

SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD
Minutes of the meeting of the Scrutiny Management Board held on
Tuesday, 13th September 2011 at 6.00pm in the Civic Offices, Telford

PRESENT: Councillors D. White (Chairman), V. Fletcher, G. Green, A. McClements, R. Sloan, C. Turley.

IN ATTENDANCE

Councillors S. Davies, S. Bentley, D. Davies, R. Evans, I. Fletcher, K. Tomlinson, W. Tomlinson; Scrutiny Co-optees J. Gulliver, M. Ward, R. Williams; Richard Partington, Interim Chief Executive; S. Jones, Scrutiny Group Specialist; T. Clarke, Scrutiny Officer.

SMB-4 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

None

SMB-5 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Cllr. Sloan declared an interest in matters relating to DWP.
Cllr. V. Fletcher declared an interest in matters relating to CAB.

SMB-6 **CO-OPERATIVE COUNCIL AND CO-OPERATIVE COMMISSION**

All Scrutiny Assembly members had been invited to take part in this part of the meeting.

Cllr. S. Davies, Cabinet member for Co-operative Council, Partnerships & Environment and Richard Partington, Interim Chief Executive, gave a presentation on Telford & Wrekin – A Co-operative Council. A number of key points from the presentation were highlighted:

This highlighted a number of the challenges and opportunities facing the borough and Council, the national policy context, the ethos and approach of the Co-operative Council, the Council's emerging priorities, examples of Early Adopter schemes developed through a co-operative approach, the Council's programme of community and staff engagement and the key elements of the Co-operative Council – "new ways of working, new solutions, better outcomes – a co-operative borough".

In addition to the information provided in the presentation, the following information was provided in response to members' questions and comments:

- With regard to Town & Parish Councils, the Co-operative Council approach is not about pushing responsibility for services onto Town & Parish Councils. The Cabinet member had spoken to most of the Town & Parish Councils, and many had come forward themselves with ideas about how they could get involved to do things better, including by working jointly with other Town & Parish Councils. However, it had to be recognised that savings must be made, and that Town & Parish Councils have a role to play.

- Options for alternative models for managing and running libraries and other services were being considered. The Localism Bill due out in the autumn would give voluntary and community groups the right to challenge local authorities over their services, and under a European Directive this could provide an opening for private sector providers to move into the market. The Scrutiny Chairman brought the Cabinet member's attention to a previous scrutiny report which had recommended that libraries were considered to offer the First Point customer service. A copy of the report had been sent to the Cabinet member for Health, Wellbeing & Leisure.
- With regard to the Co-operative Commission, around 60 people from partner organisations, voluntary and community groups had been invited by Cabinet members or volunteered to join the Commission which brought together a wide range of expertise. Many were staff working in front-line services with an understanding of issues, ideas about how things could be done differently and the barriers to change. There are huge funding issues to be addressed, and the Commission will look at new ways of delivering services co-operatively for less money. The first meeting of the Commission would be on 16th September and the Commissioners would choose 6-7 topics to review. Reviews would be carried out by sub-groups and recommendations would be agreed at the end of the review. The Commission's report and recommendations would go to full Council to debate.
- In response to a suggestion about targeted benefit take-up campaigns, there was an issue with the grant funding allocated by the Council to the CAB for the provision of benefit advice/support but the Director of the CAB was on the Co-operative Commission and would work with partners on this.
- The Building Schools for the Future (BSF) contract framework and procurement process had been used to facilitate supplier, skills and training opportunities for local people, and this was also being looked at as part of the framework 2 procurement for 2012. The BSF funding was for the construction of the schools, and additional facilities (e.g. sports) were funded by the Council.
- Brookside had been selected as the pilot ward for Co-operative working because of the existing good links into the community and because of economic and social factors. The parish council and local residents would lead this work with the Council. Governance arrangements would be developed by the end of September and work would start from October. The work would be on-going with an iterative process of learning and applying lessons. Feedback can be given in the future.
- With regard to a question about the possibility of staff in leisure services moving into a Trust to run leisure services, members were assured that this was one option that was being considered and that the idea had come from staff at an employee engagement session as part of the service review, and quite independently from the Co-operative Council work. Staff felt that a Trust model would give them the freedom to deliver services in a more commercial way. However, at this stage, there has been no proposal to create a Trust, rather the work-stream was looking to explore

how the freedoms and flexibilities identified by staff could be realised with the service still a part of the Council.

- In response to a question about the relationship with RSLs and how the Council could encourage them to act responsibly, the Cabinet member said that a fresh look would be given to this, and that it was about building relationships. Lessons could be learnt from Brookside where the Council, Wrekin Housing Trust and the Parish Council worked well together. Mapping had also been done in Woodside/Brookside to identify private landlords so that the Council could see what could be done to ensure private landlords take responsibility for their property.
- Regarding the distribution of funding across the borough and whether resources would be concentrated in deprived wards to bring them to a better standard leaving other wards with no funding, the Cabinet member replied that there was a balance to be struck. There was limited capital for regeneration, but it does not always take capital to regenerate an area - much could be done by local people and human resources to revitalise an area.
- Cllr. V. Fletcher said that progress had been made in schools and businesses to champion Fair Trade, and the Cabinet member would bring the campaign to the attention of Cabinet colleagues.

SMB-7

SCRUTINY HANDBOOK

Members considered the report of the Scrutiny Group Specialist on the changes to the Scrutiny Handbook. The Scrutiny Handbook had been updated to reflect the new scrutiny arrangements, but there were some issues arising which were set out in section 5 of the report. There was a discussion of these issues and members agreed the changes they wished to be made.

RESOLVED

- **That any Scrutiny Member may attend any Scrutiny meeting to hear the discussion, and questions will be allowed at the Chairman's discretion.**
- **That there should be no more than one Spotlight or In-depth review undertaken by a Scrutiny Committee at any one time and that reviews should be undertaken in order of priority.**
- **That where there are competing demands between Scrutiny Committees for staff resources which cannot reasonably be met, the Scrutiny Management Board will decide how resources will be allocated.**
- **That the Chairman of the Scrutiny Management Board may use their discretion to allocate scrutiny suggestions directly to a Scrutiny Committee where the suggestion is urgent, or where the suggestion clearly relates directly to the work of a particular Scrutiny Committee.**

- That urgent suggestions referred to a Scrutiny Committee may be included in the work programme if agreed by e-mail by a simple majority of the Committee.
- That the number of co-optees on a Scrutiny Committee should not exceed 50% of the number of elected members, other than the Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee which should not exceed the number of elected members.
- That once agreed, the Scrutiny Work Programme would be circulated to the Scrutiny Assembly and senior officers, posted on the website with a link to the Scrutiny Meetings and that a *What's On?* leaflet would be e-mailed regularly to all members with information about forthcoming meetings.
- That the Scrutiny Handbook would be made available electronically and hard copies would only be printed where requested.
- That the Head of Governance, in consultation with the Chairman of the Scrutiny Management Board, is delegated to make minor changes to the Scrutiny Handbook when required.
- That the final version of the Scrutiny Handbook would be sent to the Scrutiny Management Board for approval prior to publication.

