



Cabinet Highways Report

Report of: Simon Green, Executive Director, Place

Report to: Cabinet Highways Committee

Date: 29th August 2014

Subject: Streets Ahead - Changes to the Winter Service

Author of Report: Steve Robinson: 2735553

Key Decision: YES / NO

Reason Key Decision: Savings over £500,000
Affects 2 or more wards

Background Papers: None

Category of Report: OPEN

Statutory and Council Policy Checklist

Financial Implications
YES Cleared by: Jayne Clarke
Legal Implications
YES Cleared by: Steve Eccleston
Equality of Opportunity Implications
YES Cleared by: Ian Oldershaw
Tackling Health Inequalities Implications
YES
Human Rights Implications
NO
Environmental and Sustainability implications
NO
Economic Impact
NO
Community Safety Implications
NO
Human Resources Implications
NO
Property Implications
NO
Area(s) Affected
City Wide
Relevant Cabinet Portfolio Lead
Cllr Jack Scott
Relevant Scrutiny Committee
Economic, Environmental Wellbeing Scrutiny and Policy Committee
Is the item a matter which is reserved for approval by the City Council?
YES
Press Release
YES

REPORT TO THE CABINET HIGHWAYS COMMITTEE

29th AUGUST 2014

STREETS AHEAD - CHANGES TO THE WINTER SERVICE

1.0 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report seeks approval from the Cabinet Highways Committee to change the way in which the winter service is delivered across the city under the Streets Ahead contract following a recently undertaken review.
- 1.2 Reductions in funding from central government have required the Council to make savings across all services.
- 1.3 The proposed changes will introduce clear justifiable criteria for the provision of the winter service including precautionary gritting and grit bins and deliver savings to aid the Council to meet its budget as approved by Full Council in March 2014.

2.0 WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR SHEFFIELD PEOPLE

- 2.1 The Council will continue to provide a Winter Service that is of a greater level of service than most other Local Authorities including those with a similar topography to Sheffield. The winter services to the busiest main routes in the City are unchanged as is the clearance of snow. The people of Sheffield will still benefit from a greater proportion of the City's road network being on a precautionary route and the City having more grit bins than other comparable Councils. The Council is aware of how this service is valued by the people of the City and that was underlined by the feedback during the consultation.

People have had an opportunity to comment on the proposals and their contributions have led to changes to the original proposals. Following the review the criteria for providing the service will be clear and justifiable and can be used if changes are made to the road network in the future. Having defined criteria makes the service provision fairer through clarity regarding whether a road is eligible for gritting or if a grit bin is in the appropriate location.

It is evident from the reviews of population density that the number of people and businesses affected by the proposed changes is low. Some people may need to change their routes to and from work so as to travel on gritted roads.

3.0 OUTCOME AND SUSTAINABILITY

- 3.1 The outcome of the recommendations will be the delivery of an appropriate and effective winter service across the city of Sheffield. The routes treated will be determined through a clear, objective framework.

- 3.2 The proposed changes to the winter service are based on applying objective criteria to determine the Priority 2 precautionary gritting routes, objective criteria to assess the location of grit bins and continuing the snow warden service but without future recruits.
- 3.3 The proposed criteria can be utilised in the future to assess new routes for example, when bus routes change, and ensure the Council operates in a non-discriminatory manner when making decisions as to which new routes should be included in the winter service or when new grit bins are requested.
- 3.4 These transparent, justifiable and quantifiable criteria are sustainable and will determine the development of efficient and effective future winter maintenance strategies and implementation plans.

4.0 THE CURRENT WINTER SERVICE

4.1 Our winter service season runs from the 1 October through to the 30th April. During the winter, we aim to keep priority roads and pavements across the city safe and, as far as reasonably practical, free from ice and snow.

4.2 The service currently includes:

4.2.1 Precautionary gritting

- Gritting roads on our precautionary gritting routes when freezing temperatures are forecast to reduce the risk of ice forming and snow settling. The routes are categorised as Priority 1 and Priority 2.
- The Priority 1 routes cover the major arterial routes and busiest main roads across the city.
- The Priority 2 routes cover the other main roads, link roads, roads where key public service facilities (such as schools, doctor's surgeries and care homes) are located, and rural routes serving less populated areas.
- The Council grits 59% of its road network which is more than any other Authority benchmarked.

4.2.2 Snow clearance

- In the event of heavy snow, snow ploughing and gritting initially takes place on the Priority 1 and Priority 2 routes. Where we can, we support the NHS deliver its own arrangements to get patients needing critical treatments into hospital. This is coordinated with NHS staff.
- We then begin working through the rest of the city on a priority basis carrying out snow ploughing and gritting until every street in Sheffield is accessible. The prioritisation is based on the next days' black bin collections to reduce disruption.
- We also clear snow from the busiest pavements.

