

Oldham Council Winter Service Plan

October 2020

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1 Version Control / Distribution

1.1 Version Control

Please ensure you have the most up to date version of this document. Recognised recipients will only be notified of updates by email.

The latest version of this document is available online at:

https://www.oldham.gov.uk/info/200146/strategies_plans_and_policies/1373/highway_policies_and_strategies

Any queries about this document should be directed to:

Unity Highways
Telephone: 0161 770 4325
Email: highways@oldham.gov.uk

1.2 Distribution

The following service groups hold copies of this plan:

- Unity Partnership
- Emergency Planning – Shared drive
- People and Place

2 Introduction

2.1 Background

Following a number of severe winters it has been acknowledged that it is best practice to provide a winter plan for the authority and partner organisations to document the arrangements in the event of a significant winter weather event detailing what happens during a 'winter weather' event.

Section B.7.2.1 of Well-managed Highway Infrastructure (WmHI) states: "Authorities should formally approve and adopt policies and priorities for Winter Service, which are coherent with wider objectives for transport, integration, accessibility and network management, including strategies for public transport, walking and cycling. They should also take into account the wider strategic objectives of the authority."

Section B.7.5.30 of WmHI also states: "Authorities should formally approve, adopt, and publish, in consultation with users and key stakeholders, a Winter Service Plan based on the principles of this Code."

2.2 Aim

The aim of this plan is to set out the policies and priorities for the Winter Service and to form the Winter Service Plan based on the principles of WmHI, in order to facilitate and coordinate Oldham Council's assistance to the communities of Oldham during winter weather, to ensure that the limited winter service resources are utilised to benefit the maximum number of highway users possible.

There are insufficient resources available to provide the service for every individual highway user. It is however, recognised that there are a number of vulnerable, individual highway users who require access to health or social services and if genuine requests for assistance are received from such vulnerable, individual users, they will be prioritised.

2.3 Objectives

To achieve this aim, the plan has the following objectives:

- To provide the safest and most effective highway winter service possible within the resources available
- To avoid gridlock on the highway network and the paralysis of the local economy
- To prioritise, as reasonably practicable:-
 - the primary route network and well-trafficked routes

- Bus routes, medical facilities, vulnerable communities
- areas of significant population
- To make effective use of the press, internet and social networking sites for disseminating accurate and timely winter service information
- To provide facilities for the public to make requests for service
- To encourage local communities to stay safe during the winter season
- Establish a flexible activation procedure to ensure a timely response to a severe weather event
- Outline the measures in place to ensure effective communications with the community, staff, elected members and partner organisations prior to and during a severe winter event
- Document the system for recording school closures, and effectively communicate to all, those schools that remain open

2.4 Scope

This plan will cover Oldham Council's response to winter weather, specifically low temperatures and heavy snowfall. The plan is not designed to cover other severe weather events such as floods or high winds, or incidents which may arise as a result of winter weather, such as disruption to utilities.

2.5 Links to other plans

This plan links to several other plans, for example:

- Corporate and departmental business continuity plans
- Highway Asset Management Policy, Framework and Strategy
- Oldham Emergency Response and Recovery Plan and supporting documents

2.6 The Council's Statutory Obligation

Under the Highways Act 1980 (Section 41A(1)), as amended by the Railways and Transport Safety Act 2003, the Highway Authority is under a duty to maintain the public highway.

In particular, the Highway Authority is under a duty to ensure, so far as reasonably practicable, that safe passage along a highway, is not endangered by snow or ice.

In addition the Traffic Management Act 2004 requires Highway Authority to do all that is reasonably practical to manage the highway network effectively to keep traffic moving, including the establishment of contingency plans.

2.7 Legislation

Oldham Council is subject to the following legislation and guidance:

- General Data Protection Regulation 2016
- The Freedom of Information Act 2000
- The Equality Act 2010
- The Environmental Information Regulations 2004
- The Highways Act 1980
- Well-managed Highway Infrastructure October 2016
- The Traffic Management Act 2004

3 Activation

3.1 Winter period

This plan will generally be active over the winter period (see paragraph 7.13) but also on an exceptional basis at any other time of the year where one or more of the following occurs:

- An episode of heavy snow and / or low temperatures which results in disruption to critical services
- Severe weather warnings indicating a high probability of heavy snow and/or low temperatures which could cause service disruption

3.2 Gritting

The duty manager within the Highways Operations team, in consultation with the Head of Service, makes the decision to grit roads based on a detailed analysis of weather forecast (section 6)

An email is then distributed to the winter weather email group, which includes representatives from:

- Communications Team – use social media, website press releases etc. for both the public and staff.
- Environmental Services – staff may be redeployed to clear footways and assist in response.
- First Response – control the ‘out of hours’ response for the council – staffing the gritting line, co-ordinating information for communications regarding school closures etc.
- Unity Partnership – deal with the ‘working hours’ gritting line and co-ordinating the requests received.
- Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and Councillors
- TfGM (Transport for Greater Manchester)

They in turn activate their service area’s response.

4 Control and Coordination of Winter Weather Events

4.1 Coordination of Oldham Council Response

During a winter weather event, the various departments will carry out their winter service responsibilities. The Director of Environmental Management has overall responsibility for coordinating Oldham Council's response, and may decide to call out relevant departments, personnel and resources as appropriate.

For more major winter weather incidents the Winter Weather Group will co-ordinate the overall response to the event.

