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## **AUDIT COMMITTEE**

### **INTERNAL AUDIT OF WINTER MAINTENANCE**

#### **REPORT BY AUDIT, RISK AND COUNTER FRAUD MANAGER**

##### **A. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To inform the Audit Committee of the outcome of an internal audit of the controls in place over the delivery of the council's winter maintenance service.

##### **B. RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that the Audit Committee notes that controls in place are considered to be effective.

##### **C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS**

<b>I Council Values</b>	Being honest, open and accountable, making best use of our resources.
<b>II Policy and Legal (including Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Issues, Health or Risk Assessment)</b>	2021/22 Winter Service Plan. Roads (Scotland) Act 1984, Section 34. The audit is relevant to risk RTS001: "Failure to deliver a winter service in accordance with council policy".
<b>III Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers</b>	None.
<b>IV Impact on performance and performance Indicators</b>	Weaknesses in internal control may have an adverse impact on performance.
<b>V Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement</b>	Our public services are high quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive to local people's needs.
<b>VI Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)</b>	None.
<b>VII Consideration at PDSP</b>	None.
<b>VIII Other consultations</b>	Managers within Operational Services as part of the audit process.

**D. TERMS OF REPORT**

In accordance with the internal audit plan for 2022/23, an audit has been undertaken of winter maintenance, reviewing the controls and procedures in place to deliver a winter maintenance service in West Lothian.

The resultant internal audit report is attached as an appendix to this report and includes an action plan containing agreed management actions.

**E. CONCLUSION**

Our audit has concluded that the controls in place over the delivery of the winter maintenance service are effective.

**F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES**

Report to the Audit Committee 21 March 2022: Internal Audit Plan 2022/23.

Appendices/Attachments: Internal audit report dated 1 September 2022: Winter Maintenance

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**Kenneth Ribbons**  
**Audit, Risk and Counter Fraud Manager**

Date of meeting: 21 October 2022



**OS2204**

# **INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT**

## **WINTER MAINTENANCE**

**1 September 2022**

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## 1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 In accordance with the annual audit plan for 2022/23, we have undertaken a review of the winter maintenance service provided by Operational Services and conclude that the level of control is **effective**.
- 1.2 Risk RTS001: *Failure to deliver a winter service in accordance with council policy* is recorded the corporate risk register as a **low** risk.
- 1.3 The audit remit is set out in section two.
- 1.4 The Roads (Scotland) Act 1984, Section 34 states “a roads 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”.
- 1.5 Operational Services Roads and Transportation Services is responsible for providing a winter service for the roads and footpaths within West Lothian. The winter service plan is based on the UK Roads Liaison Group’s Code of Practice: Well-managed Highway Infrastructure.
- 1.6 A copy of the 2021/22 winter service plan is provided in Appendix B and includes details of:
  - the service standards expected;
  - the definition of an “extreme weather event”;
  - a statement of resilience and salt conservation strategy;
  - self-help guidance within Government recommendations.
- 1.7 The normal period of operation of the winter service plan is from the last Thursday in October until the last Thursday in March.
- 1.8 Operational Services has a £2.350 million recurring budget to deliver this service; spending £1.806 million during the winter of 2021/22. A £1 million Winter Resilience Fund, approved by council on 25 February 2021, was not utilised during 2021/22 and will be maintained for use in future winters.
- 1.9 Over a three-year period it is intended that the Winter Resilience Fund will be used to fund 25 strategic self-help salt piles across West Lothian (£375,000); two grit bin replenishment squads (£375,000) the remainder (£250,000) will be retained for contingency use in extreme weather periods. The Winter Resilience Fund will only be utilised if the annual winter service budget is exceeded, thereby protecting it for future winters.
- 1.10 The approximate distance of the road and footpath network covered by the winter service plan is 1,000km of carriageway and 1,300km of footway. Indicative carriage and foot way treatment timescales are provided in Appendix C. Actual timescales will vary depending on the weather conditions.
- 1.11 For the winter period 2021/22 6,869 tonnes of salt was used to treat the road and footway network. Appendix D provides a comparison of the number of carriageway and footpath treatments from 2015/16 to 2021/22. Salt usage for carriageway treatment is also provided.
- 1.12 BEAR Scotland, on behalf of the Scottish Government, are responsible for maintaining the M8 and M9 motorways within West Lothian, not the council.