4.2.3 Grit bins

- We currently provide over 2,000 grit bins across the city for members

- of the public to use to help clear roads and pavements.
- 4.2.4
- This is more than any other Authority benchmarked.

Snow Wardens

- We currently have over 500 Snow Wardens across the city and are asking them to continue helping their community in times of wintry weather.

5.0 BACKGROUND TO THE REVIEW

- 5.1 In 2013, the Council was facing the third year of cuts in funding from Central Government. All services within the Council were affected by the cuts and required to review how they were delivered. The winter service was not exempt from review. However, the scale of change is less than many other services as it is acknowledged that the service is needed to keep the city moving.

At the beginning of the winter service review the Council decided that the Priority 1 (P1) routes that cover the major arterial routes and busiest main roads across the city were fit for purpose and so they were excluded from the review.

- 5.2 The Priority 2 (P2) gritting routes and location of grit bins across the city have developed organically over the years. Over recent years, hundreds of requests for additional gritting routes and grit bins were received from the public and members and many of these were accommodated.

- 5.3 When the Streets Ahead project began in August 2012, the Streets Ahead contract stipulated that in each year of the contract the new technical staff at the Council and Amey would carry out an Annual Winter Maintenance Review. It was agreed that the reviews would take the form of planned staged process for the first 4 years of the Streets Ahead contract:-

- Years 1 and 2 (2012 and 2013) – review the operational efficiency of the service, install new technology optimise gritting routes based on experience and gather data to benchmark the service level
- Year 3 (2014) – gather benchmark data and carry out a wider review of the service itself
- Year 4 (2015) - further route optimisation and review of grit bin usage

- 5.4 In years 1 and 2 the team used thermal mapping information to identify different climatic zones within the city. New weather stations were installed to provide better and more accurate local weather information so that gritters could be sent out to spread grit exactly where and when it was needed.

- 5.5 The teams also used the data they had gathered to optimise the gritting routes enabling the drivers to complete their gritting routes in a more efficient manner.

5.6 In year 3 we planned a more comprehensive review of the service starting from determining the level of service that is appropriate. This review would also be carried out within a framework of reducing budgets available to the Council.

5.7 It should be noted that once the criteria has been applied and the roads to be precautionary gritted established there may need to be some minor additions to the overall gritting network so as to take account of operational practicalities.

6.0 WINTER SERVICE REVIEW PROCESS

6.1 Recommendation 20 of the Well Maintained Highways Code of Practice for Highways Maintenance Management states that:

'All aspects of the Winter Service Plan, including service delivery arrangements, should be reviewed annually in consultation with key stakeholders to take account of changing circumstances.'

Annual reviews have taken place but in recent years this has focused on operational issues and efficiency with only minor changes being made to the precautionary gritting network.

6.2 The teams used data gathered from the LGA Winter Readiness Report 2011/12 and 2012/13 which indicated that the precautionary gritting coverage in Sheffield was very high. Data was also gathered from other Local Authority websites along with <http://www.cipfa.org/> data which showed that Sheffield gritted more miles of road than comparable Authorities and also had more grit bins. (see **Appendix A**)

Taking into account the data that had been gathered from various sources and the discussions that had been held with other Local Authorities, the decision was taken to review our current Priority 2 precautionary gritting routes and to develop criteria that could be used across the board to assess which roads should be considered for inclusion and which roads should not. This then led to also reviewing the location and number of grit bins across the city and the future of Snow Wardens in the city.

6.3 The needs of the city change and evolve over time with new roads and housing developments being built, changes to bus routes, as well as the opening, closing or relocation of public service facilities such as schools and fire stations. As a result, a failure to more deeply review the precautionary gritting routes has led to a situation where it could be argued that some roads currently receiving precautionary gritting should be removed from the network and others added in. It is time for a more fundamental review of the Winter Service particularly when the Council is facing such substantial cuts in its funding.

6.4 In order to ensure that this particular review process resulted in a set of precautionary gritting routes which were justifiable and in line with

national best practice guidance, it was decided to develop a set of criteria guided by recommendations made in the Well Maintained Highways - Code of Practice for Highways Maintenance Management which could then be used to develop a revised Priority 2 Precautionary Gritting Network.

