

Brighton & Hove City Council

Highway Winter Service Policy

2022

This Highways Winter Service Policy outlines the service provided by Brighton & Hove City Council for clearance of snow and ice on the city's streets.

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Summary

This document provides detailed information about the council's highway winter service, specifically relating to public roads and pavements. It is worth noting that other agencies and council sections also have winter plans and policies which support their service objectives.

1 Introduction

1.1 Statutory Duty

The legal position relating to the Highway Authority's responsibility in respect of the winter service is set out in an amendment to Section 41(1) Highways Act 1980 (c.66) (duty of highway authority to maintain the highway).

(1A) in particular, details that a highway authority is under a duty to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the safe passage along a highway is not endangered by ice or snow.

The council recognises that the winter service is essential in aiding the safe movement of highway users, maintaining communications, reducing delays and enabling everyday life to continue. It is very important to both road safety and the local economy.

The winter service that the council provides is believed to be sufficient, so far as is reasonably practical, to discharge the duty imposed by the legislation. However, it is important to recognise that the council has to prioritise its response to deal with winter weather due to logistics and available resources.

1.2 Overview

Brighton & Hove City Council will endeavour to provide a Highway Winter Service that permits where reasonably practicable that safe passage on all its main roads, bus routes within the city, access to emergency service operational centres and footways and cycleways is not endangered by snow or ice.

In normal winter conditions, this is achieved by pre-salting the road network to prevent ice or frost forming.

In snow conditions, it maybe unachievable to spread sufficient salt to melt more than a very thin layer of snow and/or of ice. Under such circumstance, the aim is to recover the network as soon as reasonably practicable.

Pavement and cycleway clearance will also be carried out during snow events.

The Highway Winter Service Plan and budget are specifically targeted at dealing with cold weather events (i.e., ice, frost, sleet and snow). However, the identified gritting network (the city's 'critical road network') and associated operations also helps inform the highway authority's response to other severe weather events such as storms or flooding.

1.3 Standards

To enable Brighton and Hove City Council to respond quickly and efficiently we have adopted this Policy and the associated standards for each of the winter service duties. The operational processes and more detailed standards are provided in a Highway Winter Service Plan, which compliments this Policy Statement.

Brighton & Hove City Council provide a Highway Winter Service which, as far as reasonably practicable will:

- Minimise the risk of loss of life and injury to highway users, including pedestrians, and preventing damage to vehicles and other property
- Keeps the highway free from obstruction and thereby avoiding unnecessary delay to journeys
- the winter maintenance period runs from 1st November to 31st March. The period may be extended by the Head Traffic Management in cases of severe cold weather continuing into April or starting earlier in October.

