

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

10 January 2012

Report of the Chief Executive and the Director of Planning, Transport and Leisure

Part 1- Public

Matters for Recommendation to Cabinet

1 WINTER MAINTENANCE REVIEW

To bring the Committee up to date following reports to the Scrutiny Panel last October.

1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 Members will be aware that Kent (County Council) Highways and Transportation has a statutory duty (Section 41(1) of the Highways Act 1980 (c.66)) to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that safe passage along a highway is not endangered by snow or ice. Trunk roads are the responsibility of the Department for Transport and the Highways Agency acts for the DfT in this respect.
- 1.1.2 The Borough Council owns and maintains a number of car parks throughout the Borough. Following several bouts of heavy snowfall in recent years and very low temperatures the decision was taken in 2010 to enhance our own capabilities to reduce the impact of winter conditions.

1.2 Current position

- 1.2.1 Carol Valentine, KCC Highway Manager (West Kent) attended the Scrutiny Panel meeting on 6 October 2011 and circulated copies of their Winter Service Policy Statement. This sets out the broad context, objectives and the variety of methods for relieving winter conditions. Subsequent to this Panel meeting KCC has circulated to all Members a full copy of its Local Winter Maintenance Service Plan for the borough of Tonbridge & Malling.
- 1.2.2 The Borough Council has invested in a Land Rover and towable salt spreader and has a supply of salt to treat the most heavily used car parks. This is supplemented by using tractor mounted buckets operated by Kent Landscape Services (TMBC's grounds maintenance contractor) who work in coordination with our own staff. We also have a variety of hand operated salt spreaders and snow shovels which are used by the Civil Enforcement Officers to treat the smaller areas which the mechanised plant cannot reach.

1.3 The Review

1.3.1 At the September meeting of the Scrutiny Panel Members raised a number of issues, the key ones are listed below.

- 1) Parish and Town Councils should be enabled to add value to the work of KCC in clearing snow etc to the benefit of local communities.
- 2) Parish and Town Councils should be consulted on what their local priorities are for snow clearance and any arrangements they could provide to help with snow clearance. Such activity needs to be co-ordinated with the Borough and County Councils so that there is no duplication of effort and to enable a more effective partnership approach to snow clearance etc.
- 3) Supplies of salt need to be provided to Parish and Town Councils in advance of bad weather to enable them to undertake snow clearance in local areas.
- 4) Greater use could be made of more local contractors e.g. farmers and others with suitable equipment to help clear roads and footways of snow.
- 5) More needs to be done to clear roads other than A roads and also to clear important community areas such as surgeries, shops, schools, sheltered housing and other important community facilities.
- 6) Planning for winter maintenance should ideally be undertaken at an earlier point in the year, perhaps immediately after the winter spell so that lessons can be learnt.
- 7) Communities and residents need to be encouraged to 'do their bit' in clearing snow from outside of their properties and helping vulnerable neighbours who may be trapped in their homes due to snow fall. KCC should issue advice to residents confirming that they will not be liable for any accident if they do undertake such clearance work.
- 8) The issue of the siting of salt bins needs to be discussed with KCC with a view to any current restrictions, for example, on the public highway, being relaxed.
- 9) Winter Maintenance issues need to be discussed at the Parish Partnership Panel.
- 10) Contact details for responsible officers at KCC should be provided to all Town and Parish Councils in advance of bad weather so that they know who to contact when snow falls and extra supplies/assistance is needed.

1.4 Next Steps

- 1.4.1 KCC should be invited to attend a further meeting of the Scrutiny Panel in the spring to report on the effectiveness of this years Local Winter Service Plan and receive any feedback from Members following experiences this winter.

1.5 Legal Implications

- 1.5.1 None

1.6 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

- 1.6.1 None

1.7 Risk Assessment

- 1.7.1 None

1.8 Equality Impact Assessment

- 1.8.1 See 'Screening for equality impacts' table at end of report

1.9 Recommendations

- 1.9.1 That the matters raised by the Scrutiny Panel be endorsed and that Kent Highways and Transportation be invited to attend a further meeting of the Scrutiny Panel in the spring as set out in the report.

Background papers:

Nil

contact: Mike O'Brien
Mark Raymond

David Hughes
Chief Executive

Steve Humphrey
Director of Planning, Transport and Leisure

Screening for equality impacts:		
Question	Answer	Explanation of impacts
a. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper have potential to cause adverse impact or discriminate against different groups in the community?	No	

Screening for equality impacts:		
Question	Answer	Explanation of impacts
b. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper make a positive contribution to promoting equality?	Yes	Improved access for vulnerable members of the community
c. What steps are you taking to mitigate, reduce, avoid or minimise the impacts identified above?		

In submitting this report, the Chief Officer doing so is confirming that they have given due regard to the equality impacts of the decision being considered, as noted in the table above.