1. **Reason for the Report**

1.1 To present the conclusions of the Winter Maintenance Sub-Committee.

2. **Recommendation**

2.1 That the Executive:

- Support Derbyshire County Council (DCC) being approached for match funding for additional quad bikes to assist in snow clearance activity.

- Agree to this Council supporting DCC’s self help messages including promotion of the DCC snow warden scheme, to town and parish councils and the general public;

- Approve that where local builders and suppliers can guarantee supplies of grit, that this be advertised on the Council’s website.

- Approve the purchase of additional grit bins for unparished areas of the borough, subject to DCC agreeing to fill the bins with grit and subject to siting criteria being established between officers and the Portfolio Holder for Operational Services.

- Authorise the Portfolio Holder in making an Individual Executive Decision to procure up to an additional 3 quad bikes within a maximum budget allocation of £30,000 (not included in the 2015/16 budget). Final
numbers acquired being dependent on the availability of match funding from DCC

3. **Executive Summary**

3.1 Community Select Committee established a sub-committee to review the winter maintenance arrangements in High Peak at the meeting on 17 June 2015.

3.2 The Sub-Committee agreed it’s terms of reference and agreed to invite a Parish Councillor to attend meetings of the Sub-Committee as well as representatives from Derbyshire County Council as appropriate.

3.3 The Sub-Committee met on three separate occasions. The first meeting considered this Council’s role and responsibilities, concluding our own systems were fit for purpose. The second meeting, on 23 September, was attended by representatives from Derbyshire County Council. Members of the Sub-Committee were given an over-view of the County Council’s priorities and systems. The third and final meeting considered the final report and recommendations to be made to the Community Select meeting, as per the recommendations in this report.

3.4.1 Although no Parish Councillors attended the meetings, comments were received from Bamford with Thornhill Parish Council, Whaley Bridge Town Council and Chapel en le Frith Parish Council. The comments received related to DCC’s functions and were passed to the DCC officer representatives for their consideration.

4. **How this report links to Corporate Priorities**

4.1 This report supports the Council’s strategic aim to help create a safer and healthier environment for our residents to live and work and specifically to influence effective snow clearance.

5. **Implications**

5.1 **Community Safety - (Crime and Disorder Act 1998)**

None

5.2 **Workforce**

During periods of severe weather when HPBC services (e.g. street cleansing) are suspended available staff will work under the supervision of DCC Highways division to support the delivery of its Winter Maintenance Policy

5.3 **Equality and Diversity/Equality Impact Assessment**

This report has been prepared in accordance with the Council’s Diversity and Equality Policies.
5.4 Financial Considerations

Approval is requested for £30,000 of unbudgeted spend to acquire the quad bikes. Subject to approval, confirmation is awaited from DCC as to whether match capital funding in support of additional quad bikes will be made available. There will be an annual ongoing cost to HPBC in order to maintain and store the quad bikes of approximately £2,500 per annum of which a contribution of 50% will be sought from DCC. Therefore, the remaining £1,250 will be covered from existing budget provision.

5.5 Legal

HPBC has general duties under the Health and Safety at Work etc., Act 1974 to ensure ‘so far as is reasonably practicable’ safe access and egress from its places of work. The Workplace (Health Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992 places specific duties on the Council as an employer to ensure ‘so far as is reasonably practicable’, floors are kept free from substances that could cause slips, trips or falls. The approved code of practice that supports the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992 states, “arrangements should be made to minimise risks from snow and ice”.

Under the Occupiers’ Liability Act 1957 the Council has a common duty of care towards visitors, to ensure they are reasonably safe in using the premises for the purposes for which they are invited. HPBC has responsibility for snow clearance and gritting of areas under its control, which include off-street car parks, access to and around Council premises, cemeteries and parks.

5.6 Sustainability

The partnership approach is considered to provide the most sustainable solution in preparing for future adverse weather conditions.

5.7 Internal and External Consultation

The Winter Maintenance Policy was adopted in 2010, and was developed jointly by HPBC and DCC. Parish Council’s were specifically consulted on behalf of the Working Group.

