

# PERTH AND KINROSS COUNCIL

## Environment, Infrastructure and Economic Development

1 November 2023

### POLICY AND LEVEL OF SERVICE FOR WINTER 2023/2024

#### Report by Head of Environment and Consumer Services

(Report No. 23/291)

## 1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 This report describes the winter season experienced in 2022/2023 and proposes a level of service for the 2023/24 winter season period, the aim being to permit winter weather to be treated and assist the safe movement of pedestrians and vehicles across the Council area.
- 1.2 The Winter Maintenance Policy is designed to deal with a typical winter and the level of service complies with the recommendations laid down in Code of Practice 'Well-managed highway infrastructure' (the code). The code refers to practical guidance by the National Winter Service Research Group (NWSRG).
- 1.3 Severe snow events may restrict movement during periods when demand exceeds the available resources. Teams will continue to focus their efforts on priority routes whilst continually reviewing conditions and routes to ensure optimal efficiency. However, often during these severe events the Council cannot meet the public's expectations.

## 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Environment, Infrastructure and Economic Development Committee:
  - notes that changes to last year's policy and level of service for winter are shown in *italics*
  - approves the level of service for the gritting and snow clearing of roads and footways in Perth and Kinross for the forthcoming winter period, using plant and labour resources of Tayside Contracts, other Council Services and private contractors as required
  - notes that officers are continuing to examine resource requirements to support year round resilience, recognising changing weather patterns

### **3. STRUCTURE OF REPORT**

3.1 This report is structured over the following sections:

- Section 4: Background
- Section 5: Proposals
- Section 6: Conclusion
- Appendices

### **4. BACKGROUND / MAIN ISSUES**

4.1 Within Perth and Kinross, there are a number of winter service arrangements for our public roads. Around 910km of the Council's 2,500km road network is designated as a high priority for winter service. These priority routes receive precautionary treatment that aims to keep them generally ice-free, although this can never be guaranteed.

4.2 The Council also provides a high level of service on priority footways in busy urban areas. Lower levels of treatment are provided on the remainder of the carriageway and footway network, as and when required, during normal working hours. However, it is not possible to treat every road and footway, particularly during severe weather events. Very low priority carriageways and footways are normally not treated, unless hard packed snow or ice threatens to prevent access for essential services.

4.3 In periods of prolonged severe weather, resources are targeted towards keeping the strategic road and footways network open. As a result, it can be a considerable time (in some cases several days) before lower priority routes are reached. *In cases where repeated treatment of the primary network is disadvantaging other users and where there is minimal risk in deviating from the priority treatment, officers will direct resources to these other areas.* The availability of operatives also impacts on the level of cover that can be provided for footway treatment.

4.4 The Scottish Government is responsible for the winter service on the 250 km of trunk road network within Perth and Kinross covering the M90, A90 and A9 between Broxden and Keir Roundabout. This is managed by Amey (since August 2022). The A9 north of Broxden and A85 has been managed by BEAR (Scotland) Ltd for many years.

4.5 Experience of recent winters has shown that the level of service as set out in this Policy is generally achievable, although public expectation is significantly higher in severe snow and ice events than can reasonably be delivered. This is particularly the case on the lower priority roads and footways.

