



Report for:	Cabinet Member Signing 21 October 2014	Item Number:	
Title:	Winter Service Plan Review 2014/15		
Report Authorised by:	Stephen McDonnell, Assistant Director Environmental Services and Community Safety		
Lead Officer:	Michael McNicholas, Neighbourhood Action Manager, Single Frontline		
Ward(s) affected: All	Report for Key/Non Key Decisions: Key		

1. Describe the issue under consideration

- 1.1 The Council as a Highways Authority has a statutory duty to keep highways free of snow and ice as far as reasonably practicable. This report seeks approval for the revised Winter Service Plan for 2014/15 which details the council's policies and operational procedures for dealing with snow and ice on the highway.

2. Cabinet Member introduction

- 2.1 This review of the Winter Service Plan is intended to take account of feedback and suggestions about the service delivered last winter where these can help improve the service we provide this winter. The publication and yearly updates to the Winter Service Plan have been welcomed by Members and residents as a proven way of improving the service year-on-year based on direct feedback from residents.
- 2.2 We will continue to promote a self-help culture and encourage residents to follow the self-help advice in the Snow Code issued by the Government. We will work to pro-actively engage with communities to create a list of snow volunteers. We will supply snow volunteers with snow shovels and loose grit drop-offs so they can help themselves and their neighbours during severe weather. We will produce and



circulate an FAQ guide to residents and traders via Community Groups and the council website.

3. Recommendations

3.1 That the Cabinet Member approves and adopts the Winter Service Plan 2014/15 attached to this report as Appendix 1 incorporating the proposed changes to Pavement and Carriageway Priority levels, and amendment to the grit bin network, as summarised in section 5 below.

3.2 That the Winter Service Operation Plan be reviewed annually.

4. Alternative options considered

4.1 The option to incorporate all of the winter service suggestions and feedback into the Winter Service Plan 2014/15 was considered. This option was not chosen because the plan is designed to deal with snow and ice on a priority basis linked to heightened levels of risk, the need to keep public transport moving, taking into account footfall levels and the presence of important public buildings. Some of the feedback and suggestions received could not be given priority because they do not meet at least one of these criteria.

4.2 The option to make no change to the Winter Service Plan 2013/14 was considered. This option was not chosen because the opportunity to improve the council's response during severe winter weather would be lost and could lead to avoidable injuries and damage at untreated locations.

5. Background information

5.1 The Council has an obligation to keep highways free of snow and ice as far as reasonably practicable. This does not mean that every carriageway and pavement surface has to be gritted and made safe. It does require there to be policies and operational procedures for dealing with snow and ice on the highway and that these are linked to risk factors with priorities clearly set out and followed in any given severe weather event. This is the purpose of the Winter Service Plan.

5.2 The Winter Service Plan does not cover gritting arrangements for Homes for Haringey land, Parks or land within school or council building boundaries. Officers from the Single Frontline Service will work with officers and staff responsible for these areas to ensure they have advice and assistance in making their winter service arrangements. The Winter Service Plan does not cover gritting arrangements for Red Route carriageways and pavements as these roads are the responsibility of TfL.

5.3 The proposed changes to the Winter Service Plan 2014/15 are summarised below and detailed in Appendix 2.



- It is proposed that three roads are added to the Carriageway Priority 1 schedule, two from the Priority 2 schedule and one from the Priority 3 schedule. These additions are proposed in recognition of the gradient and/or level of traffic on those roads or because of the presence of facilities that are regarded as meeting the established criteria for Priority 1 status. These additions will result in an increase in the length of Carriageway Priority 1 gritting from 129.0kms to 129.3kms.
- It is proposed that three roads are added to the Carriageway Priority 1A (schools) schedule and two roads are removed as they are now in the Carriageway Priority 1 schedule. These changes will result in an increase in the length of Carriageway Priority 1A (schools) gritting from 24.7kms to 25.2kms.
- It is proposed that two roads are removed from the Carriageway Priority 2 schedule and placed into the Carriageway Priority 1 schedule, there will be virtually no change to the length of Carriageway Priority 2 gritting.
- It is proposed that one road is removed from the Carriageway Priority 3 schedule and placed into the Carriageway Priority 1 schedule, there will be virtually no change to the length of Carriageway Priority 3 gritting.
- We currently have a network of 163 grit bins. It is proposed to add 2 new grit bin sites for 2014/15.
- It is proposed to make one change to the Pavement Priority 1 schedule.
- It is proposed to make two changes to the Pavement Priority 2 (schools) schedule.

5.4 There are no proposed changes to the following schedules:

- Carriageway Resilience Network
- Carriageway Frost Patrol schedule
- Pavement Frost Patrol schedule

5.5 Responsibility for replenishment of the salt store has passed to Veolia as part of the new Waste and Environmental Services Contract. The Council's salt store holds a maximum of approximately 1,500 tonnes of salt which was easily sufficient for last winter's requirements. There are no proposed changes to salt store stock and in-season re-stocking arrangements.

6. Comments of the Chief Finance Officer and financial implications



- 6.1 This service is provided under the Veolia contract. There may be a small additional cost for increased gritting where roads have moved to a different priority, but it is expected that this can be contained within existing budgets.

