

The Highland Council

**Caithness and Sutherland Area Committee
18 November 2013**

Agenda Item	6.
Report No	CS 37/13

Winter Maintenance Plan for 2013/14

Report by the Director of Transport, Environmental & Community Services

Summary

This report invites Members to approve the Winter Maintenance Plan for the Caithness and Sutherland Area for 2013/14.

1 Introduction

1.1 The Council's Scheme of Delegation to Area Committees gives the Caithness and Sutherland Area Committee the power:

“ to approve the winter maintenance plan within the strategy and budget allocated by TECS Committee”

1.2 Under Section 34 of the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984, 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.

1.3 The Transport, Environmental and Community Service Committee agreed a number of enhancements to the winter maintenance service at its meeting on 16 May 2013 (Report TEC-41-13). These enhancements included:

- a) Engage with communities well before the start of next winter to promote the community self-help scheme.
- b) Provide 3 spare winter maintenance vehicles (one per operational area).
- c) Continue to use local contractors to provide additional resources to assist with snow clearing.
- d) Formalise the arrangements for the treatment of footpaths in sheltered housing schemes.
- e) Continue to ensure that grit bins are kept full.
- f) Reduce the number of Priorities in the Winter Maintenance Policy from 4 to 3, and carry out a comprehensive review of routes to identify those routes which should be re-classified as Priority 1.

Note: While the majority of the existing Priority 2 routes should be considered for re-classification to Priority 1, other difficult routes should also be considered; however the overall length of route to be reclassified as Priority 1 should not exceed a level which requires additional drivers or vehicles.

- 1.4 The Council's Winter Maintenance Policy (approved on 19 September 2013 TEC-67-13) was updated to take account of the enhancements agreed by Members on the 16 May 2013 (Report TEC-41-13).
- 1.5 This policy is in place to ensure a consistent level of service between Areas and to ensure, as much as possible, the safety of drivers/pedestrians. However, the operation of that Policy does not and cannot ensure that every road/footway will be free of ice and/or snow at all times.
- 1.5 The operational management of the Winter Maintenance Policy in Caithness and Sutherland is devolved to the Caithness and Sutherland Areas. Each Area has its own Winter Maintenance Plans which set out the operational details required to deliver a service in its area which complies with the Council's policy. These plans take full account of the recent review recommendations and policy revisions. Due to updated school bus route information, 25km has been added to the Secondary network in Caithness.

2. Winter Maintenance Policy

- 2.1 The Council's Winter Maintenance Policy, which sets out the priority system for the winter maintenance service, is reproduced at **Appendix A**.
- 2.2 The percentage of each Priority on routine treatment routes in Caithness and Sutherland are:

	Caithness/North Sutherland	Sutherland
Primary	30.8%	40.8%
Secondary	27.2%	13.6%
Other	42.0%	42.6%

3. Forecast / Decision Making

- 3.1 The Council employs a professional forecast provider (Meteo Group Ltd) who provides daily and 5 day weather forecasts. Separate forecasts are received for the 8 climatic zones across Highland to support local decision making.
- 3.2 The daily forecast is received at noon and covers the following 24 hours. This forecast is used to plan treatment for the evening and following morning. The forecast is updated at 06:00. If there is any adverse deterioration in the forecast during the forecast period, an update is provided directly to the duty officer(s) by telephone.

- 3.3 Real time data is obtained from 25 icelert sites (including 7 located on the trunk road). These sensors provide information on the road surface temperature, surface condition (wet, dry, ice), and the presence of salt, graded 1, 2 or 3. A Salt 1 level will prevent freezing down to about minus 2 and Salt 3 down to minus 8 degrees Celsius.
- 3.4 Area staff operate a “Duty Officer” rota to ensure that there is always a suitably qualified and experienced person available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, to take decisions on the deployment of appropriate resources to deal with the prevailing weather conditions.
- 3.5 Duty officers have all had training from the weather forecast provider. Training is refreshed every three years.

4. Operatives

- 4.1 The number of manual workers allocated to road maintenance is determined by the number of routes required to deliver the winter maintenance policy, and the establishment currently stands at 38 for Caithness and 26 for Sutherland. The majority of operatives hold an LGV driving licence.
- 4.2 Operatives normally allocated to grounds maintenance and street sweeping are used to provide resources for treating footpaths. A number have been trained as LGV drivers; however the majority hold ordinary driving licences, which restricts their involvement to the treatment of footpaths.
- 4.3 Operatives participate in a standby rota to ensure that cover is always available to deliver a service for medical emergencies overnight.

