
**Bath & North East
Somerset Council**

Improving People's Lives

Bath & North East Somerset Council

Winter Service Policy

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Appendix A – Salting Routes (Normal Operations and Emergency Operations)

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Document History

<i>Revision Description</i>	<i>Dated</i>
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Winter Service Policy	March 2011
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DEFINITIONS

- 0.1 HIGHWAY SENIOR ENGINEER (HSE)** – Member of the Council team specifically tasked to manage and co-ordinate the Winter Service.
- 0.2 HIGHWAY SERVICE MANAGER (HSM)** – Member of the Council's staff having overall responsibility for the management of the Winter Service.
- 0.3 EMERGENCY DUTY OFFICER (EDO)** – Member of the Council's staff who is the designated contact out of hours. This role is undertaken on a rota system with responsibilities set out in Section 3.2 of this document.
- 0.4 SERVICE PROVIDER** – Organisation contracted to Bath & North East Somerset Council to provide highway network management and construction services. For the term maintenance contract commencing on 1st October 2008 the provider is Atkins Highway Services.
- 0.5 COUNCIL CONNECT** – (Tel: 01225 394041 in hours 01225 477000 Out of hours) Facility based in Plymouth House in Bath. During office hours it is the principal point of contact by telephone for the public on highway matters. It receives information from the public and external organisations, distributes it as appropriate within the Council and Service Provider and can report on issues to the public and external organisations.
- 0.6 WEATHER FORECAST SERVICE PROVIDER** – The organisation responsible for providing weather forecasts on a 24 hour basis throughout the winter season.
- 0.7 SALT PROVIDER** – The supplier responsible for the providing the 6mm graded rock salt used to treat snow and ice on the highway. This is currently Irish Salt Sales.
- 0.8 DEPARTMENT FOR TRANSPORT (DfT)** – Government Department responsible for transport issues (except when devolved), providing national policy and strategy guidance.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Statutory Obligations and Government Requirements

Bath and North East Somerset Council's (the "Council") Winter Service Policy is designed to meet the Council's statutory obligations and will provide a consistent approach to the management of the network during the winter season. The *Code of Practice for Maintenance Management: Well Maintained Highways* (2005) ¹ identified four core objectives that have been used as the basis of the Council's Policy: Customers; Safety; Serviceability; and Sustainability. All of these objectives are incorporated into the Council's Winter Service Policy.

Section 41 of the Highways Act 1980 states that the Council has:
"A duty to maintain highways at public expense."

Section 111 of The Railways and Transport Safety Act 2003 supplemented this with the inserted Section 41(1A) which states that:
"A Highway Authority is under a duty to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that safe passage along a highway is not endangered by snow and ice".

What is reasonably practicable is decided by the Courts rather than the local Highway Authority (the Council) or the Department for Transport (DfT). However the DfT strongly recommends that local Highway Authorities continue to carry out Winter Service activities in accordance with Section 13 of the Code of Practice for Maintenance Management: Well Maintained Highways ("the Code"). Amongst other recommendations, the Code states that best practice would be for local Highway Authorities to adopt and publish a Winter Service Operational Plan setting out the standards for delivery of these policy objectives, developed in consultation with key stakeholders and users which is reviewed annually to take into account of changing circumstances.

Since the Code was published in 2005, Government policy with respect to highway maintenance has developed and evolved in a number of areas. There have also been a number of changes, including the introduction of new statutory duties that have been placed on Highway Authorities.

To assist users of the Code, the Roads Liaison Group has prepared complementary guidance² to advise and direct users to where they may find more up to date information to assist them in implementing best practice and the recommendations of the Code.

¹ "Well Maintained Highways", Road Liaison Group (2005)

http://www.ukroadsliaisongroup.org/pdfs/p03_well_maintained_highways.pdf

² Well Maintained Highways Complementary Guidance, Road Liaison Group (Last Updated August 2010)

<http://www.ukroadsliaisongroup.org/pdfs/Well%20maintained%20Highways%20August%202010.pdf>

Users of the Code should treat this complementary guidance as up to date and having the same status as the Code. Where paragraphs have been amended, they supersede the ones in the Code. It must be noted that these updates should not be read in isolation but should be considered within the context of the Code.

