

To: Ashford Joint Transportation Board

By: Andrew Loosemore – Head of Highway Asset Management

Date: 12th December 2017

Subject: Local Winter Service Plan

Classification: Information only

Summary: This report outlines the arrangements that have been made between Kent County Council and Ashford Borough Council to provide a local winter service in the event of an operational snow alert in the borough/district

1. Introduction

1 (1) Kent County Council Highways, Transportation & Waste (KCC HTW) takes its winter service responsibilities very seriously and is proactive as well as reactive to winter weather conditions. Winter service costs KCC in the region of £3.3m every winter and needs careful management to achieve safety for the travelling public and to be efficient. The Highways Operations teams in HTW work to ensure that the winter service standards and decisions made are consistent across the whole county.

1(2) HTW prepares an annual Winter Service policy and plan which are used to determine actions that will be taken to manage its winter service operations. The policy was presented to the Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee on 21st September 2017 and subsequently approved by the Cabinet Member.

2. District based winter service plans

2(1) The Local Winter Service Plan for the Ashford District is a working document which will evolve and be revised as necessary throughout the year. This document complements the KCC Winter Service Policy and Plan 2017/8; the Policy is available on the KCC website.

2(2) Following successful work in previous years with district councils, arrangements have again been put in place this year whereby labour from district councils can be used during snow days. Additionally HTW will supply a quantity of a salt/sand mixture to district councils to use on the highway network. The details are contained in the plan which enhances the work that HTW will continue to do in providing a countywide winter service. The local plan comes into effect when a snow emergency is declared that affects the district of Ashford

<http://www.kent.gov.uk/about-the-council/strategies-and-policies/transport-and-highways-policies/winter-service-policy>

3. Pavement clearance

3 (3) Areas for clearing pavements have been identified in the local plan. These are the areas where local knowledge has indicated that people are concerned and would most like to be kept clear when there is snow and ice.

4. Farmers

4(1) The work that our contracted farmers have done in recent years is greatly appreciated and has made a big difference in keeping rural areas clear on snow days. Again this year farmers will have predetermined local routes and will use their own tractor and KCC ploughs for clearing snow. The ploughs supplied are serviced by KCC each year. Each farmer will have plans detailing the roads that they are responsible for ploughing. When snow reaches a depth of 50mm on roads in their areas the farmers will commence ploughing notifying KCC as agreed in their contract. A list of farmers and their contact details can be found in the local plan, (although some personal information will not be available via this report or the website due to Data Protection legislation).

5. Conclusion

5(1) Working in partnership with the district councils will enable HTW to provide an effective winter service across the county.

6. Recommendations

6(1) Members are asked to note this report.

Background documents: Kent County Council Winter Service Policy and Plan 2017/18

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Winter Service Handbook

2017/18

Ashford District JTB



Winter Service Handbook for Ashford District

Contents

1. KCC Winter Service Policy 2017-18

This handbook supplements the KCC Winter Service Policy - Highway Operations for 2017/18 Winter Service Period.

2. Winter service procedure

The winter service operational period 2017-18 will run from 27th October 2017 to 27th April 2017.

Routine salting decisions for primary precautionary salting activities across Kent are managed by a team of senior staff acting as Winter Duty Officers (WDO). The WDOs are also responsible for producing the Kent Road Weather Forecast every day and for issuing weather updates as required.

Secondary routes will be treated in snow and ice emergencies only.

A snow/ice emergency can only be declared by a Highway Manager (HM). In the event of a snow/ice emergency being declared by the HM, strategic action should be considered, i.e. opening an Emergency Room and calling in other staff.

In a declared snow emergency the priorities are primary routes, followed by secondary routes if instructed by the WDO. It is unlikely that any other actions, save safety critical issues, will be taken initially until KCC Highways is on top of keeping primary and, if instructed, secondary routes clear. All requests for additional salt bins (save those from County Members under the Combined Members Grant scheme) will be rejected and will instead be considered during the following Summer. Similarly, salting routes will not be reviewed or changed until the following Summer. Any requests to spot salt locations will be sifted to identify any that are priorities to visit and assess. Given the volume of requests, those that relate to residential areas are unlikely to be visited until resources allow. It is expected that the Contact Centre and Highways Management Centre Hub staff will be able to resolve most enquiries by referring to the KCC Winter Service Policy 2017-18.

During normal working hours, the District Manager and Operations Engineer for Ashford will manage local action in Winter Service snow/ice emergencies excluding primary and secondary salting route decisions. The Standby Officer will assume control out of hours, seeking advice as appropriate from the Winter Duty Officer and Senior Duty Officer as appropriate.

Immediately after 1400 hours daily the weather forecast/information will be available on email/telephone on 03000 413111. (Update forecasts may be available at 2130 hours each day or when issued.)

3. Farmer Snow Plough Agreements.

Farmers local to the area are under contract to plough snow on the more rural routes when necessary. Each farmer will have details of the roads to be ploughed. The farmer uses his own tractor, often with a KCC plough, which is serviced every year and maintained by KCC. When snow reaches a depth of 50mm on roads in their areas the farmers will commence ploughing. Before this occurs the farmer should phone the Contact Centre of the intention to start ploughing. This information will be relayed to the relevant area office. Otherwise KCC Highways staff will contact the farmer directly and instruct action.

4. Hand clearance and salting of key pedestrian areas and routes.

Hand clearance and salting of priority pedestrian areas (Ashford & Tenterden Town Centres) and routes including bridges and underpasses will be carried out using Amey operatives or Ashford Borough Council operatives during snow emergencies. Their inclusion in the local Winter Plan does not guarantee that action will be taken at these locations as, during a snow/ice emergency, primary routes will always be actioned first followed by secondary routes if instructed by a Highway Manager.

5. Primary and Secondary salting routes

Details of primary and secondary salting routes can be seen at <http://www.kent.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/what-we-look-after/winter-service> Most bus routes will be covered by these routes but not all.

6. Salt bin locations

Salt bins will be filled once at the beginning of the winter season with further refills only if there is severe weather and time and resources permit. During the Winter period, no additional salt bins will be deployed (unless funded through the Combined Members Grant). Any other requests/locations will be considered during the following Summer.

7. Clearing Snow and Ice Guidance for the Public

The Department for Transport 'Snow Code' gives guidance for members of the public relating to the risks and liability of clearing snow and ice on the public highway <https://www.gov.uk/clear-snow-road-path-cycleway>

8. Ashford Borough Council (ABC) Mutual Aid

ABC Town Centre Action Team (TCAT) may be available in a winter emergency, resources permitting, to assist with hand salting. This team will have a 4x4 and trailer.

ABC has access to 20 tonnes of salt directly from the KCC Ashford Highways Depot as ABC has no suitable storage facilities.