



Improving the resilience of the United Kingdom's road network to the impact of severe winter weather

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“Ploughing on”

The winter of 2008/09

- Most severe winter for at least 18 years
- Sustained cold weather October to February
- Heavy snow early February
- Public transport, schools, health services affected
- Widespread travel disruption
- High profile media coverage



The winter of 2008/09

- Shortage of salt supply
- Advice on greater efficiencies of spreading issued
- Reduced service levels often only main roads treated
- Inconsistent approach
- Public expectations



National Response

- Salt Cell established
- Daily salt stock information via Regional Resilience Teams
- Priority salt distribution lists for most supplies
- Aim for each Local Council to have at least one days stock



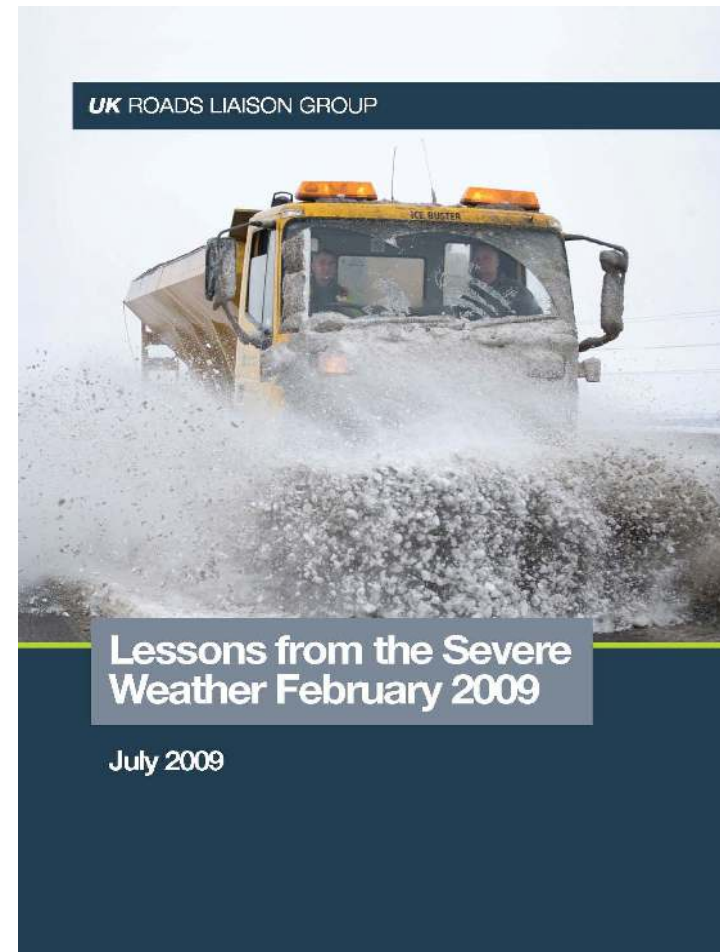
Milder weather in mid February avoided further measures

UK Roads Liaison Group Review

Lessons from the severe weather 2009

Considered:-

- Salt supply chain
- Salt stocks
- Mutual aid
- Salt Cell
- Operational Codes of Practice
- Communications



Findings of the UKRLG Review – Salt Market

- Poorly understood
- Ample salt in UK and abroad
- UK appears to be a net exporter
- No shortage of supply with sufficient notice
- Continuous production v. seasonal demand
- Short term spikes in demand hard to meet



UKRLG Review findings – Salt Suppliers

- Gave insufficient advance warning of possible shortage
- Producers increased supply significantly
- Unable to cope with high short term demand
- Too late for new imports



UKRLG Review findings – Highway Authorities

- Some maintained normal service
- Slow salt stock replenishment from earlier in winter but alarm not raised
- Many reduced service, e.g. major roads only
- Mutual aid
- Unusual salts and mixes
- Saved by the Salt Cell and by timely arrival of mild weather



UKRLG Review findings – Highway Authorities

- **Single salt supplier**
- **Short term call-off contracts**
- **Reduced salt storage capacity:**
 - series of mild winters
 - property rationalisations
 - move to covered storage
 - expectations of systemised restocking systems



UKRLG Review findings – Salt Cell

- Emergency powers not used
- Commenced quickly once established
- Advised the 2 main suppliers on distribution of salt
- Issues with data and transparency
- Successful overall
- Not for use in this way again



UKRLG Review findings – Risk

Highway Authorities:

- Weather
- Public expectations
- Winter service delivery
- Salt: pre-season stock
- In-season restocking
 - trigger level
- No guaranteed supply

Salt suppliers:

- Production and storage
- Few guaranteed sales
- Distribution



Recommendations of the UKRLG Review

Package of 19 recommendations in four themes:

1. Winter Service Resilience
2. Preparation for and Operation of Winter Service
3. Communications
4. Procurement



1. Winter Service Resilience

Adopt a local service standard based on a number of days severe conditions salting resilience.