SMB-8

POLICY FOR CO-OPTING SCRUTINY

Members considered the report of the Scrutiny Group Specialist on changes to the Policy for Co-opting Scrutiny Members. The proposed changes to bring the Policy up to date were agreed. There was a discussion about the 4 year restriction on former elected members becoming eligible to apply to be a scrutiny co-optee and the process for agreeing the changes to the Policy.

RESOLVED

- That the proposed amendments shown as tracked changes in Appendix 1 of the report on the Policy for Co-opting Scrutiny Members are made.
- That the requirement in the person specification in paragraph 3.3 that co-optees must not have been a member of Council in the past 4 years should be removed, but that to ensure the independence of co-optees, in such cases the co-optee should not take part in scrutiny of policies in which they were part of the decision making process as an elected member.
- That the Chairman of the Scrutiny Management Board would approve the final version of the Policy to be incorporated in the Scrutiny Handbook.

SMB-9

SCRUTINY SUGGESTIONS

Members considered and discussed the new Scrutiny Suggestions in Appendix E for inclusion in the work programme.

RESOLVED

- **Suggestion 1, the condition of footpaths for wheelchair users, would be included with scrutiny of highways maintenance by the Scrutiny Management Board.**
- **Suggestion 2, decriminalisation of on-road parking, a report on decriminalisation and parking enforcement would be brought to the Scrutiny Management Board.**
- **Suggestion 3, Choose Your Home, would be included in the work programme of the Scrutiny Management Board.**
- **Suggestion 4, the provision of accommodation based on national priorities, would be included in the work programme.**
- **Suggestion 5, Section 106 agreements, would not be included in the work programme due to legislative changes expected in the Localism Bill.**
- **Suggestion 6, patient care at PRH, it was suggested this would be discussed with the Local Patient Involvement Network (LINK).**
- **Suggestion 7, the impact of a managerial culture in schools, would be considered further**
- **Suggestion 8, planning enforcement, would not be included in the work programme due to expected changes to planning legislation in the Localism Bill.**

SMB-10

SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD FORWARD PLAN

The Chairman suggested that the Scrutiny Committee meetings should include a session for questions from members of the public, and this will be discussed further. It was agreed that future meetings would be held at 3.00pm of the first Monday of alternate months starting on Monday, 7th November.

The meeting ended at 8.00 pm

Chairman:

Date:

TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL

CABINET - 22 SEPTEMBER 2011

HIGHWAYS MAINTENANCE – WINTER SERVICE REVIEW

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

PART A) – SUMMARY REPORT

1.0 SUMMARY OF MAIN PROPOSALS

- 1.1 Review the operation and effectiveness of the Winter Service with regard to operational issues encountered during the 2010/11 winter season arising from the prolonged cold spell and national pressures in the delivery of road salt.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the recommended changes to the Winter Service outlined in **Appendices 1 and 2** of the report be adopted, namely:
- The existing above regional average coverage for salt treatment of our road network to remain the same for 2011/12 with the addition of one location-the access route to Harper Adams College.
 - Existing Grit Bin Policy to remain for 2011/12 but to continue close working with Parishes and community groups for local co operative opportunities
 - To provide greater resilience and efficiencies – revise our rate of spread of salt from 15g per m² to 10g per m² for frost prevention and from 30g per m² to 20g per m² for snow events, which will meet DfT guidance and will be the same rate of application as all other regional Council's and the Highways Agency
 - Continue to improve communication channels and access to information for residents and businesses within the Borough

3. SUMMARY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

COMMUNITY IMPACT	Do these proposals contribute to specific Priority Plan objective(s)?	
	Yes	<i>Environment plan – Winter resilience</i>
	Will the proposals impact on specific groups of people?	
	No	<i>Borough Wide</i>
DELIVERY DATE	<i>Winter Maintenance season commences 1st October 2011</i>	
FINANCIAL/VALUE FOR MONEY IMPACT	Yes	<i>The proposed changes to the rate of salt spread will reduce salt costs per call out. As detailed within</i>

		<i>the main report expenditure on winter maintenance in recent years has been significantly higher than the base budget available. A reduction in salt costs should help to contain costs. Expenditure on this service is, of course, heavily dependent upon the weather conditions. As in previous years any additional costs will have to be met from any available under spending in other service areas or from corporate contingency. Costs will be monitored throughout the winter period and reported as necessary. JAC 250811</i>
LEGAL ISSUES	Yes	<i>The Council has a duty under the Highways Act 1980 to ensure, so as is reasonably practicable, that safe passage along a highway is not endangered by snow or ice.</i>
OTHER IMPACTS, RISKS & OPPORTUNITIES	Yes	<i>The scope of the actions of the Winter Maintenance Service will impact on many aspects of life in the Borough including the environment, economy and community cohesion. The actions all impact on the Council's reputation.</i>
IMPACT ON SPECIFIC WARDS	Yes	<i>Borough-wide impact.</i>

PART B) – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

3.0 REPORT SUMMARY

- 3.1 In October 2003 the Government introduced an amendment to the Highway Act 1980 which placed a duty on Local Authorities to ensure, so as is reasonably practicable, that safe passage along a highway is not endangered by snow or ice.
- 3.2 In light of this legislation change the Council acknowledged that the previous policy fell short of the new Code of Practice and in September 2006 approved a new Policy for the forthcoming winter maintenance season. This policy extended precautionary salting routes to include schools, transport interchanges, industrial estates and strategic footways and cycle ways. The Policy has been further amended and strengthened in July 2009 and September 2010.
- 3.3 Due to the national shortage and distribution problems with road salt, the council in order to protect its network has increased its storage capacity from 1400 tonnes to 2700 tonnes over the past two years. This has led to increased storage costs and in some cases in order to maintain stocks, having to pay premium rates for salt deliveries during the winter season. At the start of the last Winter Maintenance season we were at full storage capacity of 2700 tonnes.

