trained in the Introduction to Road Weather conducted by the Meteorological Office.

12.3 Refresher training is undertaken annually in October at the start of the season by all staff delivering the service.

13.0 Communications

13.1 Pre- season publicity: It is important that the public are aware of and understand the Council's approach to the winter service. A public information leaflet is available at various public buildings and also available on the Council's website www.wigan.gov.uk/winterservice

13.2 Publicity during Ice or Snow Emergencies: Liaison with the news media, particularly local radio stations, is of the utmost importance and links have been established and will be maintained particularly during emergency periods.

13.3 Emergency Services: The Council's Central Watch Station will be regularly updated on the expected weather conditions and planned maintenance operations. They in turn will inform all emergency services, particularly the police during severe conditions when it may be necessary to arrange road closures or a need to remove abandoned vehicles.

13.4 Councillors: Councillors of the authority will be updated electronically when severe winter maintenance services are deployed so they are able to relay relevant information to any requests from their constituents.

13.5 Business Continuity Management: Chief Officers, Heads of Service and the Civil Contingencies Service Manager will be updated electronically to support their management decisions in delivering Council services.

13.6 Council Web Page: This policy document and all supporting information is made available on the Council's web site www.wigan.gov.uk/winterservice

14.0 Performance Monitoring and Record Keeping

14.1 Whilst operational records assist in assessing the cost effectiveness of the whole winter service and seeking improvements that are also crucial in supplying evidence in claims made against the Council.

14.2 Monitoring the effectiveness of the operation will include:

- Communication and reasons for actions;

- Provision of information to the media;
- Levels of validity of public complaints;
- Incidents of road traffic accidents;
- Third party complaints.

14.3 The key issues to be monitored in defence of the Council will include:

- Decision making and keeping of detailed records thereof;
- Response times;
- Treatment times;
- Lost fleet time due to breakdown;
- Satisfactory completion of each salted route on every salt run;
- Salt usage.

14.4 Additionally, all winter service gritting vehicles are fitted with a GPS system and will record the following information automatically:

- Start and end time of each winter maintenance route; and
- Direction, speed of travel and the salt spread rate of the winter maintenance vehicle.

15.0 Resilience

15.1 The resilience network is the minimum network of roads that will be treated should there be a prolonged period of snow or in other circumstances where salt stocks have become depleted. This will come into force if there is no prospect of salt deliveries due to continued bad weather.

15.2 Following a review of the winter service the Council has invested in a salt storage facility that has minimised salt wastage and does not envisage a salt shortage problem. However, if extreme circumstances do occur the predetermined routes will be adjusted accordingly with only Priority 1 roads receiving treatment. Any route reduction decision will be approved by Council and followed by extensive publicity information.

15.3 The required maximum and minimum salt stock levels (during each winter service period) shall be maintained as in the table below.

Required minimum stock levels for commencement of season	Minimum stock (tonnes)			Maximum stock (tonnes)
	Oct-Dec	Jan - Feb	April	
1800	1800	2500	500	4000

15.4 The Highways DLO Manager should ensure that staffing levels (management and operational) are adequate to deliver the service during prolonged periods of severe weather.

16.0 Review Period

16.1 The Highway Winter Service Policy will be reviewed on an annual basis between March and September, to ensure that lessons learned and developments and innovations are continually integrated into this area of service delivery and borough wide resilience.

Appendix A: Decision Matrix

		Predicted Road Conditions			
Road Surface Temperature	Precipitation	Wet	Wet Patches	Dry	
May fall below 1°C	No rain No hoar frost No fog	Salt before frost	Salt before frost (see note a)	No action likely. Monitor weather. (see note a)	
Expected to fall below 1°C	No rain No hoar frost No fog		Salt before frost (see note b)	Salt before frost (see note b)	
	Expected hoar frost Expected fog			Salt after rain stops (see note c)	
	Expected rain BEFORE freezing		Salt before frost, as required during rain and again after rain stops (see note d)		
	Expected rain DURING freezing		Salt before frost, as required during rain and again after rain stops (see note d)		
	POSSIBLE rain POSSIBLE hoar frost POSSIBLE fog	Salt before frost	Monitor weather conditions		
EXPECTED snow		Salt before snow fall			
The decision to undertake precautionary treatments should, if appropriate, be adjusted to take account of residual salt or surface moisture. All decisions require continuous monitoring and review.					

Notes:

- (a)** Particular attention should be given to the possibility of water running across carriageways and other running surfaces e.g. off adjacent fields after heavy rains, washing off salt previously deposited. Such locations should be closely monitored and may require treating in the evening and morning, and possible on other occasions.

- (b)** When a weather warning contains reference to expected hoarfrost, considerable deposits of frost are likely to occur. Hoarfrost usually occurs in the early morning and is difficult to cater for because of the probability that any salt deposited on a dry road too soon before its onset, may be dispersed before it can become effective. Close monitoring is required under this forecast condition which should ideally be treated just as the hoarfrost is forming. Such action is usually not practicable and salt may have to be deposited on a dry road prior to and as close as possible to the expected time of the condition. Hoar frost may be forecast at other times in which case the timing of salting operations should be adjusted accordingly.

