

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

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COMMITTEE	Community, Housing & Infrastructure
DATE	27 October 2015
DIRECTOR	Pete Leonard
TITLE OF REPORT	Roads Winter Service Plan 2015 - 16
REPORT NUMBER	CHI/15/294
CHECKLIST COMPLETED	Yes

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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 2015 – 2016.  
The Roads Winter Service Plan has been sent to Councillors electronically if approved the public will have access to the document via the web site

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Expenditure will be in accordance with the Council's approved Revenue budgets for Winter Maintenance and Emergencies 2015-2016 of £1.977M. It should be noted that the expenditure for the previous three winters has been £1.502M in 2014-2015, £1.565M in 2013-14 and £1.986M in 2012-13.

Salt which is purchased through Scotland Excel procurement has increased in price since last winter. In an average winter 19,000 tonnes of salt may be used, so this will potentially increase costs by £30,500 during this financial year.

#### 4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Failure to have a robust “Roads Winter Service Plan” (see Appendix A) will leave the Council more vulnerable to 3<sup>rd</sup> party insurance claims.

#### 5. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES

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

The following are extracts from the plan –

##### 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.

##### b) Salt Usage and Stocks

Salt stock levels have been taken back up to 9442T with a further 1000T expected prior to winter in preparation with regular programmed top-up deliveries throughout the winter.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Starting Tonnage</u>	<u>Usage</u>
12/13	17,156	18,801
13/14	12,000	5,600
14/15	13,268	9,486

ACC also manage the local salt supply for NHS Grampian for use in and around the three local hospitals and for BEAR Scotland for work on the Trunk Roads adjacent to Aberdeen

##### c) De-icing Agent

A proposed trial during the previous winter was not possible due to the relative mildness of that winter. 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. In particular a trial is proposed along sections of

the cycle ways added to the Winter Service Plan to assess whether or not the thawing effect is longer lasting than with roads treated with salt. This will only take place if a prolonged period of freezing weather is forecast.

#### 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 more than 900 salt bins throughout the City. Every year there are demands for further bins 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. Following on from last year it is proposed to continue the policy of not issuing 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, in 2012-13, to issue 1Tonne bags of salt to Community groups willing to carry out self help winter treatment. There were 71 bags issued last winter to interested groups, with the feedback being generally very positive. These groups will be contacted again this year to ask if they wish to continue their support. We have been in contact with ACVO who are interested in working with us to spread the scheme to the wider community.

Communities can request a 1 Tonne salt bag by completing the on line application form, the link is given below

[http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/web/files//roads/one\\_tonne\\_salt\\_bag\\_request\\_form.pdf](http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/web/files//roads/one_tonne_salt_bag_request_form.pdf)

In order to increase the interest in Community Salt bags we will once again be promoting this through media releases and at our winter preparation day on 28<sup>h</sup> November 2015.

This provision of Salt Bags will be continued this winter with the same conditions as in previous years

- The salt is issued to Community Groups.
- 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 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.

g) Vehicles and Plant

Over the last 4 years, considerable investment has reduced the average age of the winter fleet. This will continue this winter maintaining a fleet of at an age which is serviceable and reduces downtime for repair. Future investment will continue with the purchase of multi-use vehicles, as these can be quickly converted to other specialist equipment, such as gully emptiers, when not required for gritting. This has proven to be the most cost effective method of updating the fleet.

h) 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 21 Dec	Normal Day	Full Service
Tues 22 Dec	Normal Day	Full Service
Wed 23Dec	Normal Day	Full Service
Thurs 24 Dec	Normal Day	Full Service
Fri 25 Dec	Public Holiday	Standby + Response
Sat 26 Dec	Week End	Standby + Response
Sun 27 Dec	Week End	Standby + Response
Mon 28 Dec	Public Holiday	Standby + Response
Tues 29 Dec	Normal Day	Standby+Early Morning+ Response
Wed 30 Dec	Normal Day	Standby+Early Morning+ Response
Thurs 31 Jan	Public Holiday	Standby + Response
Fri 01 Jan	Public Holiday	Standby + Response

Sat 02 Jan	Week End	Standby + Response
Sun 03 Jan	Week End	Standby + Response
Mon 04 Jan	Public Holiday	Standby + Response

Response consists of up to 5 roadworkers providing 23 hour cover per day, 7 days per week with a break between shifts from 03:00 to 04:00. This break will be monitored by the night attendant and can be covered in emergencies.

