

Highways Winter Service Plan

2026 – 2027



Contents

Contents	2
Executive Summary	3
Purpose	4
Introduction	4
Context	4
Our Winter Service Plan.....	7
The Winter Period	8
Winter Service Routes and Locations	8
Contingency Planning – Minimum Winter Network.....	15
Forecasting Weather Conditions	18
Treatments.....	19
Record Keeping	24
Service Delivery Arrangements.....	26
Coordination and Collaboration.....	34
Communication.....	35
Operational Communications	35
Highway Inspections Supporting Winter Decisions.....	36
Media Information	36
Advice and Guidance for the Travelling Public	36
Community Self Help	37
Drainage Issues on the Highway Network.....	37
Planning for the Future	38
Review.....	39
Appendix 1 – Priority and Secondary Routes	40
Appendix 2 – Grit Bin Assessment Form.....	40
Appendix 3 - Weather Station Locations	41
Appendix 4 – Minimum Winter Network	43

Executive Summary

The Herefordshire Council Winter Service Plan 2026-27 sets out how the Council will meet its statutory duty to maintain safe passage on the highway network during periods of snow and ice. The Plan establishes a risk-based approach to winter maintenance, aligned with national best practice, to support public safety, network resilience, community wellbeing and economic activity across Herefordshire.

To support the delivery of the winter service Herefordshire Council maintains 17 Gritters, 6,200 tonnes of salt and has more than 2,500 grit bins deployed across the highway network. These resources are supplemented with 7 weather stations and an accurate weather forecasting service.

Our Winter Service operations are delivered between 15 October and 15 April, with a core winter period of 1 November to 31 March. Decisions are informed by specialist weather forecasting, real-time data from seven weather stations and local operational knowledge. A domain-based forecasting approach enables treatments to be targeted to those areas of the county most at risk, promoting efficient use of resources and minimising unnecessary salt application.

The Council maintains approximately 3340 kilometres of highway, of which 962 kilometres (29%) form the Priority Route Network. These routes include strategic roads, key commuter routes, emergency service access routes and other roads essential to maintaining connectivity during winter weather. Secondary Routes, active travel routes, car parks and other locations may also be treated during prolonged or severe weather events, where temperatures are below freezing for a 24-hour period, subject to operational priorities and available resources.

This Plan places significant emphasis on resilience and preparedness. Robust contingency arrangements are in place to address severe weather, salt supply shortages, workforce constraints, fuel shortages and other operational challenges. A defined hierarchy of service levels and a Minimum Winter Network ensure that the most critical parts of the network can continue to be maintained during periods of exceptional pressure.

Operational delivery is undertaken by M Group Ltd on behalf of the Council, supported by specialist equipment, trained personnel, GPS-monitored gritting vehicles and established governance arrangements.

Our Duty Control Officers are responsible for daily decision-making and coordinating responses to changing conditions, while detailed records are maintained to support operational management, performance monitoring and statutory defence requirements.

The Plan also recognises the importance of partnership working and community resilience. The Council works closely with neighbouring authorities, emergency services, Town and Parish Councils, contractors and local communities to maintain service continuity and support vulnerable or isolated communities during severe weather.

Through proactive planning, targeted treatments, effective resource management and strong collaborative working, the Winter Service Plan aims to keep the county moving, maintain access to essential services and ensure that winter weather impacts are managed effectively and proportionately across Herefordshire.



Purpose

This Winter Service Plan explains the arrangements that Herefordshire Council (the Council) shall deploy for dealing with ice and snow on the county's roads. It outlines the context for winter service in Herefordshire and establishes the processes and procedures for operational delivery. This Winter Service Plan has been developed in line with the recommendations made in the UKLRG's Well Managed Highway Infrastructure: A Code of Practice.

Introduction

Ice and snow affect the safety of the traveling public and the availability and reliability of the highway network throughout the winter period. As such, the successful delivery of the winter service is key to supporting the economic and social well-being of Herefordshire.

Severe and prolonged weather experienced in past winters has had a significant impact on our community and tested the resilience of all our services. Whilst Herefordshire Council's highway service has coped well it is recognised that there is always potential for improvement.

In developing the winter plan, we have considered recommendations made in the 2016 Code of Practice, Well Managed Highway Infrastructure and the National Winter Service Research Group (NWSRG) Practical Guide.

The arrangements described in this plan will apply to the 2026 - 27 winter season and for all subsequent winter seasons.

Context

Legislation

Under Section 41 of the Highways Act, the Council has a duty to maintain the highway.

The Railways and Transport Safety Act amended the Highways Act by adding a Statutory Duty Clause 41.1A concerning dealing with snow and ice. *"In particular a Highway Authority are under a duty to ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, that safe passage along a highway is not endangered by snow or ice."*

This Winter Service Plan builds upon tried and tested operational standards and is developed to meet the needs of Herefordshire setting out what is "reasonably practicable" for the county.

In addition, Section 150 of the highways act places a duty on the local highway authority to remove snow, soil etc. from the highway. In terms of winter service, this is focused on the removal of accumulation of snow.

Community Resilience

Whilst the Council's statutory duties as the Highway Authority are primarily concerned with maintaining the safe passage of traffic, prolonged periods of severe winter weather can give rise to significant wider community impacts. Healthcare issues arise not only from an increased risk of slips, trips and falls for those who travel, but also from the effects of isolation experienced by residents in both rural and urban areas.

Herefordshire has consistently demonstrated strong community resilience in responding to such challenges, and this Plan recognises the vital role that local communities play in supporting that resilience. By working alongside partner agencies, Town and Parish Councils, voluntary and

community sector organisations, and individual residents, the Council aims to harness and support community-led initiatives. Wherever possible, communities will be enabled to assist themselves and their neighbours when isolation becomes a significant concern, which can be particularly acute within the County's rural communities, where the distance to a treated highway may restrict access and egress for extended periods.

In addition to its responsibilities towards the people of Herefordshire, the Council also has duties in respect of its own corporate estate. For areas outside the public highway network but forming part of the Council's workplaces, the Council is required, so far as is reasonably practicable, to ensure that these areas are safe for employees and visitors. Consequently, appropriate measures must be taken to reduce, and where possible eliminate, risks arising from snow and ice.

