
Report to Enterprise & Environment Committee

Date of Meeting: 7th November 2013

Subject: Winter Service Roads & Footways

Report by: Mac West, Roads & Transportation Manager

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1. Each year a review of the previous winter service provision is undertaken to take account of conditions experienced and address any issues identified. Such a review has been undertaken and minor revisions have been made to the Policy & Procedures Document.
- 1.2. Due to a number of factors, including external pressures, the length of roads & footways treated as a priority has increased over the years. It is considered appropriate to carry out an in-depth review of the policy including benchmarking levels of service with other authorities, particularly given current fiscal pressures.
- 1.3. It is planned to carry out the review over the coming winter and a report will be brought to Council early next summer so that any revised policy can be implemented for the winter of 2014/15.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1. Council is recommended to approve the Winter Service Policy & Procedures for 2013/14 and to note the proposal to pursue an in-depth review.

3.0 Considerations

- 3.1. Transport links are fundamental to the economic and social activity of Clackmannanshire and it follows that the Council considers it important that they are available for use. In addition Councils have a statutory duty 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 public roads".
- 3.2. It is not possible to keep all roads and footways free of snow and ice at all times within the resources available and so it is necessary to prioritise routes for treatment. These priorities are clearly defined in the Winter Service Policy & Procedures 2013/14 which has been reviewed & updated in light of the

events of last winter. A copy is attached as Appendix A. Maps of current priority routes are available on the Council's website.

<http://www.clacksweb.org.uk/mapping/wintermaintenance.html>

- 3.3. Winter 2012/13 would best be described as an average winter in terms of severity with many marginal nights. The cold weather dragged on into April and the usage of approximately 2,365 tonnes of salt emphasised that there were a considerable number of treatments and pre-treatments. This left us with over 1500 tonnes of salt in stock at the end of the winter.
- 3.4. The length of the footpath network being treated created difficulties in manning on occasions due to a combination of drivers hours regulations and sickness absence. An external contractor used to cover one of the footway routes failed to appear on two occasions. Their services have been dispensed with.
- 3.5. It was agreed that we should reduce our salt stockholding to 3,000 tonnes as this level of usage has only been exceeded once in the extremely severe winter of 2010/11. Nevertheless we have in place a contract which ensures that we will be resupplied with salt should salt stock levels drop below 1,000 tonnes.
- 3.6. An additional weather condition monitoring station has been installed at Meadowhill which will give greater coverage of road and atmospheric conditions meaning that treatments can be targeted with more confidence.
- 3.7. Community involvement in winter service provision on roads and footways which were of low priority, as defined by the approved policy, was trialled in the Alloa Park Drive area. Resident volunteers were provided with 2.5 tonnes of salt, 5 salt bins and a few plastic shovels and, in addition, were given training in the correct method of spreading salt. This emphasised how minimal salt usage could ensure that public footways and cul-de-sacs were kept free of snow and ice. Not all of the supplied salt was used and this shows that the message of less salt usage was taken on board. The volunteers were advised daily of planned Council action on priority routes and based their own action on this. This area which has generated significant levels of complaint in the past regarding the level of winter service provided by the Council had no complaints logged against it over the winter. It is planned to continue this experiment and consideration will be given to extending it to other areas where there is an organised and committed residents group who wish to participate.
- 3.8. The Winter Service budget has historically been based on the average annual expenditure over the previous 5 winters. However exceptionally severe weather, outwith what could reasonably have been predicted, can be encountered resulting in significant additional expenditure. In these circumstances it is normal procedure for the Council's corporate emergency planning response to be deployed with overspends due to the severe weather funded from Council reserves.

4.0 Sustainability Implications

- 4.1. The use of excessive quantities of rock salt for winter treatment can cause environmental damage. Winter maintenance operatives are trained in the appropriate rate of spread of rock salt for the prevailing conditions which will ensure that any environmental damage is minimised.
- 4.2. The winter service policy provides a framework to assist people in Clackmannanshire to go about their daily business during winter, while encouraging them to help themselves and assist others.

5.0 Resource Implications

5.1. Financial Details

The amended policy & procedures and level of service provision for an average winter can be accommodated within the allocated budget.

The full financial implications of the recommendations are set out in the report. This includes a reference to full life cycle costs where appropriate.

Yes ✓

Finance have been consulted and have agreed the financial implications as set out in the report.

