

## **Winter Gritting Cycle Pilot Trial Analysis**

### **Summary**

1. This report provides a review of the pilot carried out during the winter of 2019/20 providing winter treatment on a section of defined highway cycle route as part of the regular winter treatments.
2. The pilot trialled practical treatment options and has established base costing for further consideration by the executive as to whether to continue the cycle route treatment as a permanent part of the council's winter gritting programme.
3. The winter maintenance season commences in October, and concludes in April. The budget for the winter season is £401K which is based on an average 75 winter treatments. There is a financial contingency reserve of £178K for a severe winter.
4. The 2019/20 winter season overspent by £180K this overspend included the following high cost items:
  - £47 K Cycle pilot
  - £37K Standby increase
  - £10K Vehicle repairs
  - £51K Vehicle Hire
  - £15K Weather Station
  - £20K Forecasting Accrual
5. If the pilot is continued for another year, the cost should be very similar to the 19/20 year.

### **Recommendations**

6. The Executive Member is asked to consider:

- Option 1: Continuation of the winter treatment on the cycle routes that have been defined during the trial period, using the reserve budget for a further year of trial.
- Option 2: Discontinue the treatment and do nothing considering the additional budget pressure to deliver this service.

Reason: To confirm the council's winter maintenance plans for the winter ahead.

## **Review**

7. The aim of the winter maintenance service is, as far as is reasonably possible, to allow the safe movement of traffic, pedestrians and cyclists, on York roads, footways and cycleway during times of adverse winter weather. It also seeks to keep delays and accidents to a minimum.
8. This is done through precautionary treatment undertaken before ice forms or snow settles on the highway. The precautionary treatment is currently only to footways and carriageways on the defined network, which excludes some footways and cycle ways that are off the adopted highway.
9. The current policy states cycle routes will be treated as directed by the Winter Maintenance Duty Officer, this will only occur when there are available resources and materials.
10. In effect this means cycle routes on roads are treated but those off the main highway network are rarely treated.
11. The 2019/ 20 winter season pilot treated a defined section of York's cycle route that is off highway. A map of this is contained with Annex A.
12. The defined route is detailed in annex 3 and accompanying maps in annex 4 & 5. The routes were prepared with the Councils cycling officer to identify well used sections of the cycle network but also to ensure that the route works operationally without major modification to infrastructure such as gates etc.
13. The service operated with two John Deere tractors, which have proven to be the most effective delivery method. The mini tractor is fitted with a power brush and rear tank. The reason why a snow brush is required is that if it snows you need to be able to remove as much of the snow as possible to allow the liquid solution to be effective.

14. The tractors are fitted with a 400 litre tank. The table below gives you some guidelines on how far you would go on a tank if you are spraying 1.2m wide. The quantity of solution per meter squared(msq) required is based on the forecast.

• 15 ml / msq	-	22km
• 20 ml / msq	-	16.5km
• 25 ml / msq	-	13.3km
• 30 ml / msq	-	11km
• 35 ml / msq	-	9.5km
• 40 ml / msq	-	8.3km

15. Officers were mindful of the need to increase the application rate if it snows and when working out route lengths worked on a worst case scenario.

16. The routes were approximately 18km & 25km starting and finishing from Hazel Court James Street. To maximise the benefit of the routes the foot bridges along the route were treated with the non-corrosive application.

17. The service completed 59 runs in total using 9000 litres of pathway KA, the structure friendly non-corrosive solution, and 12000 litres of Probrine, effectively a salt water brine mix.

18. There were some issues from the delivery process which will require further analysis to improve the service, the tractors did suffer some breakdowns and technical issues with the new equipment, the majority can be put down to teething problems but some driver and mechanical faults also.

19. Refinement of the routes would be beneficial to resolve some issues. For example by the Minster the cycle path is approximately 4-5m wide, are CYC treating the whole area or a strip 1.5m wide (one run through). Lendal bridge, routes are an issue at evening time. The timing of the treatment will need reviewing as the tractor is very close to people on one side and the snow brush is close to vehicles on the other. As a result people are forced onto the very edge of the footway,

20. The team positioned the vehicle on the outside of the pavement and travelled very slowly, so people were discouraged from walking on the carriageway, but this leaves the vehicle with very little room around pedestrians especially in rush hours.

