

CEREDIGION COUNTY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Thriving Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee

DATE: 31 July 2023

LOCATION: Council Chamber, Penmorfa & Zoom

TITLE: Winter Service Provision

PURPOSE OF REPORT: To provide information to members of the Thriving Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee with regards to the winter service policy and provision

REASON SCRUTINY HAVE REQUESTED THE INFORMATION The previous update/review was undertaken in 2018 and the intention of the Service is to undertake a further review in time for the 24/25 winter season

BACKGROUND

The statutory basis for Winter Service was revised by the Secretary of State for Transport in the Railways and Transport Safety Act (2003)

This legislation extended the statutory duty of highway authorities to maintain the highway by the insertion, after Section 41(1) of the Highways Act (1980), of:

'(1A) 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'.

Given the scale of financial and other resources involved in delivering the Winter Service it is not deemed reasonable or realistic to:

Provide the service on all parts of the Network

or

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

The various Winter Service reviews over time, since circa 2006, have, in the main, concentrated on the assessment matrix which is used to score each route and ultimately determines which routes, given the budget available, receive pre-treatment in advance of forecasted ice and / or snow.

This is known as precautionary treatment and is pre-emptive.

Other routes not receiving a pre-emptive treatment are treated reactively after the precautionary routes have been treated and only when resources allow.

Under the 2014 assessment matrix, the length of network which was subject to pre-treatment was set at 437.0km, and therefore to maintain this pre-treatment length due to the constraints imposed by the size of the winter maintenance fleet and other ancillary plant and equipment the cut-off point for pre-treatment under the 2018 assessment matrix was to be set at +3, equating to pre-treatment of 427.9km.

The review undertaken in 2018 was in response to members of the committee requesting that officers review the assessment methodology used to score each route to allow consideration/recognition of the effect that altitude has on temperature and climate.

Due to investment in salt spreading technology and new vehicles since 2014, officers also undertook an assessment to ascertain whether there was scope to increase the length of network that could be pre-treated using the available fleet without requiring additional/increased capital investment.

This further assessment identified that there was capacity available within the existing fleet to increase the length of network that could be the subject of pre-treatment from the 2014 level by 26.1km, which would allow the pre-treatment to be set at +2.

This was undertaken and the changes made were approved by Scrutiny on 10th May 2018 and then ratified by Cabinet on 04th September 2018.

The proposed update in advance of the 24/25 Winter Season will need to align with the approved new *Code of Practice for Highway Safety Inspection and Defect Rectification Policy*.

It is not proposed to introduce any changes to the agreed assessment matrix, but a reassessment of the scores attributed to the individual routes will be undertaken.

It is also proposed to include a more accurate, data-led analysis of the risk criteria in relation to road hierarchy and accident statistics.

It is intended to undertake the review in the coming months, and to report the findings of this more comprehensive review to the Committee for consideration in early 2024.

The overall length of the network that is pre-treated will ultimately be determined by the budget made available to provide the service.

The 2024 review will therefore also scrutinise these budget pressures in order to determine what level of service can be delivered in the 2024/25 winter season, with three possible outcomes:

1. Maintaining the current level of winter service provision which may require additional budget to be identified
2. Increasing the level of winter service provision which will require additional budget to be identified
3. Reducing the level of winter service provision in order to remain within the current budget provided.

Has an Integrated Impact Assessment been completed? If, not, please state why

Not at this time
The report is for information only

Wellbeing of Future Generations:

Summary:
Long term:
Integration:
Collaboration:
Involvement:
Prevention:

Recommendation(s):

It is recommended that members of the *Thriving Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee* request officers to undertake a comprehensive review of the Winter Service in readiness for the 2024/25 Winter Season.

Reasons for decision: To enable a review of the Council's Winter Service provision to be undertaken.

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Date of Report: 22 June 2023