

# **School closures in extreme weather**

## **Review of Children and Young People's Scrutiny Panel**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Last winter (2009-10) was confirmed as the coldest since 1978-79. The heavy snowfall on Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> January 2010 and prolonged period of freezing temperature caused considerable disruption to a number of services, including schools, public transport and businesses. The following day almost 90% of Rotherham schools were closed.

Questions were raised about the procedures for closure of schools during periods of adverse weather or in other emergencies. The Children and Young People's Scrutiny Panel was asked to undertake a short review to see if lessons can be learnt to ensure that future disruption is minimised.

The review began its evidence gathering in February 2010. Interviews were organised with the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People's Services and Cabinet Member for Streetpride Services<sup>1</sup> and relevant officers. In addition, the review group received written submissions and spoke to a number of Headteachers and Senior Staff from Primary and Secondary Schools.

The review makes thirteen recommendations (detailed in Section 6 of the report) which focus on the following areas:

- The Local Authority should reissue the guidance to schools with an emphasis on the presumption that schools should remain open unless faced by extraordinary circumstances;
- The Local Authority should confirm with governing bodies their approach to delivering the statutory 190 days of learning and in the case of closure, how they are able to make up some or all of the time lost;
- The Local Authority should collate strategies or actions that have or would assist in maintaining a "school open" status. This good practice should be shared with colleagues across cluster groups and wider school communities and used to inform their business continuity planning to cover extreme weather.
- Children and Young People's Services with Human Resources, should explore with schools the feasibility of teachers and support staff being re-directed to their nearest school to help deal with staffing shortages, to keep schools closures to a minimum;
- Priority salting routes are reviewed to accommodate schools wherever possible;
- The RMBC 'school closure' web page is redesigned with the capacity to instantly 'capture' information for each school and linked to other relevant pages on the RMBC website.

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<sup>1</sup> Since the review was commissioned, the positions of Cabinet Member for Children and Young People's Services and Cabinet Member for Streetpride have been reconfigured. Overall responsibility for the services and functions outlined in this report would lie with the portfolios of 'Safeguarding and Developing Learning' for school based issues and support and 'Safe and Attractive Neighbourhoods' for Streetpride services.

## 1 ORIGINAL CONCERNS – WHY MEMBERS WANTED TO LOOK AT THIS ISSUE

The winter of 2009-10 has been confirmed as the coldest since 1978-79<sup>2</sup>. The low temperatures combined with heavy snowfall in the week preceding Christmas. More snowfall occurred in the first week of January 2010, coinciding with the re-opening of schools on Tuesday January 5<sup>th</sup>, 2010.

The heavy snowfall on the Tuesday caused considerable disruption to a number of services, including public transport and businesses. In Rotherham, the majority of schools announced they were closing before the start of the school day or closed earlier than usual. The next day just over 11% of schools remained open. By Friday due to huge efforts to clear school sites and salt the highway network, the situation was reversed with only 14 out of the 126 schools in Rotherham remaining closed.

Although the primary concern was the potential disruption to education, particularly as a number of 'A' level and GCSE examinations were scheduled to begin shortly after the start of the term, the closure of schools meant that a number of parents were unable to go to work, placing a further burden on an already fragile economy. Although we did not gauge public opinion directly as part of the evidence gathering process, we were aware that there was a perception that some schools remained closed whilst businesses and other parts of the public sector were expected to return to 'normal service'. We do not make a judgement on whether schools remained closed beyond what could be reasonably expected, as that is a discussion that should take place with governing bodies, headteachers and parents and carers.

Questions were raised about the procedures for closure of schools during periods of adverse weather or in other emergencies. Cllr Shaun Wright, Cabinet Member for Children and Young People's Services asked the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Panel to undertake a short review into these factors and to see if lessons can be learnt to ensure that future disruption is minimised.

## 2 TERMS OF REFERENCE

The following members were part of the review:

- Cllr Ann Russell (chair)
- Cllr Barry Kaye
- Mick Hall, Co-optee, Parent Governor Representative
- Tony Marvin, Co-optee, Parent Governor Representative
- Michael Burn, Co-optee, Sheffield Diocese

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<sup>2</sup> Met Office: Coldest UK winter for over 30 years  
<http://www.metoffice.gov.uk/corporate/pressoffice/2010/pr20100301.html>

The purpose of the review was to examine the circumstances around the recent closure of Rotherham schools due to extreme weather with a view to making recommendations on how disruption and closures can be kept to a minimum in the future.