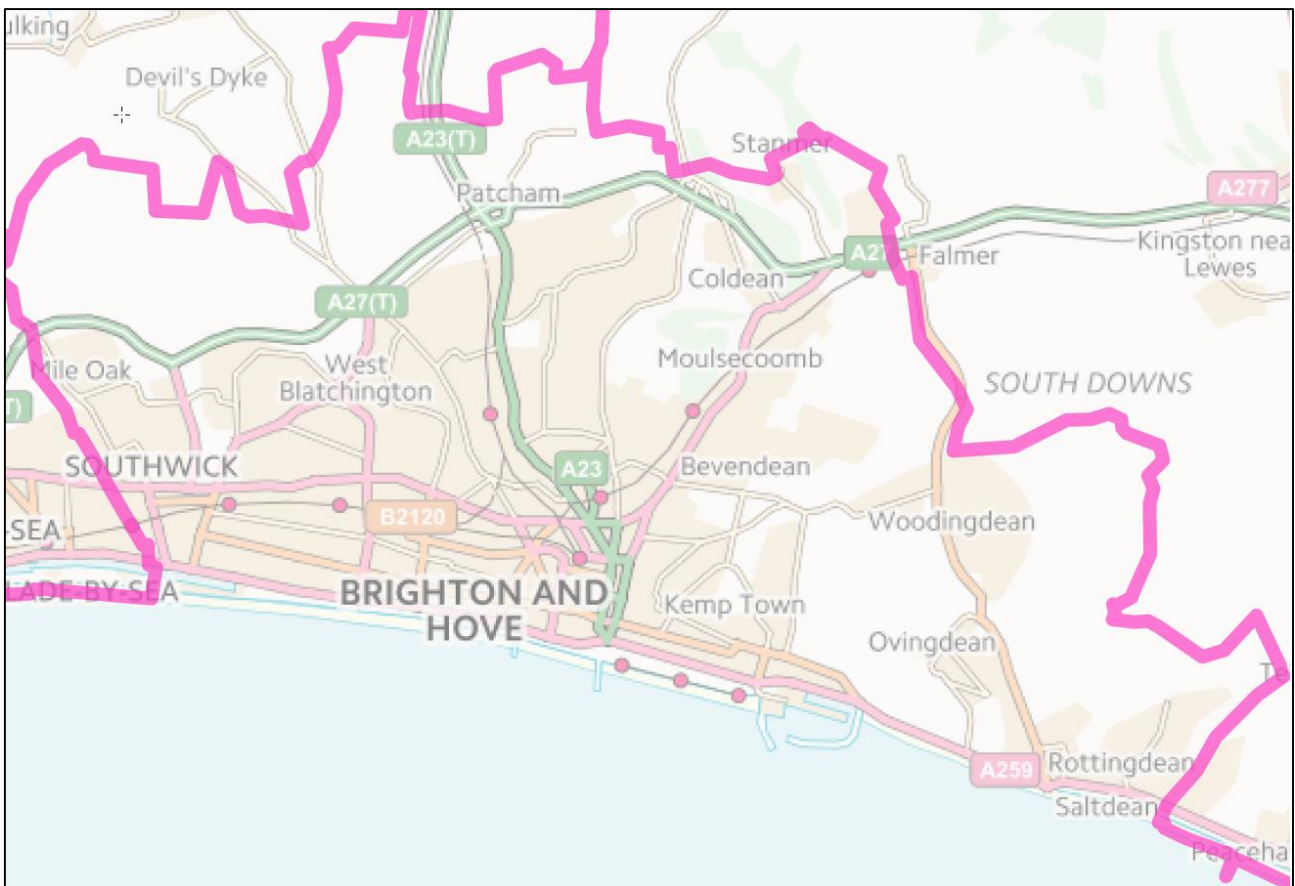


Figure 1-1 Location and Authority City Boundary ©Crown Copyright under License to Jacobs UK

1.4 Other Highway Authorities

The M23, A27 Brighton bypass and the A23 north of the A27 Junction are maintained by National Highways. Ditchling, Falmer and Saltdean borders are maintained by East Sussex County Council and Fishersgate and Devils Dyke borders are maintained by West Sussex Highways. Brighton and Hove City Council has no responsibility for the winter service activities on these roads. Close liaison exists between Brighton & Hove City Council Highways Service and Highways England, East Sussex County Council and West Sussex County Council during the winter service operational period.

2 Objectives

Brighton & Hove City Council's Highway Winter Service policy follows the recommendations issued by the UK Road Liaison Group (UKRLG) and takes into account the recommendations contained in "Well Managed Highways Infrastructure" and National Winter Service Research Group guidance. These documents are reviewed annually, and any recommendations are included within our policy where practical and reflected in an annual update to Brighton & Hove City Council's Highway Winter Service Plan. The Highway Winter Service Plan is also updated to reflect any changes needed to operational practices during the season.

Consistency with the policies of neighbouring authorities is considered and applied where appropriate.

2.1 Winter weather conditions

Winter weather conditions which are managed are:

- Snow – fairly rare, but it does cause great difficulties due to its infrequency, partial melts/refreezes, the topography of the city and the resources needed for clearance.
- Ice – occurs when conditions are freezing and wet.
- Hoar Frost – is formed from white ice crystals. We only deal with this when it forms on roads making them slippery. This should not be confused with low-level frost, such as the white frost that appears on car roofs or vegetation in the mornings.
- Freezing rain – is rain which freezes as soon as it hits the road surface. This is a rare occurrence but difficult to treat because of the timings between rain washing off the treatment and the roads freezing. It also creates very hazardous conditions which may not be easily visible e.g., black ice.

Extreme or severe winter conditions are defined as an event where the snow is over 50mm (2 inches) and is predicted to remain on the ground for longer than 36 hours.

2.2 Treatment

The service carries out treatments on designated roads in advance of or during/after ice/snow. In extreme conditions it also carries out pavement treatment on designated public thoroughfares. Grit bins and grit drops are provided for local self-help.

