

ANGUS COUNCIL

COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE – 13 AUGUST 2019

WINTER SERVICE POLICY AND PROVISION FOR 2019/20

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF INFRASTRUCTURE

ABSTRACT

This report sets out the proposed Winter Service Policy and details the proposed service provision for preventative treatment and snow clearing during the winter period 2019/20, together with contingency arrangements to cater for extreme conditions prevailing, in conjunction with the operational issues detailed in the Operational Details. This is as recommended by “Well Managed Highway Infrastructure – A Code of Practice”.

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is asked to:

- (i) approve the policy for the Winter Service during the forthcoming winter as stated in **Appendix 1**;
- (ii) note the Operational Details in **Appendix 2**;
- (iii) note the arrangements proposed to meet the costs of the Winter Service during 2019/20 as set out in the report;
- (iv) delegate authority to the Service Leader - Roads and Transportation to temporarily increase the level of service as proposed in the report in extreme conditions;
- (v) delegate authority to the Service Leader - Roads and Transportation to deviate from the treatment decision matrix and introduce salt conservation techniques as proposed in the report if difficulties are experienced or anticipated in obtaining sufficient salt supplies; and
- (vi) agree that the Council continues with the previously adopted spread rates as set out in the report.

2. ALIGNMENT TO THE ANGUS LOCAL OUTCOMES IMPROVEMENT PLAN/CORPORATE PLAN

- 2.1 This report contributes to the following local outcomes contained within the Angus Local Outcomes Improvement Plan and Locality Plans:

ECONOMY

- An inclusive and sustainable economy
- A skilled and adaptable workforce
- Attractive employment opportunities

PLACE

- Safe, secure, vibrant and sustainable communities
- A reduced carbon footprint
- An enhanced, protected and enjoyed natural and built environment

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 Winter 2018/19

3.1.1 The weather conditions experienced together with the costs of providing the winter roads service in 2018/19 were set out in the Winter Maintenance 2018-19 Activity Review included as Schedule 1 in the Information Report - Report No 166/19 placed before the Communities Committee on 28 May 2019.

3.2 Statutory Duty

3.2.1 The Roads (Scotland) Act 1984 Section 34 places a duty on the Roads Authority to take such steps as it considers reasonable to prevent snow and ice endangering the safe passage of pedestrians and vehicles over public roads. It is therefore incumbent on councils to determine the measures which it deems appropriate for the winter service on its public roads taking into account its overall priorities and available resources.

3.2.2 Angus Council will endeavour to use the resources available for winter maintenance in the most efficient, effective and economic way to prevent, as far as is considered reasonably practicable, snow and ice endangering the safe passage of pedestrians and vehicles over public roads and to minimise the inaccessibility of public roads and temporary disruption of traffic directly attributable to adverse weather conditions.

3.2.3 The Council will therefore operate a system of winter maintenance which gives priority to the more important and heavily trafficked sections of the public road network (both carriageways and footways).

3.2.4 The Council will encourage the use of self-help measures, including community-led provision of some local winter services.

3.2.5 The Council will not provide winter maintenance on private roads or prospective public roads. The Roads (Scotland) Act 1984 makes no provision to carry out winter maintenance operations on unadopted roads or footways. As the Council has insufficient resources to service the unadopted network, no provision will be made for treating non Council owned roads and footpaths. The Council will, however, carry out winter maintenance on effectively adopted public roads (i.e. roads which have been constructed to the Council's standards and have been accepted for adoption at the end of the one year maintenance period but which have not yet been added to the List of Public Roads.

3.3 Winter Service Policy

3.3.1 The Winter Services Policy and Provision for 2018/2019 was reconfirmed at the Communities Committees of 14 August 2018 and 18 September (reference Report Nos. 229/18 and 298/18 respectively). The Policy has proved to be robust and effective, and was unchanged from previous years. A copy of the policy is provided in **Appendix 1**.

3.3.2 Winter policies and priorities should in accordance with the "Well Managed Highway Infrastructure – A Code of Practice" be formally approved and adopted by authorities taking account of strategic objectives and integrated transport thinking. In developing the policy consideration is given to resilience, public transport, road users, walking, cycling, etc., as well as resources.