- 6.5 The decision to use a set of proposed criteria based on measurable data, such as gradient and traffic flow, or presence of essential public facilities also enables the right decisions to be made. Following the outcome of a comprehensive public consultation exercise it was envisaged that this would inform a final set of criteria for the provision of Priority 2 precautionary gritting which could be applied to any future development or changes in the highway network and allow for adaptation, growth and any subsequent annual reviews to be conducted in a wholly consistent, transparent and justifiable manner.
- 6.6 Despite having over 2000 grit bins across the city, the locations of some could not be justified. As budget constraints prevent the Council from increasing the number of bins it is proposed to relocate existing bins that are poorly placed. Without criteria for the location of grit bins, this is not possible.
- 6.7 Officers also reviewed the Snow Wardens scheme. Only 67 volunteers signed up in 2010 and they were clustered in a few parts of the city. A larger and more appropriate spread of volunteers across the city was required. Feedback received from existing Snow Wardens also showed that they felt that they did not need a day's training to provide them with information about how to shovel snow in the best way and the large grit bag was difficult to locate on some streets. Therefore the Snow Warden scheme was changed.

The changes involved not providing a grit bag and reducing the training needed. New volunteers were provided with a snow shovel, Government guidance on how to best shovel snow and a high visibility vest. Each newly recruited Snow Warden was also advised to use their local grit bin in times of snow. Following these changes many more (over 500) people volunteered to become Snow Wardens and a better spread was achieved across the city. The costs of the scheme were reduced through not having to provide the grit bags.

7.0 DEVELOPMENT OF PRECAUTIONARY GRITTING ROUTES CRITERIA

- 7.1 Recommendation 9 of the Well Maintained Highways - Code of Practice for Highways Maintenance Management states:

'Authorities should define treatment route plans for carriageways, cycle routes and footways for pre-treatment and snow conditions, based upon the general maintenance hierarchy, but adapted to take into account the factors identified by this Code.'

- 7.2 The Code of Practice goes on to say:

The treatment routes for a Winter Service should take, as a starting point, the hierarchy developed for other maintenance purposes but this is likely to require extensive modification to consider:

- *wider transport and other policy priorities; (fulfilled by existing Priority 1 routes);*
- *special requirements of carriageways, footways and cycle routes (generally footways and cycle routes are not separately gritted on a precautionary basis. However the Council aims to treat the footways in heaviest use in the City Centre and perimeters of the hospital sites.);*
- *safe and reliable access to emergency facilities including Fire and Rescue, Police, Ambulance Services and hospitals; (fulfilled by existing Priority 1 routes);*
- *other public service access needs and critical infrastructure where the maintenance of access may be critical; (expected to be met by the proposed Priority 2 criteria);*
- *public transport routes and access to stations, bus garages and depots; (fulfilled by a combination of existing Priority 1 routes, further supplemented by the proposed Priority 2 routes);*
- *safe and reliable access to main industrial and business centres of key importance to the local and regional economy; (fulfilled by a combination of existing Priority 1 routes, further supplemented by the proposed Priority 2 routes);*
- *any significant variation between summer and winter traffic; (the most significant seasonal variation in winter traffic flows is in the Junction 34 area of the M1 motorway, attributable to the Meadowhall shopping centre. This is fulfilled by a combination of existing Priority 1 routes and roads maintained by the Highways Agency);*
- *accessibility dependencies of remote communities for example Scotland's island and peninsular communities; (Priority 2 criteria includes bus routes in rural areas);*
- *the special needs of disabled people or older people particularly where these can be effectively targeted; (the Council believes that having an appropriate winter service is the most effective way to respond to these needs and in particular the second gritting criteria ensures access to important public services);*
- *known problems, including significant gradients, exposed areas and other topological factors; (expected to be met by the proposed Priority 2 criteria);*
- *climatic and thermal capacity differences within the area; (see i) below);*
- *co-ordination and co-operation with other authorities. (see ii) below).*

[Note that against each of the above factors a comment has been made in brackets to show how it is dealt with by the Council]

- i) ***Climatic and thermal capacity differences within the area*** – This information is used to help to guide the decision making process for

when we grit, not which routes we include in the precautionary gritting network.

The Council has numerous controls in place to ensure that the winter service delivery takes account of climatic and thermal capacity differences within the area. This includes 4 weather monitoring stations across a range of climatic domains, as well as sophisticated forecasting modelling software which informs the proposed treatment regime and times. For areas over 200m altitude falling within the Priority 1 and 2 precautionary gritting networks, the forecasting stations can often trigger a precautionary gritting action solely in these areas, even when no gritting is required below 200m above sea level.

Significantly more gritting will take place in targeted areas based upon this site specific climatic information. There has also been a significant amount of work undertaken in developing thermal mapping to ensure that the Council's Service Provider, Amey has sited weather stations in the optimal locations to gather the most accurate and reflective thermal and climatic information in order to make effective decisions as to where to treat and the optimal time to commence that treatment.

