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## **WINTER SERVICE UPDATE**

**Report by Service Director Assets & Infrastructure**

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### **EXECUTIVE**

**20 August 2019**

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#### **1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY**

- 1.1 **This report presents an update on the findings of a comprehensive Winter Services Provision review that was undertaken at the start of the calendar year and relates to the prioritisation and implementation, where appropriate, of the recommendations proposed in that review. In addition, it presents, at appendix B, SBC's Winter Service Plan 2019/20.**
- 1.2 SBC provides a winter service on nearly 3,000km of roads across the Scottish Borders. An annual Winter Plan is prepared to outline the steps that will be taken to ensure that the roads network is safe, within available resources.
- 1.3 While it was agreed at the 4 December 2018 Executive that a further report would be brought forward ideally before the end of June 2019 to consider amendments to the plan for Winter 2019/20, this was unfortunately not achievable within that timescale.
- 1.4 As part of this proposal and the need to provide previously identified savings from the winter service an Independent review of the Council's winter service provision was undertaken comparing the Council's arrangements with that of peer Authorities.
- 1.5 The Winter Services Provision Investigation Report has now been received in a final draft form and a summary is attached to this report as Appendix A. This report discusses the findings and recommendations from that report and makes further recommendations on the veracity of these along with suggested timing for their introduction or the trialling and/or further investigation of them. Financial analysis of the proposals remains ongoing due to the complexity.
- 1.6 Adoption of some of the recommendations require amendment to the existing Winter Service Plan that the Council operates, and the SBC Winter Service Plan 2019/20, incorporating those changes is presented at Appendix B.

#### **2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 **I recommend that the Executive Committee:**
  - (a) **Notes the findings of the Winter Service Provision Investigation Report; and**

**(b) Accepts the Winter Service Plan for Winter 2019/20**

### 3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Council undertakes a Winter Service on nearly 3,000km of local road network. The Service is provided by the Assets and Infrastructure Department.

Under the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984, Section 34, all roads authorities are required to *'take such steps as they consider reasonable to prevent snow and ice endangering the safe passage of pedestrians and vehicles over public roads'*. The safe passage of people on the road network during winter is very important for the social and the economic needs of the area.

- 3.2 To assist in meeting the legal requirements the Department reviews and produces an annual Winter Service Plan and describes what steps will be taken to maintain the local road network free from ice and snow as far as it is considered reasonable within the available budget. The Plan is primarily based on a route treatment hierarchy where priority routes have been determined depending on various factors such as traffic volumes, bus routes and access to schools, shops and medical centres. The Council's Winter Service Plan is updated each year based on previous experience and lessons learned.

- 3.3 The manner in which the Council keeps the road network operating safely and effectively is taken forward in 2 ways:

- Prevention – by pre-salting roads to reduce the effect of frost and frozen conditions, taken forward on a routine, planned basis. The road network is currently split into Primary, Secondary and Tertiary Networks. Planned "pre-salting" is only undertaken on the Primary Network. The remaining road network will then come under the "post-treatment" of secondary and Tertiary networks. The Secondary network is treated after the primary routes, as time and resource permits and it is believed that the freezing conditions will continue. The Tertiary network will only be treated when extended weather conditions persist, all primary routes have been treated, resources have been committed to treat secondary routes and resources have become available.
- Intervention – through large scale snow clearance following extreme winter conditions, taken forward on more of an adhoc basis, involving emergency actions and community resilience. This is co-ordinated by the Council's Emergency Planning processes.

- 3.4 Officers have presented a number of reports on the Winter Service over recent years to Executive and Council. Previous reports defined the primary and secondary salting route network and presented an update of the overall Winter Plan document.

These reports have put the Council in a robust position in terms of defining the standards and levels of service delivered through its Winter Service Plan.

- 3.5 It was agreed at the 4 December 2018 Executive that a further report would be brought forward before the end of June 2019 to consider any amendments to the plan for Winter 2019/20.
- 3.6 As part of this proposal and the need to provide previously identified savings from the winter service an Independent Consultant was brought in to evaluate the Council's winter service provision and compare it with data provided by peer Authorities.
- 3.7 The Winter Services Provision Investigation Report has now been received in final draft form. This is a comprehensive report that draws on the experience and findings from the Winter Service Plans of over thirty roads Authorities across the UK.