- 4.6 Winter seasons are always unpredictable. 2022/23 was what can be described as a “fairly typical winter” with regular afternoon/evening treatments to prevent ice forming overnight, followed by morning treatment where wet weather had washed the salt off and thus required retreatment. A feature of winter 2022/23, however, was that significant activity was compressed into December/January. The pushing back of the winter cover start date and reduced period of nightshift cover correlate with this period of increased activity. This is explained further in para 4.8.
- 4.7 Tayside Contracts provide the labour to drive all carriageway gritters. Last year, the national shortage of HGV/LGV drivers, along with general challenges in attracting and retaining staff, directly impacted available driver numbers. Three of the four nightshift routes were staffed by driver hire. However, this proved less reliable than staffing routes with employed staff and required regular late volunteer replacements to ensure service delivery. This matter has been resolved for 2023/24 and is discussed further at para 5.5 below.
- 4.8 Planned activity is based on forecast road surface temperatures rather than air temperatures as reported in news forecasts. Operationally, marginally fewer actions were carried out compared to the previous winter but still sit around the 6 year average, hence deemed a typical winter. The period of nightshift cover in place resulted in very similar levels of treatment required, thus justifying compressing the period the nightshift was available. Table 1 Operational Activity Statistics details activity over last winter compared to previous years, highlighting:
- there was a requirement to plough snow from the network for 15 days, this is twice what was required in 2021/22 but half of 2020/21. This demonstrates the unpredictable weather patterns officers and drivers need to be ready to react to.
  - 15,776 tonnes of salt were spread, an increase of 898 tonnes on the previous winter. This is as a result of increased snow days, where activity levels and thus salt outputs increase.
- 4.9 With over 1,600 grit bins, keeping them fully stocked when demand is high is challenging. Last winter, 3<sup>rd</sup> party contractors assisted in stocking grit bins in advance of winter and replenishing during the season. As it was a relatively mild season, self-help was not exhaustive and, as such requests could broadly be kept up with. Grit bins are stocked with a mix of salt/sand with sand usage down on previous years.
- 4.10 Although a typical winter season, the £3.865m budget was exceeded, outturning at £4.623m. The balance of cost is funded from Council reserves. The budget for the current winter programme (2023/24) has been increased to £4.128m, although it is recognised that, as in previous years, the outturn position will depend on the extent of the winter weather. This increased budget allocation includes £50,000 to enable the Council to be more agile and responsive to move resources around localities to address specific need. This £50,000 allocation has been used to ensure we have trailers available to

*move footway tractors around and will fund the additional cost of doing so, along with staffing the additional use of this equipment.*

- 4.11 At the end of each winter, a review of operations is undertaken with stakeholder consultation to identify areas of good practice, challenges faced, capacity and resource issues and improvements or adjustments to future plans. Changing weather patterns, resources and personnel constraints mean that the winter service needs to be agile and flexible to respond effectively. In addition, reflecting those changing weather patterns across the year, officers are continuing to examine resource requirements to support year round resilience.
- 4.12 These management reviews seek to provide an acceptable level of service whilst minimising costs, complying with working time directives and managing the work/life balance for personnel. As part of the review, *community councils were contacted and invited to provide feedback on the 2022/2023 service to inform improvements or adjustments for the current year. As it was not a severe winter season, minimal feedback was received. In addition, all elected members were invited to a presentation on 29 June 2023 to discuss winter service delivery considering statutory requirements and limitations (resource and financial). Feedback was that, although elected members were broadly happy with the service, there is a desire for officers to be permitted to be more flexible/agile without compromising their/the Council's liability. Officers were also remitted to review footway route coverage within Perth City to facilitate the treatment of the paths across North/South Inch to reflect the higher footfall these paths have. These footway links are now included in the route coverage.*
- 4.13 The Council have 8 weather stations, 2 carriageway sensors and 9 camera sites (3 sites have dual directional cameras) placed strategically across the network. The station data and images are shared with neighbouring authorities & BEAR Scotland, with their information reciprocally shared with Perth and Kinross. The camera images are also available on the Council website alongside a community camera at Spittal of Glenshee (which the Council helped fund) and Braemar. The Council would welcome discussions with other community groups around installing additional cameras and sharing the costs/images. This infrastructure is maintained, and information retrieved / interpreted by Vaisala. *The weather forecast contract for the winter of 2023/24 will again be provided by MetDesk Weather Services with the contract having been extended for an additional year.* Both contracts are administered by *Dundee City Council Procurement* on behalf of seven councils working collaboratively to achieve economies of scale. *Two additional sensors are being installed in advance of the winter season at B827 Dalginross and A923 Butterstone to give winter controllers better coverage of the Council area and reduce the need to drive to these areas to establish conditions.*
- 4.14 *For winter 2022/23, the Council spread rock salt only on carriageways to mitigate increased costs of marine salt. A minimal quantity was stored outside, with a mid season restock, as there was a risk of the salt exceeding*

*permissible moisture content levels, forming lumps and bridging in the gritters affecting its spread rate. Despite a wet winter, this was not experienced and no issues were encountered in spreading salt on the network.*

- 4.15 *Residents in Glen Quaich received a plough and gritter to enable self help treatment from Amulree to The Garrows (last property before going over the hill). Due to delivery delays, this was received late in the season giving little opportunity to monitor its effectiveness. Council officers will, in conjunction with residents, monitor effectiveness through a full season to establish opportunities to roll out further, if interested parties come forward.*
- 4.16 *Amey are based within the Ruthvenfield and Kinross depots to enable them to serve the trunk road network. This has enabled an element of cost share to both parties as follows:*
- *depot rental contribution offsetting winter operating costs*
  - *shared equipment for loading gritters*
  - *large brine tank installed by Amey but available for Council use*
  - *shared use of salt dome with common salt stock and ability to replenish from shared sources*
  - *shared costs for management/movement of salt stock*
  - *shared use of Tayside Contracts weighbridge in Ruthvenfield and Amey in Kinross later in the season*

