

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

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COMMITTEE	Community, Housing & Infrastructure
DATE	08 November 2017
REPORT TITLE	Roads Winter Service Plan 2017 - 18
REPORT NUMBER	CHI/17/253
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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 from previous years.

The report also highlights some risks that face the Roads Winter Service in the next 24 months.

**2. RECOMMENDATION(S)**

It is recommended that the Committee:-

- a. note the contents of this report
- b. approve the "Appendix A Roads Winter Service Plan" for 2017 – 2018
- c. instruct the Head of Public Infrastructure and Environment in consultation with the Head of Finance to determine the cost and resource implications of the anticipated additional maintenance burden for the Roads winter maintenance provision from the de-trunking of sections of the A90/A96 upon completion of the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Road in order that this can be accounted for in future budgets.
- d. authorise officers to incur expenditure for the purchase of de-icing salt, through an approved framework up to an estimated expenditure of £500,000 in terms of Aberdeen City Council Procurement Regulation 4.1.1.4.

**3. BACKGROUND/FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS**

**Background:**

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 Infrastructure a Code of Practice.

This document gives general guidance to Roads Authorities on all aspects of Road Maintenance. Section B7 covers aspects of Winter Maintenance. Included are recommendations on Winter Service Policy, Resilient Winter Service, Co-ordination and Collaboration, Winter Service Planning and Winter Service Delivery.

These recommendations are accommodated within the Service Plan. Some aspects may however 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 the Code Of Practice.

b) Salt Usage and Stocks

Salt stock levels have been taken back up to 11,726T, 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>
14/15	13,268	9,486
15/16	10,508	7,763
16/17	10,087	4,602

c) De-icing Agent

A proposed trial of the deicing agent during last winter was not possible due to the relative mildness of that winter. We did not experience the 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 continue the trial this coming winter, providing the conditions are severe enough. The de-icing agent is more effective than salt at very low temperatures and may be a useful addition to assist with winter treatment. In particular the trial will continue along sections of the cycle ways to assess whether or not the deicing treatment is longer lasting than the roads treated with salt. It will require a forecast of a prolonged period of freezing weather to carry out this trial.

d) Grit

The general guidance for dealing with hard packed snow and ice is to use salt mixed with grit/sand and this is included as part of the Roads Winter Service Plan The use of this mix causes problems and increased costs 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 above consequences. A salt/sand mixture has not been used since the winter of 2010-2011

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 the salt bins is a very labour intensive operation and to continually increase their numbers will only add to the current restocking problems. It is proposed to continue the policy of not issuing any additional salt 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, in consultation with local members, relocated or removed at the start of the winter season.

#### 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 75 bags issued last winter to interested groups, with the feedback being generally very positive. This scheme will be continued this winter 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 and will therefore last longer and are relatively quick to replenish.

#### g) Vehicles and Plant

Considerable investment over the last 5 years has reduced the average age of the winter fleet. This programme will continue this winter in order to have a fleet of vehicles at an age which is serviceable and reduces downtime for repair. Future investment will continue with the purchase of multi-use vehicles, that 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 1,8,9,10,10A to accommodate the minor changes to the network resulting from works associated with the Western Peripheral Route.

Changes have been made to route 9 to incorporate the treatment of the Park and Ride facility at the Airport Road.

#### 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 18 Dec	Normal Day	Full Service
Tue 19 Dec	Normal Day	Full Service
Wed 20 Dec	Normal Day	Full Service
Thur 21 Dec	Normal Day	Full Service
Fri 22 Dec	Normal Day	Full Service
Sat 23 Dec	Normal Day	Standby + Response
Sun 24 Dec	Normal Day	Standby + Response
Mon 25 Dec	Public Holiday	Standby + Response
Tue 26 Dec	Public Holiday	Standby + Response
Wed 27 Dec	Normal Day	Standby+Early Morning+ Response
Thur 28 Dec	Normal Day	Standby+Early Morning+ Response
Fri 29 Dec	Normal Day	Standby+Early Morning+ Response
Sat 30 Dec	Normal Day	Standby + Response
Sun 31 Dec	Normal Day	Standby + Response
Mon 1 Jan	Public Holiday	Standby + Response
Tue 2 Jan	Public Holiday	Standby + Response
Wed 3 Jan	Normal Day	Full Service

The Response team 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 but 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 operations, if necessary, provides a treatment of the 10 Priority 1 carriageway routes and 2 Priority footpath gritter routes. These will commence at 04:45 and this shift will continue working until 15:45 at the end of the normal working day.

