

Report to: Executive Cabinet Member,
Environmental Services

Date: 10th July 2017

Report of: Director of Place

Report No: ECMES/14/17a

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Report Title: **Winter Gritting Service Review 2017**

Non Confidential:

This report does **not** contain information which warrants its consideration in the absence of the press or members of the public

Purpose:

The purpose of the report is to inform the Executive Cabinet Member, Environmental Services, of the Council's Winter Service Review.

Recommendations:

The Executive Cabinet Member is asked to note the Winter Service Review and approve the proposals for 2017/18 winter season.

Decision:

Background Doc(s):

Last year's report ref – ECMES/35/16b

(for use on Exec Rep)

Signed:

Leader / Executive Member

Monitoring Officer

Date:

Summary:

Bolton Council Winter Service Policy was reviewed and updated July 2016 to seek as far as reasonably practical to comply with the revised guidance. No policy changes are proposed this year. This report updates on operational practices.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 The winter service provision within Bolton Council is provided by Highways & Engineering Division. It is planned to ensure that adequate resources are available at all times during the winter period to respond to adverse weather conditions.
- 1.2 We currently carry out gritting on 510kms (317 miles) of main traffic routes which equates to 51% of our network.
- 1.3 In addition, the Council also provides 533 no. grit bins placed around the borough to allow local resident self help during adverse weather conditions.

2.0 Policy update for 16/17

- 2.1 In July 2005 the Code of Practice for Highway Maintenance Management titled "Well maintained Highways" was published replacing "Delivering Best Value in Highway Maintenance".
- 2.2 September 2013 saw the latest and extensive update to Section 13 and Appendix H of the "Well-maintained Highways" document providing an up to ten year implementation plan which Authorities must strive to achieve to provide a robust Winter Service.
- 2.3 Whilst it must be accepted that it is impossible on the grounds of both practicality and economy to prevent the formation of ice and snow on all of the borough's roads and footways, Bolton Council will ensure that its statutory duties are undertaken.
- 2.4 Bolton Council's Winter Service Policy was reviewed and updated July 2016 to seek as far as reasonably practical to comply with the revised guidance. Web reference -

<http://www.bolton.gov.uk/sites/DocumentCentre/Documents/Winter%20Service%20Policy.pdf>.

There have been no changes to the Policy this year. Appendix 1 highlights the improvements that have been achieved to date and the proposed objectives for the next two years.

3.0 Summary of Winter Season 16/17

- 3.1 The past winter service season 2016/17 contained few instances of exceptionally low temperatures or heavy prolonged snowfall overall, resulting in the year passing without serious alarm.
- 3.2 At times during the season 2016/17, It was quite difficult to determine gritting treatment due to uncertainty with weather forecasts, partly due

to changes in cloud cover from what was forecast. This resulted in the predictions of zero or sub-zero temperatures not occurring which would normally cause the roads to freeze.

- 3.3 In summary, we carried out 71 full route grits during 2016/17 and 4 partial route grits, which compares to Bolton's six year average of 75 full route grits. The number of turnouts and salt used is identified in Table 1 below:

Table 1:

Year	Turnouts	Salt used (Tonnes)
2016/17	71 full treatment 4 partial treatment	2,950
2015/16	73 full treatment 4 partial treatment	3,034
2014/15	81 full treatment 6 partial treatment	4,300
2013/14	54 full treatment 6 partial treatment	2,100
2012/13	118 full treatment 18 partial treatment	6,400
2011/12	55 full treatment 9 partial treatment	2,900

4.0 Update on 2016/17 Recommendations

- 4.1 Adoption of Appendix H- Introduced Salt spread rates in line with Appendix H recommendations. This revision is aimed at Councils making salt savings therefore reducing costs. Previous guidance was always aimed at spreading at 5g intervals. However, this has now been changed and target spread rates subject to weather conditions and other factors can be set at 1g increments.

The Council has adopted revised spread rates at 1g increments as specified within our policy which has lead to spreading less salt, saving approximately £9000.

