

# Individual Executive Member Decision

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<b>Title of Report:</b>	<b>2014/15 Highway Winter Service Plan</b>
<b>Report to be considered by:</b>	Individual Executive Member Decision
<b>Date on which Decision is to be taken:</b>	14 October 2014
<b>Forward Plan Ref:</b>	ID2896

**Purpose of Report:** To seek approval of the 2014/15 Highway Winter Service Plan.

**Recommended Action:** That the Portfolio Member for Highways, Transport (Operations), Emergency Planning and Newbury Vision approves the 2014/15 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.

**Statutory:**  **Non-Statutory:**   
**Other:**

**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	
<b>Name &amp; Telephone No.:</b>	Councillor Pamela Bale - Tel (0118) 9842980
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Contact Officer Details	
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## Implications

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<b>Policy:</b>	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>
<b>Financial:</b>	<p>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 2014/15 revenue budget. (There is no budget provision for salting of the secondary network, snow clearance operations or footways treatment).</p>
<b>Personnel:</b>	<p>None arising from this report.</p>
<b>Legal / Procurement:</b>	<p>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.</p> <p>The winter service is procured through the current Term Maintenance Contract for Highways and Bridges 2006 to 2016.</p>
<b>Environmental:</b>	<p>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.</p>
<b>Property:</b>	<p>None arising from this report.</p>
<b>Risk Management:</b>	<p>None arising from this report.</p>
<b>Equalities Impact Assessment:</b>	<p>A Stage 1 Equality Impact Assessment has been prepared.</p>

## Consultation Responses

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<b>Members:</b>	
<b>Leader of Council:</b>	Councillor Gordon Lundie
<b>Overview &amp; Scrutiny Management Commission Chairman:</b>	Councillor Brian Bedwell
<b>Ward Members:</b>	All Members – responses contained in Appendix H
<b>Opposition Spokesperson:</b>	Councillor Keith Woodhams – responses contained in Appendix H

**Local Stakeholders:** All Town and Parish Councils – responses contained in Appendix H

**Officers Consulted:** Mark Edwards, Wendy Howells, David Holling, Jenny Graham, Carolyn Richardson

**Trade Union:** Not applicable.

Is this item subject to call-in.	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No: <input type="checkbox"/>
If not subject to call-in please put a cross in the appropriate box:		
The item is due to be referred to Council for final approval	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Delays in implementation could have serious financial implications for the Council	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Delays in implementation could compromise the Council's position	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Considered or reviewed by Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission or associated Task Groups within preceding 6 months	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Item is Urgent Key Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Report is to note only	<input type="checkbox"/>	

## Supporting Information

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### 1. Background

- 1.1 Winter 2013/14 was exceptionally mild and wet across central southern England with snowfall virtually non-existent and road frosts much less common than previous winters. Six of the seven winter months had temperatures well above the long term average, with the exception being November. March and November saw rainfall below average, but all other months were wetter than normal, particularly January and February.
- 1.2 October was a very mild month, particularly at night with road surface temperatures holding well above zero throughout the period. It was often unsettled with frequent spells of rain, leading to monthly totals well above the long term average.
- 1.3 In contrast, November was rather chilly and was the only month through the winter season that had mean temperatures below the long term average. The first half of the month remained mild with rain at times. The 19<sup>th</sup> November saw the first widespread frost of the season.
- 1.4 December started dry with settled conditions with road surface temperatures falling below zero on some nights. However, the rest of the month saw a return to more unsettled conditions with frequent spells of heavy rain as well as periods of strong winds, especially from 23<sup>rd</sup> to the end of the month. As a consequence, it was fairly mild the road surface temperatures largely holding above zero, although a few brief clearer and drier spells between Christmas and the New Year allowed some sites to dip below zero.
- 1.5 January was an exceptionally mild and unsettled month with frequent spells of heavy rain and strong winds, making it one of the wettest January's on record. Road surface temperatures only fell below zero on a handful of nights.
- 1.6 February continued the unsettled theme with further rainfall and temperatures well above average once again. Road surface temperatures still dropped below zero on some nights.
- 1.7 The month of March was much more settled with rainfall amounts just over half the expected average. It remained very mild with some particularly warm days. Mean temperatures were only slightly above average and road surface temperatures fell below zero on a few nights, particularly at the start of the month.
- 1.8 Despite the relatively mild winter it was still necessary to treat the primary network on 51 occasions. As a result approximately 2,750 tonnes of salt was used in total through the season. Due to commercial decisions by the Council's Term Contractor (Volker Highways Ltd), the Council no longer have use of the off site storage facility at Enfield where approximately 1,500 tonnes of salt was stored. With this in mind the salt stock held at Chieveley Depot will be 3,500 tonnes for the coming season. However, this stockpile will be replenished throughout the winter season to maintain sufficient supply.

## **2. Review of the Winter Service Plan 2013/14**

### **Summary**

- 2.1 Details of Volker Highways Ltd performance and the number of salting runs undertaken during the 2013/14 winter are provided in Appendices A and B. Volker Highways Ltd delivered a good performance returning an average score of 97.9% for the winter period, in other words, 97.9% 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 20 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 2013/14 winter period an additional 11 salt bins were added to the network and these are summarised in Appendix E.