The review examined:

- current policy and legal responsibilities
- operational arrangements – what is in place locally and how does this compare with practice elsewhere?
- can other support be provided?
- how we communicate closure to parents

Although this review focuses on the closure of schools during periods of adverse weather (snow in this instance), we are acutely aware of other pressures on schools as demonstrated by the 2007 flooding and the recent threats of flu-pandemic that may require emergency decisions about how to keep the school open.

The review began its evidence gathering in February 2010. Interviews were organised with the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People's Services and Cabinet Member for Streetpride Services and relevant officers. In addition, the review group spoke to a number of Headteachers and Senior Staff from Primary and Secondary Schools.

An email was sent to all Headteachers, Chair of Governors and teaching and non-teaching unions seeking their views. Web-based searches and telephone interviews with other authorities were also undertaken.

The review group would like to thank all those who contributed to the review for their openness and co-operation.

### **3 BACKGROUND**

On Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> January, heavy snow began to fall coinciding with the morning rush hour. The Met Office website forecast that heavy snow would fall over the next day, with further snow expected later in the week. This followed lower than average temperatures over the Christmas and New Year period.

Buses and trains were disrupted, with First Buses withdrawing services in the morning. A limited service was introduced later in the day. Despite the sheer volume of the snow fall, extensive salting was undertaken throughout the day on all major roads and bus routes. The initial advice from police was for only essential journeys to be made.

- 3.1.1 A number of headteachers agreed to close their school as the likely extent of the disruption became clearer early in the day. The ability of teachers and support staff to get to school was a significant factor in many closures. This meant that

there was a risk that safe supervision of pupils would not have been maintained if the school had opened<sup>3</sup>. For those in more rural parts of the borough, the availability of public transport and school buses was also a concern, particularly as a number of pupils relied on these for safe transit from home to school. There were fears that this would be compounded if the snow continued, with an added risk of pupils and staff becoming stranded. This was a particular concern for secondary and special schools with wider catchment areas.

The following is a table showing the number of schools that were closed on each day:

	<b>School closures</b>	<b>Schools open</b>
<b>Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> January</b>	94 (75.8%) <i>(9 of these schools closed at lunchtime)</i>	30 (24.2%)
<b>Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> January</b>	110 (88.7%)	14 (11.3%)
<b>Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> January</b>	26 (20.9%) <i>(5 schools reduced the school day for health and safety reasons. 2 schools opened to limited year groups)</i>	98 (79.1%)
<b>Friday 8<sup>th</sup> January</b>	14 (11.3%) <i>5 schools reduced the school day for health and safety reasons. 5 schools opened to limited year groups)</i>	110 (88.7%)

3.1.2 The Department for Education (DfE), quoted in the interim Quarmby report *The Resilience of England's Transport Systems in Winter*, stated that national figures for school closures were not held centrally but on the worst days of winter disruption during the week commencing 4th January 2010, it estimated around 10,000 schools had closed (out of a total of 22,000). In line with the comments from schools in Rotherham, most schools appeared to have closed due a combination of reasons, including 'unsafe premises', 'access problems' and 'transport problems'. (Department for Transport, 2010 p 42).

3.1.3 It was reported to the review that salting of the priority network was undertaken on a regular basis throughout the winter of 2009/10. This includes all principal and B class roads, as well as bus routes, access roads to hospitals, fire stations and known 'trouble spots'. Indeed at its peak, salting crews made five runs throughout the day and night to ensure routes were open and safe.

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<sup>3</sup> There are a number of statutory obligations in relation to staffing levels in schools: Primary schools are expected to have no more than 30 pupils in a class. This is a statutory requirement up to and including Year 2. For the Foundation Phase, the ratio is 1 adult (teacher or teaching assistants) to 8 pupils for Nursery and Reception classes, and 1 adult to 13 pupils for classes in Years 1 and 2. In addition, schools would need to ensure that they had sufficient employees to manage the necessary number of children safely, under health and safety legislation, including sufficient first aiders on site.