The objectives are:

- Precautionary Salting - The application of salt to carriageways on routes usually in advance of frosty and icy conditions (often referred to as spreading, gritting or pre-salting).
- Post-treatment – the application of ploughing, salt, a salt/grit mix or grit (sharp sand) to carriageways following snow and depending on the depth and severity of the snowfall. Also refers to the application of hand or machine clearance to pavements following snow.

2.2.1 Objective

The priority is to keep major routes treated and passable. These are generally all the 'A' roads, most of the 'B' and 'C' roads and other roads of local importance based on an annual review. This review considers domain, gradient and use of each road within the Council's highway network.

2.2.2 Gritting

Roads to be included within the precautionary salting routes is shown in Appendix A. This includes the following network classes:

- all of the following network classes
 - all A class roads
 - main distributors
 - secondary distributors
- links to hospitals, transport interchanges, emergency service stations and identified critical infrastructure
- links to schools
- primary bus routes with a substantial frequency

Roads have been prioritised based on their climatic location, that is, roads located within an area of Brighton & Hove that is susceptible to low temperatures and extreme winter weather throughout the winter season. Brighton and Hove naturally divides itself into two domains. Hilltops, which are at higher elevation and generally further from the climatic buffer generally provided by the sea and remaining areas.

Our policy is not to treat any of the footway network unless in extreme conditions and then only when resources are available.

The aim is to use the resources available as effectively as possible and bring the greatest benefit to the most utilised roads in our network. Treatment routes cover total of 182 miles of routes around the city, about 47% of the overall Council road network. It is simply not possible in terms of time and resources to treat every road in the city.

2.2.3 Snow Clearance

The objectives of snow clearance are:

- to prevent injury or damage caused by snow
- to remove obstructions caused by the accumulation of snow (section 150 Highways Act 1980)
- to reduce delays and inconvenience caused by snow

Snow clearance is carried out on a priority basis to core routes.

Snow clearance on footways and cycleways will only be carried out if resources are available. Priority footways will be prioritised as and when resources become available.

2.2.4 Routes

There are three levels of routes which the Council will use depending on the severity of the weather conditions and the variables which can affect it. They are listed below in order of increasing severity according to climatic zones and weather conditions:

Level	Title	Treatment	Description
Level 1	Hilltop Routes	Pre-salt	Routes located in the highest areas of Brighton & Hove where frost is more likely to form in marginal conditions and where snow is likely to settle.
Level 2	Full Routes (Combined Hilltop and Low Routes)	Pre-salt	Routes located in the highest areas of Brighton & Hove where frost is more likely to form in marginal conditions and where snow is likely to settle combined with routes in the lower areas of Brighton & Hove where frost is likely to form in extreme conditions and where snow is less likely to settle
Level 3	Priority/ Snow clearing Routes	Continuous salting and or snow clearance (ploughing)	<p>These are limited variations of the Full Routes. They are used when sustained snow or ice conditions are causing severe disruption and core routes need to be kept clear of snow and ice to minimise severe disruption to strategic routes in the city.</p> <p>Strategic routes are roads around the main hospitals and the main arterial routes. These routes may also be employed if for any reason there is a reduction in the usual available resources, such as personnel, vehicles, or materials</p> <p>Sustained snow and ice conditions prevail when snow is over 100mm (4 inches) and predicted to fall continuously or frequently within 24 hours or to remain for longer than 24 hours.</p>

2.2.5 Footways and Cycleways

Footways

Brighton and Hove’s primary objective during periods of severe winter weather is to ensure that main roads and important routes are safe for motorists to use. This being the case there are no precautionary treatments of footways. When resources become available footway treatment and snow clearance will be carried out on a priority basis as shown below:

Footway Categories

Category	Description
1	Town centre pedestrian zones and shopping areas with high pedestrian flows
2	High volume pedestrian routes to/from train, bus stations (highway footways only) and schools
3	Near hospitals, doctors’ surgeries, and schools

Cycleways

As with footways there are no precautionary treatments in advance of severe weather. When resources become available cycleway treatment and snow clearance will be carried out on a priority basis as shown below:

Cycleway Categories

Category	Type	Description
1A	Cycle track	A highway route for cyclists not contiguous with the public footway or carriageway
2B	Shared cycle/pedestrian path	Either segregated by a white line or other physical segregation, or un-segregated footway
3C	Cycle lane	Forming part of the carriageway, commonly a strip next to the nearside kerb

The extent of the Brighton & Hove footways network covered by this plan is shown in Appendix C.

