
COMMITTEE	Enterprise, Strategic Planning & Infrastructure
DATE	03 June 2014
DIRECTOR	Gordon McIntosh
TITLE OF REPORT	Winter Maintenance Operations 2013 - 2014
REPORT NUMBER:	EPI/14/067

1 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

This report is intended to provide Members with an overview of the strategy that the roads operations operated throughout the City during the winter of 2013/14. Members will be aware that the Council budget for 2013/14 for winter maintenance was £1.977M, The final cost was £1.565M.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee are asked to

- a) note the contents of this report
- b) instruct officers to continue with the benchmarking of other similar urban authorities winter services both in terms of operation and cost
- c) instruct officers to incorporate where appropriate, within the Winter Services Plan for 2014-2015, those recommendations in Section 13 of the Well Maintained Highways and any other relevant documents produced not already in the Winter Service Plan 2013-2014
- d) instruct officers to report back to Committee in September 2014 with the updated Winter Services Plan

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Expenditure was £1.565M, within the Council's Revenue Budget of £1.977 M, an underspend of £412K. This underspend is largely attributed to the reduced tonnage of salt used due to the relatively mild winter. The quantity of salt used was approximately 11,000 T less than the 10 year average figure, presenting a material saving of £343,000. The remainder of the saving can be attributed to a saving on labour costs due to a reduction in resources required for snow days.

4. SERVICE & COMMUNITY IMPACT

Aberdeen-the Smarter City

We will embrace the distinctive pride the people of Aberdeen take in their city and work with them to enhance the sense of well-being here, building strong communities which look out for, and look after one another.

We will promote Aberdeen as a great place to live, bring up a family, do business and visit.

We will ensure that Union Street regains its position as the heart of the city and move cultural activity centre-stage through re-invigorated cultural leadership.

Single Outcome Agreement - National Outcomes: 1, 5, 10, 12, 13, 14.

Public – Public interest is high in relation to Festive Lighting. Switch on Parade provides a high level of involvement with the public and local press.

Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment (EHRIA) – Not Applicable in this instance

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

5 MANAGEMENT OF RISK

Lack of a Winter Services Plan will put the City at risk of snow and ice related problems and also increase the council's liability to claims for injury

6 REPORT

Background:

Winter Weather Pattern and Service Delivered

Overnight operations commenced 9 November and early morning operations commenced 18 November. Although this was slightly later than usual staff were called in prior to this date to deal with any winter situation. 3x early season frosts meant that drivers were required to treat priority routes prior to the start of the early morning operations. While the general perception was of a milder winter it was still recorded that the road surface temperatures were at or below freezing on 69 nights.

Apr '13: 2x pre-salts, 4x early morning operations

Oct '13:

Nov '13: 7x pre-salts, 8x early morning operations, 1x snow/ice operations

Dec '13: 2x pre-salts, 9x early morning operations, 2x snow/ice operations

Jan '14: 3x pre-salts, 7x early morning operations

Feb '14: 2x pre-salts, 7x early morning operations

Mar '14: 1x pre-salts, 6x early morning operations,

Apr' 14:

In order to carry out an appropriate comparison with the other three city councils authorities in Scotland, an analysis of their salt usage for this winter was carried out. Each council is allocated a resilience stock level which equates to the minimum daily amount of salt required to treat their priority routes. This figure was used for each council to calculate the equivalent number of resilience level treatments their actual salt usage equated to. From this analysis, Aberdeen City Council was required to carry out more treatments than Edinburgh and Dundee and slightly less than Glasgow.

69 nights of the winter saw temperatures at or below freezing. The lowest temperatures recorded by the sensors around Aberdeen were -5 °C road surface temperature on 10/11/2013 and an air temperature of -3.6 °C on 24/11/2013. This compared to minimum figures of -8.6 °C and -9.5 °C respectively, experienced the previous winter.