*Discussions have taken place and whilst there is no opportunity to combine gritting routes/vehicles, agreement on boundary and network interfaces will ensure continuity of treatment for the travelling public.*

**Table 1 – Operational Activity Statistics**

Action	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Category 1 pre gritting	46	70	33	56	53	47	40
Category 1 Morning De Ice or Snow Clearing	71	108	53	66	66	76	70
Treatment on night shift routes	63	91	55	82	61	58	61
Number of snow days (>50% of network)	29	35	7	10	37	8	15
Treatment on Cat 2 network	24	56	28	20	44	31	30
Treatment on Cat 3 network	5	12	3	1	17	6	3
Treatment on footway network	11	50	19	12	38	25	23
Salt used (t)	13,301	30,632	12,191	18,681	24,158	14,868	15,766
Grit Sand used (t)	965	3,322	675	875	3,412	750	621
Red/Orange Alert in operation (days)	2	19	0	2	35	11	14

## **5. PROPOSALS**

- 5.1 Cover commenced on 16 October 2023 and runs until 14 April 2024. Appendix 1 details the phased resources available and the times that the agreed level of service will be provided if treatment is required. However, in periods of

prolonged severe weather, this level of service is often not achievable due to a requirement to ensure that operatives are given adequate (statutory) rest breaks and do not exceed driver hours.

- 5.2 Over weekends and public holidays, a driver cohort that can treat only the Category 1 road and footway network is available. This is because we need the entire workforce to widely treat the lower categories, and to do this 7 days a week would prevent road workers getting adequate (statutory) breaks.
- 5.3 A reduced level of staff and vehicles are available during the lead in and lead out periods reflecting weather patterns *and thus need*. In circumstances when unseasonal weather is forecast/experienced, volunteers are sought to support any response and to work outwith normal hours. Resourcing reduced staffing/vehicles during these periods assists in containing costs. However, this presents capacity risks when adverse weather is encountered.
- 5.4 In severe weather conditions, the higher priority routes may have to be treated several times before resources can be diverted to lower usage roads. Treatment may be restricted to clearing only the carriageway, or one footway, to ensure resources can be utilised as widely as possible across communities. *Additionally, this Policy permits deviations from re-treating the primary network where there is minimal risk in doing so and a wider benefit to communities by treating other routes.*
- 5.5 *Tayside Contracts provide the labour to drive all carriageway gritters. Over the last two years, they have trained 8 HGV/LGV drivers to address this shortage and for winter 2023/24 will return to staffing all carriageway gritters. The labour force remains under establishment, however, leaving gaps in footway rotas which will be covered by a combination of PKC waste and greenspace operatives and the sub-contract supply chain.*
- 5.6 Target Completion Time - during the main cover period the target completion time for routine morning de-icing of Category 1 carriageways is 07:30 (09:00 on Sundays and nationally recognised public holidays). The treatment time in severe weather conditions will be longer. When snow falls it can take twice as long to complete treatment, as vehicles need to travel more slowly, and ploughing is required in both directions. With the exception of the four nightshift routes, which operate during the main standby period, no treatment will routinely extend beyond 21:00 (see Appendix 2a):
  - Category 1 priority roads will be treated seven days per week as detailed above.
  - Category 2 roads will be treated five days per week (Monday to Friday) as resources permit between 08:00 – 15.00.
  - Category 3 routes comprise of roads which are not normally treated, except in prolonged ice or snow conditions and only when resources become available. Each treatment route will be arranged so that the most important parts are treated first, whilst taking account of operational efficiency.

5.7 Footways receive treatment according to their usage and importance in the public road network (see Appendix 2a). Based on this assessment:

- Category 1 priority footways will be treated seven days per week within the main winter period, with extended hours on weekdays if an alert is called. No footway treatment will be carried out on Christmas Day and New Year's Day as (in general) shops are not open on those days.
- In periods of daily repeat treatment officer discretion will be applied to treating the side of a footway "not normally treated" *as described in 5.4 above*. Consideration will also be given to rotation of treatment across settlements to ensure fair coverage *eg where a footway tractor treats several villages it will reverse the order day by day to widen route coverage whilst not compromising category 1 route safety*.
- Category 2 footway routes will be treated five days per week (Monday to Friday) as resources permit between 08:00 – 15.00.
- Category 3 routes comprise of footways which are not normally treated, except in prolonged ice or snow conditions and only when resources become available.

