

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

GOVERNANCE AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 22 OCTOBER 2010

WINTER SERVICE IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Report by the Depute Chief Executive/Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise the Governance and Scrutiny Committee of the progress against the Winter Service Improvement Plan for 2010/2011.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Following the severe weather conditions which occurred between 20 December 2009 and 15 January 2010, the Governance and Scrutiny Committee on 18 June 2010 considered a report on Winter Response Arrangements and approved a Winter Service Improvement Plan.

- 2.2 The report concluded that;

- the Council and its employees responded effectively, efficiently and flexibly to the extreme weather conditions and the challenges it posed.
- Our communities and our residents, while at times understandably frustrated by the inconvenience caused by the weather, in the main, appreciated the nature of the Council's response.
- Our most vulnerable residents were protected; our schools with very few short-lived exceptions, remained open; and our road network ensured that travel around and in and out of the area was safe.
- Our employees performed outstandingly in the most difficult of circumstances and over a prolonged period putting their communities before themselves and their families.

- 2.3 No matter how successful arrangements are deemed to be, the Council always seeks to continuously improve and therefore an Improvement Plan was developed and approved by Members. The committee agreed that the Depute Chief Executive/Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services report on progress in implementing the Improvement Plan to the meeting of the Governance and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 22 October 2010. The Improvement Plan updated with regard to progress against actions is included at Appendix 1.

2.4 Cabinet on the 29 September 2010 noted progress against the Winter Service Improvement Plan and approved the Winter Service Plan for 2010/2011.

3. SUMMARY OF PROGRESS

3.1 **Winter Service Plan;** The Winter Service Plan has been rewritten taking account of guidance contained in 'Well Maintained Highways' the Code of Practice for Highway Maintenance Management, which was revised in May 2010. The Code of Practice includes a section on Winter Service and takes account of the lessons learned from the previous two winters. The Winter Service Plan establishes the Council's policy and responsibilities, treatment priorities, outlines the day to day direction of operations, performance monitoring and liaison and communications. The Winter Service Plan includes sections on;

- Statement of Policies and Responsibilities
- Route Planning for Carriageways and Footways
- Weather Prediction and Information
- Organisational Arrangements and Personnel
- Plant Vehicles and Equipment
- Salt and De-icing Materials
- Operational Communications
- Information and Publicity

3.2 The Winter Service Plan including the carriageway gritting routes was distributed to Elected Members prior to the seminar for Elected Members on the Winter Service Review 2010/2011 – Preparation for the Future, which was carried out on 14 September 2010. Members were invited to comment on the Plan and Routes and their comments were considered in finalising the document which was approved by Cabinet on 29 September 2010. The Winter Service Plan and carriageway gritting routes are available on the Members' Portal.

3.3 **Review of Carriageway Gritting Routes;** Following the review of carriageway gritting routes three levels of response are proposed. Priorities are based on the Code of Practice guidance, which takes into account carriageway hierarchy, wider transport and other policy priorities such as access to schools, emergency facilities, public services and key industrial and business centres. The proposed carriageway gritting route priorities are set out below,

- Priority 1 routes (41% of the road network), will receive precautionary pre-salting as appropriate on receipt of an adverse forecast. The number of pre-salting routes will be reduced from 15 to 12.
- Priority 2 routes (8% of the road network) will receive post-salting treatment if adverse conditions are forecast to last beyond midday and will be treated during the working day.

- Priority 3 routes (35% of the road network) will be treated when there is severe weather forecast over a prolonged period.

The reduction in precautionary gritting routes has been achieved by having more efficient routes and reducing the length of minor rural roads which were previously included and not now considered to meet the criteria outlined for priority 1 routes. As the routes are based on a hierarchy, resources are targeted more effectively to improve the delivery of the service to a wider proportion of road users. Carriageway gritting routes will be available on the Council web site.