Consider:

- number of days - 6 as a starting point
- overall and core winter period
- minimum winter treatment network



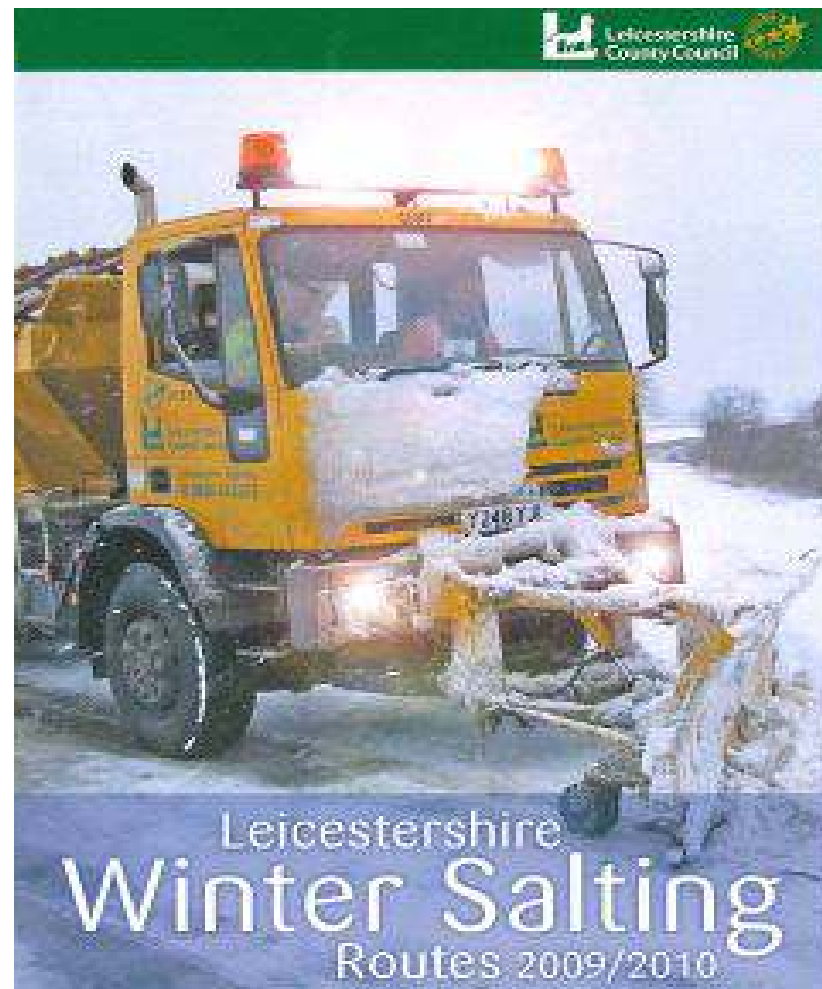
2. Preparation and Operations

- Approach to climate change
- Co-ordination and collaboration
- Sharing depots and stocks
- Supplier owned salt stocks
- Highway Agency salt stocks
- Contingency planning, including future Salt Cell, drivers' hours
- Review *Well-maintained highways*
- A Government Information leaflet for Local Councils