- 3.4 The winter of 2010/11 was at its most severe during the months of November and December, temperatures of minus 16 degrees being experienced in some areas. December was the coldest in the area since 1890 and together with early snowfall in November resulted in a significant increase in snow treatments to ensure the network remained in operation. Our existing salts stocks were put under significant pressure due to a shortage of national salt supplies and orders not getting through.
- 3.5 For the second winter in succession, it has been necessary to reduce salt usage in the Borough by introducing a revised 3 parts salt to 1 part grit mix. This resilience measure ran from 22 December through to the end of the winter season on 30 April 2011 in order to maintain stock levels. It was also necessary to reduce gritting to 5 primary routes only during the period of 22 December 2010 to 4 January 2011 to further preserve stocks. See Appendix 3 for records of turnouts
- 3.6 For the third year in succession, expenditure on winter maintenance has far exceeded normal levels. The 2010/11 service cost £653,487 against a budget of £425,440 resulting in an overspend of £228,047 which reflects the additional snow event and salt treatment of routes, grit and call out costs associated with the extreme winter weather conditions. This overspend was funded from specific service reserves and corporate contingency.
- 3.7 A more detailed performance review of the 2010/11 Winter Maintenance season is summarised in **Appendix 2** and identifies a series of service strands and conclusions, including:
- Salting Operations
 - Grit Bins
 - Salt storage.
 - Communication and advice and guidance
- Each service strand element carries a **service improvement recommendation**.
- 3.8 Each year the Council receives many requests to grit roads that are not included on the primary or secondary gritting routes. When considering any additions to gritting routes it is important that the current policy is rigorously applied. If the Council are to allow roads to be added to the existing gritting network that do not fall within the policy, it will be extremely difficult to decline further similar requests year on year. The Council will run a high risk of having inconsistencies within the policy and this carries a high probability of the Council having difficulties in defending its actions in Court as well as unsustainable increases in service costs.
- 3.9 Parish Charter: Parishes will be informed of any changes to treatment routes and other changes that affect their areas. During the winter season contact will be via the nominated Parish Council snow liaison representatives.

- 3.10 The grit bin inventory has been shared with Parishes to consider 'added value' grit bin locations. Any Parish can choose to provide additional grit bins if they should require them for local sites other than those provided for by Telford & Wrekin Council. Parishes will be expected to pay for the provision and salt replenishment of any additional bins.

4. **BENCHMARKING**

- 4.1 Having undertaken a recent benchmarking exercise with Midland Service Improvement Group (MSIG), it was found that our current Winter Maintenance Service route coverage is 41% compared to an average of 39% for the group. Also, as a local comparator – our network coverage of 41% is in contrast to Shropshire Council who cover 28% of their network.
- 4.2 Further benchmarking with MSIG identifies that we are the only Council out of 19 members who apply a higher rate of spread of salt per m² i.e. 15g per m² for frost prevention and 30g per m² for snow events. The regional norm is 10g per m² and 20g per m² respectively.
- 4.3 The lower application rate ties in with DfT guidance on salt usage reductions and increased resilience. Existing salt stocks at the start of the Winter season stand at 2700 tonnes, if the lower application rate is adopted, we would be using 900 tonnes less per normal winter season, equivalent to an overall stock level of 3600 tonnes. Therefore we will not have to consider a further increase of our stocks with the resulting increase in appropriate costs i.e. procurement, storage facility costs and land rentals etc. It will also benefit the environment with less mining, transport costs and fuel costs.

Procurement of a further 900 tonnes of salt including storage costs over and above existing stocks of 2700 tonnes would amount to an additional cost of circa £40,000. Should existing salt stock levels be retained and we don't purchase additional salt, but we continue to add grit stone at existing spread rates, as part of the treatment process, this would result in an additional cost of circa £87,000 for the 900 tonnes of grit stone required. This figure covers procurement costs, the resulting additional sweeping and landfill disposal costs.

- 4.4 We have shared this thinking with local emergency services and PCT and based on regional comparable service standards they are comfortable with a recommendation to apply the new spread, subject to review should difficulties arise during any severe weather events.

**Report prepared by David Bell, Public Realm Group Manager,
telephone 01952 384810**

Appendix 1 - WINTER SERVICE POLICY STATEMENT

1 INTRODUCTION

The Borough of Telford and Wrekin is the Highways Authority for all the adopted roads in the Borough except for the M54 Motorway and A5 Trunk road from the end of the M54 at Cluddley to Preston Roundabout.

The Highways Authority is responsible for work relating to snow, frost or ice on these roads.

The aim of the Winter Service is to provide so far as is reasonably practicable for the safe movement of road users along the highway network during wintry conditions. The Service operates between the 1st October and the 30th April i.e. the Winter Season.

A review of Winter Service Operations is undertaken each year before the start of the next Winter Season.

2 FORECASTING & TREATMENT OF ROADS

Two weather monitoring stations operate in the Borough, which with information from surrounding areas' stations and forecasting from the Met Office are used to determine the most appropriate action delivered at the best possible time.

We employ the Vaisala weather monitoring and bureau service who advise our experienced staff on optimising the salting of the roads at the most effective and economic times. However with the variable conditions we experience in this maritime climate it is not always possible to complete salting before freezing starts but we endeavour to complete salting as soon as is practicable within the constraints of our resources.

Roads to be treated

The main activities of the Winter Service are treating the highway to:

- 1 Try to prevent ice forming known as "precautionary salting"
- 2 Melt ice and snow already formed, "post-salting"
- 3 Remove snow

All the roads are divided into the "defined network" and the "non defined" roads dependent on their priority. The service aims to prevent ice forming (precautionary treatment) on the "defined network" which consists of main through roads and those serving centres of activity such as commercial, retail, employment, administrative and leisure. These are known as the "frost routes".

Frost Routes

The "frost routes" should be salted prior to the formation of frost by the fleet of gritters provided by Telford & Wrekin Services.

Primary Routes:

- A & B roads
- Roads serving fire, ambulance, police establishments
- Main bus routes in the following centres: Telford Town Centre, Dawley, Madeley, Newport, Ironbridge, Oakengates & Wellington.
- Access roads to transport interchanges

Secondary Routes:

- Other regular bus routes (The regular bus routes are defined as Monday to Friday routes with a minimum of one bus per hour during the main part of the day).
- Feeder roads to schools/colleges (roads linking main salting routes to main entrances)
- Main access roads on industrial estates (Halesfield, Stafford Park, Hortonwood)
- One access route to main villages/hamlets and minor sections of road for continuity.

