

Operational Plan

Part 1 - Policy

1.1 General Statement of Policy

- 1.1.1 The Council has a statutory duty to comply with the requirements 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”*.
- 1.1.2 Reference is made to the meeting of the Environmental Services Committee of 27th October 2004 which approved the Council's Winter Service policy as set out in the Winter Maintenance Operational Plan. This document is subject to an annual review at Officer level.
- 1.1.3 The National Code of Practice for Roads Maintenance , 'Well Maintained Highways' published by the Institution of Highways and Transportation in July 2005, advises all local authorities to establish and publish clear policies and operational plans defining the extent of the winter service.
- 1.1.4 The code also advises that the policy and operational plan is widely known and understood, especially by road users. To meet this requirement it is proposed that copies of the plan are made available in main public libraries and Council Access Points. In addition, winter maintenance leaflets are available to the public throughout Moray.
- 1.1.5 In the light of continuing changes and development in the treatment of winter conditions and changes to, and expansion of the road network, it is essential that the policy is updated in accordance with the recommendations of the Code of Practice.
- 1.1.6 The Council's policy objectives in relation to winter service is defined as *“the reduction, as far as practicable, of the effects of adverse weather conditions on the movement of people and vehicles, in order to provide safe travel on public roads within the boundaries of Moray”*.

1.2 Priorities and Standards - Carriageways

- 1.2.1 **Priority 1** routes will include all class A roads, and most class B roads along with an assortment of other classes of road in order to maximise route treatment efficiency. These roads serve as the main routes between communities, or major traffic distributors within communities which carry heavy traffic flows, or serve as public service bus routes, or give access to public service, or emergency facilities providing an essential public service. In special circumstances a road which does not meet the above definition may be considered a Priority 1 route if it is regularly used and presents special hazards because it is habitually liable to drifting snow or freezing because of altitude or exposure etc. A road designated as priority 1 need not be considered a priority 1 route at all times. A certain degree of flexibility is necessary to take account of severe weather conditions.
- 1.2.2 The standard to be aimed at on Priority 1 routes is that these routes should never become impassable to traffic except in abnormal conditions. Snow and ice clearance should be started as soon as practical when the need for it becomes apparent. Equipment and resources should be provided and should be capable of being deployed sufficiently quickly to be able to complete treatment of ice within three hours of the commencement of treatment.

- 1.2.3 For these routes there are 24 hour standby arrangements for staff and equipment throughout the Winter Service period, such that the response time from an instruction from a responsible officer of the authority to commence winter service operations to the start of snow or ice clearing on site should not be greater than 1 hour. Temperatures and forecasts will be monitored from 1st October until the 30th April and the Winter Service period will be decided upon each year by the Roads Maintenance Manager and his staff based on weather information.
- 1.2.4 Consideration will be given to the pre-salting of Priority 1 routes on receipt of an adverse weather forecast, to prevent the formation of ice or to make the clearing of snow or ice from the surface of the road less difficult.
- 1.2.5 A list of Priority 1 routes has been drawn up for Moray. The routes are collated into convenient lengths to be dealt with by one or more vehicles. Regard has been taken of the availability of depots, salt and sand dumps, and the need to keep mileage which is run empty for reloading, to an absolute minimum.
- 1.2.6 The Priority 1 routes will be reviewed annually in the late summer/autumn months to take account of changes to the road layout, e.g., in the light of new development and particularly the opening of new community facilities, e.g. schools, or health centres or similar, or in the light of changes in the road network and amendments to the routing of Public Transport. This exercise should be completed by 30 September, carried out jointly by the Roads Maintenance Manager and his operational staff. The Priorities are as listed in Appendices C & D of The Operational Plan.
- 1.2.7 The standard to be aimed at for Priority 1 routes is that these should be treated and kept open to traffic at all times if at all practicable. When frost is forecast these routes should be treated to prevent the formation of ice. Where ice has formed overnight treatment of these routes should commence at 06:00 hrs and treatment will normally be completed by 08:30 hrs. Where conditions so demand, treatment will continue throughout the working day, with additional resources committed to the operation if necessary. Because of resource constraints and low traffic levels through the night, treatment should not continue beyond 21:30hrs except in exceptional circumstances. It should be noted that treatment times in snow conditions will vary significantly, and that even a moderate fall of snow will at least double the time taken to treat a route. The response time to a report of adverse conditions on Priority 1 routes should be no greater than 1 hour from receipt of instructions from a responsible Officer of the authority that there is sufficient residual salt on Priority 1 routes and with
- 1.2.8 **Priority 2** routes will be certain classified and unclassified roads not included in the Priority 1 list but which serve as secondary roads between small communities, or as district traffic distributors within larger communities, and which carry medium traffic flows or give access to community or public facilities of a non essential nature. The Priorities are as listed in Appendices C & D of The Operational Plan.
- 1.2.9 The standard to be aimed at for Priority 2 routes is that these should be treated only after all Priority 1 routes have been opened to traffic. It is not considered practicable because of the limited number of drivers with the appropriate large goods vehicles licences and because of the constraints imposed by Drivers' legislation, the Working Time Directive and Health and Safety legislation, to provide sufficient vehicles to treat all priority routes simultaneously. Normally, if road conditions on Priority 2 routes warrant treatment, these routes will be dealt with on completion of Priority 1 routes. The response time to a report of adverse conditions on Priority 2 routes will depend upon the progress of treatment of Priority 1 routes but will not normally be less than 3½ hours from the receipt of instructions from a responsible Officer of the authority. Priority 2 routes will not be treated on Sundays or Public Holidays. On occasions it may be prudent to pre-treat Priority 2 routes where it is considered that there is sufficient residual salt on Priority 1 routes and with forecasts of severe adverse weather moving in. This would only be deemed appropriate when little or no residual salt levels existed on Priority 2 routes.

