

## **Highways Winter Service: Progress on Task Group Recommendations**

Report of the Chief Officer for Highways, Infrastructure Development and Waste

### **1. Introduction**

The purpose of this report is to provide a progress update on the Council's work regarding the 7 recommendations made by the Highways Winter Service Task Group, presented to the Scrutiny Committee on 26 March 2019 and commended to the Cabinet (Scrutiny Minute \*119 and Cabinet Minute \*335 refer).

### **2. Progress on Recommendations**

The Service has incorporated the actions in its annual winter service review cycle over the summer. The service level being delivered for this winter is virtually identical to that delivered last year, with only minor changes being made to the primary salting network where there have been changes to the highway network (eg developments and road closures).

Discussion has been held with Devon Clinical Commissioning Group, and they have requested and been provided with data relating to winter service. However, they have not yet provided any information to justify a change to the salting network and therefore there will not be any changes this winter as the window of opportunity has passed.

The emergency planning team will be using social media at the appropriate time to promote and engage with the appropriate use of 4X4s within the community and develop work in this area with partners.

The Snow Warden Scheme continues to be supported, and there has been some revision to information available regarding insurance as requested. This was included in the recent Parish and Town council events across the county, and social media groups have been established to provide support to Snow Wardens.

An educational campaign will be considered for development once the work currently being undertaken to develop a new peninsula-wide Road Safety Partnership has come to fruition.

Further details about progress on the recommendations are set out in the attached Appendix.

### **3. Conclusion**

The Service has taken on board the recommendations from the Task Group and sought to progress many areas as part of their summer review and will continue to develop communications and publicity over this coming winter period.

Meg Booth  
Chief Officer for Highways, Infrastructure Development and Waste

**Electoral Divisions: All**

Cabinet Member for Highway Management: Councillor Stuart Hughes

Local Government Act 1972: List of Background Papers

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Background Paper	Date	File Reference
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Nil

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**Highways Winter Service Task Group: Overall Approach, Specific Recommendations and Progress on the Recommendations**

	<b>Overall Approach</b>	<b>Specific Recommendations (March 2019)</b>	<b>Progress October 2019</b>
<b>1.</b>	The County Council to deliver a Winter Service policy which continues to prioritise strategic and high use sections of the highway, access to larger settlements and other key premises across the County.	<p><b>1.1</b> Retention of the County Council's current Winter Service Policy, with no reduction to the primary and secondary gritting networks across the County, for remainder of this Council.</p>	There have been no policy changes and the salting network for this coming winter has only minor changes due to changes in the highway network (road closures, developments etc)
		<p><b>1.2</b> The County Council to consider amending its salting networks to include access to all Devon GP surgeries (see costings in para 4.30), if compelling evidence can be identified of the benefits following discussion with the Devon Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs).</p>	There has been dialogue with Devon CCG and a lot of information has been provided to them but to date no request has been received or information provided to justify changing the salting network.
		<p><b>1.3</b> The County Council to continue to monitor cycle path journeys in Exeter and other key cycling routes, and reconsider winter treatment if/when journey numbers significantly increase (i.e. when winter cycling path journeys are around 1000 per day, in line with the criteria used for roads).</p>	Noted. Data will be reviewed as part of the annual winter service review each year.

	Overall Approach	Specific Recommendations (March 2019)	Progress October 2019
2.	<p>Communities be encouraged and supported to deliver well organised and resourced selfhelp and volunteer schemes, with improved, practical support from the County Council and partners.</p>	<p><b>2.1</b> The County Council to support communities and cycling groups to explore options to enable the winter treatment of cycle paths in the county, through voluntary and self-help schemes, in line with the Snow Warden scheme.</p> <p><b>2.2</b> The County Council to work with Devon &amp; Cornwall Police, CCGs, hospital trusts and 'Devon &amp; Cornwall 4x4 Response' to promote and encourage individuals with access to 4x4s to join organised 4x4 response groups, to enable a more co-ordinated and efficient response to widespread snow.</p>	<p>The Authority continues to promote and support the snow warden scheme, and most recently through the Parish and Town council events held in October.</p> <p>A coordinated approach to encourage potential membership of organised 4x4 groups has not yet been developed. However, through the @Devonalert Twitter account DCC issue tweets to direct individuals with suitable vehicles towards Devon &amp; Cornwall 4x4 Response. The latest one was retweeted 18 times and received a message of support from the police. The potential reach of the tweet was in excess of 29,000. We do not have any information on possible take-up but the lead coordinator for D&amp;C4x4R has expressed his thanks for promoting their group.</p> <p>The LRF 4x4 protocol has been updated to provide an agreed percentage of available vehicles to the NHS, so that resources are also available for other essential services in emergencies.</p> <p>In an attempt to deter untrained drivers, we also posted a warning message about the danger of not being prepared for winter conditions.</p>

Overall Approach	Specific Recommendations (March 2019)	Progress October 2019
	<p><b>2.3</b> The County Council to provide improved support and guidance for the Snow Warden Scheme through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a review and revamp of the online guidance for the Snow Warden Scheme, to include specific guidance and signposting on getting the necessary insurance cover;</li> <li>• a hard copy version of the above guidance which can be distributed to all Devon Town and Parish Councils and relevant community groups;</li> <li>• use of social media and email alerts to inform Town and Parish Councils and community groups as and when Council gritters are treating primary and secondary routes across the County;</li> <li>• use of social media to promote community volunteering in the Snow Warden scheme and in emergency planning;</li> <li>• use of online/social media platform to provide advice/guidance and sharing of best practice for Town and Parish Councils on the Snow Warden Scheme;</li> <li>• use of Town and Parish Conferences to provide advice and guidance on the Snow Warden Scheme (and other self-help), and provide an opportunity for local councils to network and work together.</li> </ul>	<p>A snow warden pack has been created and is available on the website  <a href="https://www.devon.gov.uk/communities/opportunities/snow-warden-scheme">https://www.devon.gov.uk/communities/opportunities/snow-warden-scheme</a> .</p> <p>The insurance section “what insurance cover do DCC provide?” has been updated to advise councils to contact their insurance provider for further information.</p> <p>See above – this was available at our recent parish and town council events and has been promoted in our dedicated parish and town council newsletter.</p> <p>We’ve created a Facebook group and have only just got sufficient numbers. We invited all registered snow and road wardens but engagement was very poor. Now that we have approx. 20 members (following promotion at our PC/TC events), our focus will now be on providing information.</p> <p>We frequently promote all of our self-help options on our social media pages. As we’ve now entered our official winter period we will start promoting the snow warden scheme.</p> <p>A self-help display was available at the recent Parish and Town council events.</p>

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3.	<p>Improved public understanding of the dangers of driving in extreme weather and a reduction in the number of people who undertake non-essential journeys during future snow events.</p>	<p>The County Council to work with partner agencies (including police, fire service and local media) to launch a consequences based public education campaign around the risks of driving in snow and extreme weather.</p>	<p>The Road safety team are currently working with many partner agencies to establish a Peninsula wide Road safety Partnership that should be able to tackle these types of issues, and once established, this task will be one of the areas that they will consider.</p>