

Highways and Transport Committee

Date of Meeting:	21 July 2022
Report Title:	Winter 2021/22 End of Season Review
Report of:	Tom Moody, Director of Highways and Infrastructure
Report Reference No:	HT/56/22-23
Ward(s) Affected:	All Wards

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. Further to the Highway Winter Service mid-season review paper that was presented at the March Highway and Transport Committee, this report updates members on the implementation of the revised policy for the winter gritting route network in the Borough during the winter of 21/22. It outlines the amendments required for the coming 22/23 season.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1. To accord with the Code of Practice on “Well Managed Highway Infrastructure” (WMHI) and to comply with its duty as Highway Authority, it is important that the Council has an up to date Winter and Adverse Weather Policy, including a prioritised gritting network based on clear, evidence based criteria.
- 2.2. In October 2021 the Council implemented new winter gritting routes, following a lengthy process of development and consultation.

The current winter service gritting routes can be found via the below link and are denoted via black and white lines.

https://maps.cheshireeast.gov.uk/ce/webmapping?&e=378220.01&n=364472.00&layers=TN_S_Gritting2021_LINE_CURRENT&s=250000.00&bm=road

- 2.3. This paper details conditions experienced over the winter of 2021/22, together with information gathered around the success and issues experienced during the season.
- 2.4. The report seeks approval to the proposed changes to the winter service for 2022/23.
- 2.5. The Committee should note that there is a separate and independent review process ongoing relating to ANSA delivering winter services for Town Councils. This does not form part of the recommendations included in this report. The Committee should also note that the delivery of winter gritting by third parties will not be permitted.

3. Recommendations

That the Highways and Transport Committee resolve that:

- 3.1. To approve the following amendments to the winter treatment network for implementation from the start of the 2022/23 winter season onwards:
- The inclusion of Coole Lane, Audlem into the treated network.
 - The inclusion of Brook Street, Macclesfield into the treated network.
- 3.2. To delegate authority to the Director of Highways and Infrastructure in consultation with the Section 151 Officer to approve entering into funding agreements with Town and Parish Councils in relation to winter gritting 'top up' funded routes as described in paragraphs 7.19 to 7.21 and Appendix 2 of this report, to be implemented for the 2022/23 winter season.
- 3.3. Delegates authority to the Director of Highways and Infrastructure to make minor operational changes to the Winter & Adverse Weather Policy, Adverse Weather Plan and roads included in the treated network, with any changes being subsequently reported to the Highways and Transport Committee.

4. Reasons for Recommendations

- 4.1. The Code of Practice WMHI recommends that 'All aspects of the Winter Service Plan, including service delivery arrangements, should be **reviewed annually** in consultation with key stakeholders to take account of changing circumstances.' As such the Council has undertaken an end of season review to evaluate any changes that are required for the 22/23 season. An annual operational review will be undertaken at the end of each winter season.

5. Other Options Considered

- 5.1. The Council could choose not to undertake an end of season review; however, this would not align with the principles of Well Managed Highway Infrastructure and the Council's adopted Winter Gritting Policy.
- 5.2. It is not considered that there are any other options other than those set out within this report.

6. Background

- 6.1. Cheshire County Council (CCC) was previously responsible for delivering winter maintenance services across the whole of the county until its abolition in 2009. The gritting routes were aligned to its policy. During this time, CCC operated from area offices based broadly on the then Borough boundaries. Although each office operated to the same policy, they were managed independently and governed through area highway committees. Over the years many roads were added to the gritting routes. The main mechanism for adding roads was through requests made to senior officers by stakeholders, including elected members. There was no formal process or risk assessment. The total length of treated network increased substantially during this time.
- 6.2. Cheshire East Council continued to operate this inherited policy and its associated gritting routes. During a review carried out in 2016 it was found that approximately 203 km of roads on the gritting routes did not meet the (then existing) CCC policy. Some of these roads were treated as a result of bus routes changing with no subsequent amendments being made to the gritting routes.
- 6.3. In 2016 the previous industry code of practice "Well Maintained Highways" was replaced by WMHI. WMHI was developed by UK Roads Liaison Group (UKRLG) to provide guidance and recommendations on best practice for highway authorities. WMHI recommended a shift from defined, prescriptive guidance to a risk-based approach. WMHI covers all aspects of highway maintenance, including winter service.
- 6.4. WMHI recommends that a network hierarchy is developed, categorising roads in order of their importance, meaning that the more important roads in the Borough are prioritised. This approach has been used in the development of the new winter service routes. It is important when defending any possible future claims from road users that the Council can demonstrate it is carrying out its duty as a highway authority reasonably by adopting and following clear service policies which comply with the WMHI Code of Practice.
- 6.5. In February 2020, the Council's Cabinet considered a paper containing proposals relating to the Highway Safety Inspection Policy, Code of Practice for Highway Safety Inspections, Winter and Adverse Weather Policy, Adverse Weather Plan and the Cheshire East Highway Resilient Network Strategy.

