

REPORT TO: Environment and Urban Renewal Policy
and Performance Board

DATE: 25th June 2014

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director – Policy and Resources

PORTFOLIO: Transportation

SUBJECT: Winter Service Plan 2014/15 – Part A

WARDS: Boroughwide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To seek endorsement of the HBC Winter Service Plan 2014/15 – Part A.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the Board notes and endorses the Plan.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 Following a revision to the National Code of Practice for Highway Maintenance – Winter Service, by the UK Roads Liaison Group (UKRLG), Halton has reviewed its winter service plan to meet the amended requirements, particularly Appendix H.

3.2 The Winter Service Plan is geared essentially at keeping traffic moving safely both through and within the Borough during frost, snow and icy conditions. It prioritises the treatment of the classified road network, major distributor routes and bus routes, which comprise around 45% of Halton's road network. Five gritting routes are defined to ensure treatment within the target time of four hours.

3.3 In terms of pedestrian routes, precautionary treatment of most footbridges and many strategic footpaths is carried out. Treatment is carried out manually by hand and takes up to four hours to complete. It is a very labour intensive operation and places a high demand on both labour and financial resources.

3.4 The plan also provides for an escalating response to deal with severe and / or prolonged weather events, including:

- Secondary Routes
- Major pedestrian routes in Runcorn and Widnes town centres
- Town centre car parks
- Footway / footpath treatment at school locations
- Snow & ice clearance to pedestrian routes in and around local centres

- Lists of schools, colleges, health centres, doctors' surgeries, nursing and elderly persons homes, for targeted treatment as resources permit.

The latter 2 activities usually involve deployment of the Streetscene workforce, diverted from other routine activities during severe weather.

- 3.5 The Winter Service Plan is a two part document. Part A is the formal document, and part B is the operational document that is issued to the contractor for implementation. Halton's current contractor is Lafarge Tarmac Limited.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Legislation makes it a duty to provide a properly planned and resourced winter service. The plan is reviewed and revised annually to ensure local, regional and national codes of practice, guidance and recommendations are considered and incorporated as required.
- 4.2 The policy prioritises treatment of the key transport routes to keep traffic moving safely both through and within the Borough, and also describes the escalating approach implemented during prolonged severe weather conditions. This measured approach is in accordance with the recommendations of the Code of Practice for Highway Maintenance and Management taking into account the level of resources available to deliver the service.

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

The cost of the winter maintenance service is met from Departmental Revenue budgets, which are subject to annual review.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children and Young People in Halton

Winter service operations affect all service users alike. There are no specific issues applicable to children & young people, however, the plan's escalating approach during severe weather includes schools and colleges.

6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

Access to areas of employment ensures that businesses can function at all times. The winter service is vital in ensuring that business and places of learning are not restricted by the weather conditions.

6.3 A Healthy Halton

Access to hospitals and health centres is critical to maintaining a healthier Halton. The winter service is vital in ensuring that access to these locations is not restricted by the weather conditions.

6.4 A Safer Halton

There is considerable risk to the public from icy surfaces, and whilst the Council cannot undertake to protect all road users from risk, the procedures and measures in place, demonstrate how careful planning can reduce risk.

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

There are no specific issues for Urban Renewal, however, by maintaining a safe and accessible highway network, the winter service makes an important contribution to the business continuity management for the whole of Halton's business community.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 Failure to meet our legal obligations would expose the Council to considerable financial risk from litigation.

7.2 The winter service plan ensures as far as practicable, the safety of the public and reduces potential damage to infrastructure and property.

7.3 Following each winter, a report will be produced reviewing the winter service provided by the Council, along with any issues that have arisen. The report will include a review of the following:

- a) Budget and Expenditure.
- b) Treatment routes along with any proposals to modify, either additions or deletions.
- c) Operational performance.
- d) Weather forecasting performance and decision making.
- e) Salt Supplies.

Officers will then respond to this review to ensure the service is operating as efficiently and effectively as possible. Any changes affecting the routes identified in the Winter Service Plan will be advertised on the Council's website.

8.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

There are no issues relating to equality or diversity.

9.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

Well Maintained Highways – The Code of Practice for Highways Management 2005 – Including Amended Appendix H.

Halton Borough Council Winter Service Plan 2014/15 Part A.