The Council have designed their Winter Service Policy to identify how the Council will manage the Winter Service to ensure that it meets the statutory requirements placed on the Authority, whilst still delivering a Winter Service that is operated in the best interest of the Council.

The Government also provide information for the public relating clearing snow from pavements and public places: The Snow Code³. The Snow Code states that there is no law preventing the public from clearing snow themselves and that members of the public are unlikely to be sued for any resultant slip or fall from undertaking this action. The website contains advice on the following topics:

- Preventing slips;
- When to clear snow and ice;
- What to use;
- Where to move the snow to; and
- Clearing snow from neighbours' paths.

1.2 Consistent Approach to Delivery

In delivering the Winter Service the Council will use a consistent approach to ensure that a satisfactory service is delivered to all highway users. Every year the Council deals with regular and reasonably predictable occurrences of low temperatures and ice and snow. Occasionally the Council has to deal with exceptional events and prolonged periods of cold weather.

The roads that are to be treated for precautionary salting are shown in Appendix A (Plan 1) and also available to the public on the Council's Internet Mapping System⁴. The most important routes are pre-salted in anticipation of frost when icy conditions are expected.

The following criteria have been developed using the recommendations from the Code to enable the pre-salting network to be defined. This is required to ensure a consistent approach across Bath and North East Somerset and achieve a reasonable balance between cost and level of service. During 2010 a review of the pre-salting network was carried out using the following criteria:

³ [direct.gov.uk \(2011\) *Clearing snow and ice from pavements yourself*](http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/N11/Newsroom/DG_191868)
http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/N11/Newsroom/DG_191868

⁴ Ishare (2011) -
<http://isharemaps.bathnes.gov.uk/mybathnes.aspx?MapSource=BathNES/WinterMaintenance&StartEasting=365755&StartNorthing=161998&StartZoom=28000&o=1&tab=maps>

- Strategic and Principal Routes;
- Public Transport Routes;
- Emergency Location Links including Hospitals, Fire Stations; and Ambulance Stations;
- Ensure continuity on roads that cross the boundary into other local authorities;
- Maintain a link to the strategic road network from towns and villages;
- Ensure that key link roads near schools are treated to minimise school closures during severe weather.

The Council will salt the highway network for exceptional events that take place off of the pre-salting routes. The Council will also consider salting the network following emergency service requests: where resources permit.

Some sections of the pre-salting route do not meet the criteria above, but have historically been included in the pre-salting routes. The Council will continue to pre-salt these sections of the network as there is a public expectation that these links will be pre-salted.

The pre-salting routes are assessed using a two hour treatment time. This has allowed the capacity of the dedicated equipment to be used more effectively.

Under the current term contract the Service Provider employs 40 staff full time, with an additional call on 20 subcontract staff. The core number is adequate to react to snow clearance situations, for two full shifts only, where double manning is required to operate the snow ploughs.

Winter Service is the least predictable of all highway budget expenditure. South West England generally has around fifty nights when frost is experienced and it is prudent to prepare for up to one week of moderate snowfall although this may not materialise.

By following this structured approach the Council are able to operate an effective highway network throughout the winter months. The Policy is aligned with the Council's wider objectives for: transport; accessibility; and network management to ensure a consistent approach through all Council policies relating to the management of the highway network.

Requests for amendments to the standard pre-salting routes will be considered by the Highway Service Manager against the above criteria and will only be authorised when the increase in route length can be accommodated within the capacity of the gritter operating at a 40 grams/m² spread rate and within the two hour treatment time.