Standby + Response 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 for the standby workers and can be utilised in different ways depending on the prevailing weather conditions.

Response provides cover outwith normal hours to the main arterial routes through the City, generally on the North & South Routes which are detailed in the Roads Winter Service Plan. This operation does not include any operations within the housing estates. The exception to this is in an emergency situation.

Early Morning 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.

#### i) Public Information/ Media Strategy

An information section for Winter Operations was introduced to the Council's web site 4 years ago. This provides information on current gritter and footpath plough operations along with daily updates on weather and road conditions.

This webpage is looking to be developed further to allow the mapping system to show live winter plant locations.

After the continued success of presentation to Councillors and the Press at Tullos Roads Depot and the public presentation held at St Nicholas Street, it has been decided to repeat both events this winter. Councillors have been advised that the dates for these events are 22 October 2015 between the hours of 11:00 and 13:00 at Tullos Depot and 28<sup>th</sup> November 2015 for St Nicholas Street.

The Media Team has been involved in the planning of the Media Strategy for this years winter season. Both Facebook and Twitter will be used to disseminate information on social media whilst press releases will be used to raise awareness and when required both radio and television will be used to inform members of the public re current or expected situations.

j) City Voice Questionnaire

The last survey using the City Voice network was undertaken in 2012 It is intended to resume this following the 2015 – 16 winter, to gauge public opinion on the service provided and to feed into the development of the plan in 2016-17

k) Other Locations considered for maintenance

Under the direction of the Duty Officer Roads, Environmental Services and other front line services provide additional resources as and when required, which will clean and salt the accesses to the following

- Multi Storey Sheltered Housing
- Low rise Sheltered Complexes
- Social Work Premises

A full list of these premises are contained within the Winter Service Plan

l) Contact Centre

West Tullos Winter Duty Officer will be in daily contact with the contact centre when winter conditions prevail and will assist with any calls that the call centre feels needs further explanation. The updated information on the web site is available to staff in the contact centre, this will also assist them to provide them “real time” information to help them respond to queries from members of the public.

m) Severe Winter Weather Conditions-Local Resilience

The Winter Services Plan deals only with the day to day operations over a normal winter period. Should, as occurred in 2009-2010, conditions prevail that require a wider and a more strategic input the services of the Local Resilience Partnership and the Emergency Planning Unit would take on the management of the situation with the Winter Maintenance Team providing any assistance required.

6. IMPACT

**Improving Customer Experience –**

The provision of a Winter Service Plan assists the customer by making clear the councils operational priorities over the period, allows community groups to assist in the early maintenance of areas that would be further down the priority list. The plan is based around the

clearance of bus routes which should mean that the public are still able, in times of snow and ice, to travel to a high percentage of locations across the city

### **Improving Staff Experience –**

Staff training continues with every driver required to carry out winter maintenance to obtain a City and Guilds qualification in winter operations and are required to carry out refresher training on a biannual basis.

### **Improving our use of Resources –**

The Winter Services Plan is evaluated on an annual basis using a winter debrief to discuss what went right what went wrong, how new plant and materials performed etc. Pre winter meetings look at any route changes and looks at any new methods for service delivery used by other Local Authorities.

### **Corporate –**

‘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.

### **Public –**

An EHRIA has been included with this report. The provision of the Winter Services Plan does not differentiate on who receives the service but does set out priority areas of work.

## **7. MANAGEMENT OF RISK**

The Winter Services Plan is used to mitigate the risk to the council. It sets out the Priority Operations across the city and sets out the criteria for carrying out the operation. As with all operations based on weather it is not possible to alleviate the risk completely but by having a recognised plan the risk can be managed

## **8. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

The Winter Services Plan for 2014-2015 is available through the following link, the new winter services plan will be made available to the public via the website once approved by committee.

[http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/web/files//Roads/Winter\\_Service\\_Plan\\_14\\_15.pdf](http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/web/files//Roads/Winter_Service_Plan_14_15.pdf)

9. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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