These obligations as an employer must be delivered alongside, and balanced with, the Council's wider responsibilities to the communities of Herefordshire. This Plan acknowledges these broader duties and sets out the arrangements through which they are managed as part of the Council's Winter Service provision.

Financial Resources

In the current financial climate, all public sector organisations face significant pressure on available funding, and the delivery of Winter Service is no exception. Despite these challenges, the Council remains committed to maintaining a robust and resilient service capable of responding to severe winter weather. This is achieved by focusing resources on the core requirements of Winter Service while continuing to meet its wider obligations as an employer, which are funded through separate budgets.

The Council's approach is based on a clear set of priorities, the ongoing identification and implementation of efficiencies, and prudent investment in people, equipment and infrastructure. These measures help to ensure the resilience of the service and support the delivery of a safe and reliable highway network for residents, businesses and visitors throughout the winter season and in future years.

The achievement of efficiencies and the continual assessment of value for money form an integral part of the Council's management of its Public Realm Services Contract, within which Winter Service is delivered. Performance, costs and service outcomes are regularly monitored to ensure resources are used effectively and that service standards are maintained.

The Council will continue to explore opportunities to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of Winter Service delivery. Such opportunities may include measures that reduce demand on health and social care services during severe weather events through increased levels of preventative treatment, particularly on footways and in high-footfall urban areas. By helping to reduce the incidence of slips, trips and falls, preventative action can improve public safety and wellbeing while potentially reducing wider public-sector costs. In many circumstances, prevention is both more effective and more economical than responding to the consequences of winter weather after they occur.

Any cashable savings arising from service improvements or efficiencies will be considered and allocated in accordance with the Council's Constitution and established decision-making processes.

Herefordshire's Topography and Climate

Herefordshire's regional climate is strongly influenced by its varied topography, with the Welsh mountains to the west and the Malvern Hills to the east shaping local weather patterns. As a result, weather conditions can vary considerably across the county. In general, valley locations tend to

experience a warmer and drier climate, whilst higher elevations are typically colder, wetter and more exposed to severe winter weather.

However, these patterns are not always consistent. Under certain atmospheric conditions, temperature inversions and frost hollows can develop within valleys, resulting in lower temperatures than those experienced on surrounding higher ground. Such localised variations can lead to significant differences in road surface conditions over relatively short distances.

Given the influence of these microclimates, it is essential that road temperatures are monitored in real time across the highway network. Continuous monitoring enables the Council to develop an accurate understanding of prevailing and forecast conditions, supporting informed operational decisions and ensuring that winter maintenance activities are targeted effectively and efficiently. This approach helps to maximise network resilience, maintain public safety and make the best use of available resources during winter weather events.

Components of Winter Service Delivery

There are five principal components of the Winter Service operation:

Preparedness

These are the activities undertaken before the commencement of the winter season to ensure that resources, personnel, equipment and procedures are in place and ready for deployment. Preparedness also includes the advice, guidance and support provided to communities to strengthen local resilience and enhance the county's collective ability to cope with severe winter weather.

Precautionary Salting

Precautionary salting is the application of de-icing materials to highway surfaces before the onset of freezing conditions, such as frost, snow or freezing rain. The purpose of these treatments is to prevent the formation of ice or to reduce and prevent the bonding of snow and freezing precipitation to the road surface, thereby maintaining safer travelling conditions.

Post-Treatment

Post-treatment refers to the treatment of ice or compacted snow after it has formed on the highway. Where ice or snow is forecast to persist for longer than 24 hours, additional treatment operations may be undertaken to maintain network safety and accessibility.

Snow Clearance

Snow clearance comprises the activities undertaken during and following snowfall to remove accumulations of snow from the highway network and other areas of responsibility. These operations are essential in restoring access, maintaining connectivity and supporting the movement of people and goods throughout the county.

Recovery

Recovery encompasses the activities required following severe winter weather to address both immediate and longer-term impacts on the highway network. This includes managing safety hazards arising from damage caused by ice and snow, together with repairing any deterioration in highway condition that may have resulted from prolonged winter conditions. The response to safety-related defects across the highway network is managed in accordance with the Council's Highway Safety Inspection Manual, while longer-term asset deterioration is addressed through the Council's asset management and maintenance planning processes.

Our Winter Service Plan

The Winter Service Plan contributes to the delivery of the four core objectives set out in Well-Managed Highway Infrastructure: A Code of Practice which are:

- Safety
- Customer
- Serviceability
- Sustainability

These aims are reflected in the delivery of our Local Transport Plan alongside the Highways Infrastructure Asset Management Policy, Strategy and Plan and our Highway Safety Inspection Manual.

The Council is directly responsible for a range of public spaces that lie outside the public highway, as well as its corporate estate. Whilst some of these locations are accessible to the public, others form part of the Council's workplaces and operational facilities. As an employer, the Council has a duty, so far as is reasonably practicable, to ensure that these environments are safe for employees and visitors. This includes taking appropriate measures to reduce, and where possible eliminate, risks arising from snow and ice.

The following paragraphs set out the aims of the Winter Service in Herefordshire.

Keep road users safe by effectively managing the risks posed by ice and snow on the highway network and minimising the impact of hazardous winter conditions on those travelling within the county.

Keep the county moving by maintaining access to essential services and supporting the availability and reliability of the highway network throughout the winter period.

Support the safety of the public and Council employees in those external areas for which the Council has direct responsibility, by coordinating winter maintenance activities across both the highway network and the wider corporate estate. This includes managing the risks associated with snow and ice in a manner that balances the Council's duties as a highway authority with its responsibilities as an employer and landowner.

These aims will be achieved through a proactive approach to winter maintenance. Operations will be planned and managed using the latest meteorological forecasts, real-time network condition monitoring, appropriate and timely treatment strategies, and the local knowledge held by Council officers, service providers and partner organisations. The Council will also continue to work collaboratively with Town and Parish Councils, community groups and local residents to enhance resilience and deliver an effective, efficient and responsive Winter Service across Herefordshire.