5. Vehicles and Plant

- 5.1 There are 35 front-line gritters available and 11 footpath tractors. There are 3 spare gritters available across Highland.
- 5.2 The number of front line vehicles has reduced over the last number of years; however the combined spreading capacity increased as we now operate larger vehicles which are able to treat longer routes.
- 5.3 Each rural vehicle treats, on average, 33 km of Primary and Secondary routes followed by 37 km of Other routes. The nature of the network is such that very few routes are circular so there is significant dead mileage in returning to base after a route is completed.
- 5.4 Some footway tractors treat several villages, which involves travel time between routes and reduces the length they can treat in a day.

6. Salt

- 6.1 The average annual usage of salt for Caithness and Sutherland has increased over the past 3 winters and is now around 25,000 tonnes. In the current year there is

sufficient salt in stock or on order.

- 6.2 Salt usage varies with prevailing weather conditions and typical usage levels are shown below:

	Caithness	Sutherland
Evening Pre-treatment	44 tonnes	34 tonnes
Morning treatment for ice	74 tonnes	73 tonnes
Snow (repeated treatments)	220 tonnes	219 tonnes

7. Network Hierarchy

- 7.1 As it is not possible to provide a winter maintenance service to every road at the same time, a network hierarchy has been adopted. This is detailed in the Winter Maintenance Policy, reproduced at **Appendix A**. Primary routes are generally done first, then Secondary routes with Other routes treated as resources allow.
- 7.2 The treatment routes are indicated within the Caithness and Sutherland Winter Maintenance Plans, reproduced at **Appendix B**.

8. Treatments

- 8.1 Winter maintenance treatments consist of morning routes, evening precautionary treatment routes and, during extreme/poor conditions, continuous or all day treatments. Operations begin at 0600hrs and can continue to 2100hrs. Sunday operations begin at 0700 hrs and treat Primary routes only, unless extreme conditions are being experienced.
- 8.2 Treatments consist of blading or ploughing the road surface, together with the application of pure salt or salt/sand mix (for particular conditions). A spread rate for salt application has been agreed by Council, dependent on weather conditions.

9. Resource Implications

- 9.1 There are no resource issues arising from this report.
- 9.2 There are no legal implications arising from this report.
- 9.3 There are no equality issues arising from this report.
- 9.4 There are no issues on Carbon Emissions arising from this report, although the Service is embarking on specialist training for all operatives in respect to fuel efficient driving.

10. Recommendation

10.1 The Committee is invited to approve Winter Maintenance Plans for the Caithness and Sutherland area as contained in **Appendix B**.

Designation : Director of Transport, Environmental and Community Services

Date : 31 October 2013

Author : Campbell Stewart, Area Roads & Community Works Manager,
Caithness, Sutherland & Easter Ross.

Background papers: Updated Winter Maintenance Policy – Report no TEC 67/13,
Transport, Environmental & Community Services Committee, 19
September 2013.

Appendix A



The Highland Council

Transport, Environmental & Community Services

Winter Maintenance Policy

August 2013

Winter Maintenance Policy

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THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Transport, Environmental and Community Services

Winter Maintenance Policy

1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Under Section 34 of the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984, 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.
- 1.2 This Winter Maintenance Policy relates to the Council's responsibilities as Roads Authority for adopted roads, cycle ways, footways and footpaths.
- 1.3 Cross Service Working arrangements exist between Services to ensure that Council properties receive an appropriate winter maintenance service. The appropriate Service Director will determine the appropriate level of winter maintenance service for footpaths, car parks and other areas that are the responsibility of the Council but are not on the list of public Roads.

2.0 GENERAL

- 2.1 With the operational management devolved to the Areas it is essential that a common Winter Maintenance Policy is in place to ensure a consistent service for drivers passing between local Areas.
- 2.2 It is the aim of Highland Council in respect of its winter maintenance service to:-
 - 2.2.1 Provide a winter gritting and snow clearing service which, as far as is reasonably practical, using the resources available, permits the safe movement of vehicles and pedestrians on the adopted road and footway network and seeks to minimise delays attributable to weather conditions.
 - 2.2.2 Conduct operations having regard to the requirements of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and EU and Domestic Driver Hours Regulations.
- 2.3 The Council as Roads Authority is not responsible for Winter Maintenance on unadopted roads and will not provide a Winter Maintenance service for unadopted roads. It will however make every effort to provide assistance for emergency and medical services during severe weather conditions where there is an urgent need for safe access.
- 2.4 The responsibility for Winter Maintenance on Trunk Roads lies with Transport Scotland.
- 2.5 The Council will source Winter Weather Forecasting Services from recognised Meteorological Service Providers during the period 1st October to 30th April.

