

---

**Report To: Safe, Sustainable Communities Committee**

**Date: 9 March 2010**

**Report By: Corporate Director Environment and  
Community Protection**

**Report No: ECP/ENV/AB10.42**

**Contact Officer: Robert Graham**

**Contact No: 01475 714827**

**Subject: Winter Maintenance Review 2009/10**

---

## **1.0 PURPOSE**

- 1.1 This report advises members of the significant difficulties, from a public roads perspective, that were experienced during the recent and unique period of adverse weather and makes recommendations to improve the resilience and level of service in the future.

## **2.0 SUMMARY**

- 2.1 The Council's Winter Maintenance Procedures and Resources Policy (Appendix 1) meets the statutory obligation under Section 34 of the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984 which states that "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."
- 2.2 Over the past few months weather conditions in the UK have been described as the most prolonged period of severe snow and ice for 30 years. Indeed it is now recognised that the December - January weather conditions were the worst since records began.
- 2.3 As a result of revised working arrangements implemented as part of the Single Status Agreement, the Council, during this period was effectively operating "skeleton" services over the holiday period between 25 December 2009 and 5 January 2010. The Winter Maintenance Service was therefore operating by using stand-by personnel from Environmental Services (Roads).
- 2.4 In response to concerns that salt usage throughout the UK was outstripping national production, the UK government set up a national Salt Cell to manage the distribution of salt to roads authorities throughout the UK on 7 January. A Scottish Salt Cell was set up on 8 January with the Vice Chair of the Society of Chief Officers of Transportation in Scotland (SCOTS) acting as co chair with a Transport Scotland official. Both of these individuals participated in the daily briefing of Scottish Government Cabinet members. The Scottish Salt Cell co-ordinated the distribution of salt stock through either a mutual aid agreement within the Scottish Local Authorities or by directing fresh supplies to those Roads Authorities in greatest need.
- 2.5 Through prudent use of its stocks Inverclyde Council did not run out of salt nor did it have to request mutual aid from other Councils. It was however necessary to curtail its gritting operations to priority routes only and restrict the replenishment of grit bins in an effort to preserve what stocks it had during this prolonged and unique period of adverse weather given that the timing and quantity of fresh stocks was being controlled by the Scottish Salt Cell and not guaranteed.

- 2.6 It is clear from the review that the Council needs to improve its resilience to severe and prolonged adverse weather conditions. The recommendations below propose action to deal with this issue.
- 2.7 It was evident that the weather did impinge on many operational properties and functions of the Council other than public roads and footways and therefore greater consideration needs to be given to improving the resilience of these assets. This aspect of the report is being considered by the Council's Crisis and Resilience Management Team (CRMT).

### **3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that the Committee:-

- 3.1 Acknowledge and commend the winter maintenance staff who worked over prolonged periods in the worst conditions since records began to deliver the snow clearing and gritting services to Inverclyde.
- 3.2 To improve the resilience and effectiveness of winter gritting operations it is recommended that a salt barn is procured. This should have a minimum storage capacity of around 3,500 tonnes of salt and will provide dry storage conditions for this essential winter maintenance asset. This has previously been taken account of in future depot requirements as part of the Council's Asset Management Plan.
- 3.3 Increase the mechanical footway gritting resources to provide a more responsive, efficient and cost effective method of dealing with frost, snow and ice on the priority footways throughout the area. This will be procured as part of the current fleet replacement programme.
- 3.4 Endorse the criteria for the location of grit bins and confirm requests for ad-hoc locations should be discouraged unless they meet the agreed criteria.
- 3.5 Require the CRMT to include in their current review of contingency plans, across all Services, the arrangements that should be put in place to recall staff in the event of similar events recurring during public holidays and in particular during the Christmas/ New Year holiday period.
- 3.6 Require the CRMT to review all Services within the Council whose assets and operations are affected by winter conditions and bring any proposals forward to a future Policy and Resources Committee.
- 3.7 Agree that prior to the start of the Winter season each year, Members should be briefed on the readiness of the Council to deal with Winter conditions including the operational procedures to deal with and provide an effective Winter Maintenance regime within each of the affected Services. It is also recommended that the level of service that can be expected as a result of this review should form part of a public information update annually.
- 3.8 That Committee approve writing off 1,171 tonnes of unusable salt which predates 1996.