The Cabinet Member for Streetpride reiterated that adequate measures were put in place to maintain salt supplies over the winter, although clearly the prolonged cold snap had put stocks under pressure. However, the Government imposed the 'Salt Cell' in early January, meant that supplies were managed centrally, and salt was diverted to replenish the stocks of councils where it had fallen dangerously low. Councils were also instructed to reduce the amount of salt used on each run. Under these circumstances, Streetpride did its utmost to ensure that the primary routes were open, and although it aimed to take secondary action on more minor routes, inevitably the pressure on the service meant that some side roads were not salted, including some access routes to schools.

#### **4 HOW IS THE DECISION TO CLOSE TAKEN?**

4.1.1 The DfE provide guidance on keeping schools open during extreme weather, which reiterates the need for contingency planning and in the case of winter weather, maintaining salt stocks. Whilst the Local Authority can make the decision to close community and voluntary controlled schools in exceptional circumstances (for example if there are widespread road closure or power failures), the DfE advises that the decision to close a school in an emergency such as severe weather is delegated to the headteacher.

*"...headteachers, who will know local weather and ground conditions, and the likely impact of the weather on the numbers of staff and pupils who will be able to get into school."<sup>4</sup>*

4.1.2 The DfE advice is followed in Rotherham, with the final decision to close a school resting with the Headteacher, in consultation with their Chair of Governors. The School is legally responsible for the management of the premises, including the grounds. The budget for this is delegated to them under the funding arrangements for schools. Schools are responsible for clearing the site and making the decision about closing the school if there are safety issues.

This power is delegated under Local Management of Schools. Headteachers are advised to follow the Council's "Guidance on exceptional school closure" and make their judgement based on an assessment of risk.

*The guiding principles in such circumstances should be the safety and welfare of pupils and the minimum disruption to the normal education service. Inconvenience, discomfort or travel delay, do not necessarily constitute good reason for an early closure.*

If the decision to close is reached, schools are asked to:

- contact local radio stations to disseminate information to parents
- inform Facilities Management and Children and Young People's Services, who will in turn contact catering, cleaning etc
- contact parents with reasons for closure and anticipated date of re-opening

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<sup>4</sup> Teachernet: Planning for, and responding to, severe weather

- maintain a core of staff during normal working hours to deal with enquiries (if practicable and safe)

4.1.3 Schools are asked to be mindful of health and safety factors when considering options for closure, balancing the risks arising from less supervision, late return journeys, minor slips and bumps, etc. against disruption to pupils' learning.

Other relevant considerations from the Health and Safety at Work Act (1974) include:

- 2(1): Duty on Employer to ensure so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety & welfare at work of all employees.
- 2(2)d: Ensure so far as is reasonably practicable any place of work under the Employers control, maintains safe access to & egress from without risks to employees.
- 2(2)e: Provide & maintain a working environment for employees that is so far as is reasonably practicable, safe & without risks to health & adequate with regards to welfare facilities.
- 3: Duty on employers to ensure so far as is reasonably practicable their activities do not endanger anyone & to provide information in certain circumstances to the public about potential hazards.
- 4: Duty on those in control of premises used as a place of work, to ensure so far as is reasonably practicable that they do not endanger those within them.

4.1.4 In the email responses and interviews, headteachers and senior staff thought the guidance issued to schools was sufficient. They also noted that officers based in the School Organisation and Development were helpful and available during the disruption.

## 5 ISSUES EMERGING FROM INTERVIEWS

As part of its evidence gathering process, questions were asked to establish whether the current arrangements for school closures due to extreme weather are 'fit for purpose':

- what steps were taken to keep schools open (or keep closure to minimum)?
- what were the barriers that prevented schools from remaining open?
- how we communicate closure to parents?
- if there are other measures that could be put in place to minimise disruption

### 5.1 What steps were taken to keep schools open (or keep closure to minimum)?

There is an expectation that schools will do their utmost to open and that closure is only taken as a last resort.