Staff

Basic Winter Rota Operations

	<u>Commenced</u>	<u>Finished</u>
Night Attendants	14/10/2013	18/04/2014
Nightshift driver	09/11/2013	18/04/2014
Early morning operations	18/11/2013	23/03/2014
Standby operations	18/11/2013	23/03/2014

This rota consists of the following resources:

- 1 Winter Maintenance Night Attendant
- 2 Night Shift Drivers
- 8 Early Morning Drivers
- 3 Plant Operators
- 3 Tractor Gritter Drivers
- 2 Kubota Drivers
- 1 Duty Officer

The Standby Rota consists of:

- 10 Drivers
- 3 Plant Operators
- 2 Kubota Drivers
- 1 Supervisor
- 1 Duty Officer

These operations were for Priority 1 & part of the Priority 2 routes, where conditions will allow, along with Priority 1 footpaths as described in the approved Winter Service Plan. Along with these early morning operations to the priority routes, salting was also carried out to the access roads and car parks at the two park and ride sites.

This basic operating system for staff was carried out throughout the winter but was added to when a forecast of snow or severe ice conditions was received. Additional treatment was required on 3 occasions for snow or icy conditions.

Footpath & Cycle Path Operations

The priority footpaths, as set out in the Winter Services Plan, were the only routes to be covered as part of the early morning operations. This change in operations was approved by the Policy and Strategy Committee in 2008.

Footpath operations were given additional support from Environmental Services when necessary. These men carried out hand spreading to some footpaths. With over

1200km of footways it was not feasible to have widespread coverage as anticipated by many members of the public. With a further 480 km of remote paths and areas within our Council housing estates requiring treatment the widespread expectation of “black” footpaths and car parks is not achievable in the worst winter conditions

Requests were received to carry out additional treatment to cycle paths. It was agreed that a trial would be carried out on cycle paths using a de-icing chemical which is claimed to remain effective much longer than rock salt. This winter did not present periods when road surface temperatures remained below zero with wet conditions for long periods of time to make a trial feasible as the possible advantage of using this material. It is therefore intended that the trial be carried out during the first period of severe winter weather during the coming winter.

Resources Used

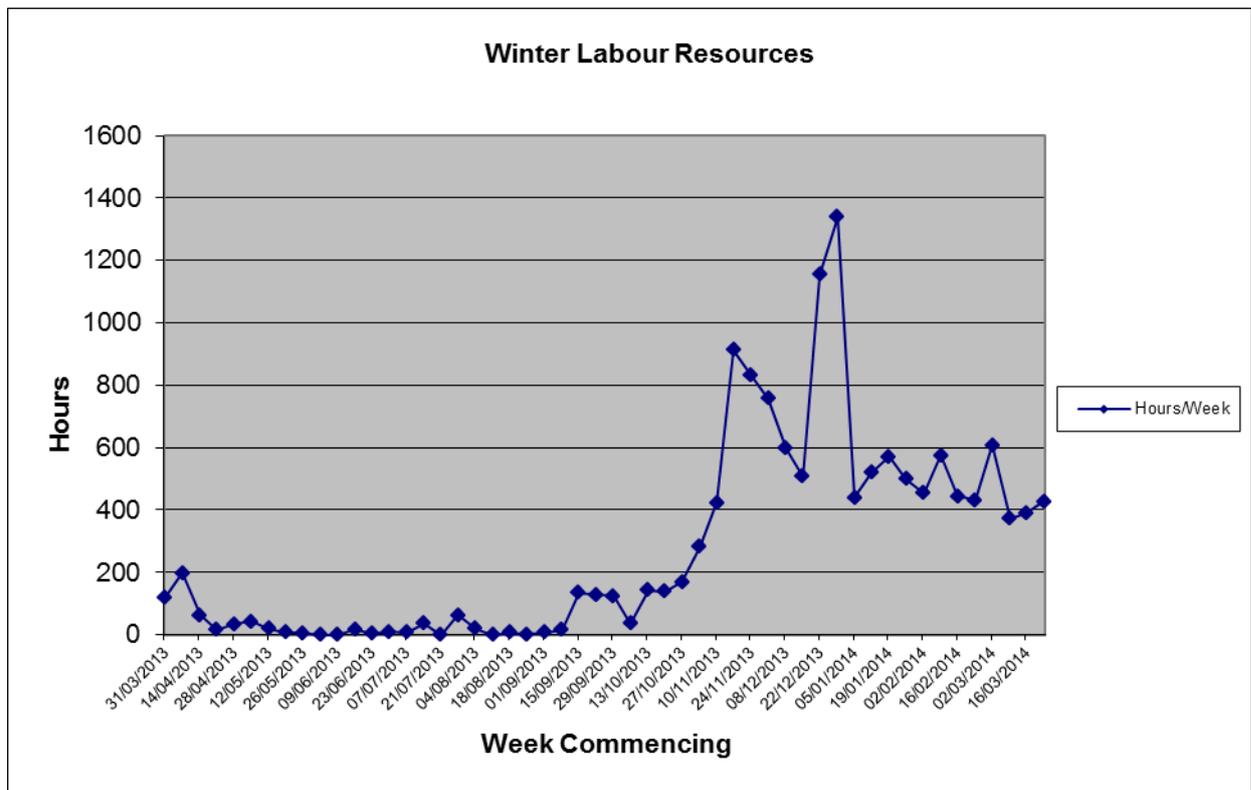
The clearing of snow from footpaths is a highly labour intensive operation. In times of severe winter weather winter operations on footpaths continue between 8 and 12 hours a day and gritting and ploughing of roads is a 24 hour operation.

