

**REPORT TO: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES
COMMITTEE ON 23 FEBRUARY 2010**

SUBJECT: WINTER MAINTENANCE

BY: DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 The reason for the report is to allow the Committee to consider the issues and actions taken to deal with severe winter weather between mid December 2009 to mid January 2010.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of the Council's Administrative Scheme relating to the maintenance of roads under the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- **Note the approval from the Policy & Resources Committee of 11 January 2010 to homologate the actions of the Chief Executive and senior Officers in dealing with the winter related local emergency;**
- **Note the actions taken by Officers in advance and during the period to deal with the severe winter weather conditions;**
- **Homologate the action of senior Officers in adopting the guidance issued on preserving salt usage during the current shortages;**
- **Note that the Roads Maintenance Manager will conduct a review of the Council's response to the winter conditions as outlined in the report and bring back a further report in late summer identifying any changes required to the current Policy, including the financial implications of any alteration, and**
- **Forward any information that they may have or receive on issues relating to their Ward that could influence change to the current Policy to the Roads Maintenance Manager so that it might inform the review.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Reference is made to the Policy and Resources Committee on 11 January 2010 (Item 3 of the Minute Refers) where the Chief Executive set out the difficulties experienced in dealing with severe and prolonged winter conditions up to that date, and requested that Committee homologate the decisions

taken to clear snow and ice that had required actions in excess of Council Policy with regards to the clearance of snow and ice from roads.

- 3.2 Reference is also made to the Councils Winter Maintenance Specification and Operational Plan approved by this Committee on 27 October 2004 (Item 10 of the Minute Refers). This was the last time the plan was formally approved by the Committee, having been comprehensively reviewed and approved on 3 occasions prior to that date. The plan is however, subject to an annual update at Officer level to ensure that it satisfies any changes to the road network.

Background to Policy

- 3.3 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”.

The National Code of Practice for Highway Maintenance Management, published by The Stationary Office and endorsed and recommended by COSLA (July 2005), advises all local authorities to formally approve, adopt, and publish a Winter Service Operational Plan, based on the principles of this Code.

The Code recognises that “given the scale of financial and other resources involved in delivering the Winter Service and the obvious difficulties in maintaining high levels of plant utilisation for specialist equipment, it is not practically possible either to:

Provide the service on all parts of the network;
nor to:

Ensure running surfaces are kept free of ice or snow at all times, even on the treated parts of the network.

Details of the current Service Levels are contained in **Appendix 1** of this report, and comprehensive details are contained on the Council’s Intranet site.

Resources

- 3.4 The Policy requires that 18 Priority 1 routes are pre-treated when weather reports indicate low temperatures and/or snow and frost is forecast. Guidance is available within the Operational Plan section of the Policy document that requires Officers to instruct appropriate levels of treatment to prevent the build up of snow or ice. These pre-treatments normally take place in two parts, early morning and early evening between the hours of 6.00am and 9.30pm. When conditions dictate, treatments will continue throughout the day and when possible cascade down into lower priority routes. The level of traffic in this area does not justify a 24hr service.
- 3.5 This requires a sufficient labour force to be available to work over this extended working day, therefore to comply with legislative requirements, 4

drivers are required for each vehicle. The normal minimum requirement is therefore 72 drivers, however further operatives are required to drive additional snow clearing equipment, tractors, loaders, snow blowers, etc. Farmers are also under contract to assist in clearing minor roads. To treat footpaths, and during severe conditions Grounds Maintenance staff augment Roads staff, then Cleansing and Housing staff and, in extreme conditions, external contractors are also hired in to assist.

- 3.6 To treat roads and footways and remove snow and ice, the Council has a fleet of 36 snowploughs/gritters, 5 mini snowploughs/gritters, 3 snow blowers and 14 footway tractors/spreaders. At the start of each winter these vehicles are mechanically prepared for the harsh conditions they have to experience. The work is undertaken by the Councils team of 16 mechanics in Fleet Services. However, operating in harsh weather conditions in a corrosive environment means that accidents and breakdowns can be a common occurrence.
- 3.7 The Council has arrangements in place to stockpile salt for the best part of a 'normal' winter (generally the maximum stock that can be accommodated), and additional orders are placed with the aim of keeping stockpiles above pre determined minimum levels that vary throughout the winter. Except for a small salt barn near Aradoul, none of our salt is stored under cover. If temperatures are forecast to be lower than minus 5 degrees Celsius, or routes being treated are known to have low traffic flows and/or there is compacted snow, then the salt may be mixed with sand to provide vehicles with a level of traction.
- 3.8 The decision making process of whether or not to treat roads is made daily depending on prevailing conditions and forecast information received under contract from the Met office. The Council has sensors located at key locations that provide continuous real-time information on road and air conditions. Information is also available from cameras located throughout the north east of Scotland. The experience of Road Maintenance duty staff is crucial in the interrogation of all of this information to identify the level of response required. This is particularly important when marginal conditions prevail.