1.3 Bath and North East Somerset Highways

The Council's annual estimate of road lengths for Communities and Local Government stated that there were 648.5 miles (1043.6 km) of adopted highway network in Bath and North East Somerset in 2010. Sixty percent of the Council's adopted highway network is made up of rural roads, which are predominantly either C Class roads or unclassified roads.

1.4 Trunk Road Network

The Highways Agency manages a further 13.5 miles (21.7km) of roads within Bath and North East Somerset as part of the national trunk road network. These Trunk Roads are identified on Plan 1 of Appendix A.

2.0 THE WINTER SERVICE POLICY

The Winter Service Policy outlines the decision making process used by the Council's Highway Maintenance team in deciding on which areas of the network are to be gritted and when this will take place. Managing the Highway Assets is an important function of the Council. Low temperatures and the formation of ice can cause serious damage to the fabric of running surfaces and accelerated damage of the network. By operating an effective Winter Service the Council can contribute to a reduction in whole life costs and minimise damage to the environment.

Winter maintenance, pre-salting the carriageway and clearing snow, from the highway network is essential for ensuring public safety on the network and supporting the local economy. The Council's Winter Service has been designed to aid movement for highway users when adverse winter conditions make it difficult for the highway network to operate normally.

2.1 Winter Service Season

The winter season traditionally runs from 1 November to 31 March each year. The season can be extended at either end as required, and any extension would be covered by the Council's Winter Service Policy.

2.2 Direction from DfT

Periodically throughout the winter season the DfT will release a National Directive on the Winter Service that the Council will have to adhere to.

2.3 Policy Updates

A Winter Service Operational Plan will be completed by the end of October before the start of the winter season. This is an internal document intended for use by Council staff.

The Operational Plan will be designed to conform to current policy guidance as at the 31st October each year. The document will be agreed with the Divisional Director – Environmental Services.

The Council's Winter Service policy will be amended in the following circumstances;

- (a) When the Council receive a directive from the DfT;
- (b) To incorporate changes in legislation; and
- (c) When requested by the Cabinet Member for Service Delivery.

2.4 Working with Neighbouring Authorities

To successfully deliver the winter service the Council will have to liaise with neighbouring authorities. The key contact details for each bordering authority are included in the Operational Plan (as an Appendix) and are available to the EDO when undertaking their duties.

Several routes cross the Council's Boundary and reciprocal arrangements are discussed with neighbouring authorities prior to the winter season by the Highway Service Manager with a view to providing a consistent and efficient service.

The Council will share information with neighbouring authorities throughout the winter season. Every working day throughout the winter season the Council will email neighbouring authorities to inform them of what action is being taken in Bath and North East Somerset with regards to the forecast weather conditions. For example if the Council are gritting due to the weather reports this 'Action Information' will be emailed by the Highway Service Manager to all neighbouring authorities, who in turn will email their 'Action Information'. This ensures neighbouring authorities are aware of what work is being undertaken on their network under any reciprocal arrangement that have been agreed.

The Council and the neighbouring authorities also share their Operational Plans to allow each authority to understand what service levels are being undertaken in adjoining authorities. This ensures consistency for the public and offers the Council opportunity to share best practice with regards to the Winter Service.

2.5 Neighbourhoods and Waste Services support

During periods of prolonged icy weather or snowfall the Divisional Director Environmental Services will, when deemed appropriate, authorise staff from the Neighbourhoods and Waste Services to support the winter weather response. The level of resources that will be made available will be dependent on the overall demands and priorities facing the Council at the time.

These teams will focus on dealing with issues away from the strategic highway network such as:

- Busy pedestrian areas with high levels of footfall e.g. shopping areas;
- Car parks;

- Public transport interchanges;
- Areas surrounding medical centres and hospitals;
- In exceptional circumstances to support an event, such as large funeral or a sporting fixture that will result in a large numbers of pedestrians.

The priority sites to be treated by Neighbourhoods are listed in Appendix B.

