

**CYNGOR SIR POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL.**

**PORTFOLIO HOLDER DECISION  
December 2016**

**REPORT AUTHOR:** County Councillor John Brunt  
Portfolio Holder for Highways

**SUBJECT:** Winter Service Plan 2016 / 2017

---

**REPORT FOR:** Decision

---

**1.0 Summary**

1.1 The Council as highway authority are under a duty under section 41(A) of the Highways Act 1980 to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that safe passage along a highway is not endangered by snow or ice.

1.2 This report outlines proposals for delivery of the service for the forthcoming winter period 2016/2017 within a budget of £1.561 million before any variation achieved through efficiency savings.

**2.0 Proposal**

2.1 To approve the recommendations and Winter Service Plan for 2016/2017 included as Attachment 1 to this report.

**3. Powys Change Plan**

3.1 The One Powys Plan 2014 – 2017 is a plan for change between all partners in the Powys Local Service Board (Powys Public Service Board from 1st April 2016). A review and update of the Plan in 2016 - 2017 reaffirmed the priorities. The provision of Winter Services supports key priorities within the Plan by aiming to maintain the key highway network in a safe and useable manner during periods of winter weather. This is fundamental to the following Plan priorities:

- Integrated health and adult social care.
- Children and young people;
- Transforming learning and skills (21st century schooling);
- Stronger Communities;  
(Transport: Improving passenger transport services to enable them to be affordable, accessible and efficient.)
- Financially balanced and fit for purpose public services.

**4.0 Options Considered/Available**

4.1 Option 1 - No change, continue to operate under the 2015/2016 Winter Service Plan

The Winter Service Plan has evolved over many years and has seen small incremental changes year on year to improve and clarify the

service. The Plan for 2015/2016 would continue to provide an appropriate level of service. The plan makes provision for all County highways (roads, footways etc) across Powys. Requirements for Trunk Roads are set by Welsh Government and are outside the scope of the plan but outline details of the provision made are included for information.

#### 4.2 Option 2 – Extend the scope of the Winter Service

The Winter Service could be extended in two ways:

1. Increase the quantity of highway within each treatment regime;
2. Enhance the level of service.

#### 4.3 Option 3 - Reduce the scope of the Winter Service

The Winter Service could be reduced in two ways:

1. Decrease the quantity of highway within each treatment regime;
2. Decrease the level of service.

#### 4.4 Option 4 - Implement Changes to Improve Efficiency

The Winter Service has developed over many years with largely incremental changes year on year to reflect changes in best practice or from identified efficiencies. Changes will often be a compromise between operating efficiently and resilience. Efficiency savings made will contribute towards the 2016-17 MTFS saving for Logistics of £250k.

4.4.1 The Highways, Transport and Recycling service has a number of Projects in place that have or will offer efficiencies for the Winter Service. The Projects report through Project Boards. The key Projects are:

4.4.2 Fleet – The Council has traditionally operated a mix of owned, leased or short term hire winter maintenance vehicles. Costings generally showed that there was little difference between operating costs for each method. With the need to update an aging fleet it was concluded that moving all front-line vehicle procurement to a hire framework would provide the best solution. Front-line vehicles are defined as those that undertake the pre-planned salting and form the backbone of the fleet. The process has resulted in a very competitive arrangement for up to 5 years which sees modern and efficient fleet provided at reduced cost in comparison with previous years. A number of reserve vehicles will be provided within the arrangement to cover servicing and breakdowns. These additional vehicles will also be available at the same hire rates for use in extreme situations where additional resilience is required. The council will also continue to operate some reserve vehicles. These are multifunctional vehicles that have a winter maintenance capability.

4.4.3 Route Optimisation – Over the years it has been possible to reduce the number of vehicles required to undertake pre-planned treatment under the Primary Treatment Regime. This has been achieved by improving the routing efficiency of vehicles. Improving efficiency reduces costs for pre-planned operations but will extend treatment times and impact on resilience during periods of severe weather. The work undertaken

to date has proposed reducing the routes, and hence front-line vehicle requirement, from 32 to 28 routes. Two minor additional routes are required to cover Llangynidr bridge (access restrictions requiring smaller vehicle) and urban areas in Montgomeryshire. Where practicable these two routes will be covered during the working day. The route optimisation project seeks to identify further efficiencies can be achieved through varying routes depending on the amount of salt required. Linked with route optimisation is the possibility for in-cab navigation and control of the gritting equipment that will enhance flexibility of operation.

4.4.4 Salt Storage – Salt stores for pre-planned treatment operations incur operating costs associated with the facility as well as for loading and wash-down. Depots at Presteigne and Crickhowell (Dan-y-Parc) are to become non-operational for 2016/2017 thus requiring two less loading shovels. Salt will continue to be stored at both sites so as to maintain salt stock levels available across Powys.

