

AGENDA MANAGEMENT SHEET

Name of Committee	Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Date of Committee	3 November 2010
Report Title	Winter Service Review 2010
Summary	This report provides the Committee with a thorough update and a basis for discussion of County Highway's Winter Service.
For further information please contact	Bryn Patefield Contract and Improvement Officer Tel. 01926 736533 brynpatefield@warwickshire.gov.uk
Would the recommended decision be contrary to the Budget and Policy Framework?	No
Background Papers	None.

CONSULTATION ALREADY UNDERTAKEN:-

Details to be specified

Other Committees	<input type="checkbox"/>
Local Member(s) (With brief comments, if appropriate)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other Elected Members	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Councillor M Doody Councillor R Sweet Councillor J Whitehouse } for information
Cabinet Member (Reports to The Cabinet, to be cleared with appropriate Cabinet Member)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Councillor A Cockburn
Chief Executive	<input type="checkbox"/>
Legal	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	I Marriott
Finance	<input type="checkbox"/>

Other Chief Officers	<input type="checkbox"/>
District Councils	<input type="checkbox"/>
Health Authority	<input type="checkbox"/>
Police	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other Bodies/Individuals	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Parish and Town Councils

FINAL DECISION

YES (If 'No' complete Suggested Next Steps)

SUGGESTED NEXT STEPS :

Details to be specified

Further consideration by this Committee	<input type="checkbox"/>
To Council	<input type="checkbox"/>
To Cabinet	<input type="checkbox"/>
To an O & S Committee	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	3 November 2010.
To an Area Committee	<input type="checkbox"/>
Further Consultation	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee
– 3 November 2010**

Winter Service Review 2010

**Report of the Strategic Director for
Environment and Economy**

Recommendation

That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee considers the findings of the 2010 Winter Maintenance Service Review.

1. Background to Review

- 1.1 Following the past two severe winters a review of the Council's winter service was carried out in June 2010. A questionnaire was forwarded to all the 208 Parish and Town Councils within Warwickshire, to ascertain their satisfaction levels with the current service and to receive any local views. The 2010 Winter Questionnaire is attached at **Appendix A**.
- 1.2 Through this review the County Council looked at a number of factors such as satisfaction with our current winter service and sought Parish views on prioritisation for the Council's precautionary and secondary gritting routes. It was highlighted that any increase in the total primary highway network gritted was not sustainable and in the questionnaire any requests for additional precautionary routes required Parish Councils to propose a corresponding deduction to the current gritted network.

2. The October 2009 Winter Service Policy States:-

2.1 Precautionary Gritting

When the formation of ice is predicted, it is the county council policy to pre-grit:-

- (i) All main traffic routes, A roads , B roads and one or two other strategic routes.
- (ii) In addition, in urban areas, accesses to hospitals, main industrial estates.
- (iii) A single route into villages.

2.2 Snow Clearance

In the event of snow fall, the roads receiving gritting will be cleared as soon as resources allow. When snow falls are heavy at least one route into villages will be cleared as soon as possible. Footways will also be cleared where there is considerable pedestrian usage. Resources will be targeted where snowfall is the heaviest.

2.3 Salt Bins

Salt bins in rural areas will be replenished with salt where they have been provided by Parish Councils.

- 2.4 The above policy and routes are published each year in leaflet form with all Parishes receiving a copy each year. The Winter Services Leaflet 2010/11 is attached at **Appendix B**.

3. Legal Requirements

- 3.1 Section 41 of the Highways Act 1980 sets out the Council's obligations, as a highway authority, for a winter weather service. Since 2003 the new Section 41(A) of the Highways Act 1980 gives the Highway Authority a more specific duty in relation to winter conditions stating that, 'a highway authority is under a duty to ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, that safe passage along a highway is not endangered by snow or ice'.
- 3.2 We carry out this duty by gritting our published precautionary gritting routes, However it should be noted that, the UK Roads Liaison Group (UKRLG) stated in Well Maintained Highways, (published in December 2009), "given the scale of financial and other resources involved in delivering the Winter Service, it is not reasonable either to:-
- (i) Provide the service to all parts of the network or
 - (ii) Ensure running surfaces are kept free of ice and snow at all times , even on the treated part of the network."

4. The Winter Service Provided

- 4.1 Warwickshire County Council, as a highway authority is responsible for a total network of 3812 km of roads and currently undertakes the precautionary gritting to 46% of the total highway network. In gritting 46% of our highway network, we are above the average for our benchmarking group. See **Appendix C**.
- 4.2 Our gritters spread at various spread rates for different weather and road surface conditions. Depending on the required spread rate, we may spread up to 250 tonnes of salt on the 26 precautionary gritting routes. We must limit the route time to around three hours to ensure that the network is treated promptly and that our gritter drivers do not contravene driver's hours regulations and remain fit to work the next day.
- 4.3 In addition, there are over 1700 Parish owned grit bins throughout the network. County Highways fills all grit bins routinely throughout the winter season and this service is appreciated by the communities and Parishes as demonstrated by the survey. The local grit bins are a valuable resource for the local communities and encourage self help and customer involvement. There are some concerns regarding litigation against the public or Parishes if they salt the network or clear snow from the footways, however, in order to help reduce those concerns the Department for Transport (DfT) plans to issue guidance notes on public self help for snow clearance during late October 2010.