- 6.6.** In respect of the winter gritting routes, every road in the Borough was scored using criteria in an evaluation matrix, with the highest scoring roads being included in the network of routes.
- 6.7.** That Cabinet decision was called in and following a further round of consultation and subsequent amendment of the winter service routes, the proposals were implemented.
- 6.8.** Following final approval of the winter treatment network, a route optimisation process was carried out to define the most efficient and cost effective vehicle routes for the gritting treatment. The main criteria used in this process were the location of the depots, the capacity of vehicles and length of time to undertake standard treatments on the particular types of road in the approved network, using recommended spread rates. This process then defined the requirement for the number and size of vehicles. A total of 16 routes were defined, with 7 to be operated from Wardle and 9 from Macclesfield. The final part of this process was to ensure the availability of sufficient suitably trained drivers, create individual routes for each vehicle and load these routes into the GPS satellite tracking and automated gritting systems for each vehicle and to carry out a series of familiarisation runs prior to the start of the season.

Treatments

- 6.9.** Table 1 below provides a summary of the precautionary treatments (gritting) undertaken during the 21/22 winter season which ran from 01/10/2021 to 30/04/2022.
- 6.10.** The Council undertake precautionary treatments after carrying out detailed weather forecasting that considers factors such as air temperature, dew point, humidity, precipitation, cloud cover and road surface temperature. These factors determine the time of gritting, the salt spread rates and if any second runs are required if conditions deteriorate, or if rain or snow occurs for example.
- 6.11.** The weather doesn't always behave as forecasted. Table 1 indicates in the last column the number of instances where the forecast temperature did not occur, even though all forecasting information pointed towards a gritting run being required. This situation is not desirable, due to the costs involved, but it can often be a very marginal call with the importance of road safety weighing heavily in the decision making process.

Domain	No routes of	No of treatments (gritting runs)	No treatments days of	Treatment days when frost/ice did not occur
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High East (Macc)	2	117	88	6
East (Macc)	7	56	50	3
South (Wardle)	7	50	44	5

Annual Operational Review

- 6.12.** As part of the annual review of the Council's Adverse Weather Plan, at the end of each winter season an operational review of the winter service is undertaken in order to identify operational issues that have occurred through the winter season.
- 6.13.** This review includes assessment of the accuracy of forecasts, fleet performance, staffing issues, driver feedback regarding the practicality of operating the routes and other wider issues.
- 6.14.** This year's review concluded:
- That the forecast accuracy and level of service provided by the forecaster was good.
 - The fleet of 18 gritters experienced no major issues with regards to lack of availability due to breakdowns.
 - Due to the impact of Covid 19, shift patterns needed to be changed mid-season to form operational bubbles and to increase resilience within the winter service team.
 - There were a number of roads where occasional difficulties were encountered gritting due to parked vehicles.
- 6.15.** The roads that experienced issues with parked cars were:
- Stanley Road, Knutsford
 - King Street, Knutsford
 - Brocklehurst Avenue, Macclesfield
- These roads will continue to be on the treatment routes; however, it should be noted that due to the difficulties parked vehicles can cause, treatment may not always be possible.
- 6.16.** This review forms part of a wider review which is undertaken annually to understand any issues that have occurred on the network or changes in the network that may require amendments to the treatment routes. This part of the review has focused on roads that have been removed from the treated network.

Service Requests and Correspondence

- 6.17.** A total of 340 service requests relating to winter service have been received from members of the public, town and parish councils, ward members and the police between 1st October 2021 and 30th April 2022. This correspondence has been received via email and phone calls to the contact centre.
- 6.18.** A broad analysis has been undertaken of the 340 service requests that have been received, 136 relate to grit bins (largely the replenishment of salt), 15 were from the police, of which 6 related to issues on roads removed from the treatment network and 92 were from the general public related to a few roads removed from the treated network.
- 6.19.** There are a small number of locations which have generated multiple enquiries. Comments regarding these roads are generally that as they are no longer gritted, they have become icy and dangerous, with some reports of road traffic collisions and vehicles leaving the road.
- 6.20.** Enquiries have also been received from town and parish councils requesting permission to grit parts of the highway network using private, third party contractors. These requests have been considered but not permitted as that approach would lead to gritting of the network which is outside the boundaries of the approved policy. These private arrangements could not comply with the operational requirements (e.g., forecasting / standby / equipment) to be able to deliver a service which complied with the Council's policy. The Council delivers a 24 hour a day, 7 day a week service that can deliver multiple treatments at controlled spread rates. Non-delivery to these standards could leave the Council open to liability issues as the highway authority has ultimate responsibility for the network.

