



**Notice of meeting of  
Community Safety Overview & Scrutiny Committee**

**To:** Councillors Bowgett (Chair), Gillies (Vice-Chair), King, Orrell, Vassie, B Watson and Sue Galloway

**Date:** Monday, 10 May 2010

**Time:** 10.00 am

**Venue:** The Guildhall, York

**AGENDA**

**1. Declarations of Interest**

At this point Members are asked to declare any personal or prejudicial interests they may have in the business on the agenda.

**2. Minutes** (Pages 3 - 8)

To approve and sign the minutes of the meeting of the committee held on 12 April 2010.

**3. Public Participation**

At this point in the meeting, members of the public who have registered their wish to speak regarding an item on the agenda or an issue within the committee's remit can do so. The deadline for registering is **Friday 7 May 2010 at 5.00 pm.**

**4. Winter Gritting Policy - Interim Report** (Pages 9 - 14)

This report presents Members with information received to date regarding CYC Winter Gritting Policy.

**5. Urgent Business**

Any other business which the Chair considers urgent under the Local Government Act 1972.

Democracy Officer:

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For more information about any of the following please contact the Democracy Officer responsible for servicing this meeting:

- Registering to speak
- Business of the meeting
- Any special arrangements
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### **Holding the Executive to Account**

The majority of councillors are not appointed to the Executive (40 out of 47). Any 3 non-Executive councillors can 'call-in' an item of business from a published Executive (or Executive Member Decision Session) agenda. The Executive will still discuss the 'called in' business on the published date and will set out its views for consideration by a specially convened Scrutiny Management Committee (SMC). That SMC meeting will then make its recommendations to the next scheduled Executive meeting in the following week, where a final decision on the 'called-in' business will be made.

### **Scrutiny Committees**

The purpose of all scrutiny and ad-hoc scrutiny committees appointed by the Council is to:

- Monitor the performance and effectiveness of services;
- Review existing policies and assist in the development of new ones, as necessary; and
- Monitor best value continuous service improvement plans

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City of York Council

Committee Minutes

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MEETING	COMMUNITY SAFETY OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
DATE	12 APRIL 2010
PRESENT	COUNCILLORS BOWGETT (CHAIR), GILLIES (VICE-CHAIR), KING, ORRELL, B WATSON AND SUE GALLOWAY
APOLOGIES	COUNCILLOR VASSIE

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**38. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Members were asked to declare any personal or prejudicial interests they may have in the business on the agenda. None were declared.

**39. MINUTES**

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of 2 March 2010 be confirmed and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

**40. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There were no registrations to speak under the council's Public Participation Scheme.

**41. WINTER GRITTING POLICY - INTERIM REPORT**

Members received an Interim Report on City of York Council Winter Gritting Policy.

Members focussed on the following objectives:

- Review of current policy in regard to cycle ways
- Review of current policy in regard to council funded salt bins

Cycle Paths

Councillor D'Agorne, in his role as Cycling Champion, expressed concern that the current policy did not give sufficient priority to off-road cycle ways. As a cycling city, this was an issue that needed to be addressed. Discussions should take place with Sustrans and other parties in order to improve the situation. It was also important that consideration was given to ways of addressing the problems in respect of Millennium Bridge. Whilst it may be inappropriate to use salt, other European countries had found alternative materials that could be used in these circumstances. Managing people's expectations and ensuring that cyclists were given the same detail of information as motorists was another factor to be considered.

Officers gave details of the current arrangements that were in place in respect of cycle routes and circulated information regarding a new machine that had recently been purchased for the maintenance of off-road cycle ways.

Details were given of the issues in respect of the maintenance of Millennium Bridge, as outlined in paragraphs 12 to 14 of the report. It was noted that when the bridge had been commissioned it had been designated as an ancillary route and it had been understood that the materials used were corrosive. Officers advised that it was important that the protective covering lasted as long as possible, as the cost of repainting the bridge would be substantial. As the bridge was designated for pedestrians, it was not possible to use vehicles on the bridge to clear the snow as this posed the risk of structural damage.