The Winter Period

The Overall Winter Period

The Overall Winter Period is from 15th October to 15th April. Throughout this time forecasting information is reviewed on a daily basis to inform the decision-making process. This period can be brought forward or extended if, on the basis of data, the risk associated with winter weather has been identified and mitigation to that risk requires the extension of the winter period.

The Core Winter Period

The Core Winter Period, during which the risk of winter weather impacts is greatest, runs from 1 November to 31 March. However, weather conditions are monitored from mid-October through to mid-April to ensure that the Council can respond appropriately to unseasonal weather events occurring outside the core period.

Winter Service Routes and Locations

The winter service has evolved over time, combining established practices for the management of snow and ice with advances in salt products, weather forecasting technology, route optimisation, and Global Positioning Systems (GPS). Our aim is to deliver a service that is efficient, effective, and timely.

We will minimise environmental impacts arising from the leaching of dissolved salt and make the most effective use of salt by applying treatments only when weather and road conditions require. Materials, products, and treatment methods used for winter maintenance will be regularly reviewed with consideration given to their environmental impact and wider sustainability objectives.

To ensure the timely delivery of the service, we aim to ensure that:

- All planned early morning precautionary treatments are completed before 0730 hours.
- Resources are capable of responding within 1 hour of an instruction to undertake treatment.
- Where the planned treatment start time is more than 1 hour from the instruction being issued, the identified resources respond at the requested time.
- All specified treatment routes are completed within 4 hours of commencement.

Domains

Domain-based forecasting enables the delivery of a more targeted and efficient winter service by recognising variations in forecast road temperatures and weather conditions across different parts of the county. Where forecasts indicate that only specific areas are at risk of frost, ice, or snow, treatments may be restricted to relevant domains rather than applied across the entire network.

The domain structure identifies the Priority Routes allocated to each forecast domain and the associated treatment requirements. This approach allows partial county treatments to be undertaken in response to localised weather conditions while maintaining network resilience and making efficient use of resources and salt stocks.

Secondary Routes and our Active Travel Network are not generally included within the domain-based treatment arrangements and will be treated in accordance with the separate criteria set out for the Secondary Route Network, although in times of localised weather impacts the domains may be used to establish which routes are treated.

Domains	Priority Routes
North Domain Routes	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 & 10
Southeast Domain Routes	11, 13, 14 & 15
Southwest Domain Routes	9, 12 & 13

Table 1: Routes in Domains

Winter Service Routes

Priority Routes

The Council is responsible for the maintenance of approximately 3340 km of highway throughout the county. Of these, 962 km, representing approximately 29% of the network, have been designated as Priority Routes for winter service treatment when carriageway or footway surfaces become, or are forecast to become, hazardous due to ice or snow.

The Winter Service treatment network is based on the highway hierarchy established for wider highway maintenance purposes. Maps of the Priority Route Network are provided in the appendices to this Plan and are also available to view on the Council's website.

Priority Routes are generally those roads where traffic volumes, vehicle speeds and network importance are greatest, resulting in a higher risk to road user safety and greater disruption to communities and the local economy should they remain untreated. The selection of routes takes account of a range of factors, including:

- The strategic highway network, including the designated Resilient Network, which supports economic activity and community continuity.
- Key commuter routes.
- Routes of importance to the emergency services, including access to operational facilities.
- Rural public transport routes operating at a frequency of two hours or better on weekdays.
- Known problem locations, including significant gradients, exposed areas and other topographical factors.
- Public transport routes and access to railway stations, bus depots and garages.
- Access routes serving key emergency facilities, including hospitals, ambulance stations, police stations, and fire and rescue service premises.

Winter service treatments will be undertaken in accordance with the prevailing weather forecasts, domain-specific road temperature forecasts, real-time local condition information and the Winter Service Decision Matrix. The objective is to undertake precautionary treatments in advance of the onset of forecast hazardous conditions, thereby maintaining the safety and resilience of the Priority Route Network.

Secondary Routes

During periods of severe or prolonged winter weather, treatment may be extended beyond the Priority Route Network to include Secondary Routes. Traffic volumes and vehicle speeds on these routes are generally lower than on the Priority Network and, consequently, the risks to road users are typically lower. However, during sustained periods of severe weather, failure to treat these routes can significantly impact accessibility, economic activity, and community resilience, particularly within rural areas where communities may be at risk of isolation.

Experience from the winter of 2009/10, when national salt shortages limited the ability to treat the full network, highlighted the need to identify a minimum level of service that can be maintained during periods of resource constraint. To support a resilient and proportionate response, the Secondary Route Network has therefore been divided into two categories, with the first category forming part of the Council's Minimum Winter Network.

Category A Secondary Routes

This category comprises routes providing access to schools from the Priority Route Network. These routes are identified in the appendices to this Plan. These routes are treated first when Secondary Routes are subject to treatment.

School Routes have been selected to provide access to all schools from the Priority Route Network. The treatment of School Routes will normally be undertaken following completion of the Priority Route Network. However, where there is a high degree of confidence in the forecast and an opportunity exists to undertake proactive treatment, School Routes may be treated in advance of, or concurrently with, Priority Routes. Treatments will only be undertaken when schools are expected to be open and subject to the availability of resources.

Category B Secondary Routes

The second category comprises other Secondary Routes that provide wider connectivity and access across the county.

These routes have been selected using the following criteria:

- Key links serving rural communities.
- Key links within urban areas.
- Public transport routes operating regular daily services.

Treatment of these routes will only be undertaken following completion of the Priority Route Network and subject to the availability of resources, salt stocks, plant, and personnel.

Where resources permit, treatment may be extended to encompass all Secondary Routes. In circumstances where resources are constrained, the treatment of School Routes forming part of the Minimum Winter Network will take precedence over all other Secondary Routes.

The decision to treat Secondary Routes will be based on forecast weather conditions, prevailing network conditions, available resources, and the anticipated duration and severity of the winter weather event. The treatment of Secondary Routes should not compromise the Council's ability to maintain the agreed level of service on the Priority Route Network.