#### **4 GENERAL FINDINGS FROM THE WINTER SERVICE PROVISION INVESTIGATION & PEER REVIEW**

- 4.1 The report concluded that the existing service was effective in keeping both roads and footways safe for travel. In particular, it noted that there were actually fewer road accidents over the winter months compared to other periods of the year and that no successful claims for negligence have been made over the last five-year period relating to winter service.
- 4.2 The high level peer review identified that the Council compared well to other Authorities with slightly above average performance in general but excelling in some areas. In particular, it noted that the total cost per Km of carriageway treated for precautionary salting was amongst the very best with costs of £19.85 per km compared to an average of £49.05 and a high in excess of £2006.
- 4.3 Notwithstanding the above findings the report identifies that there were a number of areas where changes to working could potentially realise efficiency benefits in terms of operating performance and/or cost efficiencies.
- 4.4 The recommendations from the Winter Service Provision Investigation are discussed in Section 5.

#### **5 REVIEW OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE WINTER SERVICE PROVISION INVESTIGATION REPORT**

##### **Recommendation 1 : Invest in some new fleet over the next 5 years**

- 5.1 Much of the existing winter fleet is old and now beyond its most productive use. The report summarises that 60% of the main gritter fleet is beyond expected useful life with the oldest vehicle being 18 years old. This has led to a position where there are regular breakdowns, down-time and high levels of expenditure on vehicle repair bills. Three new gritters are due to arrive in August 2019 and it is currently proposed by the service that a further five gritter/tippers be ordered this year (NB. 18 month delivery period from ordering). Going forward the intention is to invest in "swap-body" vehicles that can be utilised in the winter for gritting but also used for other work when not required for winter working. This all-year-round utilisation should lead to more cost-effective working across a variety of service areas.

- 5.2 This recommendation is accepted and can be delivered through the vehicle replacement fund subject to agreement with finance colleagues. As it involves an early decision but lengthy delivery times it is viewed as a short to medium term initiative. As part of the Council's Fit for 2024 transformation programme, a parallel review of the fleet service is currently underway and any further implications in respect of the Winter service fleet will be addressed through that work.

**Recommendation 2 : Invest in pre-wetted salt spreading technology and trialling in an appropriate locality**

- 5.3 This technology uses a brine solution that sits in a tank on the gritter and pre-wets the salt as it is spread. It is currently used by a small number of peer Authorities. As well as offering savings in the quantities of salt used it potentially offers more uniform distribution and reduces the amount of salt that is lost to areas outwith the road surface. This has the additional benefit of reducing the environmental impact of salt on the verges.
- 5.4 There are, however, a number of negative factors associated with this technology as well. Firstly, there needs to be additional investment in new machinery that has fitted brine tanks that can hold and deliver the brine solution as well as requiring mixing/storage tanks in any Depot that will operate the regime. The regime also produces a much more corrosive environment for the vehicles used and may significantly reduce the life-span of vehicles. The presence of high volume tanks on the vehicles makes it more arduous to move between usages for any swap-body vehicles. In particular tanks would need to be emptied before each and every body swap activity. The tanks also increase the running costs of the vehicles.
- 5.5 It is suggested that this is treated as a potential medium term initiative with further investigation undertaken into the costs required to invest in the technology compared to the potential savings that it offers before committing to a trial.

**Recommendation 3 : Increase salt storage capacity and improve access to existing barns where possible**

- 5.6 Increased salt storage capacity (from circa 19,000 to 24,000 tonnes) would mean greater quantities of salt could be purchased in the summer months when prices are cheaper. The savings provided by this investment very much depend on the extent of individual winters but associated savings would be derived. This initiative is very much in line with the Depot Rationalisation Strategy and would be taken forward as part of that initiative. As such this is seen as a medium to long term strategy. In time, however, this could save the Council £10,000 across an average winter in salt costs alone and further efficiencies by eliminating double handling of salt currently stored in resiliency depots located in Lauder and Jedburgh.