**Alan G. Barnes**  
**Head of Environmental and Commercial Services**

## 4.0 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The winter maintenance service is provided, as far as practicable, 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.
- 4.2 Winter weather in the UK is largely unpredictable, and, up until recently, the presence of snow and ice for any more than a few days at a time has been relatively rare.
- 4.3 Temperatures normally fluctuate around freezing point with a degree of uncertainty about whether or not ice may form on roads and other surfaces.
- 4.4 The nationally agreed Code of Practice for the treatment of roads and footways recognises this, and its recommendations are aimed at the application of chemicals (generally road salt) to artificially lower the freezing point in conditions when road surface temperatures are predicted to drop to near zero or below.
- 4.5 By these means, the winter strategy is based on trying to prevent the formation of ice on road surfaces and on trying to assist the melting of snow and ice where these are already present. This aims to allow the passage of vehicles and pedestrians on “black” surfaces.
- 4.6 The extent to which this can be successful depends on the concentrations of applications of salt, the actual road surface temperatures, and the period over which low temperatures continue.
- 4.7 The Council has a contract in place for receiving weather forecasts throughout the year. Regular updates are received when adverse weather conditions are expected and this information is used as the basis for decisions to call out crews for pre gritting etc. The forecasts received are supplemented with local information gathered from specific sites that monitor road surface temperature, salinity and other critical factors in addition to the extensive experience of our roads managers and supervisors.
- 4.8 However, the effectiveness of road salt diminishes rapidly at temperatures below -5°C and at temperatures as low as have been experienced recently it becomes increasingly difficult for salt to have any effect at all. In Inverclyde, road temperatures were recorded as low as -14.5°C with air temperatures often failing to get above freezing for many days. Even when air temperatures are marginally above zero road temperatures will remain below zero at this time of the year.

### 2-5 DAY SUMMARY FORECAST FOR INVERCLYDE SUMMARY FOR 05/01/2010 TO 09/01/2010

Day	Readiness	Min. Temp Air	Min. Temp Road	Hoar Frost	Ice	Snow
Tue/Wed	RED	-6.0	-10.5	Y	Y	N
Wed/Thu	RED	-8.5	-13.0	Y	Y	N
Thu/Fri	RED	-10.5	-14.5	Y	Y	N
Fri/Sat	RED	-8.0	-14.5	Y	Y	N

The prolonged nature of these conditions meant that it then became a matter of physically trying to remove the snow and ice with snow ploughs and excavators including spreading grit sand to improve traction on frozen surfaces.

- 4.9 Under normal gritting conditions gritters can cover reasonable distances over a few hours on black roads however during snow and ice clearance, using ploughs and other snow clearing equipment, progress can be limited due to the depth and resistance of the snow and ice.
- 4.10 During the recent prolonged period of severe weather over the whole of the UK, the strategy that is designed to deal with marginal conditions has been unable to meet the often unrealistic expectations of some members of the public – although others have been fully understanding and appreciative of the hard work and dedication of all of the people trying to deal with the situation.
- 4.11 In contrast to the UK, other countries that can routinely expect significantly lower temperatures or significant deposits of snow over a prolonged period, adopt other strategies which are more dependent on vehicles and pedestrians adapting to the conditions rather than trying to prevent the conditions from developing in the first place. The adaptations in these other countries include the mandatory use of snow tyres on vehicles, and individuals using appropriate footwear and clothing, which is often not the case here.
- 4.12 People in these countries know they will have weeks of snow cover and take their own measures to prepare for it. In addition, businesses and individuals more readily understand the need to help themselves and each other in such circumstances. Indeed in many of these countries it is an offence for someone not to clear the snow outside their property.
- 4.13 Early self help will often avoid a build up of snow and ice that becomes much more difficult to deal with later.
- 4.14 Over the past few months weather conditions in the UK have been described as the most prolonged period of severe snow and ice for 30 years. Indeed it is now recognised that the December - January weather conditions were the worst since records began.
- 4.15 Over these 30 years, milder winters have allowed public life to continue almost unhindered for the most part, with only periodic, short term impacts, and public expectations of what a Council can reasonably do to prevent disruption to normal activity in periods of extreme weather have grown to unrealistic levels – often encouraged by negative media coverage. This aspect of media coverage focusing on what has not been done rather than what has been done, has been explored twice recently in BBC television programmes. In a period when there is a high level of activity over a number of different fronts trying to meet the sometimes competing demands of different interests, it will not be difficult to find individuals who are unhappy, and can point to some failing in attending to their particular area of interest.
- 4.16 Any aspiration to meet that high level of public expectation in the conditions that were experienced recently is likely to be unaffordable for any Council.

## **5.0 COUNCIL POLICY AND LEVEL OF SERVICE**

- 5.1 Each year the Council reviews its Winter Maintenance Procedures and Resources policy and level of service for the following winter.
- 5.2 The policy recognises that it is not possible to treat all roads and footways in our area and identifies those that will be given priority for treatment.
- 5.3 160km (44%) of the Council's 362km road network is designated as being primary or secondary priority for gritting purposes. In addition a further 73km (20%) of the road network is designated as tertiary. The average primary and secondary figure for similar Local Authorities is 49% with the highest being 63%. Treatment of footways is only carried out

during normal working hours and follows the general priorities of the policy.