- 4.4 The length of treated network has steadily increased over the last four years, as the Highways Agency started to hand over responsibility for some of their Trunk Roads. The A446, A435, A45, A38 and A423 are now under county control. In order to treat the larger network there was an increase from 25 spreading vehicles to 26 vehicles in 2007. In addition, County Highways maintains a minimum of three spare gritters to give extra resilience.
- 4.5 It should be noted that the Highways Agency continue to be responsible for the treatment of the motorway and trunk road network running through Warwickshire.
- 4.6 A good winter service is valued and important in both safety and economic terms. The safe movement of all highway users is perceived to be important, especially during periods of snow and ice. Good winter service minimises delays and disruption due to bad weather and has significant economic benefits.

5. The Winter Service Review

- 5.1 Table 1 below; shows the percentage satisfaction level for the Council's current winter service from the 2010 survey.

Table 1: Questionnaire Analysis – We asked, “ Overall how satisfied are you with the Winter Service provided by Warwickshire County Council?”

Very Satisfied	15%
Satisfied	68%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	4%
Dissatisfied	11%
Nothing entered	2%

- 5.2 The winter service survey has confirmed that there is a high level of customer satisfaction. These results are even more significant when you consider that the UK has just endured two of the most severe winters for twenty years and thirty years respectively in 2008/9 and 2009/10.
- 5.3 No suitable alternatives for the primary routes replacements were received from the Parishes. We therefore propose not to make any adjustments to the primary network. We have addressed other concerns by undertaking the improvements outlined in section 6 below.

6. Improvements Implemented to the 2010/11 Winter Service

- 6.1 Secondary gritted routes proposed by Parishes have been agreed. Secondary routes are routes that would not normally receive attention unless persistent widespread ice (rather than frost) or snow occurred for more than 18 hours in a 24hr period with temperatures not forecast to rise above zero for a further 18 hours in the next 24 hours.

- 6.2 Voluntary Snow Wardens from Parishes are being enlisted to promote self help and information during severe weather events and create direct links with the Parish and localities. The wardens will assist with the Severe Weather Plan (SWP) at a local level by building up local risk registers and planning and responding to relevant local threats.
- 6.3 The two severe winters of 2008/9 and 2009/10 have brought focus on the UK's resilience in winter. The UKRLG and, most recently, the Department for Transport have highlighted the weaknesses in the national salt supply chain and emphasised the importance of holding at least 10 days of salt stock close to the point of use. Following these recommendations this Council has increased its initial stock holding of salt from 9,000 tonnes to 14,000 tonnes. To further protect our resilience at least 10 days worth of stock will be held close to the point of use. We have also adopted a broader approach to salt procurement in our new four year framework contract, let this year ,which sources from UK and overseas suppliers.
- 6.4 Improved information to customers on gritting will be achieved by placing our gritting decisions, predicted road temperatures and the weather forecast on the WCC Web. Head Teachers also have a new link to this web site to enable them to make informed decisions during severe weather.

7. Financial Implications

- 7.1 This year we have invested in a greater quantity of salt to increase our resilience. The amount of salt we currently hold is equivalent to that used in last winter's severe conditions and is some 50% greater than that normally held at the start of the season. Although the initial investment is greater than in previous years the salt will only be used as required by the conditions and will not deteriorate over time as reserve stockpiles have a protective covering to protect them from the elements.

8. Conclusions

- 8.1 Our current winter services are of a high standard when compared to the national average for network gritted. The high satisfaction levels are illustrative of an effective service. The Parishes are generally satisfied that this council provides a good winter service for residents and highway users.
- 8.2 It is recommend the Overview and Scrutiny Committee agrees to the measures and proposed improvements in winter service.

