



## **WINTER SERVICE POLICY STATEMENT 2018** **(Revision of the 2013/14 Statement)**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

**This policy statement has been released following a review by Shropshire Council and Kier of its Winter Service Policy, in line with Well Managed Highway Infrastructure: A Code of Practice October 2016 Section B.7. Winter Service along with Shropshire Council's local experience and operational circumstances arising from the diverse topography and local climatic conditions experienced across the highway network in Shropshire.**

#### **a) Objective**

Shropshire Council 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.

It is not possible, given the scale of financial and other resources that would be required, to provide the service on all parts of the network or to ensure that all surfaces, even those that are treated, are kept clear of snow and ice at all times.

The more important routes are known as the resilient network or primary routes and are designed to enable travel to important services and facilitating health local economy etc..

The Winter Service in Shropshire is carried out to minimise delays, accidents and damage caused by snow and ice. To achieve this objective, a priority treatment system has been devised which concentrates on the more important routes and then extends to other routes when resources become available.

#### **b) Highway Network**

##### **i. Minimum Winter Network**

The Minimum Winter Network is the Resilient Network as defined by the Highways Asset Management Plan and would be the minimum that would be treated in cases of exceptional circumstances. This can be viewed on the Councils Winter Service Web site:

<http://shropshire.gov.uk/roads-and-highways/highwaysmaintenance/winter-road-maintenance/where-we-grit/>

ii. Defined Network

The Defined Network consists of all 'A' and 'B' roads, and localised high-risk sections of other roads. It comprises approximately 28% of the total road network in Shropshire. Refer to the above link.

iii. Cycle ways and Heavily Used Footways

Many of the cycle ways/footways have been constructed for the safe passage of cyclists and pedestrians travelling to work and school, so if temperatures are to remain below zero after 8.00am then the defined cycle way / footway network should be precautionary treated if resources are available.

## **2. ORGANISATION**

### **a) Responsibilities**

- i. The Head of Infrastructure and Communities has overall responsibility for winter service operations within Shropshire Council.

Highway Managers are responsible for the day-to-day implementation of policy and control of Council's operations in each Divisional Office.

- ii. The winter service season in Shropshire is defined as being between 1<sup>st</sup> October and 30<sup>th</sup> April inclusive. Before the start of the winter service season each Highway Manager will agree with the service provider the routing of vehicles and equipment to cover the defined networks of roads, car parks, footways and cycle tracks.

These routes together with descriptive schedules will then be produced in plan form, A4 size for use by both client and contracting staff.

- iii. Highway Managers will make arrangements on an individual basis with local contractors with regard to the hire of any supplementary equipment which may be needed from time to time.

- iv. The Contact details of key staff are in the Winter Service Operational Plan

### **b) Standby Arrangements**

A standby rota of competent staff will be present for the period 1<sup>st</sup> October to 30<sup>th</sup> April inclusive. Decisions regarding the need for standby staff outside of these dates will be taken as appropriate.

### **3. RESOURCES**

#### **a) Vehicles**

A fleet of salting vehicles complete with snow ploughing blades sufficient to cover all Defined Network routes will be provided for precautionary salting purposes. These vehicles will be allocated and based in each Division in accordance with the number of routes for the duration of the winter period.

A 'core' fleet of snow clearing equipment together with footway ploughs will be provided for clearing snow and initially placed in the Divisions. The ongoing location of these vehicles will depend on actual conditions during the winter.

These arrangements are additionally supported by the employment of other contractors with appropriate equipment which can be utilised in severe conditions.

#### **b) Staff**

All staff making decisions will be competent, as they would have received sufficient training (recognised course for Winter Service Operations and/or Supervision) and experience.

Sufficient properly trained drivers and other staff will be available from the Service Provider to enable continuous 24-hour operation of vehicle and plant to take place.

#### **c) Grit bins**

The provision of grit bins will be kept to an absolute minimum, and will be reviewed each year. Additional bins will only be provided following a site risk assessment.

Filling and replenishment should normally be carried out with a 1:10 salt/grit mix. Replenishment will be carried out by the Service provider on instruction from the Highways Manager before the start of the season and as required throughout the Winter Service period.

Salt storage is provided in strategic locations at or close to each of the five operational highways depots. This salt is restocked before the winter season commences and is monitored daily and restocked as required.

### **4. DECISION MAKING**

Competent staff will make all decisions regarding Winter Service work, and the necessary instructions issued to the service providers. The decision for ordering treatments shall be based on a combination of weather forecasts and site inspections in accordance with the Operational Plan.

#### **a) Weather Forecasts**

Shropshire Council subscribes to official weather forecasting services from Vaisala Ltd and MeteoGroup UK during the months of October to April, and receives the following information via the Vaisala Bureau Service;

- Morning update summary – issued am.
- 24 hour forecast – issued pm
- 5 day forecast – issued pm.
- Ice prediction graphs – issued pm.
- Regular updating services
- 24 hour Consultancy Service from MeteoGroup UK

In addition, the Council subscribes to the Vaisala website which gives access to Highways England and other adjacent counties weather stations.

A prolonged sub-zero condition is when the surface temperature is at or below zero degrees for 24 hours or forecasted to be so.

### **5. TREATMENT DECISIONS**

#### **a) Precautionary salting for Preventing Ice Formation (Pre-Salting)**

The decision to turn out for precautionary salting on the Defined Network must be conveyed to the appropriate service provider so that the treatment can be totally completed prior to the hazard forming.

The salt spread-rates for pre-treatment in anticipation of freezing conditions assume reasonable spreading capability and are detailed in the Winter Service Operational Plan.

#### **b) Treatment of Snow Falls (Pre and Post-Salting)**

In the event of a confirmed snow forecast pre-salting should be carried out on the defined network as necessary, together with as much of the remainder of the network as is practical and necessary for snow clearing operations irrespective of the time of day or night.

Ploughing should commence as soon as the depth of snow is sufficient to make the operation practical.

#### **c) Prolonged Sub-Zero Conditions and Ice Build-ups (Post-Salting)**

A prolonged Sub-Zero condition is when the surface temperature is at or below zero degrees for 24 hours or forecasted to be so. In such conditions priority will always be given to treating the Defined Network. However, when the Defined Network has been adequately treated the treatment of secondary routes may be undertaken as resources allow.

In exceptional circumstances the decision may be taken to treat the minimum winter network.

## **6. PERFORMANCE MONITORING**

- a)** Highway Managers must ensure that the performance of the Winter Service is monitored at regular intervals during the winter period and meets the requirements of the Winter Service Plan.
- b)** A formal review of the effectiveness of the winter service, with the aim of learning lessons and incorporating this into the following season's plan will be carried out shortly after the end of the winter season. This review will be documented.

## **7. Governance**

This policy was reviewed in June 2018 and updated and revised the 2013 version due to industry changes and new Codes of Practice.

The revised policy was submitted to Scrutiny in July 2018 and was presented to Cabinet in September 2018 and was subsequently approved.