

Report of the Strategic Director of Place to the meeting of Executive to be held on 5 December 2017

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Subject:

Winter Service Plan 2017-18

Summary Statement:

The Council has a duty to develop and implement a winter service operational plan to ensure so far as reasonably practicable, that traffic keeps moving even in unforeseen weather conditions and that safe passage is not endangered by the presence of snow and ice.

This report details the arrangements in place to discharge this duty, outlines the changes to the plan which have been made as a result of the review of the Winter 2016-17 operation and details potential future changes that may be necessary to comply with the implementation of the new Code of Practice for Well Managed Highway Infrastructure in October 2018.

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Portfolio:

Regeneration, Planning & Transport

Overview & Scrutiny Area:

Environment & Waste Management

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Council has a duty to develop and implement a winter service operational plan to ensure so far as reasonably practicable, that traffic keeps moving even in unforeseen weather conditions and that safe passage is not endangered by the presence of snow and ice.
- 1.2 This report details the arrangements in place to discharge this duty, outlines the changes to the plan which have been made as a result of the review of the Winter 2016-17 operation and details potential future changes that may be necessary to comply with the implementation of the new Code of Practice for Well Managed Highway Infrastructure in October 2018.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Council as Highway Authority has a statutory obligation under Section 41 and Section 58 of the Highways Act 1980 to maintain the highway. The introduction of new legislation (Railways and Transport Safety Act 2003, Section 111) extended the requirements of Section 41 of the Highways Act 1980 to place a duty on the Highway Authority to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that safe passage along a highway is not endangered by snow or ice. Bradford Council undertakes a Winter Service on nearly 704 miles of roads within our network equating to 62% of the entire network.
- 2.2 To assist in meeting the legal requirements above the Department for Place produces an annual Winter Service Plan which describes what steps will be taken to maintain the local road network free from ice and snow as far as it is reasonably possible. The plan is primarily based on a route treatment hierarchy where priority routes have been determined depending on such factors as traffic volumes, bus routes, access to schools, shops and medical centres etcetera.
- 2.3 In 2001, a joint group, comprising DETR, LGA, National Assembly for Wales, Northern Ireland Roads Service, SCOTS, The Highways Agency and the Audit Commission published a document entitled 'Delivering Best Value in Highway Maintenance'. This document included a section entitled 'Winter Service' which set out recommendations on how a Highway Authority could meet their legal obligations regarding winter service economically, efficiently and effectively.
- 2.4 In July 2005 the Code of Practice for Highway Maintenance Management titled "Well maintained Highways" was published replacing "Delivering Best Value in Highway Maintenance". September 2013 saw a further and extensive update to Section 13 and Appendix H of the "Well-maintained Highways" document requiring Highway Authorities to develop an implementation plan for introducing a robust Winter Service within a ten year timeframe.
- 2.5 In October 2016 a new national Code of Practice, Well Managed Highway Infrastructure, was launched making 36 recommendations on the operation of

asset management and associated activities, including winter service operations, which must be adopted by authorities by the October 2018 deadline. The code requires that:

“Authorities should formally approve and adopt policies and priorities for Winter Service, which are coherent with wider objectives for transport, integration, accessibility and network management, including strategies for public transport, walking and cycling. They should also take into account the wider strategic objectives of the authority.”

- 2.6 The Civil Contingency Act 2004 requires a Local Authority as Category 1 responder to plan for a range of emergencies, including prolonged extreme or adverse weather. This Plan sets out how Bradford Council will respond to such situations; and its particular arrangements for maintaining, as far as is reasonably practicable, a free flowing highway network which is part of its Winter Service Policy.

3. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1 Winter Service deals with regular, frequent and reasonably predictable occurrences like low temperatures, ice and snow, as well as with exceptional events. Whilst the effects of climate change are likely to result in an increased frequency and intensity of severe weather events, these can be taken into account in Winter Service planning. Therefore any Winter Service Plan should be subject to an on-going regime of plan, deliver, review and improve.
- 3.2 The purpose of this plan is to clarify both the standard and extent of the Winter Service the Council will provide by:
- Maintaining key elements of the highway network and facilitating public transport's accessibility;
 - Assisting business continuity and resilience to other public sector and private sector service providers;
 - Confirming which areas will receive winter service provision;
 - Providing residents, community groups and businesses with information to ensure they can adequately prepare themselves.