3 Materials, Storage and Vehicles

Salt is the main material used in the winter service.

3.1 Depots and Facilities

3.1.1 Depots

Brighton & Hove winter service operations are currently based at its Hollingdean Depot. However, space is restricted and an alternative arrangement using Hangleton is currently under consideration for provision of the Service in future years.

Depot & Facilities Schedule

Depot Name	Postal Address	Purpose	Access Arrangements	Contact Details	Facilities
Hollingdean	Upper Hollingdean Road, Brighton, BN1 7GA	Maintenance Depot	Upper Hollingdean Road		Salt storage. Fuel storage, Welfare

3.2 Treatment Materials

Brighton & Hove use 6.3mm Rock Salt to BS3247: 2011

3.2.1 Salt Storage

Salt is stored at the Hollingdean Depot with additional storage held at Shoreham Harbour. Being stored openly risks salt moisture content increasing and can, in extreme weather conditions, limit the ability of the Council to provide the service. As part of the current Depot review enclosed salt storage is being considered at Hangleton.

Current Salt Storage

Location	Storage Type	Material	Capacity (tonnes)
Hollingdean	Open	6.3 mm salt	2000
Shoreham Harbour	Open	6.3 mm salt	500

Other Materials

Location	Storage Type	Material	Capacity
Hollingdean	Open	Sharp Sand	108

3.2.2 Salt Management & Supply Arrangements

Rock salt is provided by Cleveland Potash who transport the salt by ship from their mine in North Yorkshire to Shoreham Harbour. The salt is then transported by road to Hollingdean Depot.

3.2.3 Equipment

Brighton & Hove City Council have a fleet of winter service vehicles it uses to treat its network . Following a review in 2021/22, the fleet has recently been updated to include in cab technology to enable resilience in drivers, to better manage grit application and guide them using current technology. Given the age of this fleet, as part of the council's continuous improvement to its services, a further review of the fleet is planned in 2026, so as to provide improved resilience and reduce its carbon impact by utilising green fuel alternatives.

The current equipment comprises:

- 7 gritters
- 7 ploughs for use with the gritters
- 1 machine pavement gritter
- Access to 3 tractors in severe weather conditions
- Use of 3 JCB's in severe weather conditions

4 Weather Forecast Information

4.1 Weather Information Systems

An effective and efficient Highway Winter Service is only possible with reliable and accurate information about weather conditions. Without this information it is not possible to make effective and appropriate decisions on the winter service operations. We use the best weather information available from our weather forecast provider, currently Meteo Group (DTN), to ensure that decisions are based on the most accurate data available.

Our Weather forecast provider is informed by data from four weather outstations situated in strategic locations across the city. These stations provide information such as air and road surface temperatures, humidity and wind speed /direction.

4.2 Weather Reports

During the Highway Winter Service period we receive detailed weather forecasts and reports specifically dedicated to the roads and two weather domains. This data is based upon national weather forecasts and the data collected from four roadside weather stations positioned across the City.

Over a winter season, weather forecasts are approximately 90 percent accurate. Typically, this means that there are several days when a road frost or other freezing conditions are not forecast but will still occur. Similarly, there are some forecasts which predict ice and snow conditions which do not occur.

4.3 Winter Duty Managers

The Highways Service in Brighton & Hove City Council is responsible for this Highway Winter Service Policy, its associated more detailed Highway Winter Service Plan, for decision-making and for co-ordination of the operational requirements.

The Highway Winter Service is reliant on Winter Duty Officers (WDO) to perform the organisational and operational functions during the Winter Service Period, supported by the Head of Traffic Management.

The Winter Duty Officers (WDOs) use the latest technology in weather forecasting to decide what is required to protect road users during cold weather. They will assess the weather forecast for a 24-hour period combined with local weather station data, local knowledge and information from the weather forecast provider in order to decide what action is necessary.

The WDO instructs the gritter drivers about which work needs to be carried out and when.

Winter Duty Officers are volunteers from within the Highways Service of Brighton & Hove City Council who all have regular day-to-day jobs. Winter duties are in addition to their normal roles so there may be short delays in response times when dealing with enquiries.

4.4 Other teams involved in providing winter service

The Highways Service work with Cityclean as the Winter Service “contractor.” Cityclean provide the staff required to carry out the machine and manual spreading and ploughing

operations. Cityclean drivers maintain a 24-hour standby rota for all of the gritter driving whilst other Cityclean staff may be required to respond to a winter event at the request of the WDO.