- (c)** If, under these conditions, rain has not ceased by early morning, crews should be called out and action initiated as rain ceases.

- (d)** Under these circumstances rain will freeze on contact with running surfaces and full pre-treatment should be provided even on dry roads. This is a most serious condition and should be monitored closely and continuously throughout the danger period.

- (e)** Weather warnings are often qualified by altitudes in which case differing action may be required for each site.

Appendix B; Highway Winter Service Information Leaflet**Attached PDF file**

Appendix C Pay & Display Town Centre Car Parks

Wigan	Leigh
Mona Street	Doctors Nook
Harrogate Street	Church Street
Chapel Lane	Lord Street
Sovereign Road	Spinning Gate
Peppermill Lane	Library Town Hall
Market Street	Bengal Street

Appendix D

Winter Service '10 Top Tips' on Snow Clearance in School Grounds

To ensure the safety of staff, visitors and pupils at schools and the provision of a safe working environment, these 10 tips are based on best practice and offer guidance to managers of schools on a common sense approach to the clearance of snow and ice during periods of severe weather.

1. A formal snow clearance/gritting risk assessment should be carried out in advance of bad weather. Your risk assessment should include reference to manual handling issues, personal protective equipment for staff and how the school will communicate with staff, parents & visitors the appropriate access routes to use during bad weather.
2. List the areas of the school grounds that need to be cleared of snow and ice in order of priority e.g. pathways for pupils, staff and parents and any other accesses for emergency or delivery vehicles.
3. Ensure you have adequate ice and snow removal equipment available. For example shovels, salt bins and an adequate supply of salt stock. (N.B Schools are able to purchase salt stocks through the Council's contract to take advantage of a negotiated beneficial rate.)

4. Carry out gritting whenever there is a risk of air temperatures dropping sufficiently to create ice/freezing conditions. A good indication of these conditions is when the Council's Highways vehicles are out gritting the roads. You should also check local weather reports. Once an area has been gritted, it should continue to be treated on a regular basis until the risk of ice has passed. To gain the most economical and environmental solution the minimum amount of salt should be used, as a guide a good handful is sufficient to treat 1 square metre of pathway.
5. In the event of snow and in accordance with your priority list, pathways should be cleared at least one metre wide. This will allow suitable access for pedestrians and pushchairs/wheelchairs. With this in mind it may be necessary for some entrances/areas to be temporarily closed. This could be achieved by taping off areas that continue to be a slip hazard as long as consideration has been given to the maintenance of emergency escape routes. This information should be communicated to staff & parents as soon as possible.
6. Begin early the first time it snows and record how long it takes you to clear each area on your priority list. This will help you determine what time you will need to start if it snows overnight so that the school grounds can be cleared of snow and safe before pupils, staff and parents begin arriving. Also it is easier to move fresh, loose snow rather than hard snow that has packed together from people walking on it. If you remove the top layer of snow in the morning, any sunshine during the day will help melt any ice beneath. You can then cover the path with salt before nightfall to stop it refreezing overnight. Remember to pay extra attention to clear snow and ice from steps and steep pathways, you might need to use more salt on these areas.
7. Take care where you move the snow. When you're shovelling snow, ensure it doesn't block other access points or drains. Make sure you make a path down the middle of the area to be cleared first, so you have a clear surface to walk on. Then shovel the snow from the centre of the path to the sides.
8. Snow and ice should be completely removed using a suitable snow scraper or shovel. Snow and ice should not be brushed, or dissolved using hot water, as this will make surfaces more hazardous. Once the path has been cleared rock salt should be used to assist in providing extra grip. There is no advantage in gritting/salting deep snow; this should be cleared from the path first. Paths should be regularly checked throughout the day to ensure freezing or further snow coverage has not occurred.
9. Pathways across car parks may be cleared if resources permit, but generally it is suggested that attempts are not made to clear car parking areas/spaces themselves, unless snow is so heavy that essential vehicles (e.g. emergency vehicles, delivery lorries etc) are unable to gain access to the school. In such instances the Council's Highways DLO may be able to assist and can be contacted on 01942 404364 or by Email: eshelpline@wigan.gov.uk

10. If you are able to plan and draft volunteers from the local community to clear snow and ice from school grounds it should be perfectly acceptable as the Health and Safety Executive clarified in a statement:

“I would like to make it clear that under health and safety legislation nobody who volunteers to support their community by clearing pavements during icy conditions should feel they are in danger of being sued.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) encourages a common sense approach to health and safety. We think it is ridiculous that people should feel prevented from helping others, through a fear of being held responsible for an accident.”

I hope the above information has proved helpful but if you need any further advice or information regarding your school's situation please contact the Council on 01942 404364 or by Email: eshelpline@wigan.gov.uk

Appendix E

Salt Bins



Adopted Highway Salt Bin



Town Centres Salt Bin



Community Salt Bin