Consideration should be given to forming the Oldham Winter Weather Group early on in the response to a severe winter weather event, to facilitate the coordination of the response and sharing of information between service areas.

4.2 Representatives at the Oldham's Winter Weather Group

All members of the Oldham Winter Weather Group have the authority to request that all other members of the team (or their deputies) meet as soon as is reasonable to discuss a prolonged severe winter weather event, or the threat of an incident, which could force the invocation of the full emergency planning response arrangements or business continuity plans.

4.3 Terms of Reference

- To lead, prepare, manage and co-ordinate the preparedness in planning for a winter weather event in Oldham
- To identify priority service areas across Oldham
- To build and maintain effective communications and leadership across all service areas in Oldham and develop mutual aid agreements with them
- To ensure that regular and consistent key messages are communicated to staff and the public
- To provide advice to managers on service delivery prior to, during and after a severe winter weather event
- To ensure preparedness is effectively reviewed and tested and lessons learned are adopted
- To lead, prepare, manage and co-ordinate the recovery from a prolonged severe winter weather event in Oldham
- The group will meet as necessary.

4.4 Roles and Responsibilities of the Winter Weather Group

The role of the Winter Weather Group is to lead and review the work in response to a severe winter weather event.

Key functions and on-going actions may involve:

- Strategic management and co-ordination of council services in response to the winter weather event
- Managing / authorising the deployment of resources (e.g. engineering winter weather operations, 4x4 vehicles)
- Providing specialist advice and sharing information and co-operating with partner agencies (e.g. salt stocks and distribution)
- Providing support for staff, schools, day centres, youth centres
- Dealing with any media related enquiries, managing the warning and informing response and information gathering and reporting (e.g. Updating Twitter, the Council's website/intranet with up to date information regarding the response to the winter weather, closures of schools and disruptions to other services and salting information)
- Initiating the recovery planning process at an early stage where a prolonged period of severe winter weather is expected

5 Implementation of severe weather procedures and Stand Down

5.1 Implementation prior to a severe winter weather event

Severe weather procedures can be implemented in anticipation of a severe winter weather event, if deemed necessary from forecasts (see Section 6), particularly where a prolonged period of adverse weather is expected. In this situation, members of the Winter Weather Group will take action as appropriate to ensure the borough responds to the winter weather event.

The following actions may be carried out in advance of the winter weather:

- Put out general community resilience messages to the public through relevant media around being prepared for bad weather (Comms Team in coordination with Corporate Security)
- Corporate messages to staff around expectations around the importance of attending work/ delivering services as normal
- Communicate with schools advising head teachers to consider their preparations for winter weather (Comms Team in coordination with Corporate Security)
- Identify sources of resources which may be required – for example, 4x4 vehicles – and make initial contacts (or possibly put on standby)
- Ensure the winter gritting line is prepared for commonly asked questions (Unity Partnership/Corporate Security)
- Consider which critical services may be affected and arrangements that could be put in place in advance to mitigate the impact

5.2 Implementation during a severe winter weather event

During a severe winter weather event, consideration should be given to carrying out the actions outlined in Section 5.1 in addition to those listed below.

The following actions may be carried out during a severe winter weather event:

- Identify the impact of the winter weather on critical services
- Ensure that the public, staff and partner organisations are kept updated on changes to gritting patterns and the impact of the winter weather on Oldham Council services (including schools) and any other relevant information
- Issue HR guidance to staff on attending work (guidance outlined in Appendix 7 but this should be checked with HR prior to distributing)
- Respond to requests for support or resources from partner organisations and communities
- Coordinate redeployment of staff if this is required

Oldham's response to a winter weather incident may be hampered by the ability of key staff to travel to work due to poor conditions. If this occurs, Microsoft Teams or telephone conferencing will be used to maintain key communications.

Service managers should put procedures in place to ensure that key staff take any relevant equipment home (e.g. laptops, mobile phones) whenever a severe weather event is forecast so that communications may be maintained and to minimise disruption to the Council's response.

Managers should also be aware that council-owned equipment is uninsured if left unattended in a private vehicle, even if it is locked. Staff who take equipment home should be instructed to take it into their home as soon as they arrive.

5.3 Stand down

The Director of Environmental Management will advise on stand down once it is clear that a severe winter event is over, and services move into the recovery phase.

A full review will be undertaken to establish lessons learned and effectiveness of procedure following the main winter period

6 Weather Forecasting and Capabilities

6.1 Road Weather Forecast

The Metdesk and Vaisala Weather Bureau provide weather information and forecasting to the authority on a daily basis during the winter risk period. The forecast is updated or confirmed on a regular basis during the 24-hour period. The weather information is web based, and password protected, further back up is provided by text/emails to the Highways Operation Duty Managers.

Weather forecasting for the borough is carried out using the data from various weather stations located within Greater Manchester and is provided as a domain forecast which is split into five domains. Oldham currently has two weather stations at Bleak Hey Nook and Oldham Way which use sensor technology to record, measure and monitor wind, air and road temperatures. They feed information to the Vaisala Weather Bureau and the forecast is accessed via the Vaisala software and the Metdesk Software.

Weather Information is also gathered from the weather stations within the Greater Manchester. The weather station sites used have the same climatic characteristics.

The decision to carry out winter service operations and the type of operation to be carried out (e.g. pre-gritting of all routes or run off and wet spot gritting) is made by the Highways Operation Duty Manager in consultation with the Head of Service, after looking at the 24-hour Road Weather Information supplied by Metdesk.