Highway contractors are used for tasks such as filling up grit bins and for pavement clearance under the direction of the WDO and also provide access to further drivers, if needed. Cityparks staff may also assist with vehicle provision, grit drops and clearance in the event of heavy snowfall.

Provision of additional staff for manual winter tasks is dependent on what other duties may need to be carried out such as refuse collection. Apart from road gritting, such tasks will not be carried out during nighttime for safety reasons.

Other sections of the council and other services (such as fire, police and NHS) will also have plans in place to deal with severe weather incidents. The Highways Service consult on the Highway Winter Service Plan with other service providers to ensure that our highway gritting routes best suit their needs as much as is practicable.

5 Public and Media Communications

5.1 Neighbouring authorities and other agencies

The BHCC Weather Forecast containing winter service action for Brighton and Hove will be transmitted daily and updated more frequently as appropriate to other key stakeholders, including emergency services, Brighton and Hove Albion Football Club, Brighton & Hove Buses, NHS, other BHCC services, Senior managers, press/comms and EPU officers and neighbouring highway authorities, including Highways England, East Sussex County Council and West Sussex County Council so that activities can be coordinated regionally.

The Communications team will post regular updates on the Council's website informing of severe weather conditions, advice on self-help and on movements across the city during extreme of adverse weather conditions.

Search under Snow on: www.brighton-hove.gov.uk

5.2 The media

Communication with communities, businesses and emergency services during winter is essential to delivering an effective service. Local media organisations will be informed when instructions for salting the precautionary network are issued.

The Council also uses social media to communicate decisions and actions taken.

5.3 Pre-season publicity

It is important that the public are aware of and understand the Brighton & Hove City Council's approach to the Highway Winter Service. This will be done via a pre-season press release with information posted on the Council website.

6 Roadside Grit Bins

Brighton & Hove provide 420 Salt/Grit bins located across its Highway Network with some additional bins provided for important council or NHS community facilities. They have been situated at sites not normally near a gritting route with the coldest areas of the city particularly on steep hills being the priority.

The Salt/Grit bins are filled with a 50/50 mixture of 6.3mm Rock Salt and Sharp Sand and are replenished in October each year.

As a guide the criteria for the provision of a salt/grit bins for strategic reasons is as follows:

- At junctions away from main (treated) roads with a gradient in excess of 1 in 10 (10%)
- On hills with gradients in excess of 15% (non-gritted roads), where vehicle flows are more than 200 vehicles a day
- On hills at locations with gradients in excess of 20% (1 in 5) whatever the vehicle flow and is not salted

In addition, there are a number of community grit bins.

All grit bins are for residents of Brighton and Hove to use the salt/grit for self-help on roads and pavements.

Housing also provides community grit bins/grit for some areas of housing-owned land. These are usually locked, whereas Highways bins are not. For further information, please see Housing's Adverse Weather Policy.

Additional salt/grit piles will be placed in strategic locations across Brighton & Hove at the discretion of the Winter Duty Officer during snow events.

Compared to some other authorities, we supply a high quantity of salt/grit for the public, within what is a relatively small geographical area. This is because we recognise that Brighton & Hove is a mainly urban area built on hills. However, provision of grit bins needs to be balanced against the capability to refill within a reasonable timescale, as well as available resources such as salt and grit.

It is not possible to supply any more grit bins on the highway. This is because it would take far too long to fill them quickly during extreme weather and with finite resources, we cannot keep expanding the number of grit bins that we then need to service. Grit bins will be monitored and those that are not used will be removed.

The installation of a bin at any new site would only be achieved by removing a bin currently installed elsewhere in the same ward, having consulted with ward councillors and with written agreement to the substitution.

Grit bins are only filled once per year at the beginning of the season, except in extreme/severe winter conditions. Extreme winter conditions are generally defined as where snowfall is greater than 50mms (2 inches) and predicted to remain on the ground longer than 36 hours. In such circumstances, the winter contingency fund will be used to cover the additional costs of refilling the strategic grit bins.

It will not be possible to fill every grit bin immediately – it can take up to two weeks to get round every area in the city depending on accessibility and available resources.

7 Budgets

7.1 Winter Service Budget

The budget allocated to the winter service is reviewed annually and is managed by the Highways Service.

