

APPENDIX G

Consultation Feedback and Analysis

A total of 1133 consultation responses were received in response to the winter maintenance consultation. 1093 of these were completed via the online questionnaire and 40 were completed via the paper copies distributed to libraries, First Point centres and the Town Hall reception.

A. Priority 2 Precautionary Gritting

With regards to Precautionary Gritting, having had opportunity to read the consultation proposals and browse an interactive map, the first section of the questionnaire was a drop down menu from which respondents were asked to select an option to reflect their opinion as to whether the proposed criteria for roads to be included in the Priority 2 precautionary gritting network were fair and reasonable.

38.79%	Did not select an opinion
34.77%	Selected "Not Fair"
18.3%	Selected "Fair and Reasonable with Some Reservations"
6.22%	Selected "Fair and Reasonable"
1.92%	Selected the "Not Sure" option.

In addition to selecting an opinion on the proposed criteria, respondents were offered a free text box in which to provide any supplementary commentary to support their opinion.

Of the respondents very few suggested other clear alternative criteria which they deemed to be more appropriate criteria for a road to qualify for inclusion as a Priority 2 gritting route.

The alternative criteria that were suggested included

1. Height / Altitude
2. Quality of surfacing on the road
3. Grit bus routes in priority order
4. Population density (grit to villages of more than 15 dwellings)
5. Gradient and Traffic Flow – alternative thresholds and separation of criteria
6. Lack of alternative routes

Note that the list above is not exhaustive and some respondents suggested school bus routes and emergency services accesses but they are covered elsewhere in this report. Others mentioned the time of day and priority support to private sector staff but those are criteria the service is unable to act upon.

We have commented on the alternative criteria suggestions below.

1. Height / Altitude

This has been suggested as height above sea level affects temperature.

Temperature is used to help to guide the decision making process for when we grit, not which routes we include in the precautionary gritting network. If roads subject to frequent low temperatures were used as a criterion then little used tracks would be gritted just because they have a high altitude whereas well used important routes but which are at a lower level would not.

The Council has numerous controls in place to ensure that winter service delivery takes account of climatic and thermal capacity differences within the area. This includes 4 weather monitoring stations across a range of climatic domains, as well as sophisticated forecast modelling software which informs the proposed treatment regime and times. For areas over 200m altitude falling within the Priority 1 and 2 Precautionary Gritting networks, the forecasting stations can often trigger a precautionary gritting action solely in these areas, even when no gritting is required below 200m above sea level.

Significantly more gritting takes place in targeted areas based upon this site specific climatic information. There has also been a significant amount of work undertaken in developing thermal mapping to ensure that the Authority has sited weather stations in the optimal locations to gather the most accurate and reflective thermal and climatic information in order to make effective decisions of where to treat and the optimal time to commence that treatment.

In a typical winter, this tailored weather forecasting results in significantly more gritting runs taking place on roads in the precautionary gritting network in higher areas than in urban areas.

2. Quality of surfacing of the road

One comment was received stating that the quality of surfacing of the road should be a defining factor as to whether precautionary gritting should be provided.

Given that the Council is now 2 years into a 5 year project to refurbish the highway network, which includes extensive resurfacing of roads, it was felt that the Streets Ahead project would provide significant improvements over the next 36 months to the condition of the highway network which would mitigate this concern without the need for this to be a criteria.

3. Grit bus routes in priority order

The current proposal is to grit all SYPTE bus routes, which we believe if approved by Highways Cabinet, reflects the wishes of this comment. The review is about the criteria for the roads we grit rather than the order they are gritted which is more operational.

4. Population Density – should grit to villages with over 15 dwellings

Whilst we have not used population density as a criterion we have ensured that the gritting routes serve settlements of population. A map showing population density is included at Appendix I to the main report

5. Gradient and Traffic Flow – alternative thresholds and separation of criteria

A number of respondents suggested changes to the threshold of 3000 vehicles a day or the 20% gradient thresholds. The thresholds are identified so as to reflect a reasonably trafficked steep road and these routes are those that we would expect more of the public to use and the gritting of every single steep road is not currently done and could not be done in the future.

