



Subject:	Provision of salt in communities during prolonged severe winter weather
Date:	12 February 2019
Reporting Officer:	Nigel Grimshaw, Director of City & Neighbourhood Services
Contact Officer:	Davy Neill, Emergency Coordination Officer

Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Some time in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

Call-in	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues
1.1	To identify proposals for a way forward on the supply and accessibility of salt for local communities during prolonged extreme weather conditions.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	The Committee is asked to <ul style="list-style-type: none">Note the issues set out in this report and agree the interim arrangements and proposal for a more sustainable solution.

3.0	Main report
3.1	Further to a report to Committee in March 2018 regarding the provision of grit for communities during prolonged severe weather conditions Members requested a legal opinion on the Council's position on supplying grit boxes for community use.
3.2	The report from Legal Services in December 2018 (attached) is clear that the statutory duty to treat roads and public places in snow and ice conditions falls to the Department for Infrastructure (Dfi). The legislation provides Dfi with an immunity if it fails to take action under the relevant statutory order. However, as there is no statutory requirement for the Council to treat roads or to provide grit boxes for public use, the Council would not have similar immunity.
3.3	The provision of grit boxes had been suggested as a means of improving resilience in local areas during prolonged extreme weather conditions, but as this is not a viable option. Officers are continuing to liaise with Dfi to consider alternative solutions.
3.4	Consideration was given to storing bags of salt in some of the sandbag containers located throughout the City. However, these containers, supplied by Dfi, are primarily for flood risk and resilience; they are made of steel and any leakage of salt would cause serious, corrosive damage rendering the containers useless for sandbag storage. There would also be an issue of managing the logistics of two different products out of the one container.
3.5	The current proposal under consideration is to store the salt in council owned premises giving priority to high risk locations, i.e. elevated areas more prone to snow and ice. Given the legal opinion we are not considering public access, these resources would be for Members to direct for use in the community. There are a number of options to be considered, for example, suitable locations, space, cost, weight of the bags, access arrangements, etc. However, Members are asked to agree the direction of travel and the interim arrangements set out below.
3.6	It is proposed that in the meantime during prolonged severe, high impact cold weather, existing stocks of salt (25kg bags) are made available <u>for Members' use in the community</u> , at appropriate council community/leisure centres or other council Sites. Higher elevation residential areas would be prioritised where icy conditions are more prevalent and there's more impact. Additional lower lying areas can also receive stocks of salt as appropriate depending on severity and impact.

3.7

Suggested higher elevation areas and centres for salt bags could include:

- Whitewell – Salt bags delivered to Finlay Park, Whitewell Road (*storage container required*)
- Ballysillan - Salt bags delivered to Ballysillan Leisure Centre
- Ligoniel - Salt bags delivered to Ligoniel Community Centre
- Glencairn/Highfield - Salt bags delivered to Highfield Community Centre
- Whiterock - Salt bags delivered to Whiterock Community Centre
- Lenadoon - Salt bags delivered to Glen Community Centre
- Lagmore/Mount Eagles - Salt bags delivered to store at Mount Eagles Playground

3.8

Suggested salt bag centres for lower elevation areas could include:

East Belfast

- Short Strand Community Centre (*not a Council Centre but would likely be needed – perhaps an agreement around liability could be provided*)
- Avoniel Leisure Centre (*closing Sep/Oct 2019*)
- Dee Street Community Centre
- Cregagh Community Centre
- Braniel Community Centre

South Belfast

- Olympia Leisure Centre
- Malone House
- Markets Community Centre
- Belvoir Activity Centre

North Belfast

- Ardoyne Community Centre
- Loughside Leisure Centre
- plus continued deliveries to Finlay Park, Ballysillan, Ligoniel, Highfield (as above)

West Belfast

- Suffolk Community Centre
- Sally Gardens Community Centre (*owned by the Council but independently managed*)
- Brook Activity Centre

3.9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hammer Community Centre • plus continued deliveries to Whiterock, Glen, Lagmore/Mount Eagles (as above) <p>These are only suggested locations and other options will be considered. If Members agree, salt could be delivered to these locations in advance of further severe weather.</p>
3.10	<p><u>Financial & Resource Implications</u></p> <p>We currently have sufficient stocks of 25Kg bags to cover this winter but should we move to a more permanent solution we would consider purchasing 20Kg bags, which are much easier and safer to handle. For twenty two sites the cost of this would work out at approximately £3,300 per delivery. DfI cannot provide bagged salt but we are exploring the possibility of getting some of the costs covered through the Regional Community Resilience work.</p> <p>The cost of deliveries of salt to the various locations could be absorbed within existing budgets.</p> <p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p>
3.11	None
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	Appendix 1 - Legal report dated 11 th December 2018