3.0 TREATMENT OF ROADS

The Council will endeavour to provide the highest level of service possible within the resource available. During winter, especially during severe weather, it may not be possible to keep every road free from ice and snow at all times.

The treatment of roads will be carried out based on a hierarchical system dependant on route priority. The time taken to complete the treatment of routes will vary from day to day depending on actual weather conditions and can be expected to increase significantly during periods of snow due to having to plough both sides of the road.

3.1 NETWORK HIERARCHY

The following prioritised hierarchy will be used to determine the order of treatment of roads.

PRIMARY (Highest)	Strategic, Regional, Sub Regional and Link roads which serve the larger communities and permit the majority of road users to travel across the region. Main & Local distributor roads in the larger urban settlements. High frequency service bus routes operating at least 6 days a week and starting prior to 7am with identified hazards.
SECONDARY	Roads connecting smaller communities to the primary network. Link and Service roads within the larger urban settlements. Service and school* bus routes not covered by the Primary network.
OTHER	Minor rural and local access roads. Residential roads in urban settlements.

Gritting may not be completed on all routes before buses start their journeys.

* Contracted school buses and/or mini buses (9 passenger seats or more)

The priority network will be agreed by Area Committee. Leaflets with maps showing the Primary and Secondary network will be made available to the public at the start of each winter period.

3.2 TREATMENT TIMES - MONDAY TO SATURDAY

The service will be provided between 6am and 9pm. Treatment after 6pm will in general be restricted to Primary routes only.

3.3 TREATMENT TIMES – SUNDAYS AND PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

3.3.1 Sundays, 25th December and 1st January

The service will be provided between 7am and 9pm and will be restricted to the Primary network only. During periods of sustained snow, or where significant snow conditions are forecast, the service may be extended to include difficult Secondary routes.

3.3.2 26th December and 2nd January

The service will be provided between 7am and 9pm and treatment will be restricted to the Primary and Secondary networks only. Where December 26th and January 2nd fall on a Sunday then a Sunday service will be provided.

3.4 PRECAUTIONARY TREATMENT

Precautionary treatment carried out the previous evening, normally before 9pm, in advance of forecasted adverse weather, will in general be restricted to Primary routes only.

3.5 TREATMENT DURING SNOW CONDITIONS

In times of severe weather, resources will be concentrated on keeping the Primary network clear and as a result there may be a delay before it is possible to treat the Secondary and Other road network, including residential streets. In exceptional snow conditions external contractors will be deployed to assist with snow clearance.

3.6 SNOW GATES

For safety reasons Snow Gates are located on routes where drifting snow can make the route impassable very quickly. The closure and subsequent opening of snow gates will only take place with the authority of the Police.

The roads controlled by snow gates within the Highland area are as follows:

- A939 Bridge of Brown
- A939 Grantown to Dava
- A939 Dava to Ferness
- A832 Braemore to Dundonnell
- B9007 Carrbridge to Ferness
- B9176 Struie Hill Road
- Cairngorm Ski Road
- Bealach na Ba

In severe snow conditions the Council may withdraw resources from these roads and allow the storm to abate. In such circumstances resources may be diverted to assist snow clearing operations on other parts of the network. Additional resources may be employed during such snow conditions.

3.7 TARGET TREATMENT TIMES

The following are the target times for completion of routes during conditions of ice and light snow.

3.7.1 Monday to Saturday

PRIMARY ROUTES	8.30am.
SECONDARY ROUTES	9.00am.
OTHER	As resources and conditions permit.

3.7.2 Sundays, 25th / 26th December and 1st / 2nd January

PRIMARY ROUTES	9.30am.
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3.8 TREATMENT OF DIVERSION ROUTES.

Where a road, including a trunk road, is closed to traffic due to either planned works or an emergency situation then the agreed diversion route will be treated as follows.

Trunk Road Closure.

The agreed diversion route will be treated to Primary standard and signs erected at each end of the diversion and any other junctions with trunk roads, stating that there will be no overnight salting.