**Recommendation 4 : Install weighbridges in all salt storage depots**

- 5.7 This is viewed as a medium to long term initiative as it is also tied in to the proposed depot rationalisation programme. It should also be noted that, while good practice and offering increased accountability, it will not necessarily provide direct cost savings.

**Recommendation 5 : Implement key metrics, monitor and act on results**

- 5.8 This is viewed as an early initiative with a number of the measures identified in the report actually already in place and being undertaken. Further resource will be required to implement some of the detailed proposals. Again this is more an effective performance and accountability type initiative with no direct cost savings necessarily attributable.

**Recommendation 6 : Provide a roads-based resource to provide a laboratory QC service when needed**

- 5.9 There is currently no dedicated resource within the Winter Service Team for laboratory testing. The report identifies a potential over reliance on visual testing and suggests that steps are taken to introduce a more structured testing regime. This is viewed as an early to medium initiative and the suitability of introducing a Modern Apprentice to be trained up to undertake this task (with other duties) will be investigated.

**Recommendation 7 : Undertake a physical assessment of spreader calibration at least once a season in addition to an electronic calibration**

- 5.10 The purpose of this test is to ensure that the carriageway is being salted at the correct rate and at the correct coverage. A physical check would validate the electronic testing to ensure accurate calibration and the coverage is neither over or under the target rate. It is not believed that this will offer any direct financial savings but there is a system in place to allow it to happen. Early initiative.

**Recommendation 8 : Undertake footway treatment operations only during standard day hours (7:30 to 15:30 Monday to Friday) except in extreme weather events**

- 5.11 Footways are not subject to preventative treatment like the roads, only post treatment. The 20 primary footway routes are mainly focused within the town centres, shopping areas and approaches to public buildings, schools, hospitals and medical centres. Currently the footways are treated from each of the 6 main Depots and each Depot has about 50 actions per year. Where footways are not prioritised for treatment by the Council, in some cases treatment in severe weather is undertaken by 'Resilient Communities' using equipment and salt supplied by the Council.
- 5.12 At present SBC footway treatment typically starts at 0600 to allow all the priority footways to be completed by 0830. The peer review revealed that a number of rural Authorities provide a service Monday to Friday only and aim to treat before 0900 or between 0800 and 1530 as resources allow. It is felt that this provides support for SBC to relax its footway gritting times slightly such that it is carried out in "normal day hours" (0730 – 1530), with exceptions for severe weather events or special occasions (eg. Remembrance Sunday).
- 5.13 This would mean that treatment would take place within normal working hours and because of the resource intensive nature of footway treatment offers significant savings that potentially could equate to £82,000 in an average year. This figure assumes that salting would not take place at weekends. If the salting was to continue at weekends the estimated saving would drop to £58,000. In addition to either of these savings there is an estimated £16,500 in cost avoidance (the additional the Council would be required to pay in 2019/20 as a result of pay awards etc. should

overtime continued as in previous years). As such it is recommended that this is viewed as an early initiative and the Winter Service Plan is amended to allow it to be trialed over the coming winter using Environmental staff as opposed to Roads staff; allowing Roads staff to focus on the roads network.

**Recommendation 9 : Review existing priority routes such that at weekends and school holidays, school bus routes can be omitted unless prioritised for additional reasons**

- 5.14 This is identified as an early initiative as it can be reviewed relatively quickly. Initial reaction, however, is that the route changes and therefore savings, will be limited as most of the priority routes are predicated on a number of factors.

**Recommendation 10 : Optimise the existing 28 routes to improve climatic response and allow for significant cost savings on marginal nights, consider looking at various options by removing some key constraints such as depot location**

- 5.15 The Council already currently operates on a domain basis with 3 separate domains, based on local climatic conditions, identified across the region. This allows the winter service response to be targeted according to specific need depending on forecasts and prevailing conditions. The potential for further splitting of response into individual routes will be explored but is felt to be a medium priority initiative at this time as it is linked to depot rationalisation.