3.0 WEATHER INFORMATION

3.1 Decision Making/ Forecasting

The Secretary of State for Transport asked the UK Roads Liaison Group to review lessons that can be learnt from the events of winter 2008/9 and to recommend what steps could be adopted by highway authorities, producers and suppliers of salt and other stakeholders to ensure England is even better prepared should similar events occur in future.

This review makes recommendations in four themes:

- Winter service resilience;
- Preparation for and operation of winter service;
- Communications: and
- Procurement.

The Winter Service Operational Plan is updated by the Highway Maintenance Team each October and sets out the key information relating to how the network will be managed during the winter season including information on salting routes, spreading rates and when the network will be treated.

The Operational Plan is for internal use as it contains contact information such as contact telephone numbers of staff who will be on call as part of the Winter Service.

Deciding when winter maintenance activities are to be carried out is the responsibility of the Highways Service Manager (HSM) and the Highway Maintenance Team using weather forecasts supplied by the weather forecast service provider. The Forecast is received daily by computer and comprises:

- 24-hour road forecast;
- 2-5 day forecast for planning purposes;
- A weather summary for the previous 24 hours; and
- 24-hours 7 days a week consultancy service.

The Council also uses an ice detection system 'ICENET' which is provided by Vaisala Data Services. This service is used to support the weather forecast in planning the Winter Service.

All crews involved in Winter Service activities are issued with mobile telephones to enable central control of the operations to enable quick response to changing conditions allowing the HSM to alter planned winter maintenance to meet the conditions. The use of mobile communication devices by any staff are to conform to the Council's and/or the Service Provider's mobile communication policy.

The Council officers will make the decision whether or not to grit the network using the forecast information received from the weather forecast service provider and ICENET predictions. It is always difficult to judge whether the weather conditions will change significantly from the forecast so the Council will if the forecast is for adverse weather pre-salt the road as a precaution based on the information they have available at the time.

3.2 Emergency Duty Officer (EDO) Role

The EDO is responsible for managing the Winter Service outside of normal office hours. The EDO role is operated on a rota system, utilising the expertise of the Council's Environmental Services team. The EDO is on call at night and through bank holidays and the weekend to deal with the following issues as and when they occur including:

- Receive emergency information from police;
- Decide on appropriate resource and call them out;
- Record messages and action/s taken;
- Keep up to date with conditions/action taken to provide continuity and information;
- Liaise with Highway Senior Engineer (HSE) and HSM;
- Receive forecast/weather information in and outside office hours and at weekends/bank holidays;
- Decide preliminary action;
- Approve major changes from planned action; and
- Record decisions and reasons for them.

The EDO will be a competent and experienced member of the Environmental Services team able to make important decisions relating to the management of the network during the winter season. The appointment of an EDO will be made by either the Divisional Director Environmental Services or the Highway Service Manger. The EDO records all messages and actions that they take to ensure that there is an appropriate audit trail of the Council's decisions.

4.0 SALTING

4.1 Salting Route Criteria

The salting routes are planned using the criteria set out in Section 1.2, focusing on the importance of each road to the operation of the network. The road's classification is used as part of the decision making process to ensure the key local and strategic roads are pre-salted. At present the Council pre-salt 38% of the network which covers 261miles (420km) of the network managed by the Council. The roads that will be pre-salted are shown in Appendix A (Plan 1).

The drivers of both the pre-salting vehicles and snow ploughs will undertake a risk assessment of the route as part of the treatment process. If a road or section of the route is not safe for the vehicle then the driver can decide not to pre-salt or clear the section. This decision can be taken for a number of reasons including: the driver's own safety; risk to the public; and the practicality of accessing the route. This is especially important for snow ploughs where the width of the blades mean that some routes may be omitted due to the road width and the number of parked vehicles preventing the ploughing from taking place. All decisions will be recorded by the drivers and this information will be supplied to the Council who can inform the public.

4.2 Salting Divorced Cycleways (cycleways not adjacent to a road)

The Council does not pre-salt any divorced cycleways such as the Bristol to Bath Railway path. Clearing of snow and ice on divorced cycleways will be dependent on resources available and the status during the weather event.