*“Any decision to close the school is not taken lightly. It’s not about Health and Safety gone mad. A decision is made on the basis of the evidence about whether it is safe or not to open the site.”* Interview with Headteacher and Senior Staff

5.1.1 One of the major concerns of the review was that ‘every day counts’ and potential



disruption to children's education should be minimised. All schools were asked for their views on what steps were taken to keep their schools open. We received 13 responses out of a potential 126. We are unable to draw any conclusions whether there are any common factors that prevented schools from opening. However, it may be useful to collate such information in order to support future business continuity planning.

- 5.1.2 With this in mind, the review group agreed it would also be helpful to report strategies or actions taken that have or would assist in maintaining a "school open" status, for example, hiring external contractors to clear playgrounds or access routes within school sites. This good practice should be shared with colleagues across their cluster groups and wider school communities.
- 5.1.3 Schools must open for 380 half-day sessions (190 days) in each school year, beginning with the first term to start after July. This is consistent with the up to 195 days a year required by a teacher's statutory conditions of service: the additional up to five days are non-teaching work days<sup>5</sup>. On the presumption that 'every day counts', it may be valuable to explore with Governing Bodies if 'lost days' can be recovered by extending school terms.
- 5.1.4 We received assurances that schools opened to specific year groups to accommodate students who had scheduled tests or examinations. No examinations were disrupted.
- 5.1.5 Many schools cited staff shortages as a determining factor in their decision to close, as the minimum supervision levels could not be assured. However, some schools mitigated against this problem by opening later to avoid the rush hour and ensure that staff and pupils could arrive safely. Another school ensured that each member of staff had been asked to plan for their inward and outward journeys in inclement weather in advance. The school in question remained open to all year groups throughout this period and the expectation on pupils was for full attendance. The review did not examine the issues related to whether individual staff should get paid for days missed. That is a decision for individual governing bodies to take. However they should be satisfied that every effort has been made for staff to attend school.
- 5.1.6 Schools are responsible for ordering and maintaining salt supplies. It is clear that whilst many schools had not anticipated the prolonged cold snap and their salt supplies were depleted, some schools were able to maintain their stocks or secure new supplies. Again, it would be helpful to share these strategies across clusters.

## **5.2 What were the barriers that prevented schools from remaining open?**

- 5.2.1 The review held an informal 'round table' discussion with a small number of senior staff and headteachers, from both primary and secondary schools.

Some common issues emerged from the discussion:

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<sup>5</sup> Teachernet: Length of school day/year  
<http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/management/atoz//lengthofschoolday>

- health and safety issues if the school site, surrounding roads and pavements are icy
- the availability of salt for playgrounds and paths
- availability of caretakers or staff to clear ice and snow from the school site
- conflicting messages from the media on essential travel and weather forecast variations
- the ability of teachers and site staff to get to the school
- the availability of public transport and school buses (particularly on January 5, 6 and 13)
- access to catering and other support services

These particular problems were echoed in response to a wider request for information from schools. Other issues highlighted included

- problems or failure with school heating systems
- sudden unexpected weather and the difficulties of clearing the site.
- the cost of hiring equipment (snowploughs etc) was high and had not been budgeted for
- ensuring that pupils can get home safely

5.2.2 There were 5 special schools affected by the snow and ice. These sites have borough-wide catchments. Some had specific site issues such as long drives which were difficult to clear. One school was accessed by an unadopted road which was not salted by the authority. A major issue was the safe transportation of children. A high proportion of children access school transport and there were issues and difficulties 'both ends' of the journey. Anecdotally we were told that schools buses often found it difficult to navigate unsalted side roads. There were also additional issues about how children and young people (some with complex mobility issues) were safely escorted from their homes to the buses, particularly across icy pavements.

5.2.3 Several head teachers suggested that there were specific issues with the location and geography of their schools that impacted on their ability to remain open. It was reported anecdotally that for those schools located on hills or on junctions with busy roads, headteachers had grave concerns for the safety of pupils arriving at schools, as children and carers were walking on the roads as pavements were not salted. In addition, a number of Rotherham schools are located on housing estates, with access to them by side roads rather than a main route. Given that these roads were not deemed to be a priority for salting, vehicular access may have been problematic although the schools were in walking distance of main routes and may have been accessible on foot with care.