Also it is not possible to use either gradient or traffic volumes separately as that will result in steep roads that are hardly used or flat roads with reasonable traffic flows being gritted.

However, officers reviewed the gradient and researched when steep roads were signed and established that a threshold of 10% was used for signing. The figure of 10% is supported by the use of this figure by another core city, Manchester City Council in its winter service. In light of this, a decision was made to reduce the gradient threshold to 10%.

6. Lack of alternative routes in the Stannington area

This issue has been partially addressed by the outcome of the refinements to our proposal which results in alternative routes in that area.

Some 459 of the 1133 (40.5%), respondents despite not providing alternative precautionary gritting criteria, provided some other form of commentary.

The comments fall into 9 broad categories:

	Comment	% response
1	Persons asking for their street to be gritted, suggesting that their street met the criteria but had been omitted	45.44%
2	Felt the plans would cause gridlock or felt the routes forced drivers to use main roads rather than their preferred rat runs / cut through routes	15.4%
3	Concerns over cutting off rural areas and businesses	9.42%
4	Persons stating that the Council should grit every road and pavement in the City	8.97%
5	Concern over additional accidents or strain on the NHS	8.07%
6	Other general queries and comments	5.08%
7	Queries around gradient calculation methodology	3.14%
8	Suggesting that the Council should cut other services and leave gritting unaffected	2.69%
9	Council tax related queries	1.79%

We have responded to each of the comment categories below.

1. Persons asking for their street to be gritted, suggesting that their street met the criteria but had been omitted

295 requests about specific streets were received these mentioned 68 different roads for review. The 20 most requested roads were:

1	Hagg Hill	41 requests
2	Hangingwater Road	25 requests
3	Stephen Hill	23 requests
4	Brown House Lane	18 requests
5	Hollins Lane	17 requests
6	Coldwell Lane	11 requests
7	Rails Road	10 requests
8	Dore Road	10 requests
9	Blackbrook Road	9 requests
10	Lodge Lane	9 requests
11	Station Lane	9 requests
12	Skew Hill Road	8 requests

13	Long Lane	7 requests
14	Common Lane	6 requests
15	Watt Lane / Tetney Road	6 requests
16	Brookhouse Hill	4 requests
17	St Quentin Drive / Twentywell Road	4 requests
18	Blake Street	4 requests
19	Brincliffe Edge Road	4 requests
20	Mayfield Valley	4 requests

82 other streets were raised by 88 respondents, although not explicitly asking for them to be gritted, each of these was also reviewed individually for complete fairness of the process. Many were found to have already been included or reviewed after earlier parts of this process. Many were existing priority routes with no recommendation to change. A couple were new issues that were fully reviewed accordingly. As such all requests were evaluated regardless of the number of requests received.

In addition, 3 requests were received for roads which were proposed to continue to form part of the Priority 2 network to be considered to be upgraded to Priority 1.

These were also evaluated but found to not warrant Priority 1 Precautionary gritting status.

A re-evaluation of every road requested was undertaken.

This has resulted in one of 7 possible outcomes for every road queried:

- **Proposed for removal, no longer being removed**

Typically where mapping errors or anomalous data have been corrected as a result of consultees bringing these to our attention.

Strength of feeling around school bus routes being included in the Priority 2 Precautionary Gritting Network has led to a number of essential school bus services being included as part of Criteria 1 "Bus Routes".

- **Proposed for removal, still to be removed**

Roads where no significant new information has come to light which would impact on the outcome – these will still be removed as not meeting the criteria.

- **Proposed for addition, still to be added**

Roads where the decision to include has been welcomed

- **Proposed for addition, no longer to be added**

Roads where mapping errors or erroneous data have been corrected as a result of consultees bringing these to our attention

- **Not included in the consultation, now to be added**

Roads which were not proposed for either inclusion or removal from the Precautionary Gritting Routes but where new information has come to light as a result of the consultation showing the road fulfils one of the core criteria for inclusion.