3.3.3 The overall winter period, the core period, the level of resilience and treatment networks is set as far as reasonably possible with stakeholders in mind and based on risk as follows.

3.4 Prioritisation of treatment of roads and footways

3.4.1 These routes and definitions are detailed in the Operational Details 2019/20 – see **Appendix 2**. Generally in order to make best use of available resources, it is necessary to operate a priority system for the treatment of carriageways and footways. Strategic routes including important bus routes; important commuter routes; roads serving hospitals, ambulance stations, fire stations, shopping centres, most schools and major industrial centres are classed as "priority routes" (Category 1) and, accordingly, are given a higher level of service and priority over other "non-priority" (Category 3) roads. In the same way, footways are

classified as priority (Category 1) or non-priority (Category 3) taking into account the level of pedestrian usage.

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Carriageways - Priority(Cat 1)/Auxiliary (Cat2 – high land routes)/ Non priority (Cat3) Footways - Priority (Cat1) and Non Priority (Cat 2)

3.4.2 There are real benefits in dealing with snow as quickly as possible by making maximum use of available resources while conditions persist and it is recommended that authority is delegated to the Service Leader - Roads & Transportation to authorise the expenditure involved in providing a temporarily increased level of service (e.g. permitting weekend; public holiday and evening work on non-priority routes and mobilising additional physical resources).

3.4.3 Once the main transport routes are in an acceptable condition, noting that with further low temperatures or additional snow they may require re-treatment, then in heavy snow conditions (as experienced in the winter of 2010/11) resources will be used to address the other issues in order, as set out in the Operational Details.

3.5 Treatment Response Time

3.5.1 The target treatment response time is noted in the table below. The response time is defined as the time from leaving the depot and starting the route to completion. Where snow or extreme ice events occur the treatment time may be extended to deal with clearance or enable a reduced travelling speed.

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3 hours

3.6 Operating and core winter period

3.6.1 Details in Operational Details.

Angus
2 week lead in/out prior to core winter period. Core winter period starts 1 November; ends 31 March

3.7 Resilient Winter Service

3.7.1 Conservation measures in light of resource shortages that may occur recommend including use of 50/50 grit sand/salt mixes as may be appropriate or in some cases to broadcast grit sand only. Grit sand can help with traction. It also can be of benefit where salt is less effective where temperatures are below minus 5 degrees. Also may need to enable additional treatments beyond policy which may result in reduced work in future such as gritting prior to snow. Network treated may just be priority routes only or a reduced core network as detailed in the Operational Manual.

Angus
Grit/sand mixes have been used in the past on rural routes for traction

3.8 Salt holding at start of winter and minimum holding at any one time

3.8.1 Starting salt holding based on previous winter usage and minimum stock holding from advice from Code.

Angus
19,000T based on worst recent winter; 5,500T minimum holding amount used in 18 days 2009/10 without conservation measures.

3.9 Coordination and collaboration

3.9.1 This involves sharing to ensure resilience and saving to determine critical areas in conjunction with key public services.

Angus

Tayside Contracts procures salt and plant jointly through Scotland EXCEL; Tayside Procurement Consortium has procured weather and ice station maintenance. Also cross boundary gritting carried out. Ongoing consultation with Police, Passenger Transport, NHS, neighbouring authorities.

3.10 Winter Service Planning

3.10.1 Councils should consider the following:

- Communication – critical external and internal – as detailed in the Operational Details including self-help measures;
- Treatment Routes - prioritised and detailed in Operational Details; and.
- Contingency Planning – taking account of exceptional conditions.

Angus

Angus notes treatment route types and communication needed as well as the level of resilience as set in the Operational Details.

3.11 Winter Service Delivery

3.11.1 Councils should consider the following:

- Decisions and Management;
- Information Recording and Monitoring Resources;
- Training and Development;
- Route and Equipment;
- Plant and Vehicles;
- Precautionary treatments;
- Salt and De-icing Materials and management of; and
- Post Snow Inspection and Maintenance.

