
Meeting of Executive Members for City Strategy and Advisory Panel **8 September 2008**

Report of the Director of City Strategy

WINTER MAINTENANCE SERVICE 2008/09

Summary

1. This report advises Members of the outcome of a review of last seasons Winter Maintenance Service and seeks approval of officers actions in renewing the winter maintenance forecast provision contract.

Background

2. It is a statutory duty for Highway Authorities to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the highway is safe for users during periods of frost, ice and snow.
3. The Council, as part of its highways maintenance policy, invests around half a million pounds each year treating a defined road and footway network to prevent the formation of frost and ice on the road and footways and to clear snow from both as necessary.
4. Last year was an average winter and there was no need to open the emergency control room. In fact we had very little snowfall and carried out 67 treatments on the road network (70 being the average) and 9 treatments of the footway network.
5. The Council treats around 48% of this road network, which compares very favourably with the national average which is around 40%. The actual gritting operations are carried out by Neighbourhood Services using Safecote, an environmentally friendly de-icing agent which has brought the Council good efficiency savings. There are 10 defined carriageway treatment routes around the City previously approved by Members and there are no plans to change these routes in the foreseeable future. The Council also treats the City Centre footways and shared carriageways, all footway routes from the main car parks into the city centre, the main pedestrian route from the railway station into the city centre, the Acomb and Haxby shopping precinct areas, and a number of steep gradient footways located around the city and identified following a wide scale consultation with Members. Again there are no proposals to change any of this defined network.
6. Members will recall last year as part of its drive for efficiency savings a number of self help salt bins were removed. These were bins funded by the City

Council directly out of the winter maintenance budget. These bins were rarely or never used for the proceeding three winter periods. A number of these bins were thought to still be needed by some members of the public and ward members, and they decided to fund these bins out of ward committee monies at a greatly reduced cost as the surplus bins we had removed and which were still serviceable were offered to these parties free of charge.

7. In line with Members requests it can be confirmed that all self help salt bins now have a badge placed on them which indicates the salt is free for public use.
8. Members will recall that five years ago the Council entered into a public/private consortium whereby the winter maintenance forecast information was provided by the National Met Office and Vaisala to both North Yorkshire County Council and the City of York Council. This brought about the savings to both local authorities as a result of economies of scale and sharing information from our weather stations.
9. This year the contract has been re-tendered for a further 5 years and at the time of writing a decision as to who the service provider for forecast information will be is not known. It is anticipated that this will be known by the end of August and will be reported to Members verbally at the meeting.

Option

10. The report offers no options for Member consideration.

Analysis

11. There are no options for Analysis.

Consultation

12. As there are no proposals in the report so no consultation was necessary.

Corporate Priorities

Maintenance of the public highway has a direct impact on one of the Council's corporate priorities for improvement, namely:

- Improvement of the actual and perceived condition and appearance of the city's streets, housing estates and publicly accessible spaces.

Implications

Financial

13. There are no additional financial implications

Human Resources (HR)

14. There are no human resources implications.

Equalities

15. There are no equalities implications.

Legal

16. Section 41(1A) of the 1980 Highways Act puts a duty on the highway authority to ensure so far as is reasonably practicable safe passage of the general public along the highway during periods of snow and ice.

Crime and Disorder

17. There are no crime and disorder implications.

Information Technology (IT)

18. There are no information technology implications.

Property

19. There are no property implications.

Other

20. There are no other implications.

Risk Management

21. In comparison the Risk Management Strategy, the main risks associated with this report are risks arising to persons and property (physical) these which could lead to financial loss (financial) and non compliance with legislation (legal and regulatory), as well as being unpopular leading to increased dissatisfaction with the Council (reputation).
22. Measured in terms of impact and likelihood, risk has been assessed at 10. As this is less than 16 it means that the risks need only be monitored as they do not provide a real threat to the achievement of the objectives of this report.

Recommendations

23. That the Advisory Panel advise the Executive Member to note the report and approve the action to seek renewal of the winter maintenance forecast contract as identified in paragraph 9.

Reason: To ensure the current winter maintenance policy is robust whilst ensuring the budget is expended in the most cost effective way based on the Council's assessed priorities.

Contact Details

Author:

Fred Isles
Maintenance Manager
Highway Infrastructure

Chief Officer Responsible for the report:

Damon Copperthwaite
Assistant Director
(City Development & Transport)

Tel 01904 551444

Report Approved

Date 18 August 2008

Specialist Implications Officer(s)

There are no specialist implications

Wards Affected

All

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers:

There are no relevant background papers.

Annexes

None.

29 July 2008

Emap city strategy/080908 Winter Maintenance Service 2008-2009