Individual Executive Member Decision

Title of Report: 2013/14 Highway Winter Service Plan

Report to be considered

by:

Individual Executive Member Decision

Date on which Decision

is to be taken:

17 October 2013

Forward Plan Ref: ID2736

Purpose of Report: To seek approval of the 2013/14 Highway Winter

Service Plan.

Recommended Action: That the Executive Portfolio Member for Highways,

Transport (Operations), Emergency Planning and Newbury Vision approves the 2013/14 Highway Winter

Service Plan.

Reason for decision to be

taken:

Government guidance for highway management recommends the provision of an annually reviewed

operational plan for winter service.

Other options considered: None

Key background documentation:

• The Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission's

review of the 2010/11 winter season.

• UK Roads Group publication 'Lessons Learned from

Severe Weather February 2009'.

• Well maintained Highways – Code of Practice for Highway Maintenance Management, as amended

November 2011.

• The resilience of England's Transport Systems in Winter

- Interim report July 2010.

Portfolio Member Details			
Name & Telephone No.:	Councillor Pamela Bale - Tel (0118) 9842980		
E-mail Address:	pbale@westberks.gov.uk		

Contact Officer Details		
Name:	Melvyn May	
Job Title:	Highways Manager	
Tel. No.:	01635 519873	
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Policy: To comply with best practice and the statutory duty to

maintain the public highway in a safe condition, the Highways and Transport Service reviews and produces a Highway Winter Service Plan annually to set out its operational proposals for Members to consider.

West Berkshire Council aims to provide as far as is reasonably practicable safe travelling conditions on the primary precautionary salting network during the winter service period when hoar frost and snow conditions are

forecast.

Financial: The cost of providing the Winter Service, including the

maintenance of West Berkshire Council owned salt bins and undertaking up to 50 primary precautionary salting runs on 500km of carriageway, is included in the 2013/14 revenue budget. (There is no budget provision for salting of the secondary network, snow clearance operations or footways

treatment).

Personnel: None arising from this report.

Legal / Procurement: Following a House of Lords ruling, the Council has had a

statutory duty from 10 October 2003 to ensure, so far as reasonably practicable that the safe passage along a

highway is not endangered by snow or ice.

The winter service is procured through the current Term Maintenance Contract for Highways and Bridges 2006 to

2016.

Environmental: There are issues surrounding the impact of rock salt on the

environment and these are addressed in the current term Highway Maintenance Contract for Highways and Bridges

2006 to 2016.

Property: None arising from this report.

Risk Management: None arising from this report.

Consultation Responses

Members:

Leader of Council: Gordon Lundie was consulted and no comments have been

received to date.

Overview & Scrutiny

Management

Commission Chairman:

Brian Bedwell was consulted and commented that the Winter Service Plan was an excellent piece of work and

should serve us well during the winter months.

Ward Members: All Ward Members were consulted on the draft Winter

Service Plan and where appropriate, changes have been made to the report to address their comments. Formal responses have been provided. A summary is included at

Appendix I.

Opposition Spokesperson:	Keith Woodhams was consulted and no comments have been received to date.			€
Local Stakeholders:	consult approp addres	Parish and Town Councils and Ward Members were consulted on the draft Winter Service Plan and where appropriate, changes have been made to the report to address their comments. Formal responses have been provided. A summary is included at Appendix I.		
Officers Consulted:	Mark Edwards, Wendy Howells, David Holling, Jenny Graham, Carolyn Richardson			
Trade Union:	Not applicable.			
Is this item subject to call-in. Yes: No:				
If not subject to call-in please put a cross in the appropriate box:				
The item is due to be referre	The item is due to be referred to Council for final approval			

Delays in implementation could have serious financial implications for the Council

Considered or reviewed by Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission or