Members commented on the following issues in respect of the treatment of cycle ways:

- Concerns were expressed that to improve the clearing of cycle ways would necessitate the diverting of resources away from other areas which may be more of a priority.
- Even if the cycle ways were safe to use, cyclists could find difficulty in travelling safely to them.
- The priority for clearing cycle ways should continue to be to clear those which were used by commuters travelling to work rather than those which were primarily used for leisure purposes.
- In some circumstances there may not be alternative modes of transport – for example bus services may not be available for people who started work early.
- York had been designated as a Cycling City and hence it was important that the issue of ensuring that cycle ways could be used in adverse weather conditions was tackled. It was important to continue to persuade people to use alternatives to travelling by car.

The Travel Co-ordinator from York Hospital circulated responses that had been received from hospital staff arising from consultation on the current policy in regard to cycle ways (attached as a minute annex). The general view was that the council had carried out a good job during the recent prolonged spell of bad weather but that there was a need to publicise which of the routes would be gritted.

A map of all on-road and off-road cycleways had been included as Annex A to the report. Members were asked to give consideration as to whether there were any omissions or suggestions as to revised priorities.

Members suggested that a key issue was the need to raise public understanding of the arrangements that would be in place in respect of treating cycleways, including the priorities in terms of which routes would be treated. It was noted that this issue was due to be considered at the next meeting of the committee.

Salt bins

Officers gave details of the present arrangements in respect of salt bins and the costs involved, as outlined in the report.

Members gave consideration to alternative ways of working that the council could adopt, as detailed in paragraphs 25 – 26 of the report. It was noted that it would be possible for the council to purchase salt bags, which could be used to enhance the provision currently offered by salt bins during periods of extreme weather. The committee recognised that the use of these bags would enable the council to respond more rapidly when severe weather conditions occurred and this arrangement would be more cost effective than increasing the number of salt bins.

Members reiterated that the review of the gritting policy was in no way a reflection on the work that staff had carried out during what had been very difficult circumstances.

- RESOLVED: (i) That the contents of the report and the views of those present at the meeting be noted.
- (ii) That the following recommendations be included in the final report:
- That the current levels of supply of council funded salt bins be maintained
  - That in times of severe and prolonged bad weather the council also provide self-help bags at various locations across the city.
  - That a list of sites be identified for locating the self help bags – this list to be drawn up in consultation with Ward Committees and Parish Councils
  - That criteria for the provision of the self-help bags and the list of sites be included within the Winter Gritting Policy.

REASON: To progress the review in line with scrutiny procedures and protocols.

Councillor D Bowgett, Chair

[The meeting started at 10.00 am and finished at 12.00 pm].

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**York Hospitals Foundation Trust – Summary of  
Views From Staff That Cycle**

1. The views are from a very wide cross section of all the staff that cycle to work at the hospital.
2. There is great support for the purchase of the special vehicle for use in winter and the fact that greater attention is going to be paid to the maintenance of cycle ways at other times is warmly welcomed.
3. A wide cross-section of staff think that the Council did well under very difficult circumstances, but that a little more attention to certain areas would pay dividends, although some thought it was an impossible task anyway.
4. There is likely to be support for the Council trying to keep a reasonable network of routes open and advertise and concentrate activities on them. Already some staff use different routes in winter because they recognise that they are more trafficked and therefore likely to be safer.
5. The summary lists lots of locations where a more targeted approach would be welcomed.
6. Better efforts to clear snow from cycle lanes as well as the adjacent busy sections of highway where it is particularly narrow would be appreciated. At the moment there seems to be a tendency to use the cycle lane as the place to deposit cleared snow.
7. Certain sections of joint cycleway and pedestrian route and some shared bridges are considered of high importance to both groups of users and would benefit from greater attention. For example, there are quite strongly held views that Bridge Lane between Bootham Park Hospital and York Hospital was not dealt with effectively despite being on listed sections. In addition, the adjacent footbridge over the Scarborough railway line appears to be missed off.
8. There appears to be some doubt – confirmed in the printed list – that the new sections of cycleway along Water End to Clifton Green were not treated effectively.
9. The opportunity given by the request for winter maintenance feedback has resulted in a few other cycling related suggestions, some of which are separated out at the end of the note.