- **Partly included in the consultation, no change needed**

The respondents having read the list of changes had not consulted the map which showed that only part of a road was changed and so their point was not valid.

- **Not included in the consultation, not to be added**

These were found not to meet the criteria.

A full list of roads affected by changes as a result of consultation feedback and the reasons for these changes to the Priority 2 Precautionary Gritting Network are included in **Appendix J**.

The Council received numerous comments regarding how the proposal affected the Bradfield area. The Council has been able to respond to a number of these concerns and a map showing the changes in the Bradfield area from the proposal to this final consultation outcome is included as **Appendix K**.

2. **The plan will cause gridlock / you are forcing drivers to use main roads rather than our preferred rat runs / cut through routes.**

9.42% of respondents made comments relating to the wider issue of traffic flow as a criterion.

The general cause for concern raised was that drivers currently choose to use a number of “rat runs” or interlinking roads to avoid driving along more heavily trafficked routes or risking encountering traffic jams during rush hour times.

The main area of concern raised by respondents was the Malin Bridge area. A number of roads have been reintroduced to the Priority 2 Precautionary Gritting Network as a result of the consultation which will help to mitigate this concern. For example, the corridor between Manchester Road and Rivelin Valley Road (Stephen Hill / Hagg Hill) has been reinstated following the assessment of further traffic count data taken over a number of different days / times of year, which exceeded the criteria threshold. In addition, the gradients encountered on the corridor exceed 10% which based on the revised criteria makes this corridor suitable for reintroduction to the gritting routes.

3. Cutting off Rural Areas and Local Businesses

9.42% of respondents raised concerns that the revised routes may cut off rural areas, and also made comments around the impact that gritting routes have upon local businesses.

In response to this concern, a Western access route has been devised taking on board consultee feedback. This will provide a gritted link running through the rural areas in the West of the City via a number of villages in an attempt to further bolster access from rural areas to the Priority 1 and 2 gritting network and ensure that these areas are kept open for business and that residents are not cut off.

This new Western access route has been devised based upon population density mapping layers in order to best serve the most populated areas and identify settlements requiring access to this strategic connecting route.

In terms of the effect upon businesses, The Well Maintained Highways Code of Practice for Highways Maintenance Management states that the Council should seek to provide safe and reliable access to main industrial and business centres of key importance to the local and regional economy.

Unfortunately some remote, isolated businesses currently fall outside of the treated network and there may be some further ones which do so as a result of the proposed changes. A number of consultation responses cite a fear of being cut off during heavy snow. The Council wish to reiterate that these areas will still receive snow clearing services as this service is being retained.

4. The Council should grit every road and pavement in the City

8.97% of respondents suggested that they felt the Council should make provision to grit every road and pavement in the City.

The Well Maintained Highways - Code of Practice for Highways Maintenance Management in paragraph 13.1.9 advises that:

“Given the scale of financial and other resources involved in delivering the Winter Service it is not reasonable either to:

- Provide the service on all parts of the Network;
- Ensure running surfaces are kept free of ice or snow at all times, even on the treated parts of the network.”

Even with the proposal to reduce the extent of the precautionary gritting network, Sheffield will continue to provide precautionary gritting to a higher percentage of roads than the majority of other Local Authorities.

Footway gritting was clearly stated in all of the consultation documentation and proposal as being outside of the scope of this consultation.

5. Impact of the Winter Gritting Service on the NHS

All of the major Sheffield hospital sites (Northern General Hospital, Royal Hallamshire Hospital, Jessops, Charles Clifford and Weston Park) are served by Priority 1 Precautionary Gritting carriageway routes, which were not included in the precautionary gritting route review.

These sites also receive a supplementary priority service to the footways around their perimeters during snow conditions to ensure that access to these sites is protected and maintained.