In an emergency situation and after Transport Scotland or its trunk road management and maintenance agents have notified the Council of the closure, every endeavour will be made to both treat the agreed diversion route appropriately and erect signs before the first overnight period.

Council Road Closure.

Any part of the agreed diversion route that is of a lower priority than the closed road will be treated to the same priority as the closed road.

4.0 TREATMENT OF FOOTWAYS, FOOTPATHS AND CYCLE WAYS.

Treatment for ice and light snow conditions on adopted footways, footpaths and cycle ways will be carried out as set out below. Each gritting route will take a significant length of time to complete. The length of time taken will vary from day to day depending on actual weather conditions.

4.1 NETWORK HIERARCHY

The following prioritised hierarchy will be used in determining the order of treatment of footways.

Priority	Description
PRIMARY	Main urban shopping centres. Primary cycleways.
SECONDARY	Footways serving main urban areas, schools, hospitals and minor shopping areas. Sheltered Housing and locations of special need with known identified hazards.
OTHER	Other footways as resources allow.

4.2 TREATMENT TIMES - MONDAY TO SATURDAY

The winter maintenance service will be provided between 6am and 6pm and routes will be treated on a priority basis as resources permit

4.3 TREATMENT TIMES - SUNDAYS AND PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

A service will be provided between 7am and Noon on Primary routes only.

There will be no service for footways on Christmas Day or New Years Day.

-- End of Policy Statement --

Appendix B - Winter Plans

Winter Maintenance Priorities 2013-14

Primary Roads

Road Number / Name	From	To
A836	Meikle Ferry Roundabout	John O'Groats
A837	Invershin	Lochinver
A838	Dalchork Junction	Tongue
A894	Skiag Junction	Laxford Bridge
A897	Helmsdale	Melvich
A949	Dornoch	Bonar Bridge
A99	Wick	John O' Groats
B874	Princes St Thurso	A9 Hoy Junction
B876	A99 junction	A836 junction
B877	High Street, Thurso	Shore Street, Thurso
B9168	Dornoch War Memorial	Trentham
B9176	Struie Road	
C1001	Glengolly	Reay
C1025	Mountpleasant Road, Thurso	
C1041	Willowbank, Wick	Church Street, Wick
C1073	Macarthur Street, Wick	Northcote Street
C1077	A9	B877
C1081	Lovers Lane, Thurso	
U1344	Airport Road, Wick	Wick Industrial Estate Road
U3261	Embo Road	
U3311	Dornoch	Embo junction
U3420	Ackergill Street, Wick	
U3458	Bankhead Road, Wick	
U3494	St Fergus Road, Wick	
U3500	Coach Road, Wick	
U3558	Stafford Terrace, Brora	
U3603	Martha Terrace, Wick	
U3624	North Murchison Street, Wick	
U3632	River Street, Wick	
U3647	Scalesburn, Wick	
U3651	Shore Lane, Wick	
U3660	Wellington Street, Wick	
U3664	Whitechapel Road, Wick	
U3805	Station Road, Wick	
U4003	Castlegreen Road, Thurso	
U4070	Janet Street, Thurso	
U4088	Millbank Road, Thurso	

U4135	Riverside Road, Thurso	
U4313	Provost Cormack Drive, Thurso	
U4341	Henderson Street, Thurso	
U4343	Provost Sinclair Road, Thurso	
U5063	Sir John's Square, Thurso	

Secondary Roads

Road Number / Name	From	To
B855	Dunnet	Brough
B869	Lochinver	Newton
B870	B876 junction	B874 junction
B874	A9 Hoy junction	A99 Junction
C1006	Wester Bridge - Greenland Road	
C1010	Mey - Skarfskerry - Whitebridge road	
C1018	Westerdale	Halkirk
C1019	Old Caithness Road	
C1025	Mountpleasant	Durran
C1026	Skelbo Station	Dornoch
C1030	Gower Street, Brora	
C1033	B876 junction	Greenland
C1033	Upper Gills	Everley
C1037	Hastigrow	Slickly Road junction
C1038	Achnhuie	Rovie Lodge
C1041	Broadhaven Road, Wick	Staxigoe
C1042	Rearquhar	Birichen
C1045	Main Street, Lybster	Jcn A99(T)
C1046	Gartymore	West Helmsdale
C1048	Castletown - Durran Mains road	
C1049	Evelix	Rearquhar
C1057	Thrumster/Haster Road, Jcn A99(T)	Puldagon
C1058	Doll to Kilmain Road	
C1061	Duncansby Road, A99 jcn	Beil Road junction
C1069	Poolhoy to Wester road	
C1074	Altass Road	
C1078	Tirryside Road, Lairg	
C1085	Gills West Branch Road	
C1089	Dunbeath Brae Road (including to war memorial)	
C1102	A839 junction	Schiberscross junction
C1103	Poles	Skelbo Station Road
C1109	Rosehall Link Road	