3.4 Review of Footway Gritting; Footway gritting was previously reactive and on the whole only carried out during the working day. Taking on board comments from elected members and the public it is proposed to introduce precautionary footway treatment routes. Priorities are based on the recommendations within the Code of Practice and which take account of footway hierarchy and wider pedestrian and other policy priorities such as access to schools, public services and health facilities

- Priority 1 footway routes comprising 130km of footway within all towns and villages will receive precautionary treatment if it is forecast that ice or snow is likely to be present on surfaces or where surfaces are wet with temperatures forecast to remain below zero over the next 24 hours.
- Priority 2 routes comprising a further 100km of footway will be treated if it is forecast that ice or snow is likely to be present on surfaces with temperatures forecast to remain below zero over a prolonged period.
- Different types of plant and applications are presently being assessed to determine the most effective and efficient operation for footway treatment.

Footway gritting routes will be available on the Council web-site. It is not possible with available resources to treat all footways. The Council will encourage self help and resilience through advance publicity and the placing of community grit bins as detailed in paragraph 3.5 below.

3.5 Grit Bins; At present there are 400 grit bins throughout urban areas within East Ayrshire. A more detailed policy has been developed to ensure a consistent approach for the siting of grit bins in the future and is included within the Winter Service Plan. Written applications will require to be endorsed by Elected Members, Community Councils or Tenants and Residents Associations and will be assessed by Roads and Transportation staff. In addition to encourage community resilience and self help it is proposed to introduce larger community grit bins. These will be positioned in central locations within each community. Consultation regarding the location of such grit bins will take place with Elected Members, Community Councils and Tenants and Residents Associations. It is anticipated there will be approximately 35 community grit bins.

- 3.6 Salt Levels and Conservation;** It is proposed to increase the stock held at the start of winter from 6,000t to 8,000t, 4,000 tonnes of salt in each salt dome. The additional stockholding of salt should provide greater resilience during periods of prolonged extreme weather. Minimum stock levels of 2,400 tonnes of salt, rising to 4,800 tonnes (to provide 12 days resilience over the Christmas holiday period) have been set is based on recommended resilience levels. Should stock levels fall below these levels due to difficulties in obtaining salt then the Head of Roads and Transportation will consider the implementation of salt conservation measures which include treatment on Minimum Winter Network Routes and the use of salt/grit mixes.
- 3.7 Decision Making;** A real time, web-based winter service management system has been introduced to improve the dissemination of information on treatment decisions and actions taken (IceMan). The system provides instantaneous communication of decisions and allows interested parties (Risk Management Centre, other Council Services, Police, etc) to monitor decisions made and actions taken. The system also improves the management of salt stocks and provides improved performance monitoring and reporting.
- 3.8 Training;** A range of training exercises will be utilised to promote the winter service plan, these include;
- Roads and Transportation staff undertaking refresher training on winter decision making processes.
 - A Winter Service Plan presentation has been developed and will be delivered to all staff involved in the delivery of the winter service across the Council.
 - The pre-winter exercise scheduled to take place on 1 October 2010 will be extended to cover other Council services.
 - Risk Management Centre staff have been trained in accessing IceMan to ensure that access to up-to-date information is always available.
- 3.9 Communications;** A range of communications methods will be utilised to promote the winter service plan and inform the public and these are listed below;
- The distribution of the Winter Service Plan to key stakeholders including Community Planning Partners and Community Councils,
 - The Winter Service Plan will be made available on the Council website.
 - The proposed gritting routes will be made available on the Council website.
 - Publicity for the Winter Service Plan will be issued to the media prior to the winter period and will include advice on community resilience and self help.
 - The content of Winter Leaflet will be reviewed following approval of the Winter Service Plan and again will include information on community resilience and self help.
 - Lunchtime treatment decisions will be available on the Council web-site.

- Close liaison will continue between Roads and Transportation, Education and Social Services, Housing and Communications with regard to all aspects of the winter service operations to ensure accurate and appropriate information is issued timeously, during periods of prolonged Winter.

3.10 Risk Management Centre; The Risk Management Centre will be the hub for the Strategic Control of response by senior management during periods of prolonged extreme adverse weather. This will ensure that accurate and appropriate information is issued timeously to elected members, the public and other stakeholders. To assist with this and ensure the most up to date information is to hand staff within the Risk Management Centre and senior management will have access to Roads and Transportation's web-based winter maintenance management system as detailed in paragraph 3.7. Staff within the Risk Management Centre will be trained in the above system as well as receiving the Winter Service presentation.

