

Notice of Meeting

Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission

Tuesday, 2nd November, 2010 at 6.30 pm
in Council Chamber Council Offices
Market Street Newbury

Date of despatch of Agenda: Monday, 25 October 2010

For further information about this Agenda, or to inspect any background documents referred to in Part I reports, please contact Stephen Chard on (01635) 519462
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www.westberks.gov.uk



Agenda - Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission to be held on Tuesday, 2 November 2010 (continued)

To: Councillors Brian Bedwell (Chairman), Jeff Brooks (Vice-Chairman), Geoff Findlay, Irene Neill, David Rendel, Quentin Webb and Emma Webster

Substitutes: Councillors

Other Officers & Members invited:

Agenda

Part I

	Page No.
8. Severe winter weather	1 - 72
<i>Purpose:</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>To be informed of the response to the Commission's recommendations following its review into the severe winter weather of 2009/10.</i>• <i>To receive an update on the activity undertaken since the Commission's review.</i>• <i>To examine the preparations in place for the coming winter.</i>	
12. Scrutiny review into Supporting Small Schools	73 - 92
<i>Purpose: To outline the results of the investigation into the support that can be provided to small schools in West Berkshire.</i>	

Andy Day
Head of Policy and Communication

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Agenda Item 8.

Title of Report:	Severe winter weather
Report to be considered by:	Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission
Date of Meeting:	2 November 2010

Purpose of Report:

1. To inform of the response to the Commission's recommendations following its review into the severe winter weather of 2009/10.
2. To provide an update on the activity undertaken since the review.
3. To highlight the preparations in place for the coming winter.

Recommended Action:

To note the report and give consideration to any further activity that should be undertaken.

Key background documentation:

OSMC report on the impact of and response to the severe weather of the winter of 2009/10. Dated 29/06/10.

Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission Chairman	
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Supporting Information

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Commission conducted a detailed review earlier in the year to ascertain the impact of and the response to the severe weather of the winter of 2009/10.
- 1.2 As a result of this work 19 recommendations were formed for the Executive's consideration. The Executive report, considered at the meeting on 2 September 2010, is attached at Appendix A. The appendices to this report were a combined action plan, produced following both the review and the activity of the Civil Contingencies Manager, and the response to the OSMC's recommendations. Updated versions of both of these documents are attached at Appendices B and C respectively.
- 1.3 The action plan, the OSMC's recommendations and the response to them were noted and supported by the Executive in their entirety.
- 1.4 Recommendation 19 outlined an action for Thames Valley Police and the response to this is detailed at Appendix D.
- 1.5 Further information is provided in the documents attached at Appendices E and F from the Highways and Transport Service and the Education Service.

2. Focus of the meeting

- 2.1 The Civil Contingencies Manager, appropriate Portfolio Holders, Heads of Service and other lead Officers have been invited to this meeting to provide an update on progress, to outline the impact this has had on preparations for the coming winter and to answer questions.

3. Recommendation

- 3.1 Members are recommended to note the report and give consideration to any further activity that should be undertaken.

Appendices

Appendix A – Executive report - Winter 2009/10 Severe Weather Report and Action Plan.
Dated 02/09/10

Appendix B – Debrief action plan

Appendix C – Response to the OSMC recommendations

Appendix D – Response to recommendation 19 from Thames Valley Police

Appendix E – Draft 2010/11 Highway Winter Service Plan

Appendix F – Severe Winter Weather guidance for West Berkshire Schools

Title of Report:	Winter 2009/10 Severe Weather Report and Action Plan
Report to be considered by:	Executive
Date of Meeting:	02 September 2010
Forward Plan Ref:	EX2027

Purpose of Report: To provide the feedback and suggested action plan following the Severe Weather of Winter 2009/10. This includes the outcome and recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission.

Recommended Action:

- (1) The Debrief Action Plan is noted and supported in its completion
- (2) The recommendations from the OSC and response to them are noted and supported in their completion.
- (3) The proposal and format for the West Berkshire Severe Weather Plan is approved.
- (4) On a monthly basis the combined action plan is circulated to EPLO's and other officers as necessary to advise of updates relating to their service area.
- (5) Progress is coordinated by the Civil Contingencies Manager.
- (6) Progress to be reported back to Board on a 6 monthly basis, in particular to raise issues relating to budget issues.

Reason for decision to be taken: In order to allow progression & coordination of the Severe Weather Actions and in order to improve the preparation & response in the future.

Other options considered:

Key background documentation: OSC reports

The proposals will also help achieve the following Council Plan Themes:

- CPT7 - Safer and Stronger Communities**
- CPT11 - Protecting Vulnerable People**
- CPT14 - Effective People**

The proposals contained in this report will help to achieve the above Council Plan Priorities and Themes by:

Portfolio Member Details	
Name & Telephone No.:	Councillor Anthony Stansfeld - Tel (01488) 658238
E-mail Address:	astansfeld@westberks.gov.uk
Date Portfolio Member agreed report:	5 th August 2010

Contact Officer Details	
Name:	Carolyn Murison
Job Title:	Civil Contingencies Manager
Tel. No.:	01635 519105
E-mail Address:	cmurison@westberks.gov.uk

Implications

Policy: TBC as the actions are progressed
Financial: TBC as the actions are progressed.
Personnel: TBC as the actions are progressed
Legal/Procurement: TBC as the actions are progressed
Property: None
Risk Management: None
Equalities Impact Assessment: None

Is this item subject to call-in?	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/>	No: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If not subject to call-in please put a cross in the appropriate box:		
The item is due to be referred to Council for final approval	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Delays in implementation could have serious financial implications for the Council	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Delays in implementation could compromise the Council's position	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Considered or reviewed by Overview and Scrutiny Commission or associated Task Groups within preceding six months	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Item is Urgent Key Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Executive Summary

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Following the second period of severe winter weather in a 12 month period a full debrief was undertaken by the Civil Contingencies Manager and a review was undertaken by the Overview & Scrutiny Management Commission.
- 1.2 As a result of these reviews action plans and recommendations were produced. This report tables these action plans and provides proposals as to the way forward to capture and progress the points in a combined action plan.

2. Proposals

- 2.1 It is proposed that:
 - (1) A West Berkshire Severe Weather Plan is produced which will include an annex containing the Highways and Transport Winter Service Plan.
 - (2) On a monthly basis the combined action plan is circulated to EPLO's and other officers as necessary to advise of updates relating to their service area.
 - (3) Progress can be coordinated by the Civil Contingencies Manager.
 - (4) Progress is reported back to Board on a 6 monthly basis in particular in relation to issues where there is a financial implication.

3. Summary & Recommendations

- 3.1 Due to the extensive impact on the Council and the community that the severe weather had it is important that the action plans are progressed.
- 3.2 In addition there are likely to be financial implications with respect to some of the actions.
- 3.3 It is recommended that:
 - (1) The Debrief Action Plan is endorsed
 - (2) The recommendations from the OSMC and the response to them are noted.
 - (3) The proposal and format for the West Berkshire Severe Weather Plan is approved.
 - (4) On a monthly basis the combined action plan is circulated to EPLO's and other officers as necessary to advice of updates relating to their service area.
 - (5) Progress is coordinated by the Civil Contingencies Manager.
 - (6) Progress to be reported back to Board on a 6 monthly basis, in particular to raise issues relating to budget issues.

Executive Report

1. Introduction

- 1.1 During the period 17 December 2009 through to the end of March 2010 the whole of the UK experienced severe winter weather. It has now been recorded that this was the most widespread period of snowfall and cold weather since the winter of 1981/82.
- 1.2 The impact of this severe, extended period of cold weather was extensive including:
- (a) A National salt shortage, this later extended to include the majority of Europe.
 - (b) Transport was badly affected, with many reports of stranded motorists, restricted rail journeys and some flight cancellations.
 - (c) An increase in hospital admissions arising from people falling due to the conditions
 - (d) School & work place closures.
- 1.3 The average snowfall for England and Wales was between 10-20cm. The estimated snowfall in January 2010 for the Tilehurst/West Reading area was 40-45cm, for Hungerford/Lambourn 26-30cm, and for Newbury/Thatcham 15-20cm. The drifting of snow had also been an issue in some areas.
- 1.4 Temperatures across West Berkshire were often below -10°C and daytime temperatures were rarely above freezing.
- 1.5 The impact varied over the winter period. Of particular note was the 21 December 2009 when the first heavy snow fell on frozen roads earlier than forecast resulting in grid lock across the Thames Valley/Hampshire area as employees left work early in a very short period and Christmas Shoppers tried to leave shopping centres. Towards the end of the winter period however there were concerns relating to flooding should there be a rapid thaw. In addition the damage to road surfaces became more apparent as the snow melted.
- 1.6 Some specific impacts on the Council over this time included:
- (1) The number of calls made to the Contact Centre had increased from the usual average of 150 calls a day to around 390. This reached a peak on 14 January 2010 of 900 calls. These calls most often related to gritting, waste collections and pot holes.
 - (2) Increased number of insurance claims against the Council. In the period January to March 2010 the Highways & Transport Service dealt with 221 claims. In the same period in 2009 there were 111 and in 2008, 60.
 - (3) the number of hits on the Council website had increased and reached a peak of 9,000 between 8-10pm on 5 January 2010. There was an

83% satisfaction level recorded on the information provided on the website, which was above the benchmark figure for other local authorities. Positive feedback was also received from partners in relation to the website.

- (4) Waste collection was suspended for an extended period
- (5) Community Care Client support was prioritised.

1.7 As a result of this being the second severe winter weather impact within 12 months a review of the response was undertaken and this report details the review and the outcomes.

2. Review Process

2.1 As part of the routine process following any incident that affects the community a debriefing process was undertaken.

2.2 The debrief process normally involves the Emergency Planning Liaison Officers who represent each service. On this occasion the debrief process was extended to include:

- (1) Emergency Planning Liaison Officers
- (2) Additional officers within the Council who had responded to the incident
- (3) External agencies/professional partners
- (4) Town & Parish Councils

2.3 In addition to the routine debrief process a review was being undertaken by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission (OSMC).

3. Outcomes

3.1 The result of the debrief process was an action plan divided into service/team responsibilities with deadlines for completion against them. Most of the deadlines for completion are no later than November 2010 in order that they are in place ready for the coming winter, where practicable. The action plan is detailed in Appendix A.

3.2 The overarching outcomes however are the actions to review all service Business Continuity and Emergency Response Plans and develop a West Berkshire Severe Weather Plan.

3.3 In addition to the debrief action plan there are the recommendations and actions from the OSMC. These are at Appendix B. Where these cross reference with the debrief actions they have been annotated along with comments relating to the recommendations.

3.4 An amalgamated working action plan has now been developed for use by the officers.

3.5 It should also be noted that despite the list of actions identified to improve the response in the future there were also a large number of positive comments made regarding the response.

4. Potential Limitations

4.1 It should also be noted that there may be limitations on progression of some of the actions due to resources in terms of staff and budgets. This will be brought to the Boards attention as necessary for information and/or decision.

5. Way Forward

5.1 It is proposed that:

- (1) The West Berkshire Severe Weather Plan is prepared as set out below:

Section	Subject	Progress
1	Introduction	
2	Activation	
3	Command & Control	
4	Roles & Responsibilities	
5	Warning & Informing	
6	Community & Public Actions	
7	Recovery	
Annex A	Heatwave	COMPLETE for 10/11
Annex B	Drought	DRAFT COMPLETE – out for consultation in July
Annex C	Flooding to include Sandbag Policy	First Draft progressing of revised plan – out for consultation in August
Annex D	Storms including high winds (excluding snow storms)	To be drafted in Sept
Annex E	Severe Winter including extended cold, extreme low temperatures and snow. This will include as an Annex the H&T Winter Service Plan	To be drafted in August

As the individual plans are progressing it is proposed that where there is commonality this will be put in the main sections of the plan rather than the individual Annexes.

6. Resource Implications

6.1 The work in both action plans will be investigated and progressed by each service as it is split in this report. Therefore there is an impact on each service with respect to staff resources.

6.2 There are some actions however that may give rise to substantial costs to the Council to progress them. The outcome as a result may be that the action cannot

be completed. This will be brought to the attention of the Board in the next report unless urgent decisions are required to be made.

7. Summary & Recommendations

7.1 Due to the extensive impact on the Council and the community that the severe weather had it is important that the action plans are progressed as a result it is recommended that:

- (1) The Debrief Action Plan is endorsed
- (2) The recommendations from the OSMC and the response to them are noted.
- (3) The proposal and format for the West Berkshire Severe Weather Plan is approved.
- (4) On a monthly basis the combined action plan is circulated to EPLO's and other officers as necessary to advice of updates relating to their service area.
- (5) Progress is coordinated by the Civil Contingencies Manager.
- (6) Progress to be reported back to Board on a 6 monthly basis, in particular to raise issues relating to budget issues.

Appendices

Appendix A – Debrief Action Plan

Appendix B – OSC Recommendation Action Plan

Consultees

Local Stakeholders:

Officers Consulted: EPLO's, Mark Edwards

Trade Union: N/A

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Appendix B Debrief Action Plan

Highways & Transport					
Serial	Comment	Action	Lead	Deadline	Progress/Issues
1	Written gritting policy and interactive map do not always agree. Separate layers for primary, secondary and contingency routes would help. Colour too close in shade.	H&T to review how the gritting maps are displayed, ensuring user friendly in format and colours. To also consider how salt bins and other service items could be shown on the mapping system on the internet and Intranet to help the public and the Council.	H&T	Sept 10	Refer to Appendix E – draft 2010/11 Highway Winter Service Plan.
2	Mapping of salt bins would also help.				
3	Lack of grit and salt in boxes for smaller roads.	To review the location of salt bins.	H&T	Sept-10	Parish & Town Councils consulted 26 July 2010
4	Traffic calming bumps in roads made clearing difficult	This is an information item for the community – to be considered in the Severe Weather Plan as part of the educational process in explaining what the limitations are for the Council.	H&T/Civil Contingencies	Aug-10	Refer to Appendix E – draft 2010/11 Highway Winter Service Plan.
5	Perception, by some people that there was a big difference in East of area between Reading BC roads and WBC roads.	To be considered in the Severe Weather Plan as part of the educational process in explaining what the limitations are for the Council.	H&T & Civil Contingencies	31-Aug-10	
6	Late response from DfT in setting up Salt cell.	Referred to GOSE	Civil Contingencies		Referred to GOSE
7	Perception that when clearing roads of snow there was no 'standard' to try to keep to, e.g. often there was a central icy ridge in each carriageway, over which anything but a four wheel drive or lorry could not pass with safety.	Liaison with contractors. In addition to be considered in the Severe Weather Plan as part of the educational process in explaining what the limitations are for the Council.	H&T & Civil Contingencies	Aug-10	Refer to Appendix E – draft 2010/11 Highway Winter Service Plan.