- 5.4 Lower levels of treatment are provided on the remainder of the carriageway and footway network, as and when required during normal working hours. Low priority carriageways and footways are normally not treated unless hard packed snow or ice threatens to prevent access for essential services.
- 5.5 In that way, the limited resources that are available are allocated to ensure that the safety of the public is maximised and that accessibility is maintained on the most heavily used roads and footways. There is no point in treating other minor roads if the major roads to which they give access have not been cleared.
- 5.6 In accordance with the agreed procedures and resources policy, there are 4 No. primary and 4 No. secondary carriageway gritting routes and 6 No. tertiary gritting routes to be treated in Inverclyde. Tertiary routes will only be treated when there is sufficient residual salt on the primary and secondary routes and these routes remain free from frost and ice.
- 5.7 Whilst target times for the completion of gritting routes are well established, it has to be recognised that the treatment times in severe weather conditions will be longer. As soon as snow falls it takes at least twice as long to complete treatment, as vehicles need to travel more slowly and ploughing must be done in both directions.
- 5.8 It should be noted that as de-icing materials are discharged from the rear of the vehicle, every gritting vehicle has to negotiate an untreated road which also impedes progress. Gritter drivers also have to make their own way to the depot on untreated roads to pick up their vehicles. It also has to be recognised that in snow conditions, higher priority routes may have to be done several times before any attention can be given to other lower priority routes.
- 5.9 There are 4 No. snow routes that are treated as a priority during snow falls and will be focused on until such times as they are clear of snow and safe to drive on. These main routes represent 80km (22%) of the road network.

## 6.0 RESOURCES

- 6.1 The primary labour resource for normal winter maintenance operations in Inverclyde are the Roads Operatives (21) who work within the Council's Environmental Services.
- 6.2 Throughout the winter period (November – March inclusive) the Council have supervisory staff and operatives on standby, available to deal adequately with routine precautionary gritting and snow clearing in accordance with the conditions. Management of the decision making process for Winter Maintenance operations is carried out on a weekly rota by a Winter Controller, between October and April inclusive each year

### 6.3 Staff Resources on Standby and Winter Maintenance Duty

	Drivers	Loader Operator	Emergency Standby	Mechanic	Winter Supervisor	Winter Controller
Week 1						
Morning	4	1	2	1	1	1
Evening	4					
Week 2						
Morning	4	1	2	1	1	1
Evening	4					

Due to the Driver Hours Working Regulations it is necessary to have two shifts of drivers per week with a complete change of shift for the following week. The loader drivers and the Emergency Standby crew also change each week. This shift rotation therefore requires 22 operatives which includes 16 HGV drivers. These numbers are supplemented by drawing on resources from within other sections of Environmental Services.

- 6.4 When conditions require it, other Environmental Services Operatives are enlisted to assist with footway gritting and snow clearing.

The Council also has long standing agreements with two farmers who, in return for the Council supplying a plough, will attach it to their vehicle and assist clearing some public roads in the more remote rural areas. The Council also provide the salt for this arrangement.

- 6.5 In the recent prolonged freezing conditions a local contractor was also mobilised to assist with the removal of hard packed snow/ice in the public roads. They also provided additional labour and resources to assist with gritting.

## **7.0 WINTER MAINTENANCE FLEET**

- 7.1 Any operation that depends on the use of vehicles and plant obviously needs to plan for the unavailability of individual vehicles from time to time. To take account of these occurrences, including the age and condition of the Council's primary gritting fleet, one additional gritter has been hired for the duration of the winter period. The Council's fleet is currently being replaced and therefore it is anticipated that supplementary hires will not be needed for the foreseeable future.

- 7.2 The Council's winter maintenance fleet for public roads and footways consists of: 5 No. Operational Lorries, 1No. Hired Bulk Gritter, 10 No. Snowploughs (including farmers), 6 No. Demountable Gritters, 2 No. Loaders, 1 No. Cat Skidsteer with plough, 3 no. Pedestrian Gritters, 230 Grit Bins.

- 7.3 Maintenance of the fleet is provided through the Council's Transport section based in Pottery Street, Greenock.

- 7.4 Mini Tractors with attachments have been successfully used by many local authorities' to clear footways of snow and to provide a gritting service in frost and ice conditions during the winter maintenance period. As part of the Vehicle Replacement Programme it is proposed that 3 of the mini tractors to be replaced will also have suitable attachments for snow clearing and gritting operations on footways. This cost will be contained within existing budgets. It is also proposed that the operatives providing this function will be existing streetscene personnel. It is intended to deploy each of the mini tractors to the main town centres and to concentrate on areas of high pedestrian footfall as well as steep footways with significant pedestrian movement. This operation will be carried out during normal working hours.

## **8.0 SALT MANAGEMENT**

- 8.1 Salt management is an important aspect of winter maintenance.

- 8.2 Although salt is procured through a Local Authorities consortium contract, the Council's Environmental Services (Roads) specifies the tonnages that should be stockpiled prior the start of winter and also when restocking is required. Roads technical staff monitor the salt stock and try to anticipate any unusual demand patterns that might prompt earlier restocking.

