

<b>REPORT TITLE:</b>	<b>Discharge of Roles and Responsibilities since the last meeting of the Council</b>
<b>REPORT AUTHOR:</b>	<b>Councillor Jenny Lynn</b>
<b>AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY:</b>	<b>Public Services and Communities</b>
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## INTRODUCTION

One of the highlights of this past two months for me was the fantastic event held at the Shay recently which brought together over 220 people to learn from each other's frontline experience of supporting our residents struggling with the cost of living crisis. Entitled "Fuel Your Knowledge", the morning included some great presentations about some of the really brilliant work going on in relation to food support, tackling fuel poverty, digital exclusion, and debt.

The final hour included a chance to visit stalls from some of our great local community organisations and partners. The key message for me is that although we face some really tough times ahead, if anywhere shows what kindness and community support can achieve by way of making a difference, it's Calderdale.

I hope that you will enjoy the rest of this report, showing the wide range of work carried out by Public Services and Communities. I hope that Members will be pleased to read about the proactive work being undertaken to catch fly-tippers, the scourge of so many neighbourhoods. It is painstaking and often frustrating work so it is good to be able to report that we are starting to get results. Please spread the word that we are on the case and determined to prosecute whenever we can!

## COMMUNITY PROTECTION

### Food Hygiene Enforcement Actions

Environmental Health officers have recently served three Hygiene Emergency Prohibition Notices and obtained Hygiene Emergency Prohibition Orders from the Magistrates Courts to temporarily close three food premises in Halifax. All were closed due to evidence of rodent activity and access to food preparation areas. Two of the premises also had evidence of actual gnawing and contamination of food. All took

appropriate action whilst the premises were closed, and thus were able to reopen once officers had assessed the remedial actions taken and were satisfied that the issues had been addressed

The team prosecuted La Jawaab, Gibbet Street, Halifax on 12th July 2022 following offences from late 2021. The proprietor entered guilty pleas to all 18 summonses. The court ordered the defendant to pay full costs of £3,473 (which included a £921 fine, £2,460 client costs and legal costs, and £92 victim surcharge).

## **Days of Action**

On 17th and 18th of August the Community Safety Enforcement Officers worked with colleagues from West Yorkshire Police on two days of action in Halifax. The first day focused on waste licensing and seven scrap yards were visited, with five operating with the correct licences in place and the other two not undertaking any licensable activities. 20 tyre garages were also visited, and intelligence was gained in relation to the waste carriers utilised which led to further checks by the Environment Agency to ensure they are licensed and compliant.

Day two focused on the taxi trade and waste carriers – 14 private hire vehicles were stopped resulting in:

- 8 Vehicle Rectification Notices (VRNs) issued
- 5 deferred suspensions
- Incorrect door signs
- Front bumper damaged, front wing out of line, bonnet out of line
- Rear passenger seat belt buckle cover missing, leaving a sharp edge
- Headlight not working, side light not working, no fire extinguisher
- No insurance in vehicle (nor on email)
- 1 Police-issued Fixed Penalty Notice for a vehicle with no MOT

There were also 3 immediate suspensions issued for:

1. Engine management light on, headlight not working, sidelight not working
2. Traction control light on, front bumper cracked (held together with tape and bolts)
3. Engine management light on (Kirklees Licensed vehicle).

In relation to waste carriers, 4 vehicles were intercepted, none of which were carrying waste. Additional partnership days of action are planned for the coming months across Calderdale.

## **Fly tipping Cameras**

A covert camera has been deployed at Cold Edge Road, one of the identified hotspots for fly-tipping, in an effort to deter and/or capture any offences which might take place. On the evening of 9<sup>th</sup> June, a vehicle was caught in the commission of a fly-tipping offence, with clear footage of the vehicle registration plate, the passenger, and the driver of the vehicle.

This was followed up and suspects were interviewed under caution, in which admissions were made from both suspects. A file was then put together, and a court date is set for 4<sup>th</sup> October with a view to not only prosecuting the suspects for the offence, but also exploring the possibility of having the vehicle seized and the driver disqualified from driving. The aim is to demonstrate Calderdale Council's zero tolerance approach to fly-tipping, which should act as a huge deterrent to those considering fly-tipping in the future.