The Active Travel Network

In accordance with the principles set out in the *Well-managed Highway Infrastructure Code of Practice*, the needs of pedestrians and cyclists are considered separately from those of motorists and other road users. The risks associated with untreated footways and cycleways can increase significantly during periods of severe or prolonged freezing weather, particularly where pedestrian movements are concentrated or where access to key services would otherwise be restricted.

Decisions regarding the treatment of footways and cycleways will therefore be made alongside, but independently of, decisions relating to carriageway treatments. Footways and cycleways will not automatically be treated whenever the Priority Route Network is treated. Instead, treatments will be undertaken in accordance with the service criteria and decision-making process set out in Table 3 and subject to the availability of resources and prevailing weather conditions.

The following categories of footways and cycleways have been identified for winter treatment.

Heavily Used Active Travel Links

These comprise key pedestrian routes within Hereford City and the market towns, including:

- Principal retail and shopping areas.
- Main pedestrian routes linking transport interchanges and public car parks to retail centres.
- Key walking routes serving major educational establishments, including the main college campuses in Hereford.
- Pedestrian access routes serving Hereford County Hospital and other significant public facilities.

Treatment of these footways will be undertaken only in accordance with the criteria set out in Table 3 and will be subject to prevailing weather conditions and the availability of resources.

Strategic Active Travel Links

These comprise a defined network of footways and cycleways that provide important connections between residential areas, public transport facilities, major employment areas and key community destinations.

The purpose of treating these routes is to support safe and sustainable travel during winter conditions and to maintain accessibility for pedestrians and cyclists where it is reasonably practicable to do so.

Treatment of Strategic Active Travel Links will be undertaken only in accordance with the criteria set out in Table 3 below and will be subject to prevailing weather conditions and the availability of resources.

Other Active Travel Routes

The Council does not generally have the resources necessary to extend treatment beyond the classifications and circumstances identified above as part of normal winter service operations. Consequently, most footways and cycleways outside the identified treatment network will not receive routine winter treatment.

However, where practicable, the Council may undertake ad hoc treatment of footways or cycleways in response to specific emergencies, exceptional circumstances, or where access is required to support critical services, emergency response activities, or essential medical needs.

The Council will continue to work with Hereford City Parish Council, the market town councils, parish councils, businesses and local communities to identify and promote appropriate opportunities for self-help and community resilience initiatives, helping to maintain accessibility during periods of severe winter weather.

Other Locations or Routes

Where severe winter weather conditions persist for extended periods, the Council may undertake treatment of locations outside the defined winter service network where there is a demonstrated operational need and resources are available.

The Council will consider requests for ad hoc treatment to support emergency response activities or critical access requirements identified through partner agencies. Such circumstances may include:

- Support to the Police following a road traffic collision.
- Assistance in responding to utility infrastructure failures, such as significant water leaks.
- Facilitating access to properties for medical emergencies.

- Supporting operational requirements of the Fire and Rescue Service, Ambulance Service and other emergency responders.
- Maintaining access to critical community infrastructure during periods of severe weather.

In all cases, the decision as to whether treatment will be undertaken shall be made by the Duty Control Officer based on the prevailing and forecast conditions, the assessed level of risk, operational priorities and the availability of resources.

The Council will continue to work with Town and Parish Councils, local communities and other stakeholders to identify and support appropriate self-help and community resilience initiatives wherever reasonably practicable.

Car Parks

Applying a risk-based approach, consideration may be given to the treatment of Council-operated public car parks within Hereford City and the market towns when forecast conditions indicate that surface temperatures are expected to remain below freezing for a prolonged period, typically 24 hours or more, and ice formation is anticipated.

Any decision to treat public car parks will be made by the Duty Control Officer and will be subject to the weather forecast and prevailing weather conditions, operational priorities and the availability of resources.

Where a car park is accessible to winter service vehicles, treatment will normally be incorporated into planned gritting operations wherever practicable.

Public Bus Routes

Regular rural bus routes with a weekday frequency of two hours or better form part of the Priority Route Network. Other bus routes operating daily services are generally included within the Secondary Route Network.

Certain transport interchange locations may present an elevated risk during prolonged freezing conditions due to high pedestrian activity and the concentration of public transport movements. Where appropriate, the Council may arrange treatment of such locations when forecasts indicate prolonged sub-zero temperatures and a high likelihood of ice formation.

Treatment of these sites will be subject to operational priorities, resource availability and prevailing weather conditions. Continued treatment may also depend upon the cooperation and support of site owners or operators where the land is not part of the adopted highway.

School Transport

It is not practicable to extend winter service treatment to all school transport routes across the county. However, through the provision of Priority Routes and the School Routes element of the Minimum Winter Network, access to schools can be maintained across much of the county during winter conditions.

In periods of severe and prolonged winter weather, the Council will work closely with education services, transport providers, schools and local communities to identify particular locations where accessibility issues may significantly affect the operation of school transport services or increase the risk of community isolation.

The Council will also continue to promote community self-help arrangements and improved communication with education providers to assist in managing local winter weather impacts.

Some schools experience difficulties maintaining coach turning areas and transport facilities during prolonged periods of snow and ice. In such circumstances, pupils may be required to board or alight on the adjacent highway, increasing the risk to both pupils and other road users.

Where a school transport facility is considered to function as a transport interchange and conditions warrant intervention, the Council may arrange treatment subject to forecast conditions, operational priorities and the availability of resources.

The Council will continue to work collaboratively with schools and transport operators to help ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that essential school transport services can operate safely during severe winter weather.

All treatments undertaken under this section will remain subject to prevailing weather conditions, operational priorities and the availability of resources.

If severe conditions persist, then treatment of other locations may be carried out as needed, subject to the availability of resources. We shall consider the ad-hoc treatment of any location in support of a particular emergency or medical access need as identified through our partner agencies. Emergencies could include support to police for a reported road traffic collision, a utility water leak, gaining access to properties for medical emergencies and supporting the emergency services. A decision will be made in all instances by the Duty Control Officer on duty as to whether or not treatments should be provided.