Incidents

- 6.21.** As can be seen in the summary of winter treatments table above, there have been at least 39 days on which road surface temperatures were forecast to fall below freezing and actually did, and hence gritting operations took place.
- 6.22.** Information regarding Incidents on the network has been gathered from a number from a number of sources:
- Police Stats 19 Data
 - Contact with the Police
 - Fire Service incident responses
 - Anecdotal evidence from newspapers and contact centre reports
- 6.23.** Stats 19 Data is police data on road accidents and is a standardised national format. The Stats 19 Data records injury accidents only. The Council receive regular updates on this data. An analysis of the official Stats 19 Data shows that between 01/10/2021 and 31/03/2022 12 collisions occurred on the

highway network that were attributed to ice, only 1 of these is recorded to have occurred on a road removed from the treated network, this occurred on:

- 02/12/2021 - Coole Lane, Audlem

6.24. Cheshire Fire and Rescue have responded that they don't hold any records of the road conditions when they respond to incidents; however, an analysis of their incident response webpage shows that they attended 3 incidents on roads removed from the treated network when icing conditions may have occurred. These occurred on:

- 28/11/2021 - Long Lane, Wettenhall
- 07/01/2022 - Warmingham Lane, Middlewich
- 13/01/2022 - Coole Lane, Audlem

6.25. A review of the contact centre information shows:

- 29/11/2021 – 4 car accident Church Lane, Odd Rode
- 29/11/2021 – 2 No accidents Coole Lane, Audlem
- 29/11/2021 – Report of 2 No accident on Long Lane, Wettenhall
- 29/11/2021 – Report of accident Twinnies Road, Wilmslow
- 29/11/2021 – Report of accident on Woodcock Lane, Odd Rode
- 02/12/2021 – Police reported accident Coole Lane, Audlem
- 02/12/2021 – Police reported 2 accidents on Groby Road, Crewe
- 03/12/2021 – Report of accident on Long Lane, Spurstow
- 02/12/2021 – Report of accident Marthall Lane, Marthall
- 02/12/2021 – Report of accidents on Winsford Road, Cholmondeston
- 07/01/2022 – Report of accident on Warmingham Lane, Middlewich
- 07/01/2022 – Police closed Coole Lane, Audlem
- 13/01/2022 – Police report of accident on Childs Lane, Sandbach
- 13/01/2022 – Police report of accident on Coole Lane

A further correlated summary of these incidents can be found in Appendix 2

7. Consultation and Engagement

7.1. In order to align with the recommendations contained in WMHI the Council developed a new Winter Service Policy and Adverse Weather Plan.

7.2. Following a two stage consultation and approval process that ran between 2018 and 2020 the new treatment routes were introduced in readiness for the 2021/22 winter season.

- 7.3.** The following sections set out the consultation that has followed as part of the end of season annual review process.

End of Season Member Engagement

- 7.4.** In line with the recommendations set out in the Committee paper dated 2nd March 2022, in addition to the annual operational review, there was a commitment to engage with Members, it was decided that the most appropriate way to do this was via one-to-one meetings. It should be noted that this one-to-one meeting process isn't a core part of the annual operational review.
- 7.5.** On the 26th of April 2022 emails were distributed to two groups of Members from the Interim Head of Highways (see Appendix 1).
- 7.6.** The first email was sent to Members where roads in their wards had been referred to in correspondence with the service since the introduction of the new gritting routes. This correspondence may have included enquiries, service requests, correspondence, complaints, MP letters, FOI requests and member enquires. The Members in this group were invited to one-to-one meetings between 9th and 27th May. Copies of the risk assessment sheets for the roads or sections of which had been highlighted in correspondence were provided ahead of the meetings.
- 7.7.** The second email was sent to Members where no issues had been received regarding winter service in their ward. This outlined that the service was undertaking an end of season review and that no issues had been reported in their ward. This group of members weren't invited to attend a meeting.
- 7.8.** In order that the risk assessment scoring was as transparent as possible officers also included a refreshed Winter Maintenance Risk Assessment Scoring Methodology which now included a number of worked examples. This can be found at the below link:

<https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/pdf/highways/well-managed-highway-infrastructure/winter-risk-assessment-methodology.pdf>

- 7.9.** 20 Members, across 17 wards, attended a meeting to discuss the winter service within their respective ward. During the engagement sessions a number of issues were highlighted and as a result a number of road lengths were re-assessed against the scoring matrix.
- 7.10.** Following the conclusion of the exercise, each Member that attended a session received a written response to the points they raised, including actions for the Service to address where appropriate.

Proposed Amendments to the Network

- 7.11.** As a result of analysis of accident data, following consultation with the Road Safety Team and our Legal Services Department, Coole Lane Audlem is to be added back into the treated Network.
- 7.12.** As a result of the re-analysis of the gradient of Brook Street in Macclesfield, this section of road is now eligible for inclusion as it's risk assessment score is above the minimum threshold.
- 7.13.** Subject to the approval of the associated recommendation the above roads will be included for the 22/23 winter season.
- 7.14.** It is not proposed to remove any roads from the winter gritting routes through this review, including those associated with changes to bus routes. A full route re-assessment which will consider this in detail will be undertaken as part of the annual operational review, following the 2022/23 winter season.
- 7.15.** The Service is also looking to amend the secondary gritting routes which are implemented during periods of long and severe winter weather when main routes are clear and resources are available. These amendments will look to encompass some of the roads that have been removed from the treated network.

Winter Communication Plan

- 7.16.** A Winter Service Communication Plan is currently being developed in readiness for the 2022/23 season. This will help to familiarise road users with the winter treatment network and will include the following;
- All Member engagement session prior to start of the winter season with planning already underway.
 - Highways Newsletter edition in October to include an article specifically on winter maintenance and links to guidance documents.
 - Provide electronic variable messaging signs at selected locations across the untreated network from late September.
 - Letter drop to addresses on selected roads across the untreated network.
 - Social media posts in advance of and during the winter season providing guidance to drivers.
 - Update webpage to make this succinct and specific to the current gritting routes.
 - Regular updates via Gov Delivery on treatments during the winter season and any forthcoming periods of inclement weather.