Delays in implementation could compromise the Council's position

associated Task Groups within preceding 6 months

Item is Urgent Key Decision

Report is to note only

1. Background

- 1.1 Winter 2012/13 saw all but one month have below average temperatures, with the other month, December, only slightly above the long-term average. March was a severe month, the coldest for 50 years and the cold conditions continued into the start of April. This resulted in a lengthy winter season, resulting in many below zero evenings and significant snowfall as well, especially in January.
- 1.2 October was around 1°c below average, but road surface temperatures generally stayed above zero until the end of the month when they dropped just below zero on the 26th and 27th of the month. November was dominated by rain, with air temperatures 0.5°c below average. There were occasions when road temperatures dropped close to or below zero, especially in the first five days of the month. December as a whole was split between a cold first half, with road temperatures dropping below zero on most nights, and a milder second half with road temperatures above zero on almost every night.
- 1.3 January started off on a mild note. Easterly winds then brought in a major cold spell from the 12th through to the 27th with road temperatures dropping below zero on almost every night during this period. There was also some snow, especially on the 18th and again on the 20th and 22nd. February was around a degree colder than normal. Road temperatures dropped close to or below zero on many nights. There were snow showers throughout the month, with the most significant being on the 10th, especially to the east of the district. March 2013 was dominated by easterly winds bringing in cold air. This was especially marked during the second half of the month when there were some exceptionally cold days for mid to late March, resulting in it being the coldest on record for 50 years. There was also some snow, with some accumulations on the 23rd. Road temperatures dropped below zero on many nights. The cold weather from March continued into the start of April which resulted in the winter season being extended by a week from a contractual point of view.
- 1.4 Prior to 2008/09 for a typical winter period, around 1000 tonnes of salt was considered to be the average used across the district. However, in 2008/09 around 2,500 tonnes was used and in 2009/10 around 4,000 tonnes. A similar quantity was used in 2010/11. The Council has therefore established a covered store of salt at its Highway Depot at Chieveley of 2200 tonnes. A further 2800 tonnes are held in reserve by our Term Contractor Volker Highways Ltd in Enfield, providing a total of 5,000 tonnes as recommended by the OSMC.

2. Review of the Winter Service Plan 2012/13

Summary

2.1 Details of Volker Highways Ltd performance and the number of salting runs undertaken during the winter are provided in Appendices A and B. Despite the severe weather conditions Volker Highways Ltd delivered a good performance returning an average score of 98.46% for the winter period, in other words, 98.46% of routes were completed within the contract time of 3 hours under normal winter conditions. Whilst the contract requires 100% performance, the maximum delay was only 21 minutes over the specified contract time on one route.

Salt Stock

2.2 Salt stocks remained above the minimum requirement of 1400 tonnes throughout the winter season. To meet the environmental requirements, the salt stock at Chieveley Depot was covered. At the start of the winter season a total of 5,000 tonnes was available for the Council's use.

Salt Bins

2.3 The engagement of Parish and Town Council's in purchasing of salt bins has remained positive and has continued to make a difference across the district particularly in the rural areas. During the 2012/13 winter period an additional 22 salt bins were added to the network and these are summarised in Appendix E.

Communications

- 2.4 For the 2012/13 winter period, the Winter Service Plan and associated treatment routes were published on the Council's website and incorporated into the Council's online mapping facilities. In addition, live reporting of the Council's Winter Service actions was also published on the home page and in combination, these initiatives helped reduce the number of winter service related calls to the Council.
- 2.5 The 'Safer Driving' leaflet was revised and copies were distributed to all Members and Parish/Town Councils. It was also made available at all Council buildings with public access and published on the Council's website.

3. Operational Arrangements for Winter 2013/14

- 3.1 The Winter Service period for 2013/14 will operate from Monday 28 October 2013 to Sunday 30 March 2014, although this period may be extended if weather conditions dictate.
- 3.2 Precautionary salting, snow clearance, salt bin provision and the response to adverse weather will be carried out in accordance with the policy and guidance as detailed within the Council's Highway Winter Service Plan 2013/14.
- 3.3 All decisions and actions will be made by the Council's Winter Service Duty Officer using forecast information as supplied by the Council's contracted forecaster and local roadside weather stations.
- 3.4 Operationally, the delivery of the Winter Service will be provided by the Council's current Highway Maintenance Term Contractor, Volker Highways Ltd.
- 3.5 A copy of the 2013/14 Highway Winter Service Plan will be issued to all Members and all Parish/Town Councils. It will also be available on the Council's website.
- 3.6 The 'Safer Driving' leaflet will be revised to reflect the recommendations made in this report. Copies will be distributed to all Members and Parish/Town Councils and will be made available at all Council buildings with public access. It will also be available on the Council's website.