7.2 Severe ice and snow events

There is no specific budget allocation within Highways to respond to severe ice and snow events or set aside funding for fee. The cost of dealing with the events will be met by virement from other planned programmes of work on the highway or from special contingency funds for emergencies.

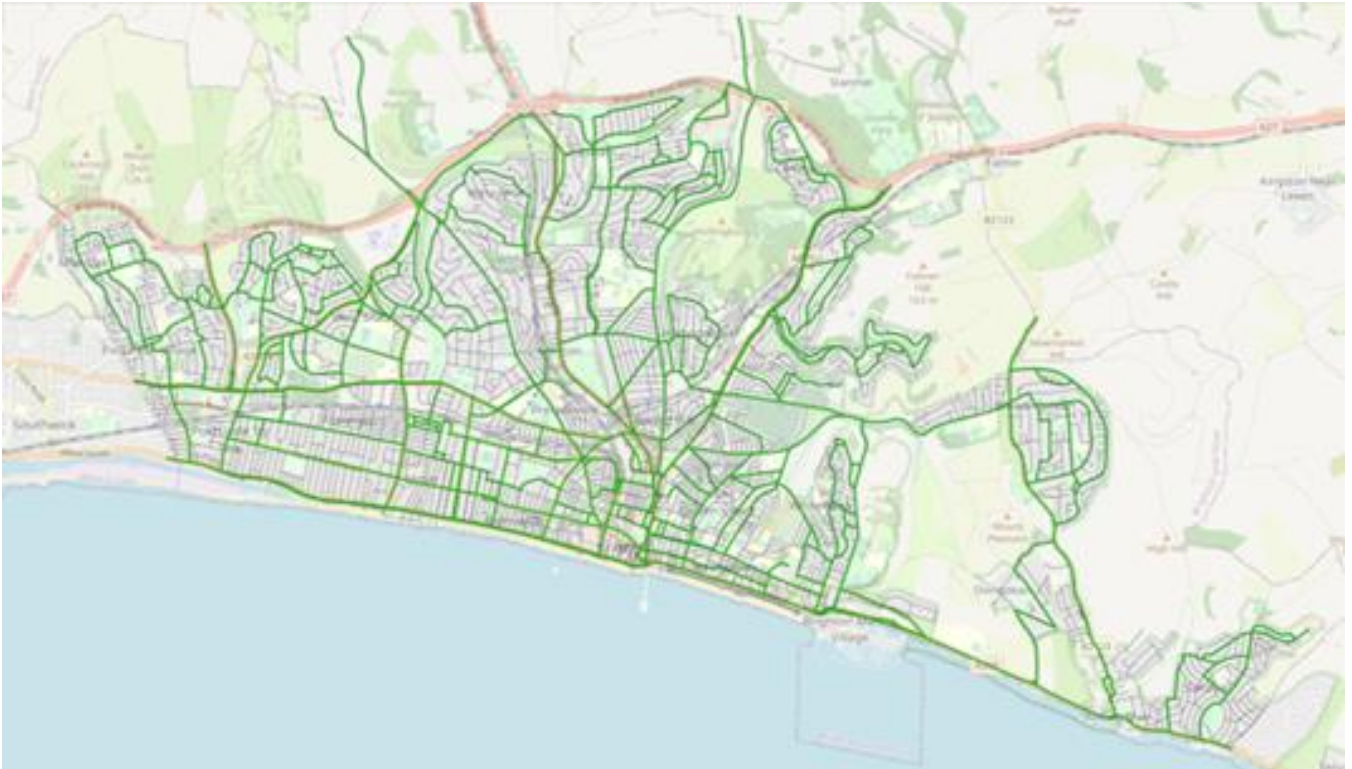
7.3 Depot and Fleet upgrade

The depot location and current arrangements are under review. The fleet condition will be monitored and a future asset plan for the fleet will be developed.

Appendix A Gritting Routes

Available at <https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/content/grit-bin-and-route-map>

GRITTING ROUTES



Appendix B Grit Bin Criteria

For locations of bins, please see:

<https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/content/grit-bin-and-route-map>

Brighton and Hove as a city is now at capacity in terms of the quantity of highway grit bins that it can service. Therefore, the installation of a bin at any new site would only be achieved by removing a bin currently installed elsewhere in the same ward, having consulted with ward councillors and with written agreement to the substitution.

It is not practicable or possible to provide grit bins and maintain them on all side roads of the city. So, to enable a fair distribution of grit bins where most needed the following criteria was used in assessing requests. The criteria below is a guide and not exhaustive.