3. Communications

- Public information, before and during severe weather
- Salt user groups



4. Procurement

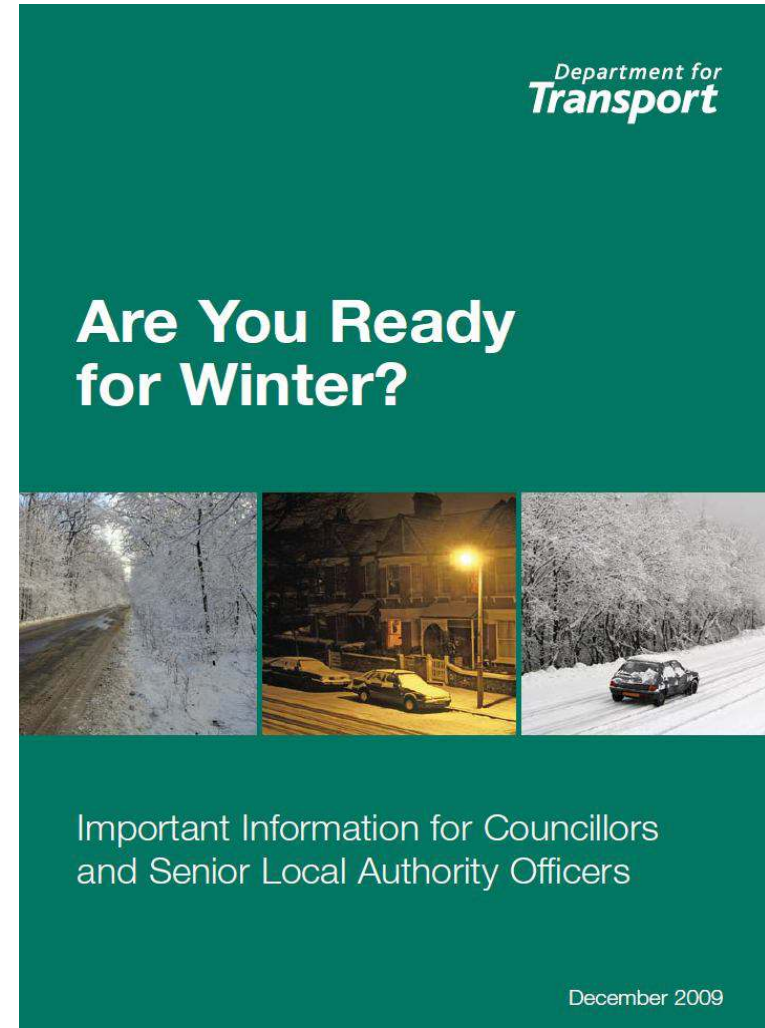
- Collaborative Winter Service arrangements
- Salt supply service
- Broader approach to salt supply
- Innovation, e.g. performance contracts with minimum supply
- Purchase guarantees, longer contracts, salt supply and storage



Government Response to UKRLG Review

Minster's statement on the 15 Dec

- Accepted all 19 recommendations
- Letter sent out to all Chief Executives of Local Highway Authorities
- Accompanying leaflet sent out "Are you Ready for Winter"
- Code of Practice Well-maintained Highways - Section on Winter Service updated



The winter of 2009/10

- Worse for 30 years
- Affecting all the UK, particularly Scotland
- Night-time temperatures down to minus 10 degrees
- Depths of snow 10-30cm
- Most Authorities purchased more salt and already taken on many of the recommendations of the UKRLG report
- But prolonged cold snap from December to January has again depleted salt stocks
- Cold weather continued well into March