**Recommendation 11 : Move to route based forecasting based on Cold routes and lower the threshold temperature down from +1°C to +0.5°C as is now being done in a number of councils.**

- 5.16 Further discussion with the consultant indicated that there was confusion over how this threshold operated. Pre-cautionary salting is only actually undertaken when temperatures are at zero or below. The +1°C is the trigger used at the 11.00 forecast to determine if staff are advised to report the next morning at 06.00. The Foreman will only give the instruction to go out based on the actual temperature that morning and the Met Office graphs for the rest of the morning. Notwithstanding this it is suggested that a trial is undertaken, over one domain area, where 0.5°C is the threshold for deciding if the men should report the following day. No financial savings are allocated to this at the moment but the difference it makes will be carefully monitored and reviewed over the 2019/20 winter. This proposal can be reversed immediately if required.

**Recommendation 12 : Restructure the night-time 'depot' routes based on climatic optimisation to ensure the highest priority roads in terms of need are treated first.**

- 5.17 As the Depot routing is already prioritised based on the strategic network there does not appear to be a lot of scope for further progress in this regard. As there are no direct cost savings associated with this it is viewed as a long-term initiative.

**Recommendation 13 : Switch weather forecast provision to either MeteoGroup or MetDesk as these are more likely to provide a better, more cost effective service than the Met Office which wants out of the current contract.**

- 5.18 The Council is currently entering year four of a 3 year + 1 + 1 contract with the Met Office. The contract can be reviewed again in a year's time.

- 5.19 It should be noted that the other two companies mentioned above tendered for the existing contract and lost out to the Met Office a little over three years ago. Future contracts will also be the subject of a competitive tendering exercise but it is difficult to see why, with inflationary costs and potentially the loss of the previously successful bidder, that a retendering exercise would produce a saving compared to the current contract. Medium term initiative.

**Recommendation 14 : Make substantial changes and exert far better control over recording of key data such as fuel usage, overtime, plant inventory and ensure such usage is booked to the correct codes and regularly reviewed.**

- 5.20 While this will improve reporting and auditability of the service it is unlikely to lead to any direct cost savings for the Council. Nevertheless this is seen as an early to medium initiative.

**Recommendation 15 (Council): Review existing winter model and consider removing the current night shift arrangement and introducing rota working with early and late shifts**

- 5.21 As this was already under active consideration by Officers, it was considered outwith the scope of the Winter Service Provision Investigation Report.
- 5.22 Early discussions have taken place with the workforce and Trade Unions on these proposals and ideally it would be hoped to move to this new method of working as near to the start of the 2019/20 winter as possible.
- 5.23 If adopted it has been estimated that the revised arrangement could generate savings to the service of £88,500 over an average winter and would be viewed as an early initiative. It should be noted, however, that a full winter saving may not be achievable in year one.

## **6 PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE WINTER SERVICE PLAN FOR 2019/2020**

- 6.1 Officers have considered the current Winter Service Plan arrangements, along with the Winter Services Provision Investigation Report and the need to identify savings in the service going forward. A number of changes are proposed for 2019/20 with further investigation and trialing identified in the medium to long term that are likely to influence subsequent Winter Service Plans.
- 6.2 The Winter Service Plan, at Appendix B, will be the Winter Service Plan for winter 2019/20. In terms of policy, priorities, routes, call out arrangements and resource planning it is similar to previous years with the main change being in relation to the timing of footway treatments.
- 6.3 The 2019/20 Winter Plan is a robust plan and clearly defines and has an agreed approach to primary; secondary; and tertiary salting of the Council's adopted road network. As always officers will continue to monitor and review winter service arrangements throughout this winter, noting any deficiencies in service provision, with a view to bring forward any further amendments for the 2020/21 Winter Plan.

## **7 IMPLICATIONS**

### **7.1 Financial**

- (a) In 2019/20 the winter service including the basic cost of all plant and vehicles required to deliver the winter service will continue to be fully funded from within the roads budget.
- (b) Due to the continuing financial pressures affecting the Council, there is a need to continue modernisation of all Council services including our approach to winter delivery. This will require a reduction in the overall salt usage on priority road and footpath routes.
- (c) The estimated savings associated with the early initiatives, outlined in sections 5.13 & 5.23, are estimated at £170,500 in an average year which would be sufficient to cover existing Financial Plan savings. In arriving at these figures a number of assumptions have been made and it will be important to closely track the actual savings that are obtained, particularly in early years.
- (d) The remaining potential savings that have been identified in the Winter Service Provision report either require significant investment and/or further detailed investigation before a cost saving can be identified.