- ii) ***Co-ordination and co-operation with other authorities*** - The Council already have comprehensive 'boundary agreements' in place with all adjacent authorities which include reciprocal precautionary gritting arrangements. All adjacent authorities were contacted prior to the consultation process to check that the boundary agreements were operating effectively for each party to ensure continuity of gritting across boundaries.

The Council has also negotiated access to the weather forecasting stations of neighbouring local Authorities and the Highways Agency in order to build up a more accurate and detailed forecasting model from which to make treatment decisions.

We combined the Code of Practice 'factors' annotated with Priority 2 above into the following criteria and it was these criteria on which we consulted:

- 1) The road forms part of a major SYPTE bus route; or
- 2) The road has a main entrance to a School, Doctors Surgery, Pharmacy, Care Home, Residential Children's Home or other critical public facilities; or
- 3) The road carries over 3000 cars per day **AND** has a significant gradient (in excess of 20% (i.e. 1:5)).

8.0 DEVELOPMENT OF GRIT BIN CRITERIA

- 8.1 The Council currently provides 2012 grit bins on the Highway Network and also receives a number of annual requests for provision or relocation of grit bins.

8.2 As part of the review of gritting routes, grit bins were seen as an integral part of the overall provision of the winter service, and, in view of this, a set of open and justifiable criteria were established in order to ensure that grit bins were provided to the areas of most need.

8.3 The table below outlines the proposed assessment for the provision of a grit bin:

Assessment	1 point for each criteria met
Grit bin is situated:	
On a road that has a drainage problem	
On a road that has a steep gradient of 1 in 5 (20%)	
On a bad bend that has a radius of less than 50 metres	
On a junction	
On a road that has a main entrance to sheltered housing	
On a road that has a main entrance to a school	
In an isolated area	
Near traffic signals (within 20m)	
Near a roundabout (within 20m)	

8.4 We planned to assess the location of each existing grit bin against the scoring system above and 1 point would be given for each of the criteria met. The original proposal was that grit bins achieving a score of 2 or more would remain on the network. It was also originally proposed that grit bins scoring less than 2 would be **removed**.

It should be noted that the proposal also stated that regardless of the score achieved:

- If a road is already included in the Priority 1 or Priority 2 precautionary gritting routes then that location is unlikely to be considered for a grit bin;
- If the potential grit bin location is within 200 metres of an existing grit bin, that location will not be considered for another grit bin.

There are a number of streets with no inclines but with several grit bins. In some instances, grit bins are less than 50 metres apart.

9.0 NO FUTURE RECRUITMENT OF SNOW WARDENS

We currently have over 500 Snow Wardens across the city and are asking them to continue helping their community in times of wintry weather. However, in order to reduce future costs our proposal is to **not** recruit any further Snow Wardens or replacing any Snow Wardens who no longer wish to be a Snow Warden.

10.0 CONSULTATION PROCESS

10.1 **Decision to Consult**

Once it had been determined what the criteria for categorising the Priority 2 precautionary gritting routes and grit bin locations would be, and to consider not recruiting Snow wardens for future years, it was deemed necessary to consult the public on the criteria and to seek their views on our proposals. This was necessary to ensure that the public were aware of any potential changes to the existing winter service and to gain their local knowledge and input into any service changes that were to be proposed.

10.2 **Discussions with another Councils**

Before the consultation process began we decided to learn lessons from another Council and we identified York City Council (YCC) as a good example as they had successfully undertaken a consultation exercise to inform a review of their Winter Service.

Similarly to Sheffield, YCC was also required to reduce the number of grit bins managed by the Council on the highway network.

Three key lessons were learnt from the consultation process in York which informed the consultation in Sheffield, namely:

1. That it was useful to provide an interactive searchable map reflecting how the proposed criteria may translate into gritting routes in order for residents to search on a street by street basis to identify how the proposals may impact upon their travel during winter periods;
2. Not to give examples of what kind of roads should be prioritised as part of their consultation (i.e. offering options like "A Roads such as named specific roads"). YCC had done this and found that it skewed the consultation responses as people who did not use the roads quoted as examples took the view that the proposal would not affect their journeys; and
3. The need to align gritting routes to bus routes. This was a major element of the consultation feedback from the York public and as a response to the feedback YCC decided to provide a gritting service to the main bus routes.

The 82.9% consultee agreement with YCC's plans to prioritise main roads and bus routes suggested this was a well-supported set of criteria which also aligned with the recommendations made in the Well Maintained Highways - Code of Practice for Highways Maintenance Management.

10.3 **Consultation Approach**

It is recommended in the Well Maintained Highways - Code of Practice for Highways Maintenance Management that a local authority should consult on any winter service changes outside of the Winter Maintenance period, which runs from October to April.

