

## READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

### REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

<b>TO:</b>	<b>STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE</b>		
<b>DATE:</b>	<b>18 NOVEMBER 2020</b>	<b>AGENDA ITEM:</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>TITLE:</b>	<b>WINTER SERVICE PLAN 2020/2021</b>		
<b>LEAD COUNCILLOR:</b>	<b>COUNCILLOR PAGE</b>	<b>PORTFOLIO:</b>	<b>STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING AND TRANSPORT</b>
<b>SERVICE:</b>	<b>ENVIRONMENT AND COMMERCIAL SERVICES</b>	<b>WARDS:</b>	<b>BOROUGH WIDE</b>
<b>LEAD OFFICER:</b>	<b>SAM SHEAN</b>	<b>TEL:</b>	<b>0118 937 2138</b>
<b>JOB TITLE:</b>	<b>STREETCARE SERVICES MANAGER</b>	<b>E-MAIL:</b>	<b>sam.shean@reading.gov.uk</b>

#### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 To inform the Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport Committee of the outputs delivered by the Winter Service Plan 2019/2020.
- 1.2 To inform the Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport Committee of the Winter Service Plan review carried out to ensure compliance with the Highways Act 1980 and 'Well-managed Highway Infrastructure: A Code of Practice'.
- 1.3 To inform and seek approval from the Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport Committee for the Winter Service Plan 2020/2021.

#### 2. RECOMMENDED ACTION:

- 2.1 That the Committee note the outputs delivered by the Winter Service Plan 2019/2020.
- 2.2 That the Committee note the outcome of the review carried out on the Winter Service Plan to ensure compliance with the Highways Act 1980 and the 'Well-managed Highway Infrastructure: A Code of Practice'.
- 2.3 That the Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport Committee note and approve the Winter Service Plan 2020/2021.

### **3. POLICY CONTEXT**

- 3.1 The aim of the Winter Service Plan is to provide a service to reduce, as far as possible, the effects of adverse weather on the public highway during the winter period.
- 3.2 To provide conditions that are as safe as reasonably practical having regards to financial constraints and our statutory duties.
- 3.3 To secure the most effective use of resources in the delivery of high quality, best value public service.

### **4. THE PROPOSAL**

#### **Overview of Winter Service delivery during 2019/2020, review of Winter Service Plan 2019/2020 and updated Winter Service Plan 2020/2021**

- 4.1 This report outlines the review of the Winter Service Plan 2019/2020 and the changes incorporated within the Winter Service Plan 2020/2021, which the Council produce and agree on an annual basis.

#### **Overview of Winter Service delivery during 2019/2020**

- 4.2 The 2019/2020 winter season was relatively mild overall interspersed with some shorter cold spells. As a result, primary precautionary salting routes were only treated on 46 occasions this year compared to 57 during the previous winter season. The cold spells were not severe nor prolonged enough to trigger treatment of the secondary precautionary salting routes or activation of the Snow Plan.
- 4.3 There were no issues with salt supply / delivery which enabled the contractor to maintain stock levels throughout the winter season.
- 4.4 There were no issues with the contractor replenishing the grit bins as and when required.
- 4.5 The winter decision making process to determine when to salt worked well during the last winter season. The Vaisala weather stations provided the correct data for informed decisions to be made.
- 4.6 The joint arrangement/agreement with Wokingham Borough Council, through their Consultants, Volker Highways, for providing the decision making service, worked well and delivered against the set key performance indicators during the 2019/2020 winter season.

- 4.7 The Winter Service Plan 2019/2020 provided a robust service for the duration of the winter period with no disruption to the primary and secondary road network during the season.

#### **Review of Winter Service Plan 2019/2020 and updated Winter Service Plan 2020/2021**

- 4.8 A review of the Winter Service Plan 2019/2020 has been undertaken. The main points, including updates for the Winter Service Plan 2020/2021, are summarised below:

- All 47 highway grit bins, which have scored highly using the Council's Grit Bin Risk Assessment Pro-forma, continue to be justified and form part of the Winter Service Plan 2020/2021.
- No new grit bin requests were received for public highway roads except for a general enquiry for additional grit bins in the Katesgrove Ward. As no specific roads were forthcoming, following the initial enquiry, a desktop assessment was carried out and the number/location of grit bins in the Katesgrove Ward remain the same as last winter season.
- The Council negotiated a reduced rate for the supply of the grit bins with the Winter Maintenance Contractor last Financial Year. This saving remains in place for the 2020/2021 winter season.
- The contractual salt stock held by the Council's contractor will be 900 Tonnes throughout the 2020/2021 winter service period, all of which is stored by the contractor at their Aldermaston site, (under sheeting cover), as set out in Section 8 of the Winter Service Plan.
- Confirmation has been obtained from Compass Minerals (the salt supplier) that there are adequate National salt stocks available to cope with a severe winter season.
- Review has shown that the updated spread rates introduced in the 2018/19 winter season has proved successful and will continue for the 2020/21 winter season.
- Bus routes continue to be on primary or secondary precautionary salting routes.
- There are no changes to the primary and secondary precautionary salting routes for the 2020/2021 winter season. It is noted that the additional MRT Bus Lanes on the A33 are included within the precautionary salting routes as part of the existing salting network.
- All cross-boundary primary and secondary precautionary salting routes correspond with neighbouring authorities precautionary salting routes.

