

Open Report on behalf of Andy Gutherson, Executive Director - Place

Report to:	Councillor R G Davies, Executive Councillor for Highways, Transport and IT
Date:	I020779
Subject:	Winter Service Plan 2020
Decision Reference:	Between 1 – 5 October 2020
Key decision?	Yes

Summary:

This report sets out the proposed amendments to the Winter Service Plan for 2020/21, in line with national guidance and best practice.

The report invites the Executive Councillor for Highways, Transport and IT to approve the draft plan and its appendices attached to this report.

Recommendation(s):

That the Executive Councillor approves the Winter Service Plan 2020 as set out at Appendix A to this report.

Alternatives Considered:

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| 1. | <p>Not to update the Winter Service Plan, continuing to operate on the 2019 version. The revisions proposed will not be adopted leaving a discrepancy from national best practice and missing service efficiencies.</p> <p>Not accepting the change to the decision making process and adjustment to the spreading rates will result in unnecessary precautionary salt usage and adverse implications through environmental impacts.</p> |
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Reasons for Recommendation:

The Winter Service Plan is updated annually so as to:

- Develop robust standards.
- Further implement proposed changes in national standards and best practice where appropriate.
- Streamline the document to reflect current practice.

1. Background

- 1.1 The Winter Service Plan should be read as a supplement to the Highways Infrastructure Asset Management Plan, and sets out the policy and procedures required for Winter Service management.
- 1.2 The statutory basis for Winter Service in England and Wales is Section 41 (1A) of the Highways Act 1980 which places a duty on highway authorities to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that safe passage along a highway is not endangered by snow or ice.
- 1.3 Lincolnshire County Council carries out precautionary and snow clearance treatments on the road network in accordance with this policy across the County. The policy only provides for roads for which the local authority has responsibility. Trunk roads (the A1, A52 west of Grantham and A46 County Boundary to Carholme Road Roundabout Lincoln) within Lincolnshire and their respective winter treatment are the responsibility of Highways England.
- 1.4 The revised Winter Service Plan takes into account the changes suggested by the "Well Managed Highway Infrastructure – A Code of Practice" document published in October 2016. This document, commissioned by the Department for Transport, provides local authorities with guidance on how to develop a highways maintenance policy based on best practice.
- 1.5 The proposed Winter Service Plan 2020 has several changes, which are set out in Appendix D, and changes to the precautionary salting flow charts in both dry and wet conditions. This is based on recommendations for treated salt from the NWSRG (National Winter Service Research Group).
- 1.6 The Precautionary Salting Network will increase by 7km to include Lincoln Eastern Bypass. In 2020/21 the Precautionary Salting Network will increase to 3,015km.
- 1.7 The Authority has the capability of calling upon 43 gritters, strategically placed around the county, with 4 spare gritters utilised as back-ups. Treatment time of the entirety of the Precautionary Salting Network will take a maximum of 3 hours, as dictated within the policy. This Precautionary Salting Network will be treated based on the Route Based Forecasting system. This system uses weather forecasts and measures the predicted impact on the road network, highlighting where the essential needs for salting treatment, if required, are located.
- 1.8 The Winter Service Plan outlines that a minimum of 25,000 tonnes of salt is in stock at the start of the winter season, with a minimum of 15,000 tonnes available at any time throughout the season. Salt stock is managed within this Policy, which is compliant with the recommendations of national best practice and the expectations of the Department for Transport.

- 1.9 In the winter of 2018/19, the Authority carried out 61 precautionary salting turnouts, and utilised 13,485 tonnes of salt. There were no "snow days" where Severe Weather Routes were run and snow ploughing took place. In 2019/20 there were only 59 precautionary salting runs using 15,858 tonnes of salt. Both winters have been mild.
- 1.10 A Winter Rally is scheduled to be undertaken in the last week of September, as part of the final preparation for the Winter Season. This Winter Rally entails training and re-acquainting the gritter drivers with the vehicles and the route, optimising the vehicles and performing final checks on the equipment used throughout the process.

2 Proposed Changes

Decision Making

- 2.1 Lincolnshire County Council Duty Officers and Winter and Emergency Duty Officers work to the following:
- Winter Service Plan: Appendix E - Precautionary Salting for Dry or Damp Road Conditions Flowchart.
 - Winter Service Plan: Appendix F - Precautionary Salting for Wet Road Conditions Flowchart.

Road Surface Temperature Criteria

- 2.2 The Winter Service Plan Appendix E and F have been amended in response to a national change highlighted by NWSRG. The change to the road surface temperature required to initiate the treatment option decision process has been reduced from $<-1^{\circ}\text{C}$ to $<-2^{\circ}\text{C}$. The new NWSRG recommendation is $<-4^{\circ}\text{C}$. Along with many partner authorities through MSIG (Midlands Service Improvement Group) a measured response with a modest change and a review of performance was felt appropriate for Lincolnshire County Council in 2020/2021.
- 2.3 The primary goal of this change is to reduce over salting above necessary safety standards which has adverse effects on the environment.