PAUL GALLAND
Strategic Director for Environment and Economy
Shire Hall
Warwick

21 October 2010

Winter Service 2010

Warwickshire County Council

Environment & Economy Directorate

County Highways Winter Service Review Questionnaire - 2010 - 2011

Questionnaire Analysis

150 questionnaire were sent out

46 questionnaires returned

68% Satisfied

15% Very Satisfied

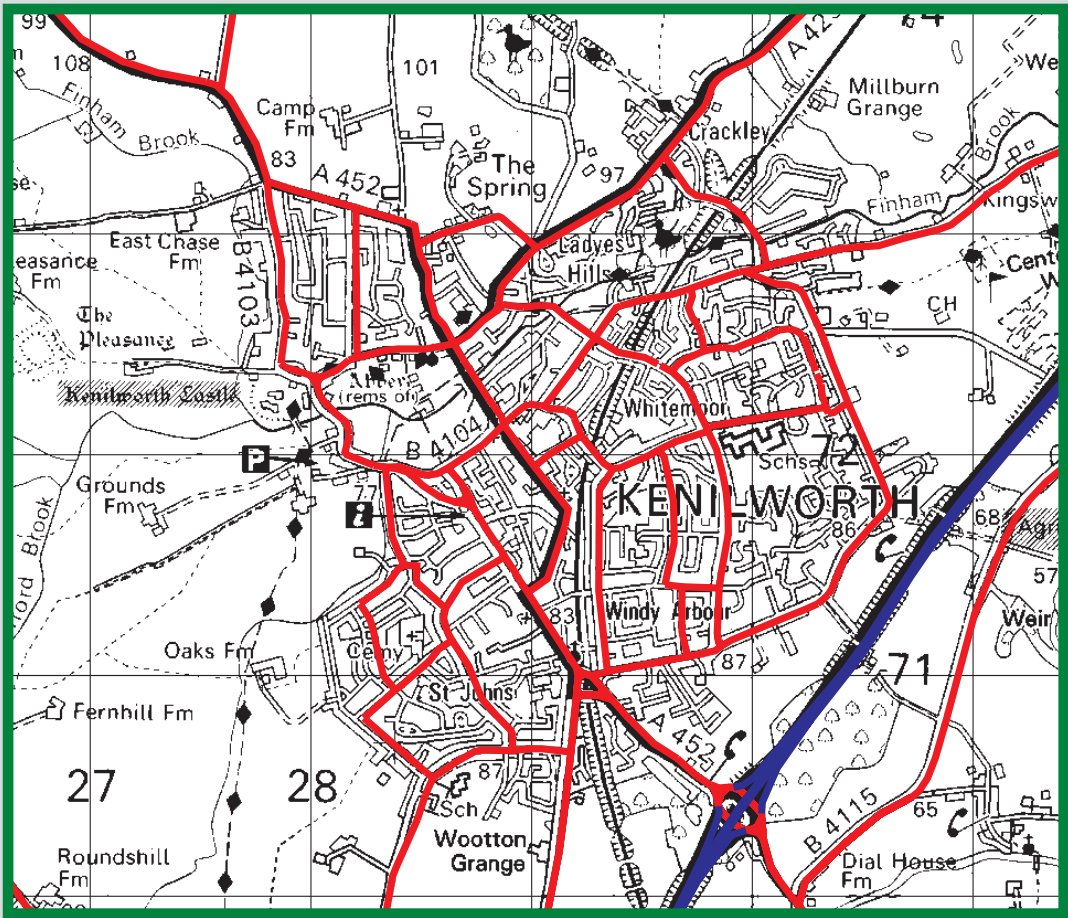
9% Dissatisfied

4% Neither Satisfied Nor Dissatisfied

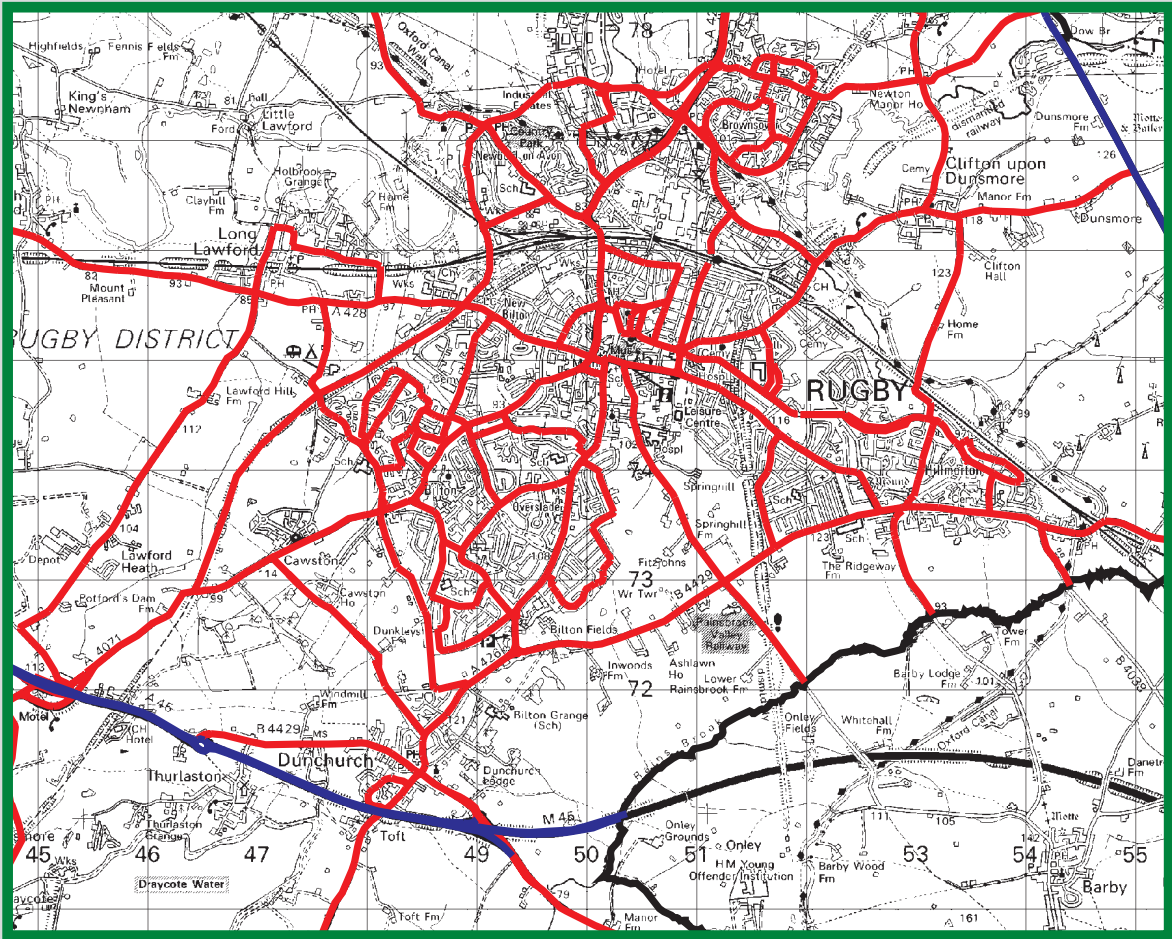
2% Very Dissatisfied

2% No response

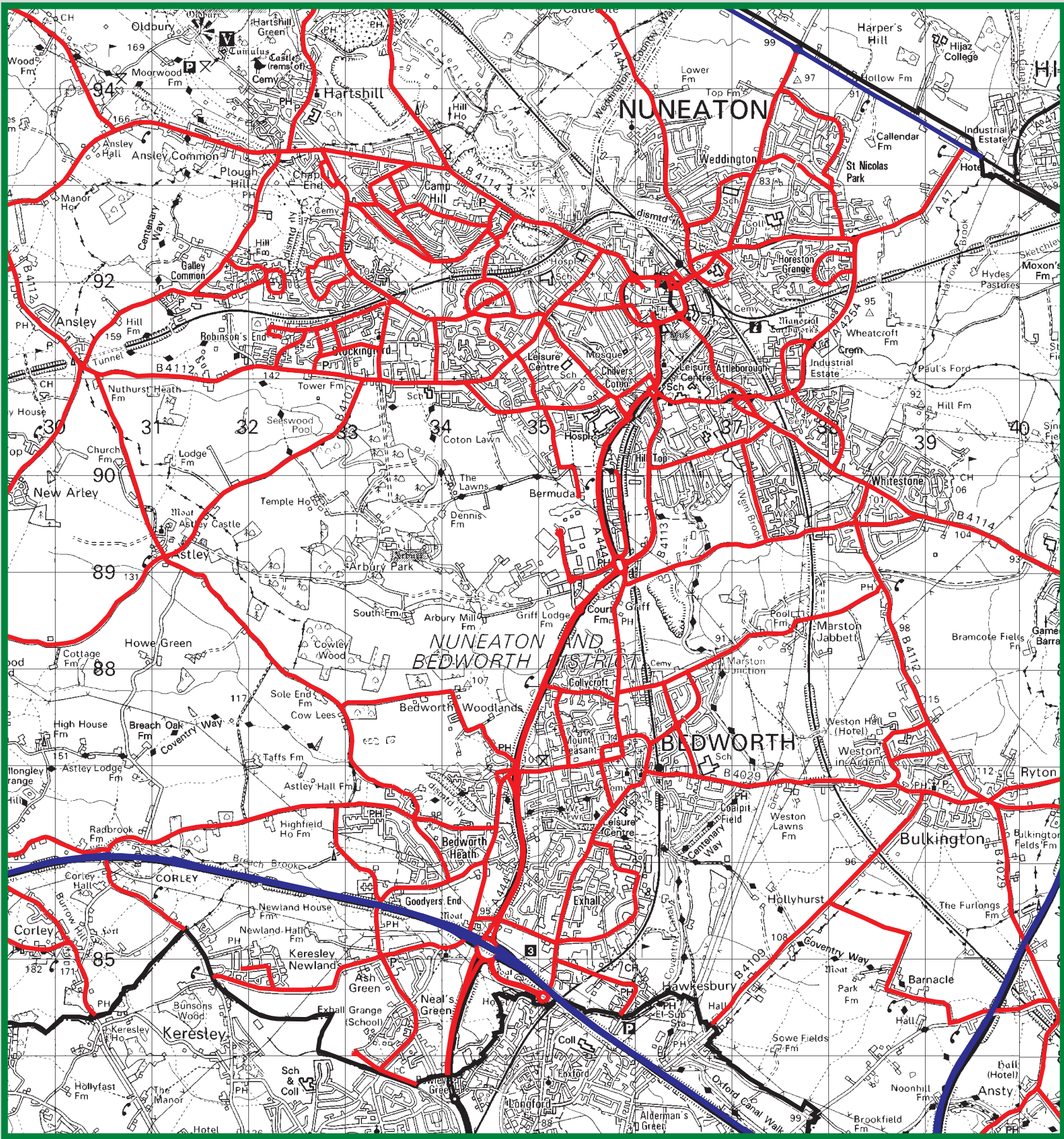