1.13 For comparison purposes the winter service details available on Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire and Falkirk councils' webpages were reviewed. These were found to be very similar in prioritisation of treatment of routes within each region and in the information and guidance provided to the public.

1.14 The following key controls were found to be in place:

#### Overall Arrangements

- a winter service plan is presented to council for review and approval annually;
- a high level summary of the winter service plan is communicated to the public via the council website news pages, Facebook and Twitter; the winter edition of the Bulletin and an article in the West Lothian Courier;
- Facebook and Twitter are used to communicate to the public any bad weather forecasts and gritting scheduled throughout the winter when required;
- the gritting and winter maintenance council webpage provides:
  - a winter services in West Lothian leaflet;
  - detailed information on gritting routes,
  - live interactive mapping of gritter locations when in operation;
  - grit bin and self-help salt pick up locations;
  - a link to the Traffic Scotland live camera webpage;
  - a driving in bad weather guidance leaflet;
- a winter maintenance manual, reviewed annually, is available and details the procedures to be followed to assist Operational Services in delivering their winter service plan;
- a risk assessment covering winter maintenance operations is in place and associated safe working procedures are available;
- a carriageway and footway priority system is in place for the treatment of roads and footways; see Tables 1 and 2, Appendix B for further details of the classifications.
- daily 24 hour and 2-10 day weather forecasts are received from MetDesk supported by further forecasts if changes to original forecasts are predicted;
- separate forecasts are provided for north and south of West Lothian to allow specific treatment and resource deployment as required;
- ice detector sensors and weather stations located throughout West Lothian provide information on the prevailing conditions to assist decision making;
- after evaluating forecast information, the duty officer proposes a course of action which is reviewed and authorised by the senior decision maker;
- operatives are provided mobile phones to provide live feedback if the condition of the network is worse than forecast;
- once authorised, any changes to the plan of action must be made following an agreed decision making procedure;
- reciprocal arrangements are in place with South Lanarkshire and City of Edinburgh councils for treatment of roads in the boundary areas.

#### Gritting Arrangements

- a GPS system is fitted to vehicles which records the route taken, to evidence treatment has been delivered in line with the agreed winter service plan;

- there are 11 squad leaders and 50 road operatives (including 40 qualified gritter drivers) in the team to deliver the service; supported by 64 operatives (including 13 qualified gritter drivers) from NETS Ground Maintenance and Street Cleansing;
- there is a long term staff rota in place covering the winter service period, supplemented by updated weekly rotas;
- there are 25 gritters and 29 footpath tractors available to deliver the service;
- Fleet Services continually inspect and maintain the gritters throughout the year, tractors are subjected to pre-use inspections each year;
- pre-use safety checks are completed by operatives before the vehicles are used;
- salt supply is maintained at approximately 30,000 tonnes; with 22,000 tonnes stockpiled in two domes at Whitehill Service Centre, with 10,000 available from a call off contract at short notice;
- salt use is electronically recorded and supplies monitored by management and Operational Service Stores team; a contract framework is in place to replenish stock as necessary;
- there are 2,571 permanent grit bins located across West Lothian;
- a dedicated replenishment team is in place to fill grit bins on an ongoing basis through the winter;
- during the winter period there are also 25 self-help salt pick up points located throughout the county;
- a specific grit bin policy is in place for assessing applications for new grit bins;

#### Other Controls

- an extreme weather event plan is in place to keep primary carriageways and footways open if continuous snow is forecast and likely to give accumulations greater than 10cm and cover the whole of the north or south areas of West Lothian;
- a contractor framework is available if additional resource is required during extreme weather events;
- new road developments are added to the routing plans once they have been formally adopted by the council;
- enquiries and complaints are responded to by management and recorded on the Confirm system;
- operational incidents and accidents reported to management are recorded on Sphera.

- 1.15 None of our findings have been ranked as being of 'High' importance.
- 1.16 The action plan in section three details our findings, grades their importance (Appendix A) and includes agreed actions. The implementation of agreed actions will help improve control.
- 1.17 We appreciate the assistance Ross McDonald, Senior Engineer, Roads and Transportation Services and all the council staff contacted during the conduct of our audit. Should you require any further assistance please contact Kenny Wilson.

