

SERVICE UPDATE

<u>Name of Function:</u>	Operations and Protective Services
<u>Date:</u>	May 2022
<u>Title of Update:</u>	Roads Winter Maintenance
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UPDATE:

In previous years, a post-winter report has been presented to Operational Delivery Committee. This report would give an overview of the previous winter operations. As the report did not seek committee approval, or seek any committee decisions being made, the report has been replaced by this service update. A pre-winter report will still be presented to ODC in advance of winter in which committee approval for the proposed winter service plan will be sought.

Winter maintenance treatments commenced on the 23rd of November 2021. In total 60 days of winter treatment were completed and winter service had to be extended into April with the final day of treatment being the 8th of April.

Overall winter 2021/22 was considerably less severe than winter 2020/21. There was minimal snowfall meaning that ploughing was only completed on a couple of days. 17 fewer days of winter treatment were completed in winter 2021/22 compared to the previous winter and persistent ice was much less of an issue than in the previous winters. Most ice which formed on the network overnight thawed during the day as temperatures rose. Temperatures were generally considerably higher than last winter, however as with previous winters, freeze-thaw was an issue with temperatures lowering over night causing freezing, rising causing melt during the day and refreezing again later in the day.

Low overnight temperatures leading to freezing with higher daytime temperatures and rainfall were regularly observed. This resulted in salt put down early in the morning being washed off by daytime rainfall. This in turn meant that further gritting later in the day was required due to the loss of residual salt.

Significant variation in weather across the city was also observed and is something which has been observed to be becoming more common place. For instance, on one day of winter treatment, snow clearance was being completed to the west of the city whilst to the east of the city squads were working on clearing localised flooding. This sort of weather phenomenon appears to be increasing in regularity as our climate changes.

Storm Arwen presented an unusual challenge during winter treatment with resources stretched as operatives had to deal with winter conditions as well as the clear up of

debris from the storm. This included having to make safe footways and carriageways damaged by fallen trees, clearing of debris and repairs to streetlights. Despite these challenges, operatives managed successfully to deliver winter maintenance as per the service plan during the storm period.

A total of around 9811 tonnes of rock salt was used treating the council's network during winter 2021/22. This compares to around 11,760 during winter 2020/21 and reflects the milder and less severe winter experience.

Winter expenditure was £1.365m, £0.205m below the £1.57m budget allocation, although it should be noted that winter 2021/22 was less severe than would be expected of an average winter. Expenditure for winter 2020/21 was £2.1m.

The one-tonne salt bag scheme was once again popular receiving 285 applications with 200 bags delivered. The main reasons for applications being rejected was a lack of suitable location for the bag and proximity to another applicant.

As with the previous winter, precautions were taken to minimise the potential risk of disruption to winter service which would have been caused by an outbreak of covid. This proved successful and winter operations were not affected by any outbreaks of covid within the squads.

A winter service plan for winter 2022/23 will be presented to ODC for approval in August.