

Individual Decision

Title of Report:	Winter Service Plan 2004/2005		
Report to be considered by:	Councillor Sally Hannon	on:	30 September 2004
Forward Plan Ref:	ID0674		

Purpose of Report:

To report on the successful operation of the 2003/2004 Highway Winter service plan and to seek approval of the 2004/2005 Plan.

Recommended Action:

That the Executive Member for Highways and Transportation approves the Highway Winter Service Plan 2004/2005.

Reason for decision to be taken:

Government guidance for highway management recommends the provision of an operational plan for winter service.

List of other options considered:

None.

Key background documentation:

- Winter Service Plan 2004/2005
- Precautionary Salting route Plan 2004/2005

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Supporting Information

1. Review of Winter 2003/2004

1.1 A summary of the Winter Service for the season 2003/2004 is contained in Appendix 1.

2. Winter Service Plan 2004/2005

2.1 Following completion of works to upgrade the interchange at Junction 13 of the M4 by the Highways Agency, a 2.2km section of new road leading to the service area and local road network was constructed by the Highways Agency and will become the responsibility of West Berkshire Council to maintain. This section of road has therefore been added to the primary salting network.

2.2 A number of enquiries were received through the Council's Streetcare service during the last winter period concerning roads that were not regularly treated. Many of these locations failed to meet the Council's criteria for inclusion within the primary salting network. However, to ensure service consistency and continuity across neighbouring District boundaries as recommended in the Code of Practice for Maintenance Management, further consideration has been given to bus routes and the roads listed below should be considered **for inclusion on the primary salting network during the next financial year 2005/2006.**

- Bitterne Avenue, Tilehurst
- Goldcrest Way (section), Tilehurst
- Partridge Drive, Tilehurst
- Curlew Drive (section), Tilehurst
- Hildens Drive, Tilehurst
- Garston Crescent, Calcot
- New Hill, Purley on Thames
- Purley Village, Purley on Thames
- Purley Lane, Purley on Thames
- Colyton Way, Purley on Thames
- Brading Way, Purley on Thames
- Chestnut Grove, Purley on Thames
- Wintringham Way, Purley on Thames
- Clayhill Road, Burghfield

2.3 No new secondary salting routes have been proposed by Parish Councils or members of the public.

2.4 Officers recommend that for 2004/2005 the primary network should increase by the inclusion of the 2.2Km of new road described in 2.1 above and that the secondary network should remain unchanged. This will increase the length of the primary network by 0.2% which represents 37.9% coverage of the total road network in West Berkshire.

2.5 With the formal approval of 14 additional salt bins during 2002/2003, the budget for providing salt bins is fully committed. Last year 9 new salt bin requests were approved however these can only be provided if a corresponding number are removed. Inclusion of the above bus routes within the primary network would release 3 salt bins in 2005/2006.

2.6 A draft copy of the Council's revised leaflet "Safer Driving This Winter on West Berkshire Roads" can be found in Appendix 7.

- 2.7 The salting of the secondary network will be undertaken in accordance with the requirements of the Winter Service Plan, although, there is no specific budget for this operation. However, it should be noted that the cost of salting the secondary routes in a typical mild winter can normally be provided from within existing budgets, although during a harsh winter this will result in a budget pressure.
- 2.8 A report highlighting the recommendations detailed in the Code of Practice for Maintenance Management is given in Appendix 5.

3. Operational Arrangements for 2004/2005

- 3.1 The winter service period for 2004/2005 will operate between 1 November 2004 (Week 45) and 10 April 2005 (Week 15) although this period may be extended if weather conditions dictate. The decision to salt will be made by the West Berkshire Duty Officer, based on forecast information supplied by the Met Office through the London Weather Centre. Once a decision is made, the Duty Officer informs Ringway Highway Services and if instructed, the defined primary network is treated with an application of rock salt to prevent the formation of hoarfrost and or ice.
- 3.2 During prolonged hazardous conditions (prolonged hazardous conditions shall be experienced for 72 hours before works may commence), the decision to salt the secondary road and town centre footway networks will be made by the Council's Winter Service Manager. This role is normally performed by the Principal Engineer (Highways Maintenance) or, in his absence, by a Project Engineer.
- 3.3 As detailed in the Council's 'Safer Driving this Winter on West Berkshire Roads', the Council does not promote the use of bicycles during periods of prolonged hazardous conditions. With the exception of shared carriageway/cycleway routes on a primary or secondary salting route, shared footway/cycleway and remote cycleway networks are not salted when hoar frost, ice or prolonged hazardous conditions are forecast. Being part of the carriageway, shared carriageway/cycleway routes on the primary and secondary salting route networks will be salted by default.
- 3.4 There is no provision within the current winter service budget for farmers or other contractors to formally assist the Council in the removal of snow deposits from the rural road network. Snow clearance of the Primary and Secondary routes will continue to be carried out in accordance with the Winter Service Plan by Ringway using their own equipment.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Review of the 2003/2004 Winter Service.
Appendix 2 – Best Value Review benchmarking results.
Appendix 3 – Summary of the Winter Operations for 2003/2004.
Appendix 4 – Proposed Revisions to Salting Network.
Appendix 5 – List of Exceptions to Winter Service Policy and Plan.
Appendix 6 -- Winter Service Policy and Plan 2003/2004 – Due to the size this document is not included within this report but a copy is located in the Members room.
Appendix 7 – Revised "Safer Driving This Winter on West Berkshire's Roads" leaflet (under development)

Implications

Policy:	The proposed Winter Service Policy will ensure as far as is reasonably practicable that the road network in West Berkshire is maintained to a safe standard during the winter months for all highway users including residents as well as those travelling through the District.
Financial:	<p>The cost of providing the call out service, providing salt bins and undertaking up to 50 primary precautionary salting runs, is included in the 2004/2005 revenue budget. (The costs of salting the secondary network and snow clearance operations are not included). Currently the Winter Service budget for the provision of salt bins is fully committed.</p> <p>The cost of salting the additional 2.2km of new road network as detailed in 2.1 and Appendix 4 for 2004/2005 will be funded from existing service grouping budgets. For subsequent years, however, funding of this and the bus routes detailed in Section 2.2 will be considered in the budget setting process for 2005/2006.</p>
Personnel:	None arising from this report.
Legal:	Following a House of Lords ruling, the Council has a statutory duty from 10 October 2003 to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that safe passage along a highway is not endangered by snow or ice.
Environmental:	There are issues surrounding the impact of rock salt on the environment and these are addressed in Appendix 34/74 of the Term Contract for Highway and Bridge Works (2000 to 2004) now extended for a further 2 years.
Equalities:	None arising from this report.
Partnering:	None arising from this report.

Consultation Responses

Members:	
Leader of Council:	Councillor Royce Longton supports the recommendations within the Report subject to minor changes.
Select Committee Chairmen:	Councillor Brian Bedwell, Chairman of the Environment and Public Protection Select Committee supports the recommendations of the Report subject to minor changes
P&D Committee Chairman (where appropriate):	N/A
Ward Members:	Councillor Laszlo Zverko supports the recommendations of the Report
Opposition Spokesperson:	Councillor Brian Bedwell supports the recommendations of the Report subject to minor changes
Advisory Members:	N/A
Local Stakeholders:	Have been consulted as part of the statutory consultation process

Officers Consulted:

Mark Edwards
Sandra Pugh
Liz Howlett
Jenny Noble

Trade Union:

Not Applicable