- 1.2.10 **Priority 3** routes are access roads to isolated communities in the rural areas and link roads in urban areas. The Priorities are as listed in Appendices C & D of The Operational Plan.
- 1.2.11 The standard to be aimed at for Priority 3 routes is that these should be treated only after all Priority 1 and 2 routes have been opened to traffic. It is not considered practicable because of the limited number of drivers with the appropriate large goods vehicles licences, because of the constraints imposed by Drivers' legislation, the Working Time Directive and Health and Safety legislation to provide sufficient vehicles to treat all priority routes simultaneously. Normally if road conditions on Priority 3 routes warrant treatment these routes will be dealt with on completion of Priority 2 routes. The response time to a report of adverse conditions on Priority 3 routes will depend upon the progress of treatment of Priority 2 routes but will not normally be less than 3½ hours from the receipt of instructions from a responsible officer of the authority. Priority 3 routes will not be treated on Sundays or Public Holidays.
- 1.2.12 **Priority 4** routes are local access roads, service roads and minor roads in the urban areas where it could be expected that residents and employees etc could make their way with some difficulty in all but the most severe conditions to the nearest higher priority route. The Priorities are as listed in Appendices C & D of The Operational Plan.
- 1.2.13 The standard for Priority 4 routes will be that these routes will not normally be treated unless conditions are severe enough to affect the safe passage of emergency vehicles for a considerable period of time and/or, where it is considered in the light of prevailing weather forecasts or exceptional depth of snow, packed snow or ice, that the conditions might be expected to persist for some time. (In the case of a request by an emergency service or an event such as a funeral the route in question would be treated.) Priority 4 routes will not normally be treated until all routes of a higher priority have been opened to traffic.
- 1.2.14 **Priority 5** routes are Private Unadopted and privately maintained roads and roads or lanes providing a secondary means of access for service vehicles and roads on which there are no direct accesses to any habitations. Priority 5 routes will not be treated unless requested by an emergency service, or necessary for an event such as a funeral.

1.3 Priorities and Standards – Footways and Cycleways

- 1.3.1 Pre-treatment of footways/cycleways will not be carried out.
- 1.3.2 The priority with regard to the sanding, salting, or snow clearance of footways is that priority will be given to those footways in the Moray Council area which carry the greatest number of pedestrians, that is, the central areas of towns or villages where the shopping and commercial facilities are concentrated, and to footways whose gradients are so steep that they would be dangerous when covered with ice or hard packed snow, and to footways in the vicinity of major public service, medical or community facilities providing an essential public service and where numbers of infirm, elderly, accompanied infants and young children are likely to congregate. The list of Priority footpaths are as listed in Appendix D of The Operational Plan and are reviewed annually.
- 1.3.3 The standard to be aimed at for footways on the Priority 1 list is that these footways should be kept in a safe condition for pedestrians during the whole of the business day i.e.. 0900 to 1700 hrs Monday to Saturday inclusive and on Sundays as required.
- 1.3.4 Snow or ice clearance should be started as soon as practicable when the need for such treatment becomes apparent. Equipment and resources should be provided and should be capable of being deployed sufficiently quickly to be able to salt, grit or clear a pathway through a moderate snowfall within 2 hours of the start of operations.

1.3.5 All other footways and cycleways in the Moray Council area will be considered to have a lower priority although again priority will be given to the more heavily trafficked routes. These routes will be treated when Roads Maintenance or other Council Departments are prevented by weather conditions from carrying out their normal duties or when conditions are severe enough to prevent the passage of pedestrians for a considerable period of time and where it is considered, in the light of prevailing weather forecasts, that the conditions might be expected to persist.

1.3.6 Rural footways will not be treated.

1.3.7 Privately maintained footways and cycleways will not be treated.

1.4 Priorities and Standards - Car Parks

1.4.1 During the working week the car park attendant will inspect the multi-storey car parks at 07:00hrs and instruct the Duty Supervisor of the action to be commenced at normal starting time. If no instruction is received the default action shall be no action. If necessary the car park attendant will close off the upper levels to afford unhindered access. At weekends a decision will be made by the Duty Officer each Friday as to resource requirements for Saturday and Sunday. These resources, if required, will be available from 06:00 hrs with action to be taken at the discretion of the Duty Supervisor. Priority should be given to Batchen Street where all vehicles are required to use the uncovered area at the exit ramp. Evening pre-treatments will only be instructed under exceptional weather conditions.

1.4.2 The clearing of snow or ice from all other car parks will commence when resources become available. Priorities are detailed in Appendix F of The Operational Plan.

1.5 Grit Boxes

1.5.1 On lower priority routes on carriageways, lay-bys and footways, grit boxes or grit heaps should be provided where the gradients are such that they would create difficulty for vehicles and/or pedestrians should winter conditions persist; and then only where they can be sited without inconvenience or danger to residents and road users. They may also be considered necessary or appropriate on higher priority routes where particular hazards are known to exist. The location of Grit Boxes are listed in Appendix G of The Operational Plan.

1.5.2 These grit boxes and grit heaps will be provided, maintained and kept filled by Roads Maintenance staff, so that sand/salt mixture is readily available to roadmen, other Council employees or indeed to local residents, should they choose to use the facility. The locations and condition of all grit boxes should be reviewed annually in late summer/autumn.