3.7 A copy of the Winter Service Plan is provided in Appendix H. A paper copy of the Winter Service Plan along with the associated treatment routes will be made available in the Member's Room during the consultation period.

4. Equalities Impact Assessment Outcomes

- 4.1 Following the severe snow episodes in 2009 & 2010, the Council undertook a full and detailed performance review across all its services. The review was carried out by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission and their findings and recommendations, where applicable, were incorporated within the Winter Service Plan.
- 4.2 As a result of the review, a defined snow clearance footway network was established across the district which included major town and village centres as well as footways to NHS surgeries, West Berkshire Community Hospital, schools and other key public buildings.
- 4.3 The Winter Service Plan 2013/14 and associated treatment routes will be published on the Council's website to allow users to decide whether to make a journey.

5. Conclusions

- 5.1 The Primary Treatment Network, which accounts for 41.7% of the highway network includes all A and B classified roads and some strategically important C class and unclassified roads. No routes have been added or deleted for 2013/14. These routes will receive precautionary treatment when hoar frost and/or ice are forecast. Details are shown in Appendix D.
- 5.2 The amended Secondary Treatment Network, which represents 19.8% of the highway network, will be treated when hoar frost and/or ice have been experienced for an unbroken period of greater than 72 hours. Details are shown in Appendix D.
- 5.3 The Road Snow Clearance Network, which accounts for 48.5% of the highway network ensures that as far as is reasonably practicable all bus routes and access routes to schools and doctors surgeries will be cleared of snow as a priority. Three additional roads (Avonway, Gaywood Drive, Newbury and Curridge Road, Chieveley) have been included on the Snow Clearance Network for 2013/14.
- 5.4 The Contingency Treatment Network which covers 46.8% of the highway network, has been introduced and will be treated when hoar frost and/or ice or snow are forecast but only when there is a national shortage of salt or limited salt supplies and/or there has been a Government directive to limit salt use.

6. Recommendations

6.1 Officers recommend that the 2013/14 Highway Winter Service Plan is approved and adopted as Council Policy.

Appendices

Appendix A – Stage 1 Equalities Impact Assessment

Appendix B – Contractors Performance in delivering the 2012/13 Winter Service.

Appendix C – Summary of Winter Operations 2012/13.

Appendix D – Changes to the Primary, Snow Clearance and Contingency Networks

Appendix E – Additional Salt Bins (funded by Parish/Town Councils)

Appendix F – List of departures from the Code of Practice for Maintenance Management Appendix G – Winter Service Plan 2013/14 Appendix H – Summary of Consultation Responses.			

Equality Impact Assessment – Stage One

Name of item being assessed:	2013/14 Highway Winter Service Plan	
Version and release date of item (if applicable):	14 October 2013	
Owner of item being assessed:	Andrew Reynolds	
Name of assessor:	Melvyn May	
Date of assessment:	20/09/2013	

1. What are the main aims of the item?

To comply with best practice and the statutory duty to maintain the public highway in a safe condition. The Council aims to provide as far as is reasonably practicable safe travelling conditions on the primary precautionary salting network during the winter period.

2. Note which groups may be affected by the item, consider how they may be affected and what sources of information have been used to determine this. (Please demonstrate consideration of all strands – age, disability, gender, reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation.)

Group Affected	What might be the effect?	Information to support this.
Older People	Difficulty in using footways during periods of sub-zero weather and/or snow. Higher risk of injury.	Customer Service Calls Claim applications
Disabled	As above.	Customer Service Calls Claim applications

Further Comments relating to the item:

Following the severe snow episodes in 2009 & 2010, the Council undertook a full and detailed performance review cross all its services. The review was carried out by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission and their findings and recommendations, where applicable, were incorporated within the Winter Service Plan. As a result of this review, a defined show clearance footway network was established across the district which included major town and village centres as well as footways to NHS surgeries, West Berkshire Community Hospital, schools and other key public buildings. In addition, the Winter Service Plan goes out to consultation to all Members and Town and Parish Councils each year and the Plan and associate treatment routes are published on the Council's website to allow users to decide whether to make a journey. As a result of the above, no Stage 2 Audit is required.