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Priority gritters have GPS fitted
Drivers hours considered by Tayside Contracts
Training and route familiarisation and keeping records carried out by Tayside Contracts
Council ensures training and competence of own winter staff and keeps records
No exercise carried out due to frequency of winter work
Preparation and maintenance of plant by Tayside Contracts including calibration start and mid-season.
Salt procured and stored by Tayside Contracts as above.
19,000 tonnes of salt held at start of season based on experience of maximum historical use; No stockpiles of salt as sufficient is held within region at start of winter and can be procured if needed combined resilience measures in place.
Rock and marine salt and Pre wet techniques used for carriageway.
Farmers/Agricultural contractors used for ploughing and gritting.
Farmers used for self-help ploughing.

3.12 Review

3.12.1 Annual review recommended.

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Post winter wash up meeting held with Tayside Contracts and financial report taken to Committee April/May detailing costs, salt stock usage and experience

3.13 Budgetary Provision and Expenditure Control

3.13.1 The provision of a winter service must take into account the vagaries of local winter weather which can vary widely from year to year in both the severity and the occurrence of wintry conditions (snow and ice). The unpredictable nature of the climate requires a pragmatic and reactive approach to the provision of resources. In practice, resources have to be available to allow a measured response to an "average winter" and contingency plans made to take account of particularly abnormal (mild or severe) winters.

- 3.13.2 The recommended approach is:
- (i) to differentiate between "fixed costs" and "variable costs";
 - (ii) to adjust the level of service to contain fixed costs and variable costs for an average winter to keep within budget; and
 - (iii) to have contingency arrangements in place to deal with a projected overspend or underspend as a result of "abnormal" weather. These contingency plans must take account of the possibility of prolonged severe weather very late in the financial year while still working within an overall cash limited budget.
- 3.13.3 Fixed costs include plant and equipment, storage and handling charges for salt, grit bins, fixed costs of standby payments, training and costs of office, depot and garaging facilities. The majority of these items form part of the standing charges submitted by Tayside Contracts.
- 3.13.4 Variable costs include running costs of plant, salt used, driver costs and payments to outside contractors for assistance with snow clearing. Variable costs will also include breakdown costs of plant during the winter period including the cost of a new clutch, etc.
- 3.13.5 Whilst the fixed costs are broadly independent of the number of treatment activities occasioned by the weather conditions and can be estimated with some confidence, the variable costs are dependent on the prevailing weather conditions and the subsequent responses.
- 3.13.6 In the event of a sustained period of severe winter weather and the likelihood of the budgetary provision being exceeded, this would be reported to the Director of Finance and the appropriate committee in accordance with the Council's Financial Regulations.
- 3.13.7 If the severity of the winter weather is such that other road works cannot be carried out, then it is sometimes possible to transfer the "under spend" from these works to Winter Service operations, thus assisting in containing the total expenditure within the overall revenue budget. This would however lead to a shortfall in revenue budgets remaining to undertake the road works that were delayed by winter weather. Additionally, severe winter weather can exacerbate the deterioration of the road network, which introduces an additional burden on the budgets for roads revenue works. However, if all the indications are that expenditure on Winter Service operations will be less than the budget allocation any "under spend" can be transferred to fund other roads revenue works.
- 3.13.8 A working group involving Tayside Contracts, Angus, Dundee and Perth and Kinross has recently been formed to review standing charges to maximise efficiencies and savings.

4 PROPOSALS (Operational Aspects)

- 4.1 The main proposals of the winter service are detailed in the Operational Details (Appendix 1). This includes details of the hours of service; prioritised routes; type of plant and equipment; and type and quantity of salt. These broadly harmonise across Tayside (Angus, Dundee and Perth and Kinross).
- 4.2 Further to last year's reductions in footway priority gritting some operational changes will take place to improve the efficiency of the service, namely the tractor used to treat the Forfar west area will attend the Friockheim priority route prior to Letham and the Brechin area tractor will attend Edzell. Minor additions to footway treatment in Arbroath will allow improved school accessibility.
- 4.3 The Council continues to seek to offer community groups existing and new, particularly in villages, the opportunity to volunteer to take action in gritting and snow clearance. The proposal offers community groups, or representatives, bags of salt or a local salt store, yellow vests and advice where communities wish to participate.
- 4.4 Following the directive from the Policy & Budget Strategy Group on 29 October 2018, inflationary cost pressures are to be funded from within existing budgets. Using a 2.5% inflationary figure the costs to be contained within the £2,613,000 budget are £65,000 per

annum or £195,000 over a three year period 2019/20 to 2021/22. The following changes to the provision of winter services were approved as part of the annual financial budgeting setting (reference Report No. 57/19):

Winter Maintenance:

- Reduce part of the route A19 (Inverarity, Kellas, Murroes, Greystone) to non-priority as no longer used by the school bus and remainder would be delivered by sub-contracting. Resulting in a savings of £0.049 million.
- Sub-contract K39 (Kirriemuir, Memus, Noranside, Glen Moy) this would produce a saving of £0.049 million.