- At junctions away from main [Gritted] roads with a gradient in excess of 1 in 10 [10%] and where vehicle flow exceeds 200 vehicles per day.
- On hills with gradients in excess of 15% [Non Gritted Routes], where vehicle flows are more than 200 vehicles per day.
- On hills at locations with gradients in excess of 20% (1 in 5) whatever the vehicle flow and is not gritted.

Grit bins for carriageway/footway use will not be provided:

- On roads that form part of precautionary or secondary gritting routes, except at known points of difficulty on steep gradients, subject to site assessment.
- Where they attract anti-social behaviour or cause nuisance to nearby residents.
- Where their provision would create a further proliferation of street furniture to the detriment of disabled or visually impaired people and/or the community.
- At locations where there are no residents or community in close proximity and where the bin is unlikely to be used.
- On un-adopted highways whether subject to future adoption or not.

Appendix C Pavement Treatment Routes

Priority areas for treatment are listed below, based on locations with the greatest footfall. However, direction of resources to an area will be determined at the time of a major winter event by the Winter Duty Officer in conjunction with the Head of Operations at Cityclean. If the city centre is clear of ice/snow or once these areas are treated, resources will be directed to local areas of importance in the most affected of the city's locations, such as priority shopping parades and other local amenities.

Area 1

- Church Road (Hove Street to Palmeira Square)
- Palmeira Square (entirety)
- Western Road (Palmeira Square to Montpelier Road)
- George Street (entirety)
- Blatchington Road (Sackville Road to Goldstone Villas)
- Goldstone Villas/Station Approach (up to Cromwell Road)
- Norton Road (entirety)
- Station Road/Boundary Road/Carlton Terrace (entirety)
- Portland Road (Sackville Road to Coleman Avenue)

Area 2

- Western Road (Montpelier Road to Clock Tower)
- Dyke Road (Clock Tower to Old Shoreham Road) (seven dials pelican crossings to be gritted)
- Marlborough Place/Gloucester Place/St Georges Place to Cheapside
- Trafalgar Street (entirety)
- Queens Road (Station to Clock Tower)
- New Road (entirety)
- North Road (entirety)
- Church Street (entirety)
- Gardener Street (entirety)
- Kensington Gardens/Street (entirety)
- Sydney Street (entirety)
- Bond Street (entirety)
- North Street (Clock Tower to St James Street) (across Old Steine Included)
- Terminus Road (entirety)
- Guildford Road (entirety)

Area 3

- A23 (St Peters Church to Aquarium) (both sides of A 23, but just the outside edges – not inner pavements)
- Edward Street (Pavilion Parade to Egremont Place)
- John Street (Edward Street to Carlton Hill)
- William Street (entirety)

- St James Street/Upper St James Street/Bristol Road/St Georges Road (to College Place) (entirety)
- Eastern Road (Abbey Road to Bristol Gate) (in front of RSCH) Bristol Gate (Eastern Road to RSCH entrance) A&E entrance.
- Sudeley Terrace (entirety)
- Paston Place (Eastern Road to Sudeley Terrace)
- Rottingdean High Street (A259 to The Green)
- Longridge Avenue (A259 to Wicklands Avenue)
- Circus Street (entirety)

Area 4

- The Lanes:
 - Meeting House Lane (entirety)
 - Nile Street (entirety)
 - Market Street (entirety)
 - Brighton Place (entirety)
 - Union Street (entirety)
 - East Street Lane (entirety)
 - Steine Lane (entirety)
- Bartholomews/Prince Albert Street/Ship Street (entirety)
- Duke Street (entirety) Air Street (entirety)
- West Street (entirety)
- Russell Road (entirety)
- Cannon Place (entirety)
- Kings Road (West Street to Preston Street - north side only)
- Preston Street (entirety)
- Pool Valley (entirety)
- East Street (entirety)

Area 5

- The Level (footway/cycleway on all 4 sides)
- London Road (Stanford Avenue to St. Peters Church) (Both sides of London Road)
- Baker Street (entirety)
- Oxford Street (entirety)
- Lewes Road (Vogue - Elm Grove)
- Around St. Peters Church
- Richmond Terrace (Elm Grove to St. Peters Church)
- Elm Grove/Southover Street/Queen's Park Road
- Elm Grove (from Queens Park Road to Freshfield Road) Footway in front of the hospital.