Yes ✓

5.2. Staffing

There are concerns that, in particularly severe weather conditions, drivers' hours regulations could potentially compromise the desired level of service provision. Drivers' hours will be monitored to ensure any restriction in service is limited.

6.0 Exempt Reports

- 6.1. Is this report exempt? Yes No ✓

7.0 Declarations

The recommendations contained within this report support or implement our Corporate Priorities and Council Policies.

- (1) **Our Priorities** (Please double click on the check box)

- The area has a positive image and attracts people and businesses
- Our communities are more cohesive and inclusive
- People are better skilled, trained and ready for learning and employment
- Our communities are safer
- Vulnerable people and families are supported
- Substance misuse and its effects are reduced
- Health is improving and health inequalities are reducing

- The environment is protected and enhanced for all
- The Council is effective, efficient and recognised for excellence

(2) **Council Policies** (Please detail)

Winter Service Policy & Procedures 2013/14

8.0 Equalities Impact

8.1 Have you undertaken the required equalities impact assessment to ensure that no groups are adversely affected by the recommendations?

Yes No

9.0 Legality

9.1 It has been confirmed that in adopting the recommendations contained in this report, the Council is acting within its legal powers. Yes

10.0 Appendices

10.1 Appendix A - Winter Service Policy & Procedures Document 2013/14.

11.0 Background Papers

11.1 Have you used other documents to compile your report? (All documents must be kept available by the author for public inspection for four years from the date of meeting at which the report is considered)

Yes (please list the documents below) No

Author(s)

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Approved by

NAME	DESIGNATION	SIGNATURE
Garry Dallas	Director of Services to Communities	Signed: Garry Dallas



SERVICES TO COMMUNITIES

ROADS AND TRANSPORTATION



WINTER SERVICE FOR ROADS & FOOTWAYS

POLICY AND PROCEDURES DOCUMENT

2013/2014

WINTER SERVICE - POLICY & PROCEDURES DOCUMENT

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Procedures

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Winter Service is important in terms of both the Local and National economy and road safety. It is carried out to ensure, as far as possible, the safe movement of all road users, both vehicular and pedestrian, while minimising the effects on the environment. It is economically significant because of the delays that bad weather can cause.
- 1.2 The Council has a statutory duty under the Roads Scotland Act 1984 to take such steps as it considers reasonable to prevent snow and ice endangering the safe passage of vehicular and pedestrian traffic over public roads including footways.

This does not mean that all roads and footways have to be treated as soon as ice formations or snow accumulations exist. To do so would be impossible and outwith the limit of the resources available and the Courts have recognised that it would not be reasonably practical to do so.

Nevertheless, in order to deal efficiently and effectively with Winter Service, operations need to be planned in a systematic manner and it is therefore essential that a policy with clearly defined priorities is established.

- 1.3 The Council's Services to Communities is responsible for providing Winter Service on adopted roads and footways throughout Clackmannanshire.

Winter Service essentially comprises the following types of treatment:

- * Precautionary salt treatment to prevent ice forming
- * Treatment of ice already formed
- * Removal of snow
- * Treatment of hard packed snow and ice

These treatments are carried out in accordance with the UK Roads Board's Code of Practice, "Well-maintained Highways - Code of Practice for Highway Maintenance Management".

- 1.4 It is accepted that there are three distinct periods for Winter Service:

- * High - December, January, February - during which severe conditions are normally expected.
- * Medium - November, March - during which severe conditions may occur.
- * Low - October, April - when severe conditions are not expected but occasionally occur.

The principal period covered will extend from 1500 hours on Friday 25th October, 2013 to 0800 hours on the morning of Friday 11th April, 2014 but cover will also be available at short notice should weather conditions dictate outwith this period.

The principal period for footways will extend from Saturday 16th November, 2013 to Friday 7th March, 2014.

2.0 PRIORITIES & TREATMENTS

2.1 CARRIAGEWAYS

The Winter Service of roads will be based on treating the various priorities of road as defined below:

- (a) Priority C1: Roads comprising the strategic road network including all major bus service routes, main urban traffic routes, principal routes to all schools and routes to emergency service establishments.

Treatment: These routes will receive the following treatment when assessed as necessary:

- * Precautionary salt treatment between 0530 hours and midnight.
- * The treatment of ice formations between 0530 hours and midnight.
- * The clearance of snow accumulations 24 hours per day.

NB The time allotted for the treatment of ice conditions on Priority C1 routes is 2½ hours and the commencement time of 0530 hours is designed to ensure treatment is complete by 0800 hours. Treatment of snow conditions will take longer particularly if ploughing is required.