Map 1 Kenilworth



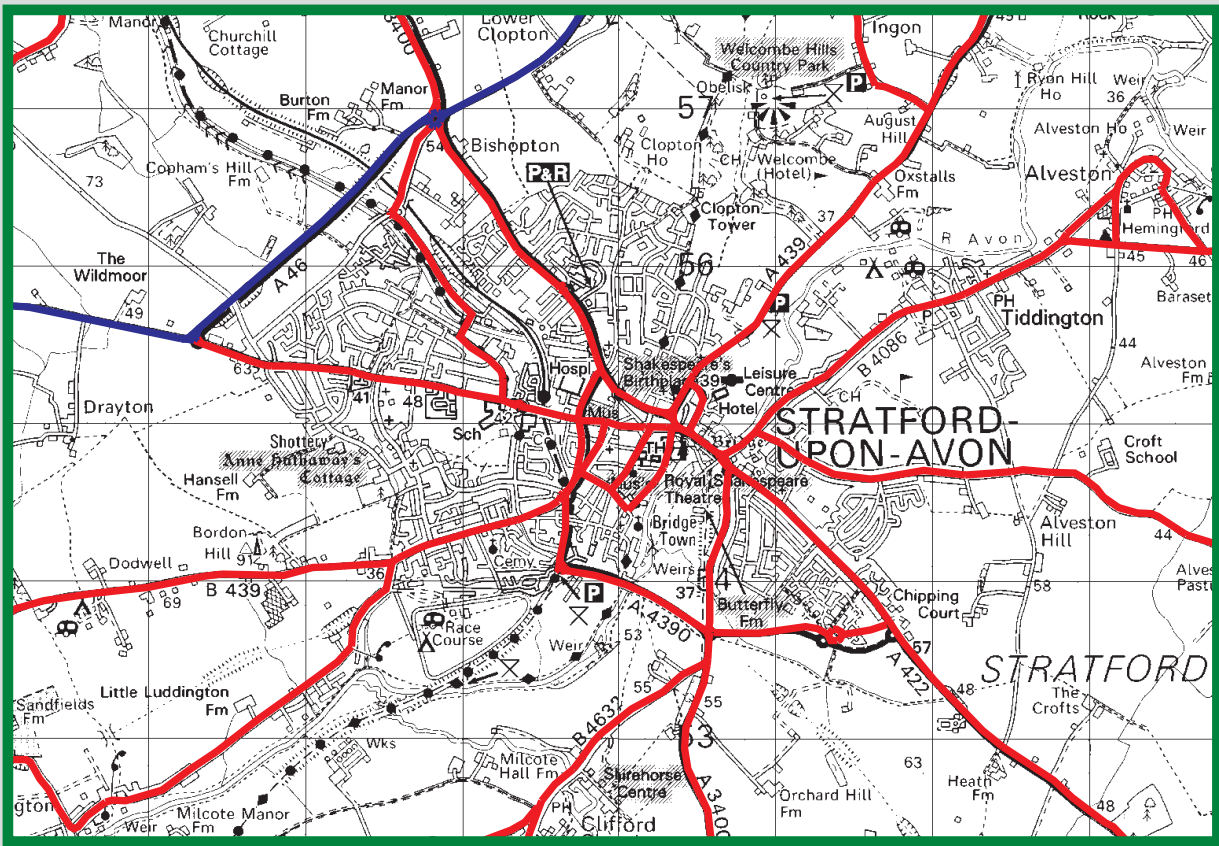
Map 2 Rugby



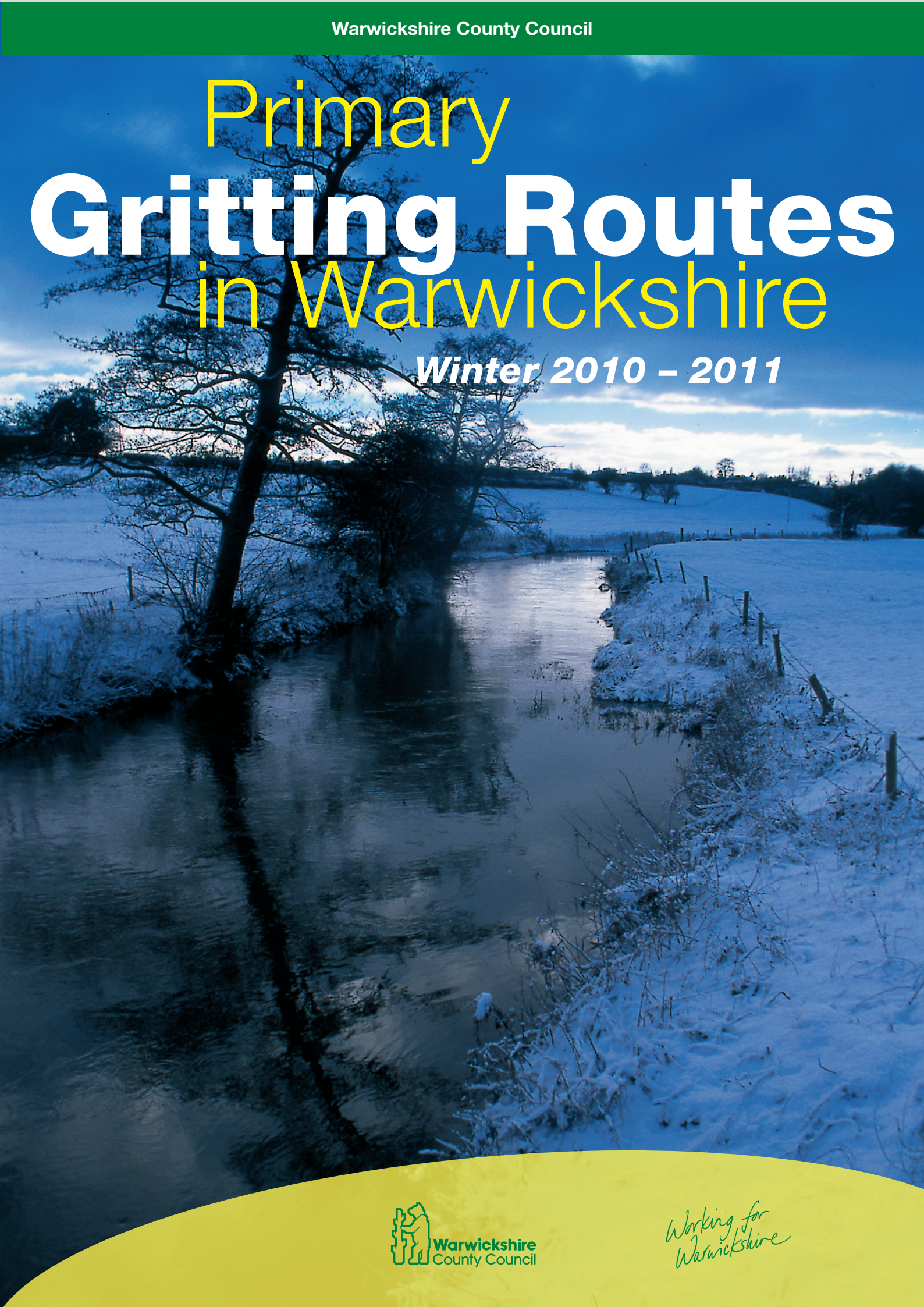
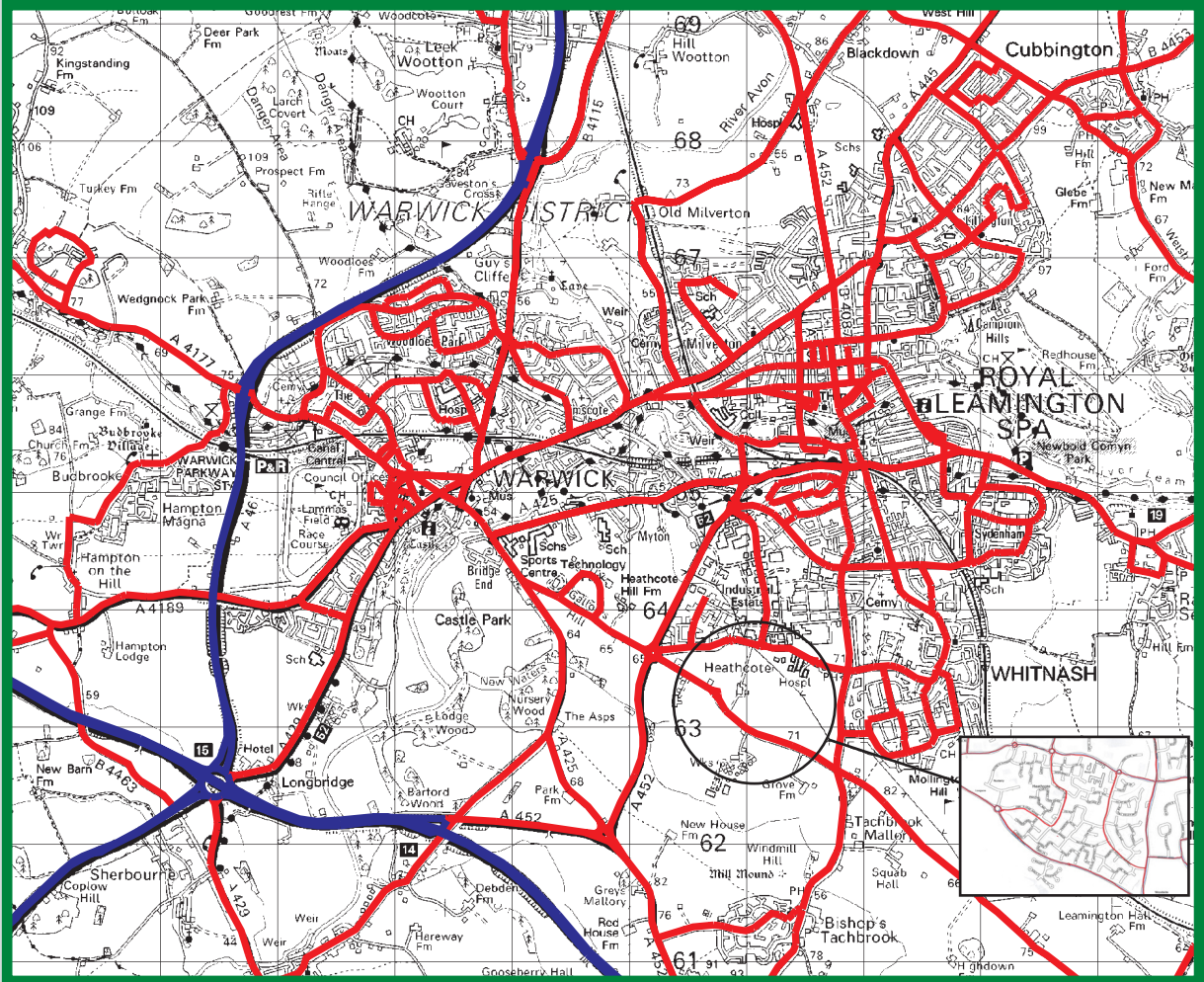
Map 3 Nuneaton & Bedworth



