

**REPORT TO:** Environment and Urban Renewal Policy  
Performance Board (PPB)

**DATE:** 20 September 2017

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Strategic Director, Enterprise, Communities  
and Resources

**PORTFOLIO:** Transportation

**SUBJECT:** Review of Primary Gritting Routes for  
marginal nights.

**WARDS:** All

## **1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 This report seeks the support of the PPB for the introduction of a 'Cold Route' for 'marginal nights' i.e. nights when the temperature is 1-2 degrees above or below freezing. It sets out proposals for the rationalisation of the existing primary gritting routes as a result of the updating of Halton's thermal map for highways.

**2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the Board supports the proposed introduction of a Cold Route to the winter gritting routes for marginal nights and the rationalisation of primary gritting route.**

## **3.0 BACKGROUND AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

3.1 In common with all other Highway Authorities Halton has an obligation to keep its highways open in periods of severe weather. It must act in a responsible manner and only provide resources in line with the levels of budget available to it. Legislation defines that duty as "ensuring so far as is reasonably practicable that safe passage along a highway is not endangered by snow or ice".

3.3 Halton delivers a winter service that is innovative and effective in treating the network. The operational aspects of the service meet both legislative demands and also the requirements and obligations of the Code of Practice for Well Managed Highways.

3.2 A thermal mapping exercise has recently been undertaken for all the primary routes on the highway network and has provided information which identifies cold spots on both side of the river. Thermal mapping of the network provides information on road surface temperatures in relation to the weather forecasting station on A56 in Daresbury. Cold spots occur due to local conditions and varying road construction types.

3.3 The information from the thermal map has been used to optimise current routes and has enabled a Cold Route to be identified. The Cold Route

consists of roads throughout the network which will be at zero or colder when the weather forecast is predicting road surface temperatures to be at +1C at the forecast site situated on the A56 in Daresbury. This Cold Route is considerably shorter than the primary gritting route which would normally be gritted on these marginal nights, thus enabling savings in time, salt and fuel costs.

- 3.4 At present gritting operations are undertaken on all routes on marginal nights, treating 303km of road infrastructure. Using data obtained from the thermal mapping exercise, this could be reduced to 117 km, thereby reducing the number of gritting vehicles from 5 to 2, reducing the amount of roads gritted by 188 km per night and a salt saving of 13 ton per operation. This equates to a revenue saving of approximately £8,500 per year. Records from previous years have indicated that on average, there have been 10 occasions when the Cold Route could have been utilised instead of the complete primary route.
- 3.5 In addition to the introduction of a Cold Route for marginal nights, it is proposed to treat the following roads on the Secondary Route in accordance with the Winter Service Plan during periods of severe prolonged weather.
- (Widnes) Foundry Lane - Broughton Way – Pickerings Road - Mersey View Road.
  - (Runcorn) Keckwick lane – Arkwright Road – Brindley Road – Goddard Road – Edison Road – Hardwick Road.
- 3.6 The changes will demonstrate the Council's determination to deliver improved winter maintenance services and to address the marginal nights over the winter periods.

#### **4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The Council has a duty to provide a properly planned and resourced service. Failure to provide such would breach this duty and place the Council liable to legal sanction.

#### **5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

##### **5.1 Children and Young People in Halton**

Winter Maintenance operations affected all service users alike. There are no specific issues applicable to children and young people.

##### **5.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton**

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

### **5.3 A Safer Halton**

Whilst the Council cannot undertake to protect all road users the procedures and measures in place demonstrate that careful planning can minimize risk.

### **5.4 Halton's Urban Renewal**

Access to areas of employment ensures that business can function at all times. Winter maintenance is vital in ensuring that business and places of learning are not restricted by the conditions.

### **5.5 Sustainability**

Minimize the number of treatments undertaken and thus reduce salt pollution of water courses and drainage systems.

### **5.6 Legal Implications**

The development and application of the Winter Maintenance Plan ensures that Halton continues to meet its legal obligations.

### **5.8 Social Inclusion**

Reducing Winter Maintenance operations on marginal nights will have no effect on access to motor vehicles or journey times.

### **5.9 Crime and Disorder**

There are no specific implications.

## **6.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

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

6.2 This operation ensures as far as practicable, the safety of the public and reduces potential damage to infrastructure and property.

## **7.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

There are no equality and diversity implications.

## **8.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

Halton Borough Council Highway Maintenance Strategy Document, 1998

Highways Act 1980

Railways and Transport Act 2003

Well Managed Highways 2016 - The Code of Practice

Halton Borough Council Winter Maintenance Plan 2004-2017

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