

WINTER SERVICE POLICY 2011-2012

1. PURPOSE

To approve the Winter Service Policy document, for season 2011-12.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Area Committee consider the updated Policy prior to submission to the Executive, and then full Council, for approval to allow Operational Plans to be finalised towards the mobilisation of resources by 1st November 2011

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The severe weather conditions of the past three seasons 2008 – 2011 has brought the Winter Service Operation to the forefront of public attention.
- 3.2 Members are reminded of the business day presentations of summer 2010 where the capabilities of the department were explained. A total of 1205km of public road, equivalent to 52% of the network can be pre-treated by 31 vehicles in advance of freeze conditions, within a period of 2-3 hours.
- 3.3 The ability of the department to escalate in snow conditions is limited and the effects of constant precipitation greatly increases the need for heavier or repeated treatments of the core network, thus delaying the treatment of peripheral sections. In times of heavy snow, salt usage can be double or more that of normal pre-salting operations, even when grit and sand mixes are used to aid traction.
- 3.4 The core allowance of 58 runs within the 2010-11 budget was reached on 9th December 2010. Eventually the equivalent of 147.5 equivalent full runs were carried out during operations last season, including footway treatments, continuous snow operations and replenishment of grit heaps and bins.
This resulted in a spend of 254% of the core budget by 31st March 2011.
- 3.5 Salt used in all treatments 2010-11 totalled 19,727 tonnes with a minimum stock level of 2,359 tonnes on 8th Dec. 2010, compared to 18,744 tonnes the previous season with a minimum level of 951 tonnes reached on 19th Jan 2010. Although salt/ grit mixes were used to preserve stock, the resilience was maintained by procuring salt ex-Chile, through our contracted supplier, at a premium rate. This contributed to the overall cost of the operation but allowed the service to continue.

4. DETAILS

4.1 Winter Service Policy Document

4.1.1 The policy document attached **APPENDIX 1**, is unchanged and maintains the level of pre-treatment service delivered in 2010-11. The route category and treatment lengths have been retained, as has the treatment times by route priority.

4.1.2 The Policy Document caters for the resilience of the service with respect to the preservation and most efficient use of Salt supplies. These measures comply with the guidance issued by the United Kingdom Roads Liaison Group UKRLG, in the aftermath of the three severe winters of 2008 - 2011

4.1.3 The current Revenue budget allocation of £1.196M is sufficient to cater for the average level of winter activity from previous years prior to 2008, equating to the equivalent of 58 full turn-outs of the 31 vehicle pre-treatment fleet. Treatment of individual routes will vary with forecast or conditions but this equates to approximately 50 separate days activity throughout the winter period 1st Nov – 15th April including ~5 days snow clearance.

4.1.4 The Policy document and associated operational plans and route descriptions will be updated on the Winter Service page of the Council website at :-
<http://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/content/roadsandtransport/roadsandpavements>
The current pre-treatment route map and description documents are available at present, as are WRC4 secondary carriageway and reactive Footway route maps. Only minor operational changes are likely to be necessary, with completed documents available via the above web address prior to formal standby operations commencing on Friday 28th October 2011.

4.2 Winter Service - Operational Resilience

4.2.1 The management, supervision and service delivery human resources structure is unchanged from the system operated successfully in previous years. However due to reductions in the core Roads workforce, assistance from Streetscene supervisors and operatives and sub-Contractors will be required.

4.2.2 The Frontline treatment vehicle fleet remains similar to 2010-11 at 33 winter capable vehicles, ranging from 7.5t to 24t capacity. The efficiency of this fleet has been enhanced by procuring eight permanently mounted Gritters (PMG) / Plough units, on a season hire basis, to replace full time fleet vehicles release in April 2011. However eight replacement general purpose fleet vehicles of 7.5t capacity, procured as part of annual vehicle replacement, have been ordered with a secondary winter treatment capability. This will increase the number of vehicles able to plough in snow by a further eight, with four of these vehicles also able to spread salt and grit. This will enhance Roads Operations ability to escalate in times of snow within the constraints of the present departmental budget.

- 4.2.3 Salt stocks have been increased, including the introduction of a Strategic Stockpile at Connel to allow services to be delivered at policy levels, for an extended period without replenishment. The target starting quantity of 17,000 tonnes in all stores by 28th October is a 70% increase on previous seasons. This is equivalent to 45 days continuous operation at Policy treatment levels, although the resilience of individual stockpiles within the network will vary.
- 4.2.4 The Salt Use Reduction and Preservation of Stocks protocol drafted in December 2010 in light of severe shipping and material shortages has been enhanced and updated. This protocol was operated during Dec. to Feb. of last season. This allowed a reduced service to be maintained until such time as salt stocks and prevailing weather conditions allowed resumption of normal Policy treatment levels. The protocol has been updated in **APPENDIX 2**, for this season to cater for the operation of the new Strategic Stockpile under the Council's direct control, as a first line of defence, should replenishment supplies again become interrupted.
- 4.2.5 Inter-departmental arrangements to provide services to vulnerable clients are being developed to allow targeted use of treatment vehicles or 4x4 capability fleet vehicles to assist in the delivery of services on the peripheral network, in times of prolonged severe weather conditions.

5. IMPLICATIONS

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| 5.1 | Policy | Maintains previous season's level of pre-treatment service and route treatment lengths. The reactive treatment of footways in persisting hazards is also maintained at the previous level of service. |
| 5.2 | Financial | Operational Revenue budget 2011-2012 = £1.196 M |
| 5.3 | Personnel | Standby and Management arrangements unchanged. |
| 5.4 | Equalities
Impact
Assessment | None |
| 5.5 | Legal | None |

For further information, please contact Callum Robertson, Roads Asset Manager

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Date 12th September 2011