4.3 Salting Car Parks

Routine pre-salting of car parks will not take place. In the event of snowfall or prolonged icy weather staff from Neighbourhoods, Parking Maintenance and any other available staff from other services will be redeployed to critical facilities.

4.4 Providing Salt to Local Residents and Private Organisations

The Council is unable to provide salt to private residents, local businesses and farms etc. Due to supply arrangements the Council's salt stock needs to be conserved for use on the strategic highway network.

4.5 Providing salt to Local Education Schools, the Business Improvement District and other Council Services

During the summer months schools, organisations and businesses in the Business Improvement District and other Council Services will be offered the opportunity to purchase salt through the Highways supply chain. The costs will be recharged to the user. Due to operational needs this service cannot be offered during the winter months.

4.6 Salting of Walking Routes

Under normal service operations the Council do not pre-salt the footpaths within its administrative area. Where resources allow any gritting of walking routes will be focused on routes to schools, hospitals and the main business areas within Bath and North East Somerset.

4.7 Spreading Rates

The Council follow a specific strategy for salting depending on the weather type experienced. The spread rates used by the Council are in accordance with the national guidance⁵. At times of exceptional conditions officers will reduce the levels of salt used at key trigger points as shown in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1 – Exceptional Condition road salt usage criteria

Stock Level (tonnes)	Action	Impact
800	Mix additives such as grit to maximise stock. Refuse external mutual aid.	Minimal increased risk of icy roads. None
700	Stop filling grit bins and supply of bagged salt. Minimise footway treatment by Neighbourhoods.	Impact on busy City Centre footways and rural communities.
700	Stop support to other services.	Negative impact on, care facilities, schools and events.
630	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Stop treatments in the car parks.- Stop any supplementary spot treatments by Neighbourhoods.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Closure of car parks and negative impact on city business.- Service reduced to treating the strategic network only.
500	Cut treated network by 20%	No treatment of Unclassified Roads on priority routes.
300	Cut treated network by 60%	No treatment of C Roads, Unclassified Roads and hills on minor roads on priority routes.
200	Cut treated network by 70%	Only treating the A road network and road to the RUH.

Note: A full review of regional and national stock levels and delivery capacities will be undertaken prior to invoking the service reduction thresholds which are indicative. Consultation at both Strategic and Divisional Director level will be undertaken prior to implementation.

⁵ DfT (2010) *Recommended Precautionary Treatments and Post Treatments Including Revised Salt Spread Rates* <http://www.ukroadsliasongroup.org/liason/winter.htm>

The standard treatment will be to apply salt to pre salting routes at 10-20 grams per square metre. If applied when the road surface is slightly damp this can remain effective for up to three days in dry conditions.

4.8 Requests for Spot Treatments and Gritting

During normal working hours any requests for service will be considered by the HSM in accordance with the operational plan. Out of normal working hours the EDO will decide what action, if any is required.

Resources do not permit a response to all requests and any response will be prioritised. Dealing with any issues on the strategic gritting routes will be the priority. Although each request will be considered on its merits, priority will be given to emergency service requests and accident locations away from the strategic gritting routes.

4.9 Salt Shortages and National Supply Problems

During periods of extreme or prolonged weather events stocks of salt may become depleted, due to demand and lack of availability of new stock. When directed by the DfT or during a national salt shortage the Council may have to reduce the amount of road network it treats. The Council has produced plans to operate under these conditions, which have been agreed with the Government Office. These are shown in Appendix A (Plans 2-4).

During a salt shortage the Council will always endeavour to obtain salt through the DfT or through mutual aid arrangements. In the event of salt being unavailable from alternative sources the service may need to be reduced to protect the most important routes and most essential facilities such as hospitals. If and when this is necessary the trigger points in Table 4.1 will be used to determine the reduction in service.