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## Community Safety Overview & Scrutiny Committee

10 May 2010

### CYC Winter Gritting Policy – Interim Report

#### Background

1. In coming to a decision to review this topic, the Community Safety Overview & Scrutiny Committee agreed the following key objectives:
  - i) To review current policy in regard to cycle paths to:
    - understand the practicalities of gritting different types of cycleways and optimum timing for gritting and make available this information in order to control residents' and visitor expectations
    - draw up a priority list of cycle routes to be gritted where funding and resources allow, for inclusion in the manual
    - Consult cycling groups to raise awareness of the issues
  - ii) To review current policy in regard to council funded salt bins:
    - to understand the costs involved to the council of supplying and maintaining 200+ salt bins across the city, and filling / re-filling those salt bins
    - to compare the advantages and disadvantages of providing those salt bins i.e. does the provision of salt via salt bins only benefit a minority of residents, could the money be put to better use funding the gritting of secondary routes across the city e.g. rat runs / roads with gradients, and public areas such as outside schools, public car parks etc
  - iii) To identify:
    - current working practices not presently included in the manual e.g. working relationship with call centre to identify residents' concerns etc.
    - reasons why the council is unable to grit certain road, cycle and pedestrian routes within the city e.g. due to limitations in staff resources, suitable equipment and funding and make available this information in order to control residents' and visitor expectations
    - a list of secondary roads / routes for gritting where funding and resources allow

- iv) To review the Council's methods for raising awareness of the gritting policy and communicating with interested parties
2. The Committee also agreed a timetable for the review, which included for consideration of the third objective at this meeting.

### **Draft Recommendations Arising From This Scrutiny Review to Date**

3. At a meeting of the Committee on 12 April 2010, the Committee considered information pertaining to the first two objectives of the review.
4. In relation to salt bins, the following draft recommendations were agreed:
  - i. That the current levels of supply of council funded salt bins be maintained
  - ii. That in times of severe and prolonged bad weather the council also provides self-help bags at various locations across the city.
  - iii. That a list of sites be identified for locating the self help bags – this list to be drawn up in consultation with Ward Committees and Parish Councils
  - iv. That criteria for the provision of the self-help bags and the list of sites be included within the Winter Gritting Policy.
5. Having considered information provided in relation to cycle paths, Members agreed that the key issues were:
  - raising public awareness of the reasons behind the council's policy on gritting cycleways
  - the need to provide up-to-date information on which main cycle access routes into the city centre are to be gritted, so that cyclists can make an informed choice on whether or not to use their bicycle and which route to take.
6. As these issues relate to the third objective of the review which is scheduled for consideration at this meeting, Members chose not to make any recommendations in relation to cycleways, at that stage.

### **Consultation**

7. Members recognised the need to consult the following interested parties at relevant stages in the review:

Residents Associations  
Federation of Tenants  
Neighbourhood Watch Groups  
Partner Agencies  
Voluntary Organisations  
Ward Committees / Parish Councils  
Other CYC service providers e.g. Adult Social Services & Network Management  
Other CYC Councillors
8. Information included in this report pertaining to the third objective has been provided by the Assistant Director of Maintenance Services and other CYC officers.

## Information Gathered

9. Recent Working Practices Not Included In the Manual

During the severe weather period December 2009 - January 2010, additional procedures to those defined in the Winter Maintenance Manual were carried out on a reactive basis i.e. :

- Gritting of roads not on the defined network
- Manual clearance of footpaths not on the defined network
- Snow clearance within car parks
- Additional salt bins placed
- Daily updates were included on the front page of the Council's website and sent to some Councillors by email / text (at their request)
- Introduction of regular information releases to the media
- The use of a 'Control Room' was replaced by the introduction of a strategic Winter Maintenance Group. This group oversaw the implementation of the council's policy
- Changes to the way the council mixed salt and grit - in order to preserve the council salt supply

10. Subject to lessons learnt, it is suggested that the policy be amended to reflect these changes to working practices.

11. Secondary Roads

The proposal to define a list of secondary routes and a criteria under which these would be treated, is based on a number of issues. It is more cost effective than snow clearance and gritting on a reactive basis, it will assist the Council in communicating with residents and other stakeholders, and will help to achieve equality of treatment across the city.

12. Officers are currently carrying out work to identify a list of secondary routes based on the proposed criteria below i.e. those secondary roads that satisfy **all** of the following:

- a. accessible by gritting vehicles - roads with minimum width 5m that are not regularly obstructed by parked cars
- b. links between other roads i.e. no cul-de-sacs (the exclusion of cul-de-sacs is based on the use of single person gritters where reversing needs to be avoided wherever possible)
- c. serve areas of dense population e.g. care homes, schools etc

13. In addition, it is suggested that the following locations which do not meet the proposed criteria, also receive snow clearance treatment at the same time as the secondary routes:

- Whitecross Road - providing access to rehab unit
- Yearsley Bridge (Huntington Road) - providing access to ambulance station

14. Subject to the above criteria being approved, it is suggested that the treatment of these routes will consist of snow clearance only (rather than regular gritting as on the defined network), and that further reactive treatments will only be carried out in emergency situations.