December 2009 – January 2010 Conditions

- 3.9 December and January experienced particularly severe winter weather conditions. The extent and extreme nature of this weather event is unprecedented in recent years, and it has been widely recognised as being the worst weather throughout the whole of the UK in over 30 years. For example, precipitation, almost always snow, was recorded at the Rothes Glen ice sensor every day except one, between the 19th December and 11th January. The fact that these heavy overnight snow events preceded days where available resources were reduced (weekends, holidays) made treatment of lower priority routes less likely leading to fresh snow becoming compacted and frozen.
- 3.10 It is important to recognise from the outset that this is not just a problem in Moray, but for the whole of the UK. Our planning and resources to deal with

winter weather do not extend to such a protracted period, leading the Chief Executive in his report to Policy and Resources Committee on 11 January 2010 to classify this as a local civil emergency. Not only were the travelling public affected by the weather conditions, but the conditions lead to difficulties in delivering Community Care Services, keeping schools open and playground areas safe, in being unable to uplift refuse from properties, and providing adequate safe access to community facilities and housing estate roads.

- 3.11 Whilst Moray did not experience the extremely low temperatures recorded elsewhere in the UK, it did experience very low (minus 11 degrees C in Lossiemouth) and almost continuous sub-zero temperatures from 15 December 2009 onwards, with only limited periods of above zero temperatures in late January, insufficient to effect any noticeable thaw. The amount of snowfall in December, meant that we were rarely able to treat below our Priority 1 routes, with multiple treatments and snow ploughing being necessary to keep these primary roads passable. Priority 1 routes account for 46% of the total road network in Moray – high in comparison with some Scottish and UK authorities – but this is of little comfort for motorists whose journeys start and/or finish on lower priority routes.
- 3.12 A build-up of snow on ice had started prior to the Christmas break, and conditions deteriorated over the holiday period. Conditions on footpaths were particularly icy immediately after Christmas, and proved too risky, in some locations, for treatments to be applied by footpath tractor/gritter. The workforce had to revert to the traditional manual application of salt. There was one occasion, immediately after Christmas, when gritters drivers were able to move to treating priority 2 and lower priority roads. However, after losing three gritters to off road accident damage within half an hour, the road conditions were deemed sufficiently dangerous by officers that treatments had to be limited. Significant levels of snow fell around the 5th and 6th January. As a result, ploughing of urban streets and footways and many rural roads became impossible. Some priority one routes were impassable, particularly the A939 Lecht but more significantly the A941 Cabrach for lengthy periods. Snow blowers were used on rural roads however, the only resort, to clearing snow on many urban streets, was by the use of contractor's excavators and lorries to take away the snow - a very expensive operation.
- 3.13 At the start of the winter season, the Council had 13,200 tonnes of salt in stock. The Winter Maintenance Procedure sets minimum and maximum stock levels for every month of the winter. For December these are 8,200 and 13,950 tonnes respectively. At the beginning of December there was 11,774 tonnes in stock.
- 3.14 In an average winter, the Council could expect to use 15,500 tonnes of salt. The severity of snow and ice prior to Christmas meant that our stocks of salt were rapidly depleted. Orders were placed, on the 9th, 16th and 29th December, for further deliveries. We received approximately 1000 tonnes on 28 Dec 2009, less than was ordered and about 1 week later than originally expected. The next delivery, part of a shipment into Buckie, was 1500 tonnes on the 20th January and we have received some more salt in February.

These top-ups should have been sufficient to see us through a normal winter, but, by this time, salt stocks were having to be conserved, with salt/sand mix being used on priority one routes and sand only on lower priority routes and footways. This continues at the time of writing this report