3.	Result (please tick by double-clicking on relevant box and click on checked)
	High Relevance This needs to undergo a Stage 2 Equality Impact Assessment.
	Medium Relevance This needs to undergo a Stage 2 Equality Impact Assessment
	Low Relevance This needs to undergo a Stage 2 Equality Impact Assessment
X	No Relevance This does not need to undergo a Stage 2 Equality Impact Assessment

For items requiring a Stage 2 equality impact assessment, begin the planning of this now, referring to the equality impact assessment guidance and Stage 2 template.

4. Identify next steps as appropriate:	
Stage Two required	
Owner of Stage Two assessment:	
Timescale for Stage Two assessment:	
Stage Two not required:	X

Date: 20/09/2013

Signed:

Millay

APPENDIX B

Contractors Performance in Delivering 2012/13 Winter Service.

Contract Performance Indicator – the percentage of gritting routes completed within the specified time.

Month	Percentage of routes completed within time	Contract requirement
November 2012	100.0 %	100.0 %
December 2012	100.0 %	100.0 %
January 2013	98.9 %	100.0 %
February 2013	98.3 %	100.0 %
March 2013	98.2 %	100.0 %
Annual average	98.46 %	100.0 %

Summary of Winter Operations: 31 October 2012 to 1 April 2013

Month	Precautionary Salting Runs on Primary Treatment Network*	Precautionary Salting Runs on Secondary Treatment Network*	Precautionary Salting Runs on the Contingency Treatment Network*
Nov 2012	9	0	0
Dec 2012	13	0	0
Jan 2013	9	4	0
Feb 2013	18	0	0
March 2013	16	0	0
Totals	65	4	0

Number of snow clearance days	6
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 $^{^{*}}$ The figures shown relate to normal winter service conditions. For the periods $18^{th}-21^{st}$ January 2013 and 23^{rd} March 2013, the service was operating under emergency procedures and vehicles were constantly on the network treating roads or clearing snow. Performance during this period is therefore excluded from the above summary.

Changes to the Primary, Snow Clearance and Contingency Networks for 2013/14

Primary Salting Routes Additions 2013/14

Name	Start	End	Ward	Funding
Nil				

Primary Salting Route Removals in 2013/14

Name	Start	End	Ward	Funding
Nil				

Secondary Salting Route Additions in 2013/14

Name	Start	End	Ward	Funding
Nil				

Secondary Salting Route Removals in 2013/14

Name	Start	End	Ward	Funding
Nil				

Snow Clearance Routes Additions 2013/14

Name	Start	End	Ward	Funding
Avon Way	Turnpike Road	Gaywood Drive	Clay Hill	WBC Internal
Gaywood Drive	Avonway	Fir Tree Lane	Clay Hill	WBC Internal
Curridge Road	B4009 Hermitage Road	Oxford Road	Chieveley	WBC Internal

Snow Clearance Routes Removals 2013/14

Name	Start	End	Ward	Funding
Nil				

APPENDIX E

Additional Salt Bins (funded by Parish/Town Councils)

Parish/Town	Road	Location	No.
Leckhampstead	Egypt Hill Corner	Public Highway	1
Tilehurst	Voller Drive	Public Highway	1
Tilehurst	Fullbrook Crescent	Public Highway	1
Tilehurst	The Sadlers	Public Highway	1
Tilehurst	Meadowside	Public Highway	2
Tilehurst	Hillview Close	Public Highway	1
Tilehurst	Dark Lane	Public Highway	1
Newbury	Ludlow Close	Public Highway	1
Newbury	Wellington Close	Public Highway	1
Newbury	Newport Road	Public Highway	1
Newbury	Digby Road	Public Highway	1
Newbury	Goldwell Drive	Public Highway	1
Newbury	Chalford Road	Public Highway	1
Newbury	Stanley Road	Public Highway	1
Newbury	Monkswood Close	Public Highway	1
Newbury	Woodside	Public Highway	1
Newbury	Enborne Place	Public Highway	1
East Garston	Rogers Lane	Public Highway	1
Chieveley	Curridge Road	Public Highway	1
Chieveley	East Lane	Public Highway	1
Chieveley	Crabtree Lane	Public Highway	1