Precautionary Salting Treatment Options

2.4 Winter Service Plan Appendix E and F have also been amended as follows:

Temperatures (°C)	Appendix E Dry or Damp Conditions (m²)	Appendix F Wet Conditions (m²)
0.5 to -2.0	7 grams <i>(from 10 grams)</i>	12 grams <i>(from 15 grams)</i>
-2.1 to -5.0	12 grams <i>(from 15 grams)</i>	17 grams <i>(from 20 grams)</i>
-5.1 to -10.0	17 grams <i>(from 20 grams)</i>	2 x 17 grams <i>(from 2 x 20 grams)</i>
-10.1 to -15.0	2 x 17 grams <i>(from 2 x 20 grams)</i>	3x 17 grams <i>(from 3 x 20 grams)</i>

- 2.5 This move gives the Authority a chance to test the effectiveness of the treated salt at the reduced capacity and the ability of our gritters to deliver the rates of spread.
- 2.6 Similarly to the above, the result in reduction of unnecessary salting of the network limits exposure of plant, benefits health and safety of the operator and reduces the adverse environmental impacts of over salting.

Treated Salt

- 2.7 Lincolnshire County Council adopted the use of treated salt (brown salt) in 2018-19. This will be continued in 2020-21 moving away from the use of the pre-wetted system. Reasons for this were outlined in the report for the Winter Service Plan 2018, highlighting that it was economical in spread rates, but the operational overheads for plant and brine facilities made it more expensive than the more recently developed treated salt method.
- 2.8 In 2018-19 Network Resilience and the Winter Service operated with four pre-wetted depots and four with treated salt. In 2019-2020 two depots stocked pre-wetted salt and six stocked treated salt. In 2020-21 the Winter Service will operate with treated salt at seven depots and one depot will hold a legacy stock of dry untreated salt, brine facilities for pre-wetting salt are no longer operational.
- 2.9 Depots in 2020-21 will operate as such:
- Manby Depot – four gritters + one spare gritter stocking untreated salt.
 - Willingham Hall, Horncastle, Thurlby, Ancaster, Sturton by Stow, Chainbridge and Pode Hole – 39 gritters + three spare gritters utilising the treated salt system.

3. Legal Issues:

Equality Act 2010

Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the Council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

The relevant protected characteristics are age; disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; and sexual orientation.

Having due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to:

- Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic.
- Take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it.
- Encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

The steps involved in meeting the needs of disabled persons that are different from the needs of persons who are not disabled include, in particular, steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities.

Having due regard to the need to foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to tackle prejudice, and promote understanding.

Compliance with the duties in section 149 may involve treating some persons more favourably than others.

The duty cannot be delegated and must be discharged by the decision-maker. To discharge the statutory duty the decision-maker must analyse all the relevant material with the specific statutory obligations in mind. If a risk of adverse impact is identified consideration must be given to measures to avoid that impact as part of the decision making process.

The Equality Act has been taken into account in this instance and an Equality Impact Analysis is attached at Appendix C. This review of the Winter Maintenance Plan is considered to have an impact as the strategy is at a high level of generality and is positive in its impact on people with a protected characteristic when compared with people who do not share that characteristic. Please review the Equality Impact Analysis in Appendix C for more information.

Joint Strategic Needs Analysis (JSNA) and the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy (JHWS)

The Council must have regard to the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) and the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy (JHWS) in coming to a decision.

The effect of revisions to the Winter Maintenance Plan on the JSNA and JHWS has been considered and deemed to have a positive impact. Our salting provisions are considered to be a means by which to ensure safety and subsequent health and wellbeing.

Crime and Disorder

Under section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, the Council must exercise its various functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent crime and disorder in its area (including anti-social and other behaviour adversely affecting the local environment), the misuse of drugs, alcohol and other substances in its area and re-offending in its area.

The duties under section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1988 have been considered and it is deemed that the proposed changes to the Winter Maintenance Plan will have no direct impact.

4. Conclusion

Following consideration of the report by the scrutiny committee, the Executive Councillor is requested to consider whether to approve the changes implemented in the Winter Service Plan as set out in Appendix A. The Winter Service Plan 2020 will then become operational from 01 October 2020.

5. Legal Comments:

The Council has the power to adopt the Plan as recommended.

The decision is consistent with the Policy Framework and within the remit of the Executive Councillor.

6. Resource Comments:

Delivery of the Winter Service Plan is funded by the budget included within the Highways budget approved as part of the overall 2020/21 Council Revenue Budget. The level of resource allocated is based on an assumed "average winter". Periods of severe winter weather or extreme weather events are likely to require additional funding, which would require a call on the contingency funds allocated in the approved budget.

7. Consultation

a) **Has Local Member Been Consulted?** N/A

b) **Has Executive Councillor Been Consulted?** Yes

c) **Scrutiny Comments**

The report will be considered by the Highways and Transport Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 14 September 2020. Any comments from the Committee will be presented to the Executive Councillor for Highways, Transport and IT.

d) **Have Risks and Impact Analysis been carried out?** Yes

e) **Risks and Impact Analysis**

An EIA has been carried out and is set out at Appendix C. Also see the main body of the Report.

8. Appendices

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix A	Winter Service Plan 2020
Appendix B	Winter Data Report 2020
Appendix C	Equality Impact Analysis for the Winter Service Plan 2020
Appendix D	Summary of Changes for the Winter Service Plan 2020

9. Background Papers

The following Background Papers within the meaning of section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 were used in the preparation of this Report.

Document title	Where the document can be viewed
Well Managed Highways Infrastructure	http://www.ukroadsliasongroup.org/en/codes

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