## **Health and Safety**

A family-run, composite decking company were unloading a 40ft container in a dangerous way and a family member walked onto site and into the container at which point the load slipped and crushed him. Luckily, the pallet wedged on the side of the container which minimised his injuries.

The owner had left to go on a business trip and had not put in place appropriate cover or plans to ensure the business operated safely. Therefore, Environmental Health Officers carried out an investigation and proceeded to court for the lack of regard to health and safety practices. The court found the director and the company at fault and they were ordered to pay all fines and costs associated with the incident, totalling £36,000 (which included the Council's costs of just over £15,000).

## **BEREAVEMENT SERVICES**

### **Parkwood Crematorium**

We are continuing to offer the later afternoon appointments and Saturday services as demand is still high for services at Parkwood. The chapel is now back to pre-covid level of funeral attendees, but we are still being cautious by retaining the sanitising of the chapel in between services and recommend the use of hand sanitising stations for everyone entering the building.

A further electric vehicle is also being procured for the service to use at Parkwood.

### **Cemeteries**

The demand for burials has increased slightly since early summer and this has had an impact on the level of grass cutting in the cemeteries, so the service is exploring assistance through Community Payback in one of the biggest cemeteries (Brighouse), undertaking tasks such as pathways and boundary maintenance, removal of saplings from graves, and leaf/detritus clearance. In the meantime, staff from Parkwood have undertaken a major clean and tidy up in the garden of remembrance and the entrance to the cemetery, with positive feedback. We are keen to develop further links with volunteer/Friends' groups, building on the success of the Friends of Lister Lane Cemetery and have been approached by members of the public who are looking at

setting up groups to look after some of the closed cemeteries and churchyards in particular.

## PARKING SERVICES

### Todmorden and Brighouse Sports centres

It is anticipated that formal parking restrictions that were advertised in July 2022 will go live in both the above car parks in October 2022. This will see a 3-hour maximum stay introduced in Brighouse Leisure Centre car park, to protect the car park for genuine leisure centre users. There will be a 72hr maximum stay applied to Todmorden Leisure Centre, along with all other standard terms and conditions such as 'park in a marked bay and disabled badge holder only in disabled bays'. The time limits that will be introduced have taken account of the location and proximity to other locations. Brighouse Leisure Centre is close to the town centre, so is often used by commuters, avoiding charges. Todmorden Leisure Centre is much further away from the town centre, so does not need a shorter stay.

<http://news.calderdale.gov.uk/access-for-all-at-calderdale-sports-centres/>

### Haworth Old Road, Hebden Bridge

We will be introducing a Resident Permit Zone on Haworth Old Road, due to the significant issues that have been caused by visitors visiting Lumb Falls. This will go live on the 26 September 2022.

### School Streets

Two new school streets were introduced in June 2022 (Beech Hill and Savile Park Primary schools, Halifax). There are two further new school streets planned for later this year at Cornholme J&I and Wainstalls J&I. This means we now have 16 operational school streets, with this increasing to 18 later this year and discussions are ongoing with other schools.

For further information and for the locations of the school streets see [School Streets](#).

### Parking Enforcement Contract

The existing Enforcement Contract will be extended by a further 2 years, effective from 1 November 2022. This will see APCOA Parking continuing to undertake enforcement on the Council's behalf until 31 October 2024.

### Parking Strategy

Work continues to develop a Parking Strategy that will support wider Council objectives around modal shift, climate change, active travel, and improved air quality. It is

anticipated that this will be considered at the October Cabinet meeting along with the air quality strategy and EV parking. On approval of the strategy, a review of parking charges will be undertaken.

## TRANSPORT SERVICES

With the new school year starting in September, the Operations Team have been focusing on the preparing the necessary Home to School Transport runs by assessing over 2000 transport applications, processing school bus passes for mainstream school transport and routing the SEND minibus runs. The beginning of a new academic year can often be challenging, with drivers learning new routes and pupils and their families adapting to new pick up/drop off times - but this usually eases as 'teething issues' are sorted by the middle of September.

The number of SEND pupils eligible for home to school transport continues to grow, with two additional minibuses added to the fleet along with the recruitment of seven new driver and passenger attendants. There are some difficulties in recruiting staff, due to a combination of a split shift working day and part time hours, as well as the number of people holding a minibus driving licence is dwindling as grandfather rights were ceased in 1997, meaning anyone under the age of 42 will have had to take a separate driving test to be able to drive a minibus.