#### j) Footpath and 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 are given additional support, as and when necessary, from Environmental Services. These operatives carry out hand spreading to some footpaths especially around sheltered accommodation

With over 1200km of footways to maintain it is not feasible to have the widespread instant coverage as expected by some 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 more severe winter conditions

#### k) Public Information

An information section for Winter Operations was introduced to the Council's web site 6 years ago. This provides information on gritter routes and live information on operations on the main routes. There is a further section advising of weather and road conditions. The webpage will continue to be developed further as necessary.

After the success of last year's presentation to Councilors and the Press at West Tullos Roads Depot and a follow up Public presentation held at St Nicholas Street, it is intended to repeat both events this winter. Councillors have been advised that the dates for these events are 18 October 2017 between the hours of 11:00 and 13:00 and 22 November 2017 from 8.30 until 15.00hrs.

#### l) City Voice Questionnaire

The last survey using the City Voice network was undertaken in 2017 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.

#### m) Future Developments

As the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Road nears completion 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 will 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 resources and budgets.

#### n) Consultation

The following organisations have been consulted on the content of the Winter Service Plan.

Bear Scotland, Bon Accord Care, NHS Scotland, Aberdeen City Council – Education, and Housing Services, Police Scotland, The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service.

## **4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

Expenditure will be in accordance with the Council's approved Revenue budgets for Winter Maintenance and Emergencies 2017-2018 of £1.727M. It should be noted that the expenditure for the previous three winters has been £1.610 in 2016-17, £1.752M in 2015-2016 and £1.977M in 2014-15.

## **5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

Failure to provide a robust and justifiable "Roads Winter Service Plan" will leave the council more vulnerable to legal challenges and 3<sup>rd</sup> party insurance claims.

The Council is obligated under Section 34 of the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984 to take such steps as they consider reasonable to prevent snow and ice endangering the safe passage of pedestrians and vehicles over a public road.

## 6. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

To ensure that the service meets its obligation in the coming years the risks identified in the Future Developments section of the report need to be addressed:

<b>Risk Reputational/Technological/ Customer /citizen</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Risk Level</b>	<b>Mitigation/Controls</b>
The development of new codes of practice superseding the current winter policies.	In the next 12-24 months	Medium	Monitor and consult on industry developments and adapt the Winter Service Plan to meet developing standards and practices.
Reduction in the number of Community Salt Bags, required at the start of winter, if milder winters continue, Then looking for the council to provide them should conditions deteriorate	In the next 12-24 months	Medium	Use Corporate Communications to continue to highlight the importance of the community salt

<b>Risk Reputational and Financial</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Risk Level</b>	<b>Mitigation/Controls</b>
The additional burden placed on the winter service from the de-trunking of sections of the A90/A96 following the completion of the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route.	In the next 12-24 months	High	Ensure that resources are made available to identify the likely additional demands from the de-trunking of sections of the A90/A96 and to integrate the de-trunked sections of road into Winter Service Plan.
Allocated Budget will only cover costs of a standard winter, overspend at times of high snowfall will require the allocation of additional budget	In the next 12-24 months	High	Look at methods of introducing overtime winter operations into the mainstream work practices

## 7. IMPACT SECTION

### **Economy**

The provision of an effective winter maintenance service that keeps the transport network working effectively is important to support the economy of Aberdeen during adverse winter conditions.

### **People**

With a growing population and expanding roads network it is important that the winter service plan is reviewed and adjusted to meet the ongoing demands of the population.

The winter service plan seeks to have a positive impact on the public in general including those with protected characteristics by reducing the adverse effects of winter weather.

### **Place**

The Council is committed to providing a winter maintenance service that will help to enhance Aberdeen as a place to invest, live and visit. An effective winter maintenance service will also make the city safer for all road and transport users.

### **Technology**

The Council is committed to examining technological and innovative methods to solve winter maintenance problems and to communicate with the public regarding ongoing treatments.

## **8. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

## **9. APPENDICES**

The following appendix should be attached to this report.

Aberdeen City Council – Roads Winter Service Plan 2017-18.

## **10. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS**

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