

POST WINTER UPDATE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 As part of the work plan for Area Committees agreed by the Area Committee Chairs and Chief Executive last year, it was agreed that an annual report be brought to the Area Committee seeking any views and comments that could be put forward for consideration as potentials for policy change through the Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee.
- 1.2 This report invites comments from Area Committees for consideration by the Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee for any potential policy amendments.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 Members are asked to consider this report and put forward any comments or views to be considered as part of the 2020/21 Winter Policy which is intended to be presented to the Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee in September 2020.

3.1 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Each year, Roads and Infrastructure Services refresh their Winter Maintenance Policy. The most recent version of the report to the Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee in September 2019 and the associated appendices and policy document is appended to this report (Appendix 1).
- 3.2 The policy sets out priorities for treatment and routes that will be 'pre-treated' in advance of winter hazards. In prolonged winter conditions the policy provides for all roads to be treated with resources being allocated to focus on the hierarchy of priorities (i.e. the lower priorities will only be cleared once the higher priorities have been treated and are clear).
- 3.3 The policy is a comprehensive document setting out the management,

governance and operational requirements for the winter service. The policy sets out signing provision to warn the travelling public of roads that are unsuitable for use during extreme winter conditions. The policy also provides a protocol for the reduction in use of salt and preservation of remaining stocks in the unlikely event of replenishment salt stocks not being available. This was introduced following the severe winters of 2009/10 and 2010/11.

- 3.4 Currently the Council pre-treat approximately 52% of the road network and utilise four priority categories (1 – 4). Essentially, whilst only 52% of the network is treated prior to the onset of snow or ice, the full network would be treated in a prolonged winter event. As part of this current financial years budget process, an extra £500k of budget was made available for winter which right sizes the budget based on recent years' average cost. The current budget provision provides sufficient resource for an average winter. There is no surplus within the budget provision therefore it is suggested that if any additional treatments were carried out, any additional costs would need to be delivered through efficiencies.
- 3.5 As part of the current in year budget settlement, Council allocated an additional £500k to offset historic overspends. £50k of this funding has been allocated to help improve community resilience during winter conditions. As part of the community resilience proposal, as an initial step we aim to better engage with our local communities and involve them in our winter maintenance programme. Where possible, this will involve empowering communities to work with the Council during winter weather events. The model we will be taking forward to engage with community groups is based on that used for the festive lights, the main difference being that we will be looking to initiate an initial scheme for community resilience for the 2020/21 winter season. Based on experiences elsewhere, we anticipate that there may be a slow start up which gathers momentum over short period of time.
- 3.6 Officers have liaised with representatives from Aberdeenshire Council and the Ayrshire Roads Alliance, both of which have successfully trialled community engagement and involvement through Snow Wardens (Aberdeenshire) and Community Engagement (Ayrshire Roads Alliance). Over a period in excess of three years each authority has seen a rise in members of their community being trained and given access to personal protective equipment as well as grit/shovels from the authority to help clear snow and ice from their local community. Both authorities are clear that a structured media campaign is required to get communities on board along with help and guidance. This includes resource from the Council to facilitate community engagement, training, media, provision of equipment etc.
- 3.7 A winter maintenance review is to be carried out during the 2019/20 and 2020/21 winter seasons. The review is considering vehicle type and procurement, staffing issues and route optimisation. Currently we are going through an initial procurement process for route optimisation. Multiuse vehicles may reduce the overall vehicle numbers required to deliver the year round service by maximising the use of chassis units with demountable bodies. These changes are scheduled to be incorporated in 2021/22. At present these

measures are still to be finalised through the vehicle procurement process as a consequence of the Departmental Re-Design which amalgamated Roads, Amenity and Waste resources in each area, into a single multifunctional operational workforce.

4.0 CONCLUSION

4.1 As part of the work plan for Area Committees agreed by the Area Committee Chairs and Chief Executive last year, it was agreed that an annual report be brought to the Area Committee seeking any views and comments that could be put forward for consideration as potentials for policy change through the Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Policy – winter maintenance policy is in place and goes before the EDI Committee each year for consideration.

5.2 Financial – from within existing revenue budgets

5.3 Legal – none known

5.4 HR – none known

5.5 Equalities – none known

5.6 Risk – none known

5.7 Customer Service – none known

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Winter Maintenance Policy 2019/20 covering report and associated appendices