Map 4 Stratford upon Avon



Map 5 Warwick & Leamington



Warwickshire County Council

Primary
Gritting Routes
in Warwickshire

Winter 2010 – 2011

Gritted Routes in Warwickshire

2010 – 2011

View the gritting maps online
www.warwickshire.gov.uk/gritting

Never assume a road has been gritted.
Always remember that when driving in
winter conditions you need to take extra
care and drive slowly.

ICE

- Drive more slowly
- Steer gently
- Avoid harsh braking
- Use the highest gear you reasonably can

FOG

- Drive more slowly
- Use dipped headlights
- Use fog lights

SNOW

- Drive more slowly
- Use dipped headlights
- Use fog lights
- Steer gently
- Avoid harsh braking
- Use the highest gear you reasonably can.

REMEMBER

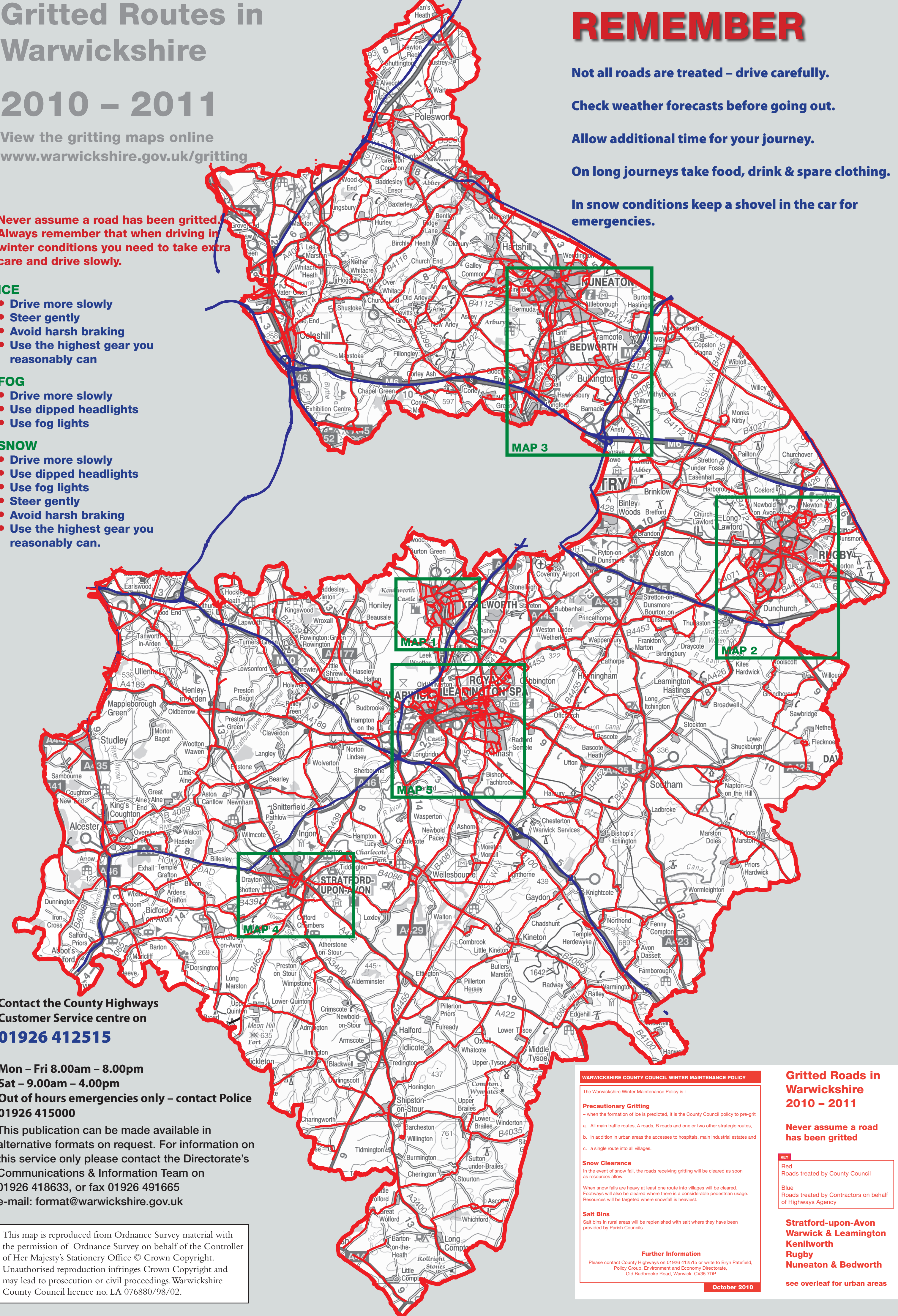
Not all roads are treated – drive carefully.

