

Extreme Winter Weather Management



How will the climate change in the East Midlands?

Hotter, drier summers, milder, wetter winters and more frequent extreme weather events are the headline findings of future climate modelling.



UK Climate Projections 2009 data for the East Midlands suggests that, under a medium emissions scenario, by the 2050s the region may see:

- An increase in summer mean temperatures of around 2.5°C, and of winter temperatures of around 2.2°C;
- A 14% increase in winter mean precipitation;
- A 16% decrease in summer mean precipitation.

(Source: UKCP09 - <http://ukclimateprojections.defra.gov.uk>)

This case study describes how Derbyshire County Council has, since 2011, started working in partnership with others to combat extreme winter weather. Although the long term climate projections are for milder winters there may still be some severe winters as there were in 2009 and 2010 and so it makes sense to prepare. Derbyshire's Winter Weather Plan aims to increase resilience to such extreme events and has been applauded by the Health and Safety Executive.

Key points

The aim of Derbyshire's Winter Weather Plan is to increase the effectiveness of snow clearing and gritting, whilst making more efficient use of resources and finances. The key aims of the strategy are:

- To make gritting on the roads more manageable
- To help prevent overspending on the gritting budget

- To clear more snow from the county's roads
- To make better use of staff and equipment

The Winter Weather Plan also aims to support and empower volunteers and members of the public to take responsibility for assisting with the management of extreme winter weather.

www.climate-em.org.uk/projects/well-adapting-east-midlands

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Background

Over recent winters Derbyshire has faced some of the worst weather recorded to date. In the winter of 2010/11 the authority spent £4.5 million, an overspend of £1 million, on gritting and clearing the snow from the highways. For the 2011/12 winter Derbyshire County Council is no longer working in isolation. The authority is working with district and parish councils, community groups, farmers and other contractors to clear even more roads. The new initiatives see the reprioritisation of gritting routes and an increase in the network of Snow Wardens. The County Council is also providing a range of information on winter weather and asking all members of the public to take responsibility and follow the Government's Snow Code.



“If we face another harsh winter we need many more local authorities to encourage residents to do the responsible and neighbourly thing shifting their own snow... there's no health and safety reason for them not to. I am delighted to see that there is a lot more common sense in Derbyshire.”

Judith Hackett CBE,
Chair of the Health and Safety Executive.

What we did

In August 2011 Derbyshire County Councillors considered and agreed changes to the existing gritting routes. This was then put out to a public consultation asking people

for their views on the new system and what types of roads should be classified as primary, secondary and tertiary routes. The new routes covered the same length of roads as

the existing routes, 1,500 miles, but make use of available resources in a more efficient way.

1,000 miles of primary gritting routes make up around 60% of the total gritting network, including all A roads and heavily used B roads. Primary routes are designed to provide at least one access route to villages and go within 500 yards of schools where possible. Secondary routes make up the remaining 40% of the gritting network. The secondary routes are only to be treated during the day and include some bus routes, roads through smaller villages and heavily used routes through estates. Finally, tertiary routes have been identified that external contractors, such as farmers with snow clearing capability, can manage if required. External contractors are paid a minimum



The Snow Wardens.

of £200 and are provided with salt and grit. The option to sign up to clear tertiary routes was advertised through local media, the Council's website and through the National Farmers Union. The scheme was well received by businesses and farmers in Derbyshire with over 120 applications. Members of the public are able to submit requests for tertiary routes to be cleared via the Council website and Call Derbyshire.

Snow Wardens

Derbyshire County Council has encouraged over 80 parish and town councils to get involved with the Snow Warden scheme. Snow Wardens clear paths, report issues with grit bins, provide information to the public and encourage people to participate in safe snow clearing activities. In return the authority provides snow wardens with a shovel, gloves and a high visibility jacket. Each parish is provided with a grit bin and up to a tonne of grit. 140 volunteers attended nine free snow clearing training courses provided by the County Council, which offered advice on safety, public liability and how to report snow clearing activity to the authority.

“I think if anyone who is able to help to keep the pavements and footpaths clear, it'll benefit everyone in the community.”

Barry Aldridge,
Volunteer Snow Warden.

The County Council has communicated winter weather information to the public under the **SNOW INFO** brand. Information on school closures, latest weather, road conditions and gritting routes is provided in a clear, easy-to-read format. Information on the Government's Snow Code is



Ryan Boam, Flagg farmer and now ploughing contractor.

also provided so that Derbyshire residents are provided with the information they need to take part in effective and legal snow clearing. Derbyshire residents are also encouraged to become 'snow buddies' providing support to neighbours and local communities

in periods of extreme winter weather.

Derbyshire County Council has been recognised nationally for its work on community snow clearing and road gritting practices by the Health and Safety Executive.

“It's a nice feeling at the end of the day knowing that you have helped an old lady who couldn't otherwise get out or you've helped someone to get to work in the mornings. You get home and think I have done a good thing today.”

Ryan Boam,
Flagg farmer and snow ploughing contractor.

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Further Information

For further information on Derbyshire County Council's winter weather plan and up to date snow reports please see:

www.derbyshire.gov.uk/snow

Contact details

Case study prepared by Climate Change Team, Derbyshire County Council.

For information on this case study and other climate change projects please contact:

climate.change@derbyshire.gov.uk

Or visit the website

www.derbyshire.gov.uk/climatechange

One of a series of case studies about adaptation to climate change, developed as part of the Well Adapting East Midlands project and supported by Climate East Midlands. Other case studies can be viewed at the web address below.

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