4.10 Treatment Times

Evening salting of the priority routes normally takes place when temperatures are likely to drop during the evening but before freezing has occurred. In this case no inspection of the routes would be required unless rain followed by freezing or snow had been forecast.

Morning precautionary salting on the priority routes will normally be carried out between 05.00 and 07.30 hours. It is accepted that it will not always be possible to maintain even priority routes free from ice throughout the night. However, it is particularly important that pre-salting routes on the approaches to built-up areas should be dealt with before the morning peak traffic flows.

Secondary salting on the priority routes takes place to treat areas where frost or ice has already formed and been in existence for at least 24 hours salt shall be applied at 10-20 grams per square metre to pre-salting routes and off the pre-salting network routes in that order. It will not normally be possible to treat routes off the pre-salting network before pre-salting routes are completed.

4.11 Salt Stock and Storage

The Council have the capacity to hold a maximum stock level of around 2300 tonnes distributed throughout the Area, as shown in Table 4.2. This is enough to provide 43 days of frost salting or seven days of major snow and ice treatment on the pre-salting network. This level will be depleted more quickly if other routes are treated with salt following snow ploughing.

Table 4.2 – Salt Stock Distribution

Store	Location	Tonnes (capacity)
Clutton Salt Barn	Upper Bristol Road, Clutton	1300
	Total:	1300
Braysdown Depot (Sheeted storage)	Braysdown Access, Braysdown Lane, Peasedown St John	1000
	Total:	1000
	Grand Total:	2300

Salt needs to be dry for efficient spreading or it will coagulate and form a tunnel over the distribution belt on the spreader unit. Salt is generally stored at depots in barns but where these are not present salt is stored in the open and is covered.

5.0 SNOW CLEARANCE

5.1 Snow Clearance Route Criteria

In the event of snowfall the Council will clear the principal routes of snow. The principal routes have been identified in Appendix A Plan 4. The secondary routes will be cleared by farmers through a Winter Maintenance Agreement with the Council particularly in rural areas of Bath and North East Somerset.

5.2 Use of Farmers

Prior to the start of the winter season the Council will seek rates from private farmers and contractors for snow clearing. A schedule detailing those accepted will be included in the Operational Plan at the start of each season.

The HSE may, where appropriate, arrange for local farmers to be given designated areas or routes, which they shall plough depending on local conditions. The routes included may form part of the pre-salting network, the post treatment network or any other road carried out to deal with local safety or access problems.

The HSE will arrange for ploughs to be issued to farmers and arrange for those already issued to be serviced ready for use. The HSE shall also ensure that the equipment can be fitted onto the farmer's current machinery.

The EDO or the HSE will liaise with the available farmer, set the priorities and direct the operations to be undertaken by the farmer/contractor.

5.3 Redeployment of Staff

When adverse weather conditions occur that prevent them from undertaking their normal duties the Highways teams will be supported by the re-deployment of staff from the Neighbourhoods and Waste teams. In such conditions these teams will assist with the clearance of priority footways within Bath and North East Somerset.

Salt will only be used sparingly to avoid the subsequent safety problem associated with loose grit and the need to clear drains and channels of accumulated debris. The treatment of key footway areas is undertaken under delegation agreements with Neighbourhood and Waste Services.

Operational Staff from Waste Services will be redeployed to assist when it is anticipated that ploughing is likely to be necessary. Two staff will operate each vehicle fitted with a snow plough.

5.4 Clearance of Footways

Footways and shared footway/cycleways are not routinely pre-salted. In the event of prolonged icy weather or snowfall clearance of snow and ice will be dependent on resources as set out elsewhere in the policy.

5.5 Support to Other Services

Where resources permit the Council will provide assistance to institutions such as schools and colleges in the form of farmer support or with any available staff redeployed from their normal duties. Support to other services will only be available once the routes and sites listed in Appendix A and B.

