

QUESTION BY COUNCILLOR

Question submitted by: Councillor Mrs Terri Beer

To Cabinet Member: Councillor John Stephens

Question:

How many gritting lorries were out over this cold snap gritting roads in the evening and overnight? Were all grit bins filled for residents in Plympton Erle? Bus routes to keep Plymouth moving, were these done in time? Just how prepared was the council for this demand? Some roads on the red list were never gritted why?

Response: (for completion by City Council officers and Cabinet Members)

Since Christmas Eve and up to Wednesday 7th January, Highways have been out gritting a total of 16 times; the first 3 of which were Primary routes only but the last 13 have all been Primary and Secondary routes. Many of these have been double visits in the same day, in the afternoon/evening and again in the early hours as below:

Wednesday 24th December @ 7pm (Primary only)
 Thursday 25th December @10pm (Primary only)
 Friday 26th December @7pm (Primary only)
 Tuesday 30th December @7pm (Primary and Secondary)
 Wednesday 31st December @2pm (Primary and Secondary)
 Thursday 1st January @ 4pm and again @ 10pm (Primary and Secondary)
 Friday 2nd @ 2pm followed by 2am on Saturday 3rd (Primary and Secondary)
 Saturday 3rd @ 2pm followed by 1am on Sunday 4th (Primary and Secondary)
 Sunday 4th @ 1pm followed by 1am on Monday 5th (Primary and Secondary)
 Monday 5th @ 1pm followed by 1am on Tuesday 6th (Primary and Secondary)
 Wednesday 7th @3am (Primary and Secondary)

N.B. Most of these shouts have been for Primary and Secondary routes at higher than normal spread rates due to the predicted temperatures.

All grit bins (Throughout the City) were filled in October/November prior to the first gritting treatment of the season on 19th November 2025. We started to receive requests to refill grit bins around New Year and rather than respond to individual sites we have now ordered a second full City-wide grit bin refill, which has commenced this week.

All gritting routes have been completed on time, although timings of treatments are carefully made to be in advance of predicted freezing road surface temperatures but after any predicted rainfall as much as possible. It should be noted that it is not always possible to

avoid rainfall and inevitably any significant rainfall after completion of gritting routes can still cause some wash-off of salt and allow ice to form even where routes have been gritted.

The Council was as prepared for the cold snap as it can be. Salt stocks were 1100 Tonne at the start of the season, but this has reduced to 400 Tonne following this cold spell. More salt has now been ordered and is expected to arrive later this week or early next week. Crews and Winter Decision makers were on call 24 hours throughout Christmas and New Year, and all decisions were made following close scrutiny of weather forecasts. Live surface temperatures and rainfall volumes were also monitored as much as possible where the temperatures were more marginal. It can still take time to mobilise in response to changing weather conditions and salt is less effective during rainfall.

All routes have been completed over this period and over the whole season, so we are unaware of any roads on the "red list" not being gritted. Any specific locations can be shared with the team and tracking records from the vehicles can be checked.

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Steyn', is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Dated: 8th January 2026