

DATA LABEL: PUBLIC



COUNCIL EXECUTIVE

2020/21 WINTER PLAN – ROADS AND TRANSPORTATION

REPORT BY HEAD OF OPERATIONAL SERVICES

A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The *Code of Practice “Well-managed Highway Infrastructure” – 2016* recommends that councils should review and approve their Winter Service Plan annually. The purpose of this report is to seek approval for councils Winter Service Plan for 2020/21

B. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Council Executive approves the Winter Service Plan 2020/21 as detailed in Appendix A.

C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

I Council Values	Focusing on our customers' needs; Making best use of our resources; and Working in partnership
II Policy and Legal (including Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Issues, Health or Risk Assessment)	Council's Winter Service Plan. Roads (Scotland) Act 1984 and The <i>Code of Practice “Well-managed Highway Infrastructure” – 2016</i>
III Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers	None
IV Impact on performance and performance Indicators	The Plan will ensure that the winter service is delivered in a consistent and efficient manner which will meet existing performance targets and service standards.
V Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement	Maintaining strategic transport links within the community are necessary in order to deliver the SOA Outcomes. The Winter Service Plan supports Outcomes 1, 2, 10 and 14.
VI Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)	Operational Services have a Winter Service budget for 2020/21 of £2.329 million to carry out their statutory duties under the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984 (Section 34).

VII Consideration at PDSP	None
VIII Other consultations	None.

D. TERMS OF REPORT

D.1 Background

In Scotland, Councils statutory responsibilities regarding the Winter Service are defined in the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984, Section 34 which requires “that a road authority shall take such steps as it considers reasonable to prevent snow and ice endangering the safe passage of pedestrians and vehicles over public roads”.

The Code of Practice recommends that councils should review and approve their Winter Service Plan annually.

D.2 Winter Service Plan

The council’s current Winter Service Plan (summarised in Appendix A), is well established and is based on The *Code of Practice “Well-managed Highway Infrastructure” – 2016*.

The Winter Service Plan includes; the service standards and a definition for an “Extreme Weather Event”; a statement on resilience and salt conservation strategy; and promotes the benefits of self-help in line with Government recommendations.

The Winter Service Plan extreme weather event actions were triggered during the 2017/18 winter when West Lothian was affected by its first “red weather warning event” and although the delivery of the service was extremely challenging an effective service was provided in these exceptional circumstances.

Domain based forecasting is utilised with separate forecasts being obtained for the north and south of the county. With each of the primary carriageway routes falling within a single domain it allows treatment plans to be more specific with resources being deployed appropriately providing an improved service to areas in most need.

Once again, the Gritter Tracking page will be available on the council’s website. This allows users to view the gritters deployed when treatment is deemed necessary, providing up-to-date information on the location of our vehicles.

Route maps are continually reviewed and updated to reflect any newly adopted streets, with additions being prioritised in line with the plan. These route maps and further information on how the council prioritise gritting can be found on the council website; along with details of our grit bin policy and self-help advice

D.3 Winter 2020/21 Resources

Delivery of the winter plan rests with Roads & Transportation however additional resources are utilised from NET's, and Land & Countryside Services to provide a robust and flexible rota.

It is recognised that COVID-19 has the potential to severely impact staff availability and consequently additional contingency plans are being prepared. The Winter Service is a key activity and will be prioritised over less critical work should the need arise.

Staffing levels have been reviewed and Roads & Transportation have 40 trained gritter drivers who will be rostered to the winter service similar to previous years. In addition, the service has access to around 150 HGV drivers from other service areas of which training is planned for an initial 10 drivers to ensure that they are available from the start of the winter season. To put these staffing numbers in to context the service requires 7 HGV drivers at any one time to allow treatment of the primary carriageway routes as detailed in Appendix A

Staggered start and finish times are in place to ensure staff from different service areas remain separate from each other to help mitigate an outbreak. Enhanced vehicle cleaning regimes have also been introduced to minimise cross contamination.

If our ability to carry out winter maintenance activities is reduced, the service would focus on the primary carriageway routes; which cover 50% of the network. This would be communicated to the public advising them to consider their travel plans or to make allowances for the conditions.

Our stock level of 30,000 tonnes of salt will be available for the winter period. In addition, our salt contract includes alternative suppliers should the need arise.

A framework contract is also in place allowing us to engage external resources and equipment if required.

E. CONCLUSION

Consideration of the potential impacts of Covid19 has been considered and contingency measures will be in place for the start of the winter season. Following review of the 2019/20 Winter Service Plan it is recommended that no changes are required and that this plan as detailed in Appendix A is approved for the coming winter season 2020/21.

F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES

Roads (Scotland) Act 1984

The Code of Practice "Well-managed Highway Infrastructure" – 2016

Appendices/Attachments: Appendix A – Winter Service Plan

Contact Person: David Wilson, Roads Operations Manager, Tel: 01506 284598, Email: David.Wilson@westlothian.gov.uk

Jim Jack
Head of Operational Services
Date: 6th October 2020

APPENDIX A

The Winter Service Plan 2020/21 is summarised as follows:-

Carriageways	Road Type	Treatment
Primary Routes (SNOW ROUTES)	Important principal roads, major scheduled bus routes, routes to fire stations, hospitals, ambulance depots, railway stations and local danger spots on highly trafficked roads and major industrial estates.	Gritting and/or snow ploughing 24 hours a day on all days. Pre grit if required. Planned or reactive.
Secondary Routes Level 1	Other classified routes, distributor routes and connecting routes between centres, minor bus routes, main accesses to schools, medical centres and residential areas.	Gritting and/or snow ploughing during normal working hours i.e. 0800 to 1505 hours Monday to Friday. Pre grit as resources allow.
Secondary Routes Level 2	Residential areas, cul-de-sacs and other unclassified roads.	Gritting and/or snow ploughing during normal working hours i.e. 0800 to 1505 hours Monday to Friday. Reactive treatment only.
Secondary Routes Level 3	Surfaced areas within schools, roads within industrial estates, routes to car parks and car park surfaces.	Gritting and/or snow ploughing during normal working hours i.e. 0800 to 1505 hours Monday to Friday. Reactive treatment only.

