

**Open Report on behalf of Richard Wills, Executive Director for Environment and Economy**

Report to:	<b>Highways and Transport Scrutiny Committee</b>
Date:	<b>15 September 2014</b>
Subject:	<b>Winter Maintenance - Preparations for Winter 2014/15</b>

**Summary:**

This report details the background and preparations put in place for highway winter maintenance operations in Lincolnshire for the 2014/15 winter season.

**Actions Required:**

The Committee is invited to consider and comment on the report and to endorse the preparations for winter operations in 2014/15.

## 1. Background

Winter maintenance operations are carried out in accordance with the policies and procedures set out in the county's *Winter Maintenance Plan*, the latest version of which is dated July 2013 and was approved by Members in September 2013. A copy is attached as Appendix A.

### Winter Maintenance Plan – Section 1 Procedures

The Winter Maintenance Plan is split in to three parts. *Section 1 – Procedures*, includes policies and standards, is required to have Member approval. *Section 2 – Winter Maintenance Contacts* and *Section 3 – Operational Information* are for internal staff use only.

### Historical Context

Attached at Appendix B and C are charts detailing Salt Usage and Precautionary Salting Turnouts since 1985. This shows the uncertain nature of the winter weather over the last 20 winter seasons. Policy HM29 of the attached Winter Maintenance Plan details how the winter maintenance budget is set.

### Priority Route Network

In the past it was usual at this time of year for a report to be tabled for Members to consider a list of additional roads that could have been added to the Priority Route

Network, which had been scored in accordance with Policy HM31. But as reported in previous years, the network is at capacity with the resources currently deployed.

However we are aware that road usage does change following new housing and industrial development. Therefore some minor changes to the network are possible by taking a gritted route off the network and replacing with a non-gritted route, however this must be with all Parish/Town Council's affected agreeing to the changes. No changes are planned for this winter season.

### Salt Procurement

The normal bi-annual tender exercise for salt procurement was carried out earlier this year by ESPO and following technical and financial evaluation was awarded to the National Gritting Supplies (NGS) based in Southampton. This is the first change of supplier since Salinity UK won the contract in 1999. The county's reserve stock of 12,000 tonnes of salt will now be stored on the quayside at Southampton. For the start of the winter season there is now 23,000 tonnes of salt in depots throughout the county.

### Gritter Fleet

There have been no new vehicles brought into the fleet for this winter as the main 26 tonne vehicle replacements were completed ready for the winter of 2013/14. The replacement programme was brought forward then due to concerns over the change from Euro 5 to Euro 6 engines within the industry.

This has left two small 18 tonne Mercedes vehicles, following inspection and assessment, being extended on their lease beyond their ten year period. This will allow an informed decision to be made on their replacement following Euro 6 operations elsewhere in the municipal vehicle market.

### Salt Barns

Utilising some of the winter underspend budget from the winter of 2013/2014 work has started on the process to build a new salt barn at Willingham Hall. Once this has been completed this will only leave Horncastle with salt not stored under cover as recommended by national standards.

### Weather Station Network.

The installation of a new weather station at Caistor Top was completed late in last season and so will be fully operational for this season.

### Resilience.

Local highways divisions are continuing to engage with Parish Councils to encourage engagement on self-help practices and processes.

## **2. Conclusion**

It is recommended that the County Council continues winter maintenance operations in accordance with the Council's Winter Maintenance Plan issued in July 2013 and continues engagement with parish councils and community groups on self-help arrangements during periods of severe weather.

## **3. Consultation**

### **a) Policy Proofing Actions Required**

N/A

## **4. Appendices**

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix A	Winter Maintenance Plan - Dated July 2013
Appendix B	Winter Maintenance Salt Usage
Appendix C	Precautionary Salting Callouts (County Average)

## **5. Background Papers**

No background papers within Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 were used in the preparation of this report.

This report was written by David Davies, who can be contacted on 01522 782070 or davidj.davies@lincolnshire.gov.uk.