4.4.5 The Council currently has storage for around 23,000 tonnes of salt. After a decade of relatively mild conditions the UK experienced a number of colder winters. The severe winter of 2008/2009 together with the coldest and most extended winter to hit the UK for thirty years in 2009/2010 lead to a number of reviews across the Country. Welsh Authorities and the Welsh Government agreed that salt stock should be 1.5 times the average usage over the fixed 6 year period. This would suggest that salt storage capability in Powys should be in the order of 33,000 tonnes.

4.4.6 As well as additional provision there is a need to maintain and replace existing aging facilities. A project has therefore been established to consider option for additional storage utilising corporate capital funding of £1.4 million.

## **5.0 Preferred Choice and Reasons**

5.1 The preferred choice is option 4.4, to implement changes to improve efficiency. The existing provision is considered acceptable in terms of meeting statutory obligations and therefore no extension of service is necessary. Improving efficiency within existing levels of service supports the council in meeting challenging financial savings. Projects currently being undertaken have already identified efficiencies that can be implemented immediately whilst others will offer savings into the future. Further savings would likely require more fundamental changes such as reducing the level of pre-planned treatment undertaken. The option will reduce the resilience of the service in severe or extended periods of winter weather.

## **6.0 Sustainability and Environmental Issues; Equalities; Crime and Disorder;/Welsh Language and Other Policies etc**

6.1 Sustainability and Environmental issues are considered at the operational planning stage.

**7.0 Children and Young People's Impact Statement - Safeguarding and Wellbeing**

7.1 Not applicable for this report.

**8.0 Local Member(s)**

8.1 The proposed policy will apply across all areas of Powys and will be of interest to all Members. Local Members are able to feed opinions and priorities through the Highways, Grounds and Street Scene (HGSS) Managers.

**9.0 Other Front Line Services**

9.1 The operation of a frontline Winter Service will continue to support both directly and indirectly the delivery of other front line services.

**10.0 Support Services (Legal, Finance, HR, ICT, BPU)**

10.1 The Finance Business Partner Place notes the contents of the report. The savings that will be achieved through route optimisation and moving to hire of vehicles will contribute towards the 2016-17 MTFS saving for Logistics of £250k. The saving to be applied to the winter service element of the budget (Paragraph 1.2 refers) will be £50k.

**11.0 Local Service Board; Partnerships; Stakeholders etc**

11.1 Stakeholder views are accounted for through the Local Members and HGSS Managers when priorities are considered.

**12.0 Corporate Communications**

12.1 The report is of public interest and requires a proactive news release and use of appropriate social media to publicise the decision.

**13.0 Statutory Officers**

13.1 The Strategic Director Resources (S151 Officer ) notes the comments made by finance and the contribution to the savings requirement.

13.2 The Solicitor to the Council (Monitoring Officer) has commented as follows: " I note the legal comment and have nothing to add to the report

**14.0 Members' Interests**

14.1 The Monitoring Officer is not aware of any specific interests that may arise in relation to this report. If the Portfolio Holder has an interest he should declare it, complete the relevant notification form and refer the matter to the cabinet for decision.

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Recommendation:</b>  | <b>Reason for Recommendation:</b>   |
| <b>That the Winter Service Plan for 2016/2017 as set out in Attachment 1 to the report be approved.</b> | To enable the service to deliver its statutory duty as far as reasonably practicable. |

|                               |              |                       |              |
|-------------------------------|--------------|-----------------------|--------------|
| <b>Relevant Policy (ies):</b> |              |                       |              |
| <b>Within Policy:</b>         | <b>Y / N</b> | <b>Within Budget:</b> | <b>Y / N</b> |

|                                  |            |
|----------------------------------|------------|
| <b>Relevant Local Member(s):</b> | <b>All</b> |
|----------------------------------|------------|

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Person(s) To Implement Decision:</b>         | <b>Head of Highways, Transport and Recycling</b> |
| <b>Date By When Decision To Be Implemented:</b> | <b>Winter 2016/2017</b>                          |

|  |              |  |
|--|--------------|--|
| <b>Contact Officer Name(s):</b>                    | <b>Tel:</b>  | <b>Email:</b>  |
| Shaun James (Policy)<br>Adrian Jervis (Operations) | 01597 826000 | <a href="mailto:shaun.james@powys.gov.uk">shaun.james@powys.gov.uk</a><br><a href="mailto:adrian.jervis@powys.gov.uk">adrian.jervis@powys.gov.uk</a> |

**Background Papers used to prepare Report:**

Winter Service Plan 2015/2016

Welsh Government Trunk Road Maintenance Manual 2015/2016

Well-maintained Highways (UK Roads Board)