

TALKABOUT SURVEY

A special Talkabout survey was conducted in April. 1000 questionnaires were sent out and 684 responses received. Questions were asked on the subject areas shown below, and the replies are summarised as follows:

Advanced publicity of the winter maintenance service

The majority of panellists (82%) did not read any advance winter maintenance information last year.

Of those that did, they were more likely to read the 'clearing snow and ice' leaflet (14%), rather than information on the council's website (3%). Over two-thirds (68%) of these respondents believe the information they read was useful

Around a third of panellists said they would prefer to receive information via a leaflet distributed to every household (35%) and through local newspapers (33%). A quarter of the sample believe information should be provided on the council's website (24%), in *Your City* (24%) and in their ward committee newsletter (23%).

Only 9% of the sample are not interested in receiving advance information

When asked to suggest any further information that would be useful if included in the leaflet, the most popular request was for the location of salt bins

Ongoing publicity of the winter maintenance service

One in ten (10%) panellists are aware that daily updates on gritting are available on the council's website during extreme weather, although only 6% of the sample saw them.

27% of panellists would prefer to receive or find out ongoing gritting information through local newspapers, 26% via the council's website 26% and on local radio.

Just over one in ten (13%) panellists are not interested in ongoing information.

Treating roads and footpaths

Over a quarter (29%) of the sample said that they were prevented from making an essential trip as the roads or footpaths were impassable or untreated.

Just over a quarter (27%) of the sample said that they were involved in clearing snow and ice as part of a community initiative during the severe weather last winter.

Half (49%) of the panel said that they would be prepared to take part in clearing snow and ice as part of a community initiative during severe weather in the future, 11% said they would not and 17% said they don't feel physically able to take part in clearing snow and ice.

Treating car parks

One in five (20%) panellists said they did avoid using car parks during the severe weather because they had not been treated, whilst 80% said they did not.

Treating cycle routes

Nearly a third (33%) of the panel said they regularly cycle within the York area. Cyclists were more likely to be dissatisfied with the gritting of off-road cycle routes, with just under half (48%) dissatisfied compared to 18% satisfied. Satisfaction levels are higher for on-road cycle routes, with 30% of cyclists satisfied to some degree.

Salt bins

Panellists were asked if there was a salt bin located near to their home or workplace, to which just over a third (35%) said there was.

Under half (45%) of the sample said there was not a salt bin located near their home or workplace, whilst 20% were unsure

Of those panellists who said there was a salt bin located near their home or workplace, a third (33%) said they did use the salt, whilst two-thirds (67%) said they did not. Public footpaths were reported to be the most common destination for the salt.

Satisfaction with the service as a whole

(55%) are satisfied to some degree with the winter maintenance service over the last five years, while nearly a quarter (22%) of respondents are dissatisfied.

(52%) are satisfied to some degree with the winter maintenance service over the last winter, while nearly a third (31%) of respondents are dissatisfied with the service.

The panel were asked if they would like to see any other winter maintenance services, even if it meant a cut in other front line services. Panellists were

more likely to want an extension to the standard salting routes throughout the winter period (47%) and extra salt bins (44%). Nearly a quarter (23%) of panellists would like cycle routes to be treated more, whilst 17% would like regular treatment of car parks. A further near quarter (21%) would not like any additional winter maintenance services if it means a cut in other front line services.

The panel were finally asked if they believe there are any particular ways the winter maintenance service could be improved, to which 68% did not comment. Of those who did make a suggestion, the main comments included ensure footpaths are clear, more roads should be cleared (particularly minor roads), more salt bins are needed and potholes need to be repaired.

Conclusions

- Significantly more people still prefer to receive information by traditional means than via the internet.
- The locations of salt bins need to be communicated to residents
- A significant proportion of residents are willing and able to clear snow and ice from local footpaths
- Satisfaction with the council's overall performance on winter maintenance was only slightly lower over the last winter than for the previous winters, and is comparable to satisfaction with the condition of the public highway in general*.

*Talkabout 33 (October 2009) reported the following % opinions:

	Condition	
	Good / excellent	Poor / unacceptable
Roads	50	23
Pavements	50	18