



Transport Delivery Committee

Date	8 January 2018
Report title	Severe Winter Weather 08 -12 December 2017
Accountable Director	Steve McAleavy Director of Transport Services (Interim)
Accountable Employee	Andrew Purchase, Digital Marketing Executive Thomas Moore, Area Asset Specialist Andrew Thrupp, Operations Manager (Customer Facilities)
Report has been considered by	

Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

- To note the contents of this report.

1. Purpose

This report reflects some of the consequences experienced as a result of the severe weather in December and the efforts taken to deal with the issues. The report includes data from our digital communication channels.

2. Background

- Between the 8th and 12th December 2017 the West Midlands experienced the worst snow fall for 4 years and this had a significant impact on public transport services.
- Bus Diversions: 224 across the whole region
- Number of Services Affected: All services were affected, including a full suspension on Sunday
- Bus Stations: TfWM's 12 bus stations were all affected but remained operational throughout with the exception of two that were inaccessible for a couple of hours on the morning of the 11th.

- Train Lines Affected: All rail lines experienced delays, only a few line failures at times affected services
- Tram: Mostly ran a good service, with some points and signalling issues at the Wolverhampton end. A broken down tram caused significant disruption on Friday evening

3. Communications

3.1 Friday 8 December until Tuesday 12 December saw snow and ice disruption across the West Midlands region. Various yellow and amber warnings were issued by the Met Office which we started responding to from Thursday 7 December. The network disruption communications plan was implemented managed within the WMCA marketing team, we kept customers updated throughout the 5 day disruption.

3.2 Communication Channels: Network West Midlands - Website, social media, RTI screens, app

3.3 Emails Received: 1,188 from all partner and internal stakeholder

3.4 Communication Times:

- Thursday 2pm -10pm
- Friday 5am – 10pm
- Saturday 7am-12pm / 6pm -10pm
- Sunday 7am – 10pm
- Monday 5am – 10pm
- Tuesday 5am – 10pm

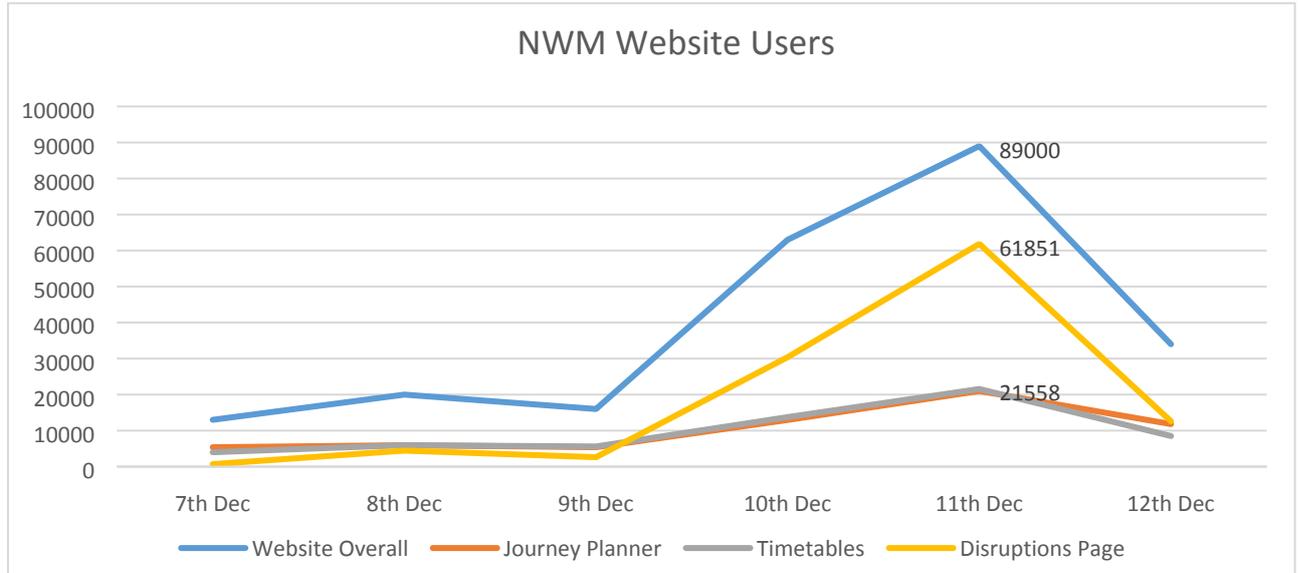
3.5 Social media reached - 1.4 million people

