

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

---

|                 |                                       |
|-----------------|---------------------------------------|
| COMMITTEE       | Enterprise, Planning & Infrastructure |
| DATE            | 29 August 2013                        |
| DIRECTOR        | Gordon McIntosh                       |
| TITLE OF REPORT | Roads Winter Service Plan 2013 - 14   |
| REPORT NUMBER:  | EPI/13/140                            |

---

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report is intended to present Members with the proposed Winter Service Plan and to explain significant changes.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

It is recommended that the Committee

- a) note the content of this report
- b) approve the "Roads Winter Service Plan" for 2013 – 2014. Appendix A, The Roads Winter Service Plan will be sent to Councillors electronically

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Expenditure will be in accordance with the Council's approved Revenue budgets for Winter Maintenance and Emergencies 2013-2014 of £1.977M. It should be noted that the expenditure for the previous three winters has been £1.986M in 2012-13, £2.12M in 2011-12 and £2.08M in 2010-2011.

Salt which is purchased through Scotland Excel procurement has increased this year from £30.27 per tonne to £31.18 per tonne. In an average winter 19,000 tonnes of salt may be used, so this will potentially increase costs by £17,500 during this financial year.

4. SERVICE & COMMUNITY IMPACT

This report has no direct implications in relation to Equalities & Human Rights Impact Assessment.

## Council Policy Statements

'Aberdeen – The Smarter City' identifies as a high priority that the Council will provide and promote a sustainable transport system, including cycling, which reduces our carbon emissions.

Winter treatment priority is given to bus routes to encourage the use of public transport.

### 5. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Failure to have a robust "Roads Winter Service Plan" will leave the Council more vulnerable to 3<sup>rd</sup> party insurance claims.

### 6. REPORT

Aberdeen City Council, Roads Winter Service Plan has evolved over many years and is amended to reflect both national and local requirements.

This year's amendments have been made to reflect: the following –

a) Well Maintained Highways, Code of Practice for Highway Maintenance Management

This document gives general guidance to Roads Authorities on all aspects of Road Maintenance. Appendix H of the Code of Practice deals specifically with Winter Service Issues. While a draft revised version of Appendix H, is available this has not yet been finalised. Elements of this guidance may be implemented this winter season if appropriate.

b) Salt Usage and Stocks

In keeping with priority based budgeting and the service's asset management plan, the storage facilities for salt have been rationalised to a new site at Bucksburn. This provides storage capacity of 12,000T close to the city. While levels are less than we would have stored collectively at the two sites at Park Road and Garlogie the new facility stock level is considerably greater than the guidance pre-season stock of 3,500T.

The Roads Service has entered into dialogue with the approved salt supplier to advise that our delivery demand for the coming year will follow a different pattern to previous years. During both the winters of 09/10 and 10/11 salt demand outstripped supply on a national basis. In both winters, Aberdeen managed to control

salt usage by starting the winter season with a healthy salt stock and by introducing salt resilience operations at an early stage in order to manage stocks. This practice will be continued and it is intended to have a stock of 12,000T in place before the onset of winter with regular programmed top-up deliveries.

| <u>Year</u> | <u>Starting Tonnage</u> | <u>Usage</u> |
|-------------|-------------------------|--------------|
| 10/11       | 14,076                  | 19,799       |
| 11/12       | 15,986                  | 8,088        |
| 12/13       | 17,156                  | 18,801       |

#### c) De-icing Agent

A limited trial of a chemical de-icing agent (Ecothaw) was carried out during the previous winter but we did not experience hard packed snow and ice which will be the real test of this material. There are still 12,000 litres in stock and the equipment is in place to carry out a trial this coming winter should conditions be severe enough. This de-icing agent is more effective at very low temperatures than salt and may be a useful addition to assist with winter treatment.

#### d) Grit

The general guidance for dealing with hard packed snow and ice is to use grit mixed with salt and this is included as part of the Roads Winter Service Plan. The use of grit causes problems and expense for both street sweeping and gully emptying. While stocks of grit will continue to be held, they will only be used in extreme conditions given the consequences following application.

De-icing agents, once suitably trialed, may provide a more acceptable alternative to the use of grit in very severe conditions.

#### e) Salt Bins

There are currently approximately 900 salt bins throughout the City. Every year there are demands for further boxes at new locations. Maintaining these boxes is a very labour intensive operation and to continually increase their numbers will only add to the current restocking problems. It is proposed not to issue any additional grit bins this winter but to further promote the issue of 1T bags of salt for community use.

