

**HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

**HIGHWAYS AND ENVIRONMENT CABINET PANEL  
12 JULY 2018 AT 10:00AM**

Agenda Item No.

**4**

**WINTER SERVICE OPERATIONAL PLAN (WSOP)**

Report of the Chief Executive

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Executive Member: Phil Bibby, Highways & Environment

**1. Purpose of report**

The purpose of this report is to:

1. Report on the operation of the Winter Service Operational Plan (WSOP) for the 2017/18 season;
2. Outline development of the WSOP for 2018/19;
3. Seek the panel's comments prior to publishing the WSOP for the 2018/19 season;
4. Outline an indicative 10 year winter service review and development programme;

**2. Background**

- 2.1 As outlined in the Winter Service Operational Report to Panel in June 2017, every highway authority should have a WSOP which sets out the winter service provision, following the guidance contained in "Well-Managed Highway Infrastructure – A code of Practice" (WMHI). This new code was introduced in 2016 and Hertfordshire County Council agreed to adopt it by October 2018.
- 2.2 To comply with the requirements of WMHI, Hertfordshire County Council has been undertaking a review of its precautionary salting network. This included developing new criteria, which was presented to the Highways Cabinet Panel on 16 November 2017 and approved by Cabinet on 18 December 2017. For reference the new criteria can be found in Appendix 1.

- 2.3 The agreed criteria were used to produce a new precautionary salting network. Plans of the proposed network were produced and all County Councillors offered the opportunity to come in and look at the proposed network during February 2018.
- 2.4 Highways teams have also been undertaking a practical and accessibility check to ensure that the individual roads can be treated safely with a gritter. Where it is not possible to treat an individual road and this road is deleted from the network, the relevant County Councillor will be notified.
- 2.5 Route optimisation, a process by which highway teams work out the most practical and economic way to grit the network within the treatment window and to keep costs down (basically minimising the number of gritters needed), will be undertaken before the start of the 2018/19 season. These new routes will be introduced for the 2018/19 winter season.

### **3. Summary**

1. There were 90 precautionary salting outings during 2017/18, which was well above the previous 5 year average of 51 and the most runs undertaken in Hertfordshire since records began in 1990.
2. The WSOP for 2018/19 will include new routes, which meet the agreed criteria and comply with WMHI, with some minor changes and improvements for the coming winter season.
3. A cyclic review of precautionary salting routes, high priority footway routes and secondary routes will take place on a 4 year cycle.

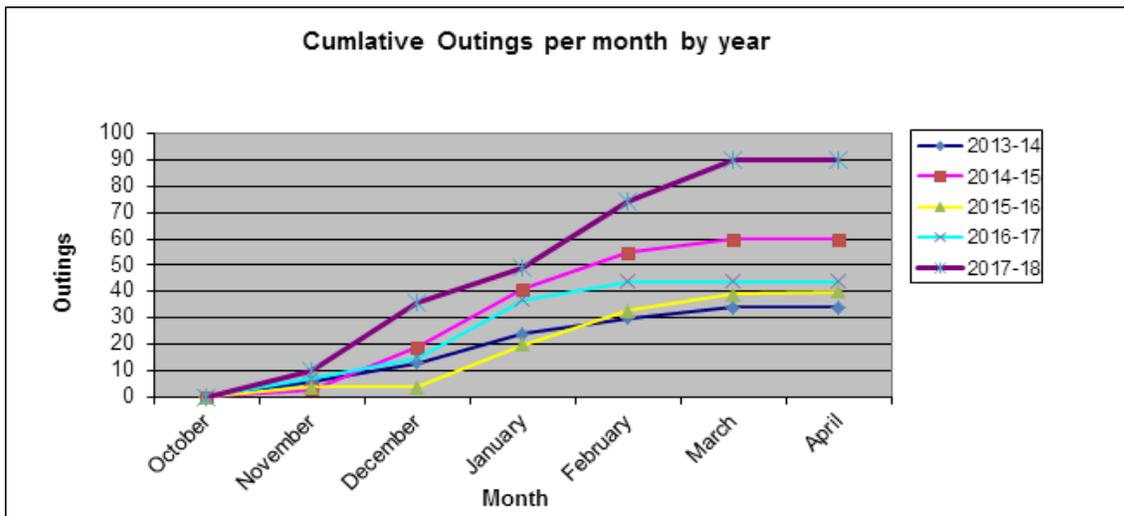
### **4. Recommendations**

- 4.1 The Highways & Environment Cabinet Panel is requested to:
  1. Comment on the Winter Service Operational Plan 2018/19 prior to its publication on the County Council's website (with personal data redacted);
  2. Note that Hertfordshire County Council will adopt the Winter Service Operational Plan 2018/19;
  3. Consider any potential developments, initiatives and efficiencies for future winter seasons;
  4. Note the proposed review and the programme of activities.

## 5 Report on the operation of the Winter Service Operational Plan (WSOP) for the 2017/18 season

- 5.1 The winter season of 2017/18 was relatively harsh in Hertfordshire, with 4 separate snow events and a number of periods of below freezing temperatures.
- 5.2 Hertfordshire County Council Highways carried out 90 runs (78 @ 15g and 12 @ 8g), the highest since their records began in 1990 and 39 more than the previous 5 year average. During each run the service treated around 2,500km of the county's precautionary salting network. In total gritters drove over 216,000km and spread more than 25,600 tonnes of salt.
- 5.3 Previously the most runs carried out was 78 (since records began in 1990), during the 2012/13 season.
- 5.4 Graph 1 and table 1 provide a breakdown of the precautionary salting runs from 2013 to 2018.