The Council has held discussions with the NHS over their winter service requirements including attending the NHS emergency planning committee.

The Council’s snow clearance service has always been outside of the remit of this consultation, so remains unchanged. Despite this, concerns have been raised by respondents about how the NHS would deal with patients during heavy or sustained snowfall situations.

Emergency planners from the NHS have confirmed that they have always had and will continue to have their own contingency plans with regard to the collection and transport of patients requiring urgent medical treatment during adverse weather events.

In terms of people accessing hospital services for outpatient appointments or in the event of an accident, to date no comments or concerns have been received from either Yorkshire Ambulance Service or the NHS with regards to this, noting that the consultation only affects Precautionary Gritting in advance of temperatures dropping below freezing.

During sustained heavy snowfall events, processes are in place for the Council to work with key NHS staff and emergency planners on a daily basis and we make best endeavours to support the NHS in its own arrangements to help critically ill patients to access hospital treatment. The NHS makes clinical decisions to ensure that patients are dealt with in order of greatest need.

6. Other general queries and comments

The most commonly raised general comments and queries fell into two categories:

- a) Those who felt that the cost of insurance claims against the Council would cancel out, if not exceed any cost saving made as a result of the changes.

In the 5 year period from 2009 to date the Council received a total of 47 claims for compensation relating to the Winter Maintenance Service. Of the claims received, only 10.6% related to the roads which were not subject to precautionary gritting. All of these were successfully repudiated

In view of this, the Council does not anticipate any increase in compensation or associated legal costs as a result of the review of Precautionary Gritting Routes.

- b) Those querying why the consultation had been undertaken in summer months rather than during the winter when it would be more topical.

The Council notes that the Well Maintained Highways Code of Practice for Highways Maintenance Management makes recommendations in section 13.2.4 that Authorities should consult with key stakeholders and utilise the time outside the winter season to put policies and plans in place.

Operationally this allows time for route optimisation exercises to be undertaken and ensures sufficient time is set aside for drivers to carry out route familiarisation so that the new routes run in an effective manner.

Consulting outside of the winter period allows officers sufficient time for all consultation responses to be given due consideration and evaluation and appropriate changes to be made.

7. Queries around gradient calculation methodology

3.14% of respondents asked technical queries around criteria, in particular how gradient were calculated.

Gradient is calculated as elevation gain over 100m divided by 100 m multiplied by 100. A 10 metre elevation gain over 100 metres would therefore be a 10% gradient.

For the purposes of the consultation, any gradient of this severity over a 100 metre length - including partial lengths of a road or street, which met this criterion in combination with the traffic flow criteria were taken into account for provision of gritting.

8. Suggesting that the Council should cut other services and leave gritting unaffected

2.69% of responses fell into this category, with suggestions for alternative cuts which could be made across the full spectrum of other Council services.

9. Council tax queries

1.79% of respondents made queries about council tax.

These fell into three categories:

- I. Those suggesting they would withhold Council tax payments if gritting ceased on their street
 - a. Any taxpayer who chooses not to pay their Council Tax as due will be subject to recovery action. Such action can result in additional costs being added to their debt and these costs could be significant if the debt remains unpaid.. We would urge all taxpayers who are able to pay their council tax to do so and on time.

- II. Those suggesting Council tax would only need to increase by a few pence per head of population per year in order to meet the target £100,000 cost saving, therefore Council tax should be increased marginally and the service left untouched with the extra funds raised.
 - a. Whilst the Council recognises the thinking behind this suggestion, it also recognises that this argument could also be made in defence of any service facing difficult budget decisions, with the overall impact being a significant increase in council tax. When considering this, the Council will take account of many issues including the fact that central government has passed legislation which allows the Secretary of State to invoke a referendum if a Council increases council tax beyond an amount specified by the Secretary of State. For the financial year 2014/15, the level of increase was set at no more than 2%. The cost and impact of staging a city wide referendum on the rate of council tax increase would be significant with no guarantee that the money would be recovered.