In accordance with this guidance, the consultation was carried out outside

the winter maintenance period and it ran for 8 weeks from 2 June to 25 July 2014. This also allowed sufficient time for all consultation responses to be carefully considered and reviewed, and any necessary refinements to be evaluated and made such that they could be implemented before the start of the next Winter Maintenance season (1 October 2014).

Operationally this would also allow sufficient time for route optimisation exercises to be undertaken and for gritter drivers to carry out route familiarisation to ensure that the new routes run in an effective manner.

10.4 **Consultation Documentation**

A consultation proposal document (see **Appendix B**) was produced which was available online via the Council's website. In addition, 640 paper copies were made available in libraries, First Point Centres and the Town Hall reception. This document explained:

- how the current Winter Service is provided;
- what the proposed changes are for precautionary gritting, grit bins and Snow Wardens;
- how the consultation process would take place and how people could take part; and
- what would happen once the consultation process had been completed.

To accompany the proposal document, a questionnaire (see **Appendix C**) was also produced as an easier and more accessible way for the public to feedback their comments to each of the proposed changes. The questionnaire was also available online and at libraries, First Point Centres and the Town Hall reception.

The information on the webpages detailed the reasons for the consultation and gave details of the proposals. An interactive map was also available which showed:

- the current precautionary gritting routes;
- the routes that were proposed to be removed and added to the highway network in accordance with the proposed criteria; and
- the proposed precautionary gritting routes after applying the proposed criteria.

Via the Interactive Map the public could input their street name or postcode and the map would show whether that particular road was a Priority 1 and therefore not included in the consultation process; a Priority 2 and if so whether it was proposed to remain as a Priority 2; or whether the proposal was to remove it. There were also a number of roads not currently gritted which were proposed to be added into the gritting network.

10.5 **Promotion of the Consultation Process**

To promote the consultation process, posters and postcards (see

Appendix D) were displayed in all libraries, First Point Centres and the Town Hall reception. Electronic copies of the posters were sent to a number of community groups with an accompanying email to ask them to print off the poster and display it for their community members.

The posters were also sent and displayed in Jessops Hospital to encourage all those visiting for antenatal appointments to have their say in the consultation process.

Posters and postcards were also supplied to each of the seven Streets Ahead Community Stewards and the stewards took these along to all community meetings they had during the consultation period. They also delivered them to Parish Councils and a number of local shops across the city to advertise the consultation and to encourage the public to take part.

Wider awareness of the consultation was achieved via press releases, media briefings and social media with regular tweets sent out via the @sccstreetsahead account (2641 followers) and this was retweeted via a number of organisations including @sheffcouncil (21,500 followers).

The consultation was also promoted on the homepage of the Council's website as well as a number of community newsletters and community blog sites. Details of the consultation and the proposals were also sent to a number of organisations who publish internal newsletters for their staff asking them to include the details in their publications.

Another form of promotion included emails to:

- approximately 3,000 community groups, interest groups, voluntary organisations, universities, Sheffield Chamber of Commerce, Sheffield City Council partner agencies and Parish Councils (see **Appendix E**);
- all the existing Snow Wardens;
- all Directors and Heads of Service within Sheffield City Council;
- Councillors and MPs.

The aim of these emails was to raise awareness of the consultation, the proposals and timings as well as asking these individuals to complete an online questionnaire and to provide the Council with their feedback on the proposals. The emails also asked those organisations to distribute the information about the consultation to their contacts to provide wider awareness of the consultation process.

10.6 Stakeholders

At the start of the consultation period, key stakeholders were sent information and asked if they would like to arrange a briefing meeting to discuss the proposals in further detail with officers.

Some of these key stakeholders included:

- Emergency Services
- Parish Councils

- NHS Strategic Group
- Council Partner organisations
- Transport groups
- Disability groups
- Elderly groups

The aim of this was to engage with these key stakeholders at an early stage in the consultation process to see if they felt that any of the proposals would or could have a detrimental effect on the service that they provide in Sheffield or on any members of the groups that they represented.

Feedback from the Emergency Services is included in **Appendix F** and this feedback has been taken into account in this report.

We also held meetings with organisations such as:

- South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive
- NHS Emergency Planning group
- Veolia Environmental Services
- Children, Young People and Families portfolio within the Council
- The Access Liaison Group
- Transport 4 All
- Bradfield Parish Council including a large number of local residents
- Stocksbridge Parish Council
- Sheffield 50+

The feedback and subsequent questionnaires that were completed by these groups have been taken into consideration as part of the consultation process.