Total 22

Departures from the Code of Practice for Maintenance Management Recommendations for Winter Service

Recommendation	Description	Adopted by WBC	Comments	Reason for not adopting recommendation
1	Authorities should formally approve and adopt policies and priorities for Winter Service, which are coherent with wider objectives for transport, integration, accessibility and network management, including strategies for public transport, walking and cycling. They should also take into account the wider strategic objectives of the authority.	Yes	Winter Service Plan reviewed in accordance with recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission (OSMC) and COP as amended December 2009. Plan to be approved by Individual Decision 24 October 2011.	
2	Authorities should consider, consult on and formally adopt local service standards for resilience of their winter service in terms of number of days continuous severe conditions salting on a defined Minimum Winter Network for the Overall Winter Period and for the Core Winter Period.	Yes		
3	Authorities should review their approach to climate change and in particular their resilience to prolonged cold weather.	Yes		
4	Authorities should consider whether collaborative arrangements such as shared services, lead authority arrangements, collaborative service procurement and sharing depots and salt stock, would prove effective and provide value for money approach to increasing winter service resilience.	Yes	Joint procurement with Berkshire Unitaries for sensor maintenance and forecasting services.	

APPENDIX F (cont'd)

Departures from the Code of Practice for Maintenance Management Recommendations for Winter Service

Recommendation	Description	Adopted by WBC	Comments	Reason for not adopting recommendation
5	Authorities should determine critical areas and infrastructure in conjunction with key public services and other stakeholders and seek to ensure that appropriate winter treatment has been considered by the appropriate party.	Yes	See item 1	
6	Authorities should ensure effective communication of information for the public before and during normal and severe winter conditions.	Yes	Publication of 'Safer Driving this Winter on West Berkshire Roads' leaflet and Winter Service Plan and associated route plans via the website.	
7	Authorities should ensure that there is appropriate consultation and communication with other highway authorities, key public services and other stakeholders and seek to ensure improved service for the public.	Yes		
8	Authorities should formally approve, adopt and publish, in consultation with users and key stakeholders, a Winter Service Plan based on the principles of this Code	Yes	See Item 1.	
9	Authorities should define treatment route plans for carriageways, cycle routes and footways for pre-treatment and snow conditions, based upon the general maintenance hierarchy, but adapted to take into account the factors identified by this Code.	Yes	Route plans in place where appropriate.	The Council only salts specified sections of footway network during prolonged hazardous conditions and when snow is forecast. Remote cyclepaths are not treated.

Departures from the Code of Practice for Maintenance Management Recommendations for Winter Service

Recommendation	Description	Adopted by WBC	Comments	Reason for not adopting recommendation
10	Authorities should prepare contingency Winter Service Plans for severe weather conditions, which include possibilities such as salting a Minimum Winter Network. Authorities should seek agreement on plans in advance with other highway authorities and key public services such as hospitals and public transport providers. There should be a coordinated approach to implementing Minimum Winter Networks across adjacent Authorities.	Yes	The Council has a defined Contingency network which is detailed in the Winter Service Plan. Route plans are also in place.	
11	Authorities should explore the potential for mutual aid in salt supply and other aspects of winter service and should make contingency arrangements in advance.	Yes	Alternative salt supply arrangements in place with WBC's Term Maintenance Contractor.	
12	Authorities should take full advantage of decision support systems and services to enable timely, efficient and accurate decision making.	Yes	West Berkshire Council makes use of information from roadside sensors and detailed site specific forecasts issued by MeteoGroup UK in its decision making process.	