### **7.2 Risk and Mitigations**

- (a) The “Beast from the East” could reasonably be viewed as a reasonable test of the Winter Plan that has been in place in recent years. Equally, however, it has emphasised the need to keep resources to a level that can cope with unexpected, unusually inclement and/or sustained weather conditions in the future. As in previous years the Roads Service, in conjunction with Officers across SBC and partners, will monitor and review arrangements throughout this winter, noting any deficiencies in service provision, with a view to bring forward any further amendments in the Autumn for the 2020/21 Winter Plan.
- (b) There is a risk that some of the recommendations will be unpopular with the general public and /or lead to increased injury accidents. This can be mitigated through positive media messages regarding the changes and explaining the rationale for them.
- (c) There is a risk that the savings identified will not be fully realised; particularly in year 1 as the service adjusts to the changes being made. This can be mitigated through continuing discussions with the workforce explaining the need to work differently going forward.

### **7.3 Equalities**

An Equalities Impact Assessment has been carried out on this proposal and it is anticipated that there are no adverse equality implications.

### **7.4 Acting Sustainably**

There are no significant economic, social or environmental issues associated with this report.

### **7.5 Carbon Management**

There are no significant impacts on the Council’s carbon emissions that are additional to current operation.

**7.6 Rural Proofing**

There are no rural proofing impacts resulting from this report. The Winter Service Plan recognises the rural nature of the Scottish Borders and the importance of maintaining links during the winter months.

**7.7 Changes to Scheme of Administration or Scheme of Delegation**

There are no changes which are required to either the Scheme of Administration or the Scheme of Delegation as a result of the proposals in this report.

**8 CONSULTATION**

8.1 The Chief Financial Officer, the Monitoring Officer, the Chief Legal Officer, the Chief Officer Audit and Risk, the Service Director HR and the Clerk to the Council have been consulted and comments received are incorporated in the final report.

8.2 The Chief Executive, the Executive Directors, the Service Director of Customer & Communities and the Service Director Assets and Infrastructure have also been consulted and comments received have been incorporated in the final report.

**Approved by**

**Martin Joyce**

**Service Director Assets & Infrastructure**

**Signature.....**

**Author(s)**

Name	Designation and Contact Number
Brian Young	Infrastructure Manager

**Background Papers:**

**Previous Minute Reference: None**

**Note** – You can get this document on tape, in Braille, large print and various computer formats by contacting the address below. Jacqueline Whitelaw can also give information on other language translations as well as providing additional copies.

Contact us at Jacqueline Whitelaw, PLACE, Business Support, Scottish Borders Council, Council Headquarters, Newtown St Boswells, Melrose, TD6 0SA, Tel 0300 100 1800, email [JWhitelaw@scotborders.gov.uk](mailto:JWhitelaw@scotborders.gov.uk).

# Summary

## 1. Project Scope

### Objectives:

- **Evidence based decision making**
  - Provide peer review data to support decision making
  - Provide detailed cost data to facilitate decision making on investment / changes
  - Provide appropriate data for performance metrics

### Outcomes:

- *Peer review summary of how other members of ELBF and near neighbours plus other representative councils provide their winter service (Spreadsheet format)*
- *Detailed costings provided in conjunctions with Accounts team*
- *Establish what data is needed and how it is best reported to demonstrate performance against targets (new targets may be required)*

- **Review of materials used for road treatments**

- Comparison of benefits of using dry salt, pre-wetted salt, brine solution, salt additives etc
- Cost comparison of different spreading technologies
- Evidence/Data for any investment business case that might be required

### Outcomes:

- *Suggestions on the benefits (or otherwise) of alternative road treatments with potential cost savings vs investment costs*
- *Review of different spreading technologies*
- *Provision of evidence and data for any potential investment business case*