We will work with the Town and Parish Councils and others to identify all reasonably practicable opportunities for self-help.

The Provision of Salt Bins

Town and Parish Councils may request the installation of salt bins at locations where they can contribute to highway safety and provide a demonstrable community benefit. All requests for new salt bins will be assessed using a risk-based approach, taking account of local circumstances, available resources and operational priorities, in consultation with the relevant Town or Parish Council.

Salt bins will normally be yellow in colour; however, black or green bins may be provided in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs), environmentally sensitive locations, or where requested by the relevant Town or Parish Council and considered appropriate by the Highway Authority. Salt bins will normally be fitted with hinged lids to protect the contents from weathering and will typically have a capacity of approximately 200 litres.

Provision Criteria

Salt bins will not normally be provided:

- On roads that form part of the Priority Route Network.
- At locations where their presence is likely to attract anti-social behaviour or cause nuisance to nearby residents.
- Where their installation would contribute to unnecessary street clutter or adversely affect the movement of disabled or visually impaired people.
- Without the agreement and support of the relevant Town or Parish Council.
- On unadopted highways, including roads within new developments that remain the responsibility of the developer pending formal adoption by the Highway Authority.

Use of Salt Bins

The salt or grit contained within these bins is provided solely for use on the public highway and associated public realm. Its use on private property or for any purpose unrelated to highway safety is not authorised.

Inspection and Replenishment

The Council aims to ensure that all salt bins are stocked prior to the commencement of the winter season and will seek to maintain supplies throughout the winter period.

Replenishment will normally be undertaken during the winter season as required, based on inspections, reported usage and customer requests. Additional replenishment may also be carried out following periods of prolonged or severe winter weather where resources allow.

The Council's ability to replenish salt bins will remain subject to the availability of operational resources, the prevailing weather conditions and the need to prioritise carriageway and footway treatments in accordance with this Winter Service Plan.

During periods of prolonged or severe winter weather, replenishment activities may be suspended while resources are directed towards maintaining the Priority Route Network and other essential winter service operations.

Asset Management and Review

The Council will maintain an inventory of all salt bins as part of its highway asset management records. This inventory will include information on location, condition, capacity and replenishment history.

Information gathered through inspections and replenishment records will be used to monitor demand and inform future provision. Where evidence demonstrates consistently high and appropriate use of salt on the public highway, consideration may be given to enhancing provision at that location following assessment. Conversely, where bins are found to be little used, redundant or no longer justified, their removal may be considered.

Before any decision is taken to remove an existing salt bin, the Council will consult with the relevant Town or Parish Council and take account of local circumstances and community needs.

Level Crossings

Spreaders are to be switched off across level crossings so that salt does not fall between the stop lines. If plough blades are being used, they will be lifted between the stop lines. Snow blowers will not be used on level crossings. There are level crossings at the following locations:

- B4361 – Easters Mart, Leominster, grid reference: 350012/259796;
- B4348 – Tram Inn, grid reference: 346399/233579;
- C1122 – between Wellington and Marden, grid reference: 351134/248112; and
- C1120 – between Moreton-on-Lugg and Marden.

Diversion Routes

Where temporary highway diversions are implemented during the winter season, the Council will seek to ensure that diversion routes are treated to a standard that is no less than that provided on the route being diverted.

When considering and implementing diversion routes during winter conditions, due regard shall be given to:

- The extent and coverage of the Priority Route Network.

- The prevailing and forecast weather conditions.
- The suitability of the proposed diversion route for winter service operations.
- The ability of winter service vehicles to safely access and treat the route.
- Any operational constraints that may affect the timely delivery of treatment.

Where a diversion route does not form part of the existing winter service network, an assessment may be required to determine whether the route can be safely and effectively treated before it is brought into use. This may include a site inspection to identify any restrictions, hazards or operational issues that could affect gritting operations.

The Council will work closely with contractors, emergency services, neighbouring authorities and other relevant partner organisations to ensure that winter service implications are considered during the planning and implementation of highway diversions.

Information relating to significant diversions and any associated winter service arrangements will be communicated, where appropriate, through established communication channels and liaison with partner organisations. The Council will seek to raise awareness of diversion routes and their winter service status through the provision of guidance, operational coordination and public information to minimise disruption and maintain the safety of highway users during winter conditions.

Trunk Roads and Motorways within Herefordshire

National Highways (NH) is responsible for the management of the Trunk Roads and Motorways in Herefordshire. The A49T, A40T and the M50 fall within their Area 9 and the services for this area are delivered through their agents.

Other Public Places

We will, wherever practicable, coordinate our winter service with the activities deployed to address the impact of snow and ice on all other public places throughout Herefordshire.

The Council's Corporate Estate - Schools

We will, wherever practicable, coordinate our winter service with the activities deployed by Schools to address the impact of snow and ice on school grounds.

Contingency Planning – Minimum Winter Network

The Council maintains a range of contingency arrangements to support the continued delivery of winter service operations during exceptional circumstances. These arrangements are designed to ensure service resilience in response to events that may affect operational capability, including:

- Disruptions to road salt supplies.
- Fuel shortages.
- Flooding and severe weather events.
- Pandemic-related impacts.
- Significant workforce shortages.
- Major incidents affecting the highway network.

Contingency measures may include:

- The deployment of suitably trained employees from other service areas to support winter operations.
- The use of approved subcontractors and agency personnel holding the appropriate LGV qualifications.

- Access to additional plant and equipment through the Council's contractor and national supply arrangements.
- Increased use of automated gritting technologies and route optimisation systems where available.
- Flexible deployment of drivers and co-drivers to maximise operational resilience.
- Implementation of operational practices consistent with current Government guidance and business continuity requirements.

These arrangements are regularly reviewed to ensure that winter service operations can continue to be delivered safely and effectively under a range of adverse circumstances.

Salt Supply Contingency Arrangements

Previous severe winters have demonstrated that national road salt supplies can become constrained during periods of prolonged and widespread winter weather. Whilst Herefordshire Council has not previously been required to reduce treatment below the Priority Route Network due to salt shortages, arrangements are in place to manage such circumstances should they arise.

