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# **Winter Service Policy and Operational Plan**

**2018 – 2019**



### Introduction

The purpose of this Winter Service Policy and Plan (This Plan) is to demonstrate that Midlothian Council has taken such steps as it considers reasonable to prevent snow and ice endangering the safe passage of pedestrians and vehicles over public roads, to fulfil its' Statutory responsibilities as defined in Section 34 of the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984.

Furthermore this plan takes into consideration the recommendations set out in the Well-managed Highway Infrastructure: A Code of Practice. Given that the guidance in the Code of Practice is non-statutory, it should be noted that Midlothian Council may deviate in certain ways to meet local conditions.

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### Winter Service and Weather Emergencies

Winter service is not, in itself, deemed an emergency service as it deals with regular, frequent and reasonably predictable occurrences of low temperatures, ice and snow.

Whilst the effects of climate change are likely to result in an increased frequency and intensity of severe weather events, these have been taken into account in winter service planning.

This Plan is likely to have relevance in emergency planning terms in relation to dealing with extreme weather conditions and as such this plan should be read in conjunction with Midlothian Council's Severe Weather Plan.

The resources available during the winter period can also be utilised during a severe weather event such as floods and storms.

### Purpose, Objectives and Statutory Basis

Section 34 of the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984 states 'a road authority shall take such steps as it considers reasonable to prevent snow and ice endangering the safe passage of pedestrians and vehicles over public roads'.

The Purpose of this Plan is to discharge those duties however it should be noted that the Code of Practice states;

"Given the scale of financial and other resources involved in delivering the winter service it is not considered reasonable either to:

Provide the same service on all parts of the network; and

Ensure carriages, footways and cycle routes are kept free of ice and snow at all times, even on the treated parts of the network."

This Plan can contribute significantly to the core objectives set out in the code. The Plan also contributes to the delivery of some outcomes for the Authority, to comply with the requirements of the Roads Scotland Act and comply with the recommendations as laid out in the Code of Practice.

Recommendation 1 in the Code of Practice states "This Code, in conjunction with the UKRLG Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Guidance, should be used as the starting point against which to develop, review and formally approve highway infrastructure maintenance policy and to identify and formally approve the nature and extent of any variations."



To that end the winter policy will be the subject of an annual review, taking into account the code of practice, current available financial resources and to ensure a consistent approach with other partner authorities in the Edinburgh, Lothians, Borders and Fife (ELBF) Shadow Joint Committee.

### Winter Service Policy

Midlothian Council recognises it's duties under the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984, the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 and the recommendations made in the Code of Practice.

The purpose of this policy seeks to discharge those duties and provide transparent and consistent guidance for staff and stakeholders during winter or any other severe weather period impacting on the Midlothian Council Area.

Midlothian Council has undertaken consultation with stakeholders to take account of their views. Furthermore Midlothian Council has taken steps in the winter service operational plan to ensure the corporate objectives of the authority are supported by this Policy.

#### Policy Service Standards

1. Keep agreed priority routes and main bus routes free from snow and ice as far as reasonably practicable.
2. Clear agreed road and footway 'Access Routes' to all schools and education establishments within Midlothian during periods of snow.
3. Establish a 'Resilient Network' that will be the focus of available resources during prolonged snowfall in order to maintain economic activity and access to key services during disruptive events.
4. Establish cross boundary treatment arrangements through ELBF to improve efficient use of available resources.
5. Support facilities management staff within school grounds during periods of prolonged snow conditions, as required and as resources are available.
6. Support social / care centres in clearing pedestrian access routes in and around facilities.



7. Maintain waste collection services as far as possible, set up local collection points when and if conditions allow.
8. Treat NHS facilities within Midlothian as part of the priority route hierarchy and provide hand crews to clear footways and pedestrian access areas\*\*
9. Support local community groups by providing bulk bags of salt / grit at pre agreed locations during periods of prolonged snow conditions.

\*\* This service is carried out on a collaborative working agreement in place for all NHS Lothian facilities within the Midlothian Area, however, this does not include the Bonnyrigg Community Hospital where only assistance with snow clearing is required.

### Winter Service Operational Plan

This Winter Service Operational Plan has been developed to take account of the requirements of the Code of Practice – Well Managed Highway Infrastructure to provide a dynamic and interactive plan that can meet changing circumstances.

Midlothian Council has an agreed and defined route priority hierarchy to ensure that maximum use is made of the available resources as follows:

#### Carriageway Priorities

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|----------------------------|---|
| <b>1 Priority Routes:</b>  | Important principal roads and bus routes – to hospitals, ambulance depots, fire stations and local danger spots (e.g. very steep hills) |
| <b>2 Secondary Routes:</b> | Cross routes, connecting routes and accesses into industrial areas.   |
| <b>3 Tertiary Routes:</b>  | Residential areas, other unclassified roads.  |

#### Footway Priorities

- |                            |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| <b>1 Priority Routes:</b>  | Agreed ‘access routes’ to schools, health clinics / medical centres, and town centres. |
| <b>2 Secondary Routes:</b> | Footways on hills and connecting footways  |
| <b>3 Tertiary Routes:</b>  | Flat lying and residential areas   |



These routes will be treated in accordance with the treatment matrix. Generally secondary and tertiary routes will only be treated during normal working hours.