- **Optimised roadway spreading routes:**

- Investigate possibility of reduced driving time (especially with empty vehicles):
  - Reduced fuel costs
  - Ability to perform preventative treatment before 8:30 am within standard shift pattern (no 'early starts')
- Investigate reduced salt use from only treating sections of road at risk (elevated sections, steep hills etc ignoring areas not exposed to open sky that would have higher RST)
- Provided suggestions for improved risk assessments
- Investigate quicker response times to adhoc requests
- Review of Priority 1 routes in line with recent infrastructure and community changes in collaboration with management team

### Outcomes:

- *Suggestions on how roadway treatment routes could be optimised, showing cost and labour benefits in doing so*
- *Identify potential cost savings from reduced salt use arising from optimised spreading*
- *Identify data needed for improved risk assessments*
- *Detailed review of Priority Treatment routes*

- **Review of how pavements/footways are treated**
  - What, if any, preventative measures under taken
  - Post treatment (de-icing, snow clearance)
  - Recommendations of labour resource for Footway clearance
  - Interaction with community volunteers/wardens
  - Promotion of Community Self help

*Outcomes:*

- *Suggestions on how footway treatment routes could be optimised, showing cost and labour benefits in doing so*
- *Review of resources potentially available for footway clearance/treatment*
- *Assessment of potential to delegate responsibility (and cost?) to other parish council or other community resources*

- **Equipment inventory assessment**
  - Detailed inventory assessment including location and condition
  - Support for any changes to maintenance plans

*Outcomes:*

- *Up to date inventory of equipment for winter service*
- *Assessment of needs and whether current inventory requires change*

- **Process evaluation across the Winter Service**
  - High level workflow charts to cover all operations
  - Detailed process maps where required

*Outcomes:*

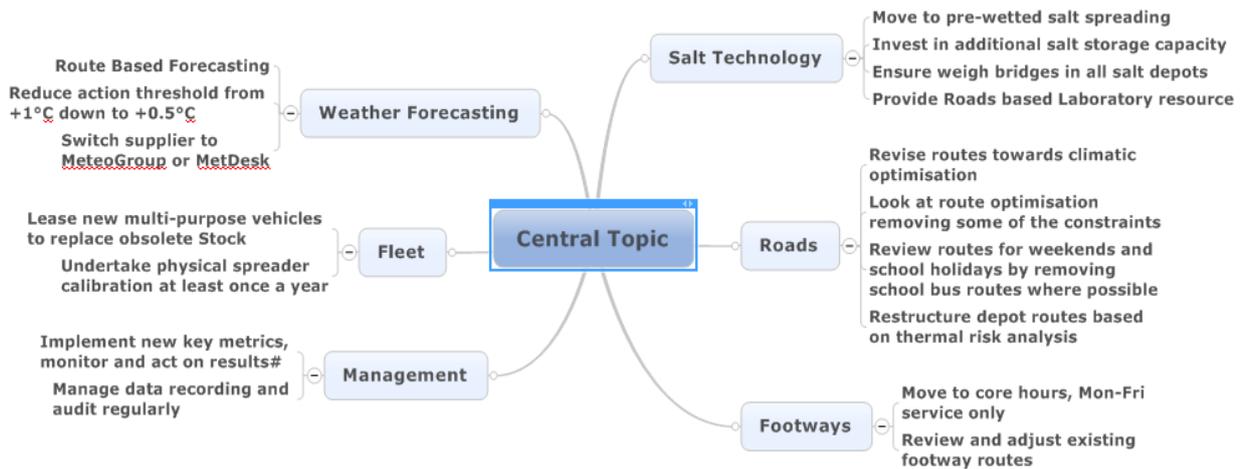
- *Lean/Value stream mapping of key processes to optimise processes*
- *RACI analysis (Responsible/Accountable/Consulted/Informed) for key processes*

