

Agenda Item	9
Report No	LA/19/21

HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: Lochaber

Date: 9 August 2021

Report Title: Area Roads Winter Maintenance Plan 2021/22

Report By: Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment & Economy

1. Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report provides Members with information on winter maintenance preparations and arrangements for the 2021/22 winter period and invites the Committee to approve the Winter Maintenance Plans for Lochaber Area.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to approve the Winter Maintenance Plan for the Lochaber Area in reference to **Appendix A**.

3. Implications

- 3.1 **Resource** – as detailed in the report.
- 3.2 **Legal** – no implications
- 3.3 **Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural)** - as detailed in the report.
- 3.4 **Climate Change / Carbon Clever** – In relation to Climate Change/Carbon Emissions the Service provides specialist training for all operatives in respect of fuel-efficient driving, and route plans are in place to achieve the most efficient routing of vehicles.
- 3.5 **Risk** – managed under Section 34 of the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984 as stated in the Highland Council Winter Service Policy (last updated 2018; **Appendix B** to this report).
- 3.6 **Gaelic** – no implications

4. Background

- 4.1 The Council's Scheme of Delegation to Area Committees gives the Lochaber Area Committee the power: -
"to approve the winter maintenance plan within the strategy and budget allocated by Community Services Committee".
- 4.2 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.

5 Lochaber Area Roads Winter Maintenance Plan 2021/22

- 5.1 Because of the effects of COVID-19 to date, and because there are no changes in resources or policy since last year, members are asked to refer to the attached Briefing Note in **Appendix A** which summarises Lochaber Area Roads Winter Maintenance Arrangements for 2021/22, including confirmation of the winter route hierarchy for the Lochaber Area (unchanged since 2017/18 shown) in **Briefing Note Annexe A**.

Designation: Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment & Economy

Date: 21 July 2021

Author: Richard Porteous, Roads Operations Manager
Lochaber, Nairn, Badenoch & Strathspey and Corran Ferry

Background Papers: [LA/14/20](#)
[TEC-41-13](#)
[TEC-67-13](#)
[COM23/16](#)
[EDI/57/18](#)

Briefing Note
Subject: Winter Service Delivery 2021/22

1. Background:

- This briefing note presents the current position regarding the delivery of the Highland Council winter service for 2021/22.
- It takes cognisance of the current service level required by the Winter policy and highlights potential impacts that still may arise in the delivery of the service due to Covid-19.

2. Road Hierarchy for Gritting:

- Each Area has its own winter service plan which sets out the operational details required to deliver the service.
- There have been no changes to the winter policy over the last 12 months. The service level required will not alter for winter 2021/22.
- On 28 September 2020 the Lochaber Area Committee approved the road hierarchy for treatment of roads within the Lochaber Area (LA/14/20 – Lochaber Area Roads Winter Maintenance Plan 2020/21). As there has been no changes to the policy, the gritting hierarchy is not expected to change.
 - The primary network will remain the same as that approved for winter 2020/21.
 - The secondary network, after reviewing routes, resources and school transport information, will have no significant changes applied to it. Any changes that do occur will be minor and will be due to operational factors such as the routing of gritters and/or the order of the roads being treated.
 - Confirmation of the winter route hierarchy for the Lochaber Area is shown in **Briefing Note Annexe A**.

3. Weather Forecast and Decision Making:

- The Council utilises a professional weather forecasting service which delivers Area based forecasts to local offices throughout the winter period. There will be no change in this arrangement for 2021/22. The historical performance of our current supplier is considered satisfactory.
- The Council utilises a series of roadside weather stations to assist local duty officers in their decision making. This set-up remains unchanged for 2021/22.
- The Lochaber Area operates with a dedicated duty officer responsible for real time decision making 24 hours a day. This arrangement will not change for 2021/22.