Priority will always be given to ensuring that the Primary routes are treated before the Secondary routes.

The remainder of the roads are “non defined” and are not treated for a forecast of frost. However grit bins are provided at high risk sites such as steep hills, severe bends, etc.

Snow and ice routes

Roads to be treated at times of snowfall or prolonged icy periods following snow (post-treatment) are known as the “snow and ice routes”. The “snow and ice routes” consist of the “frost routes, the remaining main and secondary distributor roads and high risk sections of the local network.

In times of snow and prolonged icy conditions the “snow and ice routes” are ploughed, cleared or salted with the frost routes being treated as priority. This work is undertaken under our instruction by Telford & Wrekin Services, farmer operated snowploughs and if necessary local contractors. These activities are aimed at providing safe movement around the Borough between major centres and at least one access route to each hamlet.

When resources allow they will then be deployed onto the “non defined” routes dealing with problems in priority order.

3 TREATMENT OF FOOTWAYS AND CYCLETRACKS & DISTRICT CENTRES

Frost Routes

Footpaths/cycletracks and district centres that will be treated when frost is forecast are the “defined footway routes” at the following locations:

- 1) Adopted footpaths in Telford Town centre.

- 2) Footpaths serving the main shopping areas of:
- a) Wellington
 - b) Dawley
 - c) Madeley
 - d) Newport
 - e) Ironbridge
 - f) Oakengates

Snow & ice

In the event of prolonged snow or ice strategic footway/cycletracks will be treated in a priority order. The order starts with town centres, local district centres etc. It is not possible to clear all the footpaths within the Borough during these wintry conditions.

4 GRIT BINS

Grit bins in general are only provided on “non-defined” roads at high risk sites such as steep hills, severe bends, etc and only on the adopted highway. Their provision is determined by on-site risk assessments using a standardised set of criteria and then prioritised based on available resources. Grit bins are provided on the basis of self-help by the public and the service is limited to refilling the bins with salt and replacing damaged bins.

A limited number of grit bins are provided at key locations on the footway/cycleway network defined as routes promoted as Safe Routes to Schools.

Requests for new grit bin locations are considered only from Ward members, Parish & Town Councils or community organisations and contributions will be sought from these groups for provision and maintenance.

5 STAKEHOLDER REQUESTS

Local roads which have been highlighted for consideration for adding to the gritting routes and assessed against our policy and **do not** comply are:

Location	Comments
Ellerdine Heath to A442	This is a C Road and therefore does not fall within the Policy. It was suggested that Shropshire Council grit their section of this road. Having investigated the matter further – it is confirmed that it is not on their defined gritting routes and is dealt with on an ad hoc basis when the weather dictates. Could be added to our ad hoc list at times of severe persistent weather if salt stocks are adequate.
A41 to Puleston	This is a C Road and therefore does not fall within the Policy. It was suggested that Staffordshire County Council grit their section of this road. It is not on their defined gritting routes and if there has been any gritting it has been on an ad-hoc basis. Could be added to our ad hoc list at times of severe persistent weather if salt stocks are adequate.

Rodington to B5063	This is a C Road and therefore does not fall within the Policy. The main bus routes are from the B5062 through Rodington to the B4394 at Walcot. The 822 only uses the road from Rodington to the B5063. Could be added to our ad hoc list at times of severe persistent weather if salt stocks are adequate.
Cherry Tree Hill	This is a C Road and therefore does not fall within the Policy. This is used as a short cut by drivers which is why traffic speed is restricted with traffic calming measures e.g. speed humps. The defined route is the Queensway and Jiggers Bank primary routes. Numerous requests received from residents, should this road be added, existing grit bins would be removed, they would no longer be required. Could be added to our ad hoc list at times of severe persistent weather if salt stocks are adequate.
School Road, Hillside and Flatt Road, Edgmond	These are unclassified roads and there is no justification for them to be included on the gritting routes. Edgmond is well served by two gritting routes through the village including to and from St Peters Primary School.

Roads which have been highlighted for consideration for adding to the gritting routes and assessed against our policy and **comply** are:

Location	Comments
Caynton Mill Road, Edgmond	Unclassified road, however it is the access road to Harper Adams College and therefore covered by policy. Please note that the B5062 past the college is gritted.

Appendix 2 - WINTER SERVICE STANDARDS AND PERFORMANCE:

1. SALTING OPERATIONS

Winter Maintenance Service Policy – salting

The main activities of the Winter Maintenance Service are treating the highway to:

1. Try to prevent ice forming known as “pre-salting”
2. Melt ice and snow already formed, “post-salting”
3. Remove snow

1.1 Roads:

The service aims to prevent ice forming (precautionary treatment) on the “defined network” which consists of main through roads and those serving centres of activity such as commercial, retail, employment, administrative and leisure (which in the main are serviced as part of school sites or district centres. These are known as the “frost routes” .

Defined network:

Primary Routes:

- A & B roads
- Roads serving fire, ambulance, police establishments
- Main bus routes in the following centres: Telford Town Centre, Dawley, Madeley, Newport, Oakengates, Wellington and Ironbridge
- Access roads to transport interchanges

Secondary Routes:

- Other regular bus routes (The regular bus routes are defined as Monday to Friday routes with a minimum of one bus per hour during the main part of the day).
- Feeder roads to schools/colleges (roads linking main salting routes to main entrances)
- Main access roads on industrial estates (Halesfield, Stafford Park, Hortonwood)
- One access route to main villages/hamlets and minor sections of road for continuity.

1.2 Turnouts in 2010/11

Roads:

The total number of turnouts in 2010/11 was 92 compared with 154 in 2009/10. This compares with the 5 yearly averages for previous years of 95. It must however be noted that we conducted 22 double spread rates for snow events compared to a season average of 13.

Footways:

The total number of turnouts in 2010/11 was 41 compared with 38 in 2009/10. This compares with the 5 yearly averages for previous years of 25.

1.3 Salt usage

National Salt Shortage Impact:

Due to national salt demand and delays in deliveries, the council followed the national directive to conserve salt stocks. In turn, for the second year in succession we reverted to a 75/25 salt/grit mix. This took effect from mid December through to the end of March. The use of grit provided extra traction for vehicles but does cause maintenance problems in relation to street sweeping and gully emptying. It also causes a burden on disposal costs as the collected grit has to be dried before it is disposed of.