- III. A number of residents of Bradfield suggested that they paid a higher rate of Council tax (to cover the provision of Bradfield Parish Council), but that this additional Council tax payment was not reflected in the level of gritting service which would result from the proposals.

Each of the three Parish Council's in Sheffield set a council tax precept each year in order to assist it in meeting the costs that it will incur in the coming year. This precept sets the amount of Council Tax income that the City Council will pass over to each Parish Council. This income is used by the Parish Council to provide services and facilities that are not funded by the City Council. The additional council tax paid by residents of the three Parish Councils therefore does not form part of the funding for services such as gritting which are provided by the City Council. The Councils were offered the opportunity to pay for additional gritting but this was not of interest.

Responses other than submitted questionnaires

Members of the public were also able to use a dedicated phone number and email address to gain further information about the consultation. These methods were used if the public had any specific questions about either the proposals or the consultation process itself.

46 members of the public used these methods to gain further clarity or information about the proposals and consultation process. All of these calls and emails were logged and each was responded to and asked to either complete an online questionnaire or to pick up a paper copy from libraries, First Point or the Town Hall reception.

Petitions, letters and notable emails received about precautionary gritting

In total 6 petitions were received in relation to the Winter Service consultation. These petitions were received from:

- Barry Croxall and Jane Thompson, The Three Merry Lads – 398 signatures
- Residents from Bradfield – 65 signatures
- Keep Bradfield Gritted, Online petition – 109 signatures
- Keep Bradfield Parish Gritted Action group – 411 signatures
- Cllr Matt Dixon on behalf of the residents of Bradfield Parish – 680 signatures
- Liberal Democrat Party – 1078 signatures

The majority of the petitions raised concerns about roads proposed to be removed from the Priority 2 gritting network in the Bradfield area. The petitions named specific roads that they felt should not be removed and if they were removed this would have a negative impact on the residents and businesses of Bradfield.

The comments and concerns that were raised in the petitions have all been logged and assessed as part of the consultation analysis. The roads questioned have been assessed against the criteria and recommendations have been made in accordance with this.

The petition that was received from the Liberal Democrat Party asked for the proposals for the 100 miles of Priority 2 gritting routes to be stopped and the

volunteer Snow Warden project to be restored. Once again these comments have been analysed and assessed with the other consultation responses.

Letters and correspondence were also received from MPs and a number of Councillors. Each of these letters either raised concerns about the Winter Service proposals on behalf of their constituents or were raising concerns on their own behalf as representatives of their areas.

Each of the queries were logged and assessed as part of the consultation analysis.

B. Grit Bins

The next group of questions were surrounding the proposed criteria for provision of Grit bins. In all, 1133 consultation responses were received. Similarly to the questions for Precautionary Gritting, a drop down menu from which respondents were asked to select an option to reflect their opinion as to whether the proposed Criteria for provision of a grit bin were fair and reasonable was supplied.

43.5%	Did not select an opinion
24%	Selected "Not Fair"
14.5%	Selected "Fair and Reasonable with Some Reservations"
13%	Selected "Fair and Reasonable"
5%	Selected the "Not Sure" option.

A free text box was supplied for respondents to provide comments or concerns about the proposed criteria for provision of a grit bin and another was provided to enable them to suggest new grit bin locations.

Responses within the free text box were significantly more focussed than those received for the Precautionary Gritting question. Almost every comment received included some form of request for either provision of additional grit bins or retention of existing grit bins. Unfortunately, only around 15% of those requesting retention of an existing bin mentioned the location of the bin in the free text box.

A large volume of the requests for new bins were from residents wishing to make a pre-emptive request for provision of a grit bin if the planned changes to the precautionary gritting network resulted in their street losing the precautionary gritting service.