**Kenneth Ribbons**  
**Audit, Risk and Counter Fraud Manager**

## 2.0 REMIT

- 2.1 The objective of the audit was to review risk RTS001: *Failure to deliver a winter service in accordance with council policy*. The audit reviewed the processes and controls in place that ensure the council's winter service is delivered as expected.
- 2.2 No internal audit report can provide absolute assurance as to the effectiveness of the system of internal control. Our review concentrated on the key controls and testing was undertaken on a sample basis. Therefore, the weaknesses we have identified are not necessarily all those which exist.
- 2.3 We agreed the draft report for factual accuracy with Ross McDonald, Senior Engineer, Roads and Transportation Services on 15<sup>th</sup> August 2022.
- 2.4 The Head of Operational Services is responsible for both the implementation of agreed actions and the risk arising from not acting on any agreed actions in this report.
- 2.5 We carry out follow-up reviews on a risk-based approach. The Audit, Risk and Counter Fraud Manager will determine the need for a follow-up review of this report.
- 2.6 In accordance with the council's risk management arrangements services are required to record internal audit findings graded as being of 'high' importance in Pentana as risk actions and to link these to the corresponding risks.
- 2.7 Audit findings ranked as being of 'high' importance that are not implemented will be reported to the Governance and Risk Board and Audit Committee and considered for inclusion in the Annual Governance Statement.



### 3.0 ACTION PLAN

Ref	Findings & Risk	Agreed Action	Importance Level
3.1	<p><b><u>Winter Planning – Activities Spreadsheet</u></b></p> <p>The annual review of the winter maintenance manual and planning for the winter season usually starts in August with the final plans presented to council in September/October.</p> <p>Meetings are held every two weeks to discuss the plan and confirm the manual is up to date. To assist with the process and ensure all required tasks are allocated and completed; an activities spreadsheet is used.</p> <p>The 2020/21 and 2021/22 spreadsheets were reviewed; the detail is comprehensive and lists the tasks required to be in place to ensure delivery of the winter service plan; it was found however, that not all the activities had been fully updated; with some actions listed as “still in progress” or “to be confirmed”.</p> <p>Testing confirmed there were no issues with the delivery of the plan and the required tasks had been finalised. However, to remove the potential for a task being missed in future and ensure a full audit trail is in place; once a task has been confirmed as complete; this should be formally recorded on the activity spreadsheet.</p> <p>A final review and sign off process should also be put in place.</p> <p><b><u>Risk</u></b></p> <p><i>Potential for a task not to be fully implemented which may impact the successful delivery of the service plan, resulting in disruption across the council and reputational damage.</i></p>	The activities spreadsheet will be amended to include a final sign off section. The final review / sign off will be completed prior to the 2022/23 Winter Service commencing.	Low
			<b>Responsible Officer</b>
			Ross McDonald
			<b>Risk Identifier</b>
			RTS001
			<b>Action Date</b>
			26 <sup>th</sup> October 2022

Ref	Findings & Risk	Agreed Action	Importance Level
3.2	<p><b><u>Winter Service Plan and Maintenance Manual</u></b></p> <p>Section 6.1 of the winter maintenance manual states that all winter service managers and supervisory staff must be fully aware of the details of both the winter service plan and winter maintenance manual.</p> <p>We were advised that although both documents are read and the content understood by the appropriate staff there is no evidence available to confirm this.</p> <p>The pre-winter maintenance plan should be updated to include confirmation that all relevant staff have read and understood the updated winter service plan and maintenance manual each year.</p> <p><b><u>Risk</u></b></p> <p><i>Lack of knowledge or understanding of plan and manual could result in the failure to successfully deliver the plan, resulting in disruption across council, harm to staff or the public and reputational damage.</i></p>	The activities spreadsheet will be amended to include confirmation that the relevant staff have read and understood the updated winter service plan and winter maintenance manual.	Low
			<b>Responsible Officer</b>
			Ross McDonald
			<b>Risk Identifier</b>
			RTS001
			<b>Action Date</b>
			26 <sup>th</sup> October 2022

