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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	
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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

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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"/>

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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.

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Appendix C

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.	

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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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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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Appendix E

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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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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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>

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

18	Highway authorities and relevant organisations should provide training and conduct periodic exercising to test plans for responding to severe weather events.	<p>Volker Highways Ltd are contracted to undertake a pre winter trial of their equipment each year in September.</p> <p>Various training sessions have taken place over the past few years including scenario training for different weather conditions, City & Guilds operatives and Client/Contractor supervisor qualifications obtained.</p> <p>WBC had a major input in to the Pitt report regarding major flooding events.</p>
19	Highway authorities should ensure effective communication of information for the public before and during severe winter weather events.	<p>West Berkshire Council publishes its revised Winter Service Plan annually (usually in October) along with an information leaflet. The leaflet is available in all Council owned buildings and the plan is available as a down load from the Council's website.</p> <p>During severe weather the Council issues regular press releases and updates its web page frequently.</p>

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date of meeting