5.2.4 As reported, a number of schools raised concerns that access to schools situated on non-priority routes proved hazardous and contributed to their decision to close or open partially. Whilst it is acknowledged that the Local Authority is working with finite resources to support salting activity on priority routes, school closures disrupt more than children's education. Parents and carers were required to take time off work to look after children or seek alternative child care. Because of staff shortages, businesses were disrupted, placing an additional burden on an already fragile local economy. The Local Government Association (LGA) suggests

*“Councils will need to work closely with local partners (schools, health and social care services, transport operators and local businesses) to agree priorities for winter maintenance.”<sup>6</sup> (LGA, 2010 p11)*

The review asks whether there are council services, such as salting and ploughing routes, that could be adapted to accommodate schools wherever possible.

- 5.2.5 There was some public perception that schools were taking the decision to close because of fear of low attendance negatively impacting on Ofsted targets. Whether there is any foundation to this is unclear, but we would support the LGA calls that in the case of extreme events, Ofsted and other regulatory targets should be suspended to enable the most appropriate response to be taken locally.

### **5.3 How we communicate closure to parents?**

- 5.3.1 The guidance to schools states that parents should be periodically reminded that there may be occasions when emergencies make it necessary for pupils to be sent home prematurely or the school to close and that in these circumstances parents should have advised their children of the care arrangements. Monkwood Primary School has issued a helpful leaflet outlining the procedure for emergency closure which was issued at the start of the cold snap.

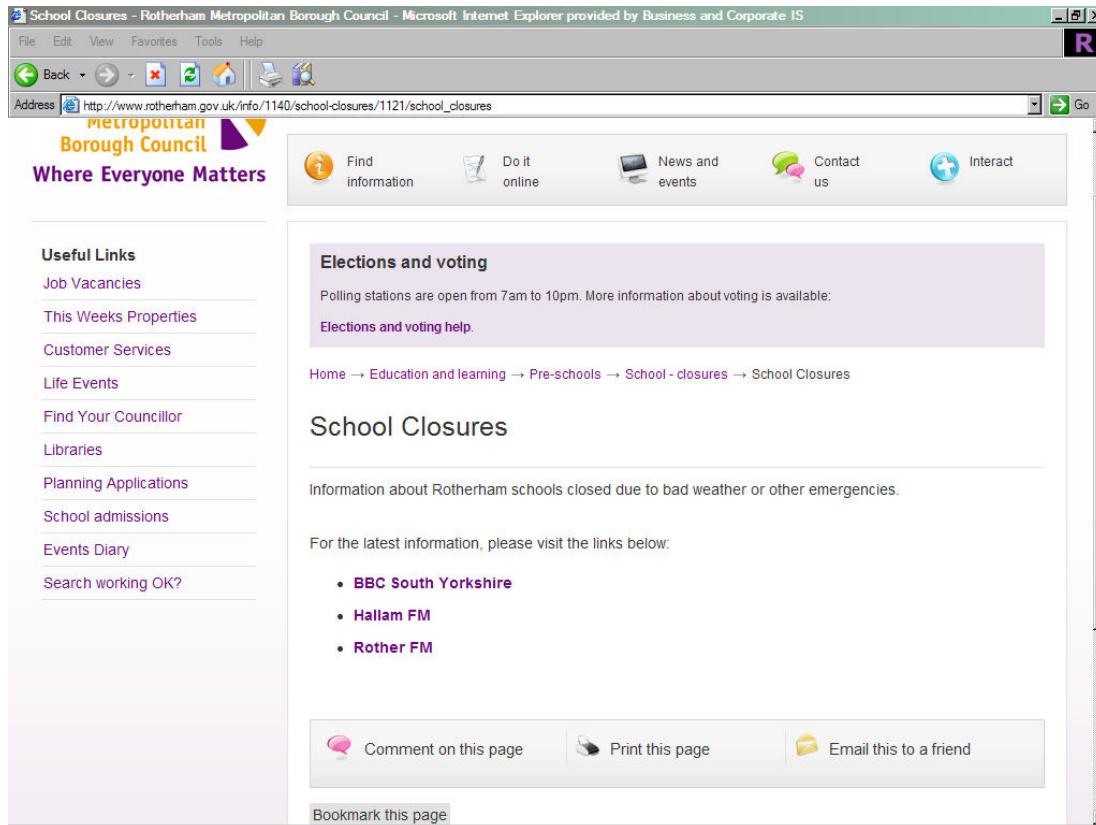
- 5.3.2 If a school decides to close, parents should be notified as soon as possible. It is suggested that a decision to close should be made no later than 07:00am so that there is an opportunity for parents to check whether a school is open before they leave the house. An earlier decision the evening before would in many cases be more appropriate as this would help the collection of information about closures, and speed up the process of alerting the BBC and others. Local radio stations are told by individual schools if they are to close and the list of closures announced at regular intervals through the days (particularly mornings). Although this has been in many respects a tried and tested method, coverage for the stations is not uniform across the borough and in a small number of instances, incorrect information was given out. Some schools have a text system notifying parents of closure. This system was seen as being the most direct and simple way of informing parents, although of course, it is reliant on parents ensuring that their contact details are up-to-date. We were informed that not all schools had this service, citing that they did not have money available in their budgets to fund this. However, it would be worth exploring through the partnership with RBT, if such a service could be introduced to schools.

