

By: Nick Chard, Cabinet Member, Environment, Highways and Waste

To: Environment, Highways and Waste Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee
14 September 2010

Subject: KHS Winter Service 2010/11

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: This report provides information relating to Kent Highway Services response to the Department for Transport commissioned report 'The Resilience of England's Transport Systems in Winter' Interim Report July 2010. The Winter Service Plan for 2010/11 is also presented for approval.

Introduction

1. On 15 September 2009 the Environment, Highways and Waste Policy Overview Committee supported the Winter Service Policy Statement and Plan for 2009/10 and these were used as the basis for all winter service operations. Additionally due to the severe nature of the winter, several reports have been submitted to this committee, including the results of the countywide consultation process that was completed in June. The Winter Service Policy for 2010/11 was approved at the July meeting of this committee.

The Resilience of England's Transport Systems in Winter – An Independent Review, Interim Report July 2010

2. In March 2010, the then Secretary of State commissioned an independent review of the resilience of England's transport systems to severe winter weather. The Interim Report focuses on measures that can be implemented relatively quickly in relation to England's highway networks in preparation for winter 2010/11. The final report will be published in the autumn of 2010. The report contains 17 recommendations most of which can be implemented by highway authorities. Appendix 1 details how KHS will act upon the recommendations in the coming winter.

Finance

3. The KHS winter service budget for 2009/10 was £2,525,000 and the out turn was £2,636,579. For 2009/10 there was a requirement for funding from the corporate emergency fund for three snow emergencies which cost £1,451,756. The budget for 2010/11 has been set at £2,490,581

Forecast Service

4. Metegroup will provide the weather forecasting service as year two of a three year contract. The ice prediction service will again be provided by Vaisala Ltd.

Winter Service Plan 2010/11

5. The Winter Service Plan 2010/11 has been produced and is tabled at this meeting. Further copies of the Winter Service Plan have been placed in the Members Room.

District plans

6. Community Delivery Team Leaders will produce a local version of the Winter Service Plan. These plans are based on a common template and detail local actions that will be taken during the winter and outline arrangements in place for working with the district council. Copies of the plans are held at depots and on the shared KHS IT area.

Working with district councils

7. Following the consultation exercise carried out earlier this year, it is clear that district councils are keen to be involved in winter service, particularly in relation to snow clearance in key town centre areas. Arrangements will be put in place this year whereby labour from district councils can be used during snow days. These arrangements worked well when deployed during January 2010. Details will be included in the district plans referred to in paragraph 6 above.

Conclusions

8. Subject to the views of this Committee it is proposed that the Cabinet Member for Environment, Highways and Waste be asked to:

- (i) Approve the Winter Service Plan for 2009/10
- (ii) Note the implementation of 'The Resilience of England's Transport Systems in winter – An Independent Review – Interim report July 2010' by KHS

Accountable Officer – Carol Valentine (08458 247800)

Previous Committee reference and background documents;

- Winter Review reports to Environment, Highways and Waste Policy Overview Committee, March and July 2010
- Ipsos MORI final report – Kent Highway Services Winter Service Consultation – June 2010
- The Resilience of England's Transport Systems in winter – An Independent Review – Interim report July 2010

Appendix 1

Kent Highway Services response to 'The Resilience of England's Transport Systems in winter – An Independent Review – Interim report July 2010

Recommendation 1 – Resilience of salt stocks – Additional 3000 tonnes of salt will be stored at Coldharbour depot for this season, resulting in overall stock at the beginning of the season of 23,000 tonnes. Closer co-operation with the Highways Agency, Area 4 who is designated to hold a regional strategic store will also be pursued.

Recommendation 2 – Data collection – Implement salt tracking system used last year to accurately record salt usage and share data with DfT and other organisations as necessary.

Recommendations 3 & 4 – National vulnerability of salt supply & Scottish and Welsh consultation - N/A – national action required

Recommendation 5 – Winter service planning – Winter service plan completed and signed off by Cabinet Member, incorporating recommendations in the Interim Report

Recommendation 6 - Consultation and communication – Consultation completed June 2010. Additionally KHS to chair the Kent Resilience Forum sub group on winter service re the highway network. The group will share information and best practice and operate throughout the winter as necessary. All salting routes will be placed on the KCC website and up to date information will be placed on the site. A communications plan is being developed and will be put in operation during the winter months

Recommendation 7 – Collaboration with other local authorities – Agreement to be put in place with district councils with clear agreements of areas for treatment, timings and local contacts

Recommendation 8 – Salt utilization – a schedule to be developed to determine trigger points for reduced usage of salt and/or a mixture of salt and a gritting agent

Recommendation 9 –Professional bodies and organisations - N/A – national action required

Recommendation 10 – Systematic collection of salt stocks – Mutual aid will be monitored and managed through the KRF (see Rec 6)

Recommendation 11 – Resilience planning for civil contingencies – Regional scenario training to be organised for November 2010. Also snow desk arrangements to be developed this year in conjunction with Emergency Planning department

Recommendation 12 – Research based measures – Any recommendations from national research will be considered and recommendations will be reported to EH&W Policy, Overview and Scrutiny Committee for inclusion in the policy and/or plan

Recommendation 13 – UK Roads Liaison Group – N/A

Recommendation 14 – National Winter Service Research Group – N/A but KHS will continue to work with them and contribute towards its activities

Recommendation 15 – Public liability – publish government guidance on public liability on the Kent County Council website and include in materials that go to all households in Kent. Publicise in communications with parishes and districts

Recommendation 16 – Long term weather forecasts – N/A

Recommendation 17 – Continued resilience planning – this will continue and recommendations both nationally and regionally will be implemented as possible