A review of existing bins will be undertaken to ensure that they are still in an appropriate location, if not they will be removed and

reallocated to an area of high demand. Should an unused bin be removed, the local members will be advised.

#### f) Community Salt Bags

A scheme was introduced to issue 1Tonne bags of salt to Community groups willing to carry out self help winter treatment. There were 40 bags issued last winter to interested groups and the feedback was generally very positive. This scheme will be continued this winter but there are conditions that the bags need to be located in a secure place such as a resident's driveway as they are susceptible to theft and vandalism. The location also needs to be accessible to the Council delivery lorry. These bags hold a far greater quantity of salt than a salt bin, will therefore last longer and are relatively quick to replenish. While it is appropriate to encourage self help during severe winter weather, current staffing levels mean that it would not be possible to implement and manage a more formal scheme of equipment issue so it is proposed that this scheme remains limited to the issue of salt only.

#### f) Vehicles and Plant

It has been practice for several years now for Fleet Services to purchase second hand lorry chassis (approx 6 years old) with refurbished gritter bodies. This has proved to be the most cost effective option. For this coming Winter 5 No. of these vehicles will be purchased, 4 x 18 Tonne, 1 x 26 Tonne.

One of the 18 Tonne vehicles will have a spray bar fitted which will give us an option in relation to the application of de-icer during hard packed snow or icy conditions.

A further 18 Tonne vehicles has been fitted with a quick change body allowing it to be changed, as and when required, from its main function as a gully tanker to a gritter . This dual function is part of the Priority Based Budget saving by making more efficient use of vehicles.

In addition to the above, 4 No. de-mountable gritter boxes will be replaced with new units.

The above shows a considerable ongoing investment in the winter fleet which will continue to bring the average age of the vehicles down. Future investment will ensure that the fleet is brought up to date thus increasing reliability.

#### g) Service Provision Over Festive Period

Service provision over the festive period will remain at the same level as in previous years. The specific details are shown below.

| DAY          | STATUS         | SERVICE AVAILABLE                |
|--------------|----------------|----------------------------------|
| Mon 23 Dec   | Normal Day     | Full Service                     |
| Tues 24 Dec  | Normal Day     | Full Service                     |
| Wed 25 Dec   | Public Holiday | Standby + Nightshift             |
| Thurs 26 Dec | Public Holiday | Standby + Nightshift             |
| Fri 27 Dec   | Normal Day     | Standby+Early Morning+Nightshift |
| Sat 28 Dec   | Week End       | Standby + Nightshift             |
| Sun 29 Dec   | Week End       | Standby + Nightshift             |
| Mon 30 Dec   | Normal Day     | Standby+Early Morning+Nightshift |
| Tues 31 Dec  | Public Holiday | Standby + Nightshift             |
| Wed 1 Jan    | Public Holiday | Standby + Nightshift             |
| Thurs 2 Jan  | Public Holiday | Standby + Nightshift             |
| Fri 3 Jan    | Normal Day     | Full Service                     |

Standby consists of sufficient staff to operate the 10 Priority 1 carriageway routes and 2 Priority footpath gritter routes for up to a 10 hour service during the period 05:45 to 19:00 and can be utilized in different ways depending on the prevailing weather conditions.

Nightshift provides cover from 7.00 pm until 6.00 am to the main arterial routes through the City. This operation does not include any operations within the housing estates. The exception to this is in an emergency situation.

Early Morning shift provides a treatment of the 10 Priority 1 carriageway routes and 2 Priority footpath gritter routes if necessary at 04:45 and this shift will continue working until the end of the normal working day at 15:45

#### h) Public Information

An information section for Winter Operations was introduced to the Council's web site 3 years ago. This provided information on gritter routes and live information on operations on the main routes. Prior to last winter a further section was added advising of weather and road conditions.

A total of 5,778 contacts were made to this service. This is approximately 4,000 higher than the previous winter and is a likely reflection on the greater severity of the winter. Analysis of the use of the website indicates a higher level of contact during severe weather.

i) City Voice Questionnaire

The last survey using the City Voice network was undertaken in 2012 It is intended to resume this following the 2013 – 14 winter, to gauge public opinion on the service provided and to feed into the development of the plan in 2014-15

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Bulletin “Winter Maintenance Operations 2012 -2013” 21<sup>st</sup> May 2013

<http://councilcommittees/mgConvert2PDF.aspx?ID=26244>

8. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

John Shearer



01224 241556



[jshearer@aberdeencity.gov.uk](mailto:jshearer@aberdeencity.gov.uk)