## 2. Key Findings

- Where data has been available, there have been errors and inconsistencies which has made detailed analysis difficult. This issue is not just confined to Winter Service provision but across many elements of the council. Examples include:
  - Overtime recording
  - Fuel usage
  - Fleet asset inventory
  - Salt usage
- No detailed processes or operating procedures are available, all training and decision making appears to be by word of mouth and using experience of long serving employees. This has led to inconsistencies in decision making and potentially led to 'single points of failure' in relying on a few key individuals.
- The service provision has kept both carriageways and footways safe with fewer road accidents over winter months compared to late summer / autumn. No successful claims for negligence have been made over the last 5 years relating to winter service provision.
- Very few complaints against the service have been upheld, and mostly relate to 'damage' caused by grit hitting vehicles.
- The current winter service fleet is reliant on a significant number of very old vehicles which have high maintenance costs and very old technology to control spreading and no navigation systems.
- The current salt storage provides for approximately 75% of a typical winter usage, thus relies on buying salt over the winter at higher prices. However, this has been recognised and plans are in progress to increase capacity.
- Provision of the Winter Service to some extent conflicts with Roads Maintenance (same staff), thus having staff dedicated to winter service impacts on roads maintenance. This is particularly important since the most common complaint against the council is for potholes. Thus, from a holistic viewpoint of total service provision, providing the winter service using overtime (particularly as staff are only needed on a limited number of days for winter service) appears to be the best option.
- Using Environments staff to undertake footway treatment (which is more labour intensive) frees Roads staff to provide road treatments and roads maintenance, thus delivering an overall better service to customers.
- If Footway treatment is undertaken during core hours (7:30 – 15:30) as is the case in many Councils, this could generate significant savings in overtime. If routes are reconsidered to do this, the impact in footways need not be too great
- Many Councils are now moving to Route Based Forecasting as a means to reduce costs (typically 10-15% of total winter spend). This could offer significant savings for SBC for relatively low investment.
- With Met Office pulling out of Roads forecasting, although they have agreed to honour the existing contract, there is a perception that the quality of the service is deteriorating. This could ultimately have a negative impact on SBC winter service costs. There are two other main suppliers, of which the MeteoGroup are now used by many other councils across Scotland and providing a reliable service.
- A number of rural councils as well as Transport Scotland and Highways England are moving away from dry salt spreading and using either pre-wetted salt or brine solution spreading. Of the two options pre-wetted salt has been shown to save over 10% of annual salt usage and also allows for higher speed spreading causing less disruption on the roads and also reduced time for treatment.

- To drive improvements and cost savings forwards will require both investment in new technology as well as better recording and reporting, using a greater selection of metrics (KPIs) to monitor performance.
- There appears to be a reluctance within some members of the Winter Service team to adopt new ways of working or embrace new technology, thus any changes made will need to be managed carefully to ensure positive outcomes and full benefits realisation.
- From the high level peer review it would appear that SBC has an average performance compared to both its near neighbours and to a wider selection of councils, thus there are possible lessons to be learned from the more innovative / more efficient councils that have been reviewed.

## Recommendations



- Invest in some new fleet over the next 5 years
- Invest in pre-wetted salt spreading technology and trialling in an appropriate region
- Increase salt storage capacity and improve access to existing barns where possible
- Install weighbridges in all salt storage depots
- Implement key metrics, monitor and act on results
- Provide a Roads based resource to provide a Laboratory QC service when needed (ideally train a depot based employee) this is not a full time resource requirement more likely an hour or two a month.
- Undertake a physical assessment of spreader calibration at least once a season in addition to an electronics one.
- Undertake footway treatment operations only during standard day hours (7:30-15:30 Monday to Friday) except in severe weather events.
- Review existing priority routes such that at weekends and school holidays, school bus routes can be omitted unless prioritised for additional reasons.
- Optimise the existing 28 routes to improve climatic response and allow for significant cost savings on marginal nights, consider looking at various options by removing some key constraints such as depot location.
- Move to route based forecasting based on Cold routes and lower the threshold temperature down from +1°C to +0.5°C as is now being done in a number of councils.
- Restructure the night-time 'depot' routes based on climatic optimisation to ensure the highest priority roads in terms of need are treated first.
- Switch weather forecast provision to either MeteoGroup or MetDesk as these are more likely to provide a better, more cost effective service than the Met Office which wants out of the current contract.
- Make substantial changes and exert far better control over recording of key data such as fuel usage, overtime, plant inventory and ensure such usage is booked to the correct codes and regularly reviewed.