The Duty Manager for the week will make the decision in the absence of the Head of Service.

Decision-making frameworks are identified within the Nation Winter Service Research Group's practical guidance documents (once published)

The weather forecast is available on the Vaisala software and the Metdesk Web Site at approximately 13.00hrs daily. This shows a morning summary, an evening forecast and a 2-5 day forecast. The decision on the Winter Service Operations to be carried out over the next few hours is made by approximately 14.00hrs and reviewed continually as required and as forecasts are updated. The Duty Manager will then discuss the weather information and suggested response to be carried out with the Head of Service.

The Duty Manger will continue to monitor Vaisala for changes to the forecast. Vaisala also sends out emails/text messages to warn if set parameters within the forecasts are met. If the forecast has changed significantly Metdesk will call the VIP centre who in turn, pass the information to the duty manager.

6.2 Severe Weather Warnings

The National Severe Weather Warning Service (NSWWS) provides warnings to the general public and emergency responders, giving up to five days advance notice of disruptive weather conditions. The warnings are issued by the Met Office.

Emergency Control receives and distributes these severe weather warnings to the designated officers (e.g. the Winter Weather Group).

Individuals or service areas within Oldham Council can be added to the distribution list for Winter Weather Gritting Action by contacting the Head of Service (Highways).

7 Gritting Routes and Salt Suppliers

7.1 Salt Stocks

Oldham Council holds 6,000 tonnes of salt stock at the Moorhey Street Depot in preparation for the winter season.

The supply of ground rock salt for all districts is undertaken through a collaborative services procurement contract currently managed by Tameside MBC (ESPO), with Compass Minerals as the preferred supplier and a secondary supplier Peacocks Salt

In the event of extreme weather conditions and the necessity to keep the Greater Manchester districts moving, mutual aid and partnership working will be essential to ensure that no area runs out of salt. Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) will broker these mutual aid arrangements, with the operational responsibility taken on by the Network Managers Group (NMG).

If there are issues nationally with the supply and provision of salt for road treatment, a 'Salt Cell' may be set up by the Government to centrally control supplies of salt to local areas. If this is instigated, then replenishment of salt stocks will be decided by the Salt Cell and will no longer be a local decision.

7.2 Salt Conservation Criteria

During the severe weather events of 2009/10 and 2010/11, there was much criticism of access to any alternative / reserve supplies of salt. Greater Manchester districts have collectively agreed to invoke a considered response to ensure that salt stocks are used effectively and conserved where practical, based upon agreed processes, protocols and triggers to ensure a consistent approach. This has been addressed to a large extent by the following actions:

- i. Districts have increased stock reserves at their own locations in line with new Government guidelines to ensure that councils have a minimum of 12 days' resilience (increased from previous 6 day recommendations)
- ii. 250,000 tonnes salt reserves have been arranged by Government with protocols in place of how to access these reserves during severe weather events
- iii. Work is on-going to determine how all Greater Manchester councils may be able to take advantage of such alternative supply chains). (e.g. using external private suppliers)
- iv. A web based communications network was created for Winter Managers, Vaisala Manger website and was used extensively throughout the winter period for recording and informing daily salt usage and deliveries received

When these triggers are invoked, conservation of stocks is critical and therefore services will inevitably have to be reduced from those otherwise provided, e.g. the re-

filling of self-help grit bins may be suspended, as will any private works requiring the provision of salt.

7.3 Gritting Prioritisation

With the financial and operational resources available it is not possible to grit and keep free from ice and snow every road in the Borough. Gritting priorities have been established taking into account the following: -

- Resilient Network
- Treatment of the most heavily trafficked roads
- Major bus routes
- Strategic routes serving isolated communities
- Key pedestrian areas e.g. Town Centre, local centres, transport facilities
- Gradient and altitude of roads

Consequently for gritting purposes, the highway network has been divided into four categories, namely: -

- Snow routes
- Primary gritting routes
- Routes to Covid-19 testing stations*
- Secondary gritting Routes
- Other Highways

Covid-19 testing stations are located throughout the borough, however some are mobile and their locations often change. Permanent testing stations are present in the following locations:

- Queen Elizabeth Hall,
- Southgate Street
- Peel Street
- Honeywell Centre

The permanent locations have been reviewed and all found to all be accessible via a Primary Gritting route. Although the Honeywell Centre fronts onto A627 Ashton Road, which is on a primary gritting route, its car park is accessed via Schofield Street. Grit bits will be provided at Peel Street car park and the Honeywell Centre car park so that they and the short section of Schofield Street can be gritted by hand as and when needed. Sufficient provisions are already in place for Civic Centre car park (Queen Elizabeth Hall) and Southgate Street car parks.

* Due to the changing locations of mobile testing stations it would not be practical to amend gritting routes or provide grit bins for these sites, instead routes to mobile stations will be gritted on request if not already on a gritting route and as far as operationally practical. They will be prioritised after Snow routes and Primary gritting routes.

Information on traffic flows on the classified highway network has been obtained from Greater Manchester Transportation Unit. It is recognised that this information only provides information on classified roads. The information does however give an indication as to traffic flows and the area. Local knowledge has then been utilised to assess traffic flows on the highways off the classified network.

It should be noted that in some cases minor lightly trafficked highways will be treated as part of the primary gritting route network for operational routing purposes.

It is also not possible to treat a number of minor roads due to the width of the winter service plant and equipment, although some specialist narrow width machines will be available for use on some of the important narrow lanes. Access problems are often made worse because of parked vehicles at times of operation (late evening / early morning).