There were 4 categories of grit bin comment received:

	Comment	% response
1	Requests for additional grit bins including requests for multiple (or additional) grit bins at the same site	55.9%
2	Requests for existing grit bins to be retained	28.9%
3	Respondents stating their reliance upon the grit bin in their local area	10.86%
4	Complaints about maintenance / filling time or abuse of existing grit bins	4.34%

We have responded to each of the comment categories below:-

1. New Grit Bin Requests

All 73 sites suggested by respondents to the consultation were subject to an assessment against the criteria.

Every site requested with accompanying location information met at least one of the criteria for provision of an additional grit bin.

3 requests were received for roads already on the Priority 1 Precautionary Gritting Network.

42 requests were received for roads already on the Priority 2 Precautionary Gritting Network.

28 requests were received for roads not on the Priority 1 or Priority 2 Precautionary Gritting Networks.

The way these requests have been dealt with has been covered later in this Appendix.

2. Requests for existing grit bins to be retained

The existing grit bin will be assessed against the criteria.

3. Respondents stating their reliance upon the grit bin in their local area

We appreciate the reliance of communities on their grit bins and that is why the vast majority of bins will be retained.

4. Complaints about the maintenance and filling time of existing grit bins

We have commitments in place for removal of graffiti, repair or replacement of broken grit bins, as well as a commitment to refill empty grit bins within 1

business day during normal conditions and within 3 business days during adverse weather.

All grit bins are proactively checked and filled, usually during September, in order to prepare for the coming winter, and then after any major snow events. However, we do rely upon public feedback to let us know when grit bins are running low or in need of attention.

Some positive feedback was received around the *gritmaps* iPhone application in these comments which although is not affiliated with the Council provides an additional means of reporting concerns with grit bin maintenance.

In addition to the requests for grit bins, there were further comments from just over 2.5% of respondents.

Although this only makes up a small percentage of the 1133 overall respondents, a number of the queries raised were also examined. These comments can be summarised into categories as follows:

	Comment	No. of comments
1	Voiced disappointment with the criteria	19
2	Everyone should have access to grit bins regardless of criteria	3
3	Alternative criteria suggested – altitude, access to bus routes and challenge of the 200 metre from next grit bin spacing	3

We have responded to each of the issues below:-

1. Voiced criticism with the criteria

1% of the total respondents stated that they felt the proposed criteria for provision of grit bins were too harsh and indicated that they felt a significant number of the existing grit bins in Sheffield would be removed if this were to be applied.

At the time the criteria were developed, an assessment of all the locations had not been completed. The assessment was completed during the consultation period and if a minimum 2 point threshold was used (as suggested in the

consultation documentation) it was found that 1371 of the 2012 grit bins would be removed. This is considered to be excessive. In view of this it is proposed that a reduced threshold of 1 point is used thereby retaining more grit bins on the network.

Around 400 grit bins currently on the Highway Network were found not to achieve the revised one point threshold and all of these grit bins will be removed. Requests for additional grit bins made during the consultation process will be considered against the criteria and any scoring 1 or more will have a bin provided. Furthermore, it is proposed that a review is undertaken of the P2 routes being removed to identify locations that meet the new threshold for grit bins. Overall it is anticipated that around 200 of the 400 removed bins will be relocated leading to a net reduction of 200 bins.

Unfortunately, it will not be possible to satisfy future requests for additional grit bins that meet the threshold score unless an annual review of usage shows there are little used grit bins available for relocations.

2. Everyone should have access to grit bins regardless of criteria

Unfortunately it is not financially viable to provide grit bins in the quantities required to ensure that everyone in Sheffield has access to a nearby grit bin. As has been previously reported in the benchmarking section of the report, both the current, and proposed provision of grit bins ensures numbers in Sheffield far exceed that of any other Local Authority benchmarked. The councils approach to the provision of grit bins is therefore believed to be appropriate and reasonable in all the circumstances.