3.11 Elected Members / Community Councils / Community Planning Briefings; A programme of winter service briefings for stakeholders has been developed and the winter service plan will be distributed to stakeholders;

- A Winter Service Seminar for Elected Members on 14 September 2010.
- A Winter Service Presentation will be given to Community Planning Partners, Community Councils and Tenants and Residents Associations prior to 1 November 2010.
- The Winter Service Plan and priority gritting routes will be distributed to Elected Members, Community Planning Partners, Community Councils and Tenants and Residents Associations
- Elected Members, Community Councils and Tenants and Residents Associations will be consulted regarding the siting of community grit bins as outlined in 3.4 above.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Table 1 – Winter Costs 2006/07–2009/10

	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
	Actual (£)	Actual (£)	Actual (£)	Actual (£)	Budget (£)
Roads Winter Maintenance	911,920	1,105,994	1,565,249	1,731,328	980,000

4.2 Reducing the number of gritting routes from 15 to 12 will reduce the cost of routine gritting treatments in an average year by approximately £130,000. The savings are derived from a reduction in manpower and salt used. In addition a further £100,000 of transport savings has been identified from a reduction in the fleet by three vehicles as leases terminate.

4.3 Table 2 – Footway Gritting Costs

	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2009/10
	Actual (£)	Actual (£)	Actual (£)	Actual (£)	Budget (£)
Footway Gritting	N/A	14,173	63,923	249,474	The footway gritting costs are included in the total winter service budget

4.4 The resultant costs arising from proposed increase in the frequency of footway gritting proposed under the revised Winter Service Plan are currently being finalised, however they will be contained within savings realised from the efficiencies in the carriageway gritting routes.

4.5 The proposed introduction of community grit bins will have an estimated additional cost of £15,000 for purchase of new large grit bins and an annual estimated cost of £15,000 based on refilling the bins six times a year.

4.6 The additional costs in improving the level of service for footway gritting and the introduction of community grit bins will be met from the redistribution of the winter service budget. It is anticipated that no additional costs will be incurred during an average winter.

5. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The reduction in the number of priority 1 gritting routes will reduce the number of operatives required for stand-by and allow the introduction of more sustainable pattern of shifts. It is proposed to change from a three shift rota (early shift, back shift, off) to a four shift rota (early shift, off, late shift, off) thus giving more flexibility in adhering to drivers hours regulations and the working time directive.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 East Ayrshire Council as Roads Authority has a statutory duty under Section 34 of the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984 to 'take such steps as it considers reasonable to prevent snow and ice endangering the safe passage of pedestrians and vehicles over public roads'. The Winter Service Plan sets out how East Ayrshire Council will provide it's the winter service to meet its statutory duty.

7. COMMUNITY PLAN / POLICY IMPLICATIONS

7.1 An effective and efficient winter service within East Ayrshire will allow the safe passage of vehicles and pedestrians and minimise delays due to winter weather. This will contribute to the Community Planning themes of Delivering Community Regeneration and Improving Community Safety.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

8.1 The Winter Service Plan has been developed to minimise risk to road users during adverse weather and to ensure that operations are undertaken safely.

9. Recommendations

9.1 It is recommended that the Committee

- i) Notes the progress against the Winter Service Improvement Plan attached at Appendix 1.
- ii) Otherwise note the content of the report

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Depute Chief Executive/Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services

EM/JB
6 October 2010

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

Governance and Scrutiny Committee Report 18 June 2010 - Winter Response Arrangements

Cabinet Report 29 September 2010 – Winter Service Plan and Improvement Plan

For further information please contact John Bryson on 01563 576310
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APPENDIX 1 – WINTER SERVICE IMPROVEMENT PLAN – September 2010

A detailed Improvement Plan to facilitate the Winter Service response arrangements within East Ayrshire Council is displayed below. To ensure clarity, officer responsibility and timescales have also been provided within the action plan. The IAP also considers the twenty recommendations of the updates to the Code of Practice 'Well Maintained Highways', issued in May 2010.