Should the availability of road salt become critically restricted, the Council may implement a phased reduction in the extent of the network treated. This would only be considered after all reasonable mitigation measures have been explored, including:

- Securing additional supplies from alternative sources.
- Careful management of existing stock levels.
- The use of reduced or variable spread rates where appropriate.
- Adoption of alternative operational strategies designed to conserve salt while maintaining safety on the most critical parts of the network.

Any decision to reduce the extent of the treatment network will be based on a risk assessment and the prevailing operational circumstances.

The authority to implement such measures rests with the Chief Executive, the relevant Director, or the Service Director with responsibility for highways, or their nominated deputy/deputies. Decisions will normally be taken following consultation with key partners, neighbouring highway authorities and the relevant emergency management structures, including Silver Command arrangements where activated.

Should route rationalisation become necessary, effective communication with road users, stakeholders and partner organisations will be essential. Information regarding the extent of the treatment network, the reasons for the decision and the anticipated impacts will be communicated through the Council's established communication channels.

Details of the phased treatment hierarchy, trigger levels and the associated Minimum Winter Network are provided in the appendices to this Plan.

Snow Clearance

Snow clearance operations present different operational challenges from precautionary salting and require a flexible response based on the severity, duration and geographical extent of the snowfall event.

When snow ploughing operations are being undertaken, Council gritting vehicles fitted with snow ploughs will normally be assigned a co-driver (Plough Mate) to support the driver and assist with operational safety. This arrangement will remain in place until conditions improve, operational requirements change, or resources are required elsewhere.

During periods of significant snowfall, the Council may supplement its own resources through the deployment of approved contractors located throughout the county. These contractors are allocated defined operational areas and can be mobilised to assist with snow clearance activities on local roads.

Levels of Service

The Council has established contingency arrangements that allow winter service operations to continue during periods when strategic capability is reduced. Such circumstances may arise due to factors including, but not limited to, prolonged severe weather, significant resource shortages, disruptions to fuel supplies, workforce availability, plant failures or constraints in the availability of road salt.

Where operational capability becomes severely constrained, a phased reduction in the extent of the network treated may be necessary. Any decision to rationalise treatment in this way represents a significant change in the level of service provided and will only be considered following a strategic assessment of the Council's ability to sustain normal operations throughout the forecast period.

The need to modify the level of service will depend on the prevailing circumstances and the resources available at that time. Consequently, the level of service delivered may vary during the winter season.

For example, following a relatively mild winter, sufficient resources and salt stocks may be available to support an enhanced level of service during a short period of severe weather. Conversely, after a prolonged period of frequent treatments, resource pressures or constraints on salt supplies may require operations to be focused on the most critical parts of the highway network.

To provide clarity regarding the service that may be delivered under different circumstances, five Levels of Service have been defined:

- Normal Service
- Enhanced Service
- Constrained Service
- Rationalised Service
- Severely Rationalised Service

The extent of treatment associated with each level is set out in the Winter Service Level of Service Matrix contained within the following section of this Plan.

Assessment of Strategic Capability

The Council's strategic capability to deliver Winter Service operations will be reviewed regularly throughout the winter season.

Reviews will normally be undertaken as part of the daily winter operational management process to ensure that resources, risks, and operational priorities remain aligned with prevailing conditions. Additional reviews may be triggered by significant events that have the potential to affect service delivery, including severe or prolonged weather forecasts, substantial reductions in salt stocks, supply chain disruptions, workforce shortages, fuel supply constraints, plant or infrastructure failures, or emergency incidents that impact operational resources. These assessments will consider current and forecast weather conditions, the availability of salt stocks and the resilience of supply arrangements, the availability of personnel, vehicles, and equipment, and the anticipated demand for treatment activities. Wider emergency planning considerations and the potential risks

to the highway network, communities, and critical services will also be taken into account to support informed decision-making and maintain service resilience throughout the winter season.

At the commencement of each winter season, the Council will operate at the Normal Service Level. Operations will then be managed to maintain this level for as long as it remains practical and sustainable.

Forecasting Weather Conditions

Weather Forecasting

The Council subscribes to a specialist winter weather forecasting service throughout the winter maintenance season. Forecast information and decision-support tools are provided through the Vaisala Roads Manager Bureau Service, enabling informed, consistent, and timely Winter Service decisions. The service provides a range of forecasting products, including five-day forecasts, thirty-six-hour forecasts, twenty-four-hour forecasts, ice prediction graphs, and road surface condition forecasts, together with online forecasting tools and access to twenty-four-hour meteorological consultancy support. These resources assist operational decision-makers in assessing weather-related risks and determining the most appropriate response to protect the highway network.

Forecasts are developed using a combination of national and global meteorological models and data collected from a network of roadside weather monitoring stations strategically located throughout Herefordshire. This network provides real-time atmospheric and road condition information, enabling forecast outputs to be refined to reflect local conditions and variations across the county. The data collected includes road surface temperatures, air temperatures, relative humidity, dew point temperatures, surface condition information, and other meteorological observations relevant to Winter Service operations. The integration of forecast data, weather station information, and specialist meteorological advice provides a robust evidence base for operational decision-making and supports the effective and efficient delivery of the Council's Winter Service.

Domain-Based Forecasting

The Council operates a domain-based forecasting system that recognises the varying weather conditions that can occur across different parts of Herefordshire. This approach enables more effective targeting of winter treatments by identifying localised risks such as frost, ice and snowfall within specific geographical areas of the county.

Domain-based forecasting supports:

- More accurate treatment decisions.
- Targeted deployment of resources.
- Reduced unnecessary salt usage.
- Improved environmental performance.
- Enhanced operational efficiency.
- Improved network resilience during marginal weather conditions.

Forecast information from the domain-based system will continue to form the primary basis for Winter Service decision-making throughout the season. Decisions will be supported by professional meteorological advice, real-time weather station data, highway inspections and operational experience, ensuring that treatments are undertaken when and where they are most needed.