C1138	Carron Bridge	Baldounie
C1140	Baldounie Bridge	Gledfield
C1148	Link Road A897	A9(T)
C1247	Brough	Barrock
U1053	Achmelvich Road	
U1065	Latheronwheel - Braehungie Road, jcn A99(T)	Boultach
U1237	Puldagon - Newton - Whitebridge Road	
U1280	Wester Watten - Newton Road	
U1300	Gersa - Halcro road	
U1316	Myrelandhorn/Quoybrae road	
U1553	Auckengill Township Road	
U1557	Freswick/Skirza Road	
U1609	Seater/Canisbay/Hill of Warse Road	
U1613	Kirkstyle - Canisbay Road	
U1633	Mey Road	
U1707	Lochend Road	
U1755	Bowermadden - Gillock Road	
U1802	Dunn - Lannergill Road	
U1865	Braal Terrace	
U1871	Halkirk/Plocan Road	
U1913	Plocan - Brawlbin - Dorrery Road	
U1927	Brawlbin - Shurrery Road	
U2052	Forss	Achreamie
U2066	Buldoe/Achreamie Road	
U2105	Forss - Westfield Road	
U2110	Lythmore Road	
U2144	Newlands of Geise - Langland Road	
U2158	Holburn Head Road - round loop St Clair Ave/Holburn Place	
U2188	Weydale Road	
U2196	Sordale - Hilliclay Road	
U2202	Knockarthur Road	
U2211	Muie Road	
U2220	Stonegun	Sibmister
U2247	Acheilidh	Inchcape
U2257	East Langwell Road	
U2385	Munro's Bridge	West Helmsdale
U2390	Link Road U2385	U2394
U2394	Link Road C1148	C1046
U2485	Wick Industrial Estate	

U2532	Lower Marrel Road	
U2560	Marrel Road	
U2766	Lothmore Road	
U2780	Portgower Old Village Road	
U2847	Johnstone Place, Brora	
U2851	Johnstone Crescent, Brora	
U2855	Tarbet Crescent, Brora	
U2859	Seaforth Place, Brora	
U2894	Dudgeon Par drive, Brora	
U2929	Doll School Road	
U2933	East Doll Road	
U3103	Dunrobin Glen Road	Argo Terrace
U3140	Nursery Road, Backies	
U3166	Backies Road, Golspie	
U3299	Ardshave Road	
U3316	Torboll Street	
U3470	Battery Road, Wick	
U3474	Airdens Road	Garbh Leathad junction
U3489	Loch Migdale Road	
U3497	Cairndhuna Terrace, Wick	
U3520	Girnigoe Street, Wick	
U3521	A9(T)	Torboll Road
U3521	Lairg Road	Clashcoig
U3523	Glamis Road, Wick	
U3524	Migdale Manse Road	Loch Migdale Road
U3541	Harrow Hill, Wick	
U3547	Henrietta Street, Wick	
U3551	Hill Avenue, Wick	
U3557	Hospital Road, Wick	
U3560	Huddart Street, Wick	
U3561	Croik Manse Road	
U3564	Baldounie Bridge	Amat
U3565	Kenneth Street, Wick	
U3577	Leishman Avenue, Wick	
U3618	Newton Road, Wick	
U3637	Roxburgh Road, Wick	
U3649	Seaforth Avenue, Wick	
U3654	Smith Terrace, Wick	
U3659	Wellington Avenue, Wick	Battery Road
U4017	Dale Road, Thurso	

U4057	Heathfield Road, Thurso	
U4064	Howburn Road, Thurso	
U4115	Park Avenue, Thurso	
U4119	Pennyland Drive, Thurso	
U4151	St Andrews Drive, Thurso	
U4293	Thorfinn Terrace, Thurso	
U4299	Towerhill Road, Thurso	
U4305	West Church Street, Thurso	
U5431	Thurso Business Park	