Review of the Winter Service Plan 2016-17

- 3.3 As part of the development of the 2017-18 plan a review of the Winter Service for 2016-17 was undertaken. This review looked at all aspects of the service delivery arrangements including administrative and management arrangements, utilisation of plant and equipment together with the priority treatment network.
- 3.4 Members may recall that the 2016/17 budget process approved a reduction in the overall percentage of the network receiving Priority 1 gritting treatment from 62% to 50% with a further planned reduction for the 2018-19 season. As part of the 2016-17 budget process Executive pro-actively approved the

allocation of additional funding to winter maintenance service. This funding was used to restore some routes which had previously been removed as well as facilitating the enhancement of the local gritting team initiative.

- 3.5 In preparation for the 2017-18 season and through service procurement efficiencies, a review of resilience of salt stocks and the redesign of gritting routes using new route planning software the winter service has been able to achieve the 2016-17 budget savings whilst achieving a treatment percentage of 62% of the highway network. By comparison other West Yorkshire authorities treat a lesser percentage of their networks as illustrated in the table below:

Authority	Percentage of Network Receiving Priority Treatment
Leeds City Council	42%
Calderdale MDC	60%
Kirklees MDC	60%
Wakefield MDC	50%

Salt Stock

- 3.6 As described above the Winter 2016-17 review also considered the resilience of the Authority in terms of its stock piled reserves of road salt based on historic levels of usage over the previous 8 years. Over this period, average salt use was 13,000 tonnes with specific peak use being during the winters of 2009-10 and 2012-13, however, by comparison the average over the last 3 years has been 9,800 tonnes. At the start of each winter season the service holds reserves of road salt sufficient to provide in excess of 30 days resilience (compared to the recommended resilience reserve of 12 days).
- 3.7 The reduction in use of road salts over the previous 3 year average can in part be attributed to the milder winters where significant periods of freezing or snow conditions have not been as prevalent or prolonged. Additionally, the use of more accurate methods of controlling the spreading of grit have contributed to a reduction in the amount of material used per treatment.
- 3.8 The review therefore concluded that a small reduction in reserves from the previous 28,500 tonnes to 24,800 tonnes through a reduction in stock piles at Wakefield Road depot and the removal of the stores at Stubden would not adversely affect the provision of an effective service.

Gritting Volunteers Scheme

- 3.9 A Member's review of gritting was carried out in September 2017 and facilitated by the Portfolio Holder. In addition to considering the general service provision during the preceding winter season the group specifically considered the introduction of a gritting volunteers scheme and the use of grit

bins. A number of specific recommendations were made as a result of this Member review including:

- a) Development of a GIS layer to show the location of grit bins in the district together with areas which are covered by any grit volunteer scheme.
- b) Involving members on the development of any proposed changes to gritting routes in the future, specifically at the ward level.
- c) The operational arrangements for any gritting volunteer scheme including the requirement for a 'Champion' or lead volunteer.
- d) Training provision for any winter gritting volunteers including the introduction of a communication system for gritting volunteers advising them of the Council's daily response action plan.
- e) Providing clarity on the Council's Grit bin policy, including clarity on how the Council will deal with any grit bins which are provided by third-parties in terms of replenishment of grit in the winter season.

3.10 The above recommendations were considered in the development of the 2017-18 Winter Service Plan as follows:

- a) The 2017-18 Winter Service Plan now shows on the Priority 1 network maps the location of all grit bins (which the Council are aware of) which are deployed on the highways network. As gritting volunteer groups are established this information will be included within the mapping software and included in subsequent iterations of the plan.
- b) It was not possible to fully involve local ward members in the development of winter gritting routes for the 2017-18 season but arrangements have been made to ensure that full engagement will occur in any future planned changes (as required by the new Code of Practice).
- c) A draft structure for the Winter Gritting Volunteer schemes will be developed in conjunction with the Area Officers during the Winter 2017-18 season and details incorporated in the 2018-19 Plan.
- d) A trial of the GovDelivery email system to communicate the daily action report to gritting volunteers will be instigated as and when volunteer groups are registered with the Council.
- e) The 2017-18 Winter Service Plan includes (in Appendix 8) details of the Council's approach to deployment of grit bins which provides clarity on how the Council assesses suitable locations for its grit bins.