These will be treated in a descending order of priority.

7.4 Primary Gritting Routes

These routes comprise the most heavily trafficked roads in the Borough. In general they include classified “A” roads, the most important “B” roads, key bus routes, and important local roads serving local communities.

There are 6 Primary Gritting Routes details of which can be found in Appendix 1 (During severe weather conditions it may be necessary to treat only the major roads until conditions improve – see paragraph 7.5)

The pedestrianised area of Oldham Town Centre is treated as part of the primary route network.

7.5 Snow Routes

These routes are invoked during heavy snow events. Whilst it is important to keep the primary gritting routes open wherever possible, during periods of heavy snowfall resources must be prioritised on routes that are critical to the functioning of the borough. The Snow routes are not formally recorded snow routes, the routes to be treated will be based on the council’s Resilient Network, generally the most important “A” roads in the borough, but also taking into account altitude and/or gradient of road, focused on the areas where heavy snow has been forecast.

In times of very heavy snow Oldham Council will reduce the length of network treated to ensure that the most critical routes can remain open. Any decisions not to clear snow from cross-Pennine “A” roads will be made in conjunction with neighbouring authorities and those routes will be closed to traffic. This coordinated approach is to ensure highway users are not put in unnecessary danger and/or inconvenience only to find the route becomes un navigable or hazardous when they reach the borough boundary.

7.6 Secondary Gritting Routes

In general these include: -

- Any remaining classified “B” roads
- Important local distributor roads
- Significant estate link roads
- Other highways that form part of local bus routes
- Refuse and recycling routes

Appendix 2 provides details of the Secondary Gritting Routes.

It should be recognised that treatment of Secondary Routes will only be undertaken during periods of prolonged frost or adverse weather as resources allow.

7.7 Other Highways

In general these will include all through routes not included on the primary or secondary gritting route networks. It is unlikely that these highways will receive formal treatment, as priority will be given to all other highway categories.

7.8 Cul-de-sacs and non-through roads

Cul-de-sacs and non-through roads will not be treated unless assistance to do so is received from one of the Emergency Services.

For health and safety reasons, all gritting routes designed to be driven forwards, minimising the need to reverse to only occur by exception, as gritting vehicles' are by their nature, large and heavy. These facts, coupled with potentially severe weather conditions, icy road conditions and lack of clear visibility makes reversing of a gritting vehicle a dangerous manoeuvre. In addition, the presence of haphazardly parked or abandoned cars on narrow streets adds significantly to the risks involved.

7.9 Footway Gritting

As with highways, it is not possible to treat all footways in the Borough. The pedestrian areas of Oldham town centre are part of primary gritting routes and are gritted accordingly. Following sustained snow/ice periods, priority will be given to gritting and clearing the most heavily trafficked footways such as district centres.

7.10 Cycleway treatment

Cycleways are not gritted unless they are part of a primary or secondary route. This is due to the issues around access to the cycleways and the equipment required.

7.11 Salt supply to schools

Schools are responsible for the treatment of school premises. Schools are able to make advanced purchases of grit via Moorhey Street Depot, please go to https://www.oldham.gov.uk/info/201062/gritting_and_winter_travel

7.12 Salt supply to Parish Councils

Parish councils can order salt they require for the winter from Moorhey Street Depot, please go to https://www.oldham.gov.uk/info/201062/gritting_and_winter_travel

7.13 Winter Period

The Winter Risk Period runs from the 1st November until 31st March with a low risk period from mid-October until 1st November and 31st March to the end of April with monitoring of weather information and data throughout the whole period. Gritters are on standby 24hrs a day to ensure a prompt and effective response to adverse weather.

7.14 Grit Bins

7.14.1 Existing Grit Bins

There are currently around 637 grit bins in place around the Borough.

Grit bins are provided by the Council, based on defined criteria, to encourage and assist local residents to clear footways and highways adjacent to their property in times of severe winter weather; this is for use on adopted highways and footpaths only.

Prior to the winter season, grit bins are pre filled and then periodically re-filled during the winter season when resources permit.

7.14.2 Public Requests for a New Grit Bin in a New Location - Funding through Highway Budgets

Grit bins and the supply of grit are expensive to provide and the Council has to ration their provision. Grit bins are generally only provided in the most exposed or hazardous highway locations. When a request for a new bin in a new location is received its proposed location is assessed against set criteria and an assessment points score given. Providing this point's score is above a minimum threshold (currently 125) a new bin will be provided and funded through the highway budget. Existing bins reported damaged are replaced as a matter of routine.

New grit bins in new locations are only provided in line with the policy set out Appendix 3.

7.14.3 Public Requests for a New Grit Bin in a New Location - Sponsored Grit Bins

Where a location fails to meet the threshold points score a bin cannot be provided and funded through highway budgets. However, a bin may still be provided as long as its provision and maintenance are funded (or “sponsored”) from other Council budgets.

Invariably a sponsored bin, providing it has the support of local Ward Members, is funded through a District Executive. In this instance a location’s assessment score is ignored.

Where an existing sponsored bin is vandalised or damaged the cost of its replacement / repair has to be met by the sponsor. If a sponsor wishes to end sponsorship, then a bin will be removed and not replaced.