Midlothian Council's defined treatment route plans for carriageways and footways for pre-treatment and snow conditions are based upon the general maintenance hierarchy but adapted to take account of the factors identified in the Code of Practice and local conditions and priorities.

The Code of Practice recognises that during periods of severe weather it is reasonable that Midlothian Council may only treat a minimum 'Resilient Network' (defined routes only). As such some Priority, all Secondary and all tertiary routes may not be treated until the 'Resilient Network' routes are clear.

Midlothian Council carriageway and footway treatment routes can be found on Midlothian Council's website

### **Network Hierarchy and Route Planning**

Midlothian Council has allocated a network hierarchy rating to all roads within the area based on the Code of Practice. This hierarchy rating has been utilised along with the available resources to determine the route planning for treatment during winter to ensure as far as is reasonably practicable Midlothian Council discharges its duties under the Road (Scotland) Act 1984.

### **Decisions and Management Information**

Midlothian Council takes full advantage of decision support systems and services from the 'Met Office' and 'Vaisala' to enable timely, efficient and accurate decision making.

The decision making process and recording Management Information of Winter Service operations is carried out in accordance with the Winter Service Manual and Procedures document.

Midlothian Council continually monitors performance during service delivery and responds to changing conditions or network incidents by analysing the treatment reports and feedback from stakeholders to ascertain where any improvements can be made as part of the annual review process of this document.



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### Resources and Operational Issues

Midlothian Council has available resources from the in house Roads Operations service based at Fushiebridge depot. Roads Operations manage and provide the winter weather/severe weather service throughout the year.

Roads Operations have agreements with Land and Countryside Services, Building Maintenance Services, Facilities Management and Waste Services to utilise available additional resources during periods of snowfall and other severe weather events.

In addition to the above, through a framework contract, Roads Operations have a number of companies and equipment at their disposal during the winter to assist with winter and other duties on an as required basis.

A full list of the available resources is held by the Roads Operations and Asset Manager. This also shows where all resources are deployed and to what end.

The Roads Operations and Asset Manager has undertaken consultation with colleagues in Education, Health and Social Care, Travel Team, Leisure Services, Customer Services and local community groups to establish agreed service levels to deal with the many conflicting priorities of each service, matched to the available resources.

This co-ordination and collaboration Service Level Agreement is held by the Roads Operations and Asset Manager.

### Winter Service Training and Development

Midlothian Council ensures that all HGV personnel involved in the winter service plan, are trained and experienced to demonstrate competence in delivery of their duties. Other winter service staff will have or are being trained by the Roads Operations Supervisor based at Fushiebridge depot.

In general all Roads Operations staff are trained to SVQ level 2 as a minimum.

An annual evaluation and review of training requirements is undertaken by the Roads Operations Supervisor to ensure all staff have the appropriate vocational and health and safety training / qualifications. Any identified training will be completed prior to the start of the winter season although some evidence based training and assessment can only take place during winter operations. A record of all training is held by the Roads Operations Supervisor at Fushiebridge Depot.



Midlothian Council carries out periodic exercises to test plans for responding to severe weather events, these exercises are usually carried out in early October, to ensure all equipment is operational and all staff are aware of their duties.

### **Plant, Vehicles, Materials and Resilience**

#### **Plant**

9 number Mini tractors c/w snow scraper and gritter – Fushiebridge

2 number JCB 3CX shovels and 2 number JCB 2CX shovels – Fushiebridge

2 number Renault tractors c/w scraper and gritter – Stobhill

Other plant will be made available from framework contract partners.

#### **Vehicles**

4 number, 18t HGV gritters c/w snow scraper

4 number, 26t HGV gritters c/w snow scraper and 2 Hi Capacity 'V' ploughs

3 number, 3.5t gritter

4 number, 6t pick-up trucks, 2 with a gritter

2 number, 4x4 pick-up trucks with gritters and snow scrapers

All of the above are based at Fushiebridge Depot

2 number 3.5t pick-up truck with gritter based at Stobhill depot

All other pick-up's and vans based at Stobhill depot will be utilised as necessary along with the available framework contract partners vehicles listed.

#### **Materials**

Midlothian Council obtains salt supplies for de-icing through the Scotland Excel (SE) contract, using ICL as the main supplier, with other suppliers available through the SE framework. Regular contact is maintained between the supplier and the Council





to ensure that the supply is treated as a service rather than a simple commodity purchase.

In periods of extreme or prolonged conditions it may be necessary to obtain supplies from out-with the existing contracts and Midlothian Council will use this option as required and in collaboration with the Edinburgh, Lothian's, Borders and Fife shadow joint committee (ELBF) collaborative working arrangements.

Stocks of road salt and grit are controlled by the Roads Operations and Asset Manager. A minimum stock of 3000t of 6mm low moisture salt is held prior to 1<sup>st</sup> November each year at Fushiebridge in the Salt dome, with further deliveries arranged as required throughout the winter period. This stockholding will be used for the road and footway network as well as the NHS facilities.