5.8 Situations occur which need restrictions on hours, routes, and the employment of contractors etc. to be relaxed, to deal more effectively with the emergency. This is allowed for and controlled by a system of 'Alerts'. In serious situations, either an Orange or Red Alert can be authorised by the Road Maintenance Partnership Manager, to allow working arrangements out with the 'normal' policy such as employing 3<sup>rd</sup> parties to work on clearing/lifting snow or exceeding driver hours to deal with un-forecast situations.

5.9 *Last winter season saw 15,766 tonnes of salt spread. Salt stocks have been replenished and sit at 15,612 tonnes mid-September, with 10,000 tonnes under cover, and a mid-season restock is in place for January 2024, if required. Tayside Contracts has again, at the Council's request, re-stocked with a majority of rock salt to mitigate cost increases of marine salt. Marine salt will continue to be used in footway tractors, as it is finer and flows through the smaller spinner mechanism better and manufactures brine.*

5.10 The Council currently provides in excess of 1,600 grit bins, reflecting our approach to encourage self-help and the policy not to treat some minor roads routinely. Any request for additional grit bins may require relocation of grit bins known to have minimal usage. Grit bins are generally only provided on steep gradients, tight bends, and steps or in some particular cases where there is a specific community need. The routinely available resources to service and replenish these containers is at capacity and 3<sup>rd</sup> party contractors will again be used to assist replenishing these. Additionally, bulk bags of salt are available should communities request a quick supplementary supply. Push along barrows are also available for community groups/individuals to assist in treating areas the Council does not routinely get to.

- 5.11 Voluntary arrangements are in place with 68 farmers to whom the Council supplies snow ploughs, which they fit to their own vehicles to clear snow on specified lengths of public road, and their own private roads. Farmers provide an invaluable additional resource and the farmers included on this agreement cover around 300km of road, just under 8% of the overall Council road network.
- 5.12 In addition, *last season, 32 of these farmers were available to be employed in severe conditions to undertake snow clearing of additional lengths of road. These farmers are called on for Orange Alerts and provide a much appreciated and important service. Officers are in the process of checking insurances and licenses for those farmers interested in participating this winter.*
- 5.13 There is a national desire to move people away from cars to other forms of active travel such as buses, bicycles, and walking. The Council's approach and programme to achieve this will impact on winter service delivery as different types and numbers of vehicles/drivers will be required. The approach will also likely be different across urban and rural locations. Consideration of requirements and funding implications for winter service should be included by designers when developing these active travel plans.

## **6. CONCLUSION**

- 6.1 Based on previous successful service delivery, it is concluded that the winter maintenance service should be delivered as outlined in this report.
- 6.2 The Executive Director (Communities) is authorised to make arrangements out with the policy and level of service in exceptional conditions such as snow and flooding emergencies
- 6.3 The winter maintenance budget, (£4.128m) is also used to fund other weather-related emergencies, such as works to mitigate immediate risk of flooding to properties/roads and wind damage, directly affecting free movement across the network.



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**Approved**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Designation</b>	<b>Date</b>
Barbara Renton	Executive Director (Communities)	23 October 2023

**APPENDICES**

- Appendix 1 – Period of Cover
- Appendix 2a – Level of Service & Priority Systems (Carriageways)
- Appendix 2b - Level of Service & Priority Systems (Footways)
- Appendix 3 – Category 1A Carriageway Snow Routes

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## 1. IMPLICATIONS, ASSESSMENTS, CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

<b>Strategic Implications</b>	<b>Yes / None</b>
Community Plan / Single Outcome Agreement	<b>Yes</b>
Corporate Plan	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Resource Implications</b>	
Financial	<b>Yes</b>
Workforce	<b>Yes</b>
Asset Management (land, property, IST)	<b>None</b>
<b>Assessments</b>	
Equality Impact Assessment	<b>Yes</b>
Strategic Environmental Assessment	<b>Yes</b>
Sustainability (community, economic, environmental)	<b>Yes</b>
Legal and Governance	<b>None</b>
Risk	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Consultation</b>	
Internal	<b>Yes</b>
External	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Communication</b>	
Communications Plan	<b>Yes</b>

