

**Staffordshire County Council
Winter Service Policy
2015-16**

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Introduction

Staffordshire County Council is responsible for a 6000km highway network, the maintenance of which is delivered through Infrastructure Plus, a collaborative partnership between Staffordshire County Council and Amey Local Government Ltd (**ALGL**).

This Winter Service Policy is the overarching document which defines the principles and standards which have been adopted to ensure that Staffordshire County Council fulfils its statutory responsibilities as defined in Section 41 (1A) of the Highways Act 1980.

This document is accompanied by a Winter Service Operational Plan which sets out how the policy and service will be implemented and delivered and is developed annually by the County Council's strategic operational partner, Amey Local Government Ltd.

The combined Winter Service Policy and Operational Plan together ensure that the Authority's resources are being utilised efficiently whilst fulfilling its statutory duty and taking account of the recommendations contained within the national Code of Practice for Highway Maintenance – *Well Maintained Highways 2005*.

Policy

Treated Network

Under Section 41 (1A) of the Highways Act 1980, Staffordshire County Council is 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 extent of the network and the resources available to Staffordshire County Council, it is not considered reasonably practicable to undertake routine precautionary treatment of the entire network nor to keep the identified treated network free from ice and snow at all times.

To enable a proportionate response that maximises coverage with the resources available the treated network is split into a two tier hierarchy comprising a Primary Treatment Network and an Extended Treatment Network. The Extended Treatment Network (which includes the Primary



Treatment Network) encompasses all roads in Traffic Groups 1 to 4 as defined in the table below:

Traffic Group	Definition
01	Roads carrying over 1250 commercial vehicles per day in each direction
02	Primary route network and roads carrying between 750 and 1250 commercial vehicles per day in each direction.
03	Roads carrying between 250 and 750 commercial vehicles per day in each direction.
04	Roads carrying between 75 and 250 commercial vehicles per day in each direction. Including Industrial estate distributor roads/Commuter routes/Main distributor roads on large housing estates serving more than 500 homes.
05	Roads carrying between 10 and 75 commercial vehicles per day in each direction. Including links to industrial estate distributor roads/housing estate roads serving between 300 and 500 homes.
06	Roads carrying less than 10 commercial vehicles per day in each direction – Housing estate roads serving less than 300 homes.
07	Rear access roads on housing estates.

Roads in Traffic Groups 5 to 7 will not be subject to routine precautionary treatment.

The Primary Treatment Network encompasses all A and B roads identified in the National Street Gazetteer and, due to their topography and climatic conditions, those routes, encompassing roads in Traffic Groups 1 to 4, treated from the Leek and Hemmingslow Depots and by hill contractors.



Precautionary treatment of the Primary Treatment Network will be undertaken in accordance with the Precautionary Treatment Decision Matrix contained within the Winter Service Operational Plan.

The Extended Treatment Network will only be treated when prolonged freezing and/or snow conditions are expected as defined below; it will not be treated in marginal weather conditions when such extended periods of ice and snow are not expected.

Precautionary treatment of the Extended Treatment Network will be undertaken in accordance with the Precautionary Treatment Decision Matrix AND when the following, or more severe, conditions are predicted:

- Ice forecast to be present for a continuous period of more than two hours, any part of it falling between the hours of 07:00 and 19:00 inclusive AND road surface temperature forecast to be at or below -0.5C

OR

- Expected snow or freezing rain

If the decision is taken not to undertake precautionary treatment of the Extended Treatment Network, conditions will be monitored and if they become worse than predicted such that the above criteria are reached, post treatment of this network will be undertaken.

Winter service decision making is the responsibility of ALGL.

The routes comprising these treatment networks are published on the Staffordshire County Council website:

<http://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/transport/staffshighways/winterdriving/wintertravel.aspx>

Details of proposed treatment actions can be found on the below Twitter feed:

https://mobile.twitter.com/StaffordshireCC?ref_src=twsrc%5Egoogle%7Ctwcamp%5Eserp%7Ctwgr%5Eauthor



Minimum Network and Snow Conditions

The Primary Treatment Network is also classified as the **Minimum Network** in the context of emergency contingency planning in circumstances such as a national shortage in the supply of de-icing salt.

During snowfall conditions all available resources will be utilised to deliver the winter service. In rural areas farmers and contractors will be mobilised to assist with clearing the network.

Priority for snow clearance will initially be given to routes on the Primary Treatment Network i.e. the Minimum Network. The remainder of the Extended Treatment Network will be cleared as resources become available and the Primary Treatment Network is clear.

Footways and Cycleways

Routine precautionary treatments on footways, cycleways or any part of the Public Rights of Way network of minor highways will not be carried out.

Resilience

ALGL are required to ensure that a stock of de-icing material that allows the full treatment of the Extended Treatment Network for at least six days without resupply is maintained throughout the winter season.

Records

An auditable system of records relating to the Winter Service will be maintained by ALGL and will be defined in the Winter Service Operational Plan.

Grit Bins

Grit bins and salt piles are intended as an aid to winter road safety for use by local communities on areas of adopted carriageway and footway and are not for use on private property. Locations of existing grit bins can be found on the County Council website:

<http://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/transport/staffshighways/winterdriving/wintertravel.aspx>

Prior to the start of each winter season all grit bins will be visited by ALGL to ascertain their condition and whether or not they require replenishing.



Requests for new grit bins will be assessed by the Highways Team. Provision of new bins will be subject to this assessment and funding/resource availability.

Ice Busters

Ice Busters is a Staffordshire County Council initiative aimed at Parish Councils and residents associations who wish to mobilise dedicated volunteers to help to treat local footways and pedestrian routes during periods of prolonged cold weather and to clear snow and ice during the winter months.

The County Council supports these groups by providing advice, equipment and de-icing materials.

Information on how to join this initiative can be found at:

<http://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/transport/staffshighways/winterdriving/icebusters/IceBusters.aspx>

Liaison

ALGL are responsible for all liaison with the emergency service control rooms and neighbouring authorities to advise of road closures and other issues relating to the winter service.

ALGL are also responsible for liaising with neighbouring authorities in relation to cross boundary treatment agreements and daily actions.

Information and Publicity

The County Council will publish driver information on its website prior to the winter and during those conditions associated with that season to promote safe driving and road safety in relation to the weather conditions and for drivers to plan their journeys.

Press releases will be issued indicating the Council's readiness for winter and timely driving advice will be issued during the winter season in response to events.

During the winter season ALGL operational staff will take a proactive role in providing information to the County Council's Media and Communications Teams for dissemination to local radio stations and other media organisations.



ALGL, through the Infrastructure Plus Partnership, will deliver annual winter community roadshows prior to each winter season which will offer the public free advice.

General

The winter season is identified as 20th October – 30th April.

It should be noted that any elements of the national trunk road and motorway network which pass through the county are the responsibility of Highways England.

