

## ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

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<b>COMMITTEE</b>	Operational Delivery Committee
<b>DATE</b>	6 September 2018
<b>REPORT TITLE</b>	Roads Winter Service Plan 2018 - 19
<b>REPORT NUMBER</b>	OPE/18/126
<b>DIRECTOR</b>	Rob Polkinghorne – Chief Operating Officer.
<b>CHIEF OFFICER</b>	Mark Reilly
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<b>TERMS OF REFERENCE</b>	1,3,5

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### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

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

The report also seeks to address the issues raised during the Operational Delivery Committee on the 29 May 2018.

### 2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

That the Committee: -

#### 2.1

- a) Approve the "Appendix 1 Roads Winter Service Plan" for 2018-19 including the changes made to accommodate the The Society of Chief Officers of Transportation in Scotland (SCOTS) updated guidance on the use, in Scotland, of the UK guidance document Well Managed Highways Code of Practice Appendix H
- b) Instruct officers to continue with the comparison of similar urban authority's winter services both in terms of operation and cost.
- c) Instruct officers to review further guidance issued by (SCOTS) and consider incorporation of this guidance in future Winter Service Plans.
- d) Instruct officers to continue examining the implications of the anticipated additional maintenance burden for the winter maintenance provision from the de-trunking of sections of the A90/A96 following completion of the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Road and to reduce the cost implications of this where possible.
- e) Instruct officers to examine the possible benefits and savings achievable through route optimization and automated gritting.
- f) Delegate authority to the Chief Officer Operations and Protective Services, following consultation with the Chief Officer Finance to continue to deliver the Winter Maintenance Service where the allocated budget is exceeded due to extreme weather, noting that this would be funded through use of the council's contingency

budget and reported to the City Growth & Resources committee through the following quarterly financial performance report.

### 3. BACKGROUND

#### 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) SCOTS guidance on Well Maintained Highways a Code of Practice.

The Society of Chief Officers of Transportation in Scotland (SCOTS) have provided updated guidance on the use, in Scotland, of the UK guidance document Well Managed Highways Code of Practice Appendix H – Winter Service Issues. The 18/19 winter service plan incorporates this guidance.

In addition to revised treatment guidance in section 3, Appendix D of the winter service plan includes treatment matrices that provide appropriate levels of treatment for conditions likely to be encountered in the city during wintery weather including precautionary treatment for frost, ice, snow and freezing rain and reactive treatments of snow, compacted snow and ice.

These recommendations do involve an increase in salting levels during marginal conditions and an increased use of sand and salt/sand mixtures at lower temperatures. The additional use of sand is aimed at providing additional grip to vehicles and pedestrians when temperatures are below -5C and salt is less effective for removing deeper layers of snow/ice.

#### b) Salt Usage and Stocks

Salt stock levels have been taken back up to 11,726T, this stock is to be topped up with regular programmed deliveries throughout the winter.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Starting Tonnage</u>	<u>Usage</u>
15/16	10,508	7,763
16/17	10,087	4,602
17/18	10,624	15,321

#### c) De-icing Agent

Last winter brine and de-icing chemicals were trialed as a precautionary treatment several times at locations in the city centre and on cycleways. These trials were generally successful with the benefits including the elimination of the spread of salt into shops and private properties and the treatment remaining effective for longer than standard salt.

#### d) Grit

In Section 3 of the Winter Service Plan the guidance for dealing with hard packed snow and ice at temperatures below -5C is to use salt mixed with grit/sand or grit/sand. The

use of sand has been avoided in Aberdeen since 2010/11 as unlike salt, sand is not soluble in water and consequently it must be physically removed. This removal takes the form of sweeping from open areas and the use of suction machines such as gully emptiers to remove grit from drainage systems.

The 18/19 winter service plan accepts that there is a place for the use of grit at low temperatures to improve traction under foot where a layer of water has formed above ice or compacted snow.

While stocks of grit will continue to be held, they will be used in extreme conditions as described above.

#### 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 the 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. The location of grit bins is based on historic requests.

20 large capacity grit bins that can be quickly filled from a small truck are to be located as per Appendix D; these should allow the public easier access to salt during storm conditions.