**Graph 1:**



**Table 1:**

	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	Average
October	0	0	0	0	0	0
November	6	3	4	7	10	6
December	13	19	4	15	36	17.4
January	24	41	20	37	49	34.2
February	30	55	33	44	74	47.2
March	34	60	39	44	90	53.4
April	34	60	40	44	90	53.6
Total Outings	34	60	40	44	90	53.6

## **6 Outline Development of the WSOP for 2018/19**

- 6.1 Minor changes and operational improvements have been included in the WSOP and reference changed to reflect WMHI for the coming 2018/19 winter season.
- 6.2 The WSOP 2018/19 reflects the recommendations, where appropriate to Hertfordshire County Council, from the National Winter Research Group guidance and WMHI.
- 6.3 The general format and content of the WSOP has been tested in court on various occasions and has been found to be robust. For this reason the format for 2018/19 is the same as in previous years.
- 6.4 A common problem encountered during the gritting season is the difficulty in treating some roads because of obstructions caused by parked cars. Roads that may be bus routes and have daytime parking restrictions on them are often obstructed during night-time salting operations. Whilst there may be an option to use smaller vehicles this is not always reasonable and practical and as a consequence on occasions roads can be missed altogether.
- 6.5 The use of these smaller vehicles does have a knock on effect in that more vehicles/drivers are needed to salt the same amount of road which results in additional costs. The practical and accessible check is aimed at identifying these individual roads so appropriate adjustments to the routes can be made at the planning stage. Where roads still prove to be inaccessible or impracticable and therefore need to be dropped, the relevant County Councillors will be informed.
- 6.6 Approximately a third of the cost of the winter budget is spent on having the equipment available. It is intended through optimisation that we aim to reduce the fleet by a small amount to reduce this 'standing charge'.

- 6.7 Developments for 2018/19 include:
1. Publishing of gritter tracking via Hertfordshire County Council's website – this will include where the gritter is and a snail trail of where it's been;
  2. Publishing of grit bin status (i.e. when it was filled) via HCC's website.
- 6.8 The WSOP 2018/19 is attached as Appendix 2 of this report.

## **7 Outline 10 year Development Programme**

- 7.1 Highway officers have been working with the Executive Member and Deputy in developing an outline programme for evolving the winter service over the next 10 years. This takes account of possible technology improvements, known contract changes and planned review cycles.
- 7.2 The current 10 year programme is included as Appendix 3. This will evolve and be updated overtime as new initiatives are brought forward.
- 7.3 Table 2 below, outlines the proposed winter network review cycle for the next 4 years. Reviews will start in the years indicated with any updates being included in the following season's WSOP.

**Table 2:**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Activity</b>
2018/19	High Priority Footway review
2019/20	Secondary Route review
2020/21	Prepare Weather Station replacement information for inclusion in new HST Contract
2021/22	Precautionary Route review

- 7.4 The 10 year programme outlines key dates including when a new weather forecaster needs to be sought. This is usually procured through the East Anglian Consortium and is due in October 2021.
- 7.5 Over the next 5 years Hertfordshire will also need to invest in replacing / extending its weather station forecasting equipment. This will ensure Duty Officers have the latest technology to make informed decisions. Investing in latest technology can also help reduce ongoing costs. An example being that above ground ice detectors are being developed.

- 7.6 Above ground ice detectors will reduce the ongoing maintenance costs, because unlike the current detectors they are less prone to damage. The current detectors are set in the road, are constantly being run over by vehicles and therefore suffer damaged, needing replacement. Above ground ice detectors also have an added advantage as they do not need replacing when roads are resurfaced or repaired.
- 7.7 It may also be necessary to review salt products used in Hertfordshire depending on national guidance over the next few years.

## **8. Financial Implications**

- 8.1 The winter service budget for 2018/19 is £3.18m.

## **9. Equalities Impact Assessment**

- 9.1 When considering proposals placed before Members it is important that they are fully aware of, and have themselves rigorously considered the equalities implications of the decision that they are taking.
- 9.2 Rigorous consideration will ensure that proper appreciation of any potential impact of that decision on the County Council's statutory obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty. As a minimum this requires decision makers to read and carefully consider the content of any Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) produced by officers.
- 9.3 The Equality Act 2010 requires the Council when exercising its functions to have due regard to the need to (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited under the Act; (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it and (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it. The protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion and belief, sex and sexual orientation.
- 9.4 An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been undertaken and updated for 2018/19 this is annexed at Appendix 4.
- 9.5 The revised code of practice WMH suggests consideration is given to the special needs of disabled people or older people, particularly where these can be effectively targeted. The proposed criteria include treatments to such facilities where this is practicable and accessible. Action to mitigate potential impacts where it is not possible to treat these facilities includes the potential extending of self-help, providing grit bins and footway salting.

## **10. Summary of Appendices**

- 1. Agreed Criteria**
- 2. WSOP 2018/19**
- 3. 10 Year Plan**
- 4. EqIA**

### ***Background Information***

[Highways Cabinet Panel - 22 June 2017](#)

[Well-managed Highway infrastructure - A code of practice - See Page 114, Section B7 for Winter Service](#)