- 8.3 UK government advice is for roads authorities to hold at least 6 days resilience salting supply. The salt holding in Inverclyde prior to the onset of winter was 497 tonnes. This represents approx. 20 days normal usage.
- 8.4 In response to concerns that salt usage throughout the UK was outstripping national production, the UK government set up a national Salt Cell to manage the distribution of salt to roads authorities throughout the UK on 7 January.
- 8.5 A Scottish Salt Cell was set up on 8 January with the Vice Chair of the Society of Chief Officers of Transportation in Scotland (SCOTS) acting as co chair with a Transport Scotland official. Both of these individuals participated in the daily briefing of Scottish Government Cabinet members.
- 8.6 The Scottish Government continues to receive daily salt returns from all Scottish Councils to ensure that adequate supplies are in place for the remainder of the winter.
- 8.7 The salt stock held at the Roads depot is stored in the open. Due to this the quantity of stock held is limited as exposure to the elements for significant periods of time will reduce the effectiveness of the salt and depending on the length of exposure, it may be rendered unusable. To ensure improved resilience and more appropriate storage capacity, it was previously proposed that a salt barn should be procured and installed at the Roads depot. This proposal is already factored into the Council's Asset Management Plan.
- 8.8 The current procurement cost of salt is approximately £23.25/tonne. 1,171 tonnes of the existing salt stock, which has been stored in the open, predates 1996 and has deteriorated to such a degree that it is unusable. It is proposed to seek Committee approval to write this stock off and dispose of it.

## **9.0 GRIT BINS**

- 9.1 The Council provides approx 230 grit bins to allow individuals to assist in treating un-gritted roads and footways. A single replenishment of grit bins uses about 77 tonnes of salt. The grit bins are filled prior at the commencement of the winter maintenance season and refilled as and when required. In a typical winter this is easily managed within the resources that are available however during the recent weather conditions replenishment would have to have taken place twice per day to keep up with demand if both salt and labour resources had been available.
- 9.2 Of particular concern over this period it was noted that many private businesses were removing significant quantities of salt from grit bins for gritting their premises. This was to the detriment of those who stay locally and to the untreated public roads and footways within their locality. A well known car sales organisation had their mechanics dispatched to load their pick-up with salt from the roads depot grit bin for their showroom forecourts. They were reluctant to leave the depot when requested.
- 9.3 In accordance with the Winter Maintenance Procedures and Resources policy the following criteria is used when determining requests for new grit bins:
- a) They should not be sited on a road covered by a gritting route.
  - b) They should be located on, or serve a public road.
  - c) The location should have a steep gradient or bad bend etc.
  - d) The location should be of benefit to, or serve, several properties.
  - e) The site of a grit bin should be acceptable to adjacent residents.

9.4 The current Council policy requires all grit bins to be green in colour.

## **10.0 LIAISON WITH OTHER SERVICES**

- 10.1 On return to work on 5 January 2010 there was close co-operation between all Council Services, including outside agencies such as River Clyde Homes, when assistance was offered to deal with these adverse weather conditions.
- 10.2 Assistance was provided to schools on request and it is worth noting that all schools remained open during this period of severe weather. Nonetheless it was evident that the weather did impinge on many operational properties of the Council and greater consideration needs to be given to improving the resilience of these assets. The CRMT will bring forward proposals to a future Policy and Resources Committee with regards to the action plans that should be prepared and adopted across all services in relation to emergencies and severe weather conditions.

## **11.0 COMMUNICATIONS**

- 11.1 Communications with other Officers of the Council were limited during the Christmas/New Year shut down however regular dialogue was maintained with the Chief Executive and the Duty Winter Controller as the situation developed with regards to the depletion of salt and as the national crisis developed with regards to replenishing salt stocks. It was during this period that the Chief Executive agreed a mutual aid protocol with all Scottish Local Authorities.
- 11.2 Between 19 December 2009 and 5 January 2010 the Roads and Lighting Faults (RALF) service received and posted 439 complaints/requests for service to Inverclyde Council. Between 25 December 2009 and 5 January 2010 Council staff were not available to progress or deal with these complaints/requests for service. The Council had limited resources available during the Christmas/New Year break to deal with complaints and enquiries from the general public.
- 11.3 It is proposed, in line with normal practice, that communication processes both internally and externally, with regards to emergencies and severe weather conditions will be reviewed by the CRMT.

## **12.0 IMPACT ON STAFF**

- 12.1 A significant number of staff within Environmental Services worked extremely hard to attempt to minimise the impact of this weather on our communities. This has resulted in many of them working long hours, suffering disturbance, being away from their families and in fact giving up their holidays to deal with the weather conditions. The Council's Roads Team should be commended for their commitment and dedication and hard work throughout this prolonged period.
- 12.2 Roads Service staff worked throughout this period including the public holidays often putting in 12 hour shifts on a number of consecutive days. All of this means that all available resources were deployed in line with the approved Policy and Level of Service, to ensure that the priority network was kept open.
- 12.3 In a period when there is a high level of activity over a number of different fronts trying to meet the sometimes competing demands of different interests, it is not difficult to find



individuals who are unhappy, and can point to some failing in attending to their particular area of interest.