End of Season Town and Parish Council Engagement

- 7.17.** Again, in line with the content of the March 2022 Committee paper officers have been undertaking a viability appraisal of ‘top up’ winter gritting funding from Town and Parish Councils. Prior to more detailed dialogue the initial stage of this was to confirm the following;
- The level of interest in such ‘top up’ funded routes.
 - The constraints within which any such service could be offered.
 - The scale of the additional lengths of highway network that those Councils interested would wish to have gritted.
 - A high level estimated cost of this additional work.
- 7.18.** To enable this on the 22nd April 2022 emails were sent from the Interim Head of Highways asking Town and Parish Council's to indicate if they would like to procure additional gritting in their area via the Council. This was in the form of a simple survey which ran until Friday 27th May 2022, a copy of which is included in Appendix 2 of this report.
- 7.19.** Any agreed ‘top up’ funding would be subject to a series of conditions which would then be set out in a funding agreement between Cheshire East and the Parish or Town Council in question. This includes a minimum 3 year funding commitment. Through this funding agreement the Town and Parish Councils will commit to funding some elements of gritting that is undertaken by CEC.
- 7.20.** As a result 6 councils responded with an expression of interest and 7 councils formally declined. It should also be noted that a small number of councils decided to reserve their position, due to having settled budgets for 2022/23, and hence may consider funding top up routes for the 2023/24 winter season.

	Yes	No	No response	Total
Town	3	2	7	12
Parish	3	6	87	96

Table 1: Summary of Survey Responses

- 7.21.** In summary the additional ‘top up’ funding would reintroduce 20.75km of highway network back into the winter gritting network, at an estimated cost of circa £30k per annum. It should be noted that additional lengths may need to be added to ensure continuity of treatment. This has necessitated a further round of discussions with the Town and Parish councils and will likely result in variation of the above figure. This would be funded direct by the Parish and Town Councils involved.
- 7.22.** Following the return of the survey officers have held follow on engagement meetings with the interested Town and Parish Councils, to discuss the specifics of their service asks and any operational issues related. These

sessions also provided an opportunity to discuss the formal agreement which would be required to contract these services.

- 7.23.** Noting the above it is intended that the top up funded routes will be added for the 2022/23 winter season.

Notice of Motion

- 7.24.** A Notice of Motion has been submitted to Council on 20/07/22 relating to the winter service routes. A response to the Notice of Motion can be found in Appendix 4 of this report.

8. Implications

8.1. Legal

- 8.1.1.** The statutory basis for winter service in England and Wales is Section 41 of the Highways Act 1980 (as amended). Section 41(1) states:

“(1) The authority who are for the time being the highway authority for a highway maintainable at the public expense are under a duty to maintain the highway.

(1) (A) 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.”

- 8.1.2.** This duty is not absolute given its qualification of “reasonably practicable”. What is “reasonably practicable” has not been defined in statute. “Reasonably practicable”, as traditionally interpreted, is a narrower term than “physically possible” and implies that a computation must be made in which the quantum of risk is placed in one scale and the sacrifice, whether in money, time or trouble, involved in the measure necessary to avert the risk is placed in the other; and that, if it be shown that there is a gross disproportion between them, the risk being insignificant in relation to the sacrifice, the person upon whom the duty is laid discharges the burden of proving that compliance was not reasonably practicable. Caselaw has also determined that Local Authorities should not take an overly restrictive to this test, especially during extreme and unforeseen weather events. In addition, the Traffic Management Act 2004 placed a network management duty on all local traffic authorities in England. It requires Authorities to do all that is reasonably practicable to manage the network effectively to keep traffic moving. In meeting the duty, Authorities should establish contingency plans for dealing promptly and effectively with unplanned events, such as unforeseen weather conditions, as far as is reasonably practicable.

- 8.1.3.** The Winter and Adverse Weather Policy along with the Adverse Weather Plan and Winter Risk Assessment Methodology and Scoring Matrix determine which roads will form the Winter Treated Network. The Council are under a general duty to keep these documents under review. In

accordance with the Winter and Adverse Weather Policy “consideration will be given to addressing winter conditions on areas of the public highway which are not included on the treated network”.

