



Name of meeting: CABINET
Date: 18th September 2018

Title of report: The Revised winter maintenance policy

Purpose of Report This is a key decision to seek approval to adopt the revised winter maintenance policy

Key Decision - Is it likely to result in spending or saving £250k or more, or to have a significant effect on two or more electoral wards?	Yes Affects more than 1 ward
Key Decision - Is it in the Council's Forward Plan (key decisions and private reports?	Yes First published 16 August.
The Decision - Is it eligible for call in by Scrutiny?	Yes
Date signed off by Strategic <u>Director</u> & name Is it also signed off by the Acting Service Director - Finance, IT, and Transactional? Is it also signed off by the Service Director Legal, Governance and Commissioning?	Karl Battersby - 3.09.2018 Eamonn Croston - 7.09.2018 Julie Muscroft - 6.09.2018
Cabinet member portfolio	Cllr Naheed Mather - Communities and Environment

Electoral [wards](#) affected: All

Ward councillors consulted:

Public or private: PUBLIC

1. Summary

Adverse winter conditions can have a major disruptive impact on our community including businesses, education, transport, health and social care. The council undertakes this important winter maintenance service in order to help road users and help minimise the disruptive effect of winter weather in the context of the council's legal duties as well as guidance and

good practise contained in the new code of practise 'Well managed highway Infrastructure'. The council does not have unlimited resources to provide this service and is therefore keen to promote a proactive community approach by wider engagement to compliment the council's interventions. This policy has been updated to reflect the new code of practise but provides for essentially the same winter maintenance service at this time.

The winter of 2017/18 and particularly in March with 'Beast from the East' provided very challenging winter conditions in Kirklees as well as across the country. In such circumstances the priority is to keep people safe, with council resources used where necessary, rather than budget driven. We worked closely with partners and member of the community, providing up to date information and responding to calls for assistance.

This revised policy (Appendix 1) relates to early intervention and management of the winter maintenance service on a minor to moderate scale. It sits alongside the council's emergency planning procedures which will be activated and override this policy should there be severe or prolonged conditions, such as heavy snowfall.

2. Information required to take a decision

2.1 Legal context

- 2.1.1 There is a legal duty on Highway authorities (Highways Act 1980) to ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, that safe passage along the highway is not endangered by snow or ice. The Traffic Management Act 2004 places a network management duty on all local traffic authorities to do all that is reasonably practicable to manage the network effectively to keep traffic moving. In meeting these duties, the council has established contingency plans for dealing with unplanned events such as weather conditions as far as reasonably practicable. The emphasis is on 'as far as reasonably practicable' and the courts would expect this to be demonstrated by provision of a service which manages risk within the financial and resource constraints of the council as a highway authority and would look to the highways code of practise as an example of good practise.
- 2.1.2 The new highways code of practice, "Well-managed Highway Infrastructure: A Code of Practice" (The Code) came into effect on 28 October 2016. This document supersedes the previous "Well-maintained Highways" code of practise, which includes advice on how to operate a winter maintenance service and will be withdrawn in October 2018. There has been a two year transition period to implement the Code. It is therefore necessary to update the council's winter maintenance policy in line with the advice of the new code.
- 2.1.3 The council as highway authority is responsible for providing a winter maintenance service on adopted public highway comprising over 1900 km of road network and other council owned facilities within the district, except motorways which are the responsibility of Highways England.

2.3 Community and citizen involvement

- 2.3.1 The council understands the importance of our winter maintenance service provided to both our residents, businesses and communities but we also recognise that there is not unlimited resources to reach everyone regardless of the severity of the conditions. Responses to the National Highways and Transportation Network (NHT) Public Satisfaction Survey tell us that clearing snow and ice is an important issue for residents. The 2017 survey recorded 55% satisfaction with clearing of snow and ice on the council's road network.
- 2.3.2 It is important that the council manages its resources and prioritises the most important busier routes but also supports vulnerable members of the community and enables our partners to continue to deliver essential services. This approach means that we are unable to reach everyone all of the time and we value how our communities help and support each other during periods of winter weather.
- 2.3.3 Community gritting- The council provides and maintains grit bins throughout the district which are located on adopted roads away from the normal treatment network. The expectation is that individuals will make use of this salt for the benefit of the community to grit roads and pavements when winter weather is forecast and help to clear lying snow and ice in the vicinity. The location and management of the grit bins is delegated to the service director. Any changes will be considered as part of the annual review following each winter season and in discussion with ward councillors.
- 2.3.4 The council acknowledges the valuable help given by community groups and volunteer farmers in rural areas who help keep clear and grit rural roads and pavements to assist vulnerable residents and the more isolated communities in the Kirklees area.
- 2.3.5 The council will explore a number of initiatives in the following areas to expand on the current valued work done by communities:
- Winter Ready Schools Initiative –work with schools who make a commitment to remaining open during winter, to enable parents to continue to work and students to learn.
 - Winter Ready Drivers Initiative – We recognise that some residents live in areas that are both higher elevations and are not part of the normal gritting network.
 - Winter Ready Community Initiative - We recognise that some residents will be vulnerable during the winter months and of limited means. Winter ready partners initiative- We recognise that severe weather can have an impact on the ability of our partners to delivery services. We will explore ways of working with them to continue to deliver these services, particularly important where vulnerable people need help.