10.7 **Public meetings**

Two public drop-in meetings were also held in the Town Hall. One was held in the evening between the hours of 6pm to 8pm and the second was held between 9am and 12 noon. The meetings were held on two different days to allow for all those interested to attend at a convenient time for them.

The information that was available at the meeting included:

- Presentation to provide information about the winter maintenance service consultation
- Map detailing the current Priority 1 and Priority 2 gritting routes
- Map detailing the proposed routes that would be added and removed from the highway network
- Map detailing the proposed Priority 2 gritting routes
- Map showing the population density across the city
- Copies of the proposal
- Copies of the questionnaire

- Copies of the snow code
- Copies of the poster and postcard so members of the public could take these and distribute them if they wished
- Computers so that the public could view the online interactive map when discussing specific issues with officers

At the meetings, the public were able to speak directly to officers who had been involved in producing the proposals and view maps to see what effect the proposed changes might have within their area.

They were able to raise any specific concerns they had about the proposals and about specific roads and then complete an online questionnaire to provide us with their feedback on our proposals. If they didn't want to complete an online questionnaire, they were provided with a paper copy of the questionnaire and asked to return it via the freepost address provided.

10.8 **Questionnaire Questions**

The questions that were included in the questionnaire were developed to ensure that the public could give their opinion on each of the proposals, whilst still having the scope to provide details about individual streets and grit bins they had concerns or opinions about.

Questions were about each of the three proposals so if an individual wanted to just give their opinion about one or all three of the proposals then this was possible.

The first question under each of the proposals was designed to gauge the public's view about whether they felt the proposals were fair and reasonable or not. This would then give a clear indication of how many of the consultees felt that each of the proposals were fair and reasonable.

If the consultee had responded 'not fair' or 'fair and reasonable with some reservation' to the first question, then the second question for each of the proposals was designed to gain further information about why they felt this. This was the consultee's opportunity to provide further details about what they thought of each of the proposals.

Some further questions allowed the consultees the opportunity to provide details about either individual streets or grit bins that they had concerns about. This is where the majority of consultees provided details to let us know that a road had been missed that they felt could meet the criteria.

The questions at the end of the questionnaire were included to gather information about the consultees e.g. how old they are, if they suffered from any disabilities or were a carer. We also asked for street and postcode information so that we could analyse which areas of the city we had received responses from.

11.0 EVALUATION OF CONSULTATION FEEDBACK

11.1 Evaluation Model

A dedicated team of winter maintenance officers from the Streets Ahead Client Technical Team evaluated the consultation responses received.

On a weekly basis throughout the consultation period, this team received the latest update of online and handwritten questionnaire submissions therefore these could be evaluated to gain an ongoing appreciation of concerns being raised by members of the public.

Once the consultation had formally closed, the officers carried out the following process:

- compiled summaries of opinions;
- read through every single comment received to each question;
- classified comments with a common theme into a category. (If a consultee raised three concerns in their comments, these were allocated to three different categories); and
- analysed and evaluated the comments and concerns raised.

11.2 Overview of Consultation and Evaluation of Results

A detailed analysis of the consultation responses received is contained in **Appendix G**.

However, below is a summary of the findings:-

- 1133 questionnaire responses were received.
- Detailed correspondence was received from the “Keep Bradfield Gritted” group
- It was clear from the content of the responses that the public place great value on the winter service
- There were very few workable suggestions proposed for alternative gritting criteria
- Few comments were received regarding the grit bin criteria
- Some respondents suggested roads for inclusion
- Many responses came from residents in rural areas who were concerned about the impact on their area and they raised issues about the effects on schools and older and disabled people
- The gritting of school bus routes was a concern
- Some respondents were concerned about the risk of personal injury and whether such claims would outweigh any potential savings
- Some respondents commented about the gradient criteria
- The potential for traffic congestion in particular around the Malin Bridge area was raised
- The difficulties residents in the west of the City would have accessing main roads without encountering or contributing to traffic congestion

We have reviewed the consultation process against the legal

requirements placed on the Council (see Section 14) and have commented in italics on each of the requirements below:-

(i) consultation has taken place when the proposal is still at a formative stage; *(Section 12 “Refinement of Proposed Changes” above indicates the degree of change in the recommended proposals from the original proposals which indicate that the consultation was carried out when the proposals were at a formative stage)*

(ii) sufficient reasons have been put forward for the proposal to allow for intelligent consideration and response; *(the reasons for the proposal were contained within the consultation document (see **Appendix B**) along with the links showing interactive and searchable maps of the implications of the proposals shows the degree of detail provided to the public so they were able to properly respond. The number of responses and the detail contained in them underline the point)*

(iii) adequate time has been given for consideration and response *(a period of 8 weeks was allocated for the consultation to be considered by both individuals and community groups to allow sufficient time for submissions to be made to the Council and that is validated by the number of responses we received); and*

(iv) the product of consultation has been conscientiously taken into account. *(a dedicated team of officers specialising in highways and winter maintenance services has been assigned by the Council to carry out a detailed evaluation and assessment of every single comment raised as part of this consultation. In addition, Section 12 “Refinement of Proposed Changes” above indicates the degree of change in the recommended proposals from the original proposals).*

12.0 REFINEMENT OF PROPOSED CHANGES

In light of the evaluation, the proposals have been refined by the following.