### 13.0 DAMAGE TO INFRASTRUCTURE

- 13.1 The prolonged period of very cold weather has resulted in considerable damage to the road infrastructure. The frost has penetrated below the road construction resulting in freezing of the subsoil and widespread frost heave on the road and footway network. The effect is worst on the footway network which has a shallower construction.
- 13.2 The results are cracked and uneven asphalt surfaces, uneven paving slabs, potholes and differential movement at kerbs and manholes. Utility reinstatements are also a problem, where the different construction of the infill and reinstatement means that the track reacts differently to the adjacent construction.
- 13.3 As a result of the above an additional £200k has been approved for the current financial year by Committee to assist in dealing with repairs to the roads network up to 31 March 2010. The Policy and Resources Committee met on 9 February 2010 and approved a further one off revenue funding of £400k which will be added to the Roads budget for the 2010/11 financial year to deal with the damage sustained by the roads network.

### 14.0 IMPLICATIONS

#### 14.1 Finance

The 2009/10 budget for winter maintenance is £265,000. The chart below details the costs for the provision of winter maintenance on public roads since 2005/06.

#### WINTER MAINTENANCE EXPENDITURE

Fin. Year	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10 up to 17 Jan 2010	Projected Spend 2009/10
Cost	£176,293	£123,740	£168,091	£282,762	£209,598	£379,000

The projected gross overspend of £114,000 for 2009/10 is based on the costs to 17 January 2010 and certain assumptions including, where appropriate, the previous year's expenditure from 18 January 2009 until 31 March 2009. These projections will change subject to weather conditions. The overspend is partly offset by a £15,000 decrease in Supplies and Services costs due to a decrease in other roads activity as a result of the adverse winter conditions.

- 14.2 If the tertiary routes were to be incorporated into the primary and secondary gritting regime this would increase the network coverage to 64%. The estimated cost of providing this enhanced coverage, based on this year's projected costs, would be an additional £250,000. Even based on 2008/09 costs it is estimated to cost an additional £178,000. It would also be necessary to procure an additional 3 gritters and employ an additional 12 drivers to deliver this operation. Employee costs included in the above estimates are based only on seasonal employment throughout the winter maintenance season.
- 14.3 As stated in 8.8 above it is proposed to write off 1171 tonnes of salt stock that predates 1996 and which has found to be ineffective.

14.4 The proposed spend as a result of this review is as detailed below:

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	Budget Year	Proposed spend this report	Virement from	Other Comments
Roads Client	Winter Maintenance Materials	2009/10	£89,000		Includes 1,171 tonnes of salt to be written off.
Roads Client	Winter Maintenance basic contract	2009/10	£15,000		Offset by reduction in Supplies & Services (ref para 14.1)
Roads Client	External Hires	2009/10	£10,000		

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	Budget year	Proposed spend this report	Virement from	Other Comments
Capital – Vehicle replacement programme	Mini Tractors and Equipment	2010/11	£43,500	N/A	Included in Vehicle replacement programme
Capital – Replacement Depot	Salt Barn	2011/12 and future years	£350,000	N/A	Included in Asset Management Plan

#### 14.4 Human Resources and Occupational Development

There are no implications for HROD, subject to consideration of item 14.2.

#### 14.5 Legal

There are no implications for Legal Services provided the Council meets its statutory obligations in terms of the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984.

#### 14.6 Equalities

There are no equality issues associated with this report.

### 15.0 CONSULTATION

15.1 The Chief Financial Officer has been consulted on this report.

The Head of Legal Services has been consulted on this report.

The Head of Human Resources and Occupational Development has been consulted on this report.

# **WINTER MAINTENANCE**

## **PROCEDURES AND RESOURCES**

**2009/2010**

**Inverclyde**  
Council

**October 2009**

Alan G. Barnes  
Head of Environmental Services  
1 Ingleston Park  
Cartsburn Street  
GREENOCK, PA15 4UE

## Contents

### Page No.

1.	INTRODUCTION	3
2.	POLICY ON TREATMENT PRIORITIES	4
3.	ORGANISATION	5
4.	COUNCIL RESOURCES	5
5.	OTHER RESOURCES	6
6.	METEOROLOGICAL REPORTS	7
7.	ICE PREDICTION	7
8.	ROAD CONDITION REPORTS	7
9.	STATEMENTS TO THE MEDIA	7
10.	ROAD CLOSURES	8
11.	LIAISON WITH THE POLICE	8
12.	OTHER SERVICE PROVIDERS (TRUNK ROADS)	8
13.	CROSS BOUNDARY ARRANGEMENTS	8
14.	VEHICLE ROUTES	8
15.	PRECAUTIONARY SALTING	9
16.	SNOW CLEARANCE	9
17.	GRIT BINS	9
	APPENDIX A - Contact Addresses / Telephone Numbers	10
	APPENDIX B – Environmental Services (Roads) Resources	11
	APPENDIX C - Other Service Providers (Trunk Roads)	12
	APPENDIX D - Cross Boundary Arrangements	13
	APPENDIX E - Distribution List	14

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 Inverclyde Council has a statutory obligation, under Section 34 of the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984, to take such steps as it considers reasonable to prevent snow and ice endangering the safe passage of pedestrians and vehicles over public roads which by definition includes carriageways, footways, footpaths, etc.
- 1.2 It is therefore the aim of Environmental Service (Roads) to:
- (i) provide a standard of service on public roads, (in compliance with Policy 17 of the Council's Local Transport Strategy) which will permit safe movement of vehicular, cyclist and pedestrian traffic appropriate to the prevailing weather conditions;
  - (ii) establish a pattern of working which will keep delays, diversions or road closures to a minimum during adverse weather conditions;
  - (iii) conduct operations having regard to the requirements of the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974.