4. Staff Resources

- A standby system operates during the core winter period. This ensures that sufficient staff and drivers are available to cover weekends and respond to out of hours emergencies.
- In order to optimise available resources, the number of drivers utilised for normal gritting activities may be supplemented by resources from other services such as Amenities or Waste.
- There are no plans to change these arrangements for 2021/22.

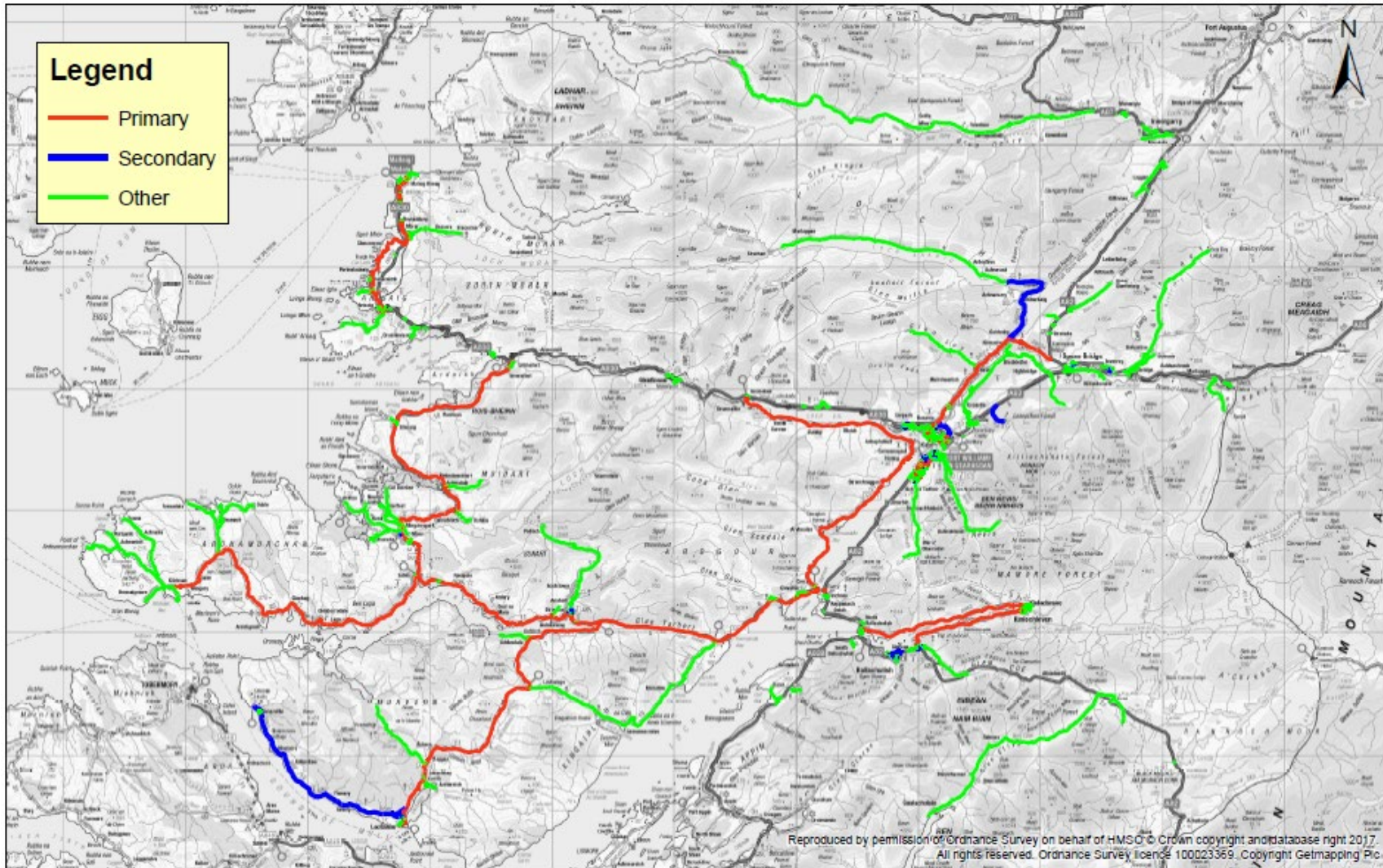
5. Risk Factors – Service Delivery (Covid-19)