- (b) Priority C2: These are the major secondary routes which include urban spine roads into housing and industrial areas and certain rural roads and identified routes including major cul-de-sacs in housing and industrial areas and certain roads opening up less populated rural areas.

Treatment: These routes will not receive precautionary salting and any treatment of ice and snow will only be carried out when a specific instruction to do so is given by management who should be satisfied that the following criteria are met:

- i) The general weather outlook established from forecasts, other meteorological information, ice sensor trends etc. is that the prevailing ice or snow conditions are likely to continue beyond midday.
- ii) That their treatment would not be detrimental to the level of service required on Priority C1 routes.

- (c) Priority C3: The remainder of the road network but divided into:

- * C3A: Sections of road with identified difficulties.
- C3B: Others.

Treatment: These routes will only be treated in very exceptional weather conditions and will require authorisation of the Roads and Transportation Manager, or his nominated representative, who will specify C3A, C3B or both.

2.2 FOOTWAYS

The Winter Service of footways will be based on treating the various categories of footway as defined below:

- a) Priority F1 (relates to both snow and ice treatment)

The footways to be treated are:

- i) Those immediately outside shops in urban, community or village shopping centres where a minimum of three essential premises such as food shops, Post Offices etc. exist.
- ii) A connecting footway from the above shopping areas to relatively nearby and identified public buildings.
- iii) Adopted footways in sheltered housing or residential complexes for the elderly.
- iv) One footway along main pedestrian routes which best serves pedestrian traffic and/or serves the most premises.
- v) Those providing a link to old people's residential establishments or sheltered housing complexes from the nearest treated footway.
- vi) Standing areas at bus stops
- vii) Main footways leading to main access gates to schools.

Treatment: These will be salted each morning that snow or ice formations exist unless information indicates that a thaw will take place before 0800 hours. Clearance will, as far as possible, be by mechanical means. Snow at other times of the working day will be cleared before 0830 hours the following morning.

b) Priority F2: Relates to ice or snow conditions and comprises the remaining footway network which has identified difficulties

(c) Priority F3: The remainder of the footway network.

Treatment: - These will only be treated in very exceptional weather conditions.

Treatment will require authorisation from the Roads and Transportation Manager or his nominated representative who will specify F2, F3 or both.

Note: Link footpaths will not be treated where alternative, albeit longer treated footway routes are available. Footways will only be treated six days a week (Monday to Saturday), except in the run up to Christmas where identified town centre footways will be treated as required.

2.3 **SALT BINS**

Salt bins will be provided at locations of identified difficulty e.g. steep gradients, sharp bends, awkward cul-de-sacs. Salt heaps may be placed in rural areas but reasonable steps will be taken to replace these with bins to minimise the adverse effects of salt. Bins will be refilled during or following spells of adverse weather as soon as resources permit. We currently supply and service over 300 salt bins which is the limit we can effectively manage.

3.0 **MANAGEMENT PROCEDURES**

3.1 **INTRODUCTION:**

Effective Winter Service depends on accurate up to date weather information. To ensure that the necessary information is available at all times of the day and night it has been agreed to operate a 24 hour (out of hours) winter weather monitoring service jointly with Stirling and Falkirk Councils manned by Duty Officers on a rota system. The services to be provided under this agreement include:-

- a) Monitoring of weather sensor data from Icelert outstations.
- b) Monitoring of weather radar.
- c) Access to meteorological consultancy.
- d) Maintenance of Icelert system.

3.2 **ASSESSMENT OF ACTION REQUIRED**

Weather forecast information specific to Clackmannanshire will be acquired on a daily basis for the winter period. This information will include a detailed 24 hour forecast and a 2 to 5 day outlook. In addition amendments and updates will be provided as necessary and there will be access to a 24 hour meteorological consultancy service.

The content of the weather forecasts supplemented by Meteorological / Icelert based information will be assessed by senior management during weekdays and a decision made on what the course of action should be for the following evening/morning.

Outwith normal working hours the Duty Officer will gather and assess sensor data, weather forecasts and other relevant information and prepare a recommended course of action which he will communicate to the Duty Manager who will determine the course of action to be followed.