3.11 It has been noted that Parish and Town Council's have previously, or are currently in the process of purchasing grit bins at a cost of £100 each to service a perceived local need. Replenishment of any grit bin costs the Council £25 / refill which is inclusive of material, plant and labour costs. The

policy contained in the Winter Service Plan therefore clarifies the Council's approach to deployment of externally procured bins together with its level of responsibility for their on-going replenishment. Similarly, the policy describes how the Council will deal with requests for grit bins from members of the public.

Weather Forecast Service

- 3.12 As part of a West Yorkshire collaboration a combined contract for Road Weather Information Bureau Services was tendered during 2017. This contract was awarded to Meteogroup and Viasala Weather Bureau who now provide weather information and forecasting to the authority on a daily basis through the winter risk period. This contract has provided a saving in costs to the Council of approximately £9,000 on its previous arrangements.
- 3.13 With the change in Weather Information Bureau Services the plan has been updated to reflect the revised arrangements which are now operational for the provision of weather forecasting information and the resulting decision making activities by the winter maintenance team on whether or not treatment of the network is required.

New Code of Practice

- 3.14 As described previously a new Code of Practice (Well Managed Highway Infrastructure) was launched by the Department for Transport in October 2016. This code contains 36 recommendations relating to the approach to be adopted by highway authorities in managing their highway assets. A section of this code specifically relates to the Winter Service operations and makes recommendations in relation to the development of a Winter Service plan. The 2017-18 plan has, as far as possible, adopted these recommendations but due to the nature of some of the recommendations it has not been possible to fully implement all recommendations, specifically those relating to:
- a) Extended communication of the Winter Service Plan;
 - b) Inclusion of diversion routes in the event of closures of major routes;
 - c) Use of risk assessments to establish which routes should be included in the Priority treatment programmes. In particular the treatment of footways and cycle routes must be considered taking into account the risk to all highway users and consideration of the available resources;
 - d) Inclusion of training plan proposals for staff involved in the provision of the winter service including both formal qualifications and practical experience training;
 - e) Salt management and arrangements for salt storage; and
 - f) Arrangements for the post-season review of winter service operation and demonstration of improvements in the plan as a consequence of the review.

These arrangements will be fully developed for the 2018-19 Winter Service Plan.

4. FINANCE & RESOURCE APPRAISAL

4.1 The cost of the Winter Service for 2016-17 was £816,409 against a budget of £859,500. A budget of £840,700 has been set for 2017-18. However, as has been noted previously the level of expenditure within any winter season is heavily dependent of weather conditions and previous levels of service cannot be relied upon to provide an indication of the necessary planned level of service in the forthcoming year.

4.2 Resources for the delivery of the Winter Service are provided generally from within the Highway Delivery Unit of the Planning, Transportation & Highways Service. These resources are supplemented by Parks & Landscape staff to undertake footway treatment and in times of severe weather events can be supplemented by private sector resources.

5. RISK MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE ISSUES

5.1 The Winter Service Operational Plan contains a decision making matrix for the application of the winter service response which ensures that this is delivered in accordance with the national code of practice for winter service provision.

6. LEGAL APPRAISAL

6.1 Sections 41 and 51 of the Highways Act 1980 state that the Highway Authority has a statutory duty to main maintain the highway and must at all times take reasonable care to ensure that the highway is not dangerous. Section 150 of the Highways Act 1980 imposes a duty upon authorities to remove any obstruction on the highway resulting from “accumulation of snow or from the falling down of banks on the side of the highway or from any other cause”.

6.2 The Railways and Transport Safety Act 2003 (section 111) has inserted an additional section (41(1)) to the Highways Act 1980 which places a duty on Highway Authorities in respect of winter conditions. In particular, it states ‘a Highway Authority is under a duty to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that safe passage along a highway is not endangered by snow or ice’.

6.3 All the actions proposed are within the Council’s powers and/or duties as Highway Authority. There are no direct legal implications.

7. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Equality & Diversity

The provision of the winter maintenance service considers the needs of vulnerable groups and isolated communities.

7.2 Sustainability Implications

The winter maintenance service contributes to the sustainability of the District by ensuring that vital road links remain viable during winter conditions.