General Comment

It is evident that the last three concurrent cold winters have seen a significant increase in the use of salt and the numbers of turnouts have resulted in a significant increase in the year end costs for the Winter Service. This increase has been met from corporate funds given the service priority.

Benchmarking Standards:

It is recognised that our current Winter Maintenance Service Policy is to a higher standard than that of other Councils and is above the national average in terms of expenditure.

Having undertaken a recent benchmarking exercise with the Midland Service Improvement Group (MSIG), it was found that our current Winter Maintenance Service route coverage is 41% compared to an average of 39% for the group. Also as a local comparator our network coverage of 41% is in contrast to Shropshire Council who cover 28% of their network.

Further benchmarking with Midland Service Improvement Group (MSIG) identifies that Telford and Wrekin are the only Council out of 19 members who apply a higher rate of spread of salt per m² i.e. 15g per m² for frost prevention and 30g per m² for snow events. The regional norm is 10g per m² and 20g per m² respectively.

The lower application rate ties in with DfT guidance on salt usage reductions and increased resilience. Should we adopt the lower application rate we would be using 900 tonnes less per normal winter season and will therefore will not have to consider further increase our stocks with the resulting increase in appropriate costs i.e. storage facility and land rentals etc. It will also benefit the environment with less mining, transport costs and fuel costs.

1.4 Feedback from Community stakeholders

Feeder roads to schools and colleges

Despite the prolonged period of cold weather conditions during the 2010/11 winter season, the salting of feeder roads to schools has been successful in ensuring that schools have remained open.

Comments by the Capital & Facilities Manager were:

The winter maintenance programme proved very effective last year and as a consequence there were no school closures which resulted directly from road closures or dangerous surfaces caused by the ice or snow.

A request from Harpers Adams College has been received requesting gritting of the access road to the college.

Access roads to transport interchanges: Bus companies

Comments by the Area Manager, Midland Arriva (Telford) were:

I would have to commend the efforts of the council and say that we were very pleased with all your hard work in keeping roads open. Apart from locations with inclines, which were affected by the worst of the weather, our services continued to run

Main access roads on industrial estates

Halesfield, Stafford Park, and Hortonwood – all routes were kept open during the frost and snow events.

1.5 Conclusion: salting operations

Feedback from key stakeholders suggested that the gritting routes used in 2010/11 provided a satisfactory level of protection to road even with the salt/grit mix being introduced. It is however encouraging to confirm there were minimal reported accidents as a result of wintry conditions on the road network.

Formal complaints to the council increased compared with previous years. Regretfully this was to be expected, considering the severe and long period of weather experienced meant that snow lay on many untreated estate roads, particularly over Christmas. Between 1 November 2010 and 31 March 2011 we received eleven compliments and sixteen formal complaints relating to the winter maintenance service.

Feedback from customers would suggest that a mixture of increased information on the Councils web site, national & local media coverage including a series of radio & television interviews, public understanding and the excellent service delivery from the council and contractor throughout the prolonged period all helped to ensure public frustration were contained to a relative minimum.

Recommendation: Defined network

Given the overall effectiveness of the service performance across the current defined network, it is prudent for the routes to remain unchanged with the exception of the access road to Harper Adams College.

2. GRIT BINS

2.1 Current grit bin policy

The Council continues to provide in excess of 460 grit bins on non-treated roads that are considered high risk locations. These sites have been subject to a risk assessment criteria or they remain in situ due to historical placement reasons. The number of grit bins we currently provide far exceeds the average compared to other Councils.

All high risk sites are now accommodated, however future requests for grit bins for community/public use provision can be on the basis of a co operative approach and/or financial contributions from community groups such as Parish Councils which the Council will assist in relation to purchasing and replenishing on their behalf.

Prior to the commencement of the 2010/11 and the forthcoming winter season, all Parish and Town Councils have been written to regarding local provision of grit bins and to seek their views on providing grit bins at their expense. This is only the case when the Council criteria for sighting a bin are not met. This has led to a successful take up with several Parishes wanting to engage.

Grit bins are provided on the basis of self help by motorists for use on the public highway. There is evidence from community feedback that grit bins are sometimes

requested and used for the gritting of private footpaths & driveways. We also receive complaints from residents regarding the siting of them near their properties and Parishes are mindful of this.

During 2010/11 as in past years there continued to be a number of 'one off' requests for grit bins which were made generally during snow events where drivers experienced difficulties with traction on untreated estate roads.

Some Parish Councils have enquired about the locations of grit bins in their area so that they can review whether they are meeting the needs of the community. An up to date inventory list and location maps will again be circulated to all Parishes prior to the start of the 2011/12 winter season. All grit bins will be numbered and have the prefix 'P' where Parish owned.

2.2 Conclusion: Grit bins

The number of grit bins installed and serviced is much higher than many other council's. Further consultations are in process with Parishes on the locations of grit bins in their specific areas so they may consider local demand and provision.

Recommendation: Grit bins

Given the current provision it is recommended that the Grit Bin Policy remains unchanged for 2011/12 and a co operative approach is more widely publicised on the website.

3. SALT STORAGE/USAGE

3.1 Effectiveness of changes to salt storage

Members may recall the difficulties experienced during the 2008/9 season and as a result of a national shortage, additional salt storage of 350 tonnes was created at the Granville House depot prior to the start of the 2009/10 season. This extended the total storage of salt to 1700 tonnes. Prior to 2010/11 permission was given to acquire a further 1000 tonnes, which was stored locally at a facility owned by Jack Moody on Redhill Way, Telford. Therefore at the start of the 2010/11 winter season salt stocks were at the maximum of 2700 tonnes

The 2010/11 prolonged winter weather conditions started earlier than previous years and as with every council in the country, we again experienced problems with salt deliveries similar to that encountered in 2010/11. The cold snap and snow falls in November and December together with extremely low temperatures for that period created a national shortage of salt requiring the reintroduction of the Government led Salt Cell.

This brought about resilience actions being imposed on all councils to reduce salt usage by up to 50% but for the majority of the time we were able to maintain a near normal service without any reduction to the gritting routes by introducing a 75% salt:

25% grit mix. However for the period 22 December 2010 to 4 January 2011 in order to maintain rapidly dwindling stocks of salt, it was necessary to reduce our gritting routes to the 5 main primary routes.