## Feedback

21. Comments regarding the trial have been positive, with requests to increase treatments in a few areas. Although it has been a mild winter with only 59 treatments out of an average of 75, the consensus was that the reassurance for cyclists using the river side paths commuting to work being the significant dividend of the scheme. A few prominent comments regarding the last of the autumnal leaves being less slippery when frosty/icy also gave reassurance for cyclists. The scheme is a positive benefit to the public.
22. The city of York Council Cycle Officer had feedback from cyclists which can be summarised as the trial is a vast improvement and that they'd like it extending to other parts of the network which were not included in the trial.
23. Further feedback included:
  - *“The fact that the drivers of the mini-tractors were sent out at the same time as the road-gritters gives a visible message that cycle routes are not treated any differently than the road network which previously was the case when it took all day to grit the network and the grit used was more or less useless as it was blown away, washed away by rain and only covered a very small section of the path surface”*
  - *“We had a YBB meeting this evening. Several of the group commented that their usual walking cycling routes along Foss Islands and Terry Avenue had not been icy after the baby gritters had been out over the last couple of months. And that it seemed much safer to get around this winter than last year.*
  - *So... it seems to be working. Thank you! We look forward to the trial being extended to more walking cycling routes next year*

## Consultation

24. The priority cycle routes selected had been determined seeking advice and consultation from internal sources, and an external list of e-mails received by the [walkcycle.winter.maintenance@york.gov.uk](mailto:walkcycle.winter.maintenance@york.gov.uk) e-mail address that was set up in mid-January 2019.

Replies received from 7 sources

Jubilee Terrace to Scarborough Bridge (6 replies)

Post Office Lane & Scarborough Bridge ramps (1 reply)

Millennium Bridge approaches including Butcher Terrace  
Hospital Fields Road ramp and Maple Grove link (2 replies)  
Foss Islands Path (former railway) (1 reply)

This e-mail address was sent to York Bike Belles and York Cycle Campaign.

## **Council Plan**

25. The pilot of winter maintenance met the emerging Council Plan outcome of Getting around Sustainably

## **Implications**

26. The following implications have been considered:

**Financial** – The cost of the pilot last year was estimated to be £42k. The total cost of the trial was £47k. Some of the increase in cost was due to the rise in standby payments prior to the commencement of the winter season. As identified in paragraphs 4 and 5 there are additional unbudgeted pressures across the winter maintenance budget which will need to be managed. Vehicle hire and repairs should reduce once the vehicle replacement programme is completed. However that is not going to be in time for the 2020/21 season.

To continue the service in 2020/21 this cost could be met from the winter maintenance contingency where £178k is available although this will reduce the amount available to support the winter maintenance budget should the winter be more severe than average. The ongoing level of service and budget impact in future years would need to be considered as part of the annual budget process as permanent budget will need to be identified. The plant would need to be hired prior to decisions being made on full year budgets.

Given the impact of covid 19 on the council's finances and the uncertainty of future funding levels available to the council Members are likely to need to prioritise which services are provided going forward and at what level as part of future budget rounds. Any increase in service is likely to lead the necessity to make savings elsewhere

**Legal** - The Council has a statutory obligation under Section 41 & 41.1A and section 150 of The Highways Act 1980 to maintain the highway. The Railways and Transport Safety Act 2003, Section 41/ 41.1A of the Highways Act, to place a duty on the highway authority to ensure, so far as

is reasonably practicable, that safe passage along a highway is not endangered by snow or ice.

If the service is made permanent in the future consideration will need to be given currently to procurement, these will fall significantly below the relevant EU procurement threshold for supplies and services (i.e. £189,330). As such, any procurement exercise run in respect of this option to acquire the relevant goods and/or services will not be subject to the full EU procurement regime under Part 2 of the Public Contract Regulations 2015.

That being said, any such procurement or request for quotes will still be subject to the Council's own Contract Procedure and Financial Procedure Rules, as well as the basic principles of transparency and fairness under the Treaty for the EU and those additional requirements under the Regulations that still apply to below threshold procurements (i.e. Regulations 53(3), 53(4), and 110 to 114).

Further advice should be sought from the Council's Legal Services and Procurements teams regarding how best to structure any such procurement and contracts to meet the requirements of the Regulations and the Contract and Financial Procedure Rules (and in the case of the latter, if any part of these rules need to be waived).

## **Risk Management**

27. The proposed option is compliant with the Council's risk management strategy, the following risks associated with the recommendation in this report have been identified and described in the following points, and set out in the table below:
28. The following implications have been considered:

Authority reputation –This risk is in connection with the public perception of the Council if the recommended scheme does not significantly manage the route so far as is reasonably practicable, that safe passage along a highway is not endangered by snow or ice.

## Contact Details

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**Report**  **Date** 8 September 2020  
**Approved**

**Wards Affected:** All

**For further information please contact the author of the report**

### **Background Papers:**

19 September 2019 – Decision Session for Executive Member for Transport -  
Cycle Route Winter Treatment Pilot 13

### **Annexes**

Annex A Treatment Routes