

Review of the Winter 2003/2004

Summary of Winter Service Season 2003/2004

The beginning of the Winter Service season was very wet and mild with no hoar frosts being experienced during November 2003. However there were around 10 nights which resulted in ground frost and salting of the primary network took place due to the moisture remaining after the rain showers and the low temperatures experienced.

December 2003 was also a very changeable month with dry, foggy and frosty spells alternating with wet and windy periods. Minor sleet and snow showers occurred at the end of the month.

The New Year continued the pattern of unsettled weather however it was mild and wet until a serious cold front moved down from the arctic starting on 27 January. Whilst this front had been forecast and arrangements were in place for the continued salting of the primary and secondary salting networks, 28 January saw a unique set of weather conditions that included a thunder and lightning storm, which brought a sudden drop in temperature at around the 5.00pm rush hour and a heavy fall of snow. The cold spell and minor snow showers continued for the next few days.

February 2004 saw a period of very mild and sunny weather until the last week when another cold front off the arctic brought a few snow showers and several frosts. During early March a spell of dry warm weather was experienced until day 11 when the frosts returned for a week before the spring weather appeared.

To summarise, the 2003/2004 winter period was very changeable, this was wetter than normal, with periods of sunshine interspersed with very cold periods.

Over the period 1 November 2003 to 31 March 2004 there were 41 precautionary salting runs on the primary salting network and 4 runs on the secondary salting network. Due to the cold weather experienced during April 2003 it was necessary to increase the winter service period beyond the 23 weeks originally planned.

The 2003/2004 Winter Service in West Berkshire was carried out by the Council's appointed Term Maintenance Contractor, Ringway Highway Services Ltd. The overall operation was managed by West Berkshire Council, details of which are summarised in Appendix 3.

Winter Service Plan 2003/2004

The 2003/2004 Winter Service Plan detailed the Council's Policy and information relating to the weather forecasting and decision making processes, call out arrangements, salting routes and stakeholder contacts.

Under the Winter Service Plan 2003/2004, the length of the primary route network represents 38% of the total network in West Berkshire. During 2003 a bench marking exercise was under taken with the adjoining authorities and the results are shown in Appendix 2.

Results of Benchmarking Exercise

Authority	Percentage of Primary Salted Network	Percentage of Secondary Salted Network
Bracknell Forest District Council	39	13
Cambridgeshire County Council	42	Not available
Hampshire County Council	26	Not available
Reading Borough Council	29	22
Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead	35	14.5
West Berkshire District Council	38	21
Wiltshire County Council	25	Not available
Wokingham District Council	35	12

Summary of Winter Operations 2003/2004

Month	Precautionary Salting of Primary Network	Part/Wet Patches	Precautionary Salting of Secondary Network
April 2003	1	0	0
November 2003	4	0	0
December 2003	11	7	0
January 2004	10	3	2
February 2004	9	3	2
March 2004	6	1	0
Total for financial year 1 April 2003 to 31 March 2004	41	14	4

Number of days with multiple salting runs	3	3	0
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Operation days for financial year 1 April 2003 to 31 March 2004.	37	12	4
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Met Office Forecast Sites – Verification Figures

Membury Sensor

Month	Number of Hoar Frosts Forecasted	Actual Number of Hoar Frosts formed	False Alarm*
October 2003	0	0	0
November 2003	0	0	0
December 2003	11	7	6
January 2004	9	8	1
February 2004	12	11	1
March 2004	5	7	2
Total for period 1 November 2003 to 31 March 2004	37	33	10

Notes

- False Alarm – Where ice conditions are forecast but actual temperatures remain above zero.

Proposed Additions to Salting Network

1. Roads to be added to the Primary Salting Network 2004/2005

Road	From	To	Length	Reason
Old Oxford Road	Curridge Road overbridge	Chieveley Motorway Services	2.2Km	Adopted following changes to M4 junction 13 by the Highways Agency

2. Roads to be deleted from the Primary Salting network

None this financial year.

3. Roads to be added to Secondary Salting Network:

None this financial year.