Ref	Findings & Risk	Agreed Action	Importance Level
3.3	<p><b><u>Senior Decision Maker</u></b></p> <p>The senior decision maker reviews and verifies the treatment decision made by the duty officer prior to any treatment starting.</p> <p>Currently, there is a single person dependency on the Roads Operations senior engineer as they are the only trained senior decision maker in place. Whilst it is noted the Roads Operations manager will undertake this role should the senior engineer be unavailable, they are not officially trained as a senior decision maker.</p> <p>We have been advised Stirling Council are arranging a “Winter Services Decision Making Course” to be delivered by the Institute of Highways Engineers (these are usually only held in Birmingham) and they have asked other councils if they would like participants to share the cost. Roads and Transportation will be sending three duty officers.</p> <p>Attendance at this course should be confirmed as it will provide the appropriate training and cover to remove the single person dependency and allow better rota planning for the role. Once the training has been delivered the current senior decision maker should initially provide ongoing training and mentoring until the trainees become confident in the process.</p> <p><b><u>Risk</u></b></p> <p><i>Lack of knowledge due to absence of key personnel could result in insufficient capability to make appropriate treatment decisions resulting in disruption across council, harm to staff or the public and reputational damage.</i></p>	<p>A further three duty officers have been booked on the 5-day Winter Decision Making training course. This is scheduled as follows:-</p> <p>Days 1-2 September 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Days 3-5 October 26<sup>th</sup>, 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup></p> <p>The current senior decision maker will continue to take the lead role and mentor the new decision makers throughout winter 2022-23. Thereafter it is anticipated that the new decision makers will be capable of undertaking the role in full from winter 2023-24 onwards.</p>	Medium
			<b>Responsible Officer</b>
			Ross McDonald
			<b>Risk Identifier</b>
			RTS001
			<b>Action Date</b>
			28 <sup>th</sup> October 2022

Ref	Findings & Risk	Agreed Action	Importance Level
3.4	<p><b><u>Operative Training and Safe Working Procedures</u></b></p> <p><u>Training Records</u> Operational Services Learning and Development team (L&amp;D) are responsible for maintaining the training records for Operational Services staff. The training records of 13 operatives responsible for delivery of the winter services were reviewed.</p> <p>It was found the service training records do not reconcile to those held by L&amp;D, therefore the current records may not be up to date or staff have not completed all the required training/refresher training.</p> <p>With the assistance of L&amp;D; the training records of all winter maintenance operatives should be reviewed; the specific requirements for each individual confirmed and a schedule agreed to complete any outstanding training and refresher sessions as necessary.</p> <p><u>Safe Working Procedures (SWP)</u> SWP's cover the tasks required to deliver the winter service plan e.g. ice and snow clearance; filling grit bins, hand spreading salt, mounting and demounting gritters.</p> <p>The service is responsible for delivering SWP training which should be completed every three years. From the details provided refresher training is due for the upcoming 2022/23 winter period.</p> <p>If not already scheduled, arrangements should be made to ensure operatives read and evidence their understanding of all required SWP's.</p> <p><b><u>Risk</u></b></p> <p><i>Training and Safe Working Procedure awareness not kept up to date and out of date or wrong processes may be followed resulting in disruption across the council, harm to staff or the public and reputational damage.</i></p>	The Senior Engineer (Operations) is meeting the L & D Team Leader on 18 <sup>th</sup> August 2022 to discuss the anomalies and to review the training records / requirements for all winter maintenance operatives. Thereafter a schedule will be prepared to ensure training is carried out for each operative within the necessary timescales. This will include the delivery of relevant SWP's which will be signed off by the operatives to evidence that they have read and understood them.	Medium
			<b>Responsible Officer</b>
			Ross McDonald
			<b>Risk Identifier</b>
			RTS001
			<b>Action Date</b>
			31 <sup>st</sup> August 2022

Ref	Findings & Risk	Agreed Action	Importance Level
3.5	<p><b><u>Level Crossing Treatment</u></b></p> <p>There is currently one active level crossing in West Lothian located at Kirknewton station. Section B.7.5.43 of the Well-Managed Highway Infrastructure states: "Network Rail recommends that salting should not be undertaken between the stop lines of level crossings, even when covered with snow".</p> <p>We were advised that only one roads officer; who has been with the team for several years, remembered that drivers were instructed not to grit level crossings but this was between 10 to 15 years ago. It was confirmed that current drivers may not be aware of this requirement.</p> <p>Whilst it is acknowledged Network Rail have only issued a recommendation, the risk of any potential damage to the train tracks is very low and there have been no known issues recorded; all drivers should be advised not to grit the Kirknewton level crossing in future and all route planners and refresher training should be updated to reflect this requirement.</p> <p><b><u>Risk</u></b></p> <p><i>Salt usage on the level crossing could potentially damage the train tracks impacting on the train service causing reputational damage to the council.</i></p>	<p>From winter 2022/23 onwards, the vast majority of primary route treatments will be completed using an automated system. The driver will select the assigned route from a screen in the cab and drive it via a satnav system. Salt is then dispensed automatically at the appropriate sections on the route. The route that contains the level crossing at Kirknewton will be reprogrammed to omit this small section.</p> <p>Drivers will also be advised not to grit the level crossing should it be necessary to revert to the manual system.</p>	Low
			<b>Responsible Officer</b>
			Ross McDonald
			<b>Risk Identifier</b>
			RTS001
			<b>Action Date</b>
			26 <sup>th</sup> October 2022