- 5.3.3 In addition to the text and radio notification, schools also contact the local authority to let them know of closure. This is to notify facilities management (cleaners) and catering to cancel services. Although the closures are posted on the Council’s website, difficulties with staff getting into work on both the Tuesday and Wednesday, meant that the website was not updated regularly. Assurances were given that access to remote technology meant that this could be updated more frequently in the future.

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<sup>6</sup> Weathering the Storm II: improving UK resilience to severe winter weather” Local Government Association

5.3.4 The review group were also concerned about the quality of information posted on the RMBC website<sup>7</sup> (figure 1). Whilst directing parents to the radio stations is one route to update parents, it is important to ensure that information is posted on RMBC's website at an early stage, and information is disseminated through new technologies as appropriate (Twitter, Facebook etc).



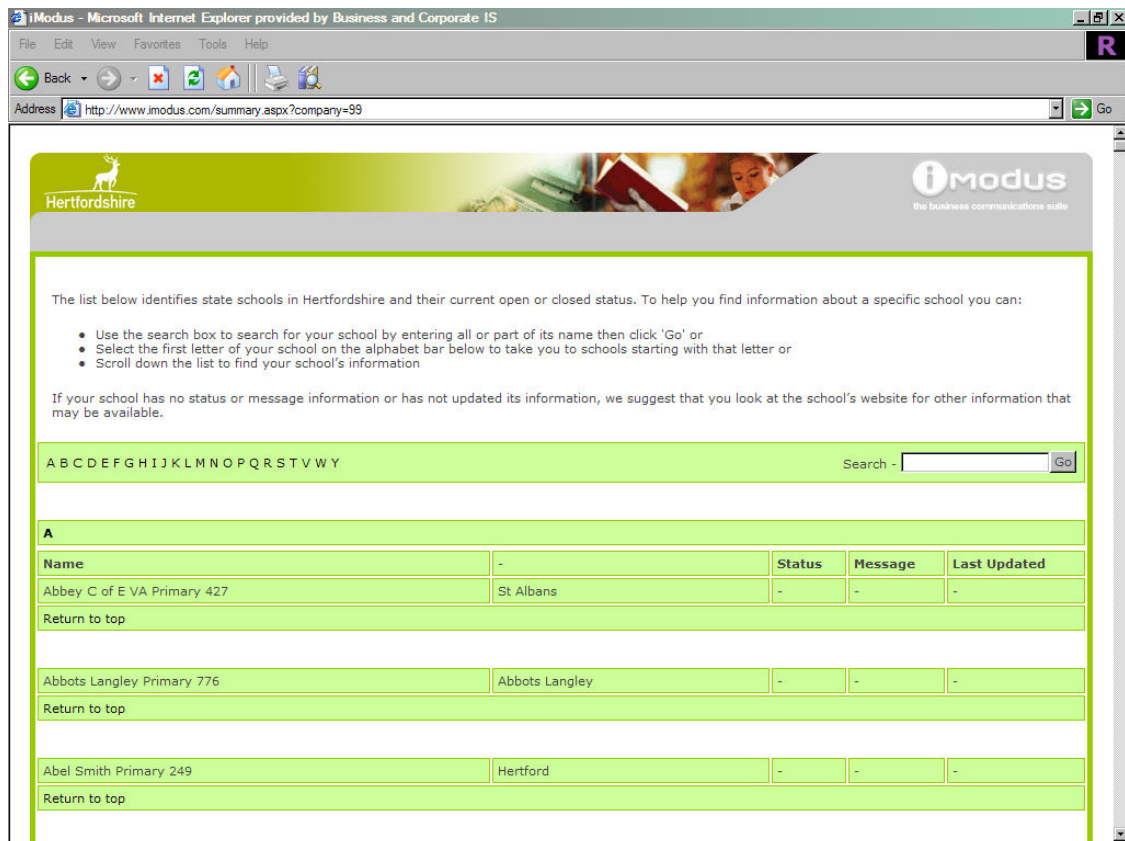
5.3.5 Northamptonshire County Council (NCC)<sup>8</sup> (figure 2) has developed a system with schools to ensure that they are able respond promptly to issues as they arise, such as having access to schools IT passwords so that information could be posted if school had difficulties accessing their websites. Radio stations used NCC's texting service to inform schools by 6.30am of weather conditions, current and forecasted, as well as the conditions of the roads and transport information.