If individuals require salt and they do not have access to a vehicle, a limited number of 10kg salt buckets can be deployed on pallets to residential areas. This is a very labour intensive process and may have to be restricted during storm conditions.

#### f) Community Salt Bags

A scheme was introduced, in 2012-13, to issue 1 tonne bags of salt to Community groups willing to carry out self-help winter treatment. This scheme allows community groups to request a 1 tonne bag of salt. A total of 717 valid requests were received last year. Those who requested bags last year are being contacted to ascertain whether they would like to be included in this self-help provision again. Additional small bags will be provided to help distribute the salt in the community. The media team will help promote the scheme and the benefits it provides to the public.

The scheme is still subject to the following conditions.

- the salt is issued to community groups.
- the bags are 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.

It is proposed to apply a cut off date for applications of the 1 November after which applications will not be processed until the following year. The media team are to make the public aware of this well in advance of winter.

#### 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. 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 some routes to accommodate the minor changes to the network resulting from works associated with the Western Peripheral Route.

Work on revised routes to be introduced following the completion of the AWPR and transfer of the old truck road network to the city council is ongoing. The old sections of trunk road are to be de-trunked on the 1 April 2019. The council will accept responsibility for those de-trunked sections within the city limits from that date.

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

The Response team consists of up to 5 roadworkers providing 23 hours of 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. Standby workers 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) Footways and Cycle Path Operations

The city centre priority 1 footways as set out in the Winter Services Plan are 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. The priority 1 routes are concentrated on the city centre, shopping areas and footways with a steep gradient. The current policy is that treatment should begin on these footways during the day Monday – Friday between 7.45 and 15.45. At weekends the provision is targeted at the city centre routes.

Completing the Priority 1 footways already stretches the resources available to Roads and assistance from other services is required to complete all the Priority1 footways in a reasonable timescale.

Currently, once the P1 footways are treated further treatment is extended into the lower priority footways, including those that contain some of these essential facilities, the treatment that lower priority footways receive is dependent on the resources available so there is no timescale placed on the completed the lower priority footways.

Appendix 2 shows the location of the current Priority 1 and higher priority footways in addition to the distribution of hospitals, main surgeries, health centres, GP practices and schools.

The current criteria for including a footway for priority 1 treatment is the number of pedestrians and the steepness of the footway being so severe that they would be dangerous when covered in ice or hard packed snow. To increase the number of priority 1 footway routes on the basis of other criteria such as treating frontage of schools, hospitals, etc, would require a change in the policy and cost an estimated £35,000 per route for a typical winter. Current budgets and staffing levels will not meet increased costs if progressed.

Footpath works are given additional support, as and when necessary, from Other Council Services. These operatives carry out hand spreading to some footpaths especially around sheltered accommodation. The 2018/19 service plan includes a green, amber and red readiness approach, with treatment for sheltered housing facilities to be considered at the amber phase. If the treatment is required, the Service undertaking the work is to be notified at an early stage to allow them to dedicate resources to the treatment.

With over 1200km of footways to maintain it is not feasible to have the widespread instant coverage. With a further 480 km of remote paths and areas within our Council housing estates requiring treatment it is not feasible to have instant coverage with priority going to main routes.

Similar to roads, the use of grit will be included in the treatment of footways at lower temperatures, particularly where water is lying on ice at low temperatures.

There is no provision in the current policy for the widespread use of precautionary salting treatment of footways. It is however proposed to continue the use of brine as a precautionary treatment in selected areas.

#### k) Public Information

An information section for Winter Operations was introduced to the Council's web site 7 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.

The council does produce a Winter Travel Advice leaflet which includes information on aspects of the winter treatment regime and on how particular groups should approach the wintry conditions.

#### l) City Voice Questionnaire

The last available survey using the City Voice network was undertaken in 2017 this presented a generally positive public perception of the winter maintenance service

#### m) Future Developments

As the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Road nears completion it is anticipated that a considerable length of the current trunk road network including footways, 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 on the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019. Work is ongoing to revise the winter routes to reduce this additional burden.