5.8 Risk Assessment

The Winter Maintenance policy sets out a clear framework for roles and responsibilities between DCC and HPBC for managing winter maintenance, so mitigating the risks and liabilities for both councils.
6. **Background and Detail**

6.1 Community Select Committee established a sub-committee to review the winter maintenance of streets at its meeting on 17 June 2015.

6.2 Councillors Howe, Johnson, Quinn and G Wharmby were appointed to the Sub-Committee, and at his request, Councillor Kerr was co-opted to the Sub-Committee. Councillor G Wharmby was appointed as Chair.

6.3 The Sub-Committee agreed its terms of reference as follows:

- HPBC role and responsibility
- HPBC Organisational arrangements and overview
- DCC role and responsibilities and overview
- Community Involvement

6.4 It was agreed that a Parish Councillor representative be invited to attend meetings of the Sub-Committee as well as representatives from Derbyshire County Council as appropriate. In the event no Parish representatives chose to attend, although written comments were received from Bamford with Thornhill Parish Council, Chapel en le Frith Parish Council and Whaley Bridge Town Council. The content of these responses related to County matters and so were passed on to County Council colleagues for their attention.

6.5 The Sub-Committee met on four occasions and minutes of the meetings are attached at Appendix A. The first meeting agreed the scope of the review and process to be followed. The second meeting considered a presentation from officers on the Council’s own legal obligations and how systems and operating practices across departments ensured its obligations were met. The working group concluded that the Council’s own requirements were adequately met and to make no direct recommendation in relation to arrangements on the ground. Debate at this meeting included such issues as encouraging residents to self help, the availability of grit bins in unparished areas and provision of information. The third meeting on 23 September heard from DCC officers. Detail was provided of DCC’s arrangements in adverse weather conditions as well as pressure on the Highways budget. DCC grit over 1,500 miles of road, more than any other County, according to an established priority list. They emphasised support from local contractors and farmers as well as through their snow warden scheme is critical in ensuring the effectiveness of their adverse weather response. The DCC representatives advised the Working
Group that High Peak Borough Council do more in adverse weather conditions than any other District in Derbyshire.

7. ISSUES

7.1 The Sub-Committee reviewed the existing role, responsibility and partnership arrangements of High Peak Borough Council and Derbyshire County Council to deal with winter maintenance issues.

7.2 Particular issues considered by the Sub-Committee were:

• Community involvement – especially promotion of the DCC snow warden scheme
• The availability of grit to the public through local suppliers
• The provision and filling of grit bins, particularly in unparished areas
• The desire to improve footway clearance and potential to enhance the Council’s fleet of quad bikes.
• Issues experienced with DCC call centre and the consequential effect on HPBC.
• What additional support HPBC could offer DCC

8. CONCLUSIONS

8.1 The Sub-Committee considered the option of purchasing additional quad bikes to assist with footway clearing, with additional funding support being sought from DCC. It was confirmed that the necessary resources were available to use the additional bikes, but that consideration would need to be given as to where the vehicles could be stored.

8.2 The Portfolio Holder confirmed he had secured an ‘in principle’ agreement with Executive for a maximum £30,000 to be spent by HPBC on additional quad bikes and would wish to progress acquisition in time for the winter season through an individual executive decision if the working group were in support. A fully equipped quad bike with snow plough and gritter attachments would cost circa £12,500. Thus, two would be affordable within the £30,000 budget limitation with a third could only being accommodated should DCC be prepared to provide match fund. Any additional grit bins for unparished areas would also have to be funded from out of the £30,000 allocation after the purchase of the additional quad bikes.

8.3 It should be noted that the £30,000 is not included in the 2015/16 budget and will therefore need to be funded from revenue reserves or additional capital funding as necessary. There is also an ongoing revenue cost of approximately £2,500 per annum for maintenance and storage, of which a 50% contribution will be sought from DCC. The remaining annual cost will be covered from existing budget provision.
8.4 It was considered that the provision of additional grit bins in the unparished areas of the Borough could assist in the promotion of the self help scheme, with DCC being requested to provide the grit to fill the bins. It was acknowledged that if additional bins were to be provided siting considerations would need to be in accordance with criteria to be established allowing for such matters as obstruction, ease of maintenance, severity of winter hazard all being considered. In addition, it was suggested that where local builders and suppliers could guarantee supplies of grit that this be advertised via the Council's website.