## **2. POLICY ON TREATMENT PRIORITIES**

Inverclyde Council has defined the priorities for carriageway and footway/footpath/cycleway treatment as follows:-

### **2.1 Carriageway Priorities**

- (1) Routes A761 and A770.
- (2) Routes B786, B788, B7054.
- (3) Access routes to hospitals; ambulance depots; main police stations and fire stations; main bus routes and accesses to schools.
- (4) Local concentrations of employment e.g. industrial estates.
- (5) Steep roads not included in (1) to (4) above.
- (6) Other public roads not included in (1) to (5) above.
- (7) Proposed public roads.
- (8) Private roads only at express instruction of the Head of Environmental Services.

Fixed gritting routes are pre-planned to ensure that during "routine" winter conditions, priorities (1) to (3) plus some priority (4) to (6) will be treated. However, under more extreme conditions (heavy snow falls or freeze/rain/freeze cycles) gritters will concentrate on the higher priority roads until attention can be safely transferred to other roads. The lowest categories mainly (6) and (7) will only be treated using available gritters if conditions persist and all other routes are clear. This will be determined by the Head of Environmental Services. During such conditions it is unlikely that all lower category roads (especially cul de sac) will be treated within 48 hours.

### **2.2 Footway/Footpath/Cycleway Priorities**

With limited resources available footways, footpaths and cycleways will only be treated when the Environmental Services Manager (Roads) considers this to be absolutely necessary (e.g. heavy snowfall or extensive icing). Treatment will generally only occur during normal working hours.

Otherwise, the following general priorities will apply:

- i. Urban shopping centres and precincts;
- ii. Other areas of high pedestrian concentration;
- iii. Steep hills in housing areas; footways in the vicinity of homes for the elderly; cycleways.

### 3. ORGANISATION

The Environmental Services Manager (Roads) is responsible for specifying the level of winter maintenance service required whilst the Team Leader (Network Management) is responsible for implementing this service through the Service's Trading Operation. The contact address/telephone numbers is provided in **Appendix A**.

### 4. COUNCIL RESOURCES

#### 4.1 General

- (a) It is the responsibility of the Team Leader (Network Management) to issue appropriate works orders to the Trading Operation to provide the necessary labour and plant for winter maintenance operations.
- (b) The Team Leader (Network Management) shall thereafter be responsible for advising the Environmental Services Manager (Roads) of any matters which may affect the Service's ability to deal with adverse weather conditions e.g., labour disputes, extensive plant breakdowns etc.

#### 4.2 Labour

- (a) Special arrangements concerning the availability of labour resources, including vehicle mechanics, for winter maintenance come into effect by the first week of November and continue until the end of the first week in April, although the period may be extended beyond this date should conditions warrant such actions. These arrangements include home standby which is activated by the designated Winter Supervisor when instructed by the Winter Controller or as a result of hazardous road conditions being reported.
- (b) Procedures are in place to provide a limited winter standby cover out with the formal standby period should weather conditions so dictate.
- (c) For details of labour resources refer to **Appendix B**.

#### 4.3 Vehicles Plant and Equipment

- (a) Prior to commencement of winter maintenance operations, the Team Leader (Network Management) shall ensure that all equipment for salting roads and snow clearing is in working order and, where appropriate, the ancillary items can be fitted to vehicles without difficulty, e.g. ploughs will be marked with the vehicle number to which they are to be fitted and set up on blocks/stands to facilitate assembly. The above procedure should also be applied to vehicles and plant available under contract for winter maintenance.

- (b) As radios allow contact to be maintained between office and operational staff, the Team Leader (Network Management) shall ensure that as many vehicles as possible employed on winter maintenance work are equipped with this facility.
- (c) A summary of Environmental Services (Roads) vehicles, plant and equipment available for winter maintenance work is detailed in **Appendix B**.

#### 4.4 Salt

- (a) Salt is bought through an annual purchase contract (currently let by South Ayrshire and servicing several other local authorities) and bulk stored at East Hamilton Street Depot. By 1 October, the Team Leader (Network Management) shall reassess stock levels together with committed deliveries against requirements and arrange for alternative sources of supply to make good any anticipated deficiencies.
- (b) During the season, the Team Leader (Network Management) should arrange for a weekly check to be made on the amount of salt used and for stocks to be augmented as necessary.
- (c) At various locations throughout the Council Area, small quantities of salt are available for issue free of charge to the public, subject to their supplying a suitable container. Notice of this facility is intimated by the Team Leader (Network Management) in local newspapers and the Council Web site.