This adjustments have been put in place for 2019/20.

- 4.5 Extreme weather conditions as previously experienced in the area can create salt shortages. Therefore it is recommended that the Service Leader, Roads and Transportation, be delegated the authority, to apply salt conservation measures if future weather conditions merit such measures. This entails varying the decision matrix in the policy to allow the use of 50/50 grit sand/salt mixes as may be appropriate or in some cases to broadcast grit sand only. Grit sand can help with traction. It also can be of benefit where salt is less effective where temperatures are below minus 5 degrees Celsius.
- 4.6 Angus has undertaken collaborative procurement previously, through Tayside Procurement Consortium, with Highland, Perth & Kinross, Dundee City, Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire and Moray Councils for winter weather forecasting and similarly with some of these authorities for weather bureau services and ice station maintenance. The Council continues to extend these arrangements to obtain best value.
- 4.7 Angus Council adopted previously recommended changes from the Society for Chief Officers in Transportation in Scotland (SCOTS) Winter Working Group to the national Code of Practice for Highway Maintenance and Management 'Well Maintained Highways' for winter maintenance as set out in Appendix H of that document. The National Winter Spreading Research Group have recently updated spread rates in the advice associated with the Code, and these are given in the updated Operational Details 2019/20. It is recommended that the Council continues with the previous adopted spread rates.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The approved budget for Winter Service third party payments for 2019/20 has been established at a sum of £2,613,000.
- 5.2 As in previous years, the intention is to provide the best level of service possible within the available budget. In practice, winter service operations are dictated by the prevailing weather and the responses required in accordance with the council's policy and agreed level of service, which is set by the Operational Details.
- 5.3 Some costs (related primarily to ensuring a state of "being prepared") are fixed and will be predictable once the relevant charges and rates have been agreed with Tayside Contracts.
- 5.4 Other costs are variable and are proportional to the treatment activity required in consequence of the severity of the winter and, as detailed above, a severe winter can greatly increase the expenditure required to provide the approved level of service.
- 5.5 With reference to Paragraph 4.4 above options for further changes to the provision of winter services will be considered as part of the budget setting process for winter 2020/21.
- 5.6 The Director of Infrastructure will monitor costs closely as winter 2019/20 progresses, and where there are indications that the projected expenditure is likely to be at variance with the budget, a report will be prepared in conjunction with the Director of Finance, with proposals for any necessary budget adjustments for the consideration of the appropriate committee.

6 CONSULTATION

The Angus Health and Social Care Integration Joint Board, Local Police Commander for Tayside Division and the Managing Director of Tayside Contracts have been consulted in the

preparation of this report.

NOTE: The background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) which were relied on to any material extent in preparing the above report are:

- Report No 166/19, Schedule 1 – Winter Service Policy and Provision for 2018/2019 – Communities Committee – 28 May 2019.
- Report No. 57/19 Provisional Revenue & Capital Budget 2019/20 – Background Report – Special Budget Meeting of Angus Council – 21 February 2019
- Report No. 229/18, Schedule 3 – Winter Service Policy and Provision for 2018/2019 – Communities Committee - 14 August 2018.
- Report No 298/18 - Winter Maintenance Footway Treatment - Special Meeting – 18 September 2018.

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List of Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Winter Service Policy 2019/20

Appendix 2 – Operational Details 2019/20

**ANGUS COUNCIL
WINTER SERVICE POLICY
2019/2020**

Angus Council will endeavour to use the resources available for winter maintenance in the most efficient, effective and economic way to prevent, as far as is considered reasonably practicable, snow and ice endangering the safe passage of pedestrians and vehicles over public roads and to minimise the inaccessibility of public roads and temporary disruption of traffic directly attributable to adverse weather conditions.

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