- The arrival of Covid-19 since 2020 has presented the Council with significant challenges. Despite vaccinations there remains uncertainty as to what level of transmission may occur within the Highland area over the coming winter.
- It must be recognised that despite the Council taking all necessary precautions there is still a risk, that should an outbreak occur within one of our larger depots, the level of service provided may be affected.
- Should this occur resources will be supplemented, where possible, with drivers who have the correct licence requirements from within the Council. Subsequently, this could affect the delivery of other services such as Waste and Amenities.
- In a worst-case scenario, it may be necessary to reduce the extent of the road network treated at any one time. This would take the form of shifting available resources to the treatment of the Primary and Secondary networks or, in exceptional circumstances, to the Primary network only. Alternatively, it may be the case that the whole network is treated but target completion times may have to be extended to offset the reduction in driver resource. Members should already be aware that the driver's hours regulations require to be adhered to so the winter resource available is not limitless.

6. Community Self-Help

- Community self-help will continue to be encouraged under the Councils "Winter Resilience" scheme whereby communities can submit an application via their community council to carry out footway gritting operations within an agreed area. The Council will continue to provide the community with salt/grit, bins, scrapers and reflective waistcoats. It is important to note that this does not replace the service provided by the Council but allows the community to provide an enhanced level of service.

Briefing Note Annex A - 1 of 2



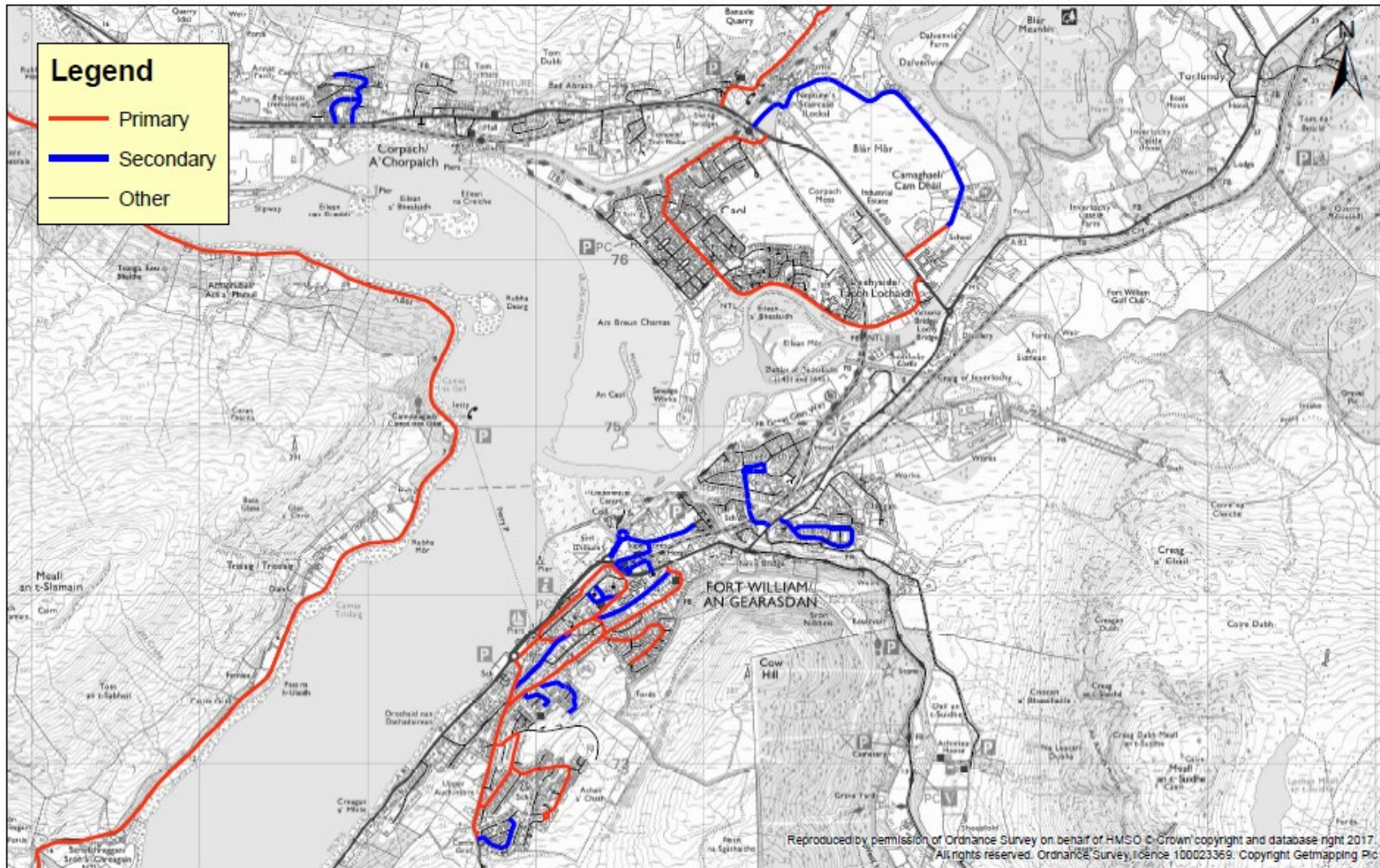
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Date: 04/08/2017
Filename: Winter_Gritting_Routes_2017-18