### 5. OTHER RESOURCES

- 5.1 During sustained adverse weather conditions the Winter Supervisor (after consultation with the Winter Controller) should, if necessary, augment his resources by the use of available labour/equipment from other Inverclyde Council Services, farmers, plant hirers and contractors. The Team Leader (Network Management) shall be advised, as soon as practicable, of external resources engaged as a result of decisions made out with normal working hours.
- 5.2 The Team Leader (Network Management) shall ensure that rates/prices are agreed prior to the engagement of farmers, plant hirers and contractors.
- 5.3 A number of snowploughs are made available to farmers to enable them to make more effective use of their vehicles/plant in snow clearance operations  
**(Appendix B)**.

### 6. METEOROLOGICAL REPORTS

- 6.1 The Team Leader (Network Management) shall ensure that he, or the other Winter Controllers, receive the daily weather forecasts provided by MeteoGroup UK Ltd at 0700 hours, 1200 hours and at 1900 hours (and updates out with those times), throughout the working week, at weekends and on public holidays from 1 October to 15 May. Thereafter, it is the responsibility of the Winter Controller to take action which may include instructing the Winter Supervisor to mobilise the standby operatives to undertake salting/snow clearing.
- 6.2 The Team Leader (Network Management) shall ensure that MeteoGroup UK Ltd is provided with the telephone numbers of the Winter Controllers who are responsible on a rota basis for initiating action during and outwith normal working hours.
- 6.3 Winter Controllers have the facility at any time to contact MeteoGroup UK Ltd for advice or clarification of forecasts.

### 7. ICE PREDICTION

- 7.1 In addition to the standard weather forecast information referred to previously the Service has available further information from a sensor located on Route B786 (3 km South of Kilmacolm). This service is jointly owned by Inverclyde and Renfrewshire Councils.
- 7.2. The sensor provides current details of road and air temperatures and can indicate the presence of moisture thereby identifying when icing has occurred or where there exists a risk that it will occur.
- 7.3 By utilising the data supplied by the sensor MeteoGroup UK Ltd is able to supplement the text forecast by producing a site specific forecast and graph.
- 7.4 The above information is available via a computer link to the Winter Controllers in the office at 71 East Hamilton Street and at home.

## **8. ROAD CONDITION REPORTS**

During periods of adverse weather, the Team Leader (Network Management) shall pass a collated report on road conditions to the Environmental Services Manager (Roads) before 0930 hours on each working day. These reports should be updated as necessary depending on changing circumstances.

## **9. STATEMENTS TO THE MEDIA**

The Head of Corporate Communications and Public Affairs will deal with statements to the Press, Radio and Television regarding road conditions and resources deployed throughout the Area.

## **10. ROAD CLOSURES**

- 10.1 Where it is considered that due to extreme weather conditions or a serious accident a route has been rendered unsafe to use, the Police will be consulted by the Winter Supervisor. The decision to close a route will lie with the Police.
- 10.2 The Winter Supervisor shall ensure that appropriate measures have been taken to redirect traffic and that necessary signs are put in place. He will inform the Winter Controller who in turn will contact the Environmental Services Manager (Roads) and also adjoining Councils if the road affected is a through route.

## **11. LIAISON WITH THE POLICE**

- 11.1 During difficult weather conditions, the Winter Controller should take steps to advise the Police of forecasts relating to medium (25-100 mm deep) or heavy (over 100mm deep) snowfall. Where practicable, the Police should also be informed in advance of proposed operations.
- 11.2 Reports from the Police regarding dangerous road conditions should be acted upon by the Winter Supervisor as soon as practicable, having regard to the priorities in this document and the prevailing conditions.
- 11.3 A protocol has been agreed with the Police for dealing with anti social behaviour affecting vehicles carrying out gritting operations. In certain circumstances a gritting service may have to be withdrawn from an area for a period of time as determined by the Winter Supervisor.

## **12. OTHER SERVICE PROVIDERS (TRUNK ROADS)**

For operations on Trunk Routes A8 and A78 refer to **Appendix C**.



### **13. CROSS BOUNDARY ARRANGEMENTS**

Because the Council boundaries do not always coincide with convenient/safe turning points at the end of gritting routes, arrangements have been drawn up with Renfrewshire Council for the gritting routes to be continued short distances to appropriate turning points. This has been done in a manner which does not have any adverse financial implication on either of the authorities. (**Appendix D**).

### **14. VEHICLE ROUTES**

14.1 From local knowledge and the resources available, the Team Leader (Network Management) shall draw up routes on the basis of the priorities listed in Paragraph 2.1. However, in order to minimise unproductive mileage some roads in a lower category may be treated out of sequence. This may also occur when weather conditions vary throughout the Area.

14.2 A complete set of route cards will be kept by the Winter Controllers and in the Trading Operation and Team Leader (Network Management) offices.

