

## WINTER MAINTENANCE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

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### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report provides an update on the development of the winter community engagement programme.

### 2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 Members are asked to:
- i. Note that the introduction of this scheme has been delayed as a result of COVID
  - ii. Agree the outline scheme criteria for the pilot project and public consultation as set out at 3.6
  - iii. Agree that Officers should explore the possibility of running a pilot scheme based on the criteria set out at 3.5
  - iv. Note that a further report will come back to this committee at the end of the winter season.

### 3.0 DETAIL

- 3.1 The Council previously (2019/20) allocated specific funds (£50,000) as part of the winter maintenance budget to support community engagement and resilience relating to winter maintenance.
- 3.2 The intention had been to look to run a community consultation over the course of the Spring of this year to (a) gauge interest and (b) gather information from communities around their expectations, which then could have been used to define the terms of the scheme.
- 3.3 With the onset of the COVID crisis it was felt that the timing was such that no meaningful feedback could be gathered, and notwithstanding this all resources were fully committed to the continued delivery of key frontline services.
- 3.4 As we now enter the winter period it is proposed to run that delayed consultation over the season, with a view to using feedback to define a scheme for roll-out

across the Council area next Summer/Autumn, in advance of the 2021/22 winter season.

- 3.5 To support the development of the scheme we are looking to run one pilot somewhere in Argyll and Bute with an established community group, on the basis of the criteria outlined below. On-the-ground feedback from a pilot partner would provide further useful data to inform the roll-out mentioned above
- 3.6 In broad general terms we would look to define this pilot scheme, and base the consultation exercise, on the following criteria:
1. That the partnership be with a properly established and constituted group
  2. That the partnership is based on members of the local community voluntarily offering their spare time to manually clear snow and/or spread grit from publicly-adopted footways [roadside pavements] and footpaths [paths remote from roads]
  3. The group should undertake this work on a reactive basis
  4. That the group limit its activity to footways and footpaths pre-agreed with the Council [likely to be in residential areas where we would not otherwise have the resources to attend to e.g. routes that the Council does not cover]
  5. That there is no expectation on the part of the Council for the group to 'turn out' at any point
  6. That the Council provides PPE and equipment such as shovels and salt spreaders
  7. That the Council provides training to the group's nominated person/leader
  8. That the Council provides grit in one or a number of large grit bins to be sited at publicly-owned locations which can be mutually agreed. This will be provided at the start of the season and restocked on request as and when available
  9. That individuals involved declare themselves fit to undertake the activities of manual shoveling of snow and gritting
- 3.7 The public consultation will be online on the Council website and highlighted through various channels via a communications exercise. The link will also be emailed to community councils, development trusts etc. The aim is to run the consultation over the remainder of the winter season.
- 3.8 A review of the pilot scheme and the public consultation feedback will be brought back to a future committee in order to define the scheme and move towards a full roll-out across Argyll and Bute Summer/Autumn 2021
- 3.9 It should be noted that while it is not expected that there will be a significant uptake in the 2021 season, any uptake will have to be carefully monitored as there is a finite amount of revenue funding available to support the scheme (£50,000). Should uptake be significant the Council may require to consider an area based geographic criteria to ensure the limited funding is prioritized where it will deliver the greatest benefit.

## **4.0 CONCLUSION**

- 4.1 The concept of community helping themselves during winter weather events is well established, which is why Councils provide publicly available grit bins. The Council is looking to further empower communities by establishing specific partnerships which will further help them help themselves.
- 4.2 If successful, this project will see an increased level of community resilience and will allow communities to augment the Council's existing winter maintenance activities.

## **5.0 IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 Policy – ultimately our approach to winter community engagement will form part of our winter services policy, once that approach is fully defined and tested
- 5.2 Financial – there is a £50,000 budget allocation for training, equipment, PPE and materials.
- 5.3 Legal – any agreement between the Council and groups will be structured to protect both from any liability
- 5.4 HR – none
- 5.5 Fairer Scotland Duty:
  - 5.5.1 Equalities - protected characteristics – none known
  - 5.5.2 Socio-economic Duty – none known
  - 5.5.3 Islands – none known
- 5.6 Risk – none known
- 5.7 Customer Service – this scheme provides an opportunity to enable and empower our customers to support the delivery of services and support their communities

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