Footways	Footway Type	Treatment
Primary Routes (SNOW ROUTES)	Urban shopping areas and precincts. Routes to schools, accesses to health centres and medical centres, hospitals, etc. main routes to residential areas and bus stops.	During November and March , gritting of widespread ice/snow clearing 0500 to 1505 hours Monday to Friday. During December, January and February the service will be extended to cover weekends and public holidays (0500 to 1505 hours). Reactive treatment only.
Secondary Routes Level 1	Other routes to schools, residential areas and housing areas in general.	Gritting of widespread ice/snow clearing 0800 to 1505 hours Monday to Friday. Reactive treatment only.
Secondary Routes Level 2	Footway links to car parks, community centres, day centres etc and cycle routes	Gritting of widespread ice/snow clearing 0800 to 1505 hours Monday to Friday. Reactive treatment only.

EXTREME WEATHER EVENT

An extreme weather event will be considered to be an event where continuous snow is forecast and likely to give significant accumulations in excess of 10cm covering the whole of the north or south expanse within the council area. The snow will also be expected to remain in untreated areas for a prolonged period due to low temperatures before a natural thaw disperses it.

During periods of extreme weather and heavy continuous snowfall when roads and footways are affected by significant levels of lying snow, priority will be given to primary carriageway routes and primary footpath routes and these routes will be known as West Lothian Council's "Snow Routes". These routes are defined within the council plan and will be published on the council website. Gritters and footpath resources will be deployed on these specified snow

routes continuously until satisfactory snow clearance has been achieved before resources are deployed to any secondary routes.

The plan is aimed at providing a minimum strategic network during periods of extreme weather and will provide access to key facilities and other transport needs.

RESILIENCE and SALT CONSERVATION

West Lothian Council procures and stocks salt supplies for use on the whole of the public carriageway and footway network during the winter period. A stock level of 30,000 tonnes of salt will be available for the winter period.

In periods of an extreme weather event or periods of prolonged conditions that demand a high usage of salt it may be necessary to restrict the use of salt to snow routes only. For West Lothian Council, salt will be restricted to snow routes when the council reaches a minimum stock level of salt for 6 days resilience of continuous salting.

GRIT BIN POLICY

- Only provided on sites with difficult conditions.
- Bins will only be located where they can be filled from a lorry.
- Only replenished during and immediately after periods of adverse weather or upon request from the public as resources allow.
- No provision in private areas or car parks for internal use by either Council or any other public or private property such as schools, parks, hospitals, old people's homes, lunch clubs etc. unless a service level agreement is in place.
- Bins will not be designated to serve a carriageway if that carriageway is designated as a primary route or snow route.
- Bins will not be designated to serve a footway if that footway is designated as a primary route or snow route.
- Only written requests for bins will be considered.
- A request will not be accepted unless a location to site the bin has been agreed. Therefore, even if the criterion for locating the bin is met, none will be provided if residents cannot agree a position.
- The position of any proposed bin should not obstruct the passage of pedestrians.
- Grit bins will be left in-situ during the summer months unless the responsible officer confirms that they are causing a public nuisance.
- Bins should be yellow and tagged with a unique id number and their position recorded in the electronic database.

In times of an extreme weather event it is not always possible to service and replenish grit bins due to their location and the deployment of resources in higher priority areas.

In the event that West Lothian Council suspends the grit bin service then Road Services will provide temporary grit bags and grit heaps at strategic locations across West Lothian for use by the public. The locations of the grit bags and grit heaps will be advertised to the public when the service is in operation.

SELF HELP – WHAT CAN YOU DO?

There is no law preventing members of the public from clearing snow and ice from public roads and footways outside their properties and businesses. However, people should exercise care and caution when attempting to undertake any snow clearing so that they do not create any further hazards through careless or inconsiderate actions.

Being a good neighbour during severe winter weather is usually welcomed. Detailed below is some advice provided by the Government on clearing roads and footways yourself:-

1. Do not use hot water as this could freeze, increasing the risk of injury to persons.
2. Choose suitable clothing for the task to ensure that you remain warm, clearly visible to traffic and that footwear provides a good grip.
3. Do not take unnecessary risks in the road and be aware that vehicles may find it difficult to stop quickly in icy conditions.
4. If shovelling snow consider where you are going to put it to avoid shifting the problem elsewhere, for example, avoid blocking other footways and drainage features such as gullies.
5. Use a shovel with a wide blade and do not overload the shovel with snow.
6. It is easier to remove fresh snow before pedestrians have compressed the snow into compacted ice.
7. Clear a line down the middle of the area to be cleared first to create a safer surface to work from.
8. Spread some salt on the area cleared to prevent the formation of ice.
9. Do not use too much salt as a few grams, about a tablespoon for each square metre that you clear should be sufficient.
10. If there is no salt available then a little sand or grit is a reasonable substitute. It will not have the same de-icing properties as salt but will improve grip underfoot.
11. Salt applied to the road or footway could be washed away by rain or snow and subsequently freeze – in this case a further application of salt should be used soon after the rain has ceased and before temperatures approach freezing.
12. Particular care and attention should be given to steps and steep gradients to ensure that snow and ice is removed – it may be beneficial to apply additional salt at these locations to reduce the risk of injury.