- 4.2 Route Optimisation – During the 2015/16 season Webaspx Ltd (specialist route optimisation company) were employed to optimise the routes. This enabled the gritting routes to be completed with seven gritters rather than eight over the 2016/17 season. This provides an average annual saving of £12k. This saving is being used to off-set the costs of automating our gritters for the 2017/18 season.
- 4.3 Winter Bureau Service and Maintenance Contract 2017-2022 – Over the 2017 summer months a new Winter Bureau Service has been contracted. See report ECMES/60/17, approved by the Executive Member on 10 May 2017.

5.0 Proposals for 2017/18

- 5.1 The winter service industry is becoming much more focused on evidencing what we do and with increased reliable technology, automated gritters are becoming common place. Econ Ltd, our current vehicle supplier, now provides these features and we will be utilising this technology over the forthcoming season. Through negotiation with our supplier we have managed to absorb the majority of the increased cost by reducing the hired fleet. Addition cost of hiring the equipment to automate our fleet is £5000
- 5.2 Given the route changes made during the 2016/17 season and the fact that it was a mild winter no significant route changes are proposed this year. This will allow the changes to become embedded and ensure continuity of service delivery.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Executive Cabinet Member, Environmental Services, notes the Winter Service Review and approves the proposals for 2017/18 winter season.

Appendix 1

Recommendations / Action Plan

'The guidance and recommendations contained within Appendix H relate to national Best Practice and it is recognised that local circumstances, including financial and other resource constraints, as well as political influences etc. can vary widely across the country. Authorities and operators will need to take all of these factors fully into account, when devising and revising their Winter Service policies and plans. Some of the recommendations and practices will, if adopted, also take a number of years to implement. For example, it is recognised that, in certain cases it could potentially take up to around 10 years' - Appendix H Winter Service Practical Guidance Appendix Amended 18 September 2013

The table below highlights the improvements that have been achieved to date (grey) and the proposed objectives over the next two years.

<u>Urgency</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Rationale inc Appendix 'H' guidance (2013)</u>	<u>Action</u>
Red	De-icing Salt Moisture level testing	Authorities should regularly check the salt condition, by testing samples taken from existing stockpiles as well as new deliveries. This method provides data to aid the decisions for salting spread rates factoring in salt condition.	BMBC to implement salt monthly moisture testing and maintain records as soon as practicably possible. Decision making must include data from moisture test results Completed during 2015/16 season
Red	Salt distribution and spread rate calibration	Every spreader should be calibrated before each winter, however undertaking and additional mid-winter calibration is also good practice. Calibration should be carried out whenever required throughout the season, for example following a change of salt or monitoring highlighting a potential issue. The objective is to ensure that the intended spread rates are achieved Calibration should be carried out for every spreader in a fleet and should check: 1. That the total amount of salt being discharged is within acceptable tolerances 2. That the salt is being spread to the target area	BMBC to ensure calibration of fleet is undertaken with vehicle providers in line with Appendix 'H' guidelines (2013) as soon as practicable possible. Completed for 2016/17 season

Red	Route Optimisation review	The Annual Review should include an analysis on whether service delivery meets the Winter Service policy and plan. It should also include a review of the current thinking with regards to the impact of climate change. Service efficiency improvements such as route optimisation should also be considered.	Route optimisation Completed for the start of 2016/17 Season
Red	Fleet review	Standardise Fleet with capacity for 1g incremental spread rates, navigational aids and the latest technology	BMBC has entered into a three year contract with ECON Ltd. Completed 2015/16 season
Amber	Fleet - Automated Gritting	Standardise Fleet with automated gritting capability Technology options to be investigated during the 2017/18 season	BMBC have entered into an agreement with ECON Ltd to supply additional equipment. Automate gritters
Green	Expand the use of IT including the installation of In-Cab technology	Link I.T. systems (linking all databases to provide one input point only – mostly automated) increasing efficiency and controls via low manual inputs, realtime gritter activity inc spread rates and location providing greater control for shift manager.	BMBC to investigate potential to reduce dual inputting and increase efficiency in delivery of the service.
Green	Provide real-time tracker information online to public	Provide data to public via website. Data to include location of gritter in real time.	BMBC to investigate the benefits of linking a software platform to public facing website to reduce FOI requests and increase the ability for the public and local businesses to predict where the network has been recently treated.

Legend

Red: By 2016/17 season

Amber: By 2017/18 season

Green: By 2018/19 Season

Boxes greyed out have been completed