- Removing the word “major” as it is not helpful in defining specific bus routes
- The addition of SYPTTE school bus routes
- Amendment to the slope/traffic criteria to 10% from 20%
- Addition of an extra criteria for gritting so as to create a “Western access route” in order to reduce traffic congestion in that area
- Reduction to the threshold for existing grit bins provision from 2 points to 1 so as to retain more bins on the road network
- Amendment to one of the gradient grit bin criteria to 10% from 20%

13.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

13.1 Due to the Council’s significant reduction in resources, it is currently assessing all of its services to identify possible cost savings the aim being to enable the Council to meet all of its service delivery priorities within its

reduced budget.

It has been highlighted in this report that the existing winter service has historically been provided at a greater level of service than other Councils provide and has scope for service reductions without compromising the overall service.

- 13.2 As part of the Council's budget report in March 2014, a savings target of £100,000 to be realised from making changes to the winter service, was approved.

The changes proposed to the service as set out in this report are expected to meet this £100,000 target, depending on the final determination of the proposals following the outcome of the consultation and validation of the costs savings with Amey.

This savings target is one of a number of project savings ideas the Streets Ahead team are pursuing in order to assist the Council with easing budget pressures over the coming years.

- 13.3 If the proposed changes to the winter maintenance service are not approved, this will inevitably increase budget pressures on other Council services which could lead to other essential services being cut in order to maintain the winter maintenance service in its current form.

14.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 14.1 Section 41 of the Highways Act 1980 states that:

- *(1) The authority who are for the time being the highway authority for a highway maintainable at the public expense are under a duty subject to subsections (2) and (4) to maintain the highway.*
- *(1A) In particular, a highway authority is under a duty to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that safe passage along a highway is not endangered by snow or ice.*

- 14.2 The duty under Section 41(1A) is not an absolute duty given the qualification of 'reasonable practicability'. There are no statutory defences available to a highway authority faced with a claim that the statutory duty imposed by Section 41(1A) has been breached. Instead, the highway authority must demonstrate that it acted within the bounds of 'reasonable practicability'. Highway authorities will be expected to be guided by the Well Maintained Highways - Code of Practice for Highways Maintenance Management and implement a plan in accordance with best practice which is sufficient to address foreseeable risks.

- 14.3 Cabinet Highways Committee must therefore be satisfied that the proposed changes to the winter service complies with the Code of Practice and the Council's strategy for ensuring that safe passage along the highway is not endangered by snow or ice falls within the bounds of 'reasonable practicability'.

14.4 There is no statutory obligation to consult with members of the public when considering a change to the winter service but there is a legitimate expectation of consultation where public services are the subject of this potential level of change. In reviewing the consultation, Cabinet Highways Committee need to be satisfied as to the following:-

- (i) consultation has taken place when the proposal is still at a formative stage;
- (ii) sufficient reasons have been put forward for the proposal to allow for intelligent consideration and response;
- (iii) adequate time has been given for consideration and response; and
- (iv) the product of consultation has been conscientiously taken into account.

This report and its appendices need to evidence that consultation has been undertaken as set out above

The legal obligations relating to the Public Sector Equality Duty are described in the section below.

15.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

15.1 S149 Equality Act 2010 (“The Public Sector Equality Duty” PSED) requires that:

(1) A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:

(a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act; .

(b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; .

(c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

15.2 Having due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to:

(a) remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;

(b) take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it; .

(c) encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

15.3 The relevant protected characteristics are age; disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex and sexual orientation.

15.4 The primary tool for showing how equalities are considered in the proposal is via the Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) at **Appendix H** which identifies potential negative impacts on protected characteristic groups and any mitigation possible.

16.0 TACKLING HEALTH INEQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

Highways Cabinet Committee are referred to **Appendix H** of this report to satisfy themselves that the EIA has sufficiently addressed tackling health inequalities implications.

17.0 ENVIRONMENTAL AND SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

The application of road salt to the highway can have a detrimental effect on the environment through leaching into watercourses. Depending on the configuration of highway drainage and watercourses, there can be particular areas where concentrations of salt are higher. The greatest degree of mitigation is through correct decision making about when to grit and deciding on appropriate grit spread rates.