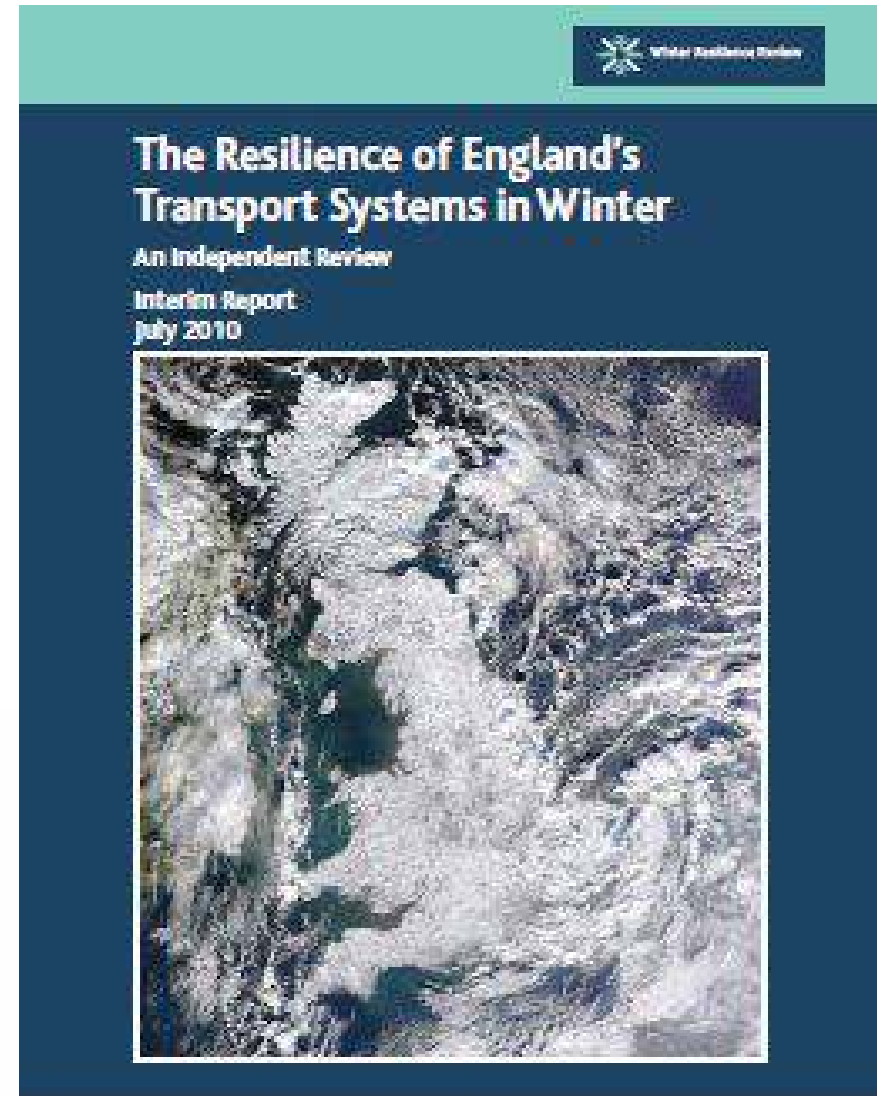
The UK's Government Response

- Salt Cell again activated and met weekly for 14 weeks
- Councils initially asked to reduce salt utilisation by 25% and then only days later as the situation further deteriorated they were Councils asked to reduce utilisation by a further to 50%
- Some Councils managed well
- Some quickly ran low on salt
- Mutual aid
- Emergency purchases of salt, pad salt, and Salt/grit mixes



The Independent Review 2010

- The Government commissioned an independent review led by David Quarmby
 - Interim and final report
 - Across all forms of transport road, rail and aviation
 - Supported the UKRLG recommendations
 - Two further key recommendations
1. There should be a strategic salt reserve of 250,000 tonnes
 2. Councils should hold higher stock levels of a minimum of 12days/14runs