Following the severe winter of 2009/10 in order to increase resilience the DFT set up strategic reserve stocks of salt, from which authorities could request supplies. Salt deliveries were restricted by the DFT with priority being given to those authorities in a critical situation. Telford and Wrekin Council requested and received a total of 1084 tonnes. In addition due the uncertainties surrounding this process and the ongoing lack of domestic supplies it was necessary for the Council to be proactive and we sought deliveries from other sources.

- 200 tonnes Mutual Aid from Shropshire Council
- 1000 tonnes from JC Peacock (marine salt from Australia)

Further measures to preserve salt also included filling salt bins with grit and using grit for footways.

3.2 Impact of prolonged cold winters and the national salt shortage

The previous two winters had seen a significant increase in the amount of salt being used. In 2009/10 there were 5,345 tonnes used and 5,160 tonnes in 2008/9. However milder weather from the beginning of February 2011 through to the end of April 2011 resulted in total salt usage of 3964 tonnes. This compares to the 5 yearly averages for previous years of 3916 tonnes. Though it must be noted, during the time of national shortage, we had to pay a premium for winter salt orders and deliveries, including that from the strategic reserve stock. There are currently only three main suppliers of road salt in the UK

Salt Union (current supplier)
Cleveland Potash
Irish Salt

The salt barn at the Granville House depot now has the facility to accommodate some 1700 tonnes of salt which is equivalent to approx 40 turnouts for frost and 20 for snow. The additional stock of 1000 tonnes stored at Moody's will provide approx 24 turnouts for frost and 12 turnouts for snow.

In total this allows for 64 turnouts for frost turnouts and 32 for snow,

In normal circumstances this level of stock should be more than capable of providing resilience, however the last two severe winters have proved, despite the increased resilience that this may not be the case. The Government recommendation is to maintain not less than 6 days stock. If we were to have a really bad spell of snowfall, we could provide 16 days of double treatment twice a day which is far in excess of the Government recommendation.

3.3 Conclusion: Salt storage/Usage

Given the benchmarking findings highlighted in section 1 above, in order to further increase resilience for the Council and without the need to increase storage capacity and costs, consideration should be given to reduce the rates of spread of salt.

Reducing the rate of spread from 15 grams per sqm to 10 grams per sqm when pre treating for ice and from 30 grams per sqm to 20 grams per sqm when pre treating for snow, would result in the equivalent of 900 tonnes of salt being saved per average season. Therefore resilience would be increased to the equivalent of 3600 tonnes with no increase in procurement or storage costs.

The revised rate of spread is used by many other Local Authorities and the Highways Agency without any adverse effects, including locally both Shropshire Council and Staffordshire County Council. This proposed spread rate also falls within suggested national guidelines.

Recommendation: Salt storage/Usage

It is recommended that the current salt storage capacity remains unaltered for the 2011/12 winter season but in order to increase winter resilience the rates of spread of salt be reduced 15 grams per sqm to 10 grams per sqm and from 30 grams per sqm to 20 grams per sqm for the 2011/12 winter season.

4. COMMUNICATIONS

4.1 Positive Actions undertaken

In order to assist Elected Members, Parishes, the media and the community as a whole, the council provided access to a series of information channels which were available on the council website, in relevant customer services teams and electronically available to all Members & Parishes.

The information included:

- Borough wide maps indicating defined gritting routes
- Winter maintenance: Frequently Asked Questions
- Winter Maintenance – Facts and Figures
- Who to contact
- Daily service disruption information i.e. refuse & kerbside collections, schools, leisure sites etc.
- Notification of 'real time' gritting operations to all Ward Members, Parish and Town Councils.

There was also a series of meetings with Parish representatives which also assisted in developing the information above.

During the peak of the national salt shortage the council maintained daily contact with the media, GOWM Regional Resilience Team and a local 'virtual' Silver Command Group involving key emergency & public service representatives

4.2 Conclusion

Due to 'round the clock' monitoring and actions the council maintained effective communication throughout the very testing set of circumstances and received praise for its actions and approach

Recommendation: Communication

It is recommended that in future the same approach is adopted and a more proactive style of communication is developed with a particular emphasis on the council website and information to Parishes and co operative opportunities particularly around grit bins. This is to include up to date records and plans highlighting local grit bins.

Appendix 3- Winter Service: Record of turnouts

	2005/6	2006/7	2007/8	2008/9	2009/10	Ave over past 5 years	2010/11	Comments
Normal gritting 15gms	58	32	53	83	105	66	68	Most turnouts occurred during the months of November and December 2010 and January 2011
Double gritting 30gms	17	6	6	19	16	13	22	Salting for snow is at double the spread rate on all routes
Wet spots e.g. drainage problem	15	3	11	18	33	16	2	Reduced gritting operation to conserve salt stocks on known wet areas
Total turnouts for roads	90	41	70	111	154	95	92	
Footpaths	22	14	20	32	38	25	41	
Total salt used in tonnes	3991	2074	3008	5160	5345	3916	3964	

SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD

MEETING - MONDAY NOVEMBER 7 2011

Pothole Repairs and the Quality of Repairs

1. **Purpose**

- 1.1 Following the Scrutiny suggestions, questions and comments received, this paper aims to provide a background understanding on pothole repairs and to give an initial response to the comments raised. In turn, it is hoped that this paper will assist in determining any course of action which the Scrutiny Management Board may request.

2. **Background**

- 2.1 **What is a pothole?** Potholes happen when the road surface breaks up to expose the layers beneath. Traffic is one factor but the main cause is water freezing and thawing during the winter. Although road and footway surfaces are all porous, water builds up on the surface. This creates pressure and results in holes forming from below. Potholes can develop very quickly and it is often impossible to predict where they will appear, although there may be regular patterns on some road sections. Potholes do not mean there's a problem with the road construction.

- 2.2 **How to fix them permanently?** Wherever possible the Council will make permanent repairs to potholes. The teams will excavate a larger area around the pothole, fill in the hole with bitumen macadam and compact it or use our innovative Pothole Busting machine. The machine uses infra-red to heat up the material around the pothole it then adds bitumen macadam, re-levels and then compacts the whole patch.

When permanently reinstating in bound materials i.e. tar macadam, the sides of the opening should be vertical and not 'V' or 'A' shaped. However ideally a reinstatement should be 'stepped and overlapped' between layers, therefore the opening at the bottom of the reinstatement is smaller than that at the surface, basically a stepped 'V'.

- 2.3 **Why do we make a Temporary Fix?** On occasions, repairs are carried out when the road is scheduled for resurfacing or programmed patching work in the coming weeks and months.