To address these challenges, the service is looking to employ passenger attendants and then training those who wish to progress to become (higher paid) minibus drivers by putting them through the necessary driving tests to achieve the requisite licence category. Consideration is also being given to introduce some full time (37 hour per week) roles by linking with the Green Spaces and Street Scene service to create a Driver/Operative role where the employee will drive a school minibus at each end of the day and work in one of the parks or green spaces during the middle part of the day.

## WASTE & RECYCLING

Waste & Recycling collections are at a far more stable level than they were at the beginning of the year, with only minimal disruption to the front-line routes due to occasional resource issues and vehicle breakdowns. Any collections missed on the scheduled day are generally picked up the following day, except for areas with access issues, where smaller vehicles return at the weekend.

The exceptions have been the periods of extreme heat over summer, and, more recently, the bank holiday week, where resource issues resulted in some uncollected recycling that could not be caught up on Saturday as this was already a designated scheduled collection day.

The rural routes that are serviced by bespoke 4x4 vehicles returned to a weekly collection at the start of June and have been much more stable as new crew become more familiar with the routes.

The online Garden Waste waiting list has been successfully enabling residents to express an interest in joining the service and they will be contacted when spaces become available.

Staff in Waste Management, Customer Services and IT are working to review the online reporting and communication messages to ensure residents receive the most up to date information when enquiring about collections that have been delayed.

## GREEN SPACES & STREET SCENE

The council's winter services operation resumes on the 1<sup>st</sup> of October for 7 months, with the new salt barn full of salt, all staff up to date with necessary training to make the decisions required in adverse weather conditions, and all our contractors ready to go.

Gangs that carry out pothole repairs and other work on the highway have now been provided with handheld devices, which means daily jobs can be sent directly, confirmation of completion provided remotely, and this then allows customers/complainants to be updated in a timely manner.

The Street Sweeping team are currently trialling electric mini sweepers, with the aim to replace all 4 diesel mini sweeper with electric versions a.s.a.p.

Clearing up after Traveller encampments continues to be a challenge, as this diverts resources from day-to-day operational activity, and also incurs additional cost if specialist contractors are needed to remove particular waste types. A number of sites have had physical interventions put in place, such as boulders, to prevent future incursions. However, we are working with Public Health, Planning and Housing to look at new ways to engage with Gypsy, Roma, and Travellers to address the inequalities and discrimination faced by these communities, whilst also minimising costs, intrusion, and disruption for settled communities.

## CUSTOMER ACCESS



## **Contact Centre – Telephony and Face to Face**

Face to Face appointments have resumed at Brighthouse library. The team are supporting customers face to face with Blue Badge applications, bus pass applications as well as helping with Council Tax and Benefit queries.

Upskilling and training of advisers is our priority currently; this will ensure they are able to answer calls more quickly on the busiest lines. 1.5 FTE vacancies have been filled and those advisers are now receiving Council Tax training. Interviews are being held this month for a further 1.5FTE vacancies. This will leave the team with 1FTE vacant, and recruitment will start asap for that post.

Advisers from the Early Assistance and Support Team and the Council Tax Support Team are attending the Fuel Your Knowledge: Support for the cost-of-living event being held at the Shay Stadium later this month. Our advisers will be available in the 'Money Zone' offering help and advice to those working with the most affected by the current economic climate.

## **Homelessness Prevention**

Customer First Homelessness Prevention Team continues to see a high demand for support, as clients have increasingly complex needs and struggle to sustain a tenancy.

Agencies that we refer clients to are also stretched and many hours are spent chasing services to progress placements with long waiting lists.

As Winter approaches and the energy crisis looms clients already struggling face a grim choice of paying their rent or buying food/paying utility bills with little respite in sight, making the demand for our support service ever greater.

## **Complaints and Compliments**

During the first quarter of 2022/23, 87 complaints were received council wide; this is compared to 20 in the same quarter of the previous year which was adversely affected due to us just recovering from the pandemic. Finance saw a sharp rise in complaints due to customers unhappy with how the energy rebate scheme and covid grant payments were administered.

