

## READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

### REPORT BY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC GROWTH AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

<b>TO:</b>	<b>STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT PLANNING AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE</b>		
<b>DATE:</b>	<b>20 NOVEMBER 2019</b>	<b>AGENDA ITEM:</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>TITLE:</b>	<b>WINTER SERVICE PLAN 2019/2020</b>		
<b>LEAD COUNCILLOR:</b>	<b>COUNCILLOR A PAGE</b>	<b>PORTFOLIO:</b>	<b>STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING AND TRANSPORT</b>
<b>SERVICE:</b>	<b>TRANSPORTATION AND STREETCARE</b>	<b>WARDS:</b>	<b>BOROUGHWIDE</b>
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#### 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 2018/2019.
- 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 2019/2020.

#### 2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 That the Strategic Environment Planning and Transport Committee note the outputs delivered by the Winter Service Plan 2018/2019.
- 2.2 That the Strategic Environment Planning and Transport 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 2019/2020.**

### **3. POLICY CONTEXT**

- 3.1 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**

#### **Review of Winter Service Plan 2018/2019 and Updated Winter Service Plan 2019/2020**

- 4.1 This report outlines the review of the Winter Service Plan 2018/2019 and the changes incorporated within the Winter Service Plan 2019/2020, which the Council produce and agree on an annual basis through the Committee process.
- 4.2 The 2018/2019 winter season was typically mixed with some milder spells but also some cold spells particularly during the latter part of January / early February when there was some snow.
- 4.3 As stated in the Winter Service Plan 2018/2019 report presented to this Committee in November 2018, the Berkshire Consortium agreed to extend the contract with Vaisala for a further two year period. The 2019/2020 winter season will be the second year of this further extended period.
- 4.4 The joint arrangement/agreement with Wokingham Borough Council, through their Consultants, Balfour Beatty, for providing the decision making service, continued in 2018/2019 and overall provided a good service. As stated in last November's Committee report, Balfour Beatty's contract with Wokingham Borough Council ended on the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019. Effective from April 2019, Wokingham Borough Council entered into a new contract with Volker Highways. A formal agreement is in place for Volker Highways to provide the winter decision making service for Reading Borough Council.
- 4.5 The Winter Service Plan 2018/2019 provided a robust service for the duration of the winter period with minimal disruption to the primary and secondary road network during the 'normal' winter weather. Inevitably there was some unavoidable disruption to the road network during the snow events, but the Winter Maintenance Contractor coped well considering the severity of the weather at the time.

4.6 The availability of salt for the Council's Winter Maintenance Contractor to maintain salt stock levels during the 2018/2019 winter season was achieved throughout the winter period.

4.7 A review of the Winter Service Plan 2018/2019 has been undertaken. The main points, including updates for the Winter Service Plan 2019/2020, 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 2019/2020.
- A grit bin request was received for Calder Close but as there is already a grit bin sited in this Close, at the junction with Chichester Road (one of the 47 approved highway grit bins), no further assessment has been carried out. A request was also received for a grit bin in Gerrard St but was not considered appropriate given that it is not a residential road. Accordingly, no assessment has been carried out.
- 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 2019/2020 winter season.
- The contractual salt stock held by the Council's contractor will continue to be 750 Tonnes throughout the 2019/2020 winter service period, all of which is stored by the contractor at their Aldermaston site, (under sheeting cover).
- The 600 Tonnes of salt owned by Reading Borough Council, which had been held in reserve for several winter seasons and was of deteriorating quality, was used up during the 2018/2019 winter season and is therefore no longer a factor for the 2019/2020 winter season.
- 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 will continue for the 2019/20 winter season.
- Bus routes continue to be on primary or secondary salting routes. There are no bus route changes reported, therefore the routes remain as per the 2018/19 winter season. However, should Reading Buses notify the Council of any changes to bus routes during this winter season, a review and appropriate action will be undertaken at that time.
- There are no changes to the Primary Precautionary Salting Route for the 2019/2020 winter season. It is noted that the additional MRT Bus Lanes on the A33 will be included within the salting routes as part of the existing salting network.

- All cross-boundary primary and secondary salting routes correspond with neighbouring Authorities 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 Bridge.
- 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 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 2019/2020 Winter Service Plan and shown on a plan ‘Town Centre Winter Maintenance - Treated Footway Areas 2019/2020’ (Drawing Number RBC/WM/001A) which forms part of this Appendix.
- The Council’s advice for cyclists using the Borough’s public highway network during the winter season was reviewed and the wording updated for last winter season. Minor tweaks to the wording have been made for this Winter Season. Section 7 ‘Footways and Cycleways’ (paragraph 7.5) in the 2019/2020 Winter Service Plan refers and reads as follows:

*‘Cyclists can continue to cycle in winter but are advised to dress appropriately, use mudguards and lights, consider tyres (the wider the better) and commuting by bike can be comfortable and efficient. It is important to make a safety assessment particularly during periods of prolonged hazardous conditions, (refer to Council’s Snow Plan). The Council does not precautionary grit / salt shared footways and remote cycleways when frost, ice or prolonged hazardous conditions are forecast, with the exception of shared carriageway / cycleway routes on the primary and secondary salting network. Being part of the carriageway, shared carriageway/cycleway routes on the primary and secondary precautionary salting route networks will be salted by default in accordance with the Winter Service Plan.*

***Should individuals make the decision to cycle during hazardous winter conditions the Council recommend that they take the necessary precautionary measures for the prevailing conditions’.***

- 4.8 The updated 2019/2020 Winter Service Plan, which includes the map showing the primary/secondary routes and grit bin locations, accompanies this report. (Appendix 1 refers).
- 4.9 The plan showing the Town Centre footways to be treated, when snow is predicted to lay for a prolonged period, is included in the 2019/2020 Winter Service Plan (Drawing No. RBC/WM/001A on Page 35 refers).

## **5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS**

5.1 The Winter Service Plan 2019/2020 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 2019/2020, (including the Winter Salting Routes 2019/2020 map and the Town Centre Winter Maintenance - Treated Footway Areas 2019/2020 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 2019/2020 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 winter maintenance is fully funded from the Transport and Streetcare Revenue Budget.

## **10. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 10.1 Winter Service Plan 2018/2019.
- 10.2 Winter Salting Routes 2018/2019.
- 10.3 Town Centre Winter Maintenance - Treated Footway Areas 2018/2019.
- 10.4 Grit Bin Evaluation Sheet of current 47 No. approved grit bin locations.
- 10.5 Winter Service Plan 2018/2019 - Strategic Environment Planning and Transport Committee - 21 November 2018.