

**CABINET**  
**13 OCTOBER 2016****WINTER SERVICE POLICY 2016**

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**Relevant Cabinet Member**

Mr M J Hart

**Relevant Officer**

Director of Economy and Infrastructure

**Recommendation**

- 1. The Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Highways recommends that Cabinet approves the revised Winter Service Policy 2016 at Appendix 1.**

**Background**

2. National guidance recommends that highway authorities periodically review and update their Winter Service Policy. The last revision was in 2009. This revision takes into account changes that have taken place in guidance and practice since 2009, and embeds the move away from a prescriptive to a locally determined risk-based approach to service provision.
3. The main changes to the Policy are:
  - a) Things that should be in the revised Operational Plan have been removed from the Policy so that there is no duplication or ambiguity between the Policy and the Plan.
  - b) A new section on Infrastructure and Equipment is included.
  - c) A new section on Equality Impact has been added in the form of a statement.
  - d) A new section on working with Parish, Town and District Councils has been included.
4. The Council has a statutory duty under Section 41 of the Highways Act 1980 to maintain certain highways and a duty under Section 41(1A), as inserted by Section 111 of the Railways and Transport Safety Act 2003, to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that safe passage along a highway is not endangered by snow or ice.
5. The National Code of Practice for highways maintenance management, *Well-maintained Highways*, recommends that highway authorities should formally approve and adopt policies and priorities for Winter Service. The revised Winter Service Policy is set out in Appendix 1.

6. The current Policy was approved by Cabinet in 2009, and the operational detail is contained within the subsidiary Winter Service Operational Plan which is reviewed and updated annually, led by the Winter Service team.

7. The National Code of Practice has been amended a number of times, most notably following the severe winters of 2008/09 and 2010/11. The November 2013 revision added a significant amount of detail within 128 pages of an appendix specifically on Winter Service. Revisions within the Code were taken into account in annual reviews of the Operational Plan.

8. The National Code of Practice is due to be published later this year with the emphasis moving away from prescriptive operational detail to a risk-based approach that is appropriate to each authority's particular geographical area, objectives and available resources.

9. As well as containing operational processes, arrangements and details, the current Operational Plan already uses a risk and benefit approach to direct available resources to areas of the service in a cascading order of priorities. In this respect it already uses a risk-based approach expected in the new National guidance.

10. The changes in guidance since 2009, as well as the move later this year to risk-based service provision, require that the Policy is updated and brought into alignment with guidance and practice.

11. The objective remains unchanged in that a network of treated routes should be reasonably accessible for the majority of residents and businesses, supplemented by targeted provision of self-help facilities.

### **Legal, Financial and HR Implications**

12. The Policy will help to set out a transparent procedure to ensure consistency in approach and expectations, which will assist in dealing with any third party claims and actions brought in connection with Winter Service.

13. Adequate revenue and capital funding will be required in order to deliver the Winter Service described in this Policy.

14. There are no particular HR implications so long as a team of trained and experienced Winter Service Decision-Makers and inspectors is maintained and a succession plan is implemented.

### **Privacy Impact Assessment**

15. No impacts on privacy have been identified.

### **Equality and Diversity Implications**

16. An Equality Impact Assessment was completed in July 2016 (Appendix 3). It was found that the Policy would not result in any negative impact on protected groups, provided that the current mitigation measures that are in place for identified locations where there are greater numbers of the elderly, people with a disability and children, are implemented and reviewed regularly.

## **Public Health**

17. The service is essential for public safety and to the local and national economy in maintaining movement of vehicular traffic, cycles and pedestrians.

## **Contact Points**

### County Council Contact Points

County Council: 01905 763763

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### Specific Contact Points for this report

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## **Supporting Information**

- Appendix 1 – Winter Service Policy - attached

The following Appendices are available electronically and at County Hall Reception:

- Appendix 2 – Grit Bin Assessment form
- Appendix 3 – Equality Impact Assessment

## **Background Papers**

In the opinion of the proper officer (in this case the Director of Economy & Infrastructure) the following are the background papers relating to the subject matter of this report:

- Worcestershire Local Transport Plan 3 2011-2026 - 2011
- Worcester Transport Strategy Phase 1 2011-2016 – 2011
- Worcestershire Strategic Economic Plan 2014-2025 – March 2014