

## **Streets Ahead Proposals on the future of the Winter Maintenance Service**

### **Have your say**

We are consulting on our proposals for the future of our Winter Maintenance Service. This includes:

1. Reducing our Priority 2 precautionary gritting routes
2. Reviewing the location and number of grit bins across the city
3. Not recruiting any new Snow Wardens

This document details our proposals and explains:

- How the current Winter Maintenance Service is run
- What the proposed changes are for each area
- How the consultation process will take place and how to take part
- What happens once the consultation process has been completed

If you would like to take part in this consultation please read this document to help you better understand each of the proposals. The consultation questionnaire can be completed in a number of ways, including:

- Online at [www.sheffield.gov.uk/winter](http://www.sheffield.gov.uk/winter)
- Pick up a questionnaire from any Library, First Point or the Town Hall, complete it and return it to us either by placing it into the box provided, or
- Return it to us by freepost to:

Streets Ahead Highway Maintenance  
Corporate Mail Facility  
FREEPOST NEA5527  
Town Hall  
Sheffield  
S1 2ZZ

To have your say, please complete and return the questionnaire by **Friday 25 July 2014**.



## Background

During the winter, we aim to keep priority roads and pavements across the city safe and, as far as reasonably practical, free from ice and snow.

The service currently includes:

- **Precautionary gritting**
  - Gritting roads on our precautionary gritting routes when freezing temperatures are forecast to reduce the risk of ice forming and snow settling. The routes are categorised as Priority 1 and Priority 2. We also grit the busiest pavements.
  - The Priority 1 routes cover the major arterial routes and busiest main roads across the city.
  - The Priority 2 routes cover the other main roads, link roads, roads where key public service facilities (such as schools, doctors and care homes) are located, and main routes to less populated areas.
  
- **Snow clearance**
  - In the event of heavy snow, snow ploughing and gritting initially takes place on the Priority 1 and Priority 2 routes.
  - We then begin working through the rest of the city on a priority basis carrying out snow ploughing and gritting until every street in Sheffield is accessible. The prioritisation is based on the next days' black bin collections to reduce disruption.
  - We also clear snow from the busiest pavements.
  
- **Grit bins**
  - We currently provide over 2,000 grit bins across the city for members of the public to use to help clear roads and pavements.
  
- **Snow Wardens**
  - Over the years we have asked members of the public to volunteer to become Snow Wardens within their community. These Snow Wardens helped clear snow at times of wintry weather. These wardens have been provided with a snow shovel, a high-visibility vest and guidance notes on how best to shovel snow. This advice is also available online at [www.sheffield.gov.uk/winter](http://www.sheffield.gov.uk/winter)
  - We currently have over 500 snow wardens across the city and are asking them to continue helping their community in times of wintry weather.

## Consultation Process

These are unprecedented times for Sheffield City Council. By 2015 we will have lost 50% of our funding from Central Government compared to the position five years ago. The amount of savings we need to find means we need to change the way we do some things or to do less.

The proposals detailed in this document have been designed to ensure we continue to provide an effective Winter Maintenance Service that reaches the vast majority of people within the city, whilst still achieving the efficiency savings needed.

The consultation will run from **Monday 2 June to Friday 25 July 2014**. Once the consultation has closed we will consider all the feedback we have received. A report will be written about the results and this will then be taken into account when the future of the Winter Maintenance Service is decided upon.

Between July and September 2014, you may see our gritting vehicles on Sheffield's roads. This is being done to test the practicality of the proposed routes but does not mean that any proposals have been finalised. Feedback from the drivers will be used to help refine our proposals.

When a decision has been made, information about the decision and the outcome of the consultation process will be available at [www.sheffield.gov.uk/winter](http://www.sheffield.gov.uk/winter).

The new Winter Maintenance Service will start on 1 October 2014.

## The Proposals

### 1. Reducing our precautionary gritting routes

Our current precautionary gritting routes have developed organically over the years and we need to reassess them to ensure we continue to meet the needs of the city. We have carried out a review of our existing routes. Although there is a statutory requirement on a Highway Authority to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that safe passage along a highway is not endangered by snow or ice, there is no prescriptive requirement in relation to winter maintenance. We have however, taken account of the Well-Maintained Highways Code of Practice for Highway Maintenance Management September 2013.

It is no longer reasonably practicable to continue gritting at current levels, but we recognise that the Quarmby Review recommends that a consultation process is carried out at the planning stage of routes to ensure that the gritting network best meets the need of services such as buses, businesses, and road users.

Priority 1 precautionary gritting routes, within Sheffield **are not** included as part of the proposal and will therefore remain unchanged.

A list of the Priority 1 precautionary gritting routes can be found at: [www.sheffield.gov.uk/winter](http://www.sheffield.gov.uk/winter).

We are, however, reviewing the Priority 2 routes. We have reviewed our current routes to ensure safe and reliable access to:

- Emergency facilities
- Public service access needs
- Public transport routes
- Main industrial and business centres of key importance to the local economy

Roads which are not in the Priority 1 precautionary gritting routes have been reviewed to see if they meet the criteria for inclusion in the Priority 2 precautionary gritting routes. These criteria are:

- 1) The road forms part of a major SYPTTE bus route, or
- 2) The road has a main entrance to a School, Doctors Surgery, Pharmacy, Care Home, Residential Children's Home or other critical public facilities, or
- 3) The road carries over 3000 cars per day **and** has a significant gradient (in excess of 20% / 1:5)

It is proposed that roads **not** meeting one of these criteria are **removed** from the Priority 2 precautionary gritting routes, whilst other roads **meeting** any of the criteria above are **added in**.