Website users - 222,000 people

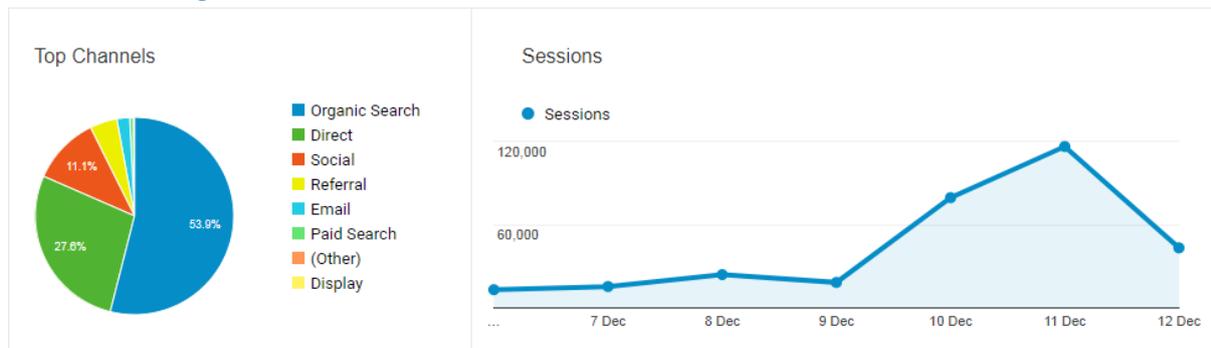
We also shared and retweeted various operator alerts and published content relating to the incident to create a full feed of information for all users and positioning NWM as a reliable, up to date, one stop shop for public transport information.

We also offered advice to car users, with winter tips and advising against non-essential travel in collaboration with Highways England's information. We also shared a few incidents affecting the motorway network.

Network West Midlands Website



Traffic arriving to the site



Social Media Communications

We used NetworkWM Twitter and Facebook as the main way to update information quickly.

- We tagged most of the outbound messages to give us a campaign report
- We have had the most successful period on social media since the snow in 2012

6
DAYS OLD

245
TOTAL POSTS

24.3K
TOTAL CLICKS

6.2M
TOTAL REACH

Link clicks

Facebook 11.0K

Twitter 13.2K

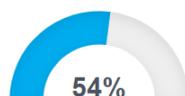
Facebook
11.0K clicks

Twitter
13.2K clicks

Google+
0 clicks

LinkedIn
0 clicks

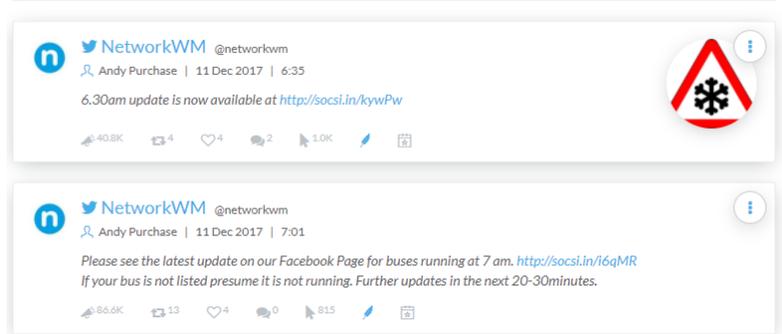
YouTube
0 clicks



Twitter

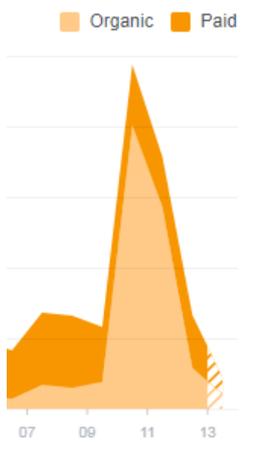
- Reach – 965,000
- Maximum potential – 6.1m
- Link Clicks – 13,200
- New Followers – 2,300
- Retweets - 687
- Likes – 498
- Replies – 323

Top Posts By Clicks Best was 1.0K



Sentiment was 34% positive, 62% neutral and 4% negative (negative is normally 18%).

Facebook



Reach – 526,000 people

The post on Sunday evening went to over 200,000 people. The highest reaching single post we have ever posted.

Sentiment was 38% positive, 60% neutral and 2% negative (negative is normally 15%).

- 3,300 new page likes
- 11,000 clicks
- 3,400 Comments (most tagging in friends)
 - 2,500 reactions
 - 3,200 Shares

4. Winter Weather Precautions at Bus Stations, Park and Ride and 16 Summer Lane

4.1 8 – 15 December 2017

As part of our Grounds Maintenance contract, TfWM receive winter weather maintenance service at bus stations, park and ride and 16 Summer Lane. Our budget is set in advance for proactive snow clearance at all bus stations and Tame Bridge P&R and a proactive gritting service using white grit at all sites.

We receive amber and red warning notifications by 11am on the day for the proactive visits. On request a reactive snow clearance can be provided at other sites with the response time being between 4 – 12 hours or longer if operational issues occur, which incurs additional costs.