7. Comments of the Assistant Director of Corporate Governance and legal implications

- 7.1 Section 41(1A) Highways Act 1980 ("the Act") provides that a highway authority (for a highway maintainable at the public expense for which it is under a duty to maintain) is under a specific duty to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that safe passage along that highway is not endangered by snow or ice. The duty is to take such steps as are, "reasonably practicable" and therefore finite financial resources and extreme or unprecedented weather conditions could be taken into account in determining the availability of a defence to any claim against the highway authority.
- 7.2 Section 150 of the Act imposes a duty on highway authorities to remove any obstruction on the highway resulting from, "accumulation of snow or from falling down of banks on the side of the highway or from any other cause." Failure to do so can give rise to civil proceedings in the Magistrates' Court.

8. Equalities and Community Cohesion Comments

- 8.1 The Winter Service Plan recognises that vulnerable people are placed at greater increased risk during snow and ice events and so require more help to cope than other people. For this reason Residential Care Homes and schools have been given special consideration in the establishment of pavement and carriageway gritting priorities.
- 8.2 It is not possible to produce a Winter Service Plan that addresses the needs of every vulnerable person in a pre-determined set of schedules. The council will always endeavour to respond to an urgent call for gritting at isolated locations that are of a lower priority level where there are vulnerable people who need help. Similarly, we will respond to calls for urgent gritting where they are received from the emergency services. The Winter Service Plan makes specific reference to this commitment.
- 8.3 Community cohesion is promoted through the ability of people to be able to conduct their normal activities during severe weather. The Winter Service Plan contributes to this through the priority gritting work focussed on keeping schools open and by treating bus routes in and through the borough as part of the set of Priority 1 schedules. Community cohesion is also promoted by able people helping less able people and the council encourages this by promoting the self-help Snow Code, providing free snow shovels and loose grit drops. The Snow Code is advice from the Department of Transport for people who want to clear snow and ice from outside their home and help neighbours to prevent slips and falls. A copy of the Snow Code is attached as Appendix 3 and can be found on the Met Office web-site on the following link:



<http://www.metoffice.gov.uk/get-ready-for-winter/out-and-about/the-snow-code>

8.4 Informing and empowering our communities is central to the success of the council's Winter Service Plan. By keeping residents up-to-date on grit bin locations, gritting routes and scheduling, and other emerging issues. We can help residents to help us keep the borough safe and moving during winter weather as follows:

- Actively seek to recruit snow volunteers by engaging with residents through Community Volunteers, residents meetings and e-mails to known community groups/individuals using established contact lists
- Haringey People news and features
- Production of a 'what to do if there is snow and ice' FAQ for residents and traders
- Press releases – including at the launch of the Winter Service Plan and throughout periods of severe weather
- Use of the council website – with a Winter Service page where residents can find information about grit, shovels, the Snow Code, where we grit, when we grit and what policies and priorities we follow
- Twitter – to offer instant updates on gritting activity
- Facebook – to run campaigns as necessary through the corporate Facebook account – including encouraging community involvement and posting relevant information, as well as celebrating community participation through posts and pictures of local residents clearing their own pavements, etc.
- Website – using the Winter Service Plan as a “feature” item on the home page of the website so that information is easily visible and accessible
- Community groups – contacting community groups and websites (such as Harringay Online, etc) directly to encourage greater community awareness of grit bin locations and participation in the service plan.

9. Head of Procurement Comments

9.1 Not applicable.

10. Policy Implication

10.1 The policies and priorities in the Winter Service Plan 2014/15 remain unchanged from last year.

10.2 A low number of changes to the Winter Service Plan are being proposed. These proposals are based on risk factors and priority treatment policies set out in the Winter Service Plan. It is important to control the number of carriageways and pavements that are placed within the Priority 1 schedules. This is because we must ensure that we are able to treat the most important locations and routes in a timely fashion and also because salt usage could be higher than the salt store could bear. It is for this reason that some suggested amendments for increased priority treatment and new grit bins, as described in Appendix 2, are not being included in the proposed changes set out in this report.



10.3 Our proposals to establish snow volunteers supports the council’s key principle of empowering communities through enabling residents who are able to do more for themselves and assist less able neighbours.

11. Reasons for Decision

During severe weather it is not practicable for snow and ice on every carriageway and pavement surface to be treated and made safe. Therefore, it is important to explain where we grit, when we grit and why we grit in any given severe weather event, the Winter Service Plan does this. The approval and adoption of the Winter Service Plan provides a mechanism to demonstrate that the policies, priorities and schedules for gritting have been given due consideration and approved at a level appropriate to the importance of the function. It is also designed to minimise the number of accidents related to snow and ice on the highway and forms part of the council’s defence when claims are received for injuries and damage linked to snow and ice.

12. Use of Appendices

Appendix 1 - Proposed Winter Service Plan 2014/15

Appendix 2 – Proposed Amendments and Points for Review for the Winter Service Plan 2014/15

Appendix 3 – Snow Code

13. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

Highways Act, 1980

Well Maintained Highways – Code of Practice for Highway Maintenance Management

Highway Winter Maintenance Guide

Pollution Prevention Guidelines Highway Depots: PPG10

The Resilience of England’s Transport Systems – An Independent Review, July 2010 – DfT Report undertaken by David Quarmby

COUNCILLOR STUART McNAMARA

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