- 8.1.4.** The Winter and Adverse Weather Policy also states “...the Council will work in partnership with the Town and Parish Councils, and supply chain partners to arrange for snow clearance work on local roads and in town centre areas”.
- 8.1.5.** Section 150 of the Highways Act 1980 puts a separate duty on the highway authority to clear snow from the highway, but only if it is causing an obstruction.
- 8.1.6.** This report proposes that funding agreements are entered into with local Town and Parish councils to introduce roads to the treated network that would not meet the Council’s Winter Service Policy. This report proposes that funding agreements are entered into with local Town and Parish councils to treat roads that aren’t included within the treated network and that as such would not meet the criteria set out in the Council’s Winter Risk Assessment Methodology and Scoring Matrix. Any such agreements would therefore introduce roads that have not been selected in accordance with the Winter Risk Assessment Methodology and Scoring Matrix but instead by the local Town or Parish council providing the funding. In line with paragraph 3.6 of the Council’s Winter and Adverse Weather Policy and Winter and Adverse Weather Plan. This creates a Partnership Network of roads that are outside of the Council’s Winter Risk Assessment Methodology and Scoring Matrix but are treated to the same standards as the core treatment network.
- 8.1.7.** Acting in accordance with the Winter and Adverse Weather Policy, Winter and Adverse Weather Plan and Winter Risk Assessment Methodology allows the Council to defend claims made against it. Any deviation from decisions made on a consistent, risk-based approach that can be adequately evidenced carries a degree of additional risk to the Council.
- 8.1.8.** The level of additional risk will be determined by the extent of the deviation from the Winter and Adverse Weather Policy, Adverse Weather Plan and Winter Risk Assessment Methodology. For example, a deviation could weaken the Council’s ability to defend claims made against it or have an impact on the Council’s insurance renewal position.
- 8.1.9.** It is therefore recommended that, before the funding agreements with the Town and Parish councils are entered into, the Service seek additional advice on the extent of any additional risks the funding agreements may expose the Council to and how to mitigate those risks.

8.2. Finance

8.2.1. For the 22/23 winter season, the cost of adding additional milage to the winter treatment routes, as a result of operational issues identified through the end of season review, will be covered by the existing Well Managed Highway Infrastructure Earmarked Reserve which contains C.£230k. For the subsequent seasons, savings will have to be found in other highways revenue budget areas.

8.2.2. Additional mileage added as a result of agreements between Town and Parish Councils for 'top up' funded routes will be covered in future years by virtue of formal legal agreements and as such the Town and Parish Councils will be responsible of the costs.

8.3. Policy

8.3.1. The recommendations in this report align with industry guidance and see the Winter and Adverse Weather Policy and Plan kept up to date.

8.4. Equality

8.4.1. This report sets out the results of an annual review of the winter gritting routes, a process which aligns with the recommendations of Well Managed Highway Infrastructure and as such the Winter & Adverse Weather Policy 2020 approved by Cabinet (report of 04/02/2020(105)). There are no changes to the adopted policy itself and as such the associated Equality Impact Assessment undertaken at the time of approval remains valid.

8.5. Human Resources

8.5.1. There are no human resource implications of the paper.

8.6. Risk Management

8.6.1. The recommendations of this paper help the council to address its statutory duties under the Highways Act 1980 and also follow the best practice identified by the industry guidance document Well Managed Highway Infrastructure (2016).

8.7. Rural Communities

8.7.1. There are no rural communities impacts of this paper

8.8. Children and Young People/Cared for Children

8.8.1. There are no Children and Young People/Cared for Children implications of this report

8.9. Public Health

8.9.1. There are public health implications of this report

8.10. Climate Change

- 8.10.1.** The slight increase in network length and salt usage will result in a slight increase in the carbon footprint of the service.

Access to Information	
Contact Officer:	Matthew Davenhill, Contract Asset Manager Matthew.davenhill@cheshireeast.gov.uk 01260 371026
Appendices:	Appendix 1 – Details of Member Engagement exercise Appendix 2 – Details of Town and Parish Council Engagement exercise Appendix 3 – Accident Correlation Summary Appendix 4 – Notice of Motion to Council on 20/07/2022
Background Papers:	2 nd March 2022 Highways and Transport Committee Highway Winter Service Mid-Season Review

Appendix 1 – Member Engagement

Sample email inviting Members to 121

Dear Councillor.....

At the meeting of the Highways and Transportation Committee held on 2nd March 2022, consideration was given to a report updating the Committee on the implementation of the revised winter gritting route network in the Borough. The report outlined that a review of the winter service would be undertaken at the end of the season to understand any issues that may have occurred in its implementation. An amendment to the recommendations of the report was approved requiring that the end of season review is undertaken in consultation with ward Members. It was also resolved that a report be presented to a future Highways and Transport

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Committee which responds to the points raised by the Committee and which provides detailed analysis of the impacts of the new routes, with consideration being given to the requirement for any amendments to the routes. At present this is being targeted for the July 2022 Committee.

Subsequently, the 21/22 end of season winter service review and analysis of the new gritting routes is currently being undertaken. As part of this review, all engagements with the service including enquiries, service requests, correspondence, complaints, MP letters, FOI requests and member enquiries have been considered. All roads identified through this engagement have been listed and the risk assessment scores reviewed.

The service has received engagement via one or more of the methods mentioned above and the documents attached to this email are the risk assessment scores for the roads identified in your ward.

I would like to offer you the opportunity to discuss these assessments with the team, should you wish to do so. Colleagues will be holding maximum 45 minute meetings between Monday 9th and Friday 27th May inclusive, as per the attached calendar, slots to be allocated on a first come first served basis. Please confirm your interest by return email to iandh@cheshireeast.gov.uk and an MS Teams invite will be issued.