Winter Services Routes Priorities 2017-18 Lochaber Area



Briefing Note Annexe A - 2 of 2



Scale: 1:110,000
Created by: JAML
Date: 04/08/2017
Filename: Winter_Gritting_Routes_2017-18

Winter Services Routes Priorities 2017-18
Lochaber Area (Inset)





The Highland Council

Community Services

Winter Service Policy

August 2018

Winter Service Policy

CONTENTS

- 1.0 BACKGROUND
- 2.0 GENERAL
- 3.0 TREATMENT OF ROADS.
- 4.0 TREATMENT OF FOOTWAYS.

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Community Services

Winter Service 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 14th October to 14th 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.

<p>PRIMARY (Highest)</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>SECONDARY</p>	<p>Roads connecting smaller communities to the primary network. Link and Service roads within the larger urban settlements. Service bus routes not covered by the Primary network.</p>
<p>OTHER</p>	<p>Minor rural and local access roads. Residential roads in urban settlements.</p>

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

The priority network will be agreed by Local Area Committee. Leaflets with maps showing the Primary and Secondary network will be made available via the Council web site at the start of each winter period.

3.2 TREATMENT OF ROADS

MONDAY TO FRIDAY

The service will be provided to the full road network, when required between 6am and 9pm. Treatment after 6pm will in general be restricted to Primary routes only.

SATURDAY AND SUNDAY

A strategic service will be provided at the weekend which covers Primary, strategic Secondary and difficult Other routes between 6am and 9pm. Treatment after 6pm will in general be restricted to Primary routes only.

3.3 PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

3.3.1 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 Saturday or Sunday then a standard weekend 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 Friday

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

3.7.2 Saturday and Sunday

PRIMARY ROUTES	8.30am.
SECONDARY and OTHER Routes	as resources and conditions permit.

3.7.3 25th / 26th December and 1st / 2nd January

PRIMARY ROUTES	9.30am.
SECONDARY ROUTES	as resources and conditions permit.

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 FOOTWAY TREATMENT TIMES - MONDAY TO FRIDAY

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

4.3 FOOTWAY TREATMENT TIMES – SATURDAY, SUNDAY AND PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

The service will be provided between 6am and Noon on Primary and strategic secondary footways as resources permit. There will be no service for footways on Christmas Day or New Year’s Day.

-- End of Policy Statement --