2.4 Communications and public engagement

- 2.4.1 The Council recognises that during and following periods of severe weather information on travel conditions and updates on the Council winter maintenance response enables the community and those using our roads to make more informed decisions about their travel arrangements. Use of the council's website, e-newsletter and social media such as the twitter account @kirkleeswinter has become a valuable means of providing up to date information to our communities and beyond. Information provided includes preparing for winter, what the council is able to do, how the community can help themselves prepare and cope with the conditions.

2.5 Winter treatment network

- 2.5.1 The Council undertakes winter maintenance treatment by gritting and snow ploughing on a number of different networks with response and treatment times described in the winter maintenance policy.
- 2.5.2 The **Normal treatment network** is developed based on guidance in the policy and is gritted in response to the forecasts and maintained during the ongoing cold conditions during the winter.

Other routes comprising the remainder of adopted highway will be cleared of snow and ice as resources allow, in response to the weather forecast and once the normal treatment network is operational.

2.6 Severe weather and resilience

- 2.6.1 The winter maintenance policy described how the council will operate its normal winter service. However as has been the case in previous winters there may be the need to modify the plan in response to the extreme conditions. The council liaises with other adjoining local councils and Highways England with mutual support and on collaboration during severe weather conditions. The Council's **minimum winter network (resilient network)** has been developed to provide for essential services and access to critical infrastructure, in response to very severe prolonged weather and shortage of resources such as salt stocks (as occurred in 2008/9 and 2009/10 when national salt reserves were low). Should the council need to move to this critical level of operation this will be communicated to the wider community, partners and those using the roads.

2.7 Delegation

- 2.7.1 The Strategic Director Economy and Infrastructure, is delegated to keep the policy under review and update as required, in consultation with the portfolio holders, if any change in policy or approach is required. Delivery of the winter maintenance service and operational arrangements outlined in this winter maintenance policy are delegated to the service director, commercial, regulatory and operational services.

3. Implications for the Council

3.1 Early Intervention and Prevention (EIP)

There will be no impact.

3.2 Economic Resilience (ER)

Winter maintenance operations help to reduce the adverse impact of winter weather on local businesses, transport networks and community activity.

3.3 Improving Outcomes for Children

Winter maintenance operations help to reduce the adverse impact on education and family centred services by keeping road networks operational.

3.4 Reducing demand for Services

Winter maintenance operations help the council and partners continue to operate with 4x4 support provided in the most severe conditions. Keeping roads passable enables the community to help themselves so reducing the risk of increasing demand on services as residents become more vulnerable.

4. Consultees and their opinions

This report has been prepared in consultation with Strategic Directors, Service Directors, Heads of Service and the Portfolio Holder for Communities and Environment, through discussion at Senior Leadership Team, Portfolio Briefing, and the Executive Team.

5. Next steps

Officers implement the winter maintenance policy putting in place operations and communications plans in readiness for winter 2018.

Officers maintain and regularly review the plans and policy

6. Officer recommendations and reasons

That Cabinet supports the approach to winter maintenance and approves the revised winter maintenance Policy as set out in Appendix 1 of this report.

That authority is delegated to the Strategic Director - Economy and Infrastructure, to keep the policy under review and update as required, in consultation with the portfolio holder, if any change in policy or approach is required. Substantial changes will be subject to cabinet approval.

That authority is delegated to the service director to deliver the winter maintenance service and operational arrangements outlined in this winter maintenance policy and operational plan.

7. Cabinet portfolio holder's recommendation

This updated Policy promotes a proactive community approach by wider engagement to compliment the council's interventions and as always, to keep people safe.

8. Contact officer

Kathryn Broadbent
Tel: 01484 221000
kathryn.broadbent@kirklees.gov.uk

9. Background papers and History of Decisions

Papers: Current winter maintenance policy approved 7th October 2014.

10. Service Director responsible

Joanne Bartholomew
Service Director
Commercial, Regulatory and Operational Services
Tel: 01484 221000
joanne.bartholomew@kirklees.gov.uk