A similar system is operated by Hertfordshire County Council to provide schools with the facility to text information which will be published instantly on a public-facing web page<sup>9</sup>, with a facility to post messages and notification of when the website was last updated. They anticipate that the system will be quicker and more efficient than current arrangements and should reduce the stress on school websites, HCC's website and their Customer Service Centre.

<sup>7</sup> It should be noted that this is the default page and in the event of an emergency, would be populated a list of schools closed

<sup>8</sup> Northamptonshire County Council: True Grit Conference: Dealing with the Winter Impact 2009/10

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.hertsdirect.org/infobase/docs/worddocs/winterfinalreport.doc>



## 5.4 Other measures that could be put in place to minimise disruption

There does not appear to have been any in-depth analysis of the factors involved in closures to identify potential trends or repeat difficulties. The review group was of the view by examining potential risks and problems across clusters, schools could take mitigating action to address these in the future.

- 5.4.1 Schools are expected to complete emergency plans, which are subject to routine auditing by the Health and Safety Team. It is not entirely clear to what extent these address business continuity in extreme weather situations. Given the likelihood of extreme weather events occurring more frequently in future years, schools should be supported to develop more comprehensive plans to mitigate against potential disruption.

This could include:

- How minimum staffing (including teaching and non-teaching staff) can be maintained
- How salt supplies are to be maintained,
- List of external contractors and/or volunteers to undertake site clearance
- How students will be supported to take scheduled examinations in the event of extreme weather

The review asks whether further work is required to provide assurance that schools have clear and accessible plans for severe weather conditions, and that these are stored off site as well as within the school premises.

- 5.4.2 In respect of taking steps to ensure minimum staffing is available, the review asked whether anything can be done to enable 'staff sharing' or pooling of premises in extraordinary circumstances. Sheffield City Council is consulting with the public on whether teachers, and other Council staff can be relocated, to help where they are needed in their local areas<sup>10</sup>. Newport Council has issued guidance if a teacher or member of support staff cannot reach their own school, they should report to another school in the area (if he/she can get there safely).

The Local Government Association (LGA) noted in its report 'that schools closures meant parents were unable to go to work which impacted heavily on businesses. In response to this it suggests:

*that contingency arrangements could be made between schools in a local area so that when travel is disrupted, teachers could be re-directed to their nearest school to help deal with staffing shortages, helping to keep schools open."*

- 5.4.3 The Cabinet Member for Streetpride stated that they were looking at ways to utilise small-plant machinery more efficiently, for example, the possibility of 'quad bikes' used for ground maintenance being adapted for snow clearance. A number of respondents suggested that they would be supportive of such measures particularly if schools could share snow-clearing machines etc. either in clusters or geographical areas to make it more cost-efficient.