Highways & Transport

Serial	Comment	Action	Lead	Deadline	Progress/Issues
8	There is a need to formalise arrangements for snow clearance on footpaths, underpasses etc - produce a list of pavement clearance in advance so we have priority areas already established. Use of GIS mapping to identify all pavement clearance crews so to minimise travel. Identify hot spot areas and prioritise.	To be considered in the next version of Winter service plan	H&T, Waste, Countryside, Civil Contingencies	Aug-10	Refer to Appendix E – draft 2010/11 Highway Winter Service Plan.
9	Due to impact of school closures on wider community to review gritting of access roads to schools	To be considered in the next version of Winter service plan	H&T	Aug-10	
10	Issues in relation to 4x4 provision and availability to support critical services.	To review the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ number of 4x4's in Council ○ the location of these vehicles ○ ownership of staff owned 4x4's – checking insurance and driver training to support the response ○ to review voluntary agency and private volunteers usage in emergencies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ H&T – Transport Team ○ Civil Contingencies 	Aug-10	
11	Not all Bus Operators provided information on their websites re service cancellations although our staff contacted all of them daily for operational updates.	To link with private transport as part of Warning & Informing plan and via transport team	Civil Contingencies Highways & Transport	Nov 10	

Community Care

Serial	Comment	Action	Lead	Deadline	Progress/Issues
1	Difficulties arose when some vulnerable people who were not looked after by the Council requested support.	To review processes and add to Vulnerable People Plan	Community Care & Civil Contingencies	Aug 10	There is a draft Vulnerable People Plan developed by Civil Contingencies Manager which is under consultation prior to sharing with external providers. Processes are being checked to ensure support is provided to all in need.
2	At times there were instances of Home Care provision not being as joined up as it could have been resulting in some difficulties.	Home Care and External providers to work on BCM and consistency, including routes for mutual aid and support requests.	Community Care	Sep-10	
3	There were some issues in relation to the extended hours and duty process and assistance to vulnerable.	BCM	Community Care	Sep-10	
4	Vulnerable need to be informed if further arrangements are being made and regular updates	Consider information sheet/leaflet to all vulnerable and their family etc in order to ensure they are aware of what may happen in advance. Review communications route doing an emergency. Linked to Vulnerable People Plan	Community Care	Sep-10	
5	Some services – such as provision of meals was being provided by the same contractor by a different organisation resulting in duplication of efforts.	To review options of more cross working with PCT re vulnerable people support etc	Community Care	Sep-10	

Business Continuity					
Serial	Comment	Action	Lead	Target	Progress/Issues

Business Continuity

Serial	Comment	Action	Lead	Target	Progress/Issues
1	If prolonged weather issue then it should be clear when BCM plans are to be activated.	To review the BCM activation and communication processes. This is to include consideration of invoking of central BCM (maybe virtually) in order to have a better picture of how Services were affected – using the concept of services reporting in red, amber, green as was planned for pandemic flu absences.	BCM Lead	Sep-10	Reminder going out to managers on issue of plan
2	Issues in relation to key aspects of Council/Community issues that would have a large impact eg: We did not hear till very late in the day that exams were due and there might be problems for pupils in getting to school.	1. Linked to finding out if any other key events ongoing. All services to consider this as part of initial review of their status. Linked to BCM. 2. To ensure SAG maintains an events list	1. All Services 2.SAG Chair	Sep-10	Reminder going out to managers on issue of plan
3	Some issues in relation to staffing of all services.	ALL BCM plans to be reviewed taking into account Timelord, long term situations	BCM Lead & all services	Sep-10	Reminder going out to managers on issue of plan
4	Consider setting up emergency access to Citrix in advance for identified staff (e.g. fixed admin staff who were unable to get in).	To consider at BCM revision stage	BCM Lead	Sep-10	Reminder going out to managers on issue of plan
5	It may have been possible for staff in some services to support other services more – vehicles, pavement clearing etc.	To consider at BCM revision stage	BCM Lead	Sep-10	Reminder going out to managers on issue of plan
6	It was noted that some staff contact details were not up to date.	Ensure all BCM plans have relevant details including managers for teams	BCM Service Leads	Sep-10	Reminder going out to managers on issue of plan
7	Some staff could have worked from different more local offices or other LA offices but not set up to operate as such.	To consider options for working in different buildings (in part answered by Timelord) with possible expansion to other LA's – reciprocal agreements.	BCM Lead	Dec 10	Reminder going out to managers on issue of plan

Business Continuity					
Serial	Comment	Action	Lead	Target	Progress/Issues
8	Some key support staff needed to operate from the Council Offices or move to remote sites.	Early consideration via the Councils BCM process which should be instigated early to identify such issues and put plans in place. Use of 4x4's to collect as necessary.	BCM lead	Sept 10	Reminder going out to managers on issue of plan
9	Schools & services responsible for buildings should set up their own weather plans and make provision for snow clearance.	All services to check their own building situations and contractors in their field of operation. All services to be encouraged to have salt, shovels, training, risk assessment, insurance and plans in place for future.	BCM Service Leads	Sep-10	Reminder going out to managers on issue of plan

Civil Contingencies					
Serial	Comment	Action	Lead	Target	Progress/Issues
1	Concerns that the Council was not visible enough to the public.	This is difficult due to geography and advice for staff not to travel however all staff, including contractors to ensure have WBC jackets. To consider reflective jackets for Care workers etc	Civil Contingencies working with teams.	Sept 10	More reflective jackets are available for staff to deploy in – with WBC logo. All staff responding at the time had jackets on. More to be distributed to EPLO's. IDs will also always be available.
2	At times the information on whether staff should go home or not travel to work was too slow in response. Many staff that were office based not getting home to late evening or early hours of the morning	To ensure aware in EOC/Senior Managers. To consider in plan for BCM & Severe weather.	Civil Contingencies	Sept-10	Covered in adverse weather plan. Completed – to be issued in Nov 10 post final issue of plan.
3	Health & Safety, Risk Management and Legal Services input into decision making in the EOC. To ensure actions during severe weather are protecting the Council's legal responsibilities.	To ensure as part of activation plan guidance	Civil Contingencies	Sept 10	Covered in adverse weather plan. Completed – to be issued in Nov 10 post final issue of plan.

Civil Contingencies

Serial	Comment	Action	Lead	Target	Progress/Issues
4	To consider the coordination of staff who live near to people that need help.	To allocate responsibility to resources coord with HR in MIP	Civil Contingencies with HR	Sept 10	Covered in adverse weather plan. Completed – to be issued in Nov 10 post final issue of plan.
5	Schools, Property need to set up their own weather plans and make provision for snow clearance.	Businesses to be encouraged to have salt, shovels, training, risk assessment, insurance and plans in place for future.	Civil Contingencies	Oct-10	Services encouraging all lead officers for buildings to ensure prepared. Also via the Berkshire Business Continuity Forum 3 seminars have been held with respect to improving private business preparations. On-going project.
6	The Major Incident Plan covers most aspects but there were some gaps in relation to severe weather information/guidance	To write a Severe weather plan that can be used as a public information area.	Civil Contingencies	Nov 10	Plan – in final draft stages to be issued by end Nov when new EA info available. Completion on target for Nov 10.
7	Whilst information flow to parishes was good there were some gaps with respect to Parish Plans and communication routes	To further develop Parish Council plans including identifying more contacts for parishes and locations for public notices to be displayed	Civil Contingencies	Dec 10 & ongoing	A number of meetings have been held with Town & parish Councils including Pangbourne, Midgham, Speen – more along Lambourn Valley and Chieveley in November. A Thames Valley Community Day and Exercise is due to take place in Mar 2011. Details of alternative contacts and locations to insert notices in local communities is nearing completing. On-going.

Civil Contingencies					
Serial	Comment	Action	Lead	Target	Progress/Issues
8	Issues with insurance and claims against residents if they helped themselves and their communities.	To work with CLG and Civil Contingencies Secretariat regarding the way forward in order that the Community can support themselves more.	Civil Contingencies	Update 6 months	Guidance issued by Gov't on 25 th Oct – inserted as guidance in the Severe Weather plan. Completed – to be issued in Nov 10 post final issue of plan.

Education/Children Services					
Serial	Comment	Action	Lead	Deadline	Progress/Issues
1	Schools need to set up their own weather plans and make provision for snow clearance.	Information to all schools to go out in Oct 10	Education	Oct-10	See Appendices 1, 2 and 5 of Severe Winter Weather Guidance for West Berkshire Schools. (Appendix F of the main report).
2	Clearing of access to centres to enable staff/ young people to safely get to the venues	Information to all schools to go out in Oct 10	Education	Oct 10	See Appendices 2 and 5 of Severe Winter Weather Guidance for West Berkshire Schools.
3	Still a few schools who did not contact Education Service through the designated e-mail address.	To encourage all schools to use the school closure email including the independents	Education	Oct 10	School status has been set up on the Council home page with links to each school's website. The methodology has been reinforced with schools. See Appendix 3 of Severe Winter Weather Guidance for West Berkshire Schools.
4	Access to the advice from QCL was late	To consider the assistance form different IT systems/Webs asap.	Education	Aug 10	Education support is aware of the need to do this asap in the event of severe weather.

Education/Children Services

Serial	Comment	Action	Lead	Deadline	Progress/Issues
5	Provide advice and guidance to governors on their requirements	Education to provide advice	Education	Oct-10	Severe winter weather guidance developed and issued to all schools in October 2010. Strong recommendation has been given to governing bodies to review the readiness of the school for severe weather. Information provided to governors via their e-magazine, at Chair's briefings and to Governor Clerks for the Term 1 agenda. Also to School Admin staff at their briefings.
6	Some early year providers were not given info as to situation	To ensure early years are involved at same level as schools.	Children services	Aug 10	Regular updates were emailed to all early years providers. Issues arose when the recipient of the email did not convey the message to staff and the need to do this has been reinforced. All early years providers have been given the link to information on the website. Additional early years provider email addresses will be used in severe weather conditions.

Education/Children Services

Serial	Comment	Action	Lead	Deadline	Progress/Issues
7	Issues with some school staff not getting into the school.	To review situation including looking at how remote access for school office staff can be put in place so that they can work from home.	Education	Sep-10	See Appendix 2 of Severe Winter Weather Guidance for West Berkshire Schools.
8	Issue with lack of site on exams coming up and the impact that this had.	To check when an incident occurs as to what key education issues may arise including exams.	Education	Sep-10	Education support is aware of the need to do this asap in the event of severe weather. Also, Appendix 3 – Communications expects schools to notify the LA of exams and other significant events that may be impacted.
9	Schools nearly ran out of oil	Schools to be encouraged to monitor oil more and there deliveries. Advise to improve this to be included in severe weather plan guidance.	Education	Oct-10	See Appendix 1 of Severe Winter Weather Guidance for West Berkshire Schools. This reinforces the importance of monitoring oil supplies.
10	Some schools used a variety of means to communicate with parents.	An assessment of what they use and pros and cons would be of value to assess if we can improve on this -link with Civil Cont team	Education	Oct 10	This will still be the case. Schools will manage this in the most effective way for their setting. However, at Admin Briefings, experiences of what had worked well were shared and this will be reviewed by schools on a regular basis. See Appendix 3 of Severe Winter Weather Guidance for West Berkshire Schools.

Waste

Serial	Comment	Action	Lead	Deadline	Progress/Issues
1	Gaps identified in the Response & BCM plans for waste	WBC & Veolia to update the Severe Weather section of the Business Continuity Plan. Revise Waste BCM & response plans	Waste	Aug 10	Interim review complete.
2	Communicate that in future severe weather events services may be suspended e.g. green waste service, to concentrate on refuse and recycling services.	As Above and include in Severe weather Plan	Waste	Aug 10	Service status now available on the Council website. Information will be included in Recycle for West Berkshire, Christmas newsletter to be delivered to residents in December 2010.
3	Identify specific times that the waste teams 4x4s could be used to assist Veolia in monitoring conditions. Ensure appropriate staff have 4x4 training.	To link with Transport Team & place in plan	Waste	Aug 10	Link with Transport team in place. Training requested before the end of the year.
4	Ensure all waste team equipment removed before vehicles handed over.	Internal service issue	Waste	Aug 10	Staff notified.
5	Request that the Newtown Road HWRC is put on the snow clearance / gritting list.	Linked to H&T Maintenance Team	Waste	Aug 10	Link with Highways team in place.
6	Clearer signage required for HWRC re closures	Large highways sign for entrance to Newtown Road HWRC explaining that site is temporarily closed.	Waste	Aug 10	Complete.
7	Lack of advice from any government agency regarding waste collections especially when services were delayed for a number of weeks. A central government led message would reduce the level of enquiries.		Waste	Complete	Complete

ICT

Serial	Comment	Action	Lead	Deadline	Progress/Issues
1	Citrix was at times very slow that hampered WFH of some staff. Better use of teleconferences to give service updates	ICT to monitor usage and speed of connections. Services to consider use of teleconferencing as part of time lord	ICT	N/A	Considerable development of Citrix has taken place as part of Timelord and all regular users now use the faster Xenapps Server version of Citrix which doesn't have the performance issues of the older system. Teleconference is available within the Council's new Unified Communication System "Openscape" and this has been rolled out to around 200 users so far and will be rolled out to hundred more staff as part of the Timelord Programme.
2	Some issues with updating website, have staff got access from home are there enough authors/editors.	ICT to encourage review of authors/editors for each service	ICT	Aug 10	All services now have enough trained web site users to maintain status pages that will be key to keeping customers updated in an emergency.
3	IT Helpdesk phones must be manned in office – need to consider future options for call handling remotely.	Investigate feasibility, cost etc	ICT (Malcolm Nicholas/Karen Reddings)	Dec-10	ICT is piloting the use of its Siemens Procentre call handing system for people working at home. There have been some technical difficulties with this but the pilot project is continuing.
4	Ensure appropriate staff have training on how to use telephone conference facilities	Services to request training as appropriate	Services	Sep-10	Telephone conference training being rolled out as part of the Openscape training.

ICT					
Serial	Comment	Action	Lead	Deadline	Progress/Issues
5	Lead officer, and the deputy, for emergency planning must have Citrix and blackberry.	Civil Cont Team and Timelord Team to review implications of Timelord on Duty Managers, Key responders, EPLO's etc	CC Team	Sep-10	Completed.
6	Enable more people to work at home	Timelord should facilitate		Mar-11	Timelord has had a beneficial impact on this capability and the number of staff able to work from home continues to rise.
7	Ensure the website is updated and contains relevant information.	Services to review	Services	Aug-10	Web Team have spent a considerable amount of time improving Service Status Pages and the process to keep these up to date in the event of an incident such as severe weather.
8	Some of the issues with certain applications in Citrix (e.g. Uniform and SmartOffice).	Have now been resolved		N/A	Most applications now available in Citrix. Project to publish others is ongoing.
Communications					
Serial	Comment	Action	Lead	Deadline	Progress/Issues
1	Better information to staff and residents in terms of website	Web users meeting to improve	ICT & Services	Aug -10	Web Team have spent a considerable amount of time improving Service Status Pages and the process to keep these up to date in the event of an incident such as severe weather.
2	Speedier updates	To consider in revision of MIP & note for Severe weather plan	Civil Contingencies	Aug-10	Covered in Severe weather plan – will be updated in MIP at next update. Completed on issue of plan in Nov 10.