They are also carried out when temporary road closures/diversions or substantial traffic management is required to provide a safe working environment for permanent repairs to be made. This takes time to arrange so a temporary repair removes the hazard in the interim period.

When undertaking temporary repairs, in order to remove a hazard quickly, it is acceptable for the sides of any reinstatement not to be vertical. In all cases however tack coat i.e. bitumen sealer should be applied to all surfaces against which the tar macadam is to be laid.

- 2.4 **How is a repair sealed?** Highway authorities and their contractors have to take care to ensure, that the seal between old and new surfacing does not create a hazard for cyclists and motorbike riders. Due to a number of well documented accidents that occurred throughout the country, through the lack of skid resistance of a bitumen sealant, the practice of over banding or surface sealing of the joint ceased. The reliance to ensure a good seal being placed upon the sides of the excavation as outlined above.

However, it has taken the industry a number of years to come up with suitable solutions, bitumen tape and resin sealant impregnated with fine stone aggregate, are just a couple of the treatments now available. All have to comply with DFT specifications before they can be widely used on the highway.

The council is currently trialling a process of cold applied resin containing graded aggregates and is also intending to trial heat applied tape containing graded aggregates. It must be noted that over banding products should not be used on bends or in braking areas of junctions etc, where the most grip from vehicle tyres are required, due to their relatively low skid resistance properties.

- 2.5 **Can Tarmac be laid hot or cold?** Tar macadam can be laid hot and cold, depending on circumstances and suitable materials. The council uses hot tar macadam for all permanent repairs and depending on the ambient air temperature and road surface temperature, care must be taken to ensure that the material is laid as quickly as possible, as a hot material can rapidly cool. The council only uses cold lay products on some of its temporary repairs, particularly when an urgent repair is required or on busy stretches of road when traffic management restrictions dictates the need for a temporary repair
- 2.6 **What should a quality job look like?** Due to the condition of the surrounding road surface, it is not always possible to achieve a straight or vertical joint, however in the majority of road surfaces this should be possible.

Depending on the depth of the reinstatement and road type, it is not always necessary to use unbound granular sub base materials as a base for tar macadam, but they are used when required and depths allow.

If potholes are identified as being sub standard by a Member, Parish or community, it would be difficult without knowing specific locations, how to respond to individual examples. Therefore if they reported, it is important to gather as much detail as possible on the location. It must also be noted that the methods used when reinstating an unclassified lane differ to those used when reinstating main carriageways and estate roads

- 2.7 **Are Pothole repairs inspected?** Not all are inspected but random checks are carried out by the council and any remedial works identified are rectified by the contractor at their own expense. In addition, all reports of sub standard reinstatement are investigated and those reinstatements found to be sub standard, are again rectified by the contractor at their own expense.

All repairs carried out by the councils contractor are covered by a 12 months maintenance period, subject to the failure be attributed to poor workmanship.

SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD

MEETING - MONDAY NOVEMBER 7 2011

CONDITION OF FOOTPATHS FOR WHEELCHAIR USERS

1. Purpose

Following the Scrutiny suggestions, questions and comments received, this paper aims to provide a background understanding on the condition of footpaths in particular for wheelchair and mobility impaired users and what the Council does to improve and repair footways and to give an initial response to the comments raised. In turn, it is hoped that this paper will assist in determining any course of action which the Scrutiny Management Board may request.

2. Background

- 2.1. It is acknowledged that the condition of footways and the availability of infrastructure such as dropped kerbs and formal pedestrian crossings can be a barrier to resident's access to services and facilities. The following statement has been included in the Council's current Local Transport Plan 2011 – 2026:

3.3.5 Promotion of Sustainable Transport Modes to Support Access to Key Services

One of the concerns for many residents is the condition of footways and the availability of infrastructure such as appropriate crossing points. The lack of a consistent approach to the provision of dropped kerbs, for instance, on pedestrian routes in the older town centres is a particular problem. The Council seeks to make improvements to the footway network in association with routine maintenance operations and where practicable will develop, in consultation with residents through Town and Parish Councils, programmes for identifying targeted footway improvements for implementation as resources permit.

The above approach would be complimentary to work undertaken at a local level to promote walking in towns and villages, for instance the nationwide 'Walkers are Welcome' initiative. Wellington has recently been accredited as a 'Walkers are Welcome' town, acknowledging that the town is walker-friendly. As well as providing organised walks and other social events, the scheme allows communities to benefit from regular networking opportunities with other 'Walkers are Welcome' towns.

2.2. Funding for Footway Maintenance & Improvements - A key factor determining the ability of the Council to maintain and improve the condition of the highways network, including footways, is the availability of funding. The grant funding provided by the Department for Transport for all highways maintenance and integrated transport (highways improvements), through the Local Transport Plan, for 2010/11 to 2014/15 is shown in Table 1.

Table 1 Local Transport Plan Capital Allocations 2011-2015 (000s)

	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14*	2014/15*
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
IT Block	2,115	880	939	939	1,320
Maintenance Block	2,432	2,832	2,743	2,661	2,506

*Indicative allocations

2.3. The above allocations extend to expenditure on all highway activities, including carriageway and footways, street lighting, traffic signs and road markings and bridges.

2.4. Additional funding can be obtained from revenue budgets (reactive highway maintenance) and capital funding is obtained from other sources, e.g. Council capital. Footway (and other highway) infrastructure can also be improved through the planning application process, e.g. through a Section 106 agreement with a developer.

2.5. Currently the Highways & Transport capital programme includes £619k allocated to footway maintenance and £40k for footway improvements (£30k dropped kerb provision and £10k for new footway links). In addition footways in borough towns have benefitted from the regeneration schemes that have been delivered in locations such as Dawley, Wellington and Newport improving the condition of town centre footways.