15. Raising Awareness of the Council's Winter Maintenance Policy

Currently, information is made available in a number of ways:

- Leaflets placed in council libraries, receptions and community centres
- Information placed on the website, including maps of gritting routes, the footpaths treated and salt bin locations
- Press releases to local radio during severe weather

16. However, officers are now proposing a number of additional methods for raising awareness:

- An open day at the Eco Depot for Members and the public in September / October this year, to display the proposed routes and equipment used – a decision on whether to repeat this in future years will depend on the response and feedback from the open day this year
- Daily updates on the website and by email to all councillors, to be instructed by the Winter Maintenance Group - some councillors received update emails during the severe weather earlier this year and the suggestion is that these be provided to all, unless they request otherwise
- More detailed maps of primary and secondary routes on the website so that individual roads can be identified

17. Furthermore, in response to the severe weather last winter, a 'Talkabout' survey specifically on the winter maintenance of roads and footpaths was issued week commencing 19 April 2010. It included questions concerning residents' satisfaction with the existing advance and ongoing information, and invited suggestions as to how this could be improved. Responses are due by 14 May 2010 and the processed information is expected by mid June to be fed into the ongoing officer review.

18. In support of the Committee's work on the first objective of this review specifically, Members are asked to consider if they wish to recommend that up-to-date information on the gritting of 'main' cycle access routes be provided on the website (to be instructed by the Winter Maintenance Group), to enable residents to make an informed decision on whether or not to use their bicycle.

19. Finally, this Committee has already identified that more could be done to publicise the Council's Winter Maintenance Policy, including providing information on why the Council are unable (or choose not) to grit some road and cycle routes. Members are asked to consider whether they wish to recommend that this information be written into the policy in order to control residents and visitor expectations.

## **Options**

20. Having considered the information contained within this report, Members may choose to:

- request additional information in support of objective (iii), or agree no further information is required
- identify alternative / additional recommendations in regard to objective (iii)

## **Corporate Priorities**

21. A robust gritting policy will provide an environment which allows workers and visitors to travel freely and safely around the city in times of severe weather, therefore maintaining the city's economy. This supports the council's strategic aim to make the city safer and enabling it to thrive.

## **Implications**

22. There are no known Financial, HR, Equalities, Legal, Crime and Disorder, IT, Property, or other implications associated with the proposed recommendations included in this report. Information on the implications associated with the draft recommendations arising from this review will be included in the draft final report.

## **Risk Management**

23. Information on the risks associated with the draft recommendations arising from this review will be included in the draft final report. There is some risk associated with not keeping to the timetable agreed for this review, as it would affect the Committee's ability to feed into the officer review, thereby undermining the dual review process which may affect the future robustness of the policy.

## **Recommendation**

24. In regard to the third objective of this review, Members are asked to
  - i) note the contents of the report and the views of those present at the meeting
  - ii) agree the inclusion of the following draft recommendations in their draft final report i.e. that:
    - the policy be updated to reflect all current working practices
    - information on why the Council are unable (or choose not) to grit some roads and cycle routes be included in the policy
    - up-to-date information on the gritting of 'main' cycle access routes be provided on the website, when instructed by the Winter Maintenance Group
    - the treating of secondary routes as detailed in paragraphs 12 – 14 above, be approved
    - the decision of when to treat secondary routes be the responsibility of the Winter Maintenance Group
    - the list of secondary routes (currently being identified by officers) and the proposed criteria be included in the council's Winter Maintenance Policy
    - the proposed methods of raising public awareness of the policy outlined in paragraph 15 above, be approved

Reason: To progress the review in line with scrutiny procedures and protocols

**Contact Details**

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**Chief Officer Responsible for the report:**

Andrew Docherty  
Head of Civic, Democratic & Legal Services

**Interim Report Approved**



**Date**

27 April 2010

**Wards Affected:**

**All**



**For further information please contact the author of the report**

**Background Papers:** Executive Report dated 10 September 2007