The following details the labour resource used during the winter to carry out the operations

West Tullos	45
Culter	5
Bucksburn	30
Ground Services	42

Mechanics and staff from Fleet were on call and carried out works to the plant during the period

The graph below shows the labour utilised on winter operations throughout the year. The peak of 1,350 hours per week compares with a peak of 2,900 hours per week the previous winter.



Grit Bins

Grit bins were filled for the start of the winter season and due to minor usage were maintained throughout the period.

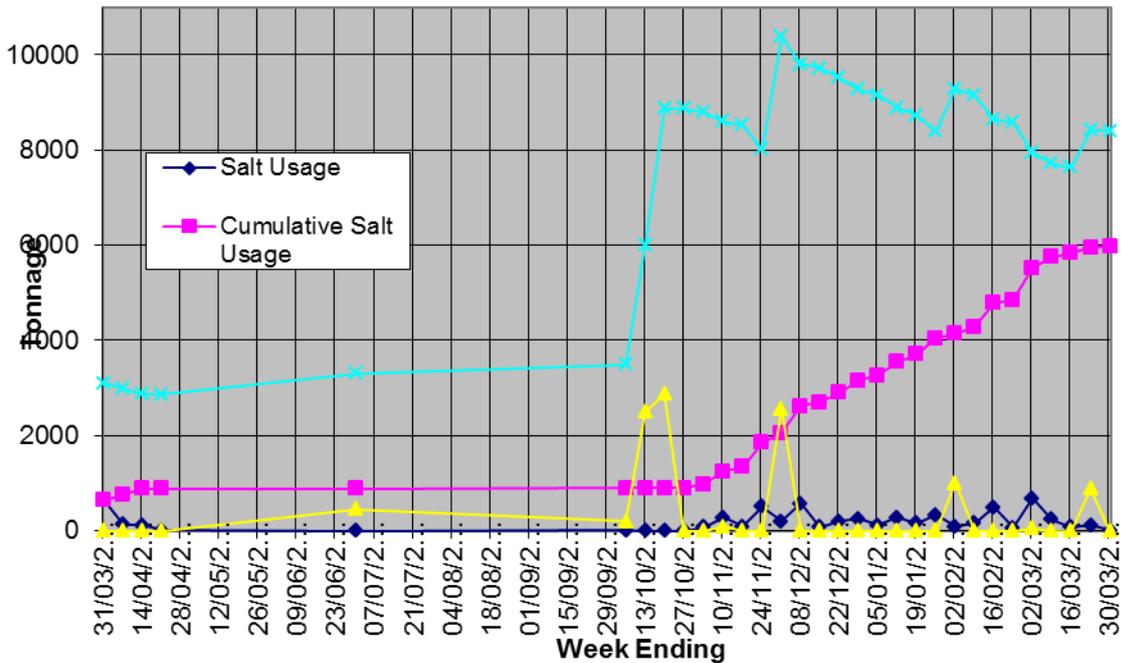
1 Tonne Salt Bags

The scheme which offers Community Groups who made requests, 1Tonne bags of salt for self help as an alternative to grit bins, was continued this winter. 89 tonnes of salt in 1 tonne bags were issued to Community groups throughout Aberdeen. The groups will be surveyed on their experience of the service and if they would use this service again. Those who used the service this year will be contacted to enquire whether they wish to continue with the service.

