

Contract Award for Winter Gritters

Decision Maker: Chief Executive

Service Area: Highways, Engineering & Operations

Directorate: Environment

Report Author: Nasir Dad, Director of Environment

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Date of Decision: 24 August 2026

1. Power to make the decision

The decision is being taken under the authorisation contained in Section 9C – Delegations to Specific Officers of Part 3 (Responsibility for Functions) of the Council Constitution for the Chief Executive to take any emergency decisions in respect of the Council's executive functions which cannot be delayed until the next Cabinet meeting.

2. Decision Sought

To approve the Contract Award for Winter Gritters, report attached.

3. Reason for urgency

Oldham Council has a statutory duty under S41(1A) of the Highways Act 1980, to ensure, so far as reasonably practicable, that safe passage along a highway is not endangered by snow or ice. In order to meet this statutory duty, the Highways Department requires a fleet of gritting vehicles for each winter season. These vehicles are used to treat the borough's highways with grit salt to ensure that the Council can do what is reasonably practicable to keep roads clear of snow and ice over the winter period (26 weeks; October - April).

As a result of the need to comply with this statutory duty, this report seeks approval to award the contract for securing the necessary vehicles in preparation for the winter maintenance programme. The current contract for winter gritting vehicles expires in October 2026 – therefore, approval of this report is urgent to ensure vehicles are available for the forthcoming winter season.

4. Risk(s) of not taking the decision

- Unable address winter maintenance requirements of the borough's highway network
- Failure to maintain the network could lead to increased legal risks and liabilities given that it is a statutory duty
- Reputational damage for not maintaining the highway network
- Increased road safety related incidents due to the absence of winter maintenance

5. Financial impact if decision not taken forward

- Risk of increased claims against the organisation because of incidents on an unmaintained highway
- Impact on residents and businesses where unable to travel across the borough as a result of highways not being maintained

6. Statutory Officer clearances

a. Section 151 Officer

Name Lee Walsh
Date 7 August 2026
Comments

The 6-month cost of hiring the Winter Gritting Fleet in 2026/27 will be £216,051 and the cost can be met through existing resources within the Highways Winter Maintenance budget. It must be noted that the service also holds an Adverse Weather Reserve. The reserve was commissioned to support the additional cost of severe winter weather conditions, given the unpredictability of winter which further creates financial resilience for the service.

b. Monitoring Officer

Name Alex Bougatef (Monitoring Officer)
Date 20 August 2026

Comments The exercise of emergency powers should be undertaken in consultation with the Leader or Deputy Leader of the Council. However, the Council has not yet appointed a Leader or Deputy Leader for the current municipal year, so it is not possible to consult them. In addition, there is no certainty about when a Leader or Deputy Leader will be appointed, as the Council has failed at successive meetings to do so. For the reasons given in the report, an urgent decision is required, and the matter cannot await the appointment of a Leader and Deputy Leader at some undetermined future date.