7.3 Greenhouse Gas Emissions Impacts

There are no greenhouse gas emissions impacts arising from this report.

7.4 Community Safety Implications

A robust and deliverable winter maintenance policy contributes towards ensuring community safety in periods of adverse weather. The winter maintenance service makes a huge contribution to the safety of the travelling public. As far as practicable, measures should contribute to protect as many as possible with particular consideration being given to the most vulnerable.

Failure to maintain a robust and deliverable winter policy/plan could jeopardise the Council's ability to comply with its legal duty to maintain its highway in periods of adverse weather.

7.5 Human Rights Act

There are no direct implications arising from this report.

7.6 Trade Union

There are no trade union implications associated with this report.

7.7 Ward Implications

There are no ward implications arising from this report.

7. NOT FOR PUBLICATION DOCUMENTS

7.1 None

8. OPTIONS

8.1 Executive may decide to adopt the proposed Winter Service Plan 2017-18 as appended to this report; or

8.2 Alternatively, Executive may decide to modify the contents of the Winter Service Plan 2017-18 prior to its adoption.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 That Executive approves the adoption of the Winter Services Plan 2017-18 and that a copy of the approved plan be placed on the Council's website in accordance with the requirements of the revised Code of Practice.

9.2 That the Winter Service Plan 2018-19, which is fully compliant with the recommendations in the revised Code of Practice be presented to Executive prior to the commencement of the winter service 2018-19.

10. APPENDICES

- 10.1 Appendix A – Winter Service Plan 2017-18
- 10.2 Appendix B – Winter Service Plan – None Technical Summary
- 10.3 Appendix C – Equalities Impact Assessment

11. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

- 11.1 Winter Preparedness - Report of the Assistant Director, Transportation and Highways to the Regeneration and Economy Overview & Scrutiny Committee dated 16 September 2010.
- 11.2 Winter Maintenance Preparedness – Report of the Strategic Director of Regeneration to the meeting of Executive dated 3 December 2010.
- 11.3 Review of Winter Service – Report of the Assistant Director Planning, Transportation & Highways to the Regeneration and Economy Overview & Scrutiny Committee dated 7 July 2011.
- 11.4 Update on Winter Service Review - Report of the Strategic Director of Regeneration and Culture to the meeting of Regeneration and Economy Overview & Scrutiny Committee dated 27 September 2012.
- 11.5 Highways Act 1980, Section 41 and 58.
- 11.6 The Railways and Transport Safety Act 2003, Section 111
- 11.7 Code of Practice for Highway Maintenance Management – ‘Well Managed Highway Infrastructure.’
- 11.8 Winter Service Guidance for Local Authority Practitioners, October 2010
- 11.9 National Winter Service Research Group (nwsrg.org)
- 11.10 Initial Equalities Impact Assessment



Equality Impact Assessment Form

Department	Place	Version no	1.0
Assessed by	Richard Gelder	Date created	08/11/2017
Approved by	Julian Jackson	Date approved	23/11/2017
Updated by		Date updated	
Final approval		Date signed off	

The Equality Act 2010 requires the Council to have due regard to the need to

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- advance equality of opportunity between different groups; and
- foster good relations between different groups

Section 1: What is being assessed?

1.1 Name of proposal to be assessed.

Winter Service Plan 2017-18.

1.2 Describe the proposal under assessment and what change it would result in if implemented.

The aim of the Winter Service Plan is to ensure that City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council as Highway Authority fulfils its legal obligations contained in the Highways Act 1980.

The Winter Service Plan states how the Council will maintain the highway network of carriageways, footways and cycle routes during periods of cold weather, when ice and/or snow may be expected to disrupt movement on the highway network throughout the district.

The Winter Service Plan for 2017-18 has been updated to include changes to the following aspects of the previous arrangements, namely:

- Definition of the Priority treatment network.
- Review of salt stocks and resilience.
- Grit bin policy.



- Arrangements for weather forecasting and bureau services.
- Recommendations of Winter Service Plan arrangements arising from the new Code of Practice: Well Managed Highway Assets published in October 2016.

The Winter Service aims to ensure that during periods of cold weather carriageways, footways and cycle routes are maintained free from ice and snow, where practicable, and within financial constraints. The Service is the council’s response to the Highways Act 1980 and other legislation obliging the council to deal with snow, ice and other obstructions on the highway.