Salt:

At the beginning of April 2013 there were 3,743 tonnes of rock salt in stock. During the year there was 10,616 tonnes delivered and at the end of the winter period 8,399 tonnes remained in stock. Therefore, a total of 5,960 tonnes was used during the financial year.

Salt Stock Levels



Sand

Weather conditions and salt supplies this winter meant that it was not necessary to use any sand.

Ecothaw

Conditions were not severe enough to ascertain how effective eco-thaw will be in conditions of hard packed snow and ice.

Problem Operations

During the winter period there were very few problems with the majority of roads being kept clear of snow and ice throughout the period.

Gritting Fleet

Investment in this fleet over the last two years has led to a great improvement in the quality of the fleet although further investment will be required to replace the remaining older vehicles. Fleet Services provided a good service in keeping the machines on the road. Two replacement gritters were purchased for the Aberdeen City Council fleet and one replacement was purchased for the Trunk Road route which Aberdeen City operates on contract for BEAR. One gritter in the ACC fleet was replaced with a gritter hired for the winter period. In addition a gritter was hired for the winter period for the Trunk Road route which Aberdeen City operate on behalf of BEAR. Two new demountable gritters were also purchased for the ACC fleet. These gritters were a welcome boost to the winter operation, as they contributed to an improvement on the downtime for the winter fleet this year.

Media and Public Relations

Two events to help boost awareness of the winter service provision were held prior to the onset of winter. An invitation was issued to all Councilors to attend a presentation at Tullos Roads depot on the morning of Wednesday 13 November where details of the winter service were presented and the winter plant was available for inspection. A similar invite was issued for that afternoon to the local press, radio and television channels and this was well attended leading to some very positive coverage for Aberdeen City Council. This was followed up by a public presentation on Saturday 16 November where winter plant was on show and Roads staff were available to take questions all day outside Marks & Spencer, St Nicholas Street. Feedback on the day was generally positive with a lot of interest in the 1T Salt Bag Scheme. It is intended to continue this push to boost awareness of the winter service provided in future years.

The ACC website was, as in recent winters, updated daily with information advising the public of the expected road conditions and the proposed winter treatments.

Winter Maintenance Budgets

<u>Year</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Spend</u>	<u>Emergencies</u>	<u>OverSpend</u>
2005-2006	£1641K	£2218K	£0	£328K
Contingencies	£1000K			
2006-2007	£1641K	£1615K	£300K	£245K
2007-2008	£1641K	£1741K	£300K	£327K
2008-2009	£1590K	£1878K	£0	£288K
2009-2010	£1499K+£500K	£2421K	£0	£422K
2010-2011	£1498K	£2195 K	£0	£697K
2011-2012	£1512K	£2116K	£0	£604K
2012-2013	£1512K	£1986K	£0	£474K
2013-2014	£1977K	£1565K	£0	£(412)K

(2011-2012 spend includes £65K of storm damage)

References

Web Link to Aberdeen City Council Winter Maintenance Plan

http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/Roads/roa/roa_winter_main.asp

In the ACC Website

Click on R

Click on Roads

Click on Snow Clearance

Winter Maintenance Plan is available as a download on the right of the page

Web Link to Aberdeen City Council Daily Gritting & Snow Clearing Operations

http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/Roads/roa/roa_winter_main.asp

In the ACC Website

Click on R

Click on Roads

Click on Snow Clearing

Click on the link Gritting & Snow Clearing Operations updates

This area of the website shows the priority gritting routes and is updated during gritting operations to advise the general public of the winter action taking place. Additional information updated daily includes the expected weather conditions and road conditions.

Web Link to Well Maintained Highways

http://www.ukroadsliaisongroup.org/roads/well_maintained.htm

7 REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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