### **Communications**

- 2.4 For the 2013/14 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 2014/15**

- 3.1 The Winter Service period for 2014/15 will operate from Monday 27 October 2014 to Sunday 29 March 2015, 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 2014/15.
- 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 2014/15 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 any 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 G. 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 2014/15 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 2014/15. These routes will receive precautionary treatment when hoar frost and/or ice are forecast. Details are shown in Appendix D.
- 5.2 The 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. No routes have been added or deleted for 2014/15.
- 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. No routes have been added or deleted for 2014/15.
- 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 2014/15 Highway Winter Service Plan is approved and adopted as Council Policy.

### **Appendices**

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Appendix A – Stage 1 Equality Impact Assessment

Appendix B – Contractors Performance in delivering the 2013/14 Winter Service.

Appendix C – Summary of Winter Operations 2013/14

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 2014/15

Appendix H – Summary of Consultation Responses.

## Equality Impact Assessment – Stage One

<b>Name of item being assessed:</b>	2014/15 Highway Winter Service Plan
<b>Version and release date of item (if applicable):</b>	14 October 2014
<b>Owner of item being assessed:</b>	Andrew Reynolds
<b>Name of assessor:</b>	Melvyn May
<b>Date of assessment:</b>	23/09/2014

### 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.)

<b>Group Affected</b>	<b>What might be the effect?</b>	<b>Information to support this.</b>
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 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. In addition, the Winter Service Plan goes out to consultation to all Members and Town and Parish Councils each year and the Plan and associated 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.



## APPENDIX A (cont'd)

<b>3.</b>	<b>Result</b> (please tick by double-clicking on relevant box and click on checked)
	<b>High Relevance</b> This needs to undergo a Stage 2 Equality Impact Assessment.
	<b>Medium Relevance</b> This needs to undergo a Stage 2 Equality Impact Assessment
	<b>Low Relevance</b> This needs to undergo a Stage 2 Equality Impact Assessment
<b>X</b>	<b>No Relevance</b> 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.

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

**Date: 23/09/2014**



**Signed:**

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## APPENDIX B

### Contractors Performance in Delivering 2013/14 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 2013	95.8 %	100.0 %
December 2013	100.0 %	100.0 %
January 2014	97.5 %	100.0 %
February 2014	98.2 %	100.0 %
March 2014	98.0 %	100.0 %
<b>Annual average</b>	<b>97.9 %</b>	<b>100.0 %</b>

## APPENDIX C

### Summary of Winter Operations: 28 October 2013 to 30 March 2014

Month	Precautionary Salting Runs on Primary Treatment Network*	Precautionary Salting Runs on Secondary Treatment Network*	Precautionary Salting Runs on the Contingency Treatment Network*
Nov 2013	12	0	0
Dec 2013	11	0	0
Jan 2014	12	0	0
Feb 2014	11	0	0
March 2014	5	0	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

Number of snow clearance days	None
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## APPENDIX D

### Changes to the Primary, Snow Clearance and Contingency Networks for 2014/15

#### Primary Salting Routes Additions 2014/15

Name	Start	End	Ward	Funding
Nil				

#### Primary Salting Route Removals in 2014/15

Name	Start	End	Ward	Funding
Nil				

#### Secondary Salting Route Additions in 2014/15

Name	Start	End	Ward	Funding
Nil				

#### Secondary Salting Route Removals in 2014/15

Name	Start	End	Ward	Funding
Nil				

#### Snow Clearance Routes Additions 2014/15

Name	Start	End	Ward	Funding
Nil				

#### Snow Clearance Routes Removals 2014/15

Name	Start	End	Ward	Funding
Nil				

## APPENDIX E

### Additional Salt Bins (funded by Parish/Town Councils)

Parish/Town	Road	Location	No.
Burghfield	Pinchcut	Public Highway (grass verge opposite No.9)	1
Stanford Dingley	Jennetts Hill	Public Highway (Top of hill)	1
Stanford Dingley	Clay Hill	Public Highway (Bottom of hill)	1
Streatley	Southridge Pightle	Public Highway (Near Pightle Cottages)	1
Streatley	Southridge Pightle	Public Highway (Near Southridge Farm)	1
Lambourn	Derby Close	Public Highway (Junction with Baydon Road)	1
Hungerford	Clarks Gardens	Public Highway (Rear of footway outside No.12)	1
Hungerford	Lancaster Square	Public Highway (Grass verge outside No.33)	1
Thatcham	Bluebell Way	Public Highway (Rear of footway outside No.17)	1
Shaw-cum-Donnington	Northern Avenue	Public Highway (Grass verge outside No.5)	1
Sulhamstead	Three Firs Way	Public Highway (Outside No.17)	1

**Total            11**

## APPENDIX F

### 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 14 October 2014.	
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.

## 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
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 co-ordinated 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.	



## 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
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.	

## 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
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	In recent years the Council have stored 5,000 tonnes of salt as recommended by the OSMC. However, due to commercial decisions by the Council's Term Contractor (Volker Highways Ltd), the Council no longer have use of the off site storage facility at Enfield where approximately 1,500 tonnes of salt was stored. With this in mind the salt stock held at Chieveley Depot will be 3,500 tonnes for the coming season.	
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.	

## 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
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 3,500 tonnes.	
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.	

**Winter Service Plan 2014/15**