The preferred course of action will be passed to the Duty Supervisor for action as necessary. The preferred action will be based on the degree of certainty of the weather predictions and may include:

- a) evening pre-salt at a specific time
- b) evening pre-salt "on hold" with subsequent action dependent on an evaluation of ice sensor data
- c) "stand to" at 0530 hours for carriageways or at 0630 hours for footways
- d) Supervisor route check
- e) no planned action
- f) a combination of the above

3.3 **Monitoring and Supervision**

During normal working hours (Monday-Friday 0900-1700) monitoring will be carried out locally by Clackmannanshire staff.

Out of hours (Friday 1700 hours to Monday 0900 hours and weekdays 1700 hours to 0900 hours) a Duty Officer will be rostered from a joint pool of staff to monitor the weather conditions in all three Council areas (Clackmannanshire, Falkirk and Stirling) and initiate any action required.

3.4 Duties and Responsibilities

(a) Service Manager (Roads & Transportation)

The Service Manager is authorised to make arrangements outwith the policy and levels of service should exceptional circumstances such as heavy snow or a medical emergency demand it.

(b) Duty Manager

The Duty Manager on duty shall be responsible for assessing all relevant information and deciding, in consultation with the Duty Officer, what action, if any, is required in response to the forecast conditions.

(c) Duty Officer

- i) Will assume responsibility for monitoring ice detection equipment and weather trends, consulting with the forecast supplier as necessary.
- ii) Will have responsibility for liaison with Central Scotland Police and adjoining authorities.
- iii) Will ensure that he is fully aware of the weather forecasts for the area and the planned action levels. He will initiate any action required and agree any operational requirements including salt spread rates with the Stand-by Duty Supervisor.
- iv) Having initiated action through the Duty Supervisors and ensured that the degree of mobilisation is commensurate with prevailing conditions the Duty Officer will have no direct operational responsibilities i.e. the Duty Supervisor will direct and control operations in the field. The Duty Officer will liaise with Supervisors to ensure he is aware of the level of activity ongoing/required.
- v) In the event of a "stand to" being arranged the Duty Officer will ensure that up to date road status information is available prior to 0530 hours for discussion with Duty Supervisors on operational requirements.
- vi) The Duty Officer will receive weather information during weekend and holiday periods and after agreed consultation communicate the course of action to be adopted.
- vii) The Duty Officer will maintain a detailed log of all reports received by radio or telephone and of any action or non-action taken.
- viii) Each weekday the Duty Officer will prepare a brief report on overnight or weekend activities which should be available to the Duty Manager before 0900 hours.
- ix) Duty Officer will ensure that the Duty Supervisor has provided details of all action/inactions to allow this information to be included in the duty log.

d) Duty Supervisor

Duty Supervisors are drawn from Roads staff and one Supervisor will be on standby in Clackmannanshire at all times outwith normal hours.

- i) All Duty Supervisors must be fully aware of the road and footway priority routes and before each period of duty will be expected to have made themselves aware of the weather forecast, the proposed treatment/action and the operational status,

serviceability and location of all gritting equipment together with details of standby manual operatives and other standby staff.

- ii) If an operational requirement is advised by the Duty Officer the Supervisor will assume full operational control of the subsequent action. In a marginal situation the Supervisor may be required to inspect, assess and report and must at all times, maintain contact with the Duty Officer to keep them informed of the current situation.
- iii) In a pre-grit or call out situation the Duty Supervisor will mobilise resources needed to deal with the immediate problem and be responsible for the control of the operation.
- iv) In a stand-to situation the Duty Supervisor will contact the Duty Officer before 0530 hours to discuss weather and road conditions including current information from ice sensors and any weather forecast updates. The Supervisor will issue instructions to gritter drivers and/or footway teams as to whether or not a route check will be needed and in the event of no action being needed may detail other duties.
- v) The Supervisor will instruct the salt spread rate required for the prevailing conditions and will monitor compliance through the use of the "Estimated Rate of Spread of Rock Salt Chart."
- vi) The Duty Supervisor will maintain a 24 hour Shift Report for submission to Roads Contracts management before 0900 hours, recording the following:
 - * Duty Supervisor on/off times
 - * Weather, road and footway conditions
 - * Routes treated
 - * Gritter details, call out/route completed/off-duty times
 - * Salt quantity used and spread rate achieved on each route
 - * Details of interruptions to gritting operations(e.g. breakdowns) and action taken to overcome them.
- vii) Duty Supervisors must ensure that the Duty Officer is made fully aware before 0900 hours of any treatments carried out to allow the report on overnight activities to be compiled accurately and the duty log updated.