## **Snow Clearance**

The overall approach to snow clearance will remain unchanged. However, roads which as a result of not meeting the Priority 2 criteria in the new proposals will no longer receive a priority snow clearance service but will be cleared in advance of the black bin collections.

## **Footpaths and Pavements**

This proposal **does not** affect gritting on footpaths and pavements. We will continue to grit the busiest pavements in advance of freezing temperatures.

## **2. Reviewing the location and number of grit bins across the city**

We currently provide over 2,000 grit bins across the city for the public to use to help clear roads and pavements.

We are reassessing the location and use of each grit bin across the city against a pre-determined scoring system. The location of each grit bin is assessed and given 1 point for each of the criteria that it meets (outlined on Page 6). If the grit bin receives a score of 2 or more then it will remain on the network.

It is proposed that those grit bins that **do not** score 2 or more will be **removed** from the network.

It is also proposed that any routes removed as part of the review in section 1 of this proposal can have grit bins added in line with our standard grit bin criteria shown in the table on Page 6.

We will assess any requests for additional grit bins received as part of the consultation, against the criteria (outlined on Page 6).

As with all grit bin locations, when assessed, if they score 2 or more they will be considered for addition on to the network at those locations.

It should be noted that regardless of the score achieved:

- If a road is already included in the Priority 1 or Priority 2 precautionary gritting routes then that location is **unlikely** to be considered for a grit bin.
- If the potential grit bin location is within 200 metres of an existing grit bin, that location **will not** be considered for another grit bin.

Assessment	1 point for each criteria met
Grit bin is situated:	
On a road that has a drainage problem	
On a road that has a steep gradient of 1 in 5 (20%)	
On a bend that has a radius of less than 50 metres	
On a junction	
On a road that has a main entrance to sheltered housing	
On a road that has a main entrance to a school	
In an isolated area	
Near traffic signals (within 20m)	
Near a roundabout (within 20m)	

### 3. Not recruiting any new Snow Wardens

In recent years, members of the public have volunteered to become Snow Wardens within their community. These Snow Wardens helped clear snow at times of wintry weather. They were provided with a snow shovel, a high-visibility vest and guidance notes on how best to shovel snow. This advice is also available online at [www.sheffield.gov.uk/winter](http://www.sheffield.gov.uk/winter)

We currently have over 500 Snow Wardens across the city and are asking them to continue helping their community in times of wintry weather. However, our proposal is to **not** recruit any further Snow Wardens or replacing any Snow Wardens who no longer wish to be a Snow Warden.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### 1. Why are you reviewing the Winter Maintenance Service?

These are unprecedented times for the Council. The amount of savings that need to be found does mean that we need to change the way we do some things or to do less. Therefore, we are reviewing our Winter Maintenance Service to ensure that it provides an effective and efficient service and in times of wintry weather we continue to keep the city moving.

### 2. What information have you considered when reviewing the Winter Maintenance Service?

The following considerations have been taken into account when developing the proposals for the future of the Winter Maintenance Service:

- Well-Maintained Highways Code of Practice for Highway Maintenance Management September 2013.
- Traffic flows
- Population data
- Bus route information
- Information about the location of key public facilities including schools, healthcare facilities and business centres

### 3. How much will the proposed changes save?

It is anticipated that the proposed changes to the service will save approximately £100,000 per year.

### 4. How will the proposals affect me?

Most people in Sheffield will not be affected by the proposals as the Winter Maintenance Service to the vast majority of roads will remain unchanged.

### 5. What is precautionary gritting?

Precautionary gritting is when we spread salt on to the roads when ice or snow is forecast. We monitor the weather and road conditions carefully throughout the winter and precautionary grit to keep priority routes as free from ice and snow as possible.

### 6. Why do you not grit cycle routes?

We grit cycle lanes if they are on roads that form part of the precautionary gritting routes. Unfortunately we do not have the resources to grit all cycle lanes and off-road cycle paths.

**7. Does the Winter Maintenance Service cover all roads in Sheffield?**

No. We do not grit or clear snow from un-adopted or private roads.

We are also not responsible for the following roads which are managed by the Highways Agency:

- Motorways
- A631 (Tinsley Lower Deck)
- A616 (Stocksbridge Bypass)

**8. How many miles of road do you currently grit?**

Our precautionary gritting routes currently cover 720 miles (59%) of the road network in Sheffield. Under our proposal they will cover approximately 610 miles (50%) of the road network.

**9. I've seen gritters out already – why is this?**

In preparation for the winter, it is essential that the proposed gritting routes are driven to see how they work in practice and to gain feedback from the drivers to help refine the proposals.

This does not mean that any proposals have been finalised.

**10. How can I help myself and others during the wintry weather?**

- Be prepared – make sure your vehicle is prepared for winter and that you check weather forecasts before travelling.
- Follow snow clearing advice if you're planning to clear snow – available at [www.sheffield.gov.uk/winter](http://www.sheffield.gov.uk/winter)
- Check on elderly and vulnerable neighbours and relatives during wintry spells
- Follow advice about staying healthy during the winter – available at: [www.nhs.uk/winterhealth](http://www.nhs.uk/winterhealth)

**11. What happens next?**

The consultation will run from Monday 2 June to Friday 25 July 2014. Once the consultation has closed we will consider all the feedback we have received. A report will be written about the results and this will then be taken into account when the future of the Winter Maintenance Service is decided upon.

When a decision has been made information about the decision and the outcome of the consultation process will be available at [www.sheffield.gov.uk/winter](http://www.sheffield.gov.uk/winter).

The Winter Maintenance Service will start on 1 October 2014.