ICT

Serial	Comment	Action	Lead	Deadline	Progress/Issues
3	Communication between team members could have been more frequent, whilst working from home	Link with Timelord communication means and ICT solution	Team Issue	Sept 10	Reminder going out to managers on issue of plan
4	Staff in office taking all telephone calls – ensure officers transfer their phones before leaving office to work mobiles	Team management & Timelord matter	Team Issue	Mar 11	Reminder going out to managers on issue of plan
5	In the next edition of the waste newsletter ensure that residents are directed to the website for service updates.	Waste Newsletter to contain information	Waste	Sept 10	Completed – April 10
6	Service status page on website needs to be up to date	Services to ensure sufficient trained people with access can update the website	Services	Oct-10	Reminder going out to managers on issue of plan
7	Review of radio station procedures (some schools found it difficult to get through)	To link with radio stations	Education	Aug-10	
8	Review of communication with transport services over which buses are running.	Review by H&T and PR	H&T	Aug-10	In Winter Service Report
9	If 'extra' are provided, i.e. salt tipped around schools please make us aware- we risk losing credibility.	Info to go to Contact Centre asap for them to advice - Top line briefings to be considered in severe weather plan	Civil Contingencies	31-Aug-10	Covered in Severe weather plan – will be updated in MIP at next update. Completed on issue of plan in Nov 10.
10	PR needs to be on the radio on a regular basis- if only a minimum service say so.	Noted - No further Action as can depend on demands of the press, info was going out daily.	PR	N/A	N/A
11	Lack of co-ordination in terms of staff getting info re. Cancellation of training etc leading to staff struggling to get to an event only to find it cancelled. Need for a more robust contact data base for all employees.	Noted – services to ensure communication routes for all staff in place	Services and linked to 11 below.	Dec 10	Reminder going out to managers on issue of plan

ICT					
Serial	Comment	Action	Lead	Deadline	Progress/Issues
12	Need to explore access from home-formalised communication routes	To consider a passworded access route for staff to see info that is not for all to see but specific messages for staff from Civil Contingencies or their managers.	Civil Contingencies & ICT	Dec-10	On-going work – on line for update in Dec 10.
13	Independent schools not always linked in to issues.	To ensure independents linked in	Education	Oct 10	Covered in Severe weather plan – will be updated in MIP at next update. Completed on issue of plan in Nov 10.
14	Service users did not know to check website for service updates and therefore the number of avoidable contacts did rise.	Info to go to schools by way of reminders asking parents to look at website too.	Education	Oct 10	
15	When schools were closed it was not always the case that the Youth service also based there was also closed	Services to communicate and agree a way forward – this needs to be publicised when agreed.	Education & Youth & Commissioning Services	Oct 10	

Misc					
Serial	Comment	Action	Lead	Deadline	Progress/Issues
1	The staff in my team felt the Council was being too reactive to the situation and did not appear prepared for it.	To consider in the Severe Weather Plan	Civil Contingencies		Noted –answered in the plan.
2	Ensure office phone lines transferred to officers work mobiles for working at home.	Noted	Team Issue		Reminder going out to managers on issue of plan
3	We will ensure a daily short 'briefing/update/actions' meeting between senior managers and those who are directly involved in managing the situation - at a set time rather than ad hoc.	Good learning point for all services.	Team Issue		Reminder going out to managers on issue of plan
4	Communication between team members could have been more frequent, whilst working from home	As part of Timelord process this should be standard	Team Issue		Reminder going out to managers on issue of plan
5	Issues in relation to redeployment of contract staff who could not do daily work but perhaps could have been utilised more	All Services to review contract conditions.	Procurement & All services		Reminder going out to managers on issue of plan
HR					
1	Staff unclear about TOIL/leave working policy	HR to provide guidance	HR	31-Aug-10	The guidance is provided in the 1999 terms and conditions of employment which are on the Intranet.
2	A protocol would be useful to detail what is expected of certain types of staff in such situations. There were mixed messages: on the one hand we were told to try to come into work but on the other hand we were told not to take any risks and to stay at home!	As Above - linked to a Severe weather plan	HR & Civil Contingencies	31-Aug-10	Advice was issued to managers last year. This will be turned into a guidance note for managers and staff and placed on the HR pages of the Intranet by the end of November 2010.

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Appendix C OSC Recommendations and feedback.

Serial	Recommendation	Feedback	Timescale	Progress/Issues	Linked to WBC Action Plan
1	<p>The Civil Contingencies Manager should establish a policy and process to allow drivers of 4x4 vehicles to assist the Council when required in severe weather. Drivers of these vehicles might be private individuals, taxi operators or farmers. The mechanism should cover:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The arrangements to safeguard vulnerable people. • How help can be offered. • How help can be requested. 	Noted.	Oct 10	Refer to Appendix E – draft 2010/11 Highway Winter Service Plan.	H&T Point 10
2	The Civil Contingencies Manager should formulate a contingency plan specifically to respond to severe weather.	Noted - although it must be borne in mind that some generic actions are covered in the Major Incident Plan.	Oct 10	Plan – in final draft stages to be issued by end Nov when new EA info available.	Civil Contingencies 6
3	The Civil Contingencies Manager should strongly encourage Parish and Town Councils to develop their own severe weather emergency plans.	Noted	On-going	A number of meetings have been held with Town & parish Councils including Pangbourne, Midgham, Speen – more along Lambourn valley and Chieveley in November. A Thames Valley Community Day and Exercise is due to take place in Mar 2011. This is a continuing project.	Civil Contingencies 7
4	The Civil Contingencies Manager should articulate, develop and communicate the valuable community engagement role for district and town/parish councillors. If	Noted	On-going	As above.	

Serial	Recommendation	Feedback	Timescale	Progress/Issues	Linked to WBC Action Plan
	necessary training for those involved should be given.				
5	Working with the Head of Legal and Electoral Services, the Civil Contingencies Manager should seek clarification on the insurance and other legal liability of individuals and businesses clearing snow from their property or public areas. If a real risk of liability exists then steps should be taken through the national infrastructure to obtain its removal. If no risk exists then a plan to communicate this to the public should be developed and delivered.	Noted.	Update 6 Months	<p>Guidance issued by Gov't on 25th Oct – inserted as guidance in the Severe Weather plan.</p> <p>Details relating to communications in the plan.</p> <p>Completed – to be issued in Nov 10 with final issue of plan.</p>	Civil Contingencies 8
6	Working with her counterparts in other organisations, the Civil Contingencies Manager should establish a mechanism for the pooling of resources, such as vehicles or staff, available to local organisations during severe weather. The arrangements should include procedures for the notification of both supply and demand to be made.	Noted		<p>There is already a process via the Strategic Coordinating group or the Tactical Coordinating Group as necessary. In addition there is an MOU within Berkshire to share resources including a database of equipment. This is currently being expanded. There is also a process via GOSE to request support. However IF as was the case in this situation everyone is in the same situation mutual aid may not be forthcoming. To be reflected in Severe weather plan.</p> <p>Work is still ongoing with H&T service re 4x4's pooling and the use of voluntary agencies.</p>	Linked to H&T 8, 10 plus others

Serial	Recommendation	Feedback	Timescale	Progress/Issues	Linked to WBC Action Plan
7	<p>The Head of Highways and Transport should review the Winter Service Plan, specifically examining:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The policy in place for the gritting of frequently used pavements, cycle ways and car parks. • The amount, type and location of roads to be treated, when and how. Factors to be taken into consideration might include gradient and access to key public services. • The appropriateness of contingency plans in place. <p>When revised, Ward Members, Parish and Town Councils, other public sector service providers and private sector transport companies should be consulted and encouraged to give their views.</p>	Noted	Nov 10	Refer to Appendix E – draft 2010/11 Highway Winter Service Plan.	Linked to H&T actions.
8	The Head of Highways and Transport should increase the Council's salt storage to 4,000-5,000 tonnes.	Noted	Aug 10	5000 tonnes are now in stock	
9	The Head of Highways and Transport should review the Council's grit bin policy. Consideration should be given to the views of Ward Members and Parish and Town Councils. The policy should address the number, size and location of the salt bins, the arrangements for replenishment and	Noted	Nov 10	Refer to Appendix E – draft 2010/11 Highway Winter Service Plan.	Linked to H&T 1, 2 & 3

Serial	Recommendation	Feedback	Timescale	Progress/Issues	Linked to WBC Action Plan
	acceptable use of them by the public. The monitoring by Parish and Town Councils of the state and use of bins should also be considered.				
10	The Head of Highways and Transport should develop and implement an appropriate communication strategy to advise members of the public on the use of salt provided in bins by the Council. Measures might include use of the website and labelling on the bins.	Noted	Nov 10	Refer to Appendix E – draft 2010/11 Highway Winter Service Plan.	Linked to Communications Plan
11	The Head of Highways and Transport should establish a mechanism to allow the engagement of local farmers to provide assistance in the clearance of roads, particularly in rural environments.	Noted	Nov 10	Refer to Appendix E – draft 2010/11 Highway Winter Service Plan.	
12	Working with the Civil Contingencies Manager, the District Council's Head of Highways and Transport should establish procedures to allow the redirection of staff from their normal duties to snow clearance in the event of severe winter weather. Staff should be drawn from waste collection teams and assistance may be available externally from Neighbourhood Wardens, the fire service and elsewhere	Noted	Nov 10	Reflected in the Severe weather plan - subject to final consultation.	Linked to BCM 5

Serial	Recommendation	Feedback	Timescale	Progress/Issues	Linked to WBC Action Plan
1 3	<p>The Head of Adult Social Care should establish a mechanism to allow the authority to provide assistance to vulnerable people not already in receipt of help from the Council. This might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying those in need, for example through Parish and Town Councils or GPs. • Advising them how to request help and when. • Identifying and recording the details of those in local communities able and willing to provide assistance. <p>The measures that should be taken to ensure the safety of the vulnerable is maintained.</p>	Noted	Oct 10	There is a draft Vulnerable People Plan developed by Civil Contingencies Manager which is under consultation prior to sharing with external providers. Processes are being checked to ensure support is provided to all in need.	Linked to Community Care 1 & 4
14	Building on the good work undertaken during the severe weather, the Head of Adult Social Care should examine the opportunities for further provision of mutual aid between the authority and private sector social care providers. A protocol governing the arrangements should be agreed and put in place.	Noted	Oct 10		Linked to Community Care 5
15	The Head of Education should share with all schools the results of the consultation undertaken to identify what worked well in schools and what lessons could be learnt.	Noted	Oct 10	Completed and sent to Headteachers in March 2010.	

Serial	Recommendation	Feedback	Timescale	Progress/Issues	Linked to WBC Action Plan
16	The Head of Education should examine the opportunities for schools to adopt a mutual aid scheme that would allow members of staff who are unable to reach their usual place of work in severe weather to report to their nearest school. Advice on the practical application of the scheme might be obtained from Thames Valley Police.	Noted	Oct 10	This was examined, but was found not to be viable due to issues regarding safeguarding and child protection.	
17	The Head of Education should encourage all schools to adopt a severe weather plan. The plans might include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A resource plan. • Mutual aid. • Communications with the public 	Noted	Oct 10	Severe winter weather guidance developed and issued to all schools in October 2010. Strong recommendation that all schools review their readiness for severe weather has been issued via key meetings, and to governors via their e-magazine and at Chair's briefings in October 2010. Also, shared with school business managers and admin staff at the Admin Briefings in October 2010.	Linked to Education 1,2,6,9
18	The Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission should write to the Secretary of State for Health to request that any financial penalties applied to the South Central Ambulance Service in respect of their failure to meet attendance time targets arising from the severe weather be dropped.	Noted		Letter sent on 20 September 2010. No response received as of 27 October 2010.	

Serial	Recommendation	Feedback	Timescale	Progress/Issues	Linked to WBC Action Plan
19	In order to avert gridlock caused by many organisations simultaneously sending home their employees early in the event of severe weather, Thames Valley Police should develop and when necessary implement procedures to ensure that the numbers of vehicles entering the road network are appropriately controlled.	Noted	Oct 10	Letter sent to BCU Commander. Civil Contingencies Manager to liaise via TV LRF. The response to this letter is included in the OSMC papers for 2 November 2010 – Appendix D.	

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POLICY AND COMMUNICATION

9 AUG 2010

Reading Police Station

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Email: christopher.shead@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk

Mr Stephen Chard, Policy Officer
West Berkshire Council
Council Offices
Market Street
Newbury
Berkshire RG14 5LD

3 August 2010

Dear Mr. Chard,

**The impact of and response to the severe weather of the winter of 2009/10 –
recommendation of West Berkshire council's Overview and Scrutiny Management
Commission (OSMC)**

Thank you for your letter dated 14 July 2010 which included the recommendations from the OSMC in relation to the severe winter weather we had earlier in the year. I am now in a position to respond to the recommendation that was a suggested action for Thames Valley Police.

Recommendation 6.1 (19)

This recommendation proposes that Thames Valley Police develop and when necessary implement procedure to ensure that the number of vehicles entering the road network are appropriately controlled.

In actual fact the Road Traffic Management Act of 2004 puts the onus very much on to relevant Highways Authorities to control traffic. Police powers to control traffic are limited to emergencies (such as fatal road collisions and the like). Heavy traffic due to oncoming poor weather is not an emergency, though assisting an ambulance through that traffic would be a function we would perform. Police have no powers at all to "control vehicles entering the road network" in these circumstances.

The best we could hope to do in these circumstances is to provide as much information as possible as to the prevailing road conditions and regular communication through media outlets and with our local community networks.

If you need any more information, please let me know.

Yours sincerely,



Chris Shead
Chief Superintendent
BCU Commander
Berkshire West BCU

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Individual Executive Member Decision

Title of Report:	2010/11 Highway Winter Service Plan
Report to be considered by:	Individual Executive Member Decision
Date on which Decision is to be taken:	4 November 2010
Forward Plan Ref:	ID

Purpose of Report: To seek approval of the 2010/2011 Highway Winter Service Plan

Recommended Action: That the Executive Member for Highways, Transport (operational) & ICT approves the 2010/11 Highway Winter Service Plan.

Reason for decision to be taken: Government guidance for highway management recommends the provision of an annually reviewed operational plan for winter service.