8.5 It was agreed that the above suggestions be recommended to Community Select Committee and/or the Executive for approval. The Working Group agreed that preparation of the final report should be delegated to the Chairman and Head of Operational Services to enable to to be presented to Community Select Committee on 21 October.
WINTER MAINTENANCE SUB-COMMITTEE

Meeting:  Wednesday 8 July 2015 at 7.30 p.m.

Present:  Councillor G Wharmby (Chair)

Councillors Howe, Johnson, Kerr and Quinn

Councillors Haken and Siddall were also in attendance

Keith Parker  Head of Operational Services
Rachel Rourke  Member Services

15/01  APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR
(Agenda item 2)

RESOLVED:

1. That Councillor G Wharmby be appointed as Chair of the Winter Maintenance Sub-Committee;

2. That Councillor Kerr be co-opted onto the Sub-Committee.

15/02  PROPOSED SCOPE AND TERMS OF REFERENCE
(Agenda item 4)

The proposed scope and terms of reference for the sub-committee were considered.

Regarding Parish Council involvement, it was agreed that the Parish Clerks be requested to submit details in writing of what they deemed to be the most important aspects of winter maintenance for their Parish. One representative would be sought to attend meetings of the Sub-Committee to represent all Parish Councils.

Regarding the terms of reference, it was requested that consideration be given to how roles could be developed, what DCC would do, and what the community could be asked to do. It was also requested that at the conclusion of the review, the press be made aware of what is proposed to be undertaken by DCC and HPBC so that members of the public are aware of what would and wouldn’t be done.

It was requested that reference to recommendations being made to Community Select Committee be included as part of the terms of reference.

RESOLVED:

That, subject to the inclusion of reference to recommendations being made to Community Select Committee at the conclusion of the review, the Terms of Reference for the Sub-Committee be approved.
RESOLVED:

That dates of future meetings would be as follows:

1. 5 August, at the conclusion of the Council meeting (if convened), or at 6.30 p.m.
2. 9 September, at the conclusion of Community Select Committee
3. 21 October, at the conclusion of Community Select Committee

The meeting concluded at 7.50 p.m.

CHAIR
Meeting: Wednesday 5 August 2015 at 7.55 p.m.

Present: Councillor G Wharmby (Chair)

Councillors Howe, Kerr and Quinn

Councillors Haken, Robins and J Wharmby were also in attendance.

Keith Parker  Head of Operational Services
Joy Redfern  Street Scene Manager
Helen Gale  Member Services

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Johnson.

15/04 MINUTES
(Agenda item 3)

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 8 July 2015 be approved as a correct record.

15/05 WINTER MAINTENANCE POLICY – JUNE 2010
(Agenda Item 4)

The 2010 Winter Maintenance Policy had been circulated as background information for this meeting, it was suggested it could be reviewed after meeting Derbyshire County Council officers.

15/06 ROLE, RESPONSIBILITY, ORGANISATIONAL ARRANGEMENTS AND OVERVIEW
(Agenda Items 5 and 6)

There was a presentation on the role and responsibilities of the Borough and County Councils. Issues discussed included:

- Existing organisational and partnership arrangements.
- Asset management.
- Getting information to the public and encouraging people to self clear.
- Street Scene delivering bagged grit to snow wardens.
- County Council responsibility for grit bins and ability to refill quickly.
- Need for more grit bins to be available and to improve path clearance, particularly in Buxton and Glossop.
- Impacted snow and householders using fire ash in the past.
- Salt being ineffective in – 8°C.
- Borough Council responsibility for litter collection in all weathers.
That the Council’s own direct responsibilities, and those of its Leisure Operators, were covered by appropriate procedures and risk assessments was noted.

Further thoughts for the next meeting were welcomed.

RESOLVED:

That the presentation be received with thanks.