Ref	Findings & Risk	Agreed Action	Importance Level
3.6	<p><b><u>Weekly Rotas</u></b></p> <p>A master winter service rota is maintained to record shift patterns and the relevant staff contact details. For ease of use a weekly contact sheet is extracted from the main rota.</p> <p>Examples of the weekly sheets were seen during the audit, however we were advised some of the sheets requested for review were not available. The Roads Officer who would usually prepare the information has been unavailable since February. Although the covering officer prepared the weekly sheets as required they were not saved in Objective.</p> <p>To maintain a full audit trail, all officers who may cover this task should be reminded to save a copy of the sheets.</p> <p><b><u>Risk</u></b></p> <p><i>Correct information may not be available to respond to potential enquiries.</i></p>	Officers will be reminded to store the weekly sheets in Objective.	Low
			<b>Responsible Officer</b>
			Ross McDonald
			<b>Risk Identifier</b>
			RTS001
			<b>Action Date</b>
			26 <sup>th</sup> October 2022

Ref	Findings & Risk	Agreed Action	Importance Level
3.7	<p><b><u>Checklists and Decision E-mails</u></b></p> <p>The duty officer receives daily detailed weather and icealert station forecasts; these are interpreted and a decision made and verified by the senior decision maker, on what treatment, if any, is to be taken.</p> <p>To assist with this daily decision making process and planning, the duty officer should complete both a decision on treatment plan and gritter action plan.</p> <p>Sixteen decision on treatment plans were reviewed and these were found to have been completed to a high standard with both the decision and rationale clearly stated.</p> <p>We also confirmed that gritter availability planning was completed by the duty officer, however, the gritter action plans were not used to formally record the details. Whilst it is acknowledged there was no operational impact on this omission, officers should be reminded to complete and save a copy of the plan to ensure an audit trail is available in future.</p> <p>Once the treatment decision has been confirmed, the decision and forecast information is circulated to appropriate council officers and members. We were advised that although all decision e-mails were sent as required only the Decision on Treatment checklist and forecast documentation is retained; therefore, no circulation e-mails were seen.</p> <p>To maintain a full audit trail, going forward a copy of the circulation e-mail should also be saved with the other decision documentation. This will also ensure all information is available should there be any queries received from officers or members at a later date.</p> <p><b><u>Risk</u></b></p> <p><i>Full audit trail of historic information not available to assist in responding to potential queries.</i></p>	<p>Officers will be reminded to complete a gritter action plan and store in Objective.</p> <p>Officers will be advised to store the circulation emails in Objective. These emails have the decision on treatment and forecast information attached so there will be no requirement to store the documents individually.</p>	Low
			<b>Responsible Officer</b>
			Ross McDonald
			<b>Risk Identifier</b>
			RTS001
			<b>Action Date</b>
			26 <sup>th</sup> October 2022

Ref	Findings & Risk	Agreed Action	Importance Level
3.8	<p><b><u>Winter Service Enquiries</u></b></p> <p>All enquiries relating to the winter service are logged on the Operational Services Confirm system and given a unique reference number.</p> <p>For specific enquiries that require a detailed response the customer will be provided the relevant information by e-mail.</p> <p>For general enquiries that do not require a bespoke response, if the customer has provided an email address, on closure of the enquiry, the Confirm system will issue the customer an automated e-mail populated with the information that has been input into the notes section of the system.</p> <p>If no e-mail address is provided the customer should be phoned and the response to their enquiry provided. On one occasion from seven enquiries reviewed, no email address was provided and no record of a phone call being made to the customer was found.</p> <p>All duty officers should be reminded of the need to make a phone call in any similar future cases.</p> <p><b><u>Risk</u></b></p> <p><i>Customer enquiry not responded to resulting in reputational damage.</i></p>	Officers will be reminded of the requirement to telephone customers on occasions where an email address has not been provided.	Low
			<b>Responsible Officer</b>
			Ross McDonald
			<b>Risk Identifier</b>
			RTS001
			<b>Action Date</b>
			26 <sup>th</sup> October 2022



## APPENDIX A

### DEFINITION OF AUDIT FINDINGS & AUDIT OPINION

#### AUDIT IMPORTANCE LEVELS

Importance levels of '**High**', '**Medium**' or '**Low**' are allocated to each audit finding within the action plan.