Replenishment of salt bins and salt piles is carried out on a regular basis, which is increased during periods of prolonged severe weather and from requests from the public. This request service is available through the public website or via the winter gritting

7.15 Wet spots

Wet spots are identified at the start of each winter season and monitored and treated accordingly across the borough. The council’s priority is to resolve the underlying issue that causes the wet spots wherever possible and gritting should only be used as a last resort.

8 Schools

8.1 Avoiding the closure of schools due to severe weather

During severe winter weather schools can close for a variety of reasons, such as:

- Access routes within the school site are considered hazardous.
- Public transport failure (resulting in staff and pupils not being able to get to work)
- Heating system failures (boilers, flooding after leaks etc.)
- Flooding

The Council has undertaken a number of measures to reduce the risks of schools needing to close due to severe weather. These include providing consistent advice in relation to being well prepared. Key messages are as follows:

- Purchase rock salt well in advance – don't wait for snow to arrive. Grit supplies are not limitless and there can be no guarantee that grit will continue to be available if we have a period of prolonged severe weather.
- Ensure the schools are aware of the procedures around notification of school closures

Please be aware that it is not the Council's responsibility to keep school access and grounds clear. All efforts will be made to keep access roads to schools open and passable as resource and conditions permit.

This information is communicated to schools in the autumn each year. Reminders to purchase rock salt are sent directly to schools via Moorhey Street Depot.

8.2 Deciding to close a school

The decision to close a school rests with the head teacher concerned. Oldham Council does not have the power to insist schools stay open or to prevent schools from closing.

This emphasises the importance of schools remaining open if safe to do so.

8.3 Reporting school closures

Unavoidable school closures must be reported by the Head Teacher or Deputy Head Teacher using the procedure found in Appendix 4. This will trigger all appropriate communications required.

As during a period of severe winter weather a number of schools may close, it is essential that access to up to date records of school closures is available to the authority, parents/carers, pupils and the local media. Schools have been issued with a

Priority Alerts checklist for unavoidable school closures. This includes a prioritised set of contacts including the (CLE) Services Business Unit; school website, answering machine message and text messaging service; local radio stations; Chair of Governors; Oldham Council web pages.

Children (including secondary school children) should not be sent home unless parents, careers or official contacts have been notified and it is clear that they are aware of the arrangements. It is better for children to be kept in school whatever the circumstances, rather than to be at potential risk.

9 Resources

9.1 4x4 Vehicles

To maintain the delivery of critical services it may be necessary to provide 4x4 vehicles to service areas that require access to inaccessible parts of the borough.

To ensure the winter maintenance is carried out, there are two 4x4 vehicles in the department. One for the Highways Operational Team who may need to close roads or attend accident sites; and one for the Vehicle Maintenance Team who may need to go out to repair a gritting vehicle.

9.2 Redeployment of Oldham Council owned 4x4 vehicles

There are a number of departments within Oldham Council that have 4x4 vehicles. Services that are able to redeploy their 4x4 vehicles in times of winter weather to assist the delivery of critical services are:

- Street Scene
- Highways
- Countryside
- Neighbourhoods

Contact details can be found in Appendix 5.

9.3 Redeployment of suitable staff to assist critical services

During winter weather events, staff from Environmental Services will be redeployed to assist in the winter weather response, assisting in the clearing of snow in town and district centres, schools and high traffic areas. This will occur on the request of the Head of Highway Operations, who will co-ordinate the locations of these staff.

10 Severe Weather Communications

10.1 Public perceptions

The operational team email the Winter Gritting Email Group to inform key people what actions will be and have been taken. This will trigger other service areas to respond accordingly with to update the websites and feed into social media notices.

To manage the public's and partners expectation in future winter weather events, community resilience messages have been developed which will be promoted prior to winter weather and continued during the incident. These are as follows and further details can be found in Appendix 7:

In order to provide a consistent approach across all districts, it is key that messages use language and meanings that are fully understood by not only officers and local members but by the key stakeholders (other partner / service providers) and the general public.

In the event of severe winter weather Oldham Council will be putting lots of information and useful links on its web site www.oldham.gov.uk/winter with clear logo links to Facebook and Twitter.

The following information can be found on:

- School closures (with a direct link to the schools website)
- Waste and recycling collections
- Gritting operations
- Weather warnings from the met office and the environment agency
- Travel information (service disruptions, delays and cancellations)
- Other essential council services (closures and disruptions)

The winter gritting operations information will be entered onto the NMG Web Portal information describing the actions proposed by winter managers for the forthcoming night's response. This information will be used to create a TfGM web site overview of the network, describing effects on roads and public transport availability

Other forms of communication will include:

- Community encouragement for engagement of supportive neighbours (care of elderly etc.)
- Local radio stations to get out messages about school closures. Key 103, Revolution Radio, Oldham Community Radio, Heart FM and GMR

10.2 Winter Gritting Requests

During winter weather events the public can request roads to be gritted by either email highways@oldham.gov.uk.

10.3 Disruption to Oldham's services

During winter weather council services may be affected by the snow and whilst every effort is made to maintain normal service delivery it may not be possible to deliver some services as normal or indeed at all. As with school closures this could be for a variety of reasons.

To provide a point of information to the public, service users, partners and the media a generic email address marketing@oldham.gov.uk has been created by the communications team that allows for the them to hold a centralised list of all services closed or disrupted. This information will then be placed on the Council's website for everyone to access.