No.	Topic	Action	Responsibility	Progress	Code of Practice Ref.	Due Date
1.0		Roads and Transportation Service				
1.1	Winter Service Policy	The Winter Service Policy to be reviewed in line with 'Well Maintained Highways' the Code of Practice for Highway Maintenance Management. This document was updated in May 2010 and takes into account lessons learned in the previous two winters. The twenty recommendations in the new guidance will be considered as part of this review.	Head of Roads and Transportation	Complete A new draft Winter Service plan has been compiled in accordance with revised guidance in Code of Practice (CoP).	R13.1 R13.8 R13.20	Aug 2010
1.2	Review of Gritting Routes	The primary gritting routes were established in 1996 and have not been subject to a full review since. The existing priority routes treat 57% of the road network. However not all roads are included on gritting routes. The primary routes will be reviewed and secondary and tertiary gritting routes to cover the majority of public roads in East Ayrshire will be developed. Trigger levels will be established to determine when these additional routes will be treated.	Head of Roads and Transportation	Complete Following the review of gritting routes three levels of response are proposed, Priority 1, 2 and 3. Priorities are based on the revised CoP guidance which takes into account carriageway hierarchy, wider transport and other policy priorities. Priority 1 routes reduced from 15 to 12 and cover 40.2% of road network. Priority 2 routes cover 8.1% of the network. Trigger levels have been set for treatment.	R13.2 R13.10 R13.9	Aug 2010
1.3	Footway Gritting	A review of the existing policy, service levels and the routes themselves will be undertaken. Access to facilities such as	Head of Roads and Transportation	Good Progress Priority 1 and priority 2 footway	R13.2 R13.10	

No.	Topic	Action	Responsibility	Progress	Code of Practice Ref.	Due Date
		schools, doctor's surgeries, care homes and community centres will be taken into consideration. This may require increased resources, including the purchase of additional plant.		gritting routes have been established based on the revised CoP guidance taking into account footway hierarchy and wider pedestrian and other policy priorities such as access to schools, public services and health facilities. Trigger levels are being considered and associated costs and resources assessed. Different types of plant and applications are being assessed to determine response times.	R13.9	Aug 2010
1.4	Grit Bins	A review of the existing policy will be undertaken. An increase in the numbers of bins provided maybe necessary to increase community resilience. It may also be necessary as a means of allowing the public access to salt / grit if the facility to collect from the depots is removed on health and safety grounds. As well as providing guidance on locating grit bins the policy will determine how often the bins will be re-filled and with what materials.	Head of Roads and Transportation	Complete New policy developed including proposal to introduce community grit bins, a larger grit bin positioned in a central location in each community. Site to be agreed with Local Members and Community Councils. All requests for new grit bins to come through Local Members or Community Councils.	R13.1 R13.2	Aug 2010
1.5	Salt Levels	In line with the recommendations of Well Maintained Highways stock levels will be determined to provide a set level of resilience to cover the Christmas and New Year period (up to 12 days) when supplies will generally be unobtainable. Trigger levels for re-ordering stock will be set.	Head of Roads and Transportation	Complete 2 x Salt domes are to be filled to 4000t (supplies permitting) if, giving 8000t salt stock.	R13.2 R13.3 R13.17 R13.18 R13.19	Aug 2010
1.6	Salt Conservation Methods	Gritting routes for a reduced network coverage will be developed and implemented in periods when salt has to be conserved. Consideration will also be given to the use of	Head of Roads and Transportation	Complete A Minimum Winter Network has been established as part of	R13.9 R13.10 R13.16	Aug 2010