### 1. Strategic Implications

#### Community Plan / Single Outcome Agreement

- 1.1 The winter maintenance service is provided to ensure that transport links essential to economic and social activity can continue to be used safely throughout most of the winter. However, it is not the intention and is not possible to keep all roads free from ice and snow at all times.
- 1.2 The Council's policy is set out in Report 96/180 "Summary of Council Policies for Roads and Transport" approved by the Roads and Transport Committee on 24 April 1996: (Art. 63/96). It is deemed that this policy is still relevant.
- 1.3 Policy 5 of the above report - The Council will operate a priority system of winter maintenance which will, as far as reasonably practicable, permit the safe movement of vehicular and pedestrian traffic on the more important parts of the road and footway network, taking into account the finance which has been made available. The priority system will be applied uniformly and will, as far as possible, contain costs to an acceptable level.

- 1.4 The objective of this policy is to enable the Council to comply with its statutory duty as set out in Section 34 of the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984 which states: “A roads authority shall take such steps as they consider reasonable to prevent snow and ice endangering the safe passage of pedestrians and vehicles over public roads.” The policy allows the Council to meet its statutory obligations by providing the most effective winter maintenance service it can within the constraints of its finite resources. During severe weather, the Council will endeavour to keep delays to a reasonable minimum.

### Corporate Plan

- 1.5 The Council's Corporate Plan for Securing the Future 2018 and Beyond lays out five Objectives which provide clear strategic direction, inform decisions at a corporate and service level and shape resources allocation. This report impacts on the following:-
- i) Promoting a prosperous, inclusive and sustainable economy
  - ii) Supporting people to lead an independent, healthy and active life
  - iii) Creating a safe and sustainable place for future generations

## **2. Resource Implications**

### Financial

- 2.1 The following table illustrates the pattern of expenditure in recent years.

Year	Budget	Standing Charges	Operating Costs	Outturn Cost
2016/17	£3.617m	£2.148	£1.223	£3.371m
2017/18	£3.717m	£2.185m	£2.857m	£5.042m
2018/19	£3.714m	£1.738m	£1.833m	£3.571m
2019/20	£3.714m	£1.436m	£2.885m	£4.321m
2020/21	£3.714m	£1.683m	£3.091m	£4.774m
2021/22	£3.810m	£1.600m	£2.435m	£4.035m
2022/23	£3.865m	£1.528m	£3.095m	£4.623m
Mean				£4.246m

- 2.2 The actual expenditure on the Winter Service will be dependent upon the severity of the weather throughout the winter and other emergencies throughout the year and will be closely monitored and reported regularly to the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee.

- 2.3 The costs of providing a winter service is split into two distinct areas:
- Standing Charges – these are the costs involved in having specialised plant, depots, hired plant and standby personnel etc in place to provide the service. These are effectively “up front” costs incurred irrespective of weather conditions.
  - Operating costs – cover the cost of fuel, routine repairs, salt, grit sand and the actual cost of paying staff and operatives to provide the service.
- 2.4 As detailed in the table in paragraph 2.1 the average outturn cost over the past seven years is £4.246M which exceeds the budget figure. Last winter, which is considered to have been a typical winter is the *third highest cost in last 7 years. Four of the last seven years out-turn costs exceed the current budget* and the Council will undoubtedly need to continue to utilise reserve funds to meet the full cost of the Winter Service.
- 2.5 The Council have this year set a budget for £4.128m for winter 2023– 24 and this report is brought it to committee to advise of preparations/arrangements for the winter season. It is recognised that in these *fiscally challenging* times the Council financial position may change requiring a subsequent alteration in the levels of service delivery to match the available budget.
- 2.6 The Council will continue to implement operational and efficiencies savings to mitigate costs but as winter is unpredictable the cost will vary.

### Workforce

- 2.7 The staff and the operatives of Tayside Contracts and the Council Services who provide the service, have demonstrated over the life of the Council, that they have the experience, flexibility, and expertise to effectively tackle the worst of winter weather, although public expectation will exceed the ambitions of what officers can realistically achieve.

## **3. Assessments**

### Equality Impact Assessment

- 3.1 An equality impact assessment has been completed with the following outcomes for functions, policies, procedures, or strategies in relation to race, gender and disability and other relevant protected characteristics. This supports the Council’s legal requirement to comply with the duty to assess and consult on relevant new and existing policies.

