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| Report to: | Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Skills) | Date of Meeting: | Tuesday 18 September 2018 |
| Subject: | Winter Service Policy and Operational Plan | | |
| Report of: | Head of Locality Services - Commissioned | Wards Affected: | (All Wards); |
| Portfolio: | Locality Services | | |
| Is this a Key Decision: | N | Included in Forward Plan: | No |
| Exempt / Confidential Report: | N | | |

Summary:

To consider the revised policy document for approval for 2018/19.

Recommendation(s):

That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Skills) be requested to consider the Policy and Operational Plan and advise Cabinet Member – Locality Services of any issues or recommendations.

Reasons for the Recommendation(s):

To approve a revised policy following consultation with Elected Members during the summer of 2018.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected: (including any Risk Implications)

The Council could choose to retain the existing policy. Winter service is a statutory function and not following the latest guidance will lead to an increased litigation risk to the authority.

What will it cost and how will it be financed?

(A) Revenue Costs

The service is funded from the Transport and Highway Infrastructure revenue budget. Whilst every effort is made to contain costs, it is understood that it is difficult to forecast expenditure due to the fact that the level of service is dependent upon weather conditions.

(B) Capital Costs

None.

Implications of the Proposals:

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| Resource Implications (Financial, IT, Staffing and Assets): |
| None. |
| Legal Implications: |
| Section 41(1A) of the Highways Act 1980 places a duty on Highway Authorities in respect of winter conditions, as follows:- 'In particular, a Highway Authority is under a duty to ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, that safe passage along a highway is not endangered by snow or ice'. |
| Equality Implications: |
| There are no equality implications. |

Contribution to the Council's Core Purpose:

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| Protect the most vulnerable: This is a universal service for the benefit of all. |
| Facilitate confident and resilient communities: This is a universal service for the benefit of all. |
| Commission, broker and provide core services: The Council has a statutory duty to provide a winter service function. |
| Place – leadership and influencer: Providing sustainable services to support our communities and businesses. |
| Drivers of change and reform: N/A |
| Facilitate sustainable economic prosperity: Providing sustainable services to support our communities and businesses. |
| Greater income for social investment: N/A |
| Cleaner Greener Supports the latest technology to minimise the impact of the carbon economy. |

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

(A) Internal Consultations

The Head of Corporate Resources (FD 5270/18) and Head of Regulation and Compliance (LD 4494/18) have been consulted and any comments have been incorporated into the report.

(B) External Consultations

Merseytravel.

Implementation Date for the Decision

Following the expiry of the “call-in” period for the Minutes of the Cabinet Meeting.

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Appendices:

Annex A - Consultation letter to Elected Members

Background Papers:

None

1. Introduction/Background

- 1.1 The Department provides a Highway Winter Service to the Borough in accordance with the Winter Service Policy and Operational Plan. Officers monitor the weather conditions 24 hours a day throughout the winter season and enact the plan when weather conditions dictate.
- 1.2 The Railways and Transport Safety Act 2003 (section 111) has inserted an additional section 41(1A) to the Highways Act 1980 which places a duty on the Highway Authorities in respect of winter conditions, and states ‘In particular, a Highway Authority is under duty to ensure, as far as reasonably practicable, that safe passage along a highway is not endangered by snow or ice’.
- 1.3 In addition, The Traffic Management Act 2004 placed a Statutory Network Management Duty on all local traffic authorities in England. It requires authorities to do all that is reasonably practicable to manage the network effectively to keep traffic moving. In meeting the duty, authorities should establish contingency plans for dealing promptly and effectively with unplanned events, such as unforeseen weather conditions, as far as is reasonably practicable.
- 1.4 The Council operates to a Winter Service Policy and Operational Plan which has been approved by the Council and is reviewed each summer to ensure that it remains ‘fit for purpose’.
- 1.5 Cabinet, at its meeting on 13th October 2011, resolved to authorise the Director of Built Environment (now Head of Locality Services – Commissioned) to make any further revisions to the Winter Service Policy and Operational Plan in consultation

with Cabinet Member Transportation (now Locality Services). There is, therefore, no requirement to take this revision back to Cabinet for further approval.

2.0. Consultation

- 2.1 The Winter Service Policy and Operational Plan is subject to an annual review, reassessment and consultation.
- 2.2 In accordance with Cabinet Member's wishes, a consultation letter was sent to every Elected Member and a copy is attached as Annex A. The closing date for responses was 29th June 2018.
- 2.3 Merseytravel has also been contacted and asked if there have been any revisions to their bus routes since last year.