Statutory: **Non-Statutory:**
Other:

Other options considered: None

Key background documentation:

- The Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission's review of the 2009/10 Winter.
- UK Roads Group publication 'Lessons Learned from Severe Weather February 2009'.
- Well maintained Highways – Code of Practice for Highway Maintenance Management.
- The resilience of England's Transport Systems in Winter – Interim report July 2010. The Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission's

Portfolio Member Details	
Name & Telephone No.:	Councillor David Betts - Tel (0118) 942 2485
E-mail Address:	dbetts@westberks.gov.uk

Contact Officer Details	
Name:	Melvyn May
Job Title:	Highways Manager
Tel. No.:	01635 519873
E-mail Address:	mmay@westberks.gov.uk

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Implications

- Policy:** To comply with best practice and the statutory duty to maintain the public highway in a safe condition, the Highways and Transport Service reviews and produces a Highway Winter Service Plan annually to set out its operational proposals for Members to consider.
- West Berkshire Council aims to provide as far as is reasonably practicable safe travelling conditions on the primary precautionary salting network during the winter service period when hoar frost and snow conditions are forecast.
- Financial:** The cost of providing the call our service, providing salt bins and undertaking up to 50 primary precautionary salting runs on 500km of carriageway, is included in the 2010/2011 revenue budget. (There is no budget provision for salting of the secondary network, snow clearance operations or footways treatment).
- If there are any financial implications contained within this report this section **must** be signed off by a West Berkshire Group Accountant. Please note that the report cannot be accepted by Policy and Communication unless this action has been undertaken.
- Personnel:** None arising from this report.
- Legal/Procurement:** Following a House of Lords ruling, the Council has had a statutory duty from 10 October 2003 to ensure, so far as reasonably practicable the safe passage along a highway is not endangered by snow or ice.
- The winter service is procured through the current Term Maintenance Contract for Highways and Bridges 2006 to 2014.
- Environmental:** There are issues surrounding the impact of rock salt on the environment and these are addressed in the current term Highway Maintenance Contract for Highways and Bridges 2006 to 2014.
- Partnering:** None arising from this report.
- Property:** None arising from this report.
- Risk Management:** None arising from this report.
- Community Safety:** None arising from this report.
- Equalities:** A Stage 1 Equality Impact Assessment has been prepared. Where a decision is required, Policy and Communication are not able to accept your report without an EIA being completed. These should be sent to P&C along with your report and should be copied to the Principal Policy Officer (Equality & Diversity). For advice please contact Principal Policy Officer (Equality & Diversity) on Ext. 2441.

Consultation Responses

Footer to be completed by Policy & Communication

West Berkshire Council

Individual Decision

date of meeting

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Members:

Leader of Council: Councillor Graham Jones

Overview & Scrutiny Management Commission Chairman: Councillor Brian Bedwell led the OSMC review of the impact of, and response to, the severe weather experienced last winter. The commissions recommendations are addressed in this report.

Select Committee Chairman: Not applicable.

Ward Members: All Members were consulted on the draft Winter Service Plan and their comments incorporated within Appendix C of this report.

Opposition Spokesperson: Councillor Keith Woodhams.

Local Stakeholders: Various stakeholders including adjoining authorities, emergency services, Parish and Town Councils have been consulted on the plan. They were also previously consulted by the OSMC as part of its review. The draft gritting routes were displayed at the October 2010 District Parish Conference.

Officers Consulted: Mark Edwards, Gabrielle Esplin, David Holling, Jenny Graham, Carolyn Richardson

Trade Union: Not applicable.

NOTE: The section below does not need to be completed if your report will not progress beyond Corporate or Management Board.

Is this item subject to call-in.	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No: <input type="checkbox"/>
If not subject to call-in please put a cross in the appropriate box:		
The item is due to be referred to Council for final approval		<input type="checkbox"/>
Delays in implementation could have serious financial implications for the Council		<input type="checkbox"/>
Delays in implementation could compromise the Council's position		<input type="checkbox"/>
Considered or reviewed by OSC or associated Task Groups within preceding 6 months		<input type="checkbox"/>
Item is Urgent Key Decision		<input type="checkbox"/>

Supporting Information

1. Background

- 1.1 The winter of 2009-2010 in Europe was unusually cold. In January 2010, the northern half of Europe experienced one of its coldest winters with the most widespread period of snowfall and cold weather since the winter of 1981/82.
- 1.2 The Met Office recorded the severe weather of winter 2009/10 as commencing on 17 December 2009. In West Berkshire there was a period of around 3 weeks of sustained severe winter weather, most noticeable in the heavy snowfalls of 21 December 2009 and 5 January 2010 which caused traffic chaos and left many motorists stranded.
- 1.3 Temperatures across West Berkshire were often below -10°C and daytime temperatures were rarely above freezing. The combination of the heavy snow, freezing temperatures and slow thaw prolonged the difficulties that were felt across the District.
- 1.4 Due to the severity of the 2009/10 winter weather, the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission (OSMC) undertook a detailed and comprehensive review of the effects of the weather and the response to it made by the Council and other organisations. Details of the review can be found in other reports, this report focuses on the recommendations that affect the highway network.
- 1.5 For a typical winter period, around 1000 tonnes of salt is used across the district, however, in 2008/09 around 2500 tonnes was used and in 2009/10 around 4,000 tonnes was used. Details of the contractors performance and the number of salting runs undertaken during the winter are provided in Appendices A and B. Despite the severe weather conditions Volker Highways delivered a good performance returning an average score of 99.1% for the winter period. i.e. 99.1% of routes were completed within the contract time of 3 hours under normal winter conditions.
- 1.6 Following national media reporting of widespread disruption to the transport network throughout the country as a result of a national shortage of salt during the 2008/09 winter, the Government requested the UK Roads Liaison Group to investigate what actually happened and a report titled 'Lessons Learned from the Severe Weather February 2009' was published in early August 2009.

This report produced 19 recommendations that between the Government, local authorities, contractors and salt suppliers should be adopted. Where appropriate and practicable the recommendations of the report were adopted by the Council last winter and will be again for 2010/11.

2. OSMC Review

- 2.1 The OSMC held several meetings following the 2009/10 winter, interviewing a number of council officers and representatives of other organisations such as Thames Valley Police, South Central Ambulance Service, Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service, Public transport companies and several Parish/Town Council's. At the end of the review, 19 recommendations were made. 6 of these were the

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responsibility of the Head of Highways and Transport to implement and can be summarised as follows:

- Review the Winter Service Plan specifically examining gritting routes and contingency plans
- Increase the Council's salt storage to 4,000 - 5,000 tonnes
- Review the Council's salt bin policy
- Develop and implement an appropriate communication strategy
- Explore the engagement of local farmers to provide assistance with snow clearance
- Establish procedures to allow other contractors staff to be redirected to snow clearance

2.2 A brief update on each of the 6 recommendations is provided as follows:

Review the Winter Service Plan

The gritting routes have been reviewed and amended to ensure that wherever practicable the roads leading to schools and doctors surgeries are treated when snow is forecast. Whilst many of these establishments are served by roads that also form part of the Primary network it isn't possible to include them all. Details of roads added to the Primary and Secondary gritting routes as a result of this exercise are detailed in Appendix C.

The winter policy has been clarified in respect of treatment of footways during periods of heavy snow. The intention of this policy amendment is that in the event of snow being forecast, town centre footways will be treated earlier by Planning and Countryside staff and contractors which will assist with the subsequent removal of any snow accumulations. Footways leading to subways have also now been specifically included.

Salt Stock

During July 2010 the Council's salt stock was increased to 5,000 tonnes. To put this into perspective around 4,000 tonnes was used last winter. The Head of Service took action early in the year with the assistance of Volker Highways Ltd to ensure that an adequate stockpile was in place for the 2010/11 winter. In the 7 October 2010 edition of the New Civil Engineer magazine it was reported that 'nearly one in five Councils in England and Wales were still without salt they had ordered for the gritting season.' This was based on a survey by the Local Government Association.

Salt Bin Policy

During summer 2010 officers wrote to every Town and Parish Council in West Berkshire to seek views on the provision and maintenance of salt bins. After a period of 2 months, approximately 40% had responded. The review has prompted a revised policy where the Council will place out the usual number of bins this winter but if the local council would like any additional bins, they will be provided at their expense. All refilling will be managed and paid for by West Berkshire Council. A letter to this effect was sent to all Parish and Town Councils on 5 October 2010.

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Communication Strategy

To ensure adequate communications regarding the use of salt in bins, a label will be provided on every bin with appropriate advice. Information on the Council's website is also being improved this year. The Government's Winter Resilience Review, chaired by David Quarmby, is due to publish its final report before the winter. However this interim report, which makes 17 recommendations covering winter gritting, the road salt supply chain, public expectations and weather forecasting, also mentions self-help by the public. On this latter point David Quarmby has confirmed that a simple code of practice will be produced by the Government (and distributed by local authorities) setting out clear advice for self help and, if observed, guard the public against negligence claims.

Engagement of local farmers

Earlier in the year officers met with the representative of an organisation called the Thames and Kennet Machinery Ring (TKMR). TKMR is a co-operative of agricultural and allied businesses for this region and who expressed an interest in forming an arrangement whereby local farmers could be employed, in effect as sub-contractors, to the Council's main highway contractor. Discussions are still ongoing and the Winter Plan will be updated as soon as formal outcome is achieved.

Redirection of contractors staff

The arrangement whereby staff from Veolia and Waterers can be utilised to assist with snow clearing has been formalised and will be operational for this winter.

3. Operational Arrangements for Winter 2010/2011

- 3.1 The Winter Service period for 2010/2011 will operate from Monday 1 November 2010 to Sunday 2 April 2011, although this period may be extended if weather conditions dictate.
- 3.2 Precautionary salting, snow clearance, salt bin provision and the response to adverse weather shall be carried out in accordance with the policy and guidance as detailed within the Council's Highway Winter Service Plan. All decisions and actions will be made by the Council's Winter Service Duty Officer using forecast information as supplied by the Council's contracted forecaster and local roadside weather stations.
- 3.3 Operationally, the delivery of the Winter Service will be provided by the Council's current Highway Maintenance Term Contractor, Volker Highways Ltd.

4. Communications

- 4.1 A copy of the 2010/11 Highway Winter Service Plan will be issued to all Members and all Parish/Town Councils. It will also be available on the Council's website.
- 4.2 The 'Safer Driving' leaflet will also be revised to reflect the recommendations made in this report. Copies will be distributed to all Members and Parish/Town Councils and will be made available at all Council buildings with public access. The leaflet can also be downloaded from the website.
- 4.3 All salt bins will be labelled with advice on where salt/grit can be used by members of the public.

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4.4 When published by the Government the Council will make available information on self help regarding clearance of snow from footways.

5. Conclusions

5.1 The policy statements set out in the Winter Service Plan have been amended to reflect the experience of last winter and to incorporate the recommendations of the OSMC review.

5.2 The amended Primary gritting routes, which account for 38.8% of the highway network includes all A and B classified roads and some strategically important C and unclassified roads. 14 additional roads have been included on the Primary gritting routes for 2010/11 and none have been deleted. Details are shown in Appendix C. These routes will receive precautionary treatment when hoar frost and/or ice is forecast.

5.3 The amended Secondary gritting routes, which represent 19.2% of the highway network, will be treated when hoar frost and/or ice have been experienced for an unbroken period of greater than 72 hours. 15 additional roads have been included on the Secondary gritting routes for 2010/11.

5.4 A new contingency treatment network which covers 45% of the highway network, has been introduced which will be treated when hoar frost and/or ice or snow are forecast but only when there is a national shortage of salt or limited salt supplies and/or there has been a Government directive to limit salt use.

5.5 The amended policy for footways will ensure that town centre footways are treated sooner in times of snowfall.

5.6 The amended salt bin policy provides an opportunity for Parish and Town Council's to play a role in determining what self-help facilities are provided locally for communities.

5.7 The amended Road Snow Clearance Network, which accounts for 44% of the highway network ensures that as far as is reasonably practicable all bus routes and access routes to schools and doctors surgeries will be cleared of snow as a priority.

6. Recommendations

6.1 Officers recommend that the 2010/11 Highway Winter Service Plan is approved. The Plan introduces a number of amendments to previous years and should be read in conjunction with this report.

6.2 Officers recommend that a new salt bin policy is implemented whereby Parish and Town Council's can request new bins at their expense although the cost of refilling bins will be met by West Berkshire Council. These will be in addition to those normally supplied by the Council.

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Appendices

Appendix A – Contractors Performance in delivering the 2009/10 Winter Service.

Appendix B – Summary of Winter Operations 2009/10.

Appendix C – Proposed Variations to the Salting Networks.

Appendix D – List of departures from the Code of Practice for Maintenance Management
(Winter Service)

Appendix E – Recommendations from ‘Lessons from the Severe Weather February 2009’.

Contractors Performance in Delivering 2009/10 Winter Service.

Contract Performance Indicator – the percentage of gritting routes completed within the specified time.

Month	Percentage of routes completed within time	Contract requirement
November 2009	100.0 %	100.0 %
December 2009	100.0 %	100.0 %
January 2010	98.4 %	100.0 %
February 2010	98.5 %	100.0 %
March 2010	98.5 %	100.0 %
Annual average	99.1 %	100.0 %

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Appendix B

Summary of Winter Operations 2009/2010

Month	Precautionary Salting Runs on Primary Network*	Precautionary Salting Runs on Secondary Network*	Precautionary Salting Runs on the Contingency Network*	Ploughing	Wet Patches/ Spot Salting
Nov 2009	1	0	0	0	0
Dec 2009	21	9	0	3	4
Jan 2010	19	9	9	6	21
Feb 2010	22	0	0	0	3
March 2010	6	0	0	0	7
Totals (For 1 April 09 to 31 March 10)	69	18	9	9	35

Operational days from 1 April 2009 to March 2010	54	13	6	7	24
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Number of Days with Multiple Salting Runs on Primary/Secondary/Contingency Network	15
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* The figures shown relate to normal winter service conditions. For the periods 17 December and 5 January, the service was operating under emergency procedures and vehicles were constantly on the network treating roads or clearing snow. Performance during this period is therefore excluded from the above summary.