14.3 During October the Team Leader (Network Management) shall arrange for a practice run over all routes to familiarise the drivers with the area and equipment.

### **15. PRECAUTIONARY SALTING**

15.1 On receipt, within normal working hours, of a forecast from MeteoGroup UK Ltd warning of frost, freezing or snow conditions, the Winter Controller shall give consideration to precautionary salting of such roads as he considers necessary.

15.2 Where such a warning is received out with normal working hours, the Winter Controller on standby, has delegated authority to instruct the Winter Supervisor to mobilise standby operatives.

### **16. SNOW CLEARANCE**

16.1 During normal hours, on receipt of a weather warning predicting medium (25-100mm deep) or heavy (over 100mm deep) snowfalls, the Team Leader (Network Management) should recall to depots such vehicles capable of being equipped with snowploughs as are considered appropriate.

16.2 Where slush is formed, this should be removed as soon as practicable to avoid the risk of rutting should there be a further significant fall in road temperatures which might result in freezing conditions.

### **17. GRIT BINS**

17.1 Where he considers appropriate and on a priority basis, the Team Leader (Network Management) should provide grit bins principally in urban areas. Grit bins which are not subject to vandalism may be left in position out with the winter period provided they do not significantly detract from the amenity of the area.

17.2 Because of finite budgets and an increasing demand from the general public for provision of grit bins, the following criteria will be used when considering new requests.

- a) Not on a street covered by a gritting route
- b) To be located on, or serve, a public road
- c) Location should have a steep gradient or bad bend etc
- d) Should be of benefit to, or serve, several properties
- e) The siting of a bin is acceptable to adjacent residents.

- 17.3 The number of available grit bins is given in **Appendix B**.
- 17.4 Current Council policy requires all new grit bins to be green in colour.



## Appendix B

### SUMMARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES (ROADS) WINTER MAINTENANCE RESOURCES

<u>Description</u>	<u>Number Available</u>
Gritters - Demountable	4
- Permantly mounted	1
- Unibody	1
- Cat Skidsteer (for use in pedestrian areas)	1
- Pedestrians	3
Snowploughs - Straight (including Farmer Ploughs)	10
Lorries (including Unibody above)	7
Loaders	2
Grit Bins	210
Operatives	21

Note: When necessary, labour, vehicles, plant and equipment from other Inverclyde Council Services, farmers, plant hirers and contractors will be used to supplement the above Environmental Services (Roads) resources.

## Appendix C

### OTHER SERVICE PROVIDERS (TRUNK ROADS)

1. Amey Infrastructure Services on behalf of the Scottish Executive are responsible for carrying out winter emergency operations on the carriageways and footways of Trunk Route A8 from Inverclyde Boundary to the Town Centre Roundabout (i.e. Bullring) and on the Trunk Route A78 from the Town Centre Roundabout to Inverclyde Boundary at Wemyss Bay.

Complaints regarding ice and snow conditions on Trunk Routes should be passed to:

Amey Infrastructure Services  
South West Unit  
Langmuir Way  
Bargeddie  
Glasgow  
G69 7RW

Tel - 0141 781 6900 (during office hours)  
Tel - 0800 028 1414 (out with office hours)

## Appendix D

### CROSS BOUNDARY ARRANGEMENTS

#### At Boundary with Renfrewshire Council

Renfrewshire Council treats:-

Stepends Rd (B786) to Torr Rd (C11)  
Bridge of Weir Road (A761) to Craigends Rd

Inverclyde Council treats:-

Craigbet Rd (C43) to Torr Rd (C11)

## Appendix E

### DISTRIBUTION LIST

a) Inverclyde Council

All Elected Members  
Chief Executive  
Corporate Director - Environment & Community Protection  
Corporate Director - Improvement & Performance  
Corporate Director - Regeneration & Resources  
Corporate Director - Education & Social Care  
Emergency Planning Officer  
Head of Performance Management and Policy Development  
Head of Corporate Communications and Public Affairs  
Chief Financial Officer - FAO Insurance Section  
Head Legal and Administration

b) Others

Strathclyde Police - Divisional Commander  
Strathclyde Police - Traffic Superintendent  
Strathclyde Police - Local Manned Stations  
Strathclyde Fire Brigade - Firemaster  
Strathclyde Fire Brigade - Divisional Commander  
Strathclyde Passenger Transport Authority - Director General  
Scottish Ambulance Service, Craw Road, Paisley  
Amey Infrastructure Services, Bargeddie, Glasgow  
Head of Roads, Renfrewshire Council  
Head of Infrastructure and Design Services, North Ayrshire Council  
Automobile Association (AA)  
Royal Scottish Automobile Club  
Royal Automobile Club (RAC)  
Freight Transport Society  
Road Haulage Association  
MeteoGroup UK Ltd  
Appropriate Bus Companies/Operators  
Community Councils  
Inverclyde Council Website  
Lower Clyde Taxi Owner's Association  
RALF Centre  
Web Page