

# CABINET



Report subject	<b>Highways Maintenance Severe Weather Plan</b>
Meeting date	11 September 2019
Status	Public Report
Executive summary	<p>To advise and seek approval for preparation activities for Winter Service delivery 2019/20 across the BCP Council conurbation.</p> <p>The report details operational planning, communications objectives and outlines wider future transformational change reviews that are necessary to ensure BCP Council can provide a legally compliant, safe, reliant, fit for purpose, affordable Highway Maintenance Service.</p>
Recommendations	<p><b>It is RECOMMENDED that:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>(a) Cabinet notes that preparations for Winter Service 2019/20 are in place to ensure continuity of service previously provided by the three preceding Highway Authorities (Dorset County Council, Bournemouth &amp; Poole Council's) for this coming Winter</b></li> <li><b>(b) A review of Winter Service is undertaken at the end of the 2019/20 season (during April 2020) to inform the development of a BCP Council Winter Service Plan. Including the extent of service and associated service priorities are reviewed e.g. options for future treatment of roads, pavements and cycle paths.</b></li> <li><b>(c) Learning from the review is used to inform the wider response to weather related incidents on the highway (gales, flooding and heat)</b></li> <li><b>(d) A wider Highway Maintenance activities review is undertaken, and an options report developed.</b></li> </ul>
Reason for recommendations	<p>Winter Service is a statutory BCP function essential to keeping the BCP conurbation safe and moving for both wellbeing, social and economic reasons during periods of ice and snow.</p> <p>To be able to continue to fulfil BCP Council's legal obligations</p>

	within available funding methods, a fundamental service review is required to develop service standards and options to inform operating policies and procedures.
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Corporate Director	Kate Ryan (Environment and Community)
Contributors	Larry Austin – Service Director Environment Kate Langdown - Street Scene Services Manager Simon Legg - Street Scene Operations Manager Stuart Best - Street Services Manager
Wards	All
Classification	Recommendation & Decision

## Background

1. All Highway authorities under Section 41 of the Highway Act have a duty to maintain the highway. The Railways and Transport Safety Act 2003 amended the Highways Act 1980 by adding a Statutory Duty Clause 41(1A) concerning dealing with snow and ice. This states: ‘In particular a Highway Authority are under a duty to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that safe passage along a highway is not endangered by snow or ice’. Each preceding authority delivered these services differently depending on their local experiences, capabilities and tolerance to risk.
2. Bournemouth, Dorset (for Christchurch) and Poole have previously shared forecasting services via a consortium arrangement lead by Devon County Council with Meteogroup. This service continues for BCP Council until September 2023.
3. Each preceding authority had its own approach to delivering services including; service decision making, rostering of drivers and capabilities to redeploy other non-highway staff to critical winter service activities such as manual pavement gritting.
4. Following outcomes from financial and asset Highway Maintenance disaggregation workstreams, it became evident that interim arrangements would be necessary to ensure service continuity provision for Winter Services in 2019/20, whilst a wider review of Highway Maintenance (including Winter Service) is undertaken and recommendations developed to shape longer term service delivery standards within available funding.
5. The total budget allocation for BCP Council Winter Service provision for 2019/20 is £233,000.

## Activities to ensure BCP Council Winter Service continuity 2019/20

6. Only minor amendments in line with current best practice and the three preceding authorities’ adopted Winter Service routings are being made to ensure successful continuity of routes around previous borough boundaries, agreement on cross

boundary actions with Dorset Council and tie in with the Hampshire County Council network.

7. Work is underway to electronically publicly present this information. The maps will be made available via the BCP Council website and will clearly show that the planned network coverage includes:
  - All BCP Council classified A roads
  - Access to Poole Port
  - Access to Bournemouth Airport (Parley Lane)
  - Access to Emergency Service buildings (Category 1 responders) Police/Fire/Ambulance
  - Bournemouth & Poole A&E Hospitals & St Marys Maternity Unit (Castle Lane East & Longfleet Road)
  - Link to A31 (Highway England trunk road)
  - Access to service critical assets e.g. Bournemouth Town Hall, Christchurch Civic Office, Poole Civic Centre, Bournemouth & Poole Crematoriums, BCP Waste transfer stations
8. In addition resilience routes for snow ploughing and/or reduced treatment have been identified across BCP based on the prior classifications used successfully across the preceding Borough of Poole Council.
9. The extent of other services, such as grit bins, manual gritting and self help advise will remain unchanged for 2019/20 but will form part of a future wider service review options report.
10. As a consequence of the limited timescales for preparation work for Winter 2019/20 (October 19 until April 20) the following interim actions to support the delivery commitments above are being undertaken:
  - Two additional vehicles have been retained (1 year only) to ensure capabilities to deliver 12 routes (4 from Southcote Road and 8 from Hatch Pond Depot). Following the identification of the need to source a shortfall in gritters to cover wider network with only one gritter transferring from Dorset Council as part of asset disaggregation allocation.
  - 12 Precautionary salting routes and 12 resilience routes have been captured. All vehicles are being updated to use GPS automated salting technology.
  - Driver rota's are amended and supplementary drivers trained to ensure continuity of service.
  - Weather forecasting services have been amended to ensure clear road weather forecasting across the BCP geographical area. BCP will be split into five operational domains around prior service areas and operating depots allowing bespoke decisions to be made:
    - A338 Wessex Way/Spur Road
    - Bournemouth East and Christchurch;