To make the scoring process more transparent we have also refreshed the Winter Maintenance Policy Methodology and Scoring Matrix document, including some worked examples, which can be found here [webpage](#)

Please also note that we have issued every Town and Parish Council with a short survey to capture interest in a potential “top up” winter gritting service. The results of this survey alongside any recommendations will be considered as part of the same paper to Highways and Transport Committee.

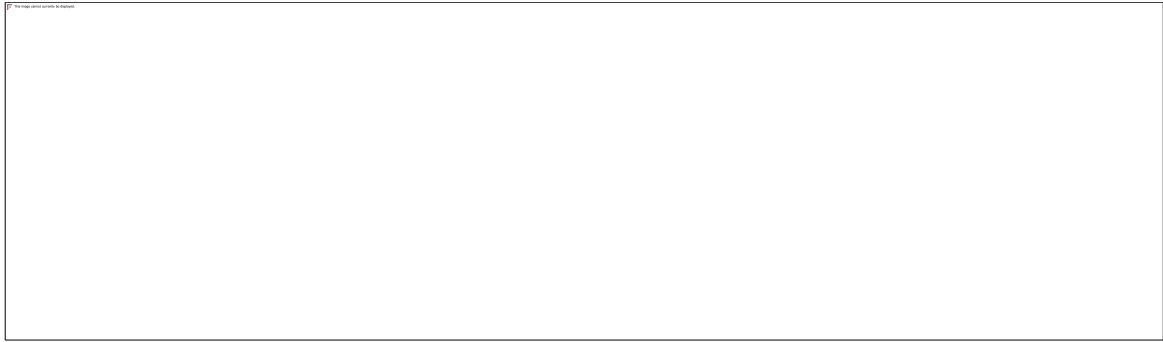
Kind Regards,

Tom Shuttleworth | Interim Head of Highways

| Cheshire East Council | tom.shuttleworth@cheshireeast.gov.uk




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Attachments to email – Example Risk Assessment

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Congleton__Dunnocksfold Road__Alsager__UY739_B

Road Number	UY739_B	Road Name	Dunnocksfold Road			
Highway Area Group	Congleton	Parish/Town	Alsager			
USRN	9100397	X-point	378285.3057	Y-point		355684.9436
Road classification	Unclassified	Section Length	920	metres		Secondary Distributor
Add to precautionary route?	YES					

	Score	Mitigating Factors
Emergency Services	0	
Public Transport Hubs	100	Scheduled Bus Route CAT 1
Education Establishment	0	
Locality Resilience	0	
Local Infrastructure	0	
Manufacturing & Industrial Centres	0	
Rural Communities	0	
Topological Features	0	
Existing or Prevailing Climate Conditions	0	
Co-ordination with Adjacent Highway Authorities	0	
Total	100	

Following the risk assessment carried out in accordance with the Defined Methodology, this length of highway (on the Cheshire East Highway Network) MEETS THE THRESHOLD for inclusion on the Winter Treatment Network

Additional Comments:

Email to Members not Invited to a meeting.

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Dear Councillor,

At the meeting of the Highways and Transportation Committee held on 2nd March 2022, consideration was given to a report updating the Committee on the implementation of the revised winter gritting route network in the Borough. The report outlined that a review of the winter service would be undertaken at the end of the season to understand any issues that may have occurred in its implementation. An amendment to the recommendations to the report was approved requiring that the end of season review is undertaken in consultation with ward Members. It was also resolved that a report be presented to a future Highways and Transport Committee which responds to the points raised by the Committee and which provides a detailed analysis of the impacts of the new routes, with consideration being given to the requirement for any amendments to the routes. At present this is being targeted for the July 2022 Committee.

Subsequently, the 21/22 end of season winter service review and analysis of the new gritting routes is currently being undertaken. As part of this review and as per the agreed methodology, all engagements with the service including enquiries, service requests, correspondence, complaints, MP letters, FOI requests, member enquires etc. are being considered. All roads identified through this engagement have been listed and the risk assessment scores reviewed.

Members for wards where roads have been identified in the 2021/22 winter season have been contacted, issued with this risk assessment and have been offered the opportunity to discuss. This process has not identified any reference to roads in your ward. Please however do be reassured that as per the policy at the end of each future winter season a full operational review of the gritting network will be undertaken.

Please also note that we have issued each of the Town and Parish Councils with a short survey to capture interest in a potential 'top up' winter gritting service. The results of this survey alongside any recommendations will be considered as part of the same paper to Highways and Transport Committee.

Kind Regards,

Tom Shuttleworth | Interim Head of Highways
| Cheshire East Council | tom.shuttleworth@cheshireeast.gov.uk

Working for a *brighter future*  together



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Appendix 2 – Details of Town and Parish Council Engagement Exercise

Sample email sent to all Town and Parish Councils

Dear All,

During the winter of 2021/22, Cheshire East Borough Council implemented new winter gritting routes. These routes were developed following the introduction of the new highway maintenance guidance document Well Managed Highway Infrastructure (WMHI) and as such the routes were developed following the guidance in WMHI. The new routes involved new roads being added to the treatment network and also roads which no longer achieved a minimum risk based score being removed.

