

STOCKPORT COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE REPORT – SUMMARY SHEET

Subject: Discretionary Grit Bin Report

Report to: Cabinet Member for Parks,
Highways & Transport Services

Date: 18 December 2024

Report of: (a) Director of Place Management

Key Decision: (b) No

Forward
Plan

General
Exception

Special
Urgency

(Mark with a Y if
applicable)

Summary:

The Council has considered the motion passed at the Council meeting on the 21st November 2024 formally requesting a review of Grit Bin Policy and to facilitate members that request the placement of additional community grit bins on adopted roads in their ward.

This report outlines the proposals in line with the above and provides firm recommendations from the Insurance department on the motion and how this may influence the Council's policy / plan.

Recommendations

The Cabinet Member for Parks, Highways and Transportation is asked to approve the proposed separate arrangement for the provision of discretionary community grit bins on the highway that are outside the scope of the borough-wide risk-based approach taken in the Council's Winter Service Policy and Plan. Also, that the Council's Policy and Plan will be reviewed in the Summer / Autumn of 2025, prior to the next winter season.

Relevant Scrutiny Committee (if decision called in): (e)
Communities & Transport

Background Papers (if report for publication): (f)

Contact person for accessing
background papers and discussing the report

Officer: Jamie Birtles
Tel: 07356 120 423

'Urgent Business': (g)

Yes/ **No** (Please circle)

Certification (if applicable)

This report should be considered as 'urgent business' and the decision exempted from 'call-in' for the following reason(s):

The written consent of Councillor _____ and the Chief Executive/Monitoring Officer/ Borough Treasurer for the decision to be treated as 'urgent business' was obtained on /will be obtained before the decision is implemented.

AGENDA ITEM

DISCRETIONARY GRIT BIN REPORT

Report of the Director of Place Management

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Council has considered the motion passed at the Council meeting on the 21st November 2024 formally requesting a review of Grit Bin Policy and to facilitate members that request the placement of additional community grit bins on adopted roads in their ward.
- 1.2 This report outlines the proposals in line with the above and provides firm recommendations from the Insurance department on the motion and how this may influence the Council's policy / plan.

2. PROPOSED ADDITION TO THE GRIT BIN PROCESS

- 2.1 It is proposed that to facilitate Ward Members wishing to install additional community grit bins on adopted roads where they feel it is necessary, they are enabled to do this outside the remit of the Council's Winter Service Policy and Operational Plan.
- 2.2 A separate decision process will be introduced for grit bins which do not comply with the criteria in the borough level risk-based approach.
- 2.3 The reasons why this separate process is advised:
 - To maintain the defensibility of the risk-based approach in the Winter Service Policy and Plan, so these can continue to support the defence of claims against the council.
 - To enable the delivery of the requested provision to meet the resolution backed by Ward Members and to provide a clear process that can be tracked separately.
- 2.4 It is noted that this process will require staff time to be re-aligned to manage the additional work involved in this motion to provide additional community grit bins.

3. The Process for Requesting Discretionary Grit Bins

- 3.1 The process to facilitate the installation of additional grit bins when requested by members would be:
 - Ward members can propose the allocation of funding from their Ward Delegated Budget to provide grit bin facilities where they feel that it is warranted. Any requests should be supported with the rationale for an additional bin and the identification of a suitable location on the highway for its placement, which will need to be agreed with highway officers (in the Network Asset Maintenance team).
 - The costs of a discretionary bin and 5 years maintenance of the bin will be charged to the Ward Delegated Budget in advance at a cost of £3000. This cost will be taken upfront within the current financial year. An Area Committee

report will be submitted for Members to consider the request and approve the funding allocation.

- Due to these requests falling outside of the risk-based approach, no formal criteria will be applied to these locations.
- The community grit bins will be subject to reasonable refilling based on usage.
- When the 5-year maintenance period expires, the community grit bin will automatically be removed, unless the continuing placement and maintenance of the bin is requested by members. If the bin is to be retained, then a further report would be required to the Area Committee. An Area Committee must give its consent to this continuation and for a further payment to be made for a further 5 years of maintenance, the costs of which will be calculated at that time. At the end of this period discretionary community grit bins managed separately from the Council's winter service policy will be removed, pending future funding decisions by Ward Members.
- The details of the location of the discretionary community grit bins would be recorded separately from the bins placed under the risk-based winter service policy.

3.2 The advice from insurance and the Council's risk advisors on this approach is as follows.

3.3 The Council have a duty under s41 (1A) to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that safe passage along a highway is not endangered by snow or ice. The Council's current winter services policy and operational plan were carefully developed in line with the Well Managed Highway Infrastructure: A Code of Practice. Since the implementation of the policy and plan, the Council has relied on this to successfully defend claims.

3.4 Prior to approval, the policy and plan received input from highways, insurers, and legal professionals. We would not recommend any changes to the policy are made without thorough consultation with the same external parties again.

3.5 From a claims perspective, the insurance team would endorse the proposal that the discretionary community bins should be managed separately from the risk-based policy / plan to ensure our claims defensibility is not undermined.

3.6 The Council has the right to review this process at the discretion of the Cabinet Member for Parks, Highways and Transport Services.

4. WINTER MAINTENANCE POLICY REVIEW

4.1 The Council is proposing to undertake a full review of the Winter Service Policy and Plan in Summer / Autumn 2025, prior to the next winter season. This will enable the Council to undertake a wider and more detailed review and allow for a refresh of the current risk-based approach taken by the Council.

4.2 It should be noted that the review will be separate to this new process for the discretionary allocation of community grit bins by members.

4.3 If it is determined that a discretionary community bin has fallen within the scope of the risk-based approach it will be moved to the borough-wide system with any unutilised funds returned to the delegated ward budget.

5. RECOMMENDATION

- 5.1 The Cabinet Member for Parks, Highways and Transportation is asked to approve the proposed separate arrangement for the provision of discretionary community grit bins on the highway that are outside the scope of the borough-wide risk-based approach taken in the Council's Winter Service Policy and Plan. Also, that the Council's Policy and Plan will be reviewed in the Summer / Autumn of 2025, prior to the next winter season.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

There are none.

Anyone wishing to inspect the above background papers or requiring further information should contact Jamie Birtles on 07356 120 423