

## CABINET

18 September 2018

### WINTER SERVICE REVIEW

#### Report of the Strategic Director for Places

Strategic Aim:	All	
Key Decision: Yes	Forward Plan Reference: FP/300418	
Exempt Information	No	
Cabinet Member(s) Responsible:	Mrs L Stephenson, Portfolio Holder for Culture & Leisure, Highways & Transportation	
Contact Officer(s):	Neil Tomlinson, Senior Highways Manager	01572 758342 ntomlinson@rutland.gov.uk
Ward Councillors	All	

#### DECISION RECOMMENDATIONS

That Cabinet:

1. Approves the Winter Service Policy in Appendix 1.
2. Approves the treatment routes as detailed in Appendix 2, for inclusion in the Winter Service Operational Plan.
3. Approves that Parishes will be charged for all grit bin re-fills from the 2019/20 winter season.
4. Approves that grit bins not having received any use prior to the start of the 2021/22 will be removed.

## **1 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 To approve the Winter Service Policy in Appendix 1.

## **2 BACKGROUND AND MAIN CONSIDERATIONS**

- 2.1 The statutory basis for Winter Service in England and Wales is addressed through Section 41 (1A) of the Highways Act on the 31st October 2003, by Section 111 of the Railways and Safety Transport Act 2003.
- 2.2 The Railways and Transport Safety Act 2003 extends the requirements of Section 41 of the Highways Act 1980 to place a specific duty on a Highway Authority to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that safe passage along a highway is not endangered by snow or ice. By using the words 'reasonably practicable' the legislation recognises that it is not possible to treat the entire network or to keep the treated parts of the network clear of snow and ice at all times.
- 2.3 The Council's aim is to respond effectively to any adverse, severe weather conditions, to ensure key corridors of the highway network are operating satisfactorily to support residents, businesses and other service providers.
- 2.4 The Council has operated a Winter Service Operational Plan for over ten years, detailing how the Winter Service will be delivered.
- 2.5 The replacement of Well Maintained Highways: A Code Practise, with Well-Managed Highway Infrastructure: A Code of Practice Published, by the UK Roads Liaison Group October 2016, required the implementation of a Winter Service Policy, and a review of the existing Operational Plan. The Highways Winter Service Policy (Appendix 1) aims to comply with legislation by the prioritised treatment of key areas of its highway network and thus ensure the Council acts in a reasonably practicable manner at all times within available resources.
- 2.6 The service will be implemented in accordance with the Policy. The specific delivery is detailed in the Winter Service Operational Plan (see Annex F of the Policy).

## **3 PRECAUTIONARY SALTING ROUTES**

- 3.1 Where the words 'reasonably practicable' are used in legislation it is usual to carry out risk assessment to ensure that the duty has been carried out in a reasonable and proportionate way. The current routes will be re-assessed in line with the Policy to provide a fully prioritised and transparent list of roads to be treated. The Policy outlines the criteria used for risk assessing each route, including the scoring weighting attributed to each risk.
- 3.2 The defined routes will be included within the Winter Service Operational Plan, and requests for further route revisions will be assessed against these criteria by the Portfolio Holder for Highways and the Senior Highways Manager.
- 3.3 The routes for approval, as currently assessed, are detailed in Appendix 2 of this report, and will thereafter be included within the Winter Service Operational Plan.
- 3.4 Cabinet are asked to review and consider the thresholds for each level of treatment:

Each route will be given a score based on the criteria in Appendix A of the Policy, and routes will be determined on the following basis:

Scoring Criteria	Treatment
Score > xxx (to be updated when review complete)	Precautionary Route – This is the advanced application of salt applied to a road to prevent ice forming and snow settling. These routes should be completed within 4 hours of the instructed start time.
Score <xxx >yyy (to be updated when review complete)	Secondary Route - These may be treated before a forecast of severe weather, or in the event of prolonged cold weather (greater than 48hours with forecast temperatures below 0.5 degrees Celsius), once the primary routes have been treated.
Access to school, medical facility or emergency services, and NOT on either of the above	Snow Route - When heavy snow is predicted (greater than 10mm expected to settle), these routes will be gritted alongside the precautionary routes.

If sections of a route fall below the required scoring level for a precautionary, or a secondary route, they may still be included to ensure route continuity.

The approved treatment routes will be identified in the Winter Service Operational Plan (Appendix F), and published on the Council’s website.