- 3.15 Due to the country-wide extent of the severe weather, the Scottish Government Resilience Room (SGoRR(O)) was put into operation from 22 December 2009 to oversee the issues arising from the weather conditions.
- 3.16 Fundamental to the difficulties that have been experienced has been the limited supplies of rock salt available to treat roads. Our supplies were being depleted quickly, and orders placed were not being scheduled for delivery. The UK Government set up a national Salt Cell on 7 January 2010 to manage the distribution of salt to roads authorities. As Scotland was classed as a regional unit, a Scottish Salt Cell was set up on 8 January 2010 and has been informed of the distribution/stockpile situation by local authorities and Transport Scotland ever since. This Cell has informed Ministers through a Cabinet Sub-Committee on Severe Weather, and has guided the supply of rock-salt, since early January, to those with the most pressing need, and will undoubtedly continue to do so for the remainder of the winter.
- 3.17 Supplies of salt for the UK remain critically low and imported salt is now being offered at higher prices. With stocks low, these sources of materials cannot be refused.
- 3.18 Our contract for winter weather forecasts include a daily forecast and a 2 to 5 day forecast. As late as the 11th December, the 2 to 5 day forecast was reporting no winter issues on the 14th and 15th December. That was the case except for the highest roads but conditions gradually worsened and, by the 19th December, snow and ice was affecting all roads and footpaths,
- 3.19 It is only very recently that the Met Office have been prepared to offer forecasts beyond 5 days. Roads Maintenance staff are aware, from experience, how difficult forecasting even a few days ahead can be.
- 3.20 Most Roads Maintenance operatives and additional labour from Grounds Maintenance were employed in snow clearing before the Christmas break. In line with Council policy, all operatives are required to take leave between Christmas and New Year, with sufficient priority one drivers on standby to return to duty on request. This has been sufficient in the past, to cope with winter conditions. There are notice periods involved in either, instructing an employee to take holidays, or, employees requesting holidays, or, refusing requests for holidays. This makes it difficult to react to weather forecasts, and without the foresight of how long the event would last. Managers therefore rely on the good-will of operatives when requested to report for work. The same applies to employees who are not on standby and have left work at the end of the day. Typically 50 employees worked on providing a winter service between Christmas and New Year including the 36 drivers on standby every day throughout the winter. Two duty supervisors and a duty officer are also

on standby every day (one supervisor in the summer months). These standby personnel change over with another 39 employees every week.

- 3.21 As mentioned in Para 3.12 above, conditions were very difficult at times and inevitably, gritters suffer from breakdown and accidental damage. Council plant was worked in demanding circumstances which requires a demanding maintenance and repair schedule. Workshop staff and mechanics were also called back to work from leave. One of the consequences of the bad weather across the country was the difficulty in getting necessary parts delivered to our workshops.
- 3.22 Uncovered salt with a higher moisture content, mixed with damp sand, and very low temperatures meant that freezing of salt and salt / sand mixes in small stockpiles and in the back of gritters was a significant problem adding to downtime.
- 3.23 The Councils Corporate Management Team met regularly throughout the first 2 weeks of January for situation updates of all Council Services experiencing weather related difficulties, and continued to receive daily reports on weather, treatments, plant and labour until 25 January 2010 when conditions moderated slightly.

The combined effects of a protracted period of winter weather, continuous below freezing temperatures and a shortage of materials led to a build up of snow and ice that became difficult or impossible to remove with existing equipment. As well as the Farmers contracted before the start of each winter to plough snow on request, additional contractors had to be brought in to excavate snow from many towns and villages, and agricultural machinery was hired in to break up hard-packed ice.

- 3.24 The snow and ice might have dispersed more quickly had sufficient rock salt been available to spread on all priority roads. Our normal practice is to spread neat salt (or a 1:1 mix with sand on less heavily trafficked roads). Based on guidance issued and endorsed by professional bodies and Scottish Government, lower salting levels have been adopted as current best practice. For the majority of January we have only been able to apply a mix of 1:2 (salt:sand) on Priority 1 routes (typically A and B class roads) , and sand only on lower class roads and footpaths. While this provides traction and a degree of abrasion, it does not have the faster disposal qualities of neat salt applications.
- 3.25 Salt also is less effective at lower temperatures unless the quantity of salt is increased.
- 3.26 The Scottish Government continues to receive daily returns on salt usage and stockpiles and has encouraged mutual aid amongst authorities when stocks have been heavily depleted.
- 3.27 Winter weather in the UK is unpredictable with snow and ice normally lasting for a few days at any time and generally with temperatures a few degrees

each side of freezing. These marginal conditions require robust decision making processes to be in place as described earlier in the report. It also means that the equipment used to disperse snow and ice is sufficient for 'normal' conditions, but less able for extreme conditions.