- 3.2 The function, policy, procedure, or strategy presented in this report was considered under the Corporate Equalities Impact Assessment process (EqIA) with the following outcome:
- (i) Assessed as relevant and actions taken to reduce or remove the following negative impacts:
    - There are finite resources which limit the amount of treatment which can be carried out.
  - (ii) Assessed as relevant and the following positive outcomes expected following implementation.
  - (iii) The Winter Manual will have a list of priorities for snow clearing. It will include also include giving priority to clearing bus stops disabled parking bays and pedestrian crossing points (both designated pedestrian facilities, and at road junctions) to assist pedestrians, to complete the link between cleared footways and carriageways.
  - (iv) Publicity information on the Winter Service via, local media and [www.pkc.gov.uk](http://www.pkc.gov.uk) will recommend that members of the community should look out for vulnerable community members and see if they can provide any assistance to them. It will also emphasise that the Council needs the assistance and support of as many members of the community as possible in order to restore the roads and footways to a safe condition.

#### Strategic Environmental Assessment

- 3.3 Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is a legal requirement under the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 that applies to all qualifying plans, programmes, and strategies, including policies (PPS).
- 3.4 The matters presented in this report were considered under the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 and pre-screening has identified that the PPS will have no or minimal environmental effects. It is therefore exempt, and the SEA Gateway has been notified.
- 3.5 The reasons for concluding that the PPS will have no or minimal environmental effects is that over the years the roadside verges have already been impacted and have adapted, resulting in vegetation, particularly grass, which is tolerant to the salt. It is not anticipated that there will be any long-term, frequent, permanent, or cumulative environmental effects, or impacts on areas of high biodiversity or cultural heritage value, as a result of the policy.

## Sustainability

- 3.6 Under the provisions of the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 the Council has to discharge its duties in a way which contributes to the achievement of sustainable development. In terms of the Climate Change Act, the Council has a general duty to demonstrate its commitment to sustainability and the community, environmental and economic impacts of its actions.
- 3.7 Perth and Kinross Council also has the following mitigation measures in place to ensure there is minimal environmental effect as a result of the Winter Service Policy including:
- Salt Management – gritters are calibrated and data from IEWS system and the specialist weather forecast enables treatment to be targeted at the areas that require it.
  - The majority of the salt storage is in buildings or covered in tarpaulins in locations which have been approved by SEPA, thus helping to prevent leaching into the ground.
  - Discharge of surface water from new developments addresses the potential environmental effects to prevent pollution.
  - The Winter Service is reviewed on an annual basis to take account of changing climatic factors and planning for extreme weather events.

## Risk

- 3.8 The Council as Roads Authority have a statutory duty as set out in Section 34 of the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984 which states: “A roads authority shall take such steps as they consider reasonable to prevent snow and ice endangering the safe passage of pedestrians and vehicles over public roads.”
- 3.9 This policy allows the Council to meet its statutory obligations and minimise exposure to risk by providing the most effective winter maintenance service it can within the constraints of its finite resources. During severe weather, the Council will endeavour to keep delays to a reasonable minimum.

## **4. Consultation**

### Internal

- 4.1 As in previous years Elected Members are given the opportunity throughout the winter, and in a presentation in June 2023, to become involved in agreeing the route categories with the Roads Maintenance Partnership. The policy also allows unadopted roads with an important community use to be included within the categorisation and is not restricted to adopted roads.

- 4.2 As local circumstances, and travel patterns change, winter maintenance categories are subject to change and Elected Members have a role in identifying and agreeing such changes. However, the resources available to carry out winter maintenance are finite, so if the relative priority of a road or footway is to be raised then that of another road or footway within a particular Ward must be reduced.
- 4.3 The Council will always receive complaints about the winter maintenance service due to high public expectations, limited available resources and the vagaries of the weather. A distinction has to be made between complaints related to proven failures to meet the approved level of service and complaints regarding the actual level of service.
- 4.4 At the end of the 2022 - 23 winter comments on the winter service provision were invited from Community Councils. *Very few responses were received, due to the typical winter weather not impacting travel.* Those responses that were received were generally complimentary comments.

## **5. Communication**

- 5.1 Communication will take place in due course and the policy and level of service, along with specific detail on gritting routes and times will be made available on the Council website. Ongoing winter action and road conditions will be made available via Council facebook and twitter.

## **2. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 2.1 Well Managed Highway Infrastructure 2016
- 2.2 Road (Scotland) Act 1984