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. The current cost of winter maintenance to trunk road standard on these roads is in the order of £250,000 per year. The anticipated annual cost of maintaining these roads to Aberdeen City Priority 1 standard is estimated to be in the order of £155,000-£200,000. These estimates exclude footway treatments.

A number of councils are working with residents to encourage self-help during time of heavy snow, this can include the provision of equipment, training, providing personal protective equipment and technical backup. The cost of this equipment is relatively inexpensive, less than £1000 per group, it may therefore be appropriate to progress this in Aberdeen if there is a public demand.

#### n) Consultation

The following organisations are being 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**

4.1 Expenditure is expected to be with the Council's approved Revenue budgets for Winter Maintenance and Emergencies 2018-2019 of £1.727M. It should be noted that the expenditure for the previous three winters has been £2.333M in 2017-18, £1.610 in 2016-17, £1.752M in 2015-2016. Following a Belwin formula submission some of the overspend in year 17-18 was repaid by the Scottish Government.

The allocated budget is £171K below the average expenditure realised over the last 3 years. It would therefore be prudent to authorise for continued expenditure beyond the budget should the weather be worse than anticipated, subject to agreement from the City Growth and Resources Committee and/or Finance.

The increased salting rates in marginal conditions are expected to result in additional salt purchase costs.

## 5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 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.

5.2 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>Risk Level</b>	<b>Mitigation/Controls</b>
The increased use of grit/sand is likely to affect drainage systems and leave footways and open areas looking untidy.	Medium	Provision made for removal of grit after each cold period by the appropriate service.
The development of new codes of practice superseding the current winter policies.	Medium	Monitor and consult on industry developments and adapt the Winter Service Plan to meet developing standards and practices.
Variable numbers of Community Salt Bags depending on the prevailing weather.	Medium	Use Corporate Communications to continue to highlight the importance of the community salt but to set a cutoff date after which provision cannot be guaranteed.

<b>Risk Reputational and Financial</b>	<b>Risk Level</b>	<b>Mitigation/Controls</b>
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The increased use of salt in marginal conditions is likely to cause pressure on the budget.	Medium	Make financial provision for changes or invest in equipment that would allow the salt spread rates to be reduced.
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.	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	High	Make provision for additional finance to be available subject to Finance team approval.

## 7. OUTCOMES

<b>Local Outcome Improvement Plan Themes</b>	
	<b>Impact of Report</b>
<b>Prosperous Economy</b>	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.
<b>Prosperous People</b>	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.
<b>Prosperous Place</b>	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.
<b>Enabling Technology</b>	The Council is committed to examining technological and innovative methods to solve winter maintenance problems and to communicate with the public regarding ongoing treatments.

<b>Design Principles of Target Operating Model</b>	
	<b>Impact of Report</b>
<b>Customer Service Design</b>	The proposed enhancements to the winter service outlined in section 3.0 are beneficial to the customer engagement and needs.



<b>Organisational Design</b>	The use of self-help principal is a move away from being a provider to the customer to facilitating engagement with the customer.
<b>Governance</b>	This report seeks to comply with the Governance Principles set out in the Target Operating Model.
<b>Workforce</b>	This report seeks to comply with the Workforce Principles set out in the Target Operating Model.
<b>Process Design</b>	This report seeks to adopt appropriate national standards to help comply with the Processes Principles set out in the Target Operating Model.
<b>Technology</b>	The proposed future developments seek to use technology to embrace new ways of undertaking the works and drive savings and additionally keeping the customer informed.
<b>Partnerships and Alliances</b>	The winter service seeks to use joint working across and outwith the organisation to deliver the service.

## 8. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

<b>Assessment</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
<b>Equality &amp; Human Rights Impact Assessment</b>	Full EHRIA included.
<b>Privacy Impact Assessment</b>	Not Required.
<b>Duty of Due Regard / Fairer Scotland Duty</b>	Not applicable.

## 9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

<http://councilcommittees.acc.gov.uk/documents/g6185/Decisions%2029th-May-2018%2014.00%20Operational%20Delivery%20Committee.pdf?T=2>

## 10. APPENDICES

Roads Winter Service Plan 2018-19  
Priority Footways and Essentials Services  
EHRIA

## 11. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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