- 3.28 In contrast, many European countries that experience routine severe winter conditions have adopted alternative strategies, less dependent on the complete removal of snow and ice, more on vehicles and pedestrians adapting to the conditions.
- 3.29 It is clear from press coverage and correspondence received by the Council, that one public perception has been of the Council providing a poor standard of winter maintenance service. Their expectations of what a Council can reasonably do to prevent disruption to normal activities, and the speed at which the dispersal of snow and ice can occur is over estimated and unrealistic.
- 3.30 Specific mention has been made to clearing works being constrained by budget pressures. This is not the case, and never has been the case. Winter maintenance is considered to be an essential safety measure. The service has however to be seen in the light that it is not an instant solution, it has to be prioritised, it will involve disruption to services or expectations and the travelling public have a responsibility to take extra care and respond to the prevailing conditions they experience.
- 3.31 A reflection of the dissatisfaction is expressed by comparing the 2008/09 winter, when 45 items of correspondence / requests for service regarding winter conditions were received by the Roads Maintenance Manager, to the period mid December to mid January, for 2009/10, where the number has increased to 1244.
- 3.32 The high level of service standards, that might be inferred is expected given public reaction to the conditions, is unlikely to be affordable for any Council, and in terms of labour and plant available locally it is also unachievable. A small amount of community effort has been reported in clearing snow and this has received very favourable press coverage. Individual, business and community self help is to be applauded. Unfortunately, the extent to which these efforts assisted the overall situation was minimal in comparison with the resources the Council had deployed over the period. There are over 600 grit bins located throughout Moray plus salt heaps put out on verges at selected locations on lower priority roads. As our resources were stretched, that affected our ability to restock these supplies, i.e. fill grit bins or treat public footways.

Winter Statistics

- 3.33 By way of reviewing the winter maintenance treatments conducted during the worst of the conditions, the following statistics are of note (figures are for the period 14 December 2009 – 18 January 2010).

- The winter gritting fleet of vehicles travelled ~85,000 miles.
- Fuel usage over the period has gone up from 49,000 litres in 2008/09 to 89,000 litres.
- Spreading salt on Priority 1 routes normally uses 80 - 120 tonnes per day, but prior to restrictions in salt usage, as much as 500 tonnes were used daily.
- Our total salt usage for 2008/09 winter was ~21,000 tonnes.
- Our salt usage over the dates above was ~8,100 tonnes, (sand usage ~7,700 tonnes), and in total for 2009/10 winter to date of writing this report has been ~13,500 tonnes. This highlights the effects of rationing salt.
- To carry out treatments on Priority 1 routes requires a total of 126 man hours daily. To deal with current adverse conditions, we have seen 1250 man hours regularly worked.
- Vehicles mechanics have worked ~1,300 hrs to keep sufficient vehicles on the road.
- In Rothes Glen, between the 20th December and the 12th January, the road surface temperature only went above zero twice – to 0.5 C.
- In Keith the total precipitation recorded has increased from 16 cm in 2008/09 to 58 cm in 2009/10.
- 19 contractors have been employed to assist with the clearing operations in towns and villages.
- 30 farmers are contracted to assist with clearing operations on minor roads.

Review of Procedures

- 3.34 The extreme nature of this winter has tested available resources and it is necessary to review both how we have responded to these events, and how prepared we may have to be to respond to any future similar event. This will take place at the end of winter.

Although not exclusive, areas of service delivery that need to be examined are:

- Extent of Priority 1 routes.
- Access to community facilities.
- Availability of workforce / outside contractors.
- Condition and suitability of winter maintenance fleet.
- Salt storage provision
- Salt deliveries and procurement changes.
- Communications and vehicle tracking.
- Affordability of service.

Consequences

- 3.35 As the snow and ice has receded (for the time being) it has revealed extensive damage to surfaces, with numerous potholes and other surface deteriorations becoming apparent. Where these are unsafe, warning signs are being erected. Normal inspection regimes have been supplemented

with 'find and fix' patrols that are infilling potholes with temporary repairs. When the weather conditions improve, more lasting repairs can be undertaken. In some cases, the extent of the damage will suggest the need to resurface lengths of road. This and available budget will influence the repairs and maintenance priorities for the 2010/11 programme.

- 3.36 With higher levels of sand being spread due to the salt shortages, considerable amounts remain on roads and footpaths. Unlike salt, this does not dissolve with rainfall, and so it will remain until uplifted by road sweepers. Town centre areas are being cleared. For the moment other areas are being left as the winter continues. Eventually, if not lifted, this sand will make its way into drainage systems. Additional resources will be required to clean gullies and manholes at the conclusion of winter.
- 3.37 Critical to reducing the possibilities of recurrence of these problems, will be more robust country wide arrangements for the supply and delivery of salt in future. It is planned that the local purchasing arrangements with adjoining Councils will cease, with salt transferring to a national purchasing contract under the management of Scotland Excel.

4. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

(a) Single Outcome Agreement/Service Improvement Plan

The proposals in this report support one of the key priorities in the 2009 Single Outcome Agreement, that of Roads/Transport.

(b) Policy and Legal

The Council is responsible for the maintenance of 1534km of road which have been adopted by the Local Authority in terms of the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984. The Act places a duty on the Local Authority to maintain the roads, lighting units and structures so adopted, but does not prescribe the level of maintenance to be delivered.

Codes of Practice for Highway Maintenance Management, Management of Highway Structures and for Highway Lighting Management identify good practice and consideration has to be given to this advice.

The Council's Winter Maintenance Policy and Procedures set out requirements in relation to provision of a winter maintenance service.

(c) Resources (Financial, Risks, Staffing and Property)

Financial:

In presenting the revenue budget expenditure details to this committee in March 2009, it was identified that the principal

financial risk arises late in the financial year if unforeseen works have to be carried out to comply with legal and policy obligations, for example, a worse than average winter.

The 2009/10 budget allowance for winter maintenance of roads is £1.9m. The estimated cost of work to date, with a forecast until the end of March (based on no further extreme conditions being experienced) is £3m. This updates the estimate presented to the Policy & Resources Committee in early January as the period of severe weather was not known at that time. A further £15k was spent on clearing snow from Moray schools in early January.

Staffing and Vehicles:

The March 2009 report also identified that, it is important to have regard to maintaining the size of the workforce, particularly to provide a winter maintenance service in line with Council Policy and in accordance with legislation on health & safety, driver's hours and working time directives.

(d) Consultations

Lorraine Paisey, Principal Accountant has been consulted and is in agreement with the financial implications.

5. CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 Employees of the Council are committed to providing, and did provide the best possible winter service within the resources available to the Council whether that was returning to work from holiday or balancing the needs and demands of the travelling public against the requirements of the Moray Council Winter Maintenance Policy and Procedures.**
- 5.2 In the run up to this period, the weather forecasts gave no indication of the start, extent and duration of the winter conditions. Nevertheless, the requirements of the Council's Operational Plan were all in place and capable of dealing with a "normal" spell of winter weather. What then transpired caused chaos over the whole of the UK, and not just in Moray.**
- 5.3 Stocks of salt were closely monitored, and orders to replenish stockpiles were placed in time, but could not be delivered due to a national shortage that is forecast to continue for the rest of this winter.**
- 5.4 Every available resource has been tasked with clearing snow, and this has been augmented by using private contractors as necessary. This has been especially useful in getting schools back timeously after the Christmas break, and allowing a sense of normality to return to lower priority roads within settlements.**

- 5.5 It is important to carefully review the actions taken and identify areas for improvement. This winter should also be considered as an exceptional weather event, and judgements made must be tempered by the service provided in more routine winters, and the significantly lower level of complaints received previously since the current policy was approved in 2004.**
- 5.6 However any additional enhancement to current policy levels will have a cost implication and this will come back to this Committee for consideration before any change is made in the present financial climate.**

Author of Report: Alexander Ritchie, Head of Direct Services

Background Papers:

Ref:

WINTER MAINTENANCE SERVICE LEVELS

General Statement

It is proposed that the Council's policy objectives in relation to winter service is now 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”***.

Priorities and Standards – Carriageways

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 and 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.

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.

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 15th of April and the Winter Service period will be decided upon each year by the Roads Maintenance Manager and his staff based on weather information.

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.

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.

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 and 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.**

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 Council. Treatment times will vary with the conditions encountered.

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.**

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.

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.**

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**.

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 and D of **The Operational Plan**.

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.

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.

Priorities and Standards – Footways and Cycleways

Pre-treatment of footways/cycleways will not be carried out.

The priority with regard to the sanding, salting, or snow clearance of footways/cycleways is that priority will be given to those footways/cycleways 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/cycleways are as listed in Appendix E of **The Operational Plan** and are reviewed annually.

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. 09:00 to 17:00 hrs Monday to Saturday inclusive and on Sundays as required.

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.

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.

Rural footways will not be treated.

Privately maintained footways and cycleways will not be treated.

Priorities and Standards - Car Parks

Pre-treatment of multi-storey car parks will be carried out on all occasions when pre-treatment is instructed on low level roads in west Moray. During the working week the car park attendant will inspect those locations at 07:00 hrs 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. On morning action priority should be given to Batchen Street where all vehicles are required to use the uncovered area at the exit ramp. On evening pre-treatments, St. Giles should be treated first.

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**.

Grit Boxes and Grit Heaps

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 as listed in Appendix G of **The Operational Plan**.

The 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.