No.	Topic	Action	Responsibility	Progress	Code of Practice Ref.	Due Date
		salt / grit mixes, particularly when snow is forecast. Trigger levels for salt conservation methods will be set and included in the policy.		contingency planning for prolonged severe weather conditions has been established. Use of salt/grit mixes to be considered outwith Minimum Winter Network at these times.		
1.7	Decision Making	The decision making process will be reviewed in line with Well Maintained Highways. In particular the co-ordination with other services will be reviewed, particularly during periods of severe.	Heads of Services	Complete New web-based winter service management system has been introduced which allows live, real time information to be accessed from anywhere with internet access, instantaneous communication of decisions, ability of other interested parties (other Council Services, Police, Risk Management Centre etc) to monitor decisions made and actions taken, improved management of salt stocks, improved reporting.	R13.4 R13.12	Aug 2010
1.8	Training	Extend training in Winter Service activities to non-core staff. The pre-winter exercise will be extended to cover staff in other services that are likely to be involved in providing the winter service.	Head of Roads and Transportation / Heads of Services	Good Progress Presentation will be given on Winter Service Plan to non-core staff and a pre-winter exercise will be extended to cover other Council services.	R13.14 R13.15	Sept 2010
1.9	Communications	Ensure that the Winter Policy, Plans and gritting routes are available on the Council website. The lunchtime treatment decision should also be available on the website. The existing 'Winter' leaflet will be reviewed and updated and further information regarding preparing for winter, etc will be developed.	Head of Roads and Transportation / Heads of Services	Good Progress Winter Service Plan will be distributed to key stakeholders such as Community Planning Partners and Community Councils and will be available on the Council website. New	R13.5 R13.6 R13.7 R13.8	Sept 2010

No.	Topic	Action	Responsibility	Progress	Code of Practice Ref.	Due Date
				gritting routes will be put on Council web-site. Publicity on the Winter Service Plan will be issued to the media prior to the winter period. The winter leaflet will be reviewed following approval of the Winter Service Plan. The lunchtime treatment decision will be made available on the Council web-site.		
1.10	Elected Members / Community Councils	Information packs will be prepared for Elected Members following the review. Consultation with the community via the Community Councils will take place following completion of the review.	Head of Roads and Transportation / Heads of Services	Good Progress A Winter Seminar has been arranged for Elected Members, 14 September 2010. A Winter Service Presentation will be given to Community Partners and Community Councils. Winter Service Plan and gritting routes will be distributed to Elected members and Community Councils. Elected Members and Community Councils will be consulted regarding the siting of community grit bins.	R13.7 R13.8 R13.14 R13.20	Sept 2010
1.11	Community Planning	Communicate our Winter Service Policy and Plans to our Community Planning Partners following completion of the review.	Head of Roads and Transportation / Heads of Services	Good Progress A presentation on Winter Service will be given to Community Planning Partners along with copies of the Winter Service Plan.	R13.5 R13.7	Sept 2010
2.0		Housing Service / Housing Asset Service				

No.	Topic	Action	Responsibility	Progress	Code of Practice Ref.	Due Date
2.1	Boilers	Review of installation procedures with regard to condensing boilers.	Head of Housing Services	Complete Meetings with manufacturers have taken place and manufacturers are reviewing alternative methods of installations to identify best practice. Increased bore of pipe, min. 35mm in line with manufacturer's recommendation in all installations. Fitting tundish traps as standard to prevent backfill into boiler.		July 2010
2.2	Water Supplies	Review of existing arrangements to provide bottled supplies to affected properties. Review of existing communication arrangements with Scottish Water.	Head of Housing Services	Complete Communication arrangements confirmed and stock of bottled water now held by HAS		Aug 2010
2.3	Stand-by Arrangement	Review the arrangements for providing a stand-by service, particularly over the Christmas and New Year period. This review will consider the effects of weather on the provision of the service and the requirements for closer co-ordination with the Risk Management Centre.	Head of Housing Services	Good Progress, Reviewed key trades: Plumbers increased to 4+4 over festive period.		Aug 2010
2.4	Repairs and Recovery	Review existing arrangements for providing temporary heating. Review existing arrangements for decanting tenants and improving the communication with affected parties.	Head of Housing Services	Good Progress Stock of 600 temporary heaters held in store, partly achieved 1 Stock of heaters increased seasonally. 2. Starter Packs 3. Increase provision of Gas Plumbers through resource management. 4. Stock levels will be increased to take in seasonal variations. 5. New operational procedures have been developed in line		Aug 2010