The desired outcome of the Service is that delays and accidents are prevented on the highway network. This will then minimise the number of claims made against the authority for failure to carry out its legal obligations, thereby saving the council tax payers money. The Service will also minimise personal injuries with consequential benefits for individuals who could have been injured in hazardous conditions. The Service is planned to maintain access to all parts of the City as far as possible during the periods of inclement weather so that normal life can continue for all citizens.

The Service improvements outlined in the new Strategy are aimed at improved coverage of the network and better ability to respond to changes in weather and marginal forecasts.

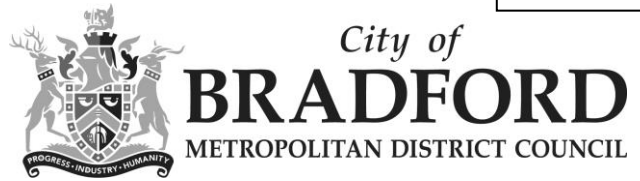
Section 2: What the impact of the proposal is likely to be

2.1 Will this proposal advance equality of opportunity for people who share a protected characteristic and/or foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those that do not? If yes, please explain further.

The Winter Service is planned to treat all communities equally and provide good access into each local area irrespective of weather conditions. By treating bus routes as a priority which cover the city fairly uniformly the Service provides an equal service for everyone. There is no specific data on how the policy affects various sectors of the community. The Council’s website and use of social media provide avenues for anyone to communicate with the Council in relation to winter operations.

2.2 Will this proposal have a positive impact and help to eliminate discrimination and harassment against, or the victimisation of people who share a protected characteristic? If yes, please explain further.

No



2.3 Will this proposal potentially have a negative or disproportionate impact on people who share a protected characteristic? If yes, please explain further.

There is no information available.

However, with finite resources to carry out the service, only those parts of the network meeting the criteria are included. This may mean that certain groups of citizens or isolated communities who encounter problems where the network is not routinely treated. In this situation grit / salt bins may be provided to allow ‘self-help’

2.4 Please indicate the level of negative impact on each of the protected characteristics?

(Please indicate high (H), medium (M), low (L), no effect (N) for each)

Protected Characteristics:	Impact (H, M, L, N)
Age	M
Disability	M
Gender reassignment	N
Race	N
Religion/Belief	N
Pregnancy and maternity	N
Sexual Orientation	N
Sex	N
Marriage and civil partnership	N
Additional Consideration:	
Low income/low wage	N

2.5 How could the disproportionate negative impacts be mitigated or eliminated?
(Note: Legislation and best practice require mitigations to be considered, but need only be put in place if it is possible.)

Mitigation includes provision of a wide range of outward facing communications on salting provision, including the dates, times and routes covered.

Section 3: Dependencies from other proposals

3.1 Please consider which other services would need to know about your proposal and the impacts you have identified. Identify below which services



you have consulted, and any consequent additional equality impacts that have been identified.

None.

Section 4: What evidence you have used?

4.1 What evidence do you hold to back up this assessment?

All complaints about the service are kept on a database and reviewed as the winter season progresses. It has been identified that there are specific risk groups and that these groups need to be considered by specific managers.

- Clients of Social Services Department
- Clients of the Health Authority
- Council buildings
- Schools and other educational buildings

4.2 Do you need further evidence?

No.

Section 5: Consultation Feedback

5.1 Results from any previous consultations prior to the proposal development.

The Service has undertaken briefings of Area Committees, Parish Councils and some local rotary clubs following the 2016-17 season. These briefings have provided information on the Council's Winter Service Plan arrangements and how various forms of treatment actually deal with the accumulation of snow and ice. They have provided a useful forum to help the Service address mis-conceptions about how the Council responds in winter to difficulties of residents and communities moving around Bradford.

5.2 The departmental feedback you provided on the previous consultation (as at 5.1).

The arrangements for Winter Service have been communicated effectively to representatives of the local community to aid understanding and reduce potential complaints about lack of service provision.

5.3 Feedback from current consultation following the proposal development (e.g. following approval by Executive for budget consultation).

None.



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5.4 Your departmental response to the feedback on the current consultation (as at 5.3) – include any changes made to the proposal as a result of the feedback.

None