On the 2nd March 2022 the Council's Highways and Transport Committee considered a paper which outlined the end of season review that is being undertaken to understand the success of the new routes and any amendments that may be required. As part of this paper there was a proposal to engage with the Town and Parish Councils in the Borough to understand if they would like to fund additional 'top up' gritting in their areas.

The attached survey proforma and supporting information pack is the start of this engagement and outlines the conditions that would be associated with the purchase of additional top up gritting, together with a calculation of the approximate costs of this service based on data inputted. I would like to bring to your attention the following key points;

- Timing of implementation of any gritting routes will be subject to the levels of interest expressed in the 'top up' service.
- The estimated cost calculator is based on an assumed level of take up. Final standing costs and costs per treatment will be indicated once the initial level of interest has been ascertained. Therefore these should be considered as a guide for costs in year 1 of the service.
- The final costs will be subject to annual inflationary increases over the minimum service period.
- A legal agreement will be required which will set out within it a minimum Duration of Service.

Please can you complete the attached form and return it to the email address iandh@cheshireeast.gov.uk **by no later than 5pm on Friday 27th May**. If no response is received then it will be assumed that the Council in question does not wish to take part in any potential winter gritting 'top up' scheme. The results of the survey together with any recommendations will be included as part of a forthcoming report to the Council's Highways and Transport Committee.

Hopefully this is self explanatory however should there be any questions please email us at iandh@cheshireeast.gov.uk and we will respond within 3 working days.

Kind Regards,

Tom Shuttleworth | Interim Head of Highways
| Cheshire East Council | tom.shuttleworth@cheshireeast.gov.uk

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Attached Background Information: Survey Proforma (continued)

Conditions of Service											
The costs to the Town and Parish Councils have been calculated with consideration given to:											
1	<p>Scope: the Service is offered on the following basis;</p> <p>a. Pre-treatment by gritting to prevent the formation of frost and ice on road surfaces</p> <p>b. Pre-treatment to be carried out at the same time as the rest of the network</p> <p>c. Spread rates to be determined by the Winter Duty Officer</p> <p>d. Multiple treatments as required by weather conditions. e.</p> <p>Snow clearance is dealt with under the Council's Severe Weather Plan and prioritises main routes in the borough. Snow clearing will not be carried out on the additional roads until all other routes are clear and resources are available.</p>										
2	<p>Minimum Service duration: There will be a requirement for a legal agreement which will set out within a minimum service duration (minimum 3 years). This is due to the requirement to acquire further fleet and plant to deliver the expanded scope of Service. This minimum service duration will be finalised upon confirmation of level of interest from the Town & Parish Councils.</p>										
3	<p>Contract: A simple legal agreement to cover costs recovery will be required between Cheshire East Council and the respective Town / Parish (format to be confirmed by CEC)</p>										
4	<p>No. Of Treatments: Based on recent observed figures a typical winter season results in 65 treatments on similar roads on the highway network; however the costs of the actual number of treatment will need to be met by the Town / Parish council.</p>										
5	<p>Service Costs: upon receipt of all expressions of interest a final cost analysis will be undertaken and each of the Town/Parish Councils will receive an updated cost for year 1 of the Service, with an explanation of any differences.</p>										
6	<p>Inflation: in line with CEC's Highways Contract inflation will be applied to all costs as appropriate, for budgeting purposes assume that this is 3-5% per annum over the minimum Service duration as set out above.</p>										
7	<p>Implementation: subject to the level of interest from Town/Parish Councils will directly dictate when the Service can commence.</p>										

Winter Service Review Town and Parish Council Top Up Scheme

Supporting Information

April 2022

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Town and Parish Council Top Up

Considerations;

- Additional roads not on gritting routes – pre treatment only
- Roads would not meet the council's Winter Service Policy
- Will require additional drivers and vehicles
- Fixed costs as well as operational costs
- Minimum service duration commitment required
- Need for route optimisation
- Risks to existing core service provision for CEC
- Need to understand actual appetite from Town/Parish Councils and the scale of the ask for this service

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Survey of Interest

- Invitation to all T & PC to complete survey
- Request to identify roads Councils would like to be included
- Survey to be issued w/c 25th April, return by Friday 27th May (5 weeks). Results of survey to be included in forthcoming Committee paper
- Proforma calculates approximate cost of Service
- Requirement to commit to the Conditions of Service stated.
- Timing of implementation will very much depend on level of interest from Town/Parish Councils

Costs

- Fixed costs include:
 - Provision and maintenance of vehicles, Facilities, Driver standby, Duty staff, Training, Weather stations, ForecastingCurrently £725 per km
- Operational costs include:
 - Drivers, Supervisors and duty staff, Fuel, Salt, Washing offCurrently £8.47 per km
- Potential Additional Costs:
 - Provision of extra vehicle(s)
 - Recruitment of drivers
 - Route optimisation

Appendix 3 – Accident Correlation Summary

The below table shows a list of incidents that have been reported to the Council through a number of channels:

Stats 19 Data: This information has been provided by the Road Safety Team and runs from October 2021 to the end of March 2022.

Police: This information is taken from Confirm and shows the dates when the Police reported accidents/road closures to the contact centre.