These reflect the importance of audit findings to an effective system of internal control and must be considered in the context of the business processes being audited (Section 2 – Audit Remit).

#### AUDIT OPINION

Our overall opinion on the controls in place is based on the level of importance attached to the findings in our audit report. The overall audit opinions are as follows:

Overall Opinion	Definition
<b>EFFECTIVE</b>	No findings ranked as 'High' importance. There may be a few 'Low' and 'Medium' ranked findings.
<b>SATISFACTORY</b>	No findings ranked as 'High' importance however there are a moderate number of 'Low' and 'Medium' ranked findings.
<b>REQUIRES IMPROVEMENT</b>	A few findings ranked as 'High' importance. There may also be a number of findings ranked as 'Low' and 'Medium' importance.
<b>UNSOUND</b>	A considerable number of findings ranked as 'High' importance resulting in an unsound system of control. There may also be a number of findings ranked as 'Low' and 'Medium' importance.

## APPENDIX B

### WINTER SERVICE PLAN 2021/22

**CARRIAGEWAY CLASSIFICATION, COVERAGE AND TREATMENT (Table 1)**

Carriageways	Road Type	Treatment
Primary Routes <b>(SNOW ROUTES)</b>	Roads of primary importance which form a strategic network, these being Strategic, Main Distributor and Secondary Distributor roads including main traffic routes, bus routes connecting neighbouring council areas, major industrial estates, routes to railway stations and routes to Emergency Service establishments.	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, local 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 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, 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.

*All carriageway routes can be viewed on the council website using the following link.*

<https://maps.westlothian.gov.uk/wml/Map.aspx?mapName=WinterMaintenance>

**FOOTWAY CLASSIFICATION, COVERAGE AND TREATMENT (Table 2)**

Footways	Footway Type	Treatment
Primary Routes <b>(SNOW ROUTES)</b>	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.	<b>During November and March,</b> gritting of widespread ice/snow clearing 0500 to 1505 hours Monday to Friday. <b>During December, January and February</b> 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.

***All footway routes can be viewed on the council website using the following link.***

***<https://maps.westlothian.gov.uk/wml/Map.aspx?mapName=WinterMaintenance>***

## **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.

## **STRATEGIC SELF-HELP SALT PICK-UP POINTS**

The provision of 23 self-help strategic salt pick-up points which will assist with community self- help during periods of winter weather. These will be located at: -

1. Xcite Centre, McGinley Way, Linlithgow
2. Xcite Centre, Church Street, Broxburn
3. Livingston North Train Station (South Car Park)
4. Livingston South Train Station Car Park
5. Xcite Centre, Craigswood, Livingston
6. West Calder Business Centre, Dickson Street
7. Blackburn Partnership Centre, Ash Grove
8. Xcite Centre, Jubilee Road, Whitburn
9. Xcite Centre, Torphichen Road, Bathgate
10. Xcite Centre, North Street, Armadale
11. Craig Inn Community Centre, Main Street, Blackridge
12. Xcite Centre, Langton Road, East Calder
13. Eastfield Road car park near the bottle banks, Fauldhouse
14. Community Centre, Bowsett, Torphichen
15. Community Centre, Craigton Place, Winchburgh
16. Bridgend
17. Newton
18. Threemiletown
19. Westfield
20. Ecclesmachan
21. Wilkieston
22. Central Livingston
23. Wester Inch, Bathgate

## GRIT BIN POLICY

In line with other authorities, criteria is set for Urban and Rural areas and flow charts have been introduced for transparency around each process.

The provision of grit bins in urban areas is to offer the public a self-help option to overcome localised difficulties of greatest risk in relation to the effect of winter conditions on roads and footpaths. It is important that the council encourages and helps facilitate self-help by those members of the public who are prepared to carry out this work.

