

# Regeneration & Transport Select Committee

A meeting of Regeneration & Transport Select Committee was held on Monday, 19th July, 2010.

**Present:** Cllr Maurice Perry(Chairman), Cllr Dick Cains(Vice-Chairman), Cllr Kevin Faulks, Cllr Paul Kirton, Cllr Alan Lewis(Vice Cllr Fletcher), Cllr Bill Noble, Cllr Fred Salt, Cllr Michael Smith

**Officers:** Jim Fiskin, Jamie McCann, Richard McGuckin, Craig Willows,(DNS) Graham Birtle, Kirsty Wannop(LDS)

**Also in attendance:** Cllr Jim Beall, Cllr Ann Cains, Cllr Roy Rix, Cllr Andrew Sherris, Cllr Mick Womphrey

**Apologies:** Cllr John Fletcher

## **RTS 26/10**      **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declaration of interest.

## **RTS 27/10**      **Review of Winter Maintenance Service**

The Committee were presented with a report on the review of winter maintenance service. During December 2009 and January 2010, Stockton-on-Tees and the rest of the UK experienced periods of extreme weather conditions with snow events lasting for weeks at a time. These were, at times, combined with sub-zero road surface temperatures and air temperatures amongst some of the lowest seen in decades.

This report built upon an initial report which was presented to the Executive Scrutiny Committee in February 2010 and provided Members with an overview of the provisions of the existing Winter Maintenance Plan, whilst at the same time providing a range of additional options to be considered which, if implemented and resourced would ensure that Stockton was effectively able to deal with similar weather conditions in the future. The recommendations had taken account of comments made as part of the consultation with Elected Members, public and staff. The report also identified learning points for discussion and consideration.

Any suggested increase in the Council response to severe weather events also needed to be considered within the tight financial constraints that the Council faces and the advice and guidance from Department for Transport.

The following was detailed within the report and discussed:

- The review of the Winter Maintenance Plan in light of the severe weather experienced over the last winter.
- An overview of the Snow Plan with options for additional snow clearing activities and service improvements. The Snow Plan consisted of a set of actions, which can be brought into operation at the start of a Snow Event which would better meet public expectation. It should be noted that this Plan would be introduced in times of severe and prolonged bad weather where the Winter Maintenance Plan is insufficient for the conditions.

- That there was thought to be a deficit in the region of 250,000 tonnes of salt going into November 2010 and this needed to be kept in mind throughout the review.

- Review of the number of salt bins provided in the borough which highlighted that, compared to other local authorities, Stockton Council had an excess due to the criteria not being applied properly. Members discussed the options available, it was agreed that the current criteria would be applied correctly which would result in reducing the number of salt bins from 316 to 157. The 157 bins would consist of 2 size bins 175 litre and 450 litre, filled twice per week. Applications for new salt bins would still be accepted and the criteria applied to determine whether a salt bin would be provided. It was requested that a copy of the criteria be sent to all Members.

An improved Communications Action Plan was currently being prepared, and would be ready for the start of the 2010/11 season, in order to improve resident's knowledge and ensure regular and updated information regarding SBC winter maintenance activities was easily accessible. It was also requested that residents were signposted, prior to the winter period to the range of local suppliers of salt, including there charges for delivery.

CONCLUDED that the following recommendation go forward to Cabinet:

1. That Members note the creation of and approve the recommendations contained within the Snow Plan.
2. That the current criteria for the provision of salt bins be vigorously applied across the borough and sent to all Members.
3. That Members note and approve the recommendations made with regard to revision of the salt bin re-filling process in order to increase the resources required to refill bins two times per week over a 3 month period and the costs be included in the recommendation to Cabinet.
4. That Members note and approve the recommendation to signpost residents prior to the winter period to a range of local suppliers who will be able to make salt available and include there delivery charges.
5. That the need for an extension to the existing salt storage facility at Cowpen Lane Depot be deferred and reviewed on an annual basis.