- Bournemouth West;
- Poole and
- Poole Port (commercial)
- Revised salt spread rates reflecting salt stocks/types and the revised Winter Service Guidance issued by the National Winter Service Research Group.
- Driver and Winter Service Decision Maker Training and refreshers have been arranged for September and early October 2019.

### **Communications and media engagement**

11. A full communications plan is being developed with Communications, Customer and ICT Services. Environment Services will be responsible for providing timely Winter Service information to BCP Council Communications team.
12. The communications plan objectives are proposed to include:
  - Clearly communicating and managing expectations of the level of service that BCP council provides, with an emphasis on both the limitations of what we can realistically provide and details on the service included in our offer to residents and businesses.
  - Raising awareness of the public's own role in dealing with severe winter weather so that individuals and businesses are more aware of their responsibilities and contribute to reducing the risk it presents to them and those around them.
  - Improving perceptions among relevant stakeholders that BCP council is well prepared for winter and that, during periods of cold weather, it provides a timely and effective winter service.
13. Communications will be delivered on a phased approach, with activity being more concentrated as the wintry weather becomes more intense or lasts for a longer period of time. Activity will broadly fall into two phases:
  - Phase 1: Pre-winter communications
  - Phase 2: Onset of winter (including severe weather)

### **2020/21 Onwards**

14. A service review is underway to consider the wider BCP Council highway maintenance operating strategy. The purpose of this review is to ensure that BCP Council is legally compliant and delivers safe, reliable, fit for purpose Highway Maintenance Services (including Winter Service) across the BCP conurbation within identified and agreed funding sources. This work will be reported to Cabinet in a future report.
15. The reviews will look at 5 specific areas:
  1. Funding model (revenue, capital and commercial)
  2. Inspection policy and procedure
  3. Operational model (resourcing)
  4. Winter service plans

## 5. Out of hours service functions and response levels

### **Summary of financial implications**

16. Revenue budget spend implications of circa an additional £35,000 in 19/20 have been estimated to support the retention of vehicles previously earmarked for disposal (one year economical life extension only) identified as necessary to address the limited snow plough capabilities within the preceding Bournemouth Council locality, and only one vehicle transferring to BCP Council through the asset disaggregation process from Dorset Council. Other costs are attributable to additional tracking/auto salting provision and further standby costs however these costs are less predictable and linked to the condition demands we face throughout the Winter Service period (Oct – April).
17. This additional spend will be managed within existing wider Environment Services budget for 19/20.

### **Summary of legal implications**

18. Section 41 of the Highway Act 1980 dictates statutory obligations on BCP Council as the highway authority for the administrative area of Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole to maintain the highway at the public expense.
19. Section 41(1A) of the Highways Act 1980 places a duty on a Highway Authority to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that safe passage along a highway is not endangered by snow or ice". As such the report recommends the actions laid out are approved to ensure compliance with the legislative duties.

### **Summary of human resources implications**

20. Additional employees have been identified and with agreement placed on a standby rota to ensure 12 drivers are available 24/7 during the Winter Season. Staff are generally on a 1 in 3 week rota allowing for sufficient rest periods and compliance with working time/driving time rules.

### **Summary of environmental impact**

21. Road salt is corrosive and can have a detrimental impact on the environment. Application rates are carefully selected so the minimum is used to treat a forecast or actual winter service hazard.

### **Summary of public health implications**

22. Key services such as hospitals and ambulance stations are on the planned resilience network across BCP to enable protection of access to key services.

### **Summary of equality implications**

23. None identified at this time.

### **Summary of risk assessment**

24. Failure to deliver Winter Service, through the development and delivery of a robust plan would result in BCP failing to comply with its statutory duty as a Highway Authority.
25. Ice and snow affects the safety of the commuting public and the availability and reliability of the highway network throughout the winter period. As such the

successful delivery of the winter service is key to supporting the social, wellbeing and economic stability of Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole.

26. Failure to deliver this service on any occasion throughout the winter, could result in fatality or serious injury, prosecution (including the potential for corporate manslaughter) and serious loss of reputation.

## **Background papers**

Well Managed Highways 2016; [Published Work]

<http://www.ukroadsliaisongroup.org/en/codes/>

National Winter Research Group Guidance [Published Work]

<http://www.nwsrg.org/>

## **Appendices**

There are no appendices to this report.