However, the number of grit bins made available needs to be controlled. Maintaining adequate salt levels in the bins results in an operational burden therefore careful consideration is given to the provision and location of grit bins.

Consideration is also given to the following:

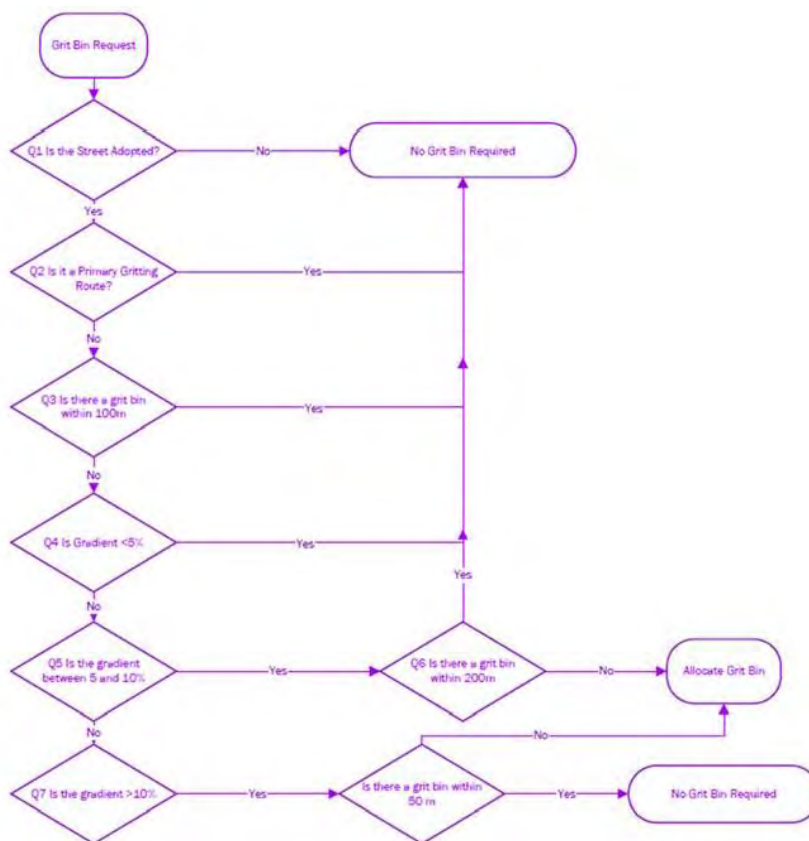
- New grit bins are only provided **in accordance with the urban and rural grit bin criteria**
- If the location is currently on a primary carriageway or footway route then a grit bin will not be considered as the risk should be mitigated from planned treatment
- Grit bins will only be located where they can be accessed and filled from a lorry.
- Grit bins will be replenished at the start of the winter period and then only as an when resources allow thereafter.
- Council grit bins will be left in place all year, we do not refill private grit bins.
- Both the grit bin and grit are purely for use on a public road or footway.
- The [locations of grit bins will be recorded](#) and made available online, to find your nearest grit bin use our map search.
- The council will not provide grit bins in private areas or car parks for use by any other council or any other public or private property such as schools, parks, hospitals, care homes, etc. unless a service level agreement is in place.
- Only those requests [submitted online](#) with the proposed location shown on a map will be considered.
- Applicants will be notified when the application is successful or not, the responsible officer's decision is final.
- A request will not be accepted unless a location to site the bin has been agreed with the responsible officer.
- Grit bins that are stolen/damaged or missing will be first reassessed in line with the criteria, a previous grit bin will not be replaced if the location does not meet the criteria.

**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.**

## Urban grit bin criteria and flowchart.

Urban is where the speed limit is 40mph or less. For speed limits we define a village as a length of road of at least 600m where there are at least 20 houses and a density of at least 3 houses in every 100 section.