Recently the Ombudsman have released their annual performance report and figures show that the Council's performance was positive, with 72 complaints being received by the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman about Calderdale Council. Of

these, 17 (23.6%) were subject to a detailed investigation, with 11 being upheld. This gave an overall upheld rate of 65%, which was below the average of 68% for similar sized authorities and was a substantial decrease on the 91.6% from the previous year. Further details are documented within the annual reports.

## **Digital Access**

The Web Team are continuing to support colleagues, particularly in Comms, with ensuring content for our website is accessible. As well as scheduled workshops, ad-hoc support is also available, and the team are starting to see the positive impact this is having.

Work continues to improve the customer experience by transforming the webforms that we use to report problems. This has been very successful in timely resolution and in diverting contact away from telephone.

## **Register Office**

Birth and death registration numbers are back to normal levels. Birth appointments are currently being booked a couple of weeks in advance, due to annual leave and the need to redirect resource to marriage and civil partnership notice appointments.

Demand for notice appointments is still high, however booking these a maximum of 2 months in advance (unless there is an urgent need) is ensuring that we see all customers within statutory timescales.

Ceremony bookings are levelling off, after the huge increase in the last two years. We are seeing a slight increase in the number of people booking smaller Register Office and Spring Hall ceremonies, which may continue as the cost of living rises.

We are hoping to advertise for a new Senior Registration Officer in the next couple of weeks. This new post will act as deputy for the Service Manager, freeing up time to look at developing the service for the future, focussing on improving the customer experience further.

## **NEIGHBOURHOODS & COHESION**

### **Neighbourhood Teams**

#### Central Team:

Our new Principal Neighbourhood Co-ordinator for the HCI team, Wahid Rashid, started on 5<sup>th</sup> September and will focus on re-establishing community links and



stakeholders as well as delivering regular neighbourhood working.

Following community concern regarding high incidences of visible criminal activity in Park the Park Stakeholders Group has been re-convened. The team will be engaging directly with its membership to ensure it is current and appropriate and that it is linked to relevant partners. Regular updates from the police are being shared with the partnership to allay concerns and ensure accurate information is being disseminated. HCI have delivered a very successful summer football programme with a higher attendance than ever before which was supported by the Inclusive Economy, Active Calderdale and Play Services teams.

## Valleys Team:

The Todmorden office at the Town Hall will soon be taken over by the Town Council and the Neighbourhood Team will be working both from the library and shared access to Town Council office. This is a co-working model that has been planned for some years and it is positive to see it coming to fruition.

Summer demands on service include ASB, over grown vegetation issues, wildfire education and engagement and managing pressure points on places of high use during hot weather.

## North Halifax:

The team are managing similar summer work pressures as mentioned above and some proactive work with the community with regard to green spaces including Shroggs Park and Brackenbed (formerly Shroggs tip) and West End Golf Club. The team continues to work with the HCI on these and other community development across ward boundaries.

## **Asylum and Migration**

### Asylum:

Data for the end of June estimates we have around 455 people living in dispersed accommodation. In addition, the hotel population remains at around 180 people.

Procurement of new dispersal properties is ongoing, and a number of properties have been acquired in Calderdale, most of those are in HX1.

The Hotels continue to place pressure on services as outlined in the Migration Briefing given to leaders on 8<sup>th</sup> August.

### Homes for Ukraine:

Arrivals under this scheme has slowed down significantly, as of 19<sup>th</sup> August we

expected 191 people in total, 123 of whom have arrived (86 adults and 38 children).

The provision of ESOL and integration support through both our own adult learning and community anchor organisations across the borough will see an uplift from September onwards with the dissemination of integration funding both through our CAL funded community learning scheme and the Community Foundation Integration and Support Fund.

## **Prevent Team**

During July to September referral numbers to Channel remain low nationally. In Calderdale there are three children's cases that are ongoing (two Extreme Right Wing and one Islamist) and the only adult case was closed at the August Channel meeting. Three further cases are being investigated and are linked to ERW activity through social media. This cohort was part of a group of 12 young people and therefore there is potential that others will also be referred in following disclosures from the first three cases.

We have successfully recruited two strong candidates to the Prevent Community and Volunteer Development Officer and Prevent Education Officer positions. They will be starting in October and November subject to satisfactory DBS checks.