No.	Topic	Action	Responsibility	Progress	Code of Practice Ref.	Due Date
				with transfer of roles to H.A.S for Sept. 10, which will include operational and communication practices		
2.5	Empty Properties	Review processes for identifying potential and actual abandonments and actions required to reduce problems during winter from burst pipes, etc.	Head of Housing Services	Complete Void property procedures reviewed and adapted to ensure drain downs during periods of cold weather.		Aug 2010
3.0		Educational and Social Services				
3.1	Access to schools	Review existing arrangements at schools for providing access during periods of severe winter weather. Ensure arrangements are in place for gritting access paths by janitorial staff.	Exec. Director ESS	Good Progress Individual Location Risk Assessments introduced for 2009/10 for all Janitorial staff. Review of documentation complete and action taken on individual issues raised in 2009/10. (new Grit spreaders, shovels bought) Further training to be completed at Janitor Seminar on October in-service day in preparation for winter 2010/11.		Aug 2010
3.2	Access to other Community Services	Review winter gritting routes with Roads and Transportation Services with regard to maintaining access to community facilities such as Day Centres, Doctor's Surgeries, Care Homes and Community Centres.	Exec. Director ESS	Complete Plans prepared to enable access to all day centres, doctor's surgeries, care homes and community centres.		Aug 2010
3.3	Remote Working	Review procedures for remote workers, particularly those providing personal assistance to vulnerable clients during periods of severe weather.	Exec. Director ESS	Complete Procedures have been reviewed and appropriate measures are in place		Aug 2010

No.	Topic	Action	Responsibility	Progress	Code of Practice Ref.	Due Date
3.4	Mobile Care Teams	Protocols to be enhanced to support the expansion of mobile services during periods of severe weather.	Exec. Director ESS	Good Progress The review is underway with Roads and Transportation to establish protocols.		Aug 2010
3.5	Meals at Home	Review of contingency arrangements regarding the use of emergency freezers for service user meals.	Exec. Director ESS	Complete, Reserve stores have been established at sheltered housing units		Aug 2010
4.0		Communications and Community Resilience				
4.1	Training	Extend training in Winter Service activities to non-core staff. The pre-winter exercise will be extended to cover staff in other services that are likely to be involved in providing the winter service.	Head of Roads and Transportation / Heads of Democratic Services	Good progress Pre-winter exercise arranged for 1 October to include non core staff. Winter presentation to be given to non core staff following approval of Winter Service Plan.		Sept 2010
4.2	Communications	Ensure that the Winter Policy, Plans and gritting routes are available on the Council website. The existing 'Winter' leaflet will be reviewed and updated and further information regarding preparing for winter, etc will be developed.	Head of Roads and Transportation / Heads of Democratic Services	Good Progress Winter Service Plan and carriageway gritting routes will be published on the Council website following approval by Cabinet. Work on leaflet commenced and will be completed following approval of Winter Service Plan.		Sept 2010
4.3	Elected Members	Information packs will be prepared for Elected Members following the review and in preparation for winter 2010/11.	Head of Roads and Transportation / Heads of Democratic Services	Good Progress Draft packs prepared and distributed to members in advance of Winter Service seminar.		Sept 2010
4.4	Community Councils and Residents Panel	Consultation with the community via Community Councils and the Residents Panel will take place as part of the review.	Head of Community Support	Work Commenced Presentations to be arranged with Community Councils on a		Nov 2010

No.	Topic	Action	Responsibility	Progress	Code of Practice Ref.	Due Date
				geographical split following approval of Winter Service Plan.		
4.5	Communities	Supporting and encouraging communities more resilient and with greater self reliance. This will be promoted through members information packs and the winter leaflet.	Head of Democratic Services	Good Progress See 4.3 and 4.4 above. Proposal to provide		Sept 2010
4.6	Community Planning	Communicate our Winter Service Policy and Plans to our Community Planning Partners following completion of the review.	Head of Roads and Transportation / Community Planning Partnership Manager	Will follow after completion of the review		Sept 2010