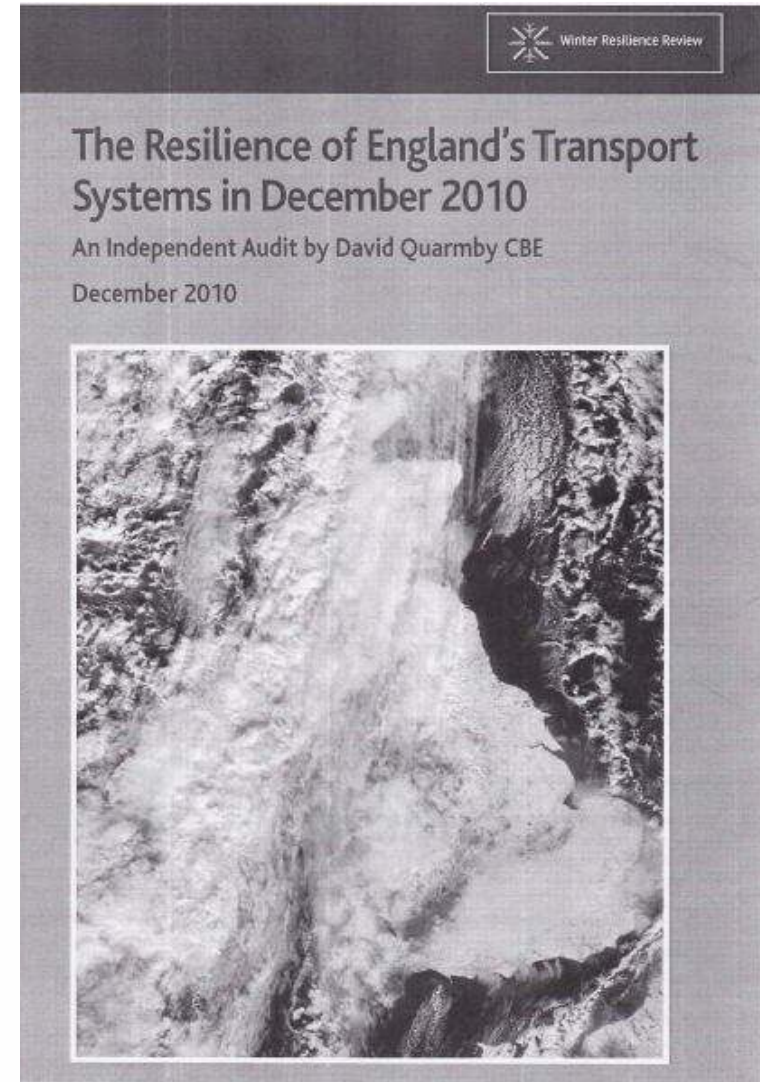
The winter of 2010/11

- The coldest for 100 years
- Night-time temperatures fell in some parts of the country to minus 20 degrees
- All modes of transport affected but particularly aviation- Heathrow airport was closed for 4 days
- Salt Cell mobilised again but not with the same intensity as previously
- Road transport not as badly affected as the previous two winters



The Independent Audit by David Quarmby

- As a result of the wider concerns about the disruption to transport the Government commissioned a further audit in December 2010
- The results indicated this time that local councils were in a good state of readiness
- The Audit recognised that there had to be some limit to the resources the nation could afford
- Work however was undertaken to provide new guidance on revised spread rates for winter gritting



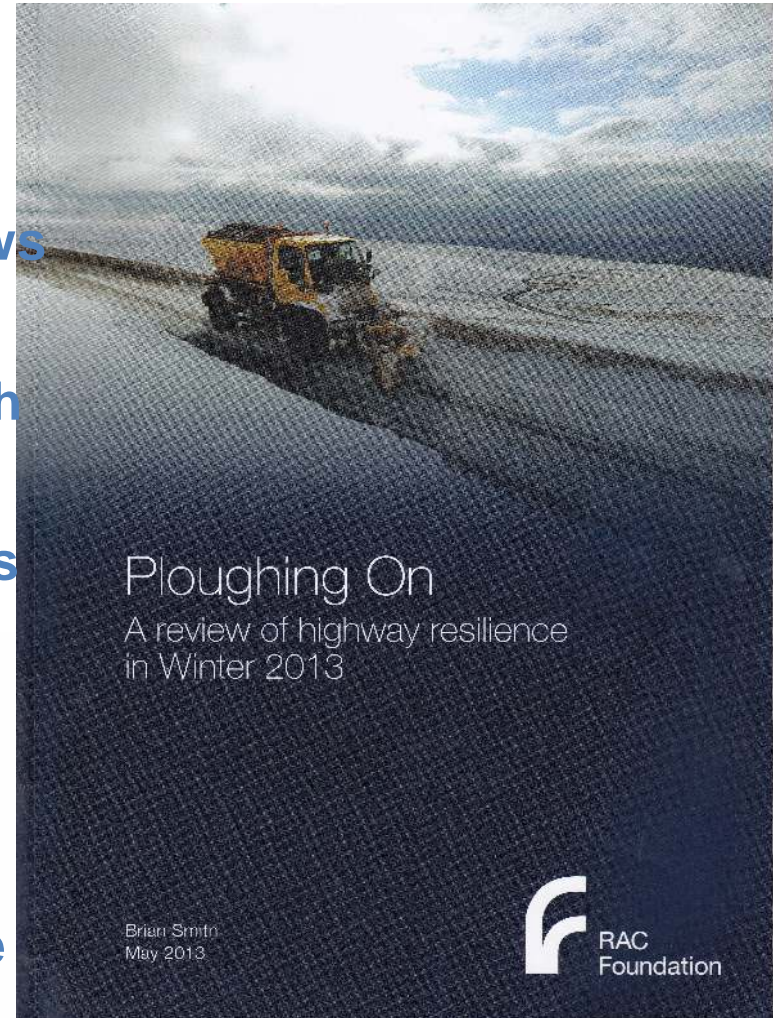
“Ploughing On” –A review of highway resilience in the winter of 2013

The winter of 2012/13 again tested the nation’s resilience

This review identified that many of the recommendations of the previous reviews had been acted on including :-

1. Councils had stored more salt along with more joint arrangements
2. Councils had reviewed their spread rates in line with the new guidance and had improved their fleets
3. The Government had created a national strategic stockpile.

All these improvements had led to increase in public satisfaction



Thank you, any questions?

