

Agenda item: 

**Decision maker:** Cabinet Member for Traffic and Transportation

**Subject:** Winter Maintenance Operational Plan 2014/15

**Date of decision:** 25<sup>th</sup> September 2014

**Report by:** Head of Transport and Environmental Services

**Wards affected:** All Wards.

**Key decision:** No

**Budget & policy framework decision:** No

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## 1. Summary

This Council has a duty to ensure that safe passage along a highway is not endangered by snow or ice, so far as reasonably practicable. This duty has been included in the Portsmouth Highways PFI contract and the responsibility to provide the Winter Maintenance Service has been transferred under this contract to Ensign Highway Limited.

## 2. Purpose of report

For the Cabinet Member for Traffic and Transportation to approve this report and to accept that the proposed Winter Maintenance Operational Plan (WMOP) will provide the required level of service as prescribed in the PFI contract and legislation

## 3. Background

The Railway and Transport Safety Act 2003 places a duty on a Highway Authority under Section 41 of the Highways Act 1980 to ensure, **so far as reasonably practicable**, that safe passage along a highway is not endangered by snow or ice. This legal requirement has been included in the PFI contract as an Authorised Highway Function and transferred to Ensign/Colas, the PFI Service Provider.

The WMOP covers the City's core responsibilities and is updated in the summer of each year to take into account lessons learnt from the previous winter. In the case of extreme conditions, the WMOP should be read in conjunction with emergency and business continuity plans.

Since 2011 additional funding of £25k per annum has been granted for additional salt bins/winter maintenance. This has been used to purchase new/replacement equipment, snow and ice leaflets and flagship articles etc.

No snow events occurred in the 2013/14 period. A brief summary of the key lessons learnt from the snow conditions that occurred in January 2013 is listed below :-

- A dry run exercise in the autumn last year proved very useful in that it proved some concerns around equipment. This was resolved in time for the winter. Another dry run exercise is planned to take place this autumn.

- Improved communication required with the Police to ensure that PCC/Colas are informed when the Police choose to close roads. Also improved communication required with Fareham Borough Council with regards to cross boundary roads.
- Having two Duty Officers worked well and has been written into the plan.
- More powerful horns have been installed on the gritters and deflectors for the ploughs to make road users/pedestrians aware of their presence.
- Due to the poor standard of some of the equipment used in the last snow event, 2 Tracmasters have been purchased for pavement snow clearance.
- Additional resource is in place to clear the Guildhall Square as a priority in a snow event.

In the event of snow conditions, priority 1 and 2 roads and footways will be cleared first, followed by key priority 3 roads and footways such as hill slope roads in the north of the city.

#### **4. Recommendations**

- 4.1 That the updated Winter Maintenance Operational Plan be approved.

#### **5. Reasons for recommendations**

- 5.1 That the approval of this report demonstrates that this Council has confidence that the proposed WMOP conforms to the requirements of the PFI contract.
- 5.2 That the WMOP will ensure safe passage along a prioritised network of roads and footways and that in periods of prolonged or severe weather conditions that a programme of treatment will be extended across the highway network, so far as reasonably practicable.
- 5.3 That the lessons learnt from the snow conditions in January 2013 have been included in the revised WMOP and that it, also, reflects the recommendation contained in the independent review document published by the Department for Transport in July 2010 and the Code of Practice for Well Maintained Highways.

#### **6. Options considered and rejected**

- 6.1 No other options have been considered for the provision of the WMOP.

#### **7. Duty to involve**

- 7.1 As the provision of the Winter Maintenance Service is a statutory duty, only limited consultation will be undertaken with interested parties such as Emergency Services, Hospital Trust, neighbouring Authorities and Public Transport organisations. A pre-winter meeting will be arranged during September with all Council Services to present the WMOP and to discuss how this will interface with their winter arrangements.

#### **8. Implications**

- 8.1 If the Winter Maintenance Service was not to be provided, then this would be a breach of the duty placed on a Highway Authority under Section 41 of the Highways Act 1980 by the Railway and Transport Safety Act 2003.
- 8.2 Untreated roads will cause traffic disruption and high levels of complaint from road user, residents, commercial and industrial businesses.
- 8.3 This may lead to increased levels of complaints to Ward Members and the Council.

**9. Corporate priorities**

This report and the project it refers to contribute to the following Corporate Priorities:

- Protect and support our most vulnerable residents
- Improve efficiency and encourage involvement
- Improve public transport

**10. Equality impact assessment (EIA)**

A preliminary EIA has been completed for the Highways Management Service and no issues were identified.

**11. Legal implications**

The City Solicitor is satisfied that it is within the powers of the City Council to approve the recommendations set out above.

**12. Head of finance’s comments**

There are no financial implications as result of the recommendations contained within this report. The Winter Operational plan is a requirement as part of the existing Highways Management PFI funded Contract with Ensign.

**13. Reason for the matter being dealt with if urgent**

This matter is not urgent.

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Signed by:

**Appendices:**

Appendix A: The Winter Maintenance Operational Plan

**Background list of documents: Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972**

The following documents disclose facts or matters, which have been relied upon to a material extent by the author in preparing this report:

Title of document	Location
1 Highways PFI contract document	Transport and Street Management
2 Highways Act 1980	City Solicitor
3 Railways and Transport Safety Act 2003	City Solicitor

The recommendation(s) set out above were approved/ approved as amended/ deferred/ rejected by Cabinet Member for Traffic and Transportation on 25 September 2014.

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Signed by: Cabinet Member for Traffic and Transportation.