This stock of salt is subject to routine reporting on use and current levels to the Scottish Government and may be sequestered to provide mutual aid to other authorities. As such it is prudent to instigate conservation measures during periods of prolonged snowfall or low temperatures (i.e. mixing salt with grit, using grit only on footways and grit bins). This will be carried out as weather conditions, available salt stock and needs dictate.

This includes a stock of salt to be used in School grounds. This will also be managed by the Roads Operations and Asset Manager in order to monitor use.

A stock of 0/4mm grit will be available through the framework contract covering aggregates and this material is available from a number of local suppliers.

A supply of salt / grit mix from the main stock holding, for use by footway clearing crews is held at the following locations.

Tillicoultry Quarries, Newtongrange Plant – Framework Contract Partner

Stobhill depot, Newtongrange

These stocks ensure that footway clearing crews are able to go direct to their designated routes from their place of work, thus speeding up operational response times.

In addition to salt and grit, there is a stock of 1000 litres of a de-icing solution held. This solution is suitable for treatment down to minus 18 degrees Celsius and will be utilised using a vehicle mounted spray bar to treat known problem areas at these very low temperatures.



The weighbridge installed at Fushiebridge depot ensures the accurate recording of salt stock and usage, to allow accurate reporting to the Scottish Government.

### **Resilience**

Resilience of salt stock is monitored by Transport Scotland. The level of resilience in the past has been used to determine delivery priorities of top up salt supplies to Local Authorities and Trunk Road Operators.

Midlothian Council will reduce the risk in 2018/19 by having a pre season stock holding of at least 3000t and the instigation of salt conservation measures when required. These measures proved very effective in maintaining a 24 hour service at all times during the severe weather of 2017/18

### **Information and Publicity**

Prior to the start of winter Midlothian Council will publish information regarding the winter service provision along with answers to Frequently Asked Questions” on road treatments in ice and snow conditions A self help leaflet will also be available in public buildings to assist members of the public.

The Communications and Marketing Team will advise the Emergency Management Team on public and general stakeholder feedback to any incident. They will also lead on the range of communication messages to staff, members of the public and stakeholders, as determined by the Emergency Management Team. This role includes liaising closely with other public communications leads within the East of Scotland Regional Resilience Partnership which includes the Scottish Government, Police Scotland and other Category 1 responders (as defined in the Civil Contingencies Act). Staff will be available to be called out 24 -7 on an agreed rota basis.

If the incident is sufficiently serious and far-reaching, members of the Communications and Marketing Unit will be seconded to the lead agency, normally the Police, for an unspecified time as part of the mutual aid arrangements.

The communications channels include: the Council’s Contact Centre, media relations, stakeholder relations in terms of voluntary organisations, Mid TV, [www.midlothian.gov.uk](http://www.midlothian.gov.uk), Facebook and Twitter.



The Communications and Marketing Unit will ensure regular and appropriate communications at least daily and more frequently depending on the incident and the Council's continuing response. In addition to the above the Service Level Agreement states that the Midlothian Council Contact Centre may be required to operate on a 24 hour basis during any severe weather period. This will be agreed between the Head of Commercial Operations and the Head of Customer and Housing Services.

### **Post Snow Inspection and Maintenance**

Once the snow has been removed from the road and footway network, the Roads Inspectors will inspect the network to ascertain defects in need of repair.

These inspections will be carried out generally in accordance with the Code of Practice and the Council's Inspection and Recording Procedures.

It should be noted that due to the potential volume of defects caused by the conditions, it may not be possible to adhere to the timescales for inspection and subsequent repairs of Category 1 (CAT1) defects as laid out in the Code of Practice.

Midlothian Council will however, allocate additional resources at their disposal to the repair of identified defects to mitigate as far as is reasonably practicable any delays in repairing CAT 1 defects.

Midlothian Council will also check and replenish all public grit bins as soon as resources allow during and following the completion of snow clearance operations.

Furthermore all vehicles and plant will be cleaned, lubricated, checked / inspected and repaired as required following the completion of snow clearing operations

A debriefing session will be held at an appropriate time and place, involving representatives from all services and stakeholders to review the winter service operational plan.

### **Other Weather Emergencies – Climate Change**

Midlothian Council recognises that Climate change and in particular the previous periods of prolonged cold weather in 2009/10, 2010/11 and again in 2017/18 have an impact on the ability to deliver services. It should be noted that December 2015 was the wettest December on record.



As such this operational plan can be implemented at any time of year to deliver a service during any period of severe weather, including floods, high winds, and storms.

Additional supplementary resources are available including-

1 no Gully Motor

4 no pumps, various sizes

1 no towing jetter

Various Emergency response equipment, generators, lighting etc

Pallet Barrier flood defence system (90m in length)

This can be augmented with additional pumps and tankers from external parties on the framework contract, should conditions dictate.

### Contingency Planning

Contingency planning for severe weather or any other major event is covered by the Midlothian Council Emergency Plan and / or the Severe Weather plan, which should be read in conjunction with this plan. The Severe Weather Plan is updated on an annual basis.

Although as previously stated the resources and response available for winter can be readily utilised for other severe weather events.

