



Name of meeting: Environment and Climate Change Scrutiny Panel

Date: 30/08/2023

Title of report: Snow Wardens Volunteer Scheme

Purpose of report: 1 year update of 2 year trial.

Key Decision - Is it likely to result in spending or saving £500k or more, or to have a significant effect on two or more electoral wards? Decisions having a particularly significant effect on a single ward may also be treated as if they were key decisions.	Not Applicable If yes give the reason why
Key Decision - Is it in the <u>Council's Forward Plan (key decisions and private reports)?</u>	Key Decision –No Private Report/Private Appendix – No
The Decision - Is it eligible for call in by Scrutiny?	Yes If no give the reason why not
Date signed off by <u>Strategic Director</u> & name Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Finance? Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Legal Governance and Commissioning?	Yes, Graham West, Service Director, 14 August.
Cabinet member portfolio	Cllr Masood Ahmed – Environment

Electoral wards affected: All

Ward councillors consulted: All (September 2022)

Public or private: Public

Has GDPR been considered? Yes

1. Summary

In 2022, a small budget was allocated from the council's annual severe weather budget to establish a snow warden trial. The winter period (starting October 2022 and finishing April 2023), was the first year of a two year trial for the snow warden scheme. This coming winter 2023/24 will be the 2nd and final year of the trial.

2. Information required to take a decision

Year 1

The first year of the trial attracted 27 volunteers to the scheme, which was less than the original target of 46 (based on an average of two volunteers per ward). Ward councillors were asked to promote the scheme to residents through various channels and engage with the team should there be an uptake in volunteers within their ward. In year 1, we found there to be peak areas within the district, with over 50% of volunteers being within the Almondbury ward.

Feedback from volunteers was positive. They enjoyed being part of the scheme and the autonomy the structure of the scheme allowed them to have, in terms of which roads and footpaths on the highway they could grit and when. The only negative feedback we received was regarding one piece of equipment, the grit shaker. We have taken this feedback on board and amended our equipment provision for year 2. We did not have to redeliver any grit during the season and we received no requests for further grit.

We operated an ad-hoc equipment ordering and delivery service as part of the trial, which proved to not be cost nor time effective. Also some volunteers waited up to a week for their kit to be delivered to them.

Year 2

Based on feedback and analysis of year 1, the following changes will be made for year 2:

- A direct approach to residents will be adopted alongside the elected member approach, with a new web page launched and a small social media campaign. We will extend the campaign should we have a lower than anticipated uptake on the trial.
- Lift the limit on the number of trial volunteers to up to 100, allowing us to order stock prior to the scheme beginning and benefit from some cheaper bulk pricing. This will bring cost down by around a third per kit.
- As a result of responses from volunteers, we will remove the shaker from the resident pack and replace with a simpler scoop based spreader.
- We will increase the amount of grit provided as part of the first delivery, from 10kg to 30kg.

- Move to a collection first model, asking volunteers to visit our depots to collect their kit. This will also enable officers to answer any questions the volunteers have prior to starting.

End of Trial Process

Year 2 of the trial will end in April 2024 and will be followed by a month of volunteer engagement in May 2024 including surveys and focus groups, with an aim to take final feedback and recommendations.

Following the feedback sessions and surveys a full report will be presented in July 2024 with recommendations including cost analysis and future options.

3. Implications for the Council

3.1 Working with People

The trial means the service working directly with residents across the district, offering advice and training to alleviate pressures on the service during the winter period.

3.2 Working with Partners

N/A

3.3 Place Based Working

N/A

3.4 Climate Change and Air Quality

N/A

3.5 Improving outcomes for children

N/A

3.6 Financial Implications for the people living or working in Kirklees

N/A

3.7 Other (eg Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA)/Legal/Financial or Human Resources) Consultees and their opinions

4. Consultation

All ward councillors were consulted on the proposal through the ward meetings in September 2022, allowing feedback on the proposals. Additionally, trial volunteers

from year 1 have been spoken to regarding their experiences with the trial, with recommendations made and changes put in place.

5. Engagement

Trial volunteers have been engaged throughout year 1 of the process, with a full trial review taking place in May 2024.

6. Next steps and timelines

The next steps are to reopen applications for snow wardens in September 2023, with the application period open for a month. Following this we will look to offer collection/delivery of stock in October 2023.

7. Officer recommendations and reasons

It is recommended that the trial is not extended to allow up to a further 100 snow wardens from across the district on the trial through a designated application period. Previously the application period was open for the full winter period, but this caused issues in purchasing and distributing equipment in a timely manner and also caused extra expense through officer time.

8. Cabinet Portfolio Holder's recommendations

To continue into year 2 of the trial, with a full review next year.

9. Contact officer

Nick Jenkin, Business Development Officer, nick.jenkin@kirklees.gov.uk, 07823 336 399

10. Background Papers and History of Decisions

The initial trial was taken to scrutiny panel in August 2022 as part of the wider winter maintenance plan.

11. Service Director responsible

Graham West, Service Director for Highways and Streetscene