Key*

Red	High - Frost, Ice and/or Snow are forecast to occur.
Orange	Moderate - RSTs (Road Surface Temperature) are forecast to be +0.5°C or below (including DRY roads below 0.0°C) - there is still a risk of frost, ice and snow.
Yellow	Low - RSTs are forecast to be between +0.6°C and +1.9°C - there is a lower risk of frost, ice or snow.
Green	RSTs are forecast to be +2°C or higher.

4.2 Friday 8 December – Red warning Received

With heavy snow forecast for the region, we planned for Mitie to deliver a reactive snow clearance service at park and ride locations in addition to their planned gritting service for Sunday 9 December. Mitie required confirmation of this request on the Sunday morning.

We asked our social media colleagues to post caution messages advising that although snow clearance and gritting was being delivered, slippery surface areas may still exist.

We notified our colleagues from Bus, Rail and Metro teams advising them of the predicted weather and the service request we had made with Mitie.

Staff from Network Delivery Team made themselves available during the course of the weekend to assist with any requests and to provide updates.

Mitie delivered planned gritting at all sites, planned snow clearance at some bus stations and on request provided a reactive snow clearance at Stourbridge Junction P&R.

4.3 Saturday 9 December – Red Warning Received

Mitie delivered planned gritting at all sites.

4.4 Sunday 10 December – Red Warning Received

Snow started to fall in the region at around 3am

TfWM confirmed to Mitie at 7am that a reactive snow clearance service would be required and stayed in regular contact with them until 23:30. Mitie also notified us that all proactive services would be provided.

During the course of the day we contacted stakeholders and regular messages were posted on social media.

It was evident from news reports and operator service updates that heavy snow was causing travel disruption throughout the West Midlands resulting in flights being suspended at Birmingham Airport, all bus services being suspended because of hazardous highway conditions and rail disruption because staff couldn't travel to work.

4.5 Monday 11 December – Red Warning Received

Mitie informed us that they had experienced operational issues in providing the planned and reactive service at all sites because their vehicles were also struggling to use the regions highway network to travel on. They recognised that this message should have been communicated to us earlier and put measures in place to provide hourly updates going forward until all sites had been completed.

As a result, Stourbridge Interchange and Wednesbury some bus stations were not fully open until later in the morning commute and because these were a priority, car parks were cleared afterwards. 16 Summer Lane upper car park was closed for the remainder of the week.

Again we provided updates to stakeholders throughout the day with social media playing a key role in informing customers.

4.6 Tuesday 12 to Friday 15 December – Red Weather Warnings

With Red Weather Warnings remaining in place, Mitie continued to deliver their proactive gritting and snow clearance service where required. However as temperatures plummeted to below -10 the grit was becoming less active and combined with persistent rain, sleet and further light snow in some areas, black ice formed making some P&R sites very hazardous.

TfWM received a number of customer complaints about the gritting of sites. One of the reasons being that white grit is used and the perception was that we were not carrying out winter maintenance. Additional messaging on social media, station RTI screens as well as extra notices on sites were posted to reassure customers that we were taking all necessary actions.

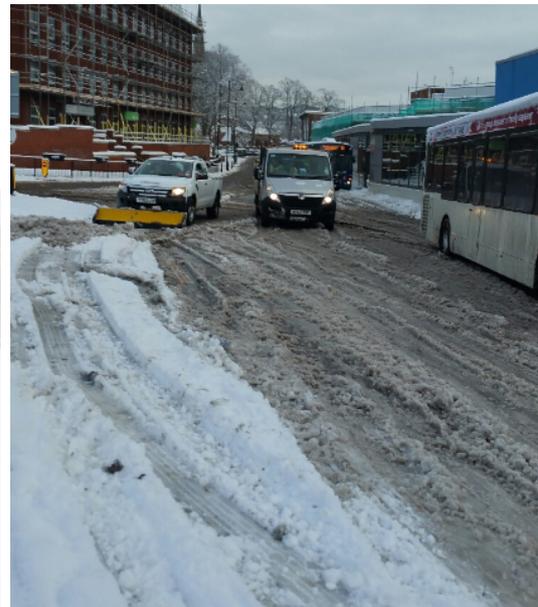
4.7 Bus Station Overview

The TfWM bus station team worked tirelessly over this period to deal with customer enquiries, assist operators and clear snow to ensure the sites were operational and safe for all users.

All bus stations were staffed throughout with some supervisors having to walk up to two miles in the snow just to access sites. Customers were kept up to date on sites through regular announcements, notices and high profile staffing. The bus stations management team were available 24/7 and attended sites to assist where it was possible.

Throughout these days, the bus station staff complemented the service we had from our suppliers by regularly applying grit to sites, clearing snow and helping customers as much as possible.

Airports for some periods and many public facilities were closed throughout so to keep bus stations accessible and operational is a credit to the TfWM bus station team and reflects the significant effort that was shown by the team.



4.8 Next Steps

TfWM and Mitie have already held a lessons learned and continual improvements meeting and the output is being implemented including amendments to standard procedures.