

**Decision Session – Executive Member for
Transport**

19 September 2019

Report of Assistant Director Transport, Highways and Environment

Cycle Route Winter Treatment Pilot

Summary

1. This report seeks to develop a pilot providing winter treatment on a defined off adopted highway cycle route as part of the regular winter treatments.
2. The pilot will trial practical treatment options and establish a cost base for further consideration by members as to whether to make a larger cycle route treatment a permanent part of the council's winter gritting programme.

Recommendations

3. The Executive Member is asked to approve:
 - (i) Option 1: A limited pilot of winter treatment on cycle routes that are not currently treated as per the map in Annex A.
 - (ii) The reviewed winter maintenance plan as found in Annex B

Reason: To confirm the council's formal winter maintenance plans and enable the council to trial different treatment options and their effectiveness to reduce risks for those walking and cycling.

Background

4. 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.

5. 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 vehicular highways.
6. 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.
7. In effect this means cycle routes on roads are treated but those off the main highway network are rarely treated.
8. For the coming winter season a pilot is proposed that would undertake treating a defined section of York's cycle route that is off vehicular highways.
9. The defined route is detailed in (Annex A). The route has been 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.
10. The service will operate with two different vehicles a quad bike and a gator type machine
11. The route will be approximately 18km starting and finishing from Hazel Court James Street. To maximise the benefit of the route it is proposed to treat the foot bridges along the route.
12. Typical salt and grit treatments are less effective on cycle networks as they require the action of vehicle tyres to work them into any snow or ice. Whilst cars and Lorries generally follow the same tyre path. Cycle tyres are much thinner and therefore these typical treatments are less effective.
13. This has determined the need for two footpath vehicles and alternative treatment solutions, we will select a solution which is non corrosive for the treatment of the bridges. The rest of the route will be treated with a brine solution.
14. To deliver the service new vehicles will need to be added to the council's fleet, these will be non typical vehicles such as a quad bike and gator. For the pilot these will be hired rather than purchased.

15. This pilot will not formally be part of the Councils Winter Service Plan, but will run alongside as a pilot. After the winter the pilot will be assessed and considered for formally incorporating into the Winter Service Plan.

Consultation

16. The priority cycle route selected has 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 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.

Options

17. Option 1: - Undertake a limited pilot focusing on the busier sections of the network than can be treated without work to the infrastructure to allow access. This is the recommended option.
18. Option 2: - To incorporate winter treatment of cycle-ways into the winter maintenance plan. This is not the recommended option.
19. Option 3: - Do nothing. This is not the recommended option.

Analysis

20. Option 1 allows the Council to pilot the equipment and treatments in developing an off vehicular highway cycle winter maintenance plan to assess effectiveness and develop a better understanding of the cost implications.
21. Option 2 would require greater work to prepare the network for access by treatment vehicles.

22. Option 3 would not address issue of winter maintenance for off adopted highway cycle-ways.

Council Plan

23. The pilot of winter maintenance meets the emerging Council Plan outcome of Getting around Sustainably

Implications

24. The following implications have been considered:

- **Financial** – The cost of the pilot is estimated to be £42k. This will be met by the current winter maintenance budget which is £401k. By its nature the winter maintenance budget is not predictable, in 2018/19 there was an underspend of £61k. Should this not occur in 2019/20 there is a winter maintenance contingency available of £258k, in addition to the annual budget, which could be utilised. The ongoing budget impact following the trial will need to be considered as part of the annual budget process.
- **Legal** - The council has a statutory obligation under Section 41 of The Highways Act 1980 to maintain the highway. Section 150 of the Highways Act 1980 also imposes a duty upon authorities to remove any obstruction on the highway resulting from “accumulation of snow or from the falling down of banks on the side of the highway or from any other cause”. The Railways and Transport Safety Act 2003 inserted Section 41 to 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. (Note, that this is not an absolute duty given the qualification of ‘reasonable practicability’ and that the description ‘highway’ applies to both carriageways and footways). The Council therefore has a plan of priority and secondary routes in order to provide and an effective and efficient winter maintenance service.

Risk Management

25. A pilot to treat the off adopted highway cycle-ways as part of the winter maintenance

26. 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:

27. 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.

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Approved

Wards Affected: All

For further information please contact the author of the report

Annexes

Annex A – Cycle Winter Maintenance Pilot Plan

Annex B – Winter Service Plan