

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL**LOCAL COMMITTEE (GUILDFORD)**

DATE: 25 JUNE 2014
LEAD OFFICER: SIMON MITCHELL,
 MAINTENANCE PLAN TEAM LEADER
SUBJECT: REVIEW OF WINTER SERVICE ARRANGEMENTS
DIVISION: ALL

SUMMARY OF ISSUE:

Surrey undertakes an annual review of the Winter Service at the end of each winter season, including the effectiveness of network coverage, operational improvements, organisational changes and partnership working arrangements. This report seeks the views of the Guildford Local Committee on the delivery of the Winter Service operations in the 2013/14 season, to feedback into the annual review.

RECOMMENDATIONS:**The Local Committee (Guildford) is asked to:**

- (i) Consider the current Winter Service provision and operations in their area and provide feedback, via their Local Committee Chairman, on any change requests.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

To give the Guildford Local Committee the opportunity to provide feedback into the annual review of Winter Service operations.

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND:

- 1.1 At the meeting on 24 September 2013 Cabinet recommended that each Local Committee should be consulted on the delivery of Winter Service operations following the 2013/14 season. In order to do this an item should be included on the spring agenda for members to provide feedback into the annual review

2. ANALYSIS:

- 2.1 After the severe winter event in 2012/13 we have been experiencing a change in the weather pattern recently with wintery weather being replaced by rain, winds and floods.
- 2.2 The situation has nevertheless continued to be challenging with the ground saturated, regular river flooding, standing water in many places and seepage leading to the high probability of ice forming during cold periods. By the end of the season Kier had completed 44/59 precautionary salting runs in the east/west of the county respectively which is comparable to an "average" (52 runs per season) Surrey winter. Salt supplies have regularly been replaced throughout the winter period in accordance with Cabinet's agreed recommendations.
- 2.3 With an unusually large number of grit bin replacements combined with new requests (246) the response has not always been timely. Mid season this response was further affected by the diversion of resources onto the storm response and recovery operation. We are working with Kier to learn lessons from this year to ensure grit bins can be placed on the highway within a reasonable timescale and that we have sufficient resilience to manage the numbers required.

3. DISCUSSION:

- 3.1 As the revised Winter Service is now fully operational only the following small number of improvement areas will form part of this year's review:
- The precautionary salting network will generally remain the same as in 2012/13 with only minor alterations resulting from the implementation of the new Surrey Priority Network (SPN) and subject to any comments from local members, residents and officers.
 - Snow clearance schedules for pavements will be reviewed against the new maintenance hierarchy on completion of the Footway Network Survey in July.
 - Opportunities for further partnership working arrangements will be explored with Parish and Town Councils enabling them to provide volunteers for pavement clearance in towns and villages that are not currently covered by the District and Borough arrangements. A number of parishes are already participating in Guildford.
 - There will be a review of the existing semi permanent ice warning signs on the network.
 - There will be an update on the trial of alternative vehicles used on hills, narrow routes and estate roads.

4. CONSULTATIONS:

Gritting Routes

- 4.1 Further route optimisation of the P1 precautionary salting network, which was first approved three year ago to provide a 'people solution', has resulted in continuous improvements to performance.
- 4.2 Where the need for further minor changes is identified the Local Committee is able to accommodate this on a 'like for like' basis provided it does not impact on the strategic gritting network.

Grit Bins

- 4.3 The current grit bin purchase scheme allows members, through their local allocation, residents and local community groups to purchase a stocked grit bin for four years at a cost of £1,040 (plus the agreed contract price 3.3% adjustment for 2014/15).
- 4.4 Any existing grit bin that has been damaged and scores less than 100 points through the approved process will be removed from the network at the end of the 2013/13 winter season. However, as previously agreed, members will be advised of each site so that they can consider the need for a priority replacement independently funded on a four year basis.

Farmers

- 4.5 In order to support the Council's snow clearance and gritting response during times of severe winter weather, 51 local farmers have been contracted to provide additional assistance and resilience.
- 4.6 In much of the county, especially the rural south, adequate farmer support is currently identified. However, there is a need to enhance the current capability in Surrey Heath, Woking, Runnymede, Elmbridge and Epsom and Ewell so it is hoped the Local Committees in these areas may be able to assist with recommendations for addition resources.
- 4.7 Following the recent severe weather and flooding it is now proposed to review existing contractual arrangements with all farmers and enable them to respond to these events and deal with fallen trees and embankment slips etc. in their locality.

5. FINANCIAL AND VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS:

- 5.1 The Winter Service will be fully funded by Surrey Highways Medium Term Plan and no financial contribution is required from the local committee budget.
- 5.2 It is, however, recognised that members and communities have the ability to fund additional grit bins on the network.

6. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS:

- 6.1 An equalities and diversity impact assessment is in place for the winter service. The winter service priority is, as far as is reasonably practicable, to

safeguard the movement and well-being of all Highway users, both the residents of Surrey and those passing through the County.

- 6.2 The recommendations in this report will have no material impact on existing equality policy so the need to complete a full assessment was not considered necessary.

7. LOCALISM:

- 7.1 The Highways Service is mindful of the localism, remains committed to “self help” and community lead opportunities for winter service provision and assistance. Local Committee have the flexibility to influence minor changes to the salting network and promote further engagement with volunteer groups to assist during severe weather events etc.

8. OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

- 8.1 None

9. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 9.1 The Local Committee (Guildford) is asked to provide feedback on the 2013/14 winter service, and any proposed changes to the salting network locally. Change request and comments will be taken into account prior to the annual winter service plan being submitted to the County Council’s Cabinet for approval in September.

10. WHAT HAPPENS NEXT:

- 10.1 The annual review will consider opportunities for continuous improvement following the 2013/14 winter season and reflect feedback received from members through their Local Committee Chairman. The proposed engagement timetable is as follows:

End of season wash up meetings – Local Highway Service Teams, Service Provider, Operations and Asset Planning	March - April
Task Group Review Meeting (including progress on the 2013/14 recommendations)	April
Local Committee Chairmen advised of any changes to salting network	May - July
Environment & Transport Select Committee – Winter Service Report & Plan	September
Cabinet – Winter Service Report & Plan	September
Local Committees – Update on winter service arrangements	Autumn meetings
Winter service information pack and communications campaign	September onwards
Stakeholder and Local Committee feedback on winter service (Agenda item to be included on spring round of Local Committees)	Oct - March

Contact Officer:

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Consulted: David Harmer Chairman E&TSC
E&TSC Winter Service Task Group Members
Kier

Annexes: None

Sources/background papers:

Report of the Task Group to the Cabinet – 24th September 2013
Winter Service Development for 2013/14

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