Two Home Office funded projects will be starting September. The first is Online Safety from the Peace Museum and the second is a Train the Trainer package from Sociological which explore the lived experience of black young people and how this impacts their life choices making them vulnerable to radicalisation.

## **Cohesion & Equality Team**

The process of reviewing our Cohesion Strategy is now underway. We are currently drawing together data on the measures of the Cohesion Action Plan and a repeat of the Your Neighbourhood Survey that was first shared with the Councils Talk Back panel in 2019 has again gone to panel members. There will be a stakeholder event planned for later in the Autumn where findings will be shared, and discussion invited on the strategies 10 priorities and future planning for ensuring that social cohesion sits at the centre of policy making and practice.

The team are currently reviewing the faith covenant, which was originally created 10 years ago, there will be an event delivered at the Town Hall as part of Interfaith Week to renew the covenant.

Calderdale Interfaith are also working with the team around the 'moral economy' and ethical approaches to support. The Inclusive Economy team will also be involved in these discussions and seminar delivery.

## SPORTS SERVICES

Sport Services again ran 2 successful Healthy Holidays Programmes, one at Mixenden Activity Centre and one at Todmorden Sports Centre. At Todmorden 239 places were taken up from children in free school meals while also offering additional paid places. They experienced a variety of physical and positive activities while Mixenden saw over 800 places taken up by children on free school meals as part of the partnership with the West Yorkshire Police Early Action Hub, Himmat and Ash Green.

Also, throughout the summer we piloted a Twilight League Football Session on a Friday evening at Calderdale College. Supported by the Holiday Activity and Food (HAF) fund the programme was led by Sport Services with support from West Yorkshire Police, Calderdale Community Safety, Calderdale College, Calderdale Sports Network and delivery partner Unique Hub. Focussing on physical activity and healthy eating while also helping reduce anti-social behaviour 140 young people, both boys and girls, attended the sessions. The Twilight League sessions have been so successful we have been asked by the Department of Education to present at one of their Youth Engagement spotlight sessions in October. We are currently looking to further funding opportunities to continue the programme.

We are continuing collaboration with the Lawn Tennis Association on a partnership programme to improve local authority tennis courts. A paper will shortly go to Cabinet on plans for improvements to commence next year.

Likewise, we continue to collaborate with the West Riding Football Association and Football Foundation on a planned approach to improving Local Authority pitches. Sites are being identified and assessments carried out before a full action plan will be produced. Specific work is underway in the Todmorden area on pitch allocation and improvements to meet the rising demand.

We are seeing the national issue of lack of swimming teachers having an impact in Calderdale. We have looked to existing sports staff to be trained as teachers and 7 have stepped forward. We hope to have them teaching within a few months.

Our online app is doing well, in the last 14 days we have had 7413 use it to book online, Sowerby Bridge has 763 users, Brighouse has 715 users and Todmorden has 284

users. This helps to manage demand on reception. Our new card entry system has been installed. Staff training will take place this month, we will then be up and running and providing a much slicker customer experience whilst providing us with much better business data.

We are working with colleagues in Public Health to roll out booster swimming lessons for children on free school meals in the coming weeks.

The Better Living Service provides a dedicated weight management support to an identified cohort of patients from NHPCN. The project involves individuals being invited for a 'triage' appointment with a Better Living Trainer to discuss what is important to them; outline the many different behaviour change programmes that are available in Calderdale to support people to lose weight (e.g. NHS Diabetes Prevention Programme (NDPP), Digital Weight Management Programme (DWMP), Slimming World, Better Living Service); and support the individual to access the programme which will best meet their needs. The Trainer then continues to offer weight management support to those individuals whose needs are best met by the Better Living Service. This project will be rolled out to North PCN in the coming months.

Work has started at Todmorden Sports Centre for the plant room refit and solar panel install. Press release has now been issued and we are updating social media. <http://news.calderdale.gov.uk/energy-improvement-works-begin-at-todmorden-sports-centre/>

Parking orders have now been through the consultation periods at both Brighouse and Todmorden Pools. We hope to soon be in a position to ticket offenders who do not park in bays and who abuse the disabled parking bays and double yellow line marking.

