

ANGUS COUNCIL

COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

26 MAY 2015

WINTER MAINTENANCE 2014/15 ACTIVITY REVIEW

1. REVIEW

- 1.1 This report outlines the service delivery, weather severity and outturn expenditure on winter road maintenance for 2014/15.
- 1.2 The full standby period for winter treatment was established as 23 October 2014 to 26 March 2015 with three week lead in and out periods with reduced resources available on standby. Due to a cold snap the full winter cover was extended over the weekend of 27 to 30 March 2015.
- 1.3 Although deemed by many as a mild but somewhat wet winter, the carriageway saw temperatures dip to minus figures (centigrade) overnight on numerous occasions requiring treatment with day temperatures rising above zero. Many of our customers are unaware of our treatment activities during such events where freezing conditions require attention. Routes frequently required retreatment with rain washing off the salt after treatment. Disruption due to snow was limited to a small number of days across the county, with additional impact in the glens, but still less disruption than that experienced to the West of Scotland.
- 1.4 The relevant weather statistics are provided in **Appendix 1** of this report, and the treatment figures are provided in **Appendix 2**. Analysis to compare the 2014/15 winter season against the last 15 years has indicated that 2014/15 had:
- equal fifth highest number of priority carriageway routes treated in the morning;
 - the fifth highest number of priority carriageway routes treated in the evening period; and
 - equal fourth highest number of priority footway treatments.
 - equal third lowest number of days with temperatures below zero
 - the fourth lowest number of days with fresh lying snow in.
- 1.5 The coldest temperature during the winter on the road network was recorded on 29 December 2014 at Ruthven crossroads at minus 7.9°C.
- 1.6 Approximately 16,800 tonnes of salt was used during the winter of 2014/15 excluding leachate. The higher than average usage was as a result of wash off with rain between periods of freezing temperatures. Salt stockpiling of just over 19,000 tonnes had been established for the winter, similar to the year before with another 4,000T brought in as stocks diminished.
- 1.7 Salt is procured by Tayside Contracts under tender for Dundee City Council, Perth and Kinross Council and Angus Council gaining the benefits of economies of scale. Salt was procured through our normal suppliers and with all UK road authorities having increased their resilience since 2010/11, salt orders were timeously received. Over the summer supplies will be restocked to 19,000 tonnes (13,000 tonnes of which will be marine salt and 6,000 tonnes rock salt held in the store in Forfar) for the start of winter 2015/16.
- 1.8 With regard to weather forecasting and data management and ice station maintenance this will likely continue through the existing contract tender with Dundee City, Fife and Perth and Kinross, Aberdeenshire, Aberdeen City and Moray Councils let by the Tayside Procurement Consortium due to be reviewed by the Group shortly. This is an example of shared services.
- 1.9 The A90 trunk road in Angus which is maintained by BEAR Scotland Ltd on behalf of Transport Scotland experienced generally the same weather conditions as the local roads but it was not necessary for the council to assist with winter maintenance on the trunk road at any time.

2. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 2.1 The net budget for winter maintenance was set for 2014/15 at £2,395,000 with an additional £38,000 for the installation of pre wetting equipment. Delays with servicing arrangements particularly the electricity supply resulted in the pre wetting equipment. The Standing Charges of £1,122,000 included plant, standby arrangements, depot costs, (fixed costs) leaving a balance of £1,273,000 (53% of the budget) available for the

day-to-day operational costs including salting/snow clearing activities and weather forecast costs, (variable costs).

- 2.2 The unaudited out turn expenditure figures for the 2014/15 winter service indicate a total cost of £2,928,000. When compared with the 2014/15 revenue budget allocation for winter maintenance of £2,433,000, an overspend of £495,000 has resulted. The completion of the 2014/15 annual accounts process is currently ongoing. Any alteration to this position will be reported at a later date to the council as part of the finalisation of the 2014/15 annual accounts process.
- 2.3 The overspend has been reported through revenue budget monitoring reports to Committee and can be contained in the overall Communities revenue budget for 2104/15.
- 2.4 The budget overspend reflects the differential in the budget provision compared to the annually increasing costs of winter maintenance service delivery and the somewhat hypothetical cost of an 'average' winter. The budget setting process for 2015/16 recognised in part the shortfall in the winter maintenance budget for an average winter and increased funding to £2,663,000.

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List of Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Winter maintenance expenditure 2014/15 review

Appendix 2 – Operational activity statistics