10.4 Staff and Managers

It is important to keep staff updated with information on the response to the winter weather incident to assist with the delivery of council services but also as members of the community themselves. This information can be issued via the intranet staff portal pages by emailing internal.comms@oldham.gov.uk and via internal briefings. This ensures that staff has access to live updated information in a rapidly changing incident. To prepare staff pre winter weather the Winter Weather Fact Sheet can be used to promote the good neighbour message and to promote staff resilience.

To enable managers to work with their employees during winter weather conditions when staff may struggle to get to work, or have caring responsibilities, HR advice can be found in Appendix 6 around maintaining services and employee issues.

10.5 Elected Members

During an emergency the Head of Service will ensure that the Leader and relevant local Councillor(s) are kept informed of events, although they are already a member of the winter weather email group.

The Chief Executive will discuss significant issues of strategy and policy with the Leader.

Oldham Council's staff portal will be updated as frequently as practicable with information about the emergency. Other methods of keeping Elected Members informed, such as emails, text messages and briefings, will be used as appropriate.

10.6 Neighbouring Authorities

To ensure that neighbouring authorities have up to date information regarding the council's response to a winter weather event, all operational winter service plans should be published each of the ten Greater Manchester councils' web sites. (It should be noted that a dedicated web site area has been developed for Winter Services Managers in order that communications, recording of proposed and actual actions from Districts are available for managers, Members, senior officers, Salt Union staff and colleagues within TfGM, to help plan their respective services accordingly).

Appendix 1: Primary Gritting Routes

Route 1

Moorhey Street Via-Derker,Austerlands, Moorside, Denshaw, Delph, Dobcross, Diggle, Grains Bar, Moorside, Grasscroft, Holts, Roundthorn.

Route 2

Moorhey Street Via-Bottom O th Moor, Austerlands, Dobcross, Uppermill, Greenfield, Holmfirth, Grasscroft, Lees, Abbeyhills.

Route 3

Moorhey Street Via-Higginshaw, Heyside, Shaw,Royton, Milnrow, Sholver, Lees, Thornham, Royton, Rushcroft, Crompton.Shaw

Route 4

Moorhey Street Via- Oldham Centre, Higginshaw, Hollins, Coppice, Chadderton Werneth,.

Route 5

Moorhey Street Via, Coppice, Hollinwood, Chadderton , Failsworth,, Hathershaw, Fitton Hill, Limeside, Daisynook

Route 6

(Poor access and Lanes Route) Oldham Centre, Shaw, Royton, Crompton, Heyside, Sholver, Delph, Denshaw, Grasscroft.

Appendix 2: Secondary Gritting Routes

Route S1

Royton .

Route S2

Shaw

Route S3

Sholver

Route S4

Lees and Springhead

Route S5

Alt, Holts and Glodwick

Route S6

Hathershaw, Fitton Hill and Bardsley

Route S7

Limeside and Hollins

Route S8

Failsworth

Route S9

Chadderton South

Route S10

Chadderton North

Route S11

Route 1 Pennine Lanes

Route S12

Derker and Town Centre

Appendix 3: Grit Bin Criteria

Provision a New Grit Bin in New Location

All new requests are assessed on a points system depending on a road's location, taking into consideration the factors set out in the assessment criteria below.

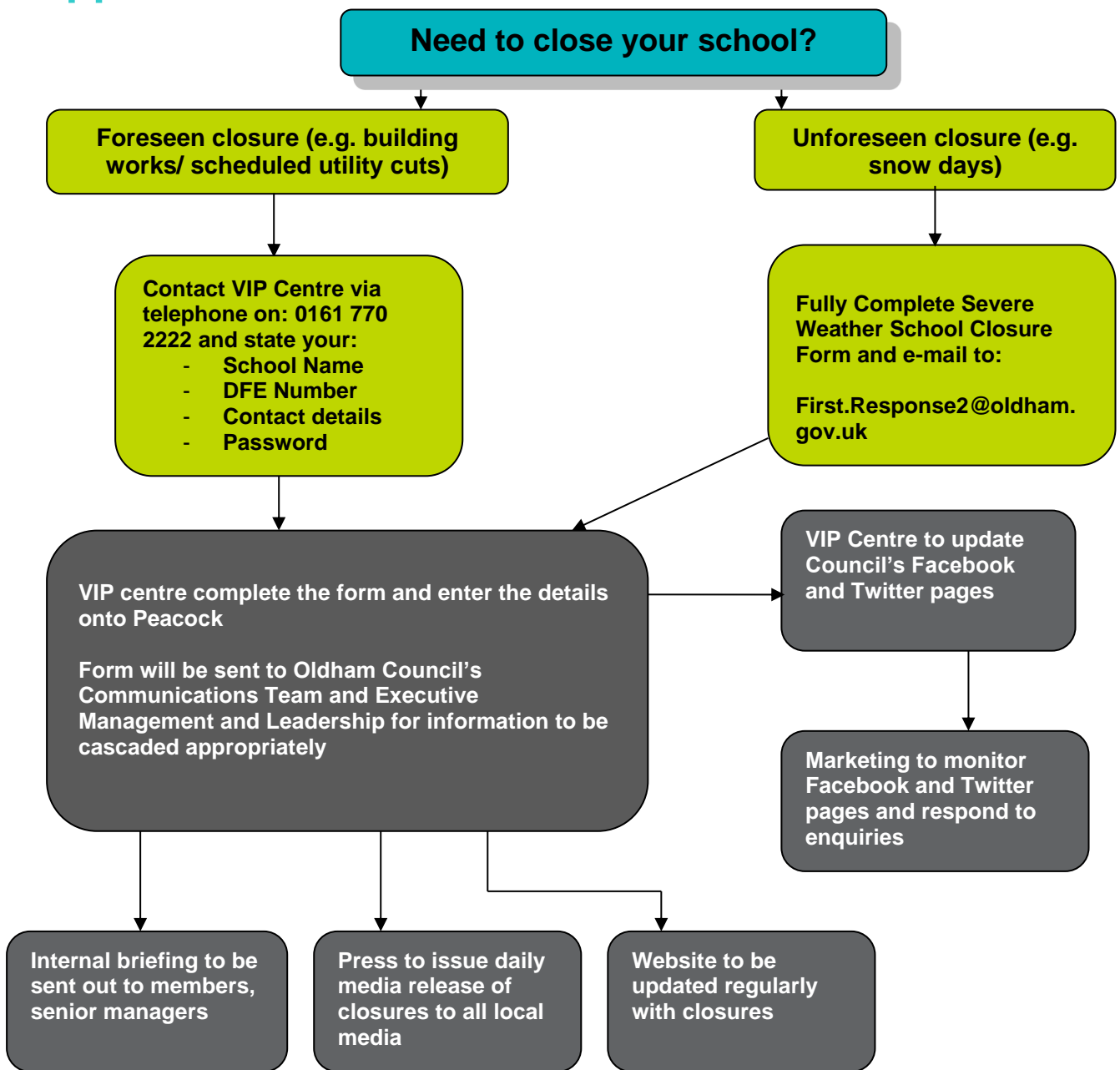
Currently a location has to score at least 125 points to be considered for the placement of a new grit bin. Funding for the provision and re-filling of bins which meet the minimum criteria will be met from the Council's Highways Maintenance Budget.