6.0 GRIT/SALT BINS

6.1 Grit/Salt Bins

The Council provides grit/salt bins for the use by residents to spread salt on the public highway (roads and footpaths) in winter weather. This provision is not to be used by members of the public for personal use within their own properties. The bins are to be used in conjunction with the winter service leaflet as far as practical, though bins are not locked so can be accessed at all times. The Inventory of Council maintained grit/salt bins can be on the Council's Internet Mapping System⁶.

⁶ Ishare (2011) -

<http://isharemaps.bathnes.gov.uk/mybathnes.aspx?MapSource=BathNES/WinterMaintenance&StartEasting=365755&StartNorthing=161998&StartZoom=28000&o=1&tab=maps>

6.2 Grit/Salt Bin Criteria

Bins will be provided within the approved resources when the following criteria are satisfied:

- (a) At busy pedestrian points not on the priority routes or on paths removed from them that have a gradient in excess of 15% (approx. 1 in 7), or are steps and have a significant footfall;
- (b) At junctions away from the priority network with a gradient in excess of 10% (1 in 10) and vehicle flow exceeding 200 vehicles per day (VPD);
- (c) On hills with gradients in excess of 15% (approx. 1 in 7) and vehicle flow in excess of 200 VPD not on priority network;
- (d) On hills at locations with gradients in excess of 20% (1 in 5) whatever the vehicle flow not on priority network.

Existing bins on the Council's Inventory that do not meet the current day criteria will remain in place unless they become obsolete through lack of use.

6.3 Grit/Salt Bin Installation

Bins will be located within the public highway, a minimum of 450mm from the carriageway edge, not obstructing sight lines or pedestrian flow. No new bins will be installed within 150 metres of an existing bin. The identification of locations will be reliant upon requests being received from Parish and Town Councils or Members following circulation of the proposed criteria. Salt/grit heaps will not be provided by the Council as they may cause environmental damage and present a hazard to users of the highway.

6.4 Grit/Salt Bin Refills

The Council will fill each Council owned bin annually prior to the start of the winter season. Defective bins will be replaced as necessary. Bins will be replenished following notification from elected members, Parish and Town Councils and members of the public that they are empty. There are situations where the cost of maintenance is excessive, and it is proposed that the following procedure will be followed:

- (a) Following vandalism a bin will be replaced once only in season.
- (b) If usage is excessive through inappropriate use of grit, the bin will be removed. It will be assumed that the bin should only be used when the priority routes are being gritted.

The Council will only fill bins owned by the Council. There are a number of existing bins on the network, some provided by the Parishes. The existing bins will be deemed 'adopted' by the Council Bins and the Council will continue to service these.

6.5 Grit/Salt Bin Appearance

All new bins in urban areas will be black or dark green in colour and in rural locations will be yellow in colour.

6.6 Privately owned bins

Any new bins installed direct by Town and Parish Councils or private individuals will not be serviced by the Council and proof of Public Liability Insurance will be required. Any bins placed on the highway network without the relevant consent of the Highway Authority will be removed.

7.0 COMMUNICATION

7.1 Communication

During the Winter Season the Highways Maintenance team provide daily updates to other departments such as Corporate Health and Safety allowing them to plan for weather events. The forecast information supplied by the weather forecast service provider is also disseminated through the Council.

Providing customer satisfaction is an important part of the Winter Service as the Council need to provide an efficient, effective and proportionate response to winter conditions. Providing accurate and up to date information to the public and emergency services forms an essential part of this process.

The Council has produced a winter service leaflet, which explains: the location of grit bins and how to use the grit effectively; winter driving tips; how to help yourself and others in adverse winter conditions; and the Council's Winter Service. The leaflet also contains a map showing the pre-salting routes in Bath and North East Somerset.

During both normal winter operations and severe weather incidents, local residents, visitors to the area and other bodies will be kept informed locally through a dedicated information page on the Council's website and information available from Council Connect. National and local weather forecasts on Television and Radio will provide reliable information on prevailing weather conditions.