The Council will keep forecasting arrangements under review and will continue to embrace technological developments that improve forecast accuracy, operational efficiency and the effectiveness of winter service delivery.

Weather Stations

There are currently seven weather stations that are placed strategically across the County. These are subject to periodic renewal to ensure that they are resilient. This renewal process also helps us leverage technology to ensure that efficient and effective decisions are taken.

Our first response to a fault with our weather stations is to visit the site and report back to our providers on the issues. This can sometimes mean that faults can be resolved remotely. In the case of more serious faults, the details are passed to the provider who initiates a response.

Treatments

Ice Treatment

Precautionary treatment of surfaces is the most effective method of treating snow and ice. Our approach to identifying treatment requirements is constructed around this principle.

Decision Making

There are broadly three steps to deciding when to deliver a precautionary ice treatment to the highway network. The initial step is to assess the road surface state and temperature that is forecast across each of the domains. The forecast also provides information on the likelihood of precipitation, helping the decision maker time treatments to be effective. Finally, these parameters are considered against Table 2 below to establish a treatment.

It is important that decision makers understand the surface state of the road network when establishing a treatment. Roads that are dry, damp or wet have different treatment approaches. The implications of changing surface state are set out in Table 2 below. Additionally, during periods of successive nights of freezing conditions residual salt levels on carriageways may be accounted for in the decision making to avoid excessive build up.

Domain based forecasting allows for response to varying temperatures across the county with part of the county forecast to be at or below zero with associated hazards, this will enable partial treatments across the county based on the available forecasts.

Winter Service decisions are normally made by the designated Duty Control Officer (DCO), who determines the appropriate response to forecast and observed weather conditions.

Decisions are based on specialist weather forecasts, roadside weather monitoring data, highway inspections, local observations, and professional judgement. The Council's weather forecasting provider supplies regularly updated forecasts for Herefordshire and offers 24-hour forecasting support.

Roadside weather stations across the county provide real-time information on air and road temperatures, humidity, dew point, and road surface conditions, helping to support informed decision-making.

The DCO will normally review forecast information between 12:00 and 13:00 hours and record an operational decision. This may include deploying treatment operations, placing resources on standby, undertaking inspections, continuing monitoring, or taking no action. Decisions will reflect forecast conditions, network risk, operational priorities, and the need to maintain a safe and resilient highway network.

Salt Spread Rates

The tables below take into account guidance and utilise best practice gained from local knowledge and experience of past winters. Rates of spread will be 8 g/m² unless conditions dictate otherwise. Previous treatments, residual salt, road conditions and water run-off will inform the risk-based approach to treatments.

The salt spread rates are set out in Table 2 below.

Weather Conditions Road Surface Conditions Road Surface Temperature (RST)	Air Temperature	Treatment Rock Salt (g/m ²)		Ploughing
		Dry/Damp Road	Wet Road	
Frost or forecast frost RST at or above -3°C	Pre-Treatment	8	8	No
Frost or forecast frost RST at or below – 3°C and above – 5°C		15	15	No
Frost or forecast frost RST at or below – 5°C and above – 10°C		15	2 x 15	No
Light snow forecast		Not Applicable	15	No
Moderate/Heavy snow forecast			15	No
Ice formed (minor accumulations)	Above – 5°C		15 (Successive ice formation is widespread)	No
Ice formed	At or below – 5°C		15 (Successive)	No
Snow covering exceeding 50 mm			15 (Successive snow accumulation is widespread)	Yes
Hard packed snow/ice	Above – 8°C		15 (Successive)	No
Hard packed snow/ice	At or below – 8°C		Salt/abrasive (successive)	No

Table 2 - Decision Making – Spread Rates

Prolonged periods of Freezing Conditions

A prolonged period of freezing conditions which is below zero for 24 hours.

Treatment of Secondary Routes

The Secondary Route network is treated using Table 2 during prolonged periods of freezing conditions. As set out above, this is where freezing conditions extend beyond a 24-hour period. Where a significant snow event that may extend for more than 24 hours is forecast the secondary route designations may be treated with 20g in advance.

Whist domains are not used to organise the routes, domain-based forecasting remains the basis for establishing the treatment of the secondary routes. This allows a risk-based decision to be made when considering the treatment of the secondary routes. Generally, the Category A Secondary Routes are treated first, reflecting their elevated community importance and increased usage. The Category B routes follow.

Treating the Active Travel Network (ATN)

Our Active Travel winter network is defined in Appendix 2 of this Plan. The triggers for treatment on our ATN are set out in the table below.

Category	Overnight Frost Conditions Overnight forecast temperatures below zero	Daytime Frost Conditions Overnight forecast temperatures below zero extending beyond 0800hrs	Prolonged Daytime Frost Conditions	Snow Events
Category A - Hereford High Town Heavily Trafficked Active Travel Network in this plan.	No treatment	Forecast led treatment and / or Treat as necessary taking a risk-based approach Inspection may be deployed to establish the treatment requirement.	Monitor and further treatment as required when resources permit, taking a risk-based approach	Snow removal will commence when resources become available from higher priority treatments. Endeavours will be made to commence clearance within 12 hours of cessation of snowfall, subject to availability of resources, taking a risk-based approach. Treatment only during normal working hours.
Category B - Heavily Trafficked parts of the Active Travel Network identified as Strategic in this plan.	No treatment	No treatment		

Table 3 - Winter Service for Footways and Cycleways – Treatment Table

Notes

1. At all times priority will be given to the priority carriageway network.
2. Combined footway/cycleways are treated in accordance with footway hierarchy.

Treatment of Car Parks and Other Parts of the Council Estate

The Car Parks are generally treated when there is a prolonged period of freezing conditions, defined as extending beyond 24 hours.

In some instances, requests may be passed from teams managing these facilities to deliver a treatment to address specific local conditions. In these cases, the DCO will consider the request against the wider risk on the highway network prior to initiating a treatment.

Decisions to Move to a Different Level of Service

Where circumstances indicate that delivery of the Normal Service Level may no longer be sustainable, an escalation process will be implemented to support strategic decision-making and ensure that available resources are directed to the parts of the network that provide the greatest benefit to public safety, network resilience and community access.