Primary Salting Route Additions in 2010/11

Name	Start	End	Parish
Greenways, Lambourn	Edwards Hill	End of Road	Lambourn
Drain Hill, Upper Lambourn	Uplands Lane	250m North	Lambourn
Unnamed Road from Malt Shovel Lane, Upper Lambourn	Malt Shovel Lane	End of Road	Lambourn
Unnamed Road from High Street, Upper Lambourn	High Street	End of Road	Lambourn
Weavers Lane/Folly Road, Inkpen	Craven Road	Post Office Road	Inkpen
Kintbury Road, Inkpen	Post Office Road	Blandys Hill	Kintbury
Post Office Road, Inkpen	Kintbury Road	Unnamed Road	Inkpen
Bishops Green, Greenham	A339	District Boundary	Greenham
Brimpton Road, Nr Tadley	B3051	District Boundary	Brimpton
Stephens Road, Mortimer	Victoria Road	West End Road	Mortimer
High Street, Thatcham	The Broadway	A4	Thatcham
Pincents Kiln, Calcot	A4	A4	Tilehurst
Dorking Way, Calcot	A4	Charrington Road	Holybrook
Water Street, Hampstead Norreys	Newbury Hill	Unnamed Road	Hampstead Norreys

Primary Salting Route Removals in 2010/11

Name	Start	End	Parish
Nil			

Secondary Salting Route Additions in 2010/11

Name	Start	End	Parish
Cross Lane, Beech Hill	Beech Hill Road	Bloomfield Hatch Road	Beech Hill
Trowes Lane, Beech Hill	Beech Hill Road	District Boundary	Beech Hill
Shortheath Lane, Sulhamstead	Hollybush Lane	Island Farm Road	Sulhamstead
Bannister Road, Burghfield	Hollybush Lane	Abbots Road	Sulhamstead
Cods Hill, Woolhampton	Woolhampton Hill	A4	Woolhampton
Urquart Road, Thatcham	Ilkley Way	Station Road	Thatcham
Bowling Green Road	Gordon Road	Tull Way	Thatcham
Mayrick Drive/Normay Rise, Newbury	Villiers Way	Glendale Ave	Newbury
Bartlemy Road, Newbury	Valley Road	A343 Andover Road	Newbury
Rowan Drive, Newbury	Almond Ave	Almond Ave	Newbury

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Appendix C cont'd

Dolman Road, Newbury	Maple Crescent	Rowan Drive	Newbury
Unnamed Road, Winterbourne	Winterbourne Road	Wantage Road	Winterbourne
Hoe Benham Lane, Hoe Benham	A4 Bath Road	Baydon Road	Wickham
Oxford Street, Eddington	A4 Charnham Street	A338 Wantage Road	Hungerford
Atherton Road, Hungerford	Church Way	Atherton Crescent	Hungerford

Secondary Salting Route Removals in 2010/11

Name	Start	End	Parish
Weavers Lane/Folly Road, Inkpen	Craven Road	Post Office Road	Inkpen
Kintbury Road, Inkpen	Post Office Road	Blandys Hill	Kintbury
Atherton Crescent	Atherton Road	A338 Salisbury Road	Hungerford
Straight Lane, Easton	Newbury Road	Ermin Street	Lambourn
New Road Hill, Midgham	Carbinswood Lane	A4 Bath Road	Midgham
Dorking Way, Calcot	A4 Bath Road	Charrington Road	Holybrook
Goldcrest Way, Tilehurst	City Road	End of Road	Tilehurst

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Appendix D

Departures from the Code of Practice for Maintenance Management Recommendations for Winter Service

Ref	Description	Adopted by WBC	Comments	Reason for not adopting recommendation
1	Authority to formally approve and adopt a policy for its Winter Service.	Yes	To be approved by Individual Decision 24 November 2010	
2	Authority to formally approve, adopt and publish in consultation with others a Winter Service Operational Plan.	Yes	Distributed to : Council and Parish Members Adjoining Councils Highway Agency and Agents Emergency Services Media Organisations Motoring Organisations Network Rail	
3	Authority to define Primary and Secondary treatment routes for carriageways based upon the road hierarchy and other local factors.	Yes	Precautionary Salting Route Plan	
4	Authority to define treatment routes for footways based upon footway hierarchy and other local factors.	Yes	Winter Service Plan Appendix I	The Council only salts specified sections of the footway network during prolonged hazardous conditions.
5	Authority to define treatment routes for promoted schemes such as 'Safe Routes to School' and 'School Bus Routes' based upon the general maintenance hierarchy but adapted to take in to account local factors identified.	No		The Winter Service should be co-ordinated to ensure that route planning and treatment regimes meet the road user's reasonable expectations for consistency. . Precautionary salting of isolated lengths of footway on a 'safe route to school' would be inconsistent with this policy and could potentially present a greater hazard.

Footer to be completed by Policy & Communication

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Appendix D cont'd

Departures from the Code of Practice for Maintenance Management Recommendations for Winter Service cont'd

Ref	Description	Adopted by WBC	Comments	Reason for not adopting recommendation
6	Authority to co-ordinate and co-operate with adjoining local and strategic authorities to ensure that route planning and treatment regimes meet road users' reasonable. Expectations for consistency and value for money	Yes	Several meetings held with adjoining authorities. Winter Service Plan issued to all adjoining Councils.	
7	Authority to produce and publish a non-technical summary of its proposed Winter Service Operational Plan including plans of treated network together with guidance on safe use of network.	Yes	'Safer Driving this Winter on West Berkshire Roads' leaflet published and circulated through public offices and libraries.	
8	Authority to establish arrangements for information to be made available to local radio, police etc.	Yes	Winter Service Plan Appendix N	
9	Authority to have an annual review of its Winter Service Operational Plan in consultation with users and key stakeholders to take in to account changing local circumstances.	Yes	A comprehensive review was undertaken by the Council's OSMC following the severe winter of 2009/10. Winter Service Plan issued to all Members, Parish Councils, adjoining local authorities & emergency services. All requests for salting received over season are reviewed for possible changes to routes.	
10	Authority to take full advantage of weather forecasting information services.	Yes	West Berkshire Council makes use of information from roadside sensors and detailed site specific forecasts issued by its contracted forecaster in its decision making process.	

Footer to be completed by Policy & Communication

West Berkshire Council

Individual Decision

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Appendix D cont'd

Departures from the Code of Practice for Maintenance Management Recommendations for Winter Service cont'd

Ref	Description	Adopted by WBC	Comments	Reason for not adopting recommendation
11	Authority to annually review arrangements for delivering its Winter Service in consultation with all service partners, consultants and contractors to ensure clear terms of reference for the provision and management of all resources, Health and Safety and insurances.	Yes	Contractual requirement with Term Contractor Volker Highways Ltd.	
12	Authority to undertake annual technical review (including calibration) of all equipment, vehicles and plant prior to the start of the Winter Service season.	Yes	Contractual requirement with Term Contractor Volker Highways Ltd for gritting vehicles. Roadside weather stations annually serviced and calibrated by Vaisala	
13	Authority to annually review training and development needs for all personnel who deal directly with implementing Winter Service, in order that any necessary training can be provided prior to the start of the Winter Service season.	Yes	Formal training of WBC staff undertaken in February 2009 – 3 staff are now accredited City & Guilds Winter Service Supervisors. All Volker Highway operatives have City & Guilds 6157 accreditation (superseded by 6159). 2 staff are now accredited City & Guilds Winter Service Supervisors.	

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Appendix D cont'd

Departures from the Code of Practice for Maintenance Management Recommendations for Winter Service cont'd

Ref	Description	Adopted by WBC	Comments	Reason for not adopting recommendation
14	Authority should manage the purchase, storage and use of de-icing materials within the principles of Best Value, sustainability and consortia purchasing.	Yes	Contractual requirement with Term Contractor Volker Highways Ltd.	
15	Authority to hold comprehensive and accurate records of all Winter Service activities. The use of data loggers should be considered for this process.	Yes	All records collected and stored by Volker Highways on behalf WBC. All gritting vehicles have data loggers and these are currently being replaced with real-time uni-directional GPS technology.	

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Recommendations from 'Lessons Learned From Severe Weather February 2009'

Ref	Recommendation	Comments
1	Highway authorities should review their approach to climate change and in particular their resilience to prolonged cold weather	This is addressed in the WBC Service Risk Register however last winter was the worst in almost 30 years.
2	Highway authorities and salt suppliers should treat the supply of salt as a service rather than a simple commodity purchase.	Volker Highways Ltd (the Council's Contractor) has restocking levels agreed with salt supplier.
3	Improved communications between salt suppliers and highway authorities should be encouraged, including the establishment of supplier based user groups.	Suggest that salt suppliers are invited along to existing local Winter Service user groups.
4	Highway authorities should broaden their approach to salt supply. For example, establishing framework contracts with more than one supplier.	Informal framework currently exists but needs to be developed and formalised between Volker Highways Ltd and the salt suppliers.
5	Highway authorities should consider whether efficiency benefits can be obtained from collaborative salt procurement and should consider ways to improve the management of risk between salt suppliers and themselves, for example, longer contracts, performance contracts with minimum guaranteed purchase and supply, and contracts that include supply of salt and investment in storage facilities.	Volker Highways Ltd to discuss possible changes with group purchasing manager.
6	Highway authorities and salt suppliers should consider jointly whether supplier owned salt stocks can be held on a short or long term basis in a number of widely distributed locations around the country. A joint approach may include agreements such as purchase of some or all stock by the end of a season or provision of land.	Discussions have been held and are ongoing with TVP and adjoining Council's regarding sharing of stockpiles.

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Appendix E cont'd

Recommendations from 'Lessons Learned From Severe Weather February 2009' cont'd

Ref	Recommendation	Comments
7	Highway authorities should explore the potential for sharing of depots and salt stocks.	WBC currently share Chieveley depot with the Highways Agency and their Contractor Enterprise Mouchel. An informal agreement is in place for the sharing of salt stocks held in the depot.
8	Highway authorities should consider, consult on and formally adopt local service standards for resilience of their winter service in terms of number of days continuous severe conditions salting on a defined minimum winter network for the overall winter period and the core winter period. Highway authorities should then review their pre-season salt stocks and in season stocking arrangements to ensure they have sufficient salt to deliver their locally defined standard. In considering appropriate service standards, at least 6 days resilience would represent sensible good practice for determining the number runs during the core winter period.	<p>A Contingency Salting network has been developed and forms part of the 2010/11 Highway Winter Service Plan.</p> <p>The proposed network is approximately 360km in length comprising strategic routes including bus routes and routes to schools and hospitals.</p> <p>The Council currently holds a minimum salt stock of 500t. During times of severe snow /snow accumulations/national salt shortage, the Council is able to carryout 2 runs per day over a period of 6 days.</p>
9	The Department for Transport should consider whether to reduce overall demand for salt at critical times by asking the Highways Agency to hold a reserve above that which it needs to meet its service standards.	Not applicable.
10	Highway authorities should review their winter service plans and ensure that there is appropriate consultation and co-ordination with other highway authorities, key public services and other stakeholders to ensure well co-ordinated plans, and consider whether collaboration with other services would improve services for the public.	<p>WBC annually reviews its policy and re-issues it in October along with a revised information leaflet.</p> <p>Details of all bus routes to be obtained from WBC Transport team to enable prioritisation of those to be salted.</p>

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Appendix E cont'd

Recommendations from 'Lessons Learned From Severe Weather February 2009' cont'd

Ref	Recommendation	Comments
11	The UK Roads Liaison Group should develop recommendations in the report 'Lessons learned from Severe Weather February 2009' which are relevant to local highway authorities in the form of complementary guidance to 'Well Maintained Highways', the UKRLG current Code of Practice for Highway Maintenance Management, and publish alongside the Code and existing complementary guidance in time to influence winter service plans for winter 2010/11.	Not applicable.
12	The Department for Transport should publish an information leaflet for highway authority elected members and senior managers on preparation for severe weather conditions.	Not available at this time.
13	Highway authorities should prepare contingency winter service plans for severe weather conditions which include possibilities such as salting a minimum winter network and reducing salt usage. Highway authorities should aim to agree plans in advance with other highway authorities and key public services such as hospitals and public transport providers. There should be a co-ordinated approach to implementing minimum winter networks across adjacent highway authorities.	See recommendation number 8.
14	Highway authorities should consider whether collaborative arrangements such as shared services, lead authority arrangements and collaborative service procurement would provide an effective and value for money approach to increasing winter service resilience.	<p>An existing agreement already exists between the 6 Berkshire unitary authorities for the joint purchase of weather forecasting and maintenance of road side weather stations.</p> <p>West Berkshire is unique compared to the other 5 Berkshire Unitary authorities in that it is predominantly rural and is much larger in size.</p>

Footer to be completed by Policy & Communication

West Berkshire Council

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Appendix E cont'd

Recommendations from 'Lessons Learned From Severe Weather February 2009' cont'd

Ref	Recommendation	Comments
15	The Department for Transport should make preparations to enable the rapid introduction of derogation against driver's hours regulations for specific categories of vehicles and drivers if necessary in times of severe adverse weather conditions.	Not applicable.
16	The possibility of a future government run Salt Cell should only be considered as a matter of a last resort. Nevertheless, government should consider developing a contingency plan for any future Salt Cell to be used in extremis. The plan should include development of clear terms of reference, the mechanism for triggering initiation, a review of membership to at least include devolved administration, clear data requirements and clarity of the surrounding legal position.	Not applicable.
17	Highway authorities should explore the potential for mutual aid in salt supply and other aspects of winter service and should make contingency arrangements in advance.	Volker Highways Ltd is able to source alternative salt supplies from their other highway contracts in Medway and London. Salt was obtained from the Highways Agency last year from their strategic stock pile however salt can often be 'borrowed' from their Chieveley stock.

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Severe Winter Weather Guidance for West Berkshire Schools October 2010

In 2009 and 2010 schools in West Berkshire suffered the impact of severe winter weather. Guidance has been developed to assist schools, and the community, to reduce the impact in the future.

Schools are expected to remain open in all but the most extreme circumstances. Factors such as site size, slope and spread, the access to the site, the distance of staff from the site and the variation of weather patterns in different areas making travelling unpredictable will need to be factored in. The decision to close a school, restrict opening hours or limit pupil attendance should not be taken lightly. Decisions are best taken locally by those who are closest to the situation and should always take into account a balance of risks against disruption to pupil learning, and always put the safety for pupils and staff to the fore.

It is recognised that Headteachers might have fewer staff to supervise pupils on days of bad weather. Schools should plan for how, if they have fewer staff available in the short term, they will continue to supervise pupils and deliver as much of the curriculum as possible.

When to take the decision to close the school is important; the benefits of an early decision to provide parents with enough time to arrange childcare and avoid unnecessary journeys must be balanced against any likelihood that a bad situation may not result as initially feared. If weather forecasts make it likely that a school will not be able to open the next day it may be appropriate to take a decision the previous afternoon.

Closing at short notice may cause difficulties for families if they need to make arrangements for children to be cared for during the school day. In some cases this may result in loss of earnings, loss of employment and / or have a detrimental impact on vulnerable pupils. Any children at the school should remain there until the Headteacher is satisfied that appropriate alternative arrangements have been made.

Advance planning and preparation can help to mitigate the impact of severe weather. Whenever possible, work should be planned for pupils to do at home should a school have to close. Headteachers should consider training requirements for staff on the use of learning platforms and websites to ensure that work can be set for pupils during a prolonged closure.