Grit bins will not be provided on **Unadopted Roads** as these highways are not maintainable at public expense.

Alternatively, District Partnerships may decide to sponsor new grit bins in their area providing they fund the provision and re-filling from their allocated budgets. The location of sponsored bins is not subject to the Highway's Assessment Criteria.

GRIT BIN LOCATION CRITERIA	POINTS
Height	
Zone A: Land over 200 metres	50
Zone B: Land between 150 and 200 metres	25
Zone C: Land below 150 metres	0
Highway Gradient	
Less than 5%	0
5 to 7.5%	25
7.5 to 10%	50
More than 10%	75
Distance to Next Grit Bin	
Less than 100m	0
100-200m	15
200-400m	30
More than 400m	35
Other Factors	
On Primary gritting route	-100
Approaches designated old person accommodation	50
Known problem with water	50
Specific problem at junction	25
High traffic generation location (eg School)	50

Appendix 4: School Closure Procedure



KEY:



***Please note all schools should continue to follow their own procedures for communicating closures to parents via text messaging, updating individual websites and emails via ParentMail**

NOTIFICATION OF SCHOOL / ACADEMY CLOSURE



due to SEVERE WEATHER EVENT

NAME OF SCHOOL / ACADEMY	Enter School Name
SITE ADDRESS	Street Address Address Line 1 Address Line 2 Address Line 3 Town Name Post Code
EDUCATION NUMBER (DfE)	Insert number
NAME OF HEAD / PRINCIPAL	Insert Name
SCHOOL TELEPHONE NUMBER	Insert Number
SCHOOL E-MAIL ADDRESS	Insert e-mail address
SCHOOL FAX NUMBER	Insert fax no. (optional)
STATE REASON FOR CLOSURE	Click here to enter text.
DATE & TIME OF CLOSURE	Insert Date Insert Time (24hr)
NAME OF SINGLE POINT OF CONTACT (POC)	Insert Name
MOBILE NUMBER FOR SINGLE POC	Insert Number
EXPECTED DATE / TIME OF REOPENING	Insert Date Insert Time (24hr)
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION	Example of wording: ALERT: (NAME OF SCHOOL) has been closed today (DATE) due to (REASON). Please visit www.oldham.gov.uk for more information.
<i>Internal Use only</i> ENTERED ON PEACOCK <input type="checkbox"/> Tick when entered	BY: Insert Name DATE: Insert Date TIME: Insert Time (24hr)

Please e-mail completed form to First.Response2@oldham.gov.uk

Appendix 5: 4 X 4

Vehicle	Registration	Service Area Users
4X4 Pick-up	TBC (Hired)	Fleet
Navarra	ML14 UTJ	Saddleworth District
Navarra	ML14 UTN	Highways
Navarra	ML14 UTU	Oldham District
4X4 Pick-up	SH67 RVV	First Response
4x4 Pick-up	TBC (Hired)	Helpline Response (hired)

Appendix 6: HR Guidelines

Guidance for Managers

The aim of the Council's Winter Service Plan is to facilitate and co-ordinate Oldham Council's assistance to the communities of Oldham during winter weather conditions.

During extreme winter weather conditions a manager's aim is to maintain services. However some employees may make contact advising they are unable to get into work. Below is the information advised to all staff via Staff Briefing in adverse weather as a reminder of work responsibilities.

Winter weather advice for staff

Staff are reminded that they have a duty to provide services to the public. The council must provide essential services to ensure safety of life and limb, maintain access to key public areas and operate vital support services.

To minimise disruption to council services office-based staff should ensure that they take any relevant equipment home (e.g. laptops, mobile phones) whenever a severe weather event is forecast so that they are able to work from home.

Please be aware that council equipment **must not** be left unattended in vehicles.