15/07 SNOW CLEARANCE ISSUES IDENTIFIED BY PARISH COUNCILS
(Agenda Item 7)

Issues raised by Whaley Bridge Town and Bamford with Thornhill and Chapel-en-le-Frith Parish Councils were discussed.

Parish Councils had been contacted to put forward a representative to attend Sub-Committee meetings, representing all Parish Councils but to date none had expressed an interest. It was agreed that if a number were interested it was hoped they all could be invited to attend.

15/08 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS
(Agenda Item 8)

Dates of future meetings would be as follows:

1. Wednesday, 23 September at 6.30 pm (moved from the conclusion of Community Select Committee on 9 September). County Council officers in attendance.

2. Wednesday, 21 October at the conclusion of Community Select Committee.

The meeting concluded at 8.32 pm.

CHAIRMAN
WINTER MAINTENANCE SUB-COMMITTEE

Meeting: Wednesday 23 September 2015 at 6.30 p.m.

Present: Councillor G Wharmby (Chair)

Councillors Howe, Johnson and Kerr

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Haken and Quinn

Keith Parker  Head of Operational Services
Joy Redfern  Street Scene Manager
Rachel Rourke  Member Services

15/09 MINUTES
(Agenda item 3)

It was confirmed that contact had again been made with Parish Council to invite representatives to attend meetings of the Sub-Committee.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 5 August 2015 be approved as a correct record.

15/10 DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES AND OVERVIEW
(Agenda item 4)

Glyn Dutton and David Massey were in attendance from Derbyshire County Council and made a presentation to the sub-committee.

Matters reported on included:

- Derbyshire’s precautionary gritting routes cover 1,550 miles of road which is more than other similar local authorities, and 48,588 tonnes of salt is used (based on 2 years ago)
- The cost of gritting each route is on average £15,000
- Budget overspent by £2.1M (2 years ago) – it was noted that nothing is not done due to budgetary constraints
- The criteria and process for gritting primary, secondary and tertiary routes
- Officer support for responding to bad weather incidents
- Forecasts and matrices used to determine what action to take – payment is made for direct weather warnings and bespoke forecasts and direct contact if severe / marginal weather
- Community involvement – particularly the introduction of the snow warden scheme. It was noted that High Peak operates its own snow warden scheme and bagged grit is provided by DCC.
- Additional assistance with snow clearing from contractors and farmers
- Information available to the public via DCC’s snow info web page, including latest weather activity, gritting routes and school closures
Members were advised that the accuracy of the weather data received was reviewed at the end of each year. Recently, more problems had been experienced with marginal weather, in and around zero being forecast. An annual review of gritting routes was also undertaken.

Regarding the use of salt, it was noted that salt would not work in temperatures of less than -6 to -8 and also needed wheels moving on it to be effective. The challenge was in trying to get the salt down on the road surface before the snow and ice arrived.

It was commented that there was a need to ensure that access roads to industrial estates were clear clear due to the numbers of people arriving for work on foot during bad weather.

Regarding community involvement, it was commented that there was a huge dependence on volunteers and town and parish councils in respect of the snow warden scheme. Members were advised that self help was encouraged to keep the footpaths clear and that additional assistance was obtained from farmers and contactors around the more rural routes. It was noted that there was also an emergency duty team including 4 x 4 vehicles and support from the mountain rescue team.

Reference was made to issues experienced with the DCC call centre during the last period of bad weather due to staff not been able to attend work due to the weather. Members were advised that as much information as possible was put onto the web site and changes had been made to enable staff to work remotely and emergency centres opened. It was acknowledged by DCC however, that they could not guarantee that the same issue would arise again.

In response to a query regarding what HPBC could do to improve matters, it was acknowledged that HPBC already do give a lot more coverage than other districts and are encouraged to continue, and to encourage more snow wardens and self help.

Reference was made to the possibility of purchasing additional quad bikes to assist with snow clearance and it was queried whether any capital support would be available from DCC for this. Reference was made to the memorandum of understanding in place between the two councils and that consideration would be given to the provision of capital funding to invest in and improve the service. It was further queried whether DCC would have any premises available to store the vehicles which would be pursued outside of the meeting.