- When the Snow Plan is activated (during prolonged adverse weather events), footway snow ploughs continue to be available for use in the Town Centre and on primary pedestrian routes such as the Reading / Caversham Bridges and Christchurch footbridge. The Snow Plan is available as a background paper.
- The Town Centre ‘core area’ footways will be treated with a proprietary material when snow is predicted to lay for a prolonged period. Traditional grit/salt may also be used on these Town Centre footways, as an alternative when snow is predicted to lay for a prolonged period. The Town Centre footways are listed in Appendix E of the Winter Service Plan 2020/2021 and shown on a plan ‘Town Centre Winter Maintenance - Treated Footway Areas’ (Drawing Number RBC/WM/001A) which forms part of this Appendix and is available as a background paper.
- The Council’s advice for cyclists using the Borough’s public highway network during the winter season remains the same as for last winter season (Section 7 ‘Footways and Cycleways’ (paragraph 7.5) in the Winter Service Plan 2020/2021 refers).

4.9 The updated Winter Service Plan 2020/2021 and map showing the primary/secondary precautionary salting routes and grit bin locations is attached to this report.

4.10 The Berkshire Winter Service Consortium (includes the six Berkshire Unitary Local Authorities) has agreed to extend the Winter Forecasting Service Contract with Vaisala for a further year to cover the 2020/2021 winter season. The contract will then be retendered prior to the 2021/2022 winter season; West Berkshire Council will be the lead Local Authority for the retendering of this contract on behalf of the Berkshire Winter Service Consortium.

4.11 Risk assessments and method statements have been updated and agreed with the contractor J. H. Cresswell and Sons Ltd to take account of the Covid-19 pandemic.

4.12 A review of the proposed ‘Active Travel Plan’ schemes has shown that they are primarily situated on the existing ‘primary/secondary’ precautionary salting routes. Any future Active Travel Plan schemes brought forward will be evaluated to determine whether they should be added to the precautionary salting route.

4.13 A review of the National Covid-19 Temporary Testing Stations/Sites has been carried out and they are primarily situated on or adjacent to the existing primary/secondary precautionary salting routes. The access to Prospect Park will be included within the primary precautionary salting route on a needs basis when this station/site is operational.

## 5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

- 5.1 The Winter Service Plan 2020/2021 will contribute to the Council's Corporate Plan 2018-21 objectives of:
- Securing the economic success of Reading
  - Keeping Reading's environment clean, green and safe
  - Ensuring the Council is fit for the future

## **6. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION**

6.1 The Winter Service Plan 2020/2021, (including the Winter Salting Routes 2020/2021 map and the Town Centre Winter Maintenance - Treated Footway Areas map), is produced and made available on the Reading Borough Council Website outlining the Council's decision making process. This is subject to review annually taking into account comments from the public, media, Government and Councillors.

6.2 Salting decision/action updates are available on social media via Twitter.

## **7. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

7.1 In addition to the Human Rights Act 1998 the Council is required to comply with the Equalities Act 2010. Section 149 of the Equalities Act 2010 requires the Council to have due regard to the need to: -

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

7.2 The Winter Service Plan 2020/2021 includes minor updates/amendments as required in readiness for the coming winter season. There is no overall change to service delivery at this time. Should any future updates/amendments be required, which result in service delivery changes, an equality impact assessment will be carried out.

## **8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 The Borough Council, as Highway Authority, has a duty under the Highways Act 1980 Section 41 (1A) to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that safe passage along a highway is not endangered by snow or ice.

## **9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 The cost of the winter maintenance service is fully funded from the Environmental & Commercial Services Streetcare Revenue Budget.

## **10. ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 Proposals set out in this paper seek to support the safe, effective and efficient use of the highway during the winter months reducing accidents and congestion. Transport is the biggest greenhouse gas emitting sector in the UK accounting for around 27% of total carbon emissions. As set out in the draft Climate Emergency Strategy this figure is lower in Reading with transport accounting for around 20% of carbon emissions, however significant investment in sustainable transport solutions is vital in order to respond to the Climate Emergency declared by the Council in February 2019 and to help achieve our target of a carbon neutral Reading by 2030.

## **11 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

11.1 Winter Service Plan 2020/2021.

11.2 Winter Salting Routes 2020/2021.

11.3 Town Centre Winter Maintenance - Treated Footway Areas.

11.4 Grit Bin Evaluation Sheet of current 47 No. approved grit bin locations.

11.5 Snow Plan

11.6 Winter Service Plan 2019/2020 - Strategic Environment Planning and Transport Committee Report - 20<sup>th</sup> November 2019.