

FIFE COUNCIL

SEVERE WEATHER UPDATE FOR ELECTED MEMBERS

This update provides an overview of service activities, issues and communications associated with this period of severe weather.

This is the first edition. Updates will be numbered and distributed by e-mail as regularly as required to keep you up to date with major developments.

If you have any questions or issues that you would like covered in future updates please contact val.millar@fife.gov.uk or call 0775 368 7851.

Roads, gritting, salt and severe weather response

- From Friday 26th November until 5am on Tuesday 30th November we have used 3,150 tonnes of salt to treat Fife's roads.
- All main roads in Fife have remained open.
- 407 Fife Council employees are currently employed directly on winter maintenance from Transportation, Parks & Amenities and Environmental Services.
- From today, this team have also been assisted by colleagues from Building Services in road and footpath clearing and filling grit bins.
- 30 Community Justice Payback Offenders have also been assisting with this task.
- In the gritting fleet there are 27 gritters with ploughs, 11 pick-ups with ploughs, 45 mini tractors for footpaths, 25 JCB excavators and three 360-degree excavators.
- Due to the repeated snowfalls and freezing temperatures the focus continues to be maintaining the primary routes. Only when these routes are clear will the bulk gritter fleet be released to clear secondary routes. Some secondary routes are currently being treated by hand crews and mini tractors.
- The current forecast provided by the Met Office at 2pm this afternoon said to expect further snow showers throughout the afternoon, evening and overnight. Ice is expected to form on damp roads or areas of melt. Salting and ploughing of primary routes is ongoing and will continue overnight.
- We currently have 15,330 tonnes in stock and an order has been placed for a further salt delivery in January 2011.

School Closures

- All schools were closed on Monday 29th and Tuesday 30th November 2010.
- Head Teachers will now take the decision locally whether they are able to open tomorrow (Wednesday).
- If schools are opening they will be confirming this through the usual telephone/online closure system by 7am tomorrow morning.
- Registered parents/guardians will receive a text message if their school is opening.
- All school closures and schools which have re-opened will be up on the FifeDirect website by 7.30am.

Social Work Services

- The Meals on Wheels Service is currently unable to operate in all areas of Fife. Staff from the Meals on Wheels team and Home and Day Care are working together to contact clients, this includes telephoning clients directly, their families or nominated contact e.g. a neighbour. Visits to the most frail and vulnerable are being prioritised.
- Home Care staff and services are being targeted to those most in need on a locality basis. Contact is being maintained with service users on a daily basis where there are changes to services. Staff are being flexible and many have come in on their days off and voluntarily given up holidays to ensure service continues.
- Residential respite care will also be considered for individuals who may be at risk.
- All main Social Work Offices are open to the public. Duty systems are being maintained.
- The Contact Centre is also being maintained; this is the main point of contact for referrals for older people's services. The Centre is staffed by customer services officers and social workers.
- Residential Care Unit managers are planning ahead with staff duty rotas to ensure that appropriate levels of staff are available. Where there are transport problems, care staff have been reporting to nearest local unit.
- All day services for older people have been suspended meantime due to transport and access issues. Contact is being maintained with service users on a daily basis to monitor if there are any care and support needs that are required, or circumstances that we need to be aware of.

- Adult day services have been available for service users who can make their own way there. Meals are being provided for those attending. Again, contact is being maintained with service users on a daily basis to monitor if there are any care and support needs that are required, or circumstances that we need to be aware of.

Bins, recycling, street cleaning and other environmental services

- Refuse collection services have been seriously disrupted.
- Conditions meant few, or no, collections could be made in Central and West Fife. 75% of collections have been made in East Fife.
- Collection in Central and West Fife is planned to resume tomorrow, 1 December, but this will be restricted and there will be no collections made from housing estates.
- Temporary communal collection points for landfill waste are also in place in Newport and Tayport:
 - Waterston Crook Recycling Point: Castle Brae Newport
 - West Road (Nr to jct with Cuthbert Road, Newport
 - Blyth Street, Opp Blyth Hall, Newport
 - Boat Road, Opp the Pier, Newport
 - St Fort Road, Nr jct with West Acre Drive, Wormit
 - Tayport: Dougall Street/William Street
 - Tayport: Car Park across from Tennis Courts beside recycling point
 - Tayport Harbour Recycling point
 - Tayport Scottcraig Drive near the junction with the B946

Grit bins and street cleaning

- Street cleaning has been suspended and all staff have been redeployed to work on weather related emergency work.
- Grit bins are being re-stocked and crossing points are being created at suitable points on main roads.
- Areas around doctor's surgeries, sheltered housing and shopping centres are being cleared.

Recycling Centres

- The recycling centres have been re-opened to help people dispose of waste if they need to.

Local Services

- Parks staff are assisting Transportation and working on emergencies. This includes dealing with fallen trees and clearing cemetery paths for burials.
- Seven Local Services Centres are closed:
 - Anstruther
 - Benarty
 - Kelty
 - Cardenden
 - Oakley (West Fife Villages)
 - Glenrothes West
 - Oakley
- In High Valleyfield, the LSC surgery from the library has been cancelled.
- Also the following centres have had some disruption:
 - Inverkeithing Civic Centre - open today but closed at 4pm
 - Cupar and St Andrews closed from 3pm
 - Rosyth - open but closed from 4pm
 - Glenrothes open but early closure was likely as this briefing was prepared
- All other main hubs/centres were open today.

Pest and Dog Control

- The pest control service and dog control service are temporarily suspended.

Communications

- Work has been underway since Sunday to coordinate information for the public. Information on closures and service disruption has been communicated through a range of mechanisms including:
 - Text and e-mail alerts
 - Broadcast media (Radio & TV)
 - Online news sites (e.g. BBC Scotland)
 - Daily print media
 - Automated telephone closure line - 08451 55 11 99
 - Mobile phone - <http://lookinglocal.gov.uk/LookingLocal/>
 - FifeDirect online website
 - DigiTV (Red Button On Sky and Virgin Media under Interactive Services, Local Services)
- Over 90,000 text alerts were dispatched on Monday.
- High demand led to difficulties with FifeDirect and the automated telephone closure line. FifeDirect was unavailable for 10 minutes on Monday morning and online services were disrupted periodically until 8.30am.

- Since then information has been restructured, alternative channels have been promoted and a new home page is now in place to help improve the service during peak times.
- A new Fife Council Twitter account was also established yesterday to offer an alternative source for information. The Council now has 380 followers. Go to www.twitter.com/fifecouncil
- New servers have been bought and are ready to be installed to support FifeDirect. These cannot be installed during a period of high demand like this but the work will be carried out as soon as possible.
- Six press releases have been issued since yesterday morning. Media releases are also published on FISH and FifeDirect.
- Arrangements have also been made to ensure all elected members now receive a copy of releases issued relating to severe weather.

The next update will be sent tomorrow afternoon, Wednesday 1st December 2010.