Additional Guidance to Help Prepare for Severe Weather Conditions

Appendix 1 - Preparing the Premises

Appendix 2 - Planning and Organisation to Enable Opening of School

Appendix 3 - Communications

Appendix 4 - Checklist

Appendix 5 – Generic Risk Assessment for Snow/Ice Clearance

Key Contacts

Mark Lewis	Education Assets Manager	01635 519038
Sue Hornblow	School Leadership and Management Officer	01635 519727
Carolyn Richardson	Civil Contingencies Manager	01635 519105
Property Helpdesk		01635 519869
Derek Martin	Senior Health and Safety Advisor - schools	01635 519174
Fiona Simmonds	Children and Young People Asset Operations Team Leader	01635 519366



Appendix 1 – Preparing the Premises

To prepare your premises for severe weather conditions, Headteachers should ensure the following actions have been taken:

- Sufficient fuel is stocked - allow for increased usage during extreme cold weather. Plan a system for regular monitoring and ordering, allowing for delay in delivery times.
- Boilers are fully serviced.
- Thermostat is set to **at least** ten degrees to avoid pipes freezing.
- Radiators are bled periodically through the heating season to remove air locks that prevent water circulation.
- Before leaving for any breaks ensure the system is set up correctly and you are familiar with the working of your heating controls.
- At times of extreme cold the heating system is monitored on a regular basis, especially during periods where the school is not in occupation.
- Before returning to school check to ensure the heating system is working effectively. If a fault is discovered contact your maintenance contractor immediately to rectify the problem prior to school starting.
- Familiarisation with the water system – be aware of how to turn off the water and who to call in cases of emergency. Test plumbing shut off valves to check they work and prevent them from seizing.
- Sufficient insulation around your water tank(s), loft and external water pipes.
- Drain down outside taps and insulate any exposed pipe work.
- Sufficient salt/sand is stocked appropriately. Plan to manage stocks allowing for increased usage and delay in delivery times.
- Remove rubbish from roofs and valleys - Drink cans, plastic bags and balls are often the cause of blockages, floods and ingress into the building.
- Gutters and rainwater pipes are clear.
- Ground drains are cleared to avoid flooding.
- Check roof is fully watertight. Replace any slipped or missing tiles.
- Masonry is cleared of any vegetation. Roots will cause frost damage as well as damp penetration.
- Check outside lights are operational.

Appendix 2 - Planning and Organisation to Enable Opening of School

To prepare for opening when there are severe weather conditions, Headteachers should ensure the following actions have been taken and systems are in place.

- A system to regularly check weather forecasts via news and websites. A designated member of staff could check the Met Office website on:
<http://www.metoffice.gov.uk/index.html>
- Monitor weather forecasts - **prevention is key**. Action is required whenever freezing temperatures or snow are forecast.
- Ensure staff travel distances are mapped and a plan is in place for designating staff who can get in by walking, short drive (five miles) / long drive (10 miles) / very long drive (10 miles +). Take into consideration disability, nervous/new drivers, four-wheel drive and other factors that affect ease of journey. This plan will inform any decision to open the school with expected availability of staff. There should be good reason for non-arrival of staff but the decision is ultimately theirs. Staff remaining at home should have evidence of work related activity. **Please remember, you cannot direct a member of staff to drive in conditions they consider to be dangerous.**
- If possible, arrange for staff to accommodate each other locally in severe conditions if return home is impossible.
- Obtain a list of volunteers that would be prepared to offer assistance in the event of severe weather.
- A risk assessment is completed of the hazards associated with snow and ice on the school site. Identify procedures to be implemented, when and by whom. All staff should be familiar with, and be able to follow, these procedures (see Appendix 5). This assessment should be updated and reviewed regularly and before use.
- Please be aware that snow and ice increases the potential load on unsupported cantilevered canopies. There were instances of collapse during snow in 2010. If you have this type of canopy ensure that you do not use the area below during periods following heavy snow until they have been independently assessed.
- The following measures may form part of your local procedures, where appropriate to your site and circumstances:
 - Identify in advance all key routes and areas to ensure safe access and operation of the school. Show these on a site plan and communicate the designated routes to all users.
 - These identified routes and areas should be treated with salt/grit and this should be repeated at appropriate intervals where temperatures remain below freezing.
 - Following your assessment of the site those areas deemed to be more affected by snow and ice, e.g. shortcuts, slopes, areas in shade or wet should be restricted and

all persons on the site are made aware. Ideally signs/cones/tape would be used to identify the hazard.

- Where time and resources permit other areas and pathways to entrances and between buildings should be cleared and gritted.
 - Ensure levels of supervision are appropriate for the conditions at break and lunchtime.
 - Supplies of salt/grit should be stored appropriately.
 - Gritting should be carried out when frost, ice or snow is forecast or when walkways are likely to be damp or wet and the floor temperatures are at or below freezing. The best time is early in the evening before frost settles; if that is not possible use early in the morning before employees arrive. Salt does not work instantly; it needs sufficient time to dissolve into the moisture on the floor. Rock salt starts to become ineffective at -6 °C.
- Consider training requirements for staff on use of learning platforms and websites to ensure work can be set for pupils during a prolonged closure.
 - If staff remain at home they should have evidence of work related activity.

Liability for Snow Clearance

The approved code of practice which supports the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations states that "arrangements should be made to minimise risks from snow and ice. This may involve gritting, snow clearing and closure of some routes.....".

WBC includes volunteers in its liability insurance programme, that is for both Public and Employers Liability Insurance. We are covered for our legal liability as defined, both for injury caused to them, for which we are legally liable and injury / damage caused by them, for which we become legally liable, providing that a suitable and sufficient risk assessment has been carried out to include these people.

It is important to complete a suitable and sufficient risk assessment – See Appendix 5. Ice slippages and back injuries from clearing snow are likely to be the greatest concerns. When areas are cleared, an assessment is still required to ensure that it is safe to open on the day.

Ultimately, if **all reasonable precautions** have been taken then we will significantly reduce the possibility of a claim. Bear in mind that claimants in civil action only have to prove their case on the balance of probabilities. All hazardous areas **must** be put out of commission. There has in recent years only been one successful claim against the Authority within the school environment for slippage on ice where prior knowledge was not acted upon.

Health and Safety legislation provides a duty to clear ice and snow and also to make sensible decisions about opening depending on the safety for the entire site. If a claim is made, the Council has the expertise to defend it providing all reasonable precautions are taken, such as a suitable and sufficient risk assessment, safe working practices, frequent rest breaks and the provision of suitable equipment.

Appendix 3 - Communications

At times of severe weather there will be occasions when you need to communicate with parents, governors, staff and West Berkshire Council. Should you need to close the school or open with restricted hours. Headteachers should ensure the following actions have been taken.

- A system is in place to be able to make a timely decision. A decision between 6am and 7am is preferred or, in extended adverse weather conditions, the day before where possible.
- Decisions to close or restrict opening hours to be communicated by e-mail to: schoolclosures@westberks.gov.uk Details are required of the reason for the closure and any amended opening hours. This is the most effective means of notification at times of severe weather and helps keep other phone lines clear. For other emergencies and temporary closures please use the guidance on Critical Incidents.
- Ensure any notification to WBC includes details of any public examinations, or critical school events for the students, due to take place.
- Be aware that the information provided to WBC will be used to update the WBC website and notify council officers and contractors, including transport services. You may wish to inform your parents of this.
- Ensure you have a plan for communicating with parents and staff. Recent experience shows text and e-mail systems are effective.
- Contact local radio stations, as per the details supplied by WBC annually in the Autumn term. Ensure your parents are aware of which radio stations you will be using.
- Ensure you are able to update your school website.
- Contact WBC on 01635 519727 should you have any queries or require assistance. For emergencies please notify the Education Critical Incident Team on 01635 519027 during office hours or 01635 42161 Out of Hours. This Out of Hours number should only be used for Emergencies, not to notify school closures during periods of severe weather.
- Once a decision to re-open the school is made please ensure you e-mail schoolclosures@westberks.gov.uk This will trigger the updating of your school status on the West Berkshire website.

Appendix 4 - Checklists

Winter Property Maintenance Preparation

Action	Completed By	Date
Boiler Serviced.		
Loft and pipe insulation checked.		
Heating set up for holiday correct and thermostat set to a minimum of 10 degrees.		
Fuel levels checked, monitoring and ordering system in place.		
Radiators bled.		
Plumbing shut off valves located and working.		
System in place for monitoring heating during periods of extreme cold.		
Outside taps drained down and exposed pipes insulated as required.		
Gutters, rainwater pipes and drains checked and cleared as necessary.		
Outside lights working.		
Vegetation removed from masonry.		
Plentiful stock of salt/grit.		

Winter Weather Planning and Organisation Checklist

Action	Completed By	Date
Risk assessment completed for Snow/Ice clearance.		
Site plan identifies routes/areas to be cleared and those to have restricted access. Who will salt/grit and when?		
System in place to monitor temperature and weather forecast.		
Who will salt/grit and when?		

Action	Completed By	Date
List of volunteers available for snow clearance and 4x4 transportation.		
System in place to monitor safety of canopies.		
Can staff work from home and provide work for pupils? Any additional training required has been provided.		
Pupils know to access websites for work during periods of closure.		

Winter Weather Communication Checklist

Action	Completed By	Date
System in place to make early decision to close/open school or restrict hours.		
System in place to communicate with parents / carers, staff and Governors.		
Who will notify schoolclosures@westberks.gov.uk ?		
System in place to notify radio stations. Parents/carers and staff know which radio station/s you will be using. Code word for notification is known.		
System in place for updating your own website. Including any training required.		
Inform WBC of special circumstances including public examinations.		
Once decision taken to reopen school notify schoolclosures@westberks.gov.uk , update own website and notify parents/carers.		
Know who to call for additional assistance.		

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Appendix 5 – Generic Risk Assessment for Snow/Ice Clearance

Version 1.3

Record of Risk Assessment.	Activity, procedure or workplace being assessed: Snow and Ice Generic Risk Assessment Template	Date:
	Assessed by:	Service: Ref.

Stage 1		Stage 4			Stage 5			Stage 6			Stage 7			9
List significant hazards and effects <i>Examples - Sharp edges: cut or abrasion. Slips and trips: impact, cut or bruised. Structure collapsing: persons trapped, crushed. Objects falling: persons cut, bruised, fracture.</i>		Describe hazard control measures in place. <i>Examples - Electrical equipment is tested and registered. All staff are given Manual Handling awareness training. Only named (and trained) persons are to clear photocopier. Covers are in place over any cables crossing walkways.</i>			Likelihood	Severity	Risk Rating	Identify any further controls required. <i>Examples: Devise & issue a 'good housekeeping policy'. Plan to replace unsuitable furniture in next financial year. Provide a safe means to reach the highest shelves. Ensure staff are made aware of roles and responsibilities.</i>			Likelihood	Severity	Risk Rating	Action dates set by Service Head are:
					L	S	L x S				L	S	L x S	
1	Snow and ice on school property	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All staff are trained/made aware of WBC policy/procedures for Severe Winter Weather for schools. 												
2	Snow and ice on school property	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All staff are made aware of the limits of the property, including restrictions on shared premises and any special features such as public rights of way, key pedestrian routes etc. 												
3	Snow and ice on school property	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Person(s) identified who will be responsible for the management of snow and ice clearance and they are suitably briefed and trained as required. 												
4	Snow and ice on school property	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Site assessment carried out to identify areas and routes required to be cleared to ensure safe access and operation of the school and those areas and routes where restrictions should be applied; All hazardous areas must be put out of commission; Site assessment is communicated and made available to all staff, pupils, contractors and visitors; Cleared areas are clearly designated for any pedestrians or vehicle access and are frequently reviewed for any changes in condition; Ensure levels of supervision are appropriate for the conditions at break and lunchtime. 												
5	Vulnerable persons/groups that may use your premises	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Risk assessment carried out to establish whether any special measures/precautions are required. 												

Appendix 5 – Generic Risk Assessment for Snow/Ice Clearance

Version 1.3

6	Snow and ice on school property	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appropriate amount of rock salt and/or grit is suitably stored in practical locations and is included in CoSHH assessment. 							
7	Lone Working	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Snow clearance may involve someone working on their own. Activity is covered in lone working arrangements. 							
8	Snow and ice clearance may involve volunteers, such as local community groups, parents and local residents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School appointed person is in control of the snow clearing process and briefed on how and where it is to be completed; School appointed person is suitability trained; All 'volunteers' are suitably briefed; All 'volunteers' are able/competent to undertake tasks and training administered as necessary. 							
9	Work Equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A competent member of staff to visually inspect and assess the materials and tools that are being used as to whether they are in good condition, fit for purpose and appropriate for the task in hand. 							
10	Manual Handling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manual handling training provided as required 							
11	Safety and Welfare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that the overall wellbeing and physical capabilities of the person(s) clearing the site is sufficient for the task in hand; Ensure clothing and footwear is suitable for the conditions and task in hand; Ensure suitable Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is provided, such as gloves, high-visibility jackets, eye protection, etc; Monitor weather forecast and ensure weather appropriate for the duration of the task; Ensure the time spent on activities is necessarily limited to a reasonable duration; 							
12	Slips, Trips and Falls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure footwear is suitable for the conditions and task in hand; Ensure work areas are kept tidy and work equipment is stored safely when not in use; Monitor water trodden into the buildings by staff and pupils to ensure that slips do not happen. (Use of mats in entranceways) 							
13	Accidents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure ability to contact emergency services; Ensure a suitably trained first aider is available. 							

Appendix 5 – Generic Risk Assessment for Snow/Ice Clearance

Version 1.3

14	Vehicle / Pedestrian interaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that vehicles are kept separate from snow and ice clearance work by restricting access; Provision of high-visibility jackets. 											
15													
16													
17													
18													
19													
20													

Stage 2: Indicate if additional assessments req. Manual handling DSE COSHH PPE Noise Fire Asbestos Other: _____

Stage 3: Indicate who could be harmed as a consequence of any of the above hazards?
 WBC staff Public / Visitors Cleaners / Security Contractors Other ↓
 Pregnant person(s) Disabled / Elderly / Infirm Young Persons (under 18) Children (under 16)

Likelihood		Severity	
4	Almost certain	4	Substantial: Major RIDDOR.
3	Likely	3	Moderate: Over 3-day injury.
2	Unlikely	2	Minor: Non RIDDOR.
1	Highly unlikely	1	Trivial: No significant injury.

Severity	4	4 Moderate	8 Substantial	12 Intolerable	16 Intolerable
	3	3 Tolerable	6 Moderate	9 Substantial	12 Intolerable
	2	2 Trivial	4 Tolerable	6 Moderate	8 Substantial
	1	1 Trivial	2 Trivial	3 Tolerable	4 Moderate
		1	2	3	4
Likelihood					

Risk classification in action	
Intolerable	Cease this work immediately. Make task / area safe. Inform Service Head <i>now</i> .
Substantial	Not tolerable. Allocate suitable resources directly. Seek professional advice.
Moderate	Start or continue only if additional controls introduced within specified time.
Tolerable	Resume, but continue to monitor to ensure existing controls are maintained.
Trivial	No further action required (i.e. existing safety controls are satisfactory).

Head of Service responsibilities:

Ensure target dates are set as required (Stage 9). If target date method not used, what alternative approach is taken?