Fire: This information is taken from the Cheshire Fire and Rescue incident feed on their website and shows when they attended accidents on the network.

News Article: This shows the dates of accidents reported in local news papers.

Public: This shows the dates of accidents reported by the public to the contact centre.

NOTE: The below table attempts to cross reference accident dates in order to reduce double counting.

The dates in the below table align with CEC winter treatment actions

Road Name	Stats 19	Police	Fire	Public				
Long Lane Wettenhall			28/11/2021	28/11/2021				
Long Lane Wettenhall				29/11/2021				
Long Lane Spurstow				03/12/2021				
Church Lane Oddrode				29/11/2021				
Coole Lane				29/11/2021				
Coole Lane				29/11/2021				
Coole Lane	02/12/2021	02/12/2021						
Coole Lane		07/01/2021						
Coole Lane		13/01/2022	13/01/2022					
Grobe Road		02/12/2021						
Grobe Road		02/12/2021						
Warmingham Lane		07/01/2022	07/01/2022					
Marthall Lane				02/12/2021				
Twinnies Road				29/11/2021				
Winsford Road Cholmondestone				02/12/2021				
Woodcock Lane Odd Road				29/11/2021				
Childs Lane Sandbach		13/01/2022						
Congleton Road Smallwood				13/01/2022				

Appendix 4 – Notice of Motion to Council on 20/07/22 and Response

COUNCIL – 20 JULY 2022

NOTICE OF MOTION

Submitted to Council in Accordance with the Council Procedural Rules

1 Review of Winter Service (Gritting) Programme Assessment Criteria Proposed by Councillor Rob Moreton

Background

Cheshire County Council (CCC) was previously responsible for delivering winter maintenance services across the whole of the county until its abolition in 2009. During a review carried out in 2016 it was found that approximately 203 km of roads on the gritting routes did not meet the existing CCC policy.

In 2016 the previous industry code of practice was replaced by “Well Managed Highways Infrastructure”, developed by UK Roads Liaison Group (UKRLG) and recommended a shift from defined, prescriptive guidance to a risk-based approach, categorising roads in order of importance.

The Council undertake precautionary treatments after carrying out detailed weather forecasting that considers factors such as air temperature, dew point, humidity, precipitation, cloud cover and road surface temperature.

During the 2021/22 Winter Season, there were 88 treatment days carried out in the High East (Macclesfield), a further 50 treatment days in the East (Macclesfield) and 44 treatment days in the South (Wardle).

An operational review of the winter service is undertaken annually, in order to identify operational issues that have occurred. In addition, the Highways Service may also look to amend the secondary gritting routes which are implemented during periods of long and severe winter weather.

As part of an operational review following the 2021/22 Winter Season, 20 Members of Cheshire East Council, across 17 wards, attended a meeting to discuss the winter service within their respective wards.

Six Town & Parish Councils have formally expressed interest in procuring additional gritting services. In summary the additional 'top up' services requested by these Town & Parish Councils would reintroduce 20.75km of highway network back into the winter gritting network.

Notice of Motion

Council resolves that: prior to carrying out the next planned operational review of the Winter Service (Gritting) Programme for the 2022/23 season and in advance of any changes to secondary gritting routes, the scoring assessment criteria and threshold for inclusion in the Winter Service (Gritting) Programme should also be reconsidered.

Response

In 2020 the Council approved the adoption of a new Winter Service Policy and Adverse Weather Plan. The new Policy and Plan align with the recommendations contained in the sector guidance document 'Well Managed Highway Infrastructure: A Code of Practice' (The Code) which was published in 2016. The Code recommends the adoption of a risk based approach to the delivery of highway services, with a move away from the previous prescriptive approach recommended in earlier codes of practice.

To implement the recommendations of The Code, each road in the Borough has been scored and ranked in accordance with a methodology and scoring matrix developed to assess a wide variety of risk factors including road hierarchy, location, use, gradient, inclusion on bus routes, proximity to shops, emergency services, transport hubs and employment centres. This ensures a consistent approach to the delivery of winter services across the Borough.

An operational review of the winter service is undertaken annually, in order to identify operational issues that have occurred. These annual reviews also consider whether there is any evidence of issues having occurred in the Borough that require amendments to the treated network. It is therefore considered that the above process is sufficient to address any risks and issues that arise.

Any amendments to the scoring matrix or alteration to the threshold for inclusion would also require funding and dependant on the outcome require a further route optimisation process and hence the likely need to acquire additional fleet, along with the recruitment of additional staff. This funding would have to be provided by a reduction of other revenue led highway maintenance activities.

Similar to the previous policy development process a full review of the risk assessment scoring matrix would take around 18 months to two years from commencement through to implementation and is considered would require further wider consultation and a number of visits to Committee to seek approvals to progress.

In summary, the previous policy development process undertaken was robust and subject to a series of consultations prior to the policy being adopted. It includes an annual review process to address changes to the highway network and as a core part considers additional data and intelligence in proposing any changes. Also, the Highways Service only has a finite level of resource, which considering the existing demands on the service is already stretched. Should a further review of the winter service be initiated, a significant amount of officer time will have to be diverted from other vital tasks, reducing the departments performance and increasing risk to the Council.