3.0 Revisions to the Policy

- 3.1 The Winter Service Policy and Operational Plan is based on guidance provided by the government in a document entitled 'Well Maintained Highways – Code of Practice for Highway Maintenance Management.' This was substantially revised in September 2013. Officers reported in 2014 of the extent of the guidance which runs to 158 pages.
- 3.2 A new code of practice was published in 2016 entitled 'Well Managed Highway Infrastructure'. This superseded all previous codes. The section relating to winter Service has been delayed a number of times and has yet to be released. Officers will address any revised guidance as and when this is available, reporting back to Cabinet Member and subsequently Overview and Scrutiny (Regeneration and Skills) Committee. In the meantime the Council will continue to comply with the existing guidance from September 2013.
- 3.3 In accordance with the policy, all routes as advised by Merseytravel, will be gritted as part of the routine gritting operations. Merseytravel has confirmed that there are no amendments required to this year's routes and has reported no issues with last year's winter gritting operations.
- 3.4 A new tender has recently been awarded for the winter service operations and includes a number of enhancements for the forthcoming season.
- 3.5 The enhancements include a new purpose built winter service facility with a salt barn capable of holding 3500 tonnes of rocksalt. This enables the authority to meet the recommended minimum salt storage requirements and increase resilience in the event of any prolonged winter weather.
- 3.6 A new gritting fleet is being provided by the contractor with the latest technology to allow for optimum salt spread rates and meet the requirements of 'Good Coverage' as detailed in the code of practice.
- 3.7 Other enhancements include a new weighbridge to accurately monitor salt usage and new vehicle trackers to monitor real time activities more effectively.

- 3.8 The procedures in the event of an Extreme Weather Event have been updated, in consultation with the risk and audit team, to include new contact information and processes.
- 3.9 There were no responses received as a result of the consultation with Elected Members.
- 3.10 At the time of writing this report, the Policy and Operational Plan document is still being revised to incorporate the revisions detailed above. The final document will be presented to Elected Members prior to Overview and Scrutiny Committee (regeneration and Skills) on 18th September 2018.

Annex A



Locality Services - Commissioned

Magdalen House
30 Trinity Road
Bootle
Merseyside L20 3NJ

Councillors

Date:
Our Ref: NWM/WM/GJ
Your Ref:
Please contact: Gary Jordan
Contact Number: 0151 934 4731
Fax No: 0151 934 4801
e-mail: network@sefton.gov.uk

Dear Councillor

Winter Service Review 2018

I am writing to you on behalf of my Cabinet Member Councillor John Fairclough regarding the above. Each year during the early summer, we review the winter service policy and operational plan from the previous season to ascertain if members have any comments they would like taken into account in the review.

By way of some background, the winter of 2017/18 was a particularly prolonged winter during which time we gritted the carriageway routes on 78 occasions and the footway routes 18 times. This compares to 43 carriageway and 15 footway in 2016/17, 33 carriageway and 1 footway in 2015/16, and 49 carriageway and 15 footway in 2014/15.

The codes of practice for winter service are now published by the National Winter Service Research Group (NWSRG). We are expecting updated guidance to be published this year and whilst officers are confident that the changes to our policy we have made in recent years will hold us in good stead, we will review this information when available and incorporate any new guidance as necessary.

With the above in mind, the winter service policy continues to serve the Council well and officers, who were on duty 24 hours per day over the whole season, were always able to provide the appropriate response to the prevailing conditions. Again, as in previous years, at no time was the availability of salt an issue. The Council always had sufficient stock levels to deal with the winter conditions.

Whilst officers are confident that the policy remains fit for purpose (we will address the issues raised by the new code of practice when this is published), Councillor Fairclough has requested that all Elected Members be contacted to seek their views on the service during the winter of 2017/18, ensure that any issues can be addressed during the summer period and any further revisions considered before the commencement of the winter season 2018/19. I would therefore be grateful if you could advise me of any issues you would like to raise regarding the policy and the provision of the winter service. I would be grateful to hear from you by 29th June 2018 to allow sufficient time to revise and present the policy for approval.

The existing policy and operational plan is available to view by following this link:

<http://www.sefton.gov.uk/parking,-roads-travel/gritting.aspx>

Following receipt of any issues raised by Elected Members, the policy will be revised as appropriate and presented to Cabinet Member for approval and adoption for the coming winter season. The finalised policy and operational plan will then be presented to Overview & Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration & Skills) on 18th September 2018.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Marrin', written on a light-colored background.

Dave Marrin
Highway Management Manager