



Department
for Transport

From the Parliamentary
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To Leaders of all
Local Authorities in England

30 October 2012

Dear Leader,

WINTER 2012/13

I am writing to you to thank you for the efforts your Council and others have made in recent years to help minimise disruption on our transport network caused by winter weather. I thought it would also be helpful to highlight some resources that your Council may find useful in its winter preparations.

As you know keeping our transport network moving is a collective effort and something we all did with some considerable success last year. That said, last winter was particularly mild and I for one still have the disruption caused by the severe winter weather of 2009 and 2010 fresh in my mind. Not only did this disruption have an impact on many of our day-to-day lives, but it also had an impact of around £280 million a day on UK Plc¹.

That is why we have taken steps to help minimise the impact of winter weather. For example, this year we will:

- Continue to work closely with the Met Office to make sure that we have the best advice available to prepare for severe winter weather;
- Maintain a substantial national strategic salt reserve and robust distribution process, if for any reason this salt of last resort needs to be allocated to local highway authorities;
- Monitor salt stocks that are held by highway authorities on a monthly basis. On this matter I would be most grateful if you could continue to ensure your officers provide this information so we can see the overall stock holding across the country. This is to ensure the country continues to maintain a good level of resilience;

¹ <http://www.dft.gov.uk/publications/winter-resilience-in-transport/>

- Publish a note with the procedure for accessing strategic salt and cost, which I can confirm remains unchanged from last year at £65 per tonne.

Whilst, of course, it is for your authority to determine the priority that is given to winter services, I hope you continue to prioritise this important activity to ensure transport disruption is minimised.

You may also wish to note that there are a number of other key resources available to local authorities in planning for winter. This includes:

- The Local Government Association will continue to have a community forum in which authorities can exchange information and best practice with respect to winter resilience issues. The link can be found here and I would encourage your authority to join if they have not done so already: <https://knowledgehub.local.gov.uk/web/winterweather/welcome>
- The Government's *Get Ready for Winter* website provides information on how communities can prepare for the winter weather. This can be accessed via: www.metoffice.gov.uk/getreadyforwinter
- *Well maintained Highways* provides advice on winter service including information on a reducing salt usage and guidance on a choice of salt spread rates. This can be accessed via: <http://www.ukroadsliasongroup.org/en/utilities/document-summary.cfm?docid=C7214A5B-66E1-4994-AA7FBAC360DC5CC7>.
- The Snow Code that we published in 2010 which serves as a common sense guide to help shop keepers and residents who want to clear their paths without having to worry about falling foul of health and safety law. I would encourage you to continue to display this guidance on your websites. The Code can be found at the following weblink: <http://www.metoffice.gov.uk/learning/get-ready-for-winter/out-and-about/the-snow-code>

Finally, I really appreciate the significant efforts that authorities, particularly those officers who are responsible for winter maintenance, are making to boost resilience and preparedness for possible severe winter weather.

Yours sincerely



NORMAN BAKER