Departures from the Code of Practice for Maintenance Management Recommendations for Winter Service

Recommendation	Description	Adopted by WBC	Comments	Reason for not adopting recommendation
13	Authority should continually monitor performance during service delivery and respond effectively to changing conditions or network incidents.	Yes	PI's in Term Maintenance Contract and Winter Service Plan.	
14	To ensure appropriate level of competence, training and development needs of all personnel should be established and reviewed annually, including health and safety and appropriate vocational qualifications. Training should then be provided where appropriate before the Winter Service season.	Yes	All Duty Officers trained to City and Guilds Supervisor Standard. All Term Contractor WS operatives have City & Guilds 6157 accreditation (superseded by 6159). 2 staff are now accredited City & Guilds Winter Service Supervisors.	
15	Authorities and relevant organisations should provide training and conduct periodic exercising to test plans for responding to severe weather events.	Yes	Ad hoc audits are undertaken to test Winter Service Plan during winter season.	
16	Authorities and salt suppliers should treat the supply of salt as a service rather than a simple commodity purchase.	Yes	Term Contractor / Salt Union re-stocking arrangements in place.	

Departures from the Code of Practice for Maintenance Management Recommendations for Winter Service

Recommendatio n	Description	Adopted by WBC	Comments	Reason for not adopting recommendation
17	As a means of enhancing local salt storage capacity, Authority and salt suppliers should jointly consider supplier owned salt stocks held on a short or long term basis in a number of widely distributed locations around the country. A joint approach may include agreements such as purchase of some or all stock by the end of season or provision of land.	Yes	Recommendation of OSMC to increase WBC"s salt stock to 5000t. Being a predominantly rural district, WBC's winter service requirements do not favourably align with those of the more urban UA's in Berkshire.	
18	Authority should seek a broad approach to salt supply, for example establishing framework contracts with more than one supplier.	Yes	Arrangements in place with Highway Term Contract for alternative salt supplies.	
19	Authorities should consider whether efficiency benefits can be obtained from collaborative salt procurement and should also consider ways to improve the balance of risk between salt suppliers and themselves, e.g. Longer contracts, performance contracts with minimum guaranteed purchase and supply, and contracts that include supply of salt and investment facilities.	Yes	Arrangements in place with salt union to maintain a total salt stock of 5000t.	

Departures from the Code of Practice for Maintenance Management Recommendations for Winter Service

Recommendatio n	Description	Adopted by WBC	Comments	Reason for not adopting recommendation
20	All aspects of the Winter Service Plan, including service delivery arrangements, should be reviewed annually in consultation with key stakeholders to take account of changing circumstances.	Yes	The Winter Service Plan is reviewed annually.	

APPENDIX G

Winter Service Plan 2013/14

Summary of Consultation Responses

APPENDIX H

Ref Number	Name / Organisation	Date Received	Comments	Response Issued	Action
001	WBC Internal	20/09/2013	WBC Salt Bin in Horseshoe Crescent, Tilehurst	n/a	Added to Register (Appendix G).
002	Boxford Parish Council	24/09/2013	No road treatment through village of Boxford. Road to Winterbourne from Boxford requires treatment.	Yes (08/10/13)	Both roads are included on Primary Network (Route 4) and Snow Clearance Network (Route 4).
003	Stanford Dingley Parish Council	25/09/2013	Descriptions of the two Parish Council owned salt bins incorrect.	Yes (25/09/13)	Descriptions amended as requested in Appendix H.
004	Purley-on-Thames Parish Council	24/09/2013	Request for 25no. Parish/Town Council adhesive labels for salt bins.	Yes (27/09/13)	Labels sent out in the post.
005	Bucklebury Parish Council	23/09/2013	Request for 2no.additional bins on the network.	Yes (08/10/13)	Confirmed application process for Parish / Town Council owned salt bins.
006	WBC Internal	01/10/2013	4.5 replace email address6.3 Insert in sentence "for emergency enquiries"	Yes (08/10/13)	Amended accordingly.
007	Councillor Alan Macro	23/09/13	Consideration of additions to the Footway Snow Clearance Network: Church Street / Blossom Avenue & Brunel Road	Yes (09/10/13)	Missing section of Church Street to be incorporated into new plan. Blossom Avenue and Brunel Road will not be included as the core strategic routes to the surgery and station are already treated and there is no budget to treat side roads off the core network.