2.6. A summary of the combined Highways & Transport capital programme (excluding regeneration schemes on the highway i.e. Oakengates) is shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2 2011/12 Highways Capital Programme - Summary

Combined Summary	Funding Source				
	LTP (M)	Council Capital	LTP (IT)	Contributions	Totals
Principal Roads: Maintenance	173				173
Classified Roads: Maintenance	994	590			1,584
Unclassified Roads: Maintenance		919	80	35	1,034
Footway Maintenance	98	521			619

Lighting Renewal and Maintenance	400				400
Barriers & Guard Rail: Renewal and Maintenance	25				25
Drainage: Maintenance		160			160
Structures: Renewal and Maintenance	700				700
Signing and lining renewal and maintenance	225	25	143		393
Miscellaneous Maintenance	125				125
New/Upgraded Infrastructure (footways)			184 (40)	127	311 (40)
Sustainable Travel			164		164
Safety Schemes	92		209	200	501
Total by funding source	2,832	5,015	880	362	6,289

3. Issues Relating to Footway Maintenance

- 3.1. The Council's draft Transport Asset Management Plan (TAMP) is the plan which identifies the value of the Council's highway assets, their current condition and what should be done in terms of whole lifecycle maintenance for each type of asset (i.e. carriageways, footways, street-lights, structures). There are approximately 1400km of footways in the borough and they are estimated to have a value of around £110m, which equates to around 12% of the total value of the Council's assets. These figures exclude public rights of way and footpaths that are owned by the Council but which do not have highway status (which includes routes such as the Silkin Way), where there are approximately a further 1000km of routes in the borough.
- 3.2. The current level of investment in planned footway maintenance is around 10% of the total capital available for highway maintenance and improvement schemes, but this is below the level identified in the TAMP. To improve the condition of the footways in the borough the TAMP estimates investment is required of around £1m per year for the next five years. The average design life of a footway is 25 – 30 years (i.e. you would expect a footway to need full reconstruction around every 25 – 30 years), at present levels of spend footways are likely to be reconstructed once every 50 – 60 years, this takes into account additional resources that have been made available for highway maintenance.
- 3.3. To put the information on footway assets and maintenance into context, the Council is responsible for around 1000km of carriageways with an estimated value of around £675m. Over the last three years the Council has spent an average of £2.6m per year on highway maintenance, compared to around £3m which is the annual figure for investment that the TAMP identifies to improve the overall condition of the borough's carriageways.
- 3.4. To limit the deterioration in footway condition over recent years the Council's planned maintenance programme has focussed on slurry sealing or surface dressing footways as opposed to full reconstruction to extend the usable life

of a footway. These types of maintenance allow more footways to be treated, but do not reconstruct the footway, the focus is on resealing the footway surface to prevent deterioration. This does provide benefit to all footway users, but limits opportunities for physical improvements for mobility impaired groups. It is likely in future years' planned maintenance programmes that the Council will have to consider doing more full reconstruction of footways, as the option of surface dressing has been used on a number of footways in the borough previously; this will mean that shorter lengths of footways are repaired/ replaced each year; to give an indication full reconstruction of a 'tarmac' footway is around £23 per square metre, surface dressing costs around £1.50 per square metre.

3.5. As part of the development of LTP3 the Council was asked to consider a target of having 100% of footpaths 'disabled accessible' in ten years. The LTP recognised that the Council should do all it can to make sure footways are accessible, but that a target of 100% was not appropriate. There are locations in the borough particularly in Ironbridge and the borough towns where historic and physical constraints mean that it is virtually impossible to provide a disabled accessible footway without buying private land.

4. What does the Council currently do?

4.1. In addition to the planned footway maintenance programmes the Council operates a dropped kerbs programme with a capital budget of around £30k per year (this has been maintained at this level even though the DfT capital budget from which it is funded has been reduced by around 55%). This programme is operated on a request basis, where residents submit a request for dropped kerbs and they are provided using the funding until the budget for each year is fully committed; the budget enables around 20 dropped kerbs to be provided per year. Where possible dropped kerbs are incorporated as part of other planned maintenance and improvement schemes, and sections of footway are often improved through schemes such as Safer Routes to School schemes.

4.2. Examples of dropped kerbs installed recently include: -

4.2.1. Wombridge Road – A number of dropped kerbs were installed along this road to help residents access the local shops.

4.2.2. Bridgnorth Road, Madeley – Dropped kerbs were installed as part of a footpath scheme to improve access for residents of Severn Gorge and the surrounding area to access nearby bus stops.

4.2.3. King Street – Wellington – Dropped kerbs were installed along the road to allow mobility scooter users to travel along King Street to reach PRH.

4.3. As part of regeneration schemes for the borough towns disabled groups have been consulted on footway designs. For example, in Newport the project team walked the route with a visually impaired resident to understand issues about navigating the town centre with a guide dog; comments from the site visit were used to improve the design.

4.4. The Council has secured around £3.5m of funding from DfT for sustainable transport projects in the borough, this includes upgrading the Silkin Way and

the link between Telford Central station and the town centre, which will provide improvements for disabled use. In addition the Council is developing proposals to make the Box Road two-way which will include providing more footways and crossing points in the town centre.

- 4.5. As part of developing the annual capital programme the Council has, wherever practicable, used a matrix approach for identifying and delivering integrated transport (improvement schemes) in order to secure value for money. In this way greater priority has been given to schemes that achieve more than one objective, from the mix of improving road safety, reducing congestion, improving access, improving the environment. We have also taken opportunities to combine works activities to reduce disruption to the public and minimise traffic management costs. The best example of this is the annual 'spring clean' on the A442 Queensway where activities such as sign cleaning and replacement, barrier repairs, grass cutting etc have been concentrated in a two week period under one Traffic Management regime (road and lane closures).
- 4.6. There is, however, scope to extend this approach to other activities across the highway network. An improvement we are therefore looking into the development of future capital works programmes is the introduction of a route treatment approach to maintaining the highway network. In this way, for instance, where carriageway repairs are identified on a stretch of road, we would seek to look at the condition, camber and width of footways and provision of drop kerb crossing points, traffic signs and road markings, street lights, barriers etc and bring these up to standard at the same time. Whilst this may result in larger but fewer highway schemes in the future, this would result in a more co-ordinated approach to highway maintenance and improvement across the Borough. Clearly, this approach may help improve the quality of the overall street, but will be constrained to the level of resources available which is the over-riding influence on what can be done to improve and maintain footways in the borough.
- 4.7. The Council is now doing more work in supervising utility company works to ensure that utility company reinstatements do not become footway problems of the future.

5. What do our residents tell us?

- 5.1. The Council takes part in an annual National Highways & Transport (NHT) survey, giving detailed feedback on highways and transport issues in the borough. For 2011, the NHT survey shows that Telford & Wrekin scores well compared to other authorities on resident satisfaction with accessibility around the borough.
- 5.2. Feedback on footway condition shows the Council performing averagely compared to other authorities in terms of resident satisfaction, but satisfaction levels are around 50% (compared to around 30% for carriageway condition); around 65% of residents responding to the NHT survey were satisfied with where footways are provided.