

Agenda Item No. 4(b)

DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

MEETING OF CABINET MEMBER – HIGHWAYS, TRANSPORT AND
INFRASTRUCTURE

19 January 2016

Report of the Strategic Director – Economy, Transport and Environment

PETITION – GRITTING OF CASTLE HILL CLOSE, ECKINGTON

(1) **Purpose of Report** To inform the Cabinet Member of investigations following the receipt of a letter from Natasha Engel MP and a petition containing 35 signatures, requesting the gritting of Castle Hill Close, Eckington, prior to a Snow Warning Alert, and to seek approval that the road is not added to the Precautionary gritting network.

(2) **Information and Analysis** A petition was received by the Cabinet Member on 7 July 2015 (Minute No.82/15). The petition is headed:

“Whenever there is a ‘Snow Warning Alert’ Due to the fact that there could be a heavy fall of snow, Emergency Services (ambulances and taxis) cannot reach any one needing emergency care, only an helicopter would be able to do that and I am sure that would be more costly 150 metres of gritsand. Our road is a very difficult hill that finishes into a cul-de-sac containing bungalows with residents all over 60yo and the majority of them, being in their 70s and 80s.”

Officer Comment

Castle Hill Close is a cul-de-sac serving 31 properties, off Castle Hill in Eckington. The properties are all bungalows and there is a slight incline as the road approaches the Castle Hill junction. There is a grit bin on the cul-de-sac that is filled and maintained by Eckington Parish Council.

Derbyshire County Council’s Winter Service Policy for the Precautionary Gritting Network is defined as:

- The Principal Road Network, Main Distributor roads and Secondary Distributor roads (as defined in the Council’s carriageway hierarchy).
- Commuter routes (rural roads carrying more than 2,000 vehicles per day, where no treated routes exist).
- Locally important roads in the carriageway hierarchy and at least one route in to all villages so far is as reasonably practicable.

- Sections of the network sufficient to provide Local Bus Services into most areas; following as near as possible the regular routes. This to include all areas necessary for practical operations, such as Bus Stations and designated turning facilities.
- No greater than 500m from a school, so far as reasonably possible.
- Emergency Service locations - police stations, fire stations, hospitals and ambulance stations.
- Transport interchanges.
- Less significant local, village and estate distributor roads having considerable traffic flows.
- Sections of the network used by Local Bus Services which are not included on the Primary network.

Castle Hill Close does not meet any of those criteria.

When Derbyshire County Council gets a 'snow warning alert', all the Economy, Transport and Environment Department's resources are directed into precautionary gritting the primary and secondary gritting network. There is no capacity to precautionary grit any cul-de-sacs throughout the County. Also, it is very difficult for gritting lorries to access cul-de-sacs due to their size and the problems with reversing out of the cul-de-sac or turning around.

If there is a 'snow warning alert', the grit bin is on site for the public to spread the grit on the highway, to prevent the formation of snow, ice or frost. If the grit bin needs refilling, then this can be reported online via the Derbyshire County Council's website or by phoning Call Derbyshire on 01629 533190.

In the event of a severe snow event, Derbyshire County Council's gritters will be concentrating on ploughing the primary gritting network and will not have the capacity to plough other roads in the County. If any residents do need emergency care during a severe snow event, they would need to ring 999 or Call Derbyshire on 01629 533190. When such calls are received, the Council's Emergency Planning Department will decide on the appropriate response on a case by case basis. Previously, this has included utilising specialist vehicles to transport medical professionals and medicines to people in their own homes and providing assistance to emergency vehicles to allow them to transport people to hospital.

In light of the above, it is recommended that Castle Hill Close is not added to the Precautionary gritting network.

Local Member Comments

Councillors Ridgeway and Charles have been consulted. No response has been received.

(3) **Financial Considerations** There are no financial considerations associated with this report.

(4) **Legal Considerations** Section 41 of the Highways Act 1980 imposes a duty on highway authorities to maintain highway maintainable at public expense. In particular, Section 41(1A), as inserted by Section 111 of the Railways and Transport Safety Act 2003, which imposes a duty on highway authorities to ensure, as far is reasonably practicable, that safe passage along a highway is not endangered by ice or snow.

Other Considerations

In preparing this report the relevance of the following factors has been considered: prevention of crime and disorder, equality and diversity, human resources, environmental, health, property and transport considerations.

(5) **Key Decision** No.

(6) **Call-In** Is it required that call-in be waived in respect of the decisions proposed in the report? No.

(7) **Background Papers** Held on file within the Economy, Transport and Environment Department. Officer contact details – Richard Grindrod, extension 38637.

(8) **OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATIONS** That:

- 8.1 The Cabinet Member notes that Castle Hill Close, Eckington will not be precautionary gritted prior to a 'snow warning alert'.
- 8.2 Natasha Engel MP, the local Members and lead petitioner be informed accordingly.

Mike Ashworth
Strategic Director – Economy, Transport and Environment