If weather conditions deteriorate during the working day, SMT will make the decision regarding the release of staff. If a decision is made to allow staff to leave early, this will be managed to avoid gridlock and allow gritting vehicles access across the town centre. Once SMT have made the decision to allow staff to leave early, staff should liaise with their managers regarding finishing times, but those who live furthest away will be allowed to leave first. Staff providing essential services should follow their manager's instructions.

If weather conditions deteriorate overnight staff should check our website www.oldham.gov.uk for information. You should allow extra travelling time to arrive at work. It is important that staff should only attempt to get into the workplace if they can do so safely. If you experience difficulties, you must contact your line manager as soon as possible.

Where you are unable to attend work or need to leave early, you will be required to use your own time by for example taking flexi, annual or unpaid leave or by making up the lost hours at a later date. This is also the case should you be unable to attend work due to emergency child or dependent care needs e.g. because a school is closed.

Those using public transport should check the TfGM website at www.tfgm.com or telephone Traveline on 0871 200 2233 for updates and a list of services affected by the weather.

Car parking:

Employees who hold a car park pass: for those employees who have purchased a car park pass it will identify a particular car park. During severe snowy conditions, whilst the Council will attempt to clear all of its car parks of snow, it may not be possible to clear them all due to competing priorities. The Council will review its car parking provision during these conditions. This position will be communicated and will be reviewed on an on-going basis.

Appendix 7: Community Resilience Messages

Snow Code: Clearing snow and ice

There is no law stopping you from clearing snow and ice on the pavement outside your property, pathways to your property or public spaces.

For up-to-date guidance on clearing snow and ice from a road, path or cycleway please visit the government website at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/clear-snow-road-path-cycleway>

Winter driving

Driving in snow and ice

- Reduce speed and allow extra space to slow down – it can take ten times longer to stop in icy conditions than on a dry road
- use the highest gear possible to avoid wheel spin whilst maintaining appropriate speed
- manoeuvre gently, avoiding harsh braking and acceleration
- get into a low gear earlier than normal when braking on ice or snow, allow the vehicle's speed to fall and use the brake pedal gently to avoid the wheels locking
- ease off the accelerator but do not brake suddenly if skidding occurs
- use car visors and reduce speeds in the event of being dazzled by winter sun.

Before setting out

- Is your journey absolutely essential?
- Check if you can make your journey using treated routes?:
https://www.oldham.gov.uk/info/201062/gritting_and_winter_travel/929/gritting_routes
- Are the windscreen wipers and lights working properly?
- Are your windows, mirrors and lights clear, clean from frost and snow?
- Do you have a full tank of fuel?

In case you breakdown or become stranded

- Never leave home without a coat.
- Is your mobile phone fully charged?
- Do you have an in-car phone charger or powerbank?
- Do you have details of your breakdown/recovery service?
- Do you have a shovel or spade in your boot?
- Do you have Wellingtons or walking boots?
- Do you have a hi-vis vest or jacket?
- Do you have a warm flask and food?
- Does anyone know where you're going and the route you plan to use?

If you are forced to abandon your vehicle, give the local police details 101

Being prepared for winter weather:

- Have you checked if your house is on a gritting route?
- Plan where you will park your car
- Have you got sturdy footwear for walking in snow? Do you own any Wellington boots?
- Have a week's worth of food and safety supplies, including bread in the freezer, long life milk and non-cook foods. If you live far from other people, have more supplies on hand.
- Keep a water supply. Extreme cold can cause water pipes in your home to freeze and sometimes break.
- Learn how to shut off water valves (in case a pipe bursts)
- Have a supply of your prescription drugs and other medicine
- Have a wind-up torch and radio, in case of power cuts.
- Have you thought about producing a household emergency plan?
- Add the following supplies in preparation for winter weather to your emergency kit:
 - **Rock salt or table salt** to melt ice on walkways
 - **Snow shovels** and other snow removal equipment.
 - Also include **adequate clothing and blankets** to keep you warm.

If you become housebound you might find the following advice useful:

- Have regular hot drinks and at least one hot meal a day if possible, eating regularly helps to keep energy levels up during winter
- Wear several light layers of warm clothes
- Keep as active as possible

Be a good neighbour:

Elderly and vulnerable people are particularly at risk during times of cold weather. Ask in advance of bad weather if there is anything, you might be able to do to help friends or relatives.

During bad weather, be a good neighbour and check they have enough food, water, medical supplies, heating and adequate clothing. You could offer to do their shopping or you might offer to clear driveways or pathways so that they or their carers can move about more easily.

It might also be a good idea to set up a “buddy” system for people making essential journeys, so you can let people know you’ve got to your destination safely.

Warm Homes Oldham

Cold homes have a significant impact on people's health, one of the best ways to keep yourself well during winter is to keep warm. Keeping warm over the winter months can help to prevent colds, flu or more serious health conditions.

The Warm Homes Oldham scheme has been set up to help people who are struggling to heat their homes in Oldham; last year we helped over 1000 people through the scheme. If you are interested or know someone who would benefit from our help we will complete a home visit to see if we can help with any of the following:

- Heating improvements
- Insulation upgrades
- Help off a card/prepayment meter
- Help if you are in debt to your fuel supplier
- Help switching energy providers
- Advice on heating or boiler controls
- Benefits checks to see if you are claiming everything you are entitled to
- Help applying for grants for new a new gas supply

To book a home visit go to www.warmhomesoldham.org or call 0800 019 1084.