

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

| | |
|-----------------|-------------------------------------|
| COMMITTEE | Community, Housing & Infrastructure |
| DATE | 1 November 2016 |
| DIRECTOR | Pete Leonard |
| TITLE OF REPORT | Roads Winter Service Plan 2016 - 17 |
| REPORT NUMBER: | CHI/16/254 |

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 2016 – 2017.
Appendix A, The Roads Winter Service Plan.
(This 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 2016-2017 of £1.727M. It should be noted that the expenditure for the previous three winters has been £1.752M in 2015-2016, £1.977M in 2014-15 and £1.565M in 2013-14.

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 3rd 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. The recommendations within Appendix H would present an onerous burden in terms of staff time and infrastructure implications for Local Authorities, if fully complied with. The Society of Chief Officers of Transportation in Scotland (SCOTS) have recognised this and have set up a working group to produce recommendations on the most appropriate and practical approach to implementing elements of Appendix H. This will produce a consolidated approach throughout Local Authorities in Scotland and provide substantial backing to each Roads Authority in the implementation of their Winter Service Plan. The SCOTS working group has issued draft findings to all Scottish Roads Authorities for consultation but these have yet to be finalised. Elements of the recommendations may have to be implemented during this coming winter if appropriate and the full recommendations will be reported to committee prior to winter 2017-18.

b) Salt Usage and Stocks

Salt stock levels have been taken back up to 10087T, this stock is to be stocked up with regular programmed top-up deliveries throughout the winter.

| <u>Year</u> | <u>Starting Tonnage</u> | <u>Usage</u> |
|-------------|-------------------------|--------------|
| 13/14 | 12,000 | 5,600 |
| 14/15 | 13,268 | 9,486 |
| 15/16 | 10,508 | 7,763 |

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 has been undertaken any that are not in an appropriate location will be relocated at the start of the winter season after consultation with local members.

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 82 bags issued last winter to interested groups, with the feedback being generally very positive. This scheme will be continued this winter but with the following conditions,

- 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 5 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) Route changes

A number of developments on the road network have been incorporated into the treatment routes.

Changes have been made to routes 5 and 8 to accommodate the additional network resulting from the third don crossing.

Changes have been made to route 7 to incorporate the treatment of the A96 to Dyce Drive link road, once the park and choose facility has been completed at the new link road its treatment will also be incorporated into route 7. The now isolated section of road running past Marshall Engineering has been removed from route 7.

i) 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 19 Dec | Normal Day | Full Service |
| Tues 20 Dec | Normal Day | Full Service |
| Wed 21 Dec | Normal Day | Full Service |
| Thurs 22 Dec | Normal Day | Full Service |
| Fri 23 Dec | Normal Day | Full Service |
| Sat 24 Dec | Week End | Standby + Response |
| Sun 25 Dec | Week End | Standby + Response |
| Mon 26 Dec | Public Holiday | Standby + Response |
| Tues 27 Dec | Public Holiday | Standby + Response |
| Wed 28 Dec | Normal Day | Standby+Early Morning+ Response |
| Thurs 29 Dec | Normal Day | Standby+Early Morning+ Response |
| Fri 30 Dec | Public Holiday | Standby + Response |
| Sat 31 Dec | Week End | Standby + Response |
| Sun 01 Jan | Week End | Standby + Response |
| Mon 02 Jan | Public Holiday | Standby + Response |
| Tue 03 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.

j) Public Information

An information section for Winter Operations was introduced to the Council's web site 5 years ago. This provided information on gritter routes and live information on operations on the main routes. There is a further section advising of weather and road conditions. This webpage will be developed further as necessary.

After the success of last year's presentation to councilors and the Press at Tullos Roads Depot and a follow up Public presentation held at St Nicholas Street, it is intended to repeat both events this winter. Councilors have been advised that the dates for these events are 19 October 2015 between the hours of 11:00 and 13:00 and 26 November 2015.

k) City Voice Questionnaire

The last survey using the City Voice network was undertaken in 2016 this presented a generally positive public perception of the winter maintenance service. There were a number of areas that require attention namely the relatively low public awareness of the winter policy and the subsequent dissatisfaction with some of the treatment to the non-priority areas of the network.

l) Future Developments

As the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Road nears completion it is anticipated that a considerable length of the current trunk road network, within the city boundary, will be de-trunked. The maintenance, including winter maintenance, of these de-trunked sections is expected to be transferred to the city council.

The continuation of the current level of winter maintenance service along these sections would result in a significant additional burden on the Roads Operations budgets.

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

8. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

Angus Maclver
01224 241500

 anmacivert@aberdeencity.gov.uk