3. Alternative Criteria Offered

1 respondent made a suggestion that access to bus stops should be prioritised in grit bin provision as an alternative criteria. 1 respondent suggested that the 200 metre distance between bins was too far in their opinion and could be reduced and another suggested altitude should be a criteria. We considered these suggestions. Officers considered that bus stops were covered by our Priority 2 precautionary gritting routes, the distance was a reasonable threshold and that altitude did not represent a valid criteria as all high level roads would then require grit bins regardless of the level of their traffic use.

C. Snow wardens

Similarly to the previous questions for Precautionary Gritting and Grit Bins, a drop down menu from which respondents were asked to select an option to reflect their opinion as to whether they felt the decision to not recruit any further snow wardens was fair and reasonable was supplied.

Once again a free text box was supplied for respondents to provide comments or concerns about the proposal to not recruit any further snow wardens.

Of the responses received, the overall opinions were:

44.28%	Did not select an opinion
21.04%	Selected "Not Fair"
13.36%	Selected "Fair and Reasonable with Some Reservations"
9.42%	Selected "Fair and Reasonable"
11.89%	Selected the "Not Sure" option.

It could be inferred from the lack of opinions given by respondents that the service is not valued and not considered by the public to be a front line winter service.

When evaluated, the comments received fell into one of 5 core categories:

	Comment	% response
1	Snow Wardens should be retained in light of the gritting cuts	74.5%
2	The removal of the Snow Wardens scheme will make no difference	13.2%
3	Unsure as to what the difference may be until it next snows	8%
4	We pay Council Tax and shouldn't be asking for volunteers to do this work	1.8%
5	Other comments	2.5%

We have responded to each of the comment categories below.

1. Snow Wardens should be retained in light of the gritting cuts

74.5% of respondents commented that Snow Wardens should be retained in light of the other linked cuts to grit bins and precautionary gritting routes as part of the winter maintenance consultation. What is important to note, is that the Council is actually retaining snow wardens and is only proposing not to seek further volunteers.

During the winter of 2013/14, the Council gave out 500 Snow Warden packs including items such as high visibility clothing and snow shovels to volunteers in the community who came forward and requested these items.

This significant expansion in the scheme meant that the numbers of volunteer Snow Wardens was increased by almost tenfold, and was facilitated by ceasing to provide the 1-tonne bags of salt to a small number of people but instead recruiting significantly more volunteers and providing basic snow clearing equipment and guidance documentation. The 500 new volunteers were also informed of the location of their nearest highway grit bin.

Although the Council is proposing to not recruit any further Snow Wardens, the Council has no plans to take back any of the equipment issued to these 500 individuals, and any member of the public or former Snow Warden are welcome to continue helping their community during adverse weather whilst following the guidance laid down in the Council's snow code.

2. The removal of the Snow Wardens scheme will make no difference

13.3% of respondents advised that they felt the snow warden scheme either did not have any impact in their community, or that they did not perceive that this change would have any negative impact upon themselves or their street. Similarly to the answer given above, the Council is retaining the current Snow Wardens.

3. Unsure as to what the difference may be until it next snows

8% of respondents felt there may be some difference from this change, but could not fully articulate what this difference may be until they had experienced a snow event without any further Snow Wardens being recruited.

4. We pay Council Tax and shouldn't be asking for volunteers to do this work

1.8% of respondents commented that footpath clearing should be undertaken by the Council and paid for out of Council Tax, rather than encouraging communities or volunteers to clear snow. Concerns regarding Council tax and its impact upon winter maintenance service provision have been previously addressed in this report.

5. Other Comments

2.5% of respondents provided other comments about the Snow Warden scheme. These other comments were predominantly that the respondent had never seen a snow warden in action, or that they had never heard of the Snow Wardens scheme.

A small number of existing snow wardens commented that this was not a significant change as last year they utilised grit bins on the highway network when required.

A number of comments also stated that they felt this was a free service so did not understand how a budget saving was being achieved by not recruiting any further volunteers but that view does not take note of the costs of recruiting wardens and providing them with equipment.