

## **WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL**

### **Report by the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development**

**Housing, Environment and Economic Development Committee: 6 October 2010**

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**Subject: Winter Maintenance Strategy - 2010/11**

#### **1. Purpose**

- 1.1** The purpose of this report is to apprise the Committee of the Council's statutory obligations under Section 34 of the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984 and seek approval of the Winter Maintenance Strategy - 2010/11.

#### **2. Background**

- 2.1** Section 34 of the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984 requires the local roads authority to take such steps as they consider reasonable to prevent snow and ice endangering the safe passage of pedestrians and vehicles over public roads.
- 2.2** The Winter Maintenance Strategy - 2010/11 outlines the proposed procedures to fulfill this statutory requirement.

#### **3. Main Issues**

- 3.1** It should be noted that as all roads cannot be treated at once, the Winter Maintenance Strategy defines priorities. Conditions may however on occasion be so severe that all resources are directed to keep the category (i) roads open, to the detriment of other roads.
- 3.2** During last winter, the primary routes were treated 94 times and over all classes of roads and footways, some 5450 tonnes of salt were used. Additional salt would have been spread however due to salt resilience measures being applied as a result of the severe weather and national shortage of salt stocks across the whole of the United Kingdom measures were introduced to limit the application of salt.
- 3.3** It should be noted that the A82 Trunk Road through West Dunbartonshire is maintained by Amey Highways and Transerve on behalf of the Scottish Government. The Strategy recommends that Council resources be utilised to provide assistance, if requested by these contractors, should they be unable to keep this vital strategic route open during severe weather.
- 3.4** The Strategy defines the responsibilities relative to public roads as defined in the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984 and included on the Register of Adopted Roads. The Housing, Environmental and Economic Development Department will liaise with other service departments to ensure that arrangements for snow clearing and gritting are in place.

- 3.5** It is a statutory requirement to provide a Winter Maintenance service for public roads and the Council is open to public liability claims should this service not be provided. The standard of service provided in the Winter Maintenance Strategy - 2010/11 is consistent to maintain the level of service previously supplied to the residents of West Dunbartonshire.
- 3.6** Our response to footway treatment is amongst the most pro-active in the country. In addition to footway treatment through inclement weather during normal working hours the Council also treats footways out of hours. Given known financial constraints for the Council in this and future years i.e. out of hours footway treatment, consideration requires to be given to whether this element of the service in the context of other priorities, is sustainable. Spend on out of hours gritting of footways is estimated to be approximately £100,000.
- 3.7** The undernoted points relate to the service provision:
- a) The carriageway and footway route cards and grit bin locations as detailed in the Strategy document are reviewed at the start of each season, and may be subject to minor adjustments.
  - b) Formal arrangements have been agreed with other sections to ensure maximum use of resources during adverse weather conditions.
  - c) The department will continue to receive real time weather information from weather stations at A811 at Gartocharn (upgraded in 2004) and on the A814 at Westcliff (upgraded in 2010).
  - d) Proprietary spreading equipment has now mostly replaced hand-casting of salt for footways. This is a major success, with footways treated more quickly, with less material used and more consistent rate of spread possible. Such efficiency improvements are sought each year.

#### **4. People Implications**

- 4.1** Existing Council resources will be augmented with private sector assistance if necessary where severe conditions are experienced.
- 4.2** Private sector involvement will provide additional mechanical support to our existing plant and machinery when required.

#### **5. Financial Implications**

- 5.1** Revenue Budget provision for 2010/11 in the sum of £700,000 is included in the department's roads budget and this includes £100,000 for out of hours gritting of footways. It is based on costs incurred in an average year, but does not reflect a worst case scenario. It is difficult to predict accurately the outturn costs of this service, however every effort is made to balance the Roads budget by reducing expenditure in other areas.

- 5.2** Should the Council review the level of budget for this service or indeed the level of provision in areas such as footways, the detail within the plan will require to be amended accordingly.

## **6. Equalities Impact**

- 6.1** This strategy ensures all service users are treated equally.

## **7. Risk Analysis**

- 7.1** The implications of not undertaking this service would result in unacceptable risk to all road users of West Dunbartonshire. Given the nature of the service, there is always a risk of service breakdown if the weather conditions are severe. However, the Winter Maintenance Strategy has been developed using risk analysis techniques, and the likelihood of service failure has been minimised.

- 7.2** Discontinuation of the treatment of footways out of hours would not compromise compliance with statutory obligations. However, treatment to footways during normal working hours would continue through adverse weather conditions. The impact of this decision would require to be properly communicated to residents of West Dunbartonshire and could be supported by an effective communication strategy.

## **8. Conclusions and Recommendations**

- 8.1** West Dunbartonshire Council has a statutory duty to provide a winter maintenance service for its network of public roads, and the actions proposed to meet this duty are shown in the document: Winter Maintenance Strategy 2010/11 which is reviewed and approved annually.

- 8.2** It is recommended that the Committee:

- (i) note the Council's obligations in relation to section 34 of the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984;
- (ii) agree to treat footways during normal working hours through periods of adverse weather conditions; and
- (iii) approve the winter maintenance strategy.

**Elaine Melrose**

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**Date: 3 September 2010**

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**Appendix:** Winter Maintenance Strategy - 2010/11

**Background Papers:** None

**Wards Affected:** All