18.0 ECONOMIC IMPACT

18.1 In terms of the proposed changes having a detrimental impact on the economy of Sheffield, the Priority 1 precautionary gritting routes remain unchanged as part of these proposed changes to the winter service and they are the roads across the city which have the greatest economic impact on the City.

18.2 The proposed changes to Priority 2 precautionary gritting routes will not affect the bus routes in Sheffield operated by the main bus companies. Therefore if residents cannot travel to work using their own transport there will be public transport available to aid business continuity when adverse weather conditions occur.

18.3 Although the reduction in the Priority 2 precautionary gritting routes will affect some communities within Sheffield, these communities will still receive an appropriate level of precautionary gritting to permit access to and from the community therefore the economic impact should be minimal.

19.0 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

The Council currently precautionary grits only part of its road network and

is proposing to reduce the proportion by a small percentage. Roads that are not gritted carry a generically higher risk to road users where drivers do not drive in accordance with road conditions. The risk has been mitigated through ensuring that the gritting criteria covers the majority of journeys and areas of population density.

20.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

Details of the alternative options for changing the winter service are contained in Appendix L. It should be noted that other additional savings ideas are also being pursued within the Streets Ahead contract.

21.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

21.1 The recommended changes will introduce clear justifiable criteria for the provision of the winter service including precautionary gritting and grit bins and deliver contract savings to aid the Council to meet its budget as approved by Full Council in March 2014

21.2 The refinements made to the proposed precautionary gritting routes following the analysis of the consultation feedback ensure that the Council is complying with its legal obligations.

21.3 The implementation of the proposed changes will realise a project saving of approximately £100,000 per annum which will contribute to the Council's budget savings throughout the life of the Streets Ahead project.

The city will still have a significant, robust and effective winter service.

22.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Cabinet Highways Committee agrees to:

- 1) Retain the Winter Service Priority 1 gritting routes as previously established and any future changes would be due to changes in the status of particular roads in the city.
- 2) The criteria for Priority 2 gritting routes as being:
 - a. The road forms part of a SYPTe bus route; or
 - b. The road has a main entrance to a School, Doctor's Surgery, Pharmacy, Care Home, Residential Children's Home or other critical public facilities; or
 - c. The road carries over 3000 cars per day **and** has a significant gradient (in excess of 10% (i.e. 1:10)).
 - d. The road constitutes a Western access route for traffic travelling to Manchester Road avoiding causing congestion to other arterial routes
- 3) The criteria for Priority 2 gritting routes being applied to the city's road network to establish a new Priority 2 gritting network.
- 4) Members approve that the precautionary gritting routes are regularly

reviewed by officers against the approved criteria as there will certainly be further changes in the future for example as bus routes are updated.

- 5) The criteria for grit bin locations as being:

Assessment	1 point for each criteria met
Grit bin is situated:	
On a road that has a drainage problem	
On a road that has a steep gradient of 1 in 10 (10%)	
On a bad bend that has a radius of less than 50 metres	
On a junction	
On a road that has a main entrance to sheltered housing	
On a road that has a main entrance to a school	
In an isolated area	
Near traffic signals (within 20m)	
Near a roundabout (within 20m)	

- 6) The application of the criteria to the city's grit bin locations using a minimum score of 1 for the retention of a grit bin. Grit bins having a score of 0 will be removed.

It should be noted that the proposal also stated that regardless of the score achieved:

- If a road is included in the Priority 1 or Priority 2 precautionary gritting routes then that location is unlikely to be considered for a grit bin; and
- If the potential grit bin location is within 200 metres of an existing grit bin, that location will not be considered for another grit bin.

- 7) The application of the grit bin criteria for future additional grit bin requests using a threshold of a minimum of 2 points and only if future reviews of grit bin usage identifies grit bins that are not used elsewhere for relocation
- 8) Continue the current snow warden scheme without seeking future recruits.

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Date: 20th August 2014

LIST OF APPENDICES

APPENDIX A	Benchmarking Data with other Local Authorities
APPENDIX B	Consultation Proposal Documentation
APPENDIX C	Consultation Questionnaire
APPENDIX D	Consultation posters and postcards
APPENDIX E	Community and Interest Groups
APPENDIX F	Emergency Services Support Letters
APPENDIX G	Consultation Feedback and Analysis
APPENDIX H	Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)
APPENDIX I	Map showing population density
APPENDIX J	List of roads amended as a result of consultation feedback
APPENDIX K	Route Map for Bradfield area
APPENDIX L	Alternative Options Considered

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