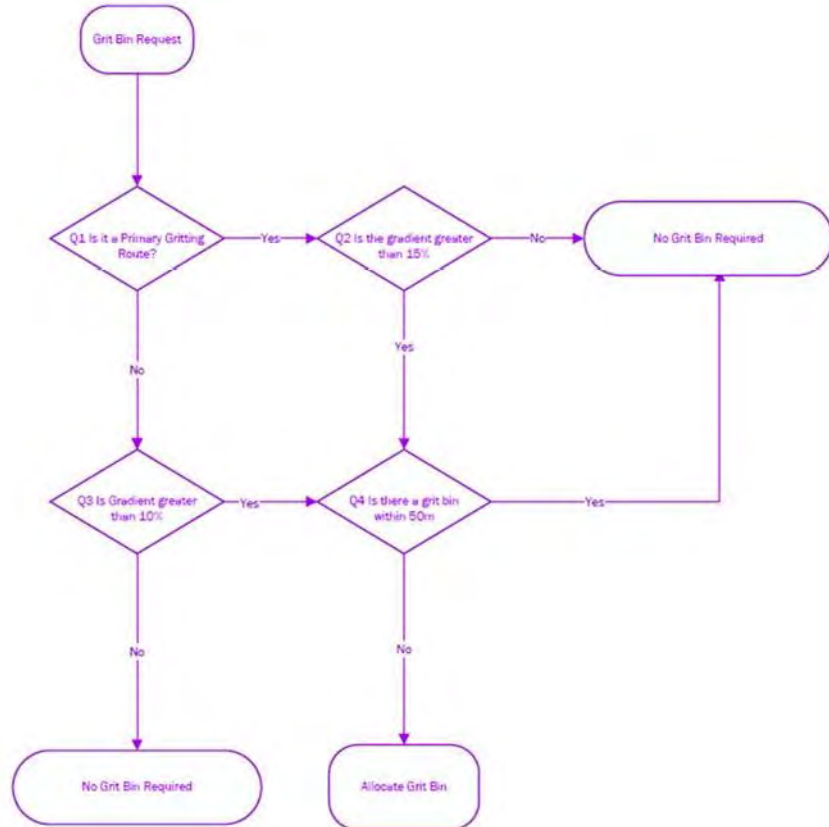
### Urban Grit Bin Criteria



### Rural grit bin criteria and flowchart

Rural is where the speed limit is greater than 40mph. For speed limits we define a village as a length of road of at least 600m where there are at least 20 houses and a density of at least 3 houses in every 100 section.

#### Rural Grit Bin Criteria



***The flow charts will be made accessible to customers online as downloadable PDF's***

***All grit bins can be viewed on the council website using the following link.***

**<https://maps.westlothian.gov.uk/wml/Map.aspx?mapName=WinterMaintenance>**

## 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: -

- Do not use hot water as this could freeze, increasing the risk of injury to persons.
- Choose suitable clothing for the task to ensure that you remain warm, clearly visible to traffic and that footwear provides a good grip.
- Do not take unnecessary risks in the road and be aware that vehicles may find it difficult to stop quickly in icy conditions.
- 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.
- Use a shovel with a wide blade and do not overload the shovel with snow.
- It is easier to remove fresh snow before pedestrians have compressed the snow into compacted ice.
- Clear a line down the middle of the area to be cleared first to create a safer surface to work from.
- Spread some salt on the area cleared to prevent the formation of ice.
- Do not use too much salt as a few grams, about a tablespoon for each square metre that you clear should be sufficient.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.



## APPENDIX C

### INDICATIVE TREATMENT TIMESCALES

Description	Gritting Treatment Time	Comments
Primary Carriageways (Grit)	4 Hours	One direction only.
Primary Carriageways (Plough & Grit)	8 Hours	Both directions.
Secondary 1 Carriageways	4 Hours	One direction only.
Secondary 2 Carriageways	3 Days	Based on typical resource level available.
Secondary 3 Carriageways	1 Day	Dependent on weather conditions and progress against all other carriageways.
Primary Footpaths	3 to 4 Hours	Average, some routes are longer than others.
Secondary 1 Footpaths	3 Days	Depending on conditions of primary routes.
Secondary 2 Footpaths	1 Day	Dependent on weather conditions and progress against all other carriageways.

## APPENDIX D

### **PRIMARY AND SECONDARY LEVEL 1 TREATMENT: 2015/16 to 2021/22**

	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Primary Carriageway Treatments	11	23	93	51	57	147	97
Secondary Level 1 Carriageway Treatments	7	9	16	12	9	28	10
Total Salt Usage (Tonnes)	5,484	11,777	9,768	5,809	4,787	17,681	6,869

### **FOOTPATH TREATMENT: 2015/16 to 2021/22**

	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Footpath Treatments	16	9	35	10	13	41	13