Several councils asks for volunteers to help clear school sites. Guidance on how this could be done safely was posted on websites<sup>11</sup>. We are aware of some schools in Rotherham taking similar action although we are not certain if this was widespread practice across the borough.

## 6 RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Local Authority should reissue the guidance to schools with an emphasis on the presumption that schools should remain open unless faced by extraordinary circumstances;
2. The Local Authority should confirm with governing bodies their approach to delivering the statutory 190 days of learning and in the case of closure, how they are able to make up some or all of the time lost;
3. The Local Authority should collate strategies or actions that have or would assist in maintaining a "school open" status. This good practice should be shared with colleagues across cluster groups and wider school communities;
4. The Local Authority should confirm the process for monitoring and reporting on school closures, including any specific circumstances to identify if there are common trends or factors<sup>12</sup>. This data should be used to inform salting

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<sup>10</sup> Sheffield City Council: Have your say in the great snow debate

<sup>11</sup> Cornwall County Council: Using Volunteers to Clear Snow from School Grounds  
<http://www.cornwall.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=23506>

<sup>12</sup> For example length of closure, staffing issues, low stocks of salt, health and safety concerns (on

routes, continuity planning across clusters and communication issues.

5. Each school should be encourage to develop their business continuity plans to cover extreme weather. This should include :
    - how minimum staffing levels will be maintained,
    - how sufficient stocks of salt are maintained; linking with clusters as appropriate,
    - contact details of local building contractors and grounds maintenance companies who are able to clear snow,
    - consideration of later openings as opposed to closure (as practiced by some schools) to allow caretakers more time to make the site safe and allow staff travelling to work more travelling time,
    - measures to ensure that scheduled examinations or tests are able to take place,
    - how closure will be communicated to parents,
    - how communication systems are to be maintained, particularly linking to RMBC website;
  6. Children and Young People's Services with Human Resources, should explore with schools the feasibility of teachers and support staff being re-directed to their nearest school to help deal with staffing shortages, to keep schools closures to a minimum;
  7. The Local Authority explores with RBT whether cost effective text notification systems (or other social networking alternatives) are available for those schools without current access to these facilities;
  8. The RMBC 'school closure' web page is redesigned with the capacity to instantly 'capture' information for each school (including date of closure, reasons for closure, expected date of re-opening and contact details). This page should have 'quick-links' to other relevant pages (policy, gritting routes etc and the decisions made during severe weather);
  9. Guidance to parents is reissued by schools on a timely basis, incorporating details of the updated RMBC website;
  10. Priority salting routes are reviewed by RMBC and other relevant agencies to accommodate schools wherever possible;
  11. The feasibility (with due regard to health and safety, relevant checks etc) of recruiting a pool of volunteers to assist with site clearance, either on a school, cluster or Area Assembly level be explored;
  12. Streetpride explores the feasibility of schools hiring small-plant machinery to clear sites in extreme weather.
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and off site) or other geographical issues (site location, road layout, access issues)



13. The Cabinet Member and Director of Children and Young People's Services writes to the Minister of Education supporting the LGA call that in the case of extreme events, Ofsted and other regulatory targets should be suspended to enable the most appropriate response to be taken locally.

## 7 THANKS

- Cllr Shaun Wright - Cabinet Member Children and Young People's Services
- Cllr Richard Russell – Cabinet Member Streetpride
- Graham Sinclair - Programme Director BSF, CYPS
- David Burton - Director of Streetpride, EDS
- Dean Fenton - Risk Management, CYPS
- David Hill - Manager, School Organisation Planning and Development, CYPS
- Steve Pearson - Communications Manager, CYPS
- Rob Haines, Deputy Head Teacher, Rawmarsh Community Sports College
- Liz Gee, Headteacher Monkwood Primary School
- Paula Harmer, Headteacher, Thorpe Hesley Junior School
- Margaret Catling, Support Services Manager Aston Comprehensive School
- Peter Barnett - Scrutiny Co-ordinator, Performance & Scrutiny Team, Chief Executive's Directorate, Coventry City Council,

## 8 INFORMATION SOURCES/REFERENCES

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