Ensure assessment viewed by SMT (or equivalent), plus Safety Committee. If not, what alternative approach is taken?

How are Stage 3 persons informed of above hazards and controls in a way understandable to them? Paper copy Soft copy 1 to 1 Group mtg. Other ↓

Appendix 5 – Generic Risk Assessment for Snow/Ice Clearance

Version 1.3

Title: Risk Assessment Record.	Form reference: H&S 006 – 02a	Version: 5	Date: June 2006
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Title of Report:	Scrutiny review into Supporting Small Schools
Report to be considered by:	Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission
Date of Meeting:	2 November 2010

Purpose of Report: To outline to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission the results of the investigation into the additional support that can be provided to small schools in West Berkshire.

Recommended Action: That the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission endorses the recommendations for the consideration of the Executive.

Reason for decision to be taken: To establish a West Berkshire position on small schools

The proposals contained in this report will help to achieve the following Council Plan Priority(ies):

- CPP1 – Support our communities through the economic downturn** – to alleviate the impact on different communities and individuals who find themselves out of work and/or disadvantaged
- CPP2 – Raise levels of educational achievement** – improving school performance levels
- CPP3 – Reduce crime and the fear of crime**

The proposals will also help achieve the following Council Plan Theme(s):

- CPT1 - Better Roads and Transport**
- CPT2 - Thriving Town Centres**
- CPT3 - Affordable Housing**
- CPT4 - High Quality Planning**
- CPT5 - Cleaner and Greener**
- CPT6 - Vibrant Villages**
- CPT7 - Safer and Stronger Communities**
- CPT8 - A Healthier Life**
- CPT9 - Successful Schools and Learning**
- CPT10 - Promoting Independence**
- CPT11 - Protecting Vulnerable People**
- CPT12 - Including Everyone**
- CPT13 - Value for Money**
- CPT14 - Effective People**
- CPT15 - Putting Customers First**
- CPT16 - Excellent Performance Management**

Portfolio Member Details	
Name & Telephone No.:	Councillor Barbara Alexander - Tel (01635) 201320

E-mail Address:	balexander@westberks.gov.uk
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Stronger Communities Select Committee Chairman	
Name & Telephone No.:	Councillor Irene Neill – Tel (0118) 9712671
E-mail Address:	ineill@westberks.gov.uk

Contact Officer Details	
Name:	Ian Pearson
Job Title:	Head of Education Service
Tel. No.:	01635 519729
E-mail Address:	ipearson@westberks.gov.uk

Implications

Policy:	This report will help establish a Small Schools Policy
Financial:	No direct financial consequences If there are any financial implications contained within this report this section must be signed off by a West Berkshire Group Accountant. Please note that the report cannot be accepted by Policy and Communication unless this action has been undertaken.
Personnel:	No direct implications
Legal/Procurement:	N/A
Property:	Consideration of condition issues and support for school projects
Risk Management:	Ensuring effective education for all pupils
Equalities Impact Assessment:	None For advice please contact Principal Policy Officer (Equalities) on Ext. 2441.
Corporate Board's Recommendation:	N/A to be completed after the Corporate Board meeting

Executive Report Summary

1. Introduction

- 1.1 On the 16th February 2010 the Stronger Communities Select Committee agreed a review of small primary schools in West Berkshire with an emphasis on how they might be supported.
- 1.2 In doing so, the Select Committee agreed the following terms of reference:
- To review the leadership, governance, funding and performance of small schools in West Berkshire, in partnership with schools and the Oxford CE Diocese.
 - Small schools in the scope of the Review are those with a roll of one hundred pupils or less in 2008 and/or 2009 (January census). The Review will consider demographics, value for money, asset issues and the contribution schools make to the communities they serve.
 - In addition, the Review will look at successful and innovative ways other authorities support small schools in their areas.
- 1.3 Sixteen primary schools (including one “infant”) were identified as being within the scope of the Review. These schools, their pupil numbers, net capacity/surplus places, forecasts and unit costs are set out in Appendix A.
- 1.4 Membership of the Review Group is attached at Appendix B.
- 1.5 The Review Group met five times as set out below:
- 26th February 2010
 - 26th March 2010
 - 7th May 2010
 - 21st July 2010
 - 17th September 2010

2. Key Areas of Review

- 2.1 The Review focussed on a number of key areas which are summarised under the following headings:
- Performance
 - Catchment/Demography/School Organisation
 - Finance
 - Leadership and Governance
 - Accommodation
 - Community Contribution/Links

- Local Authority initiatives and New Models

3. Performance

- 3.1 A number of studies have been conducted in England and overseas looking at the perceived advantage of small schools in achieving better attainment results. However, research has so far failed to identify a clear and consistent relationship between school size and performance.
- 3.2 Interestingly, it appears to be class size and organisation above school size that has the potential to influence outcomes. While small schools do not necessarily mean small classes, of necessity they more often than not operate mixed age groups.
- 3.3 For assessment of performance to be meaningful it is important to look at a high level of aggregation across several years in order to create a big enough data pool from which to draw conclusions that are statistically robust. Small school performance is particularly affected by individual pupils within small cohorts (e.g. SEN), movement of teachers, changes of head and funding. All this makes it difficult to draw conclusions about the role played by school size alone on overall performance at each key stage. This is equally true of attendance and exclusions, which tend to be individual pupil circumstance lead, with no obvious pattern other than anecdotally, it can appear disproportionate.
- 3.4 There is no doubt the quality of leadership and teaching/learning are the main determining factors when it comes to academic performance. This is borne out by an analysis of West Berkshire data when comparing a number of key indicators at different Key Stages. A Key Stage 2 analysis of results showing two levels of progress from KS1 and Level 4 outcomes over a three-year period comparing performance with the West Berkshire and national averages was undertaken. This showed conclusively that small schools were performing well, with one or two exceptions where results remain stubbornly below the West Berkshire average.
- 3.5 The importance of the Headteacher was underlined by inspection evidence and in small schools Heads can have more of a direct influence on the quality of teaching and standards achieved because they nearly always have a teaching commitment and can lead by example.
- 3.6 The most recent Ofsted and Anglican inspection outcomes for the sixteen schools within the Review are attached as Appendices C₁ and C₂.
- 3.7 Another area that was reviewed was transition from small primary schools to much larger secondary schools. The evidence available indicated that there was no discernable difference in pupils either settling in or their academic performance.
- 3.8 Previous national research (LGA/NFER) has raised the issue of whether small schools can provide a broad curriculum and give pupils the same opportunities as larger schools in terms of experiences, resources and specialisms, particularly with the limited cohort sizes. Evidence from West Berkshire schools' Ofsted inspection reports does not support this hypothesis. In terms of breadth, most small schools have developed close working relationships with other schools to share experiences, including through the West Berkshire Small Schools Federation.

3.9 Successful small schools remain very popular with parents with advantages cited including high standards, good behaviour, positive ethos, family atmosphere, closeness to parents and importance to the local community/village.

3.10 While the Review Group felt it important that this report should remain uncluttered from the wealth of performance data reviewed, an example of school performance (Key Stage 2 results) is summarised in Appendix D.

4. Catchment/Demography/School Organisation

4.1 The Review Group looked at the location of small schools in West Berkshire, their catchment areas, secondary feeder links, roll numbers and pupil forecasts.

4.2 Of the sixteen schools reviewed five had a roll average of less than fifty over the last five years and one school an average of below forty. Individual school data is set out in Appendices A and E.

4.3 The Group also looked at where pupils on roll actually live, to identify those travelling in and out of catchment areas, so providing a view on popularity and travel arrangements. Parental choice plays an important part in the fortunes of small schools with some drawing in significant numbers of pupils from outside their area. Key Stage results and Ofsted reports can greatly influence the attractiveness of an individual school.

4.4 Consideration was given to size in relation to educational viability and whether there should be a minimum pupil number. It was also pointed out that numbers in year groups should also be taken into account. It was agreed that number on roll could be one element, amongst others that could trigger an organisational review, arrived at establishing viability and any additional support required.

4.5 Should reorganisation be considered this would need to take into account strategic place planning and the consequences of closure e.g. catchment realignment, travel costs, pressure on places in other (receiving) schools etc.

4.6 Interestingly, the last National Report that provided a definitive statement on school size was Plowden in 1967, which suggested a minimum school size of 60 with at least 20 in a class on the basis that schools smaller than this would lack the resources to provide "effective education".

5. Finance

5.1 West Berkshire's Schools' Funding Formula includes a "primary taper" to cover "fixed costs" (those that have to be met by all schools irrespective of size based on a minimum teaching workforce of 2.2 including Headteacher and a class size of around 17/18) for schools where statutory numbers are below 200 pupils. In addition, there is further funded curriculum protection where pupil numbers are below 60. In 2010/11 around £900k was distributed via small schools factors to 42 schools, with seven schools getting the additional "below 60" allowance. When analysed across small schools within the Review, additional funding support varied between circa £32k and £39k, equating to a budget percentage of between 8.75% and 19.59%.

5.2 With only one exception, small schools, retained healthy revenue balances at the end of 2009/10, varying from around £3k to over £58k, the latter specifically to

support a significant capital project. Investment in ICT is another area where schools sometimes save up funds for replacement costs.

- 5.3 Unit costs vary considerably and are listed in Appendix A.
- 5.4 An analysis of small school funding in benchmark authorities, found almost universal protection being used in formulas, with West Berkshire as one of the higher funders.
- 5.5 It is recognised that the next round of work for the Heads' Funding Group/Schools' Forum is to review the Age Weighted Pupil Unit (AWPU) element of the schools' funding formula and the small schools' funding factor will be a part of this discussion.
- 5.6 Small school representatives on the Review Group raised the issue of "buy back" and the fact this can be disproportionately expensive if calculated on anything other than a pupil number basis.

6. Leadership and Governance

- 6.1 As previously stated, strong and effective leadership is a key component in successful small schools.
- 6.2 The recruitment of Heads, staff and governors is of vital importance, as is retention to maintain continuity and parental/community confidence.
- 6.3 Appointing Headteachers has become more difficult over time as the burdens of the job have grown and deputies in larger primary schools are often remunerated as an equivalent or higher salary. At the same time, and to make the job more attractive and doable, the teaching commitment of heads has reduced and they are now supported by Business/Finance Managers to help spread the administrative burden. Sometimes these posts are beneficially shared between schools.
- 6.4 Filling vacancies can be somewhat unpredictable with some being filled first time, but most having to be advertised two or more times. Looking at data from the last couple of years small school headships application pools have varied between four and no candidates.
- 6.5 Many governors and chairs of governors are long serving and filling vacancies on governing bodies can sometimes take quite some time.
- 6.6 The Review Group considered in some detail the creation of a hard federation between Shefford and Chaddleworth St Andrew's schools, which are managed under a single Head and single governing body to ensure greater viability.
- 6.7 The two schools working as one have enabled staff and resources to be shared and a class structure which means that no more than two age cohorts are grouped together. This is a long term project which provides a structure for other schools to consider.

7. Accommodation

- 7.1 All pupils deserve an accommodation entitlement which supports teaching and learning and enables the national curriculum and early years foundation stage to be taught.
- 7.2 Small schools in West Berkshire vary significantly in age, construction and layout, as do their sites. Many have Victorian origins with rooms of difficult shapes and sizes together with planning restrictions. For many it is difficult to make them DDA compliant for both pupils and staff, and some lack halls and suitable non-teaching space. This said, several schools have benefited from creative thinking and capital investment from a variety of sources. A number, however, remain challenged with specific needs yet to address. For others it is not design and space, but condition that poses the greatest challenge. More details are provided in Appendix F.
- 7.3 All schools receive devolved formula capital (DFC) and some projects have benefited from Council investment, support from the CE Diocese and a significant amount of local fund raising. Where projects have been instigated and delivered locally, the time required to fund raise and project manage should not be underestimated.

8. Community Contributions

- 8.1 All small schools within the scope of the Review were asked to contribute to this section. A summary of the contributions is listed in Appendix G. These contributions highlight the mutual support between schools and their local communities, with many identifying positive church connections. Comment was made on schools within communities underpinning the Council Plan themes of “vibrant villages” and “stronger communities”, adding to a sense of belonging/place and enlivening a sense of community.

9. Other Authorities

- 9.1 Most Local Authorities have school organisation policy documents that emphasise the importance of keeping open small schools, particularly in rural areas. With few exceptions authorities maintain viability by financial formula support (see Section 5 above). In addition, they encourage schools to share resource, such as business managers/admin and joint working/partnerships including more formal structures such as federations.
- 9.2 The Church of England Diocese maintains a position of wishing to keep open small church schools because of the value they add to local communities.

10. Conclusions

- 10.1 Following a thorough review of small school provision within West Berkshire the Review Group has come up with a number of outcomes/recommendations for consideration, aimed at strengthening the viability of small schools to deliver high quality education, with a focus on pupil entitlement and outcomes, and community contribution.
- 10.2 The Select Committee fully endorses this comprehensive piece of work and the recommendations for improvement. Members of the Select Committee are pleased with the efforts being made to continue to support small schools in West Berkshire.

11. Outcomes/Recommendations for the Executive

11.1 The suggested recommendations for the Executive are outlined below:

- (1) Heads' Funding Group/Schools' Forum to review DSG formula and small schools' funding to help support and strengthen small schools.
- (2) Encourage schools to explore the benefits of affiliations, creative partnerships and federations (structural and non-structural) where appropriate with schools of all sizes. For example, access to sports provision, teaching for gifted and talented pupils, and to create opportunities for teachers to share knowledge and experience.
- (3) Encourage the sharing of capacity and resources e.g. business managers and curriculum expertise.
- (4) Establish a set of broad criteria that could trigger a support and viability review to consider the best way forward for a school. These criteria would include pupil numbers and trends, standards, finance and Headteacher/staff recruitment issues.
- (5) Develop an accommodation entitlement schedule, and assess schools against this. Deficiency to be added to capital programme criteria.
- (6) Develop a means by which innovative building solutions can be shared and school based projects can be offered project management support.
- (7) Review the feasibility of cooking meals on all sites.
- (8) Work with schools to promote and share community links.
- (9) Admissions material produced by the Local Education Authority and by schools should include a section on the benefits of choosing a local school to encourage parents to send their children to their catchment school.

12. Recommendation for the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission

12.1 It is recommended that the Members of the Commission agree the recommendations outlined in section 11 for the Executive's consideration.