Check weather forecasts before going out.

Allow additional time for your journey.

On long journeys take food, drink & spare clothing.

In snow conditions keep a shovel in the car for emergencies.



Contact the County Highways
Customer Service centre on
01926 412515

Mon – Fri 8.00am – 8.00pm
Sat – 9.00am – 4.00pm
Out of hours emergencies only – contact Police
01926 415000

This publication can be made available in
alternative formats on request. For information on
this service only please contact the Directorate's
Communications & Information Team on
01926 418633, or fax 01926 491665
e-mail: format@warwickshire.gov.uk

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WARWICKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL WINTER MAINTENANCE POLICY

The Warwickshire Winter Maintenance Policy is :-

Precautionary Gritting
– when the formation of ice is predicted, it is the County Council policy to pre-grit

a. All main traffic routes, A roads, B roads and one or two other strategic routes,
b. in addition in urban areas the accesses to hospitals, main industrial estates and
c. a single route into all villages.

Snow Clearance
In the event of snow fall, the roads receiving gritting will be cleared as soon as resources allow.

When snow falls are heavy at least one route into villages will be cleared.
Footways will also be cleared where there is a considerable pedestrian usage.
Resources will be targeted where snowfall is heaviest.

Salt Bins
Salt bins in rural areas will be replenished with salt where they have been provided by Parish Councils.

Further Information
Please contact County Highways on 01926 412515 or write to Bryn Patefield,
Policy Group, Environment and Economy Directorate,
Old Budbrooke Road, Warwick CV35 7DP.

Gritted Roads in
Warwickshire
2010 – 2011

Never assume a road
has been gritted

KEY

Red
Roads treated by County Council

Blue
Roads treated by Contractors on behalf
of Highways Agency

**Stratford-upon-Avon
Warwick & Leamington
Kenilworth
Rugby
Nuneaton & Bedworth**

see overleaf for urban areas

Averages for Shire Counties of Total Gritted Network

	Gloucestershire CC	Lincolnshire CC	Norfolk CC	Nottinghamshire CC	Shropshire CC	Somerset CC	Worcestershire CC	Warwickshire CC
Total Road Length (kms)	5,300	8,960	9,828	4,192	5,128	6,609	3,930	3,812
% coverage of carriageway	30%	33%	33%	35%	28%	22%	38%	46%

Warwickshire County Council

Environment and Economy Directorate

County Highways Winter Service Review Questionnaire - 2010 - 2011

Warwickshire's Winter Maintenance service is essential for keeping Warwickshire's strategic highways open and safe during adverse weather conditions. We would like to hear your views on our service.

Warwickshire County Council grits some 46% of its 3800 kilometre long highway network. The County Council will carry out precautionary gritting when the formation of ice is predicted. It is the Council's policy to pre-grit the following:

- All main traffic routes, A roads, B roads and one or two other strategic routes.
- In urban areas the accesses to hospitals and main industrial estates.
- A single route into all villages.

1. Overall, how satisfied are you with the winter service provided by Warwickshire County Council?

Very Satisfied

Satisfied

Neither/Nor

Dissatisfied

Very
Dissatisfied

☐☐☐☐☐

2. PRIMARY GRITTING ROUTES

As highlighted in the attached letter we are unable to add any roads to the primary gritting routes without reducing the existing primary gritting routes by a similar amount.

If you wish to suggest any changes to the existing Primary gritting routes serving your Parish, then you must indicate which part of the adjacent Primary gritting routes should be removed. Please note routes to be removed must be similar in length to the suggested route changes and efficiently connect with the existing primary gritted network to avoid creating budget pressures.

Suggestion 1: Primary Route	
Your suggested roads to be added to the Primary Routes.	Existing roads to be removed from the Primary Routes to compensate for the addition.
Location from – to;	Location from – to;
Total Length (miles);	Total Length (miles);

Suggestion 2: Primary Route	
Your suggested roads to be added to the Primary Routes.	Existing roads to be removed from the Primary Routes to compensate for the addition.
Location from – to;	Location from – to;
Total Length (miles);	Total Length (miles);

3. Secondary routes are typically gritted during prolonged periods of severe weather and when resources allow, they are not routinely gritted on every call out. Please indicate which roads you wish to be considered as part of the secondary route review in priority order below.

Suggestion 1: Secondary Routes	Suggestion 2: Secondary routes
Location from – to;	Location from – to;
Total Length (miles);	Total Length (miles);
Suggestion 3: Secondary Routes	Suggestion 4: Secondary Routes
Location from – to;	Location from – to;
Total Length (miles);	Total Length (miles);

3. Have you any further suggestions on our Winter Service delivery?

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Please return to; Warwickshire County Council –Winter Service Review, EED , FREEPOST Licence NO LG111, PO Box 43,Shire Hall, Warwick ,CV34 4BR



Working for Warwickshire