#### 4 GRIT BINS

- 4.1 The number of bins has increased from 160 in 2011 to almost 240 in 2018, costing around £8k to fill at the start of the season. The salt is intended for use on the highway only.
- 4.2 Over 120 salt bins were re-filled last winter at a cost of over £4k, (£17.24/bin labour plus £17.36/bin salt).
- 4.3 To avoid further unnecessary potential proliferation of bins and the associated increase in the Council’s costs, it is proposed that:

- All new grit bins requests will undergo an assessment, as detailed in the Policy (Appendix 1; Annex B)
- For the 2018/19 winter season, salt bins will be filled once for free at the start of the winter season, and a further one free re-fill, before charging the Parishes for additional re-fills. Currently, Parishes are offered two additional re-fills after the initial fill in September.
- From the 2019/20 season, salt bins will only be filled at the start of the season in September. All subsequent re-fills will be charged to the Town or Parish Council/Meeting.
- Re-fills will be charged in accordance with approved fees and charges cost for each subsequent refill of each bin (currently £56/re-fill). This figure of £50/refill was agreed by Cabinet (report 163/2011) and has risen subject to inflation.

4.4 Salt levels will be recorded when the bins are re-stocked in September 2018 and will be re-checked at each pre-season re-fill, to assess which bins are actually being used.

4.5 Any grit bins that have not had salt usage recorded between now and the start of the 2021/22 season will be removed.

## **5 WINTER SNOW WARDEN SCHEME**

5.1 The Council will seek to expand the existing scheme that is currently used by very few Parish Councils. Parish and Town Councils/Meetings may nominate volunteer Snow Wardens prior to the winter season to assist with the clearance of snow from areas within their Parish during times of extreme weather.

5.2 Snow Wardens will typically be expected to clear snow and ice from untreated areas within their Parish, during periods of extreme severe weather.

5.3 Parishes will be contacted prior to the winter season to determine their interest in participation, and a specific Terms of Reference document created for the scheme.

5.4 A specific training day for Parish Clerks and other stakeholders, such as schools and colleges will be scheduled for late October, to outline the responsibilities of snow wardens, and preparedness for the winter season.

5.5 No payments will be made for snow warden duties.

5.6 Details of the Snow Warden Scheme can be found in Section 7 of the Policy (Appendix 1; Annex C).

## **6 CONSULTATION**

6.1 Ongoing consultation and dialogue is carried out with Parish Councils throughout the winter period, and requests for additional routes collated and will be assessed annually against the approved policy.

6.2 A specific winter training and preparedness event will be held for all Parish Councils in October 2018.

## **7 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 7.1 The Council has a statutory obligation under Section 41 of The Highways Act 1980 to maintain the highway as described in paragraph 2.1 above, accordingly it must continue to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that safe passage along a highway is not endangered by snow or ice.
- 7.2 The number of gritting routes could be reduced, but there have been no requests to undertake this action.

## **8 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 The winter maintenance budget for 2018/19 is currently £272,900.
- 8.2 Spend is determined by need, dependant on weather conditions. As such, a reserve with a maximum of £100k was set up to accrue underspend during less severe years. The reserve can be accessed during severe weather years, when the allocated budget may be exceeded. The reserve balance currently stands at £100k.
- 8.3 The cost for the provision of a legally compliant, out-of-hours standby service and equipment to deliver the service is approximately £95k
- 8.4 The cost of salt is determined through a framework contract with ESPO (Eastern Shires Purchasing Organisation). Approximately 2500tons of salt will be required to re-fill the salt barn at a cost of approximately £90k.
- 8.5 RCC have a road sensor and weather station situated on the A47 near Uppingham. The cost of calibration, maintenance, data transfer to the forecaster, and thermal mapping is £9k per year. Contract procedure rules state that three prices should be obtained. However, this is not currently possible as there is only one supplier of these specialist services in the UK.

## **9 LEGAL AND GOVERNANCE CONSIDERATIONS**

- 9.1 It is necessary for the Council to undertake winter maintenance services in order to comply with its' legal duty as set out in paragraphs 2.1 and 6.1 above.

## **10 DATA PROTECTION IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1 A Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIA) has not been completed for the following reasons, because no personal data is being processed.

## **11 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 11.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has not been completed as there is no moderate or significant changes to the existing Winter Service Operational Plan

## **12 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

- 12.1 The treatment of the selected areas of the highway network ensures safe passage for residents and highway users during periods of winter weather. Failure to undertake these measures could result in an increase in accidents attributable to snow and ice.

### **13 HEALTH AND WELLBEING IMPLICATIONS**

- 13.1 If the highway network was to not be treated in predicted snow and ice conditions, it may result in access to vulnerable users being compromised. It may also have an impact on educational facilities, with staff and pupils being unable to reach their destinations.

### **14 CONCLUSION AND SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 14.1 The winter service operational plan will ensure the continued safe passage of vehicular and pedestrian highway users during periods of snow and ice.
- 14.2 The Winter Service Policy will ensure that Council has met the obligation to review the winter service in line with current codes of practice, and implement them prior to October 2018, therefore, it is recommended that the Winter Service Policy be approved.

### **15 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 15.1 Cabinet Report 163/2011 Winter Service Operational Plan Review

### **16 APPENDICES**

- 16.1 Appendix 1 – Winter Service Policy
- 16.2 Appendix 2 – Winter Treatment Routes

A Large Print or Braille Version of this Report is available upon request – Contact 01572 722577.