Appendices

Appendix A – Schools within the Review – (capacity, pupil numbers, budget etc)

Appendix B – Membership of Review Group

Appendix C₁ – Ofsted Inspection Outcomes of Schools within the Review

Appendix C₂ – Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools (SIAS) Outcomes

Appendix D – School Performance Summary

Appendix E – Catchment Area Attendance Data

Appendix F – Accommodation List

Appendix G – Community Contributions by Schools

Schools in Review											
Schools	Status	Admission number	Numbers on Roll				Net Capacity as at January 2010	Surplus Places No May 2010 Return	Surplus Places % May 2010 Return	Budget £	Unit Cost £
			2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11 (forecast)					
Beedon CE Primary	VC	7	44	51	51	52	1	2	227,199	4,455	
Beenham Community Primary	LA	15	84	86	89	90	13	12	353,259	3,969	
Brightwalton CE Primary	VA	15	105	102	102	103	3	3	358,495	3,515	
Brimpton CE Primary	VC	9	39	48	43	42	20	32	248,696	5,784	
Chaddleworth St Andrews CE Primary	VC	8	45	44	19	20	32	57	197,995	10,421	
Enborne CE Primary	VA	8	52	52	59	59	1	2	241,714	4,097	
Hampstead Norreys CE Primary	VC	14	99	101	105	106	-4	-4	402,654	3,835	
Inkpen Community Primary	LA	12	51	57	59	59	26	30	302,410	5,126	
Purley CE Infant	VC	17	53	52	55	56	-4	-8	233,573	4,247	
Shaw cum Donnington CE Primary	VC	11	78	68	68	70	8	10	330,011	4,853	
Shefford CE Primary	VC	12	41	45	44	45	50	56	229,112	5,207	
Stockcross CE Primary	VA	15	98	98	102	106	3	3	366,850	3,597	
The Isleys Community Primary	LA	12	62	64	72	69	13	15	285,793	3,969	
Welford & Wickham CE Primary	VC	12	51	66	76	77	8	10	311,063	4,093	
Woolhampton CE Primary	VA	15	87	91	95	94	11	10	366,964	3,863	
Yattendon CE Primary	VA	10	61	62	72	71	1	1	302,949	4,208	

Membership of Review Group

Ian Pearson	Head of Education Service (Chairman)
Andy Tubbs	Chief Adviser for School Improvement
Anna Ditchburn	Service Manager, Access*
Jeanne Lapsley	Service Manager, Advice, Information & Training*
Susan Robbins	Interim Manager, Advice, Information, Training & Access**
Caroline Corcoran	Service Manager, Advice, Information, Training & Access***
Andrew Breavington	School Improvement Adviser
Mark Lewis	Education Assets Manager
Janet Scott	Service Manager, Adult & Community Learning, Childcare/Children's Centres, Extended Services
Franco de Mori	Education Data Officer
Julie Mintern	Oxford CE Diocese
David Babb	Oxford CE Diocese
Florence Rostrun	Headteacher, Welford & Wickham Church of England (Voluntary Controlled) Primary School
Kathryn Simmons	Headteacher, Yattendon Church of England (Voluntary Controlled) Primary School
Sue George	Chair of Governors, Beedon Church of England (Voluntary Controlled) Primary School
Linda Curson	Chair of Governors, The Ilsleys Primary School⊗
Patricia Brims	Chair of Governors, Brimpton Church of England (Voluntary Controlled) Primary School⊗⊗
Barbara Alexander	West Berkshire Councillor, Portfolio Holder Education
Irene Neill	West Berkshire Councillor, Chairman Stronger Communities Select Committee
Alan Macro	West Berkshire Councillor, Shadow Executive Children & Young People

*, **, *** Posts replaced due to redundancy

⊗, ⊗⊗ LC resigned and now replaced by PB

Ofsted Inspections

School	Date of last / current Ofsted	Overall Effectiveness	Achievement and Standards	Quality of Provision	Personal Development & Well-being	Leadership & Management
Beedon	12.2.09	2	2	2	1	2
Beenham	24+25.1.07	2	2	2	2	2
Brightwalton	5+6.10.06 (22.4.09 – PE) Ofsted letter July '10 deferred to 09.2011 at earliest	2	2	2	1	2
Brimpton	25.2.09	3	3	3	2	3
Chaddleworth St. Andrew's	14-15. 07.10	3	3	3	2	3
Enborne	17.1.08	2	2	2	1	2
Hampstead Norreys	2.10.08	1	1	1	1	1
The Ilsleys	15.5.09	2	2	2	1	2
Inkpen	02-03.12.09	3	3	3	2	3
Purley Infants	08-09.02.10	1	1	1	1	1
Shaw cum Donnington	11-12.05.10	3	3	3	2	3
Shefford	14-15.7.10	3	3	3	2	3
Stockcross	5.12.06 Ofsted letter July '10 deferred to 09.2011 at earliest	2	1	2	1	2
Welford and Wickham	9.3.09	1	1	1	1	1
Woolhampton	7+8.2.08	3	3	3	2	3
Yattendon	12+13.3.09	2	2	2	1	2

Grades

- 1 = Outstanding
- 2 = Good
- 3 = Satisfactory
- 4 = Inadequate

**West Berkshire Small School Review
Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools – SIAS**

School	Date of last / current SIAS	How well does the school, through its distinctive Christian character, meet the needs of all its learners?	What is the impact of collective worship on the school community?	How effective is the Religious Education?	How effective are the leadership and management of the school, as a church school?	Overall judgement
Beedon CE (VC) Primary	19 th March 2009	1	2	n/a	1	1
Brightwalton CE (VA) Primary	30 th April 2007	1	2	3	1	2
Brimpton CE (VC) Primary	30 th April 2009	2	2	n/a	2	2
Chaddleworth St Andrews CE (VC) Primary	10 th 11 th October 2007	1	2	n/a	2	2
Enborne CE (VA) Primary	26 th February 2008	1	2	2	2	2
Hampstead Norreys CE (VC) Primary	13 th November 2008	1	1	1	1	1
Purley CE (VC) Infants	3 rd March 2010	1	2	n/a	1	1
Shaw cum Donnington CE (VC) Primary	11 th June 2010	3	3	n/a	3	3
Shefford CE (VC) Primary	10 th 11 th October 2007	1	2	n/a	2	2

School	Date of last / current SIAS	How well does the school, through its distinctive Christian character, meet the needs of all its learners?	What is the impact of collective worship on the school community	How effective is the Religious Education?	How effective are the leadership and management of the school, as a church school?	Overall judgement
Stockcross CE (VA) Primary	5 February 2007	1	2	3	2	2
Welford & Wickham CE (VC) Primary	23 rd April 2009	1	1	1	2	1
Woolhampton CE (VA) Primary	28 th March 2008	2	3	2	3	3
Yattendon CE (VA) Primary	8 th May 2009	1	1	2	1	1

1 Outstanding

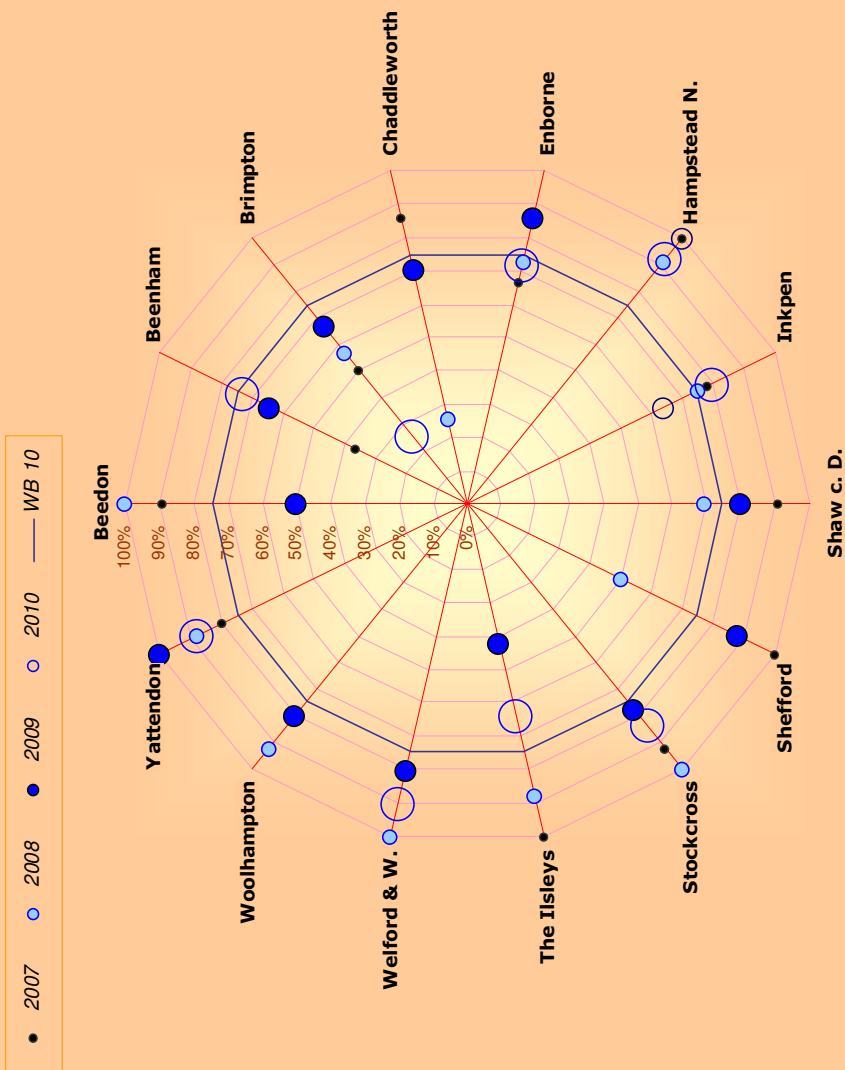
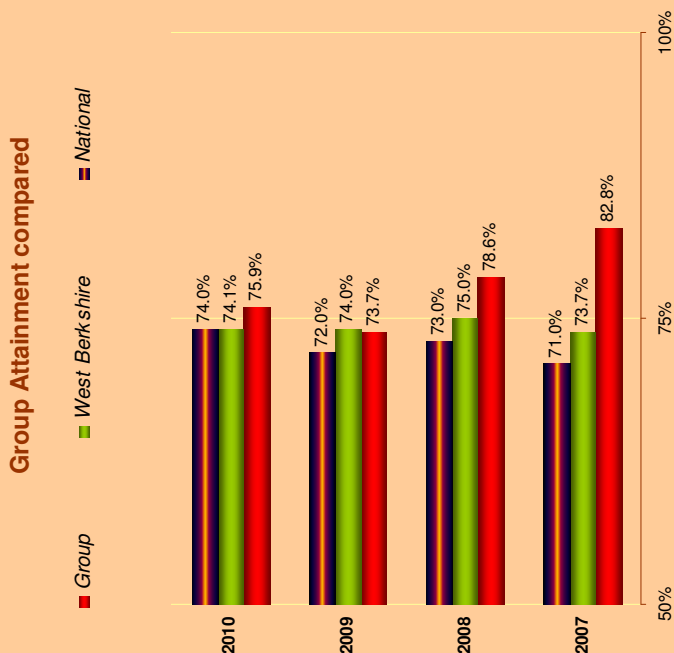
2 Good

3 Satisfactory

COMBINED ATT. TIME CHART 2007-10

Change in percentage of pupils attaining 4+ in E&M at KS2

Small Schools - ENGLISH & MATHS 4+



Catchment Area Attendance Data of Schools in Review						
Schools	Total living in Catchment May-09	Attending Catchment School May-09	Attending Other May-09	Percentage of Catchment Children on Roll May-09	Percentage from Outside Catchment May-09	
Beeton CE Primary	31	23	8	74	26	
Beenham Community Primary	67	56	11	84	16	
Brightwalton CE Primary	41	40	1	98	2	
Brimpton CE Primary	48	21	27	44	56	
Chaddleworth St Andrews CE Primary	80	33	47	41	59	
Enborne CE Primary	50	14	36	28	72	
Hampstead Norreys CE Primary	72	56	16	78	22	
Inkpen Community Primary	35	33	2	94	6	
Purley CE Infant	176	37	139	21	79	
Shaw cum Donnington CE Primary	71	16	55	23	77	
Shefford CE Primary	85	34	51	40	60	
Stockcross CE Primary	81	59	22	73	27	
The Ilsleys Community Primary	71	46	25	65	35	
Welford & Wickham CE Primary	38	29	9	76	24	
Woolhampton CE Primary	78	28	50	36	64	
Yattendon CE Primary	69	48	21	70	30	

Small Schools Accommodation

- Use of village halls for PE and Performance, sometimes providing a stage which would otherwise be unavailable
- Creative solutions developed by schools using devolved capital, including saving up for “bigger” solutions, including recent development of “log cabins” (Beedon and Brimpton)
- Importance of site size, hard play and parking spaces
- Buildings to be DDA compliant
- Mindful of energy usage and carbon reduction, particularly in relation to older buildings
- Sometimes disproportional cost of fire compliance
- Importance of broadband access and appropriate ICT solutions
- Making Victorian designs fit for modern teaching and learning
- Often schools find themselves managing difficult shaped and sized rooms
- For some schools planning restrictions pose significant problems through such issues as listing or AONB
- Important to recognise the requirement for appropriate adult space – Head/Staff/Office/loos/PPA facilities
- Need for appropriate security and obvious and attractive entrance area
- Accommodation for SEN including small withdrawal areas
- Important that spaces reflect the current curriculum, but remain flexible so they can be turned to a variety of uses
- Hall size in relation to delivering the PE curriculum
- Recognition of school meals both in terms of preference and practicalities e.g. cooking on site
- Size and number of classrooms
- Colleagues present then described two project case studies:
 - Welford and Wickham – Florence set out how the vision for accommodation at the school had been developed and the practicalities of a year of building work which had seen the school hall double in size. Space is still at a premium within the school and a further project is planned which would include the attached school house.
 - Beedon – Sue George explained the school’s current project which aims to significantly increase and improve accommodation using the latest timber construction technology which is delivering an advantageous cost effective solution
 - Both projects have required significant time and energy and this input should not be under-estimated.
 - Another point raised was the ability of small schools to access facilities at other schools, either through primary partnerships or working closely with partner secondary schools. Kathryn cited the

positive opportunities provided for Yattendon pupils at Mary Hare via the Primary Schools Partnership.

- Small areas for withdrawal

Small Schools Contribution to Community

Community Links

Heart of the community goodwill towards school

Awareness of the community in which they live – day to day involvement, local history, traditional events, local enterprises

Community Cohesion

Community supporting school

Children engage with all generations through the community

Local community planning – parish plan Parish council links Parish magazine

Local people provide services to school at good rates

Use of local amenities – village hall, green

Extended services – after school clubs supported by community members

Volunteers support the school with reading, and after school clubs, community governors

School supporting community

Local community events held at school – Fayre, Fetes, polling station

School is an employer of local people

Community lunch in school

Old peoples' homes, links with community harvest baskets

Using school as a base for other services – Police, Fire service, support groups for parents and educational opportunities for life-long learning – use of ICT

Transport for local children

Notice board and website to advertise community event

Community presentations e.g. Corn Exchange, Arlington arts

Links with preschool provision

Church links

Church links

School uses church for celebrations and services

Church benefits from school involvement in local services – school choirs etc

Whole school community benefits from pastoral links with parish priest

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