4. Additional Salt Bin Requests

Parish/Town	Road	Location	Notes
Chaddleworth	Norris Field	Junction with Sheephouse Way	All bins approved for adding to schedule in 2003/2004 Executive report. However until the same number are removed or additional funding made available they cannot be placed on site
Compton	Shepherds Rise	Junction with Shepherds Rise	
Frilsham		Near to Hawkridge House	
Lambourn	Honey Hill	Junction with Walkers Lane	
Newbury	Epsom Crescent	On green by car park	
Woolhampton	Woolhampton Hill	In lay-by opposite Driftwood	

Code of Practice for Maintenance Management Recommendations for the Winter Service Policy and Plan 2004/2005

Recommendation	Description	Adopted by WBC	Comments	Reason for not adopting recommendation
1	Authority to formally approve and adopt a policy for it's Winter Service.	✓	Approved by Individual Decision 30 September 2004	
2	Authority to formally approve, adopt and publish in consultation with others a Winter Service Operational Plan.	✓	Distributed to : Council and Parish Members Adjoining Councils Highway Agency and Agents Emergency Services Media Organisations Motoring Organisations Network Rail	
3	Authority to define Primary and Secondary treatment routes for carriageways based upon the road hierarchy and other local factors.	✓	Precautionary Salting Route Plan	
4	Authority to define treatment routes for footways based upon footway hierarchy and other local factors.	✓	Winter Service Plan Appendix I	
5	Authority to define treatment routes for promoted schemes such as 'Safe Routes to School' and 'School Bus Routes' based upon the general maintenance hierarchy but adapted to take in to account local factors identified.	✗		The Winter Service should be co-ordinated to ensure that route planning and treatment regimes meet the road users reasonable expectations for consistency. The Council only salts specified sections of the footway network during prolonged hazardous conditions. Precautionary salting of isolated lengths of footway on a 'safe route to school' would be inconsistent with this policy and would present a greater hazard.

APPENDIX 5 cont'd

Recommendation	Description	Adopted by WBC	Comments	Reason for not adopting recommendation
6	Authority to co-ordinate and co-operate with adjoining local and strategic authorities to ensure that route planning and treatment regimes meet road users' reasonable. Expectations for consistency and value for money	✓	Consultation exercise undertaken summer 2003. Winter Service Plan issued to all adjoining Councils.	
7	Authority to produce and publish a non-technical summary of its proposed Winter Service Operational Plan including plans of treated network together with guidance on safe use of network.	✓	'Safer Driving this Winter on West Berkshire Roads' leaflet published and circulated through public offices and libraries.	
8	Authority to establish arrangements for information to be made available to local radio, police etc.	✓	Winter Service Plan Appendix N	
9	Authority to have an annual review of its Winter Service Operational Plan in consultation with users and key stakeholders to take in to account changing local circumstances.	✓		
10	Authority to take full advantage of weather forecasting information services.	✓	West Berkshire Council makes use of information from roadside sensors and detailed site specific forecasts issued by the Met Office in its decisions making process.	
11	Authority to annually review arrangements for delivering its Winter Service in consultation with all service partners, consultants and contractors to ensure clear terms of reference for the provision and management of all resources, Health and Safety and insurances.	✓	Contractual requirement with Term Contractor Ringway Ltd.	
12	Authority to undertake annual technical review (including calibration) of all equipment, vehicles and plant prior to the start of the Winter Service season.	✓	Contractual requirement with Term Contractor Ringway Ltd. Roadside weather stations annually serviced by Sensing Systems and Vaisala	

APPENDIX 5 cont'd

Recommendation	Description	Adopted by WBC	Comments	Reason for not adopting recommendation
13	Authority to annually review training and development needs for all personnel who deal directly with implementing Winter Service, in order that any necessary training can be provided prior to the start of the Winter Service season.	✓	Formal training undertaken with Met Office in November 2003	
14	Authority should manage the purchase, storage and use of de-icing materials within the principles of Best Value, sustainability and consortia purchasing.	✓	Contractual requirement with Term Contractor Ringway Ltd.	
15	Authority to hold comprehensive and accurate records of all Winter Service activities. The use of data loggers should be considered for this process.	✓	All records held with Highway Manager	