Reference was made to grit bins and arrangements for the filling of the bins, with particular reference made to a free delivery of up to a tonne of paleted 20kg bags of salt to each town and parish council participating in the snow warden scheme. It was commented that the provision of additional grit bins would be useful if encouraging community support for the snow warden scheme.

RESOLVED:
That Glynn Dutton and David Massey be thanked for their attendance and
ITEMS FOR FINAL MEETING AND CONCLUSIONS  
(Agenda item 5)

Regarding the potential to purchase additional quad bikes, it was confirmed that the necessary resources would be available to use them during severe weather events, but that further investigations would be required as to where the vehicles could be stored.

It was recommended that additional grit bins be provided in the unparished areas of the Borough, subject to DCC providing the grit to fill them.

The Sub-Committee suggested that the Council could assist with communicating the self help message to town and parish councils and the community in general.

It was suggested that if local builders merchants and suppliers could guarantee supplies of grit, that this be advertised on the council website.

The agreement of DCC to help maintain Spring Gardens arising from the access issues last season was noted.

RESOLVED:

That Community Select Committee be requested to recommend that the Executive:

1. Approve the purchase of up to an additional 3 quad bikes.

2. Support by way of capital funding being made available from DCC be sought;

3. Approve the purchase of additional grit bins for unparished areas of the borough, subject to DCC agreeing to full the bins with grit;

4. Communicate the self help message from DCC, including the snow warden scheme, to town and parish councils and the general public;

5. Approve that where local builders and suppliers can guarantee supplies of grit, that this be advertised on the Council’s website.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING  
(Agenda item 6)

RESOLVED:

That the final meeting of the Sub-Committee be held on Tuesday 6 October at 6.15 p.m. in the Board Room, Pavilion Gardens.

The meeting concluded at 7.50 p.m.

CHAIR
WINTER MAINTENANCE SUB-COMMITTEE

Meeting: Wednesday 6 October 2015 at 6.15 p.m.

Present: Councillor G Wharmby (Chair)

Councillors Johnson, Kerr and Quinn

Councillors Haken and A McKeown were also in attendance.

Keith Parker  Head of Operational Services
Joy Redfern  Street Scene Manager
Rachel Rourke  Member Services

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Howe

15/13  MINUTES
(Agenda item 3)

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 23 September 2015 be approved as a correct record.

15/14  REPORT FROM THE WINTER MAINTENANCE SUB-COMMITTEE
(Agenda Item 4)

The Sub-Committee considered its draft final report, which would be submitted to Community Select Committee and then the Executive.

It was agreed that due to the need to get arrangements in place for the winter season, that the decision to purchase the additional quad bikes be pursued via an Individual Executive Decision rather than via Community Select Committee and the Executive. It was added that this would be for the provision of 2 quad bikes, with the third dependent on whether DCC funding was available.

Regarding the procedure for installing additional grit bins, it was reported that criteria would be developed, but reiterated that the provision of additional grit bins was subject to the agreement of DCC having the resources keep them filled. It was commented that prior to additional grit bins being installed, that consultation should be undertaken with nearby residents.

It was requested that gritting responsibilities on the council’s housing estates be reviewed to ensure that all relevant areas would be covered. The Sub-Committee were informed that the Neighbourhood Caretakers were transferring to Operational Services and as such coordination of resources would be improved if snow was on the ground.

It was also requested that a list of the gritting routes be circulated and included as part of the pre-winter publicity campaign.
RESOLVED:

1. That the draft report of the Sub-Committee be approved for submission to Community Select Committee, subject to the purchase of the quad bikes to be made by IED rather than full Executive. The final report to be drafted to reflect this evening’s discussions with the final edit being delegated to the Chairman and Head of Operational Services.

2. That criteria be developed around the procedure for the provision of additional grit bins in unparished area, with it being noted that this would only proceed if DCC agreed to keep them filled;

3. That a list of the gritting routes be circulated to all Members and included as part of the pre-winter publicity campaign

The meeting concluded at 6.30 p.m.

CHAIR