## CULTURAL SERVICES

### Cultural Development

**CalderdaleCreates** steering group have been working very diligently to launch a new programme of training and events for the creative sector which went live on the cultural strategy website mid-August. <https://www.wherecreativityflows.co.uk/training-events/> These include networking events, training, and seminars around the challenges that the sector has faced since the pandemic and how they can forge stronger links to create better opportunities for Calderdale cultural organisations and creative businesses in the future.

**Let's Grow Calderdale** took place across the valley from Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> - Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> August. Over 1000+ families were able to experience the joys of an allotment in the middle of their town, complete with an animatronic tortoise. The events were commissioned by cultural development as part of the on-going work of implementing the cultural strategy priorities "where creativity flows" throughout the borough and as a consultation exercise for our Year of Culture 2024 to discover what people want to see in their town as part of our celebrations. Individuality of locality shone through. Elland was jam packed working beautifully in the bandstand space as were Sowerby Bridge and Brighouse. The Todmorden event on Pollination Gardens had a very family friendly festival feel with local playgroups and nurseries bringing cohorts of their children down to the event as a special day out. Many people came from surrounding areas to see the nannies, complete the town trails spotting the vegetable in local shops and pet the tortoise. Event organisers Mimi & Ben Faulks, better known as CBeebies Mr Bloom said, "So many people came and the vibes were fantastic....some fantastic connections made with the communities, local businesses and returning families during the week and from the Halifax events"

<https://www.letsgrow.org.uk/>

## **Libraries**

This summer, we are seeing increased footfall across our libraries, with book issues more than doubling compared to Summer 2021. We've had a programme of family events right across the borough with most being booked out. Last summer, the number of children enrolling in the Summer Reading Challenge was 548 – this summer we have over 1200 with a few days still to go.

Central Library has recently celebrated its 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary and is currently displaying photographs and artwork from the build project.

Libraries are working with Calderdale Recovery Steps to highlight International Overdose Awareness Day at Central, King Cross and Hebden Bridge libraries. We will be supporting with displays and digital content.

We are continuing to work with those who support refugees, and some family support and craft sessions are planned at Central and Elland Libraries for this month.

Looking to the winter months, Libraries are expecting to be supporting communities as "warm banks" and a programme of events and drop ins is being put together.

## **Museums and Halls**

Visitor numbers continue to be healthy with corresponding income for both Shibden and Bankfield.

Staffing issues continue to be challenging as with many other service areas. Work is underway to recruit to vacant posts, casuals and volunteers.

The Women's International Stone Alliance W.I.S.A. completed works on the dry stone wall area in Shibden Park creating a monument to Anne Lister. This was a great, innovative project bringing some of the best stone carvers and wallers together from around the world and hopes to inspire more women to try this craft and develop their skill. The workshops were sold out with 30 women attending.

The collection of historical carved stonework at Shibden has now been displayed in a designated area of the rear courtyard next to the cart sheds. Our thanks to Garsides for sending the two men who lifted all of this into place.

Shibden Hall clock will return to its tower in September with a new mechanism with funding support from the Friends of Shibden Park. This will be an electric mechanism which will be more reliable and controllable.

Shibden Hall and Bankfield Museum will again be offering free entry during Heritage Open days. We are pleased to support activities going on around Calderdale celebrating and giving access to our wonderful heritage. Heptonstall Museum will also see its first opening under new operation by the Friends Group.

## **Theatres**

The Victoria Theatre continues to manage day to day operations well and safely, in addition to working on strategic development projects. Sales remain very strong and in contrast to many UK Theatres sales are broadly comparable to pre-COVID levels. This is due to early and foresightful business planning by the theatre and ongoing extraordinary efforts by the team to maintain positive relationships with the community and artistes.

Key strategic programmes that the theatre is involved with are,; the Local Cultural Education Partnership which has recently attracted an additional £30k of funding into the Borough; Arts and Health programmes with the venue relaunching its Dramatherapy programme and the Future High Street Fund.

The venue is waiting to hear whether it has been invited to bid for £3.5m Cultural Development Funds from Arts Council England to build on the successes and investment to date.

## **WELFARE & BENEFITS TEAM**



Draft guidance has been received from DWP in relation to phase 3 of the Household Support Fund for the period 1<sup>st</sup> October to 31<sup>st</sup> March. Officers are reviewing the guidance and our customer data in order to pull together a scheme that will support those in most extreme need over the winter period.