Any decision to move between service levels will be taken on a risk-based basis, informed by operational data, forecasts and resource availability, and will be supported by appropriate governance arrangements.

Where a move to a Constrained, Rationalised or Severely Rationalised level of service is required, the Council will ensure that:

- The decision is appropriately authorised.
- Relevant partner organisations are informed.
- Operational staff are briefed on the revised arrangements.
- Clear communications are issued to explain the change in service level and its implications.
- The position is reviewed regularly to determine when normal service levels can be reinstated.

The Council's objective throughout any period of service constraint will be to maintain access to the most critical routes and services, minimise risks to highway users and communities, and restore higher levels of service as soon as operational circumstances permit.

Role of the Duty Officer in Establishing Treatments

The Duty Control Officer is responsible for assessing all relevant forecast and observational data and determining the appropriate Winter Service response in accordance with this Plan. In carrying out this role, the Duty Control Officer will liaise with the weather forecasting provider, inspection teams, and operational personnel as necessary to ensure that decisions are based on the most accurate and up-to-date information available. Once a treatment decision has been made, the Duty Control Officer will inform operational supervisors, and, where appropriate, advise emergency duty officers and the service leadership, or their nominated representative during normal working hours.

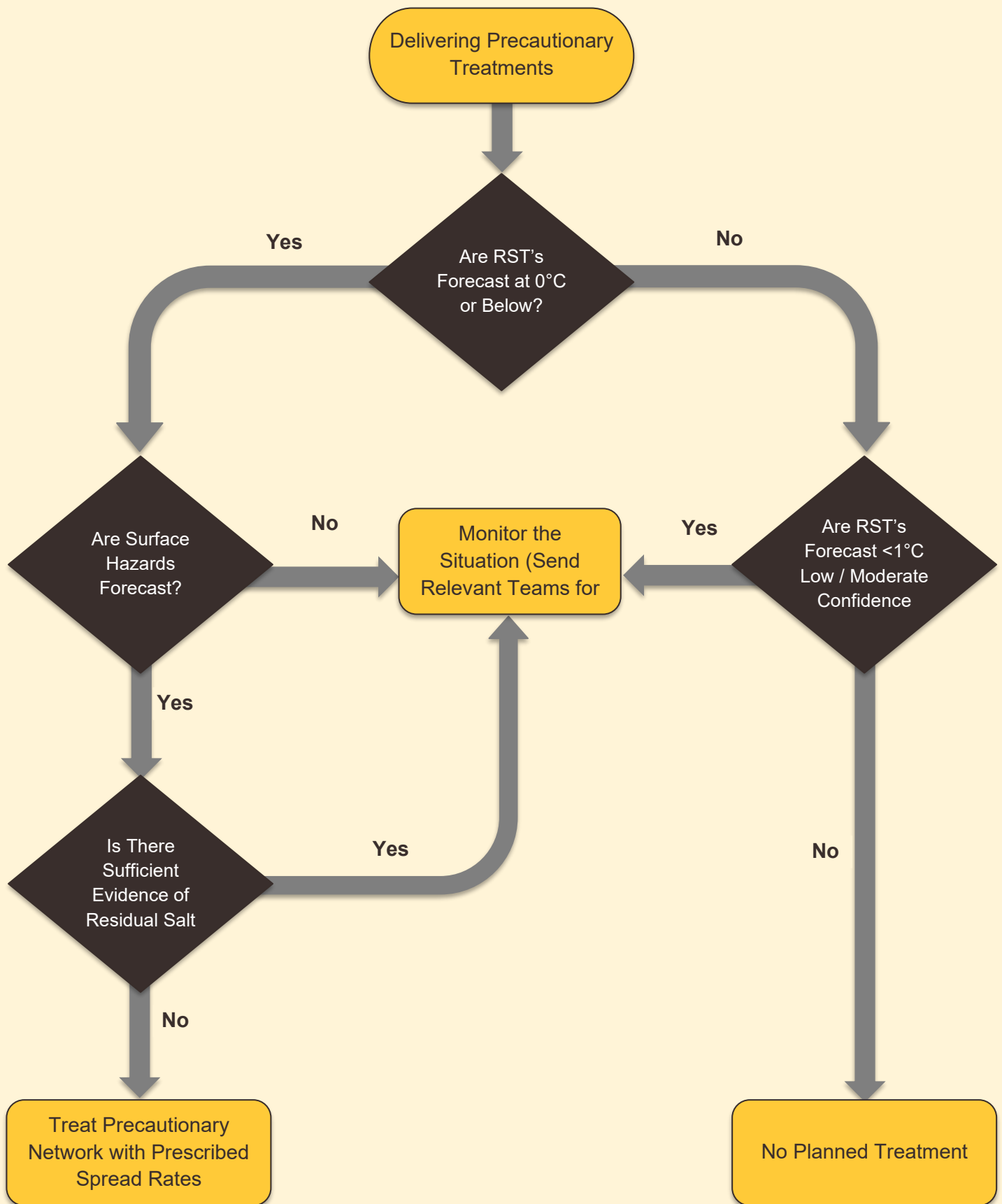
The Duty Control Officer is also responsible for communicating decisions to neighbouring highway authorities, National Highways, and other relevant delivery partners to support coordinated service delivery and cross-boundary resilience. Any necessary operational instructions or works orders will be raised, and all treatment decisions will be recorded within the Vaisala Roads Manager system to provide a clear audit trail. The role also includes initiating operational communications, including automated notifications to operational staff and key stakeholders, and ensuring that all decisions are subject to independent review and verification.

Marginal Nights

Managing the winter service for marginal nights is a delicate balance, whilst unnecessary treatments are to be avoided, ensuring the safety of the network is our priority. Increasingly we have periods that are considered 'marginal'. This is where the forecast is suggesting that conditions will be close to our threshold for pre-treating, but there may be a medium or low confidence in the accuracy of the information to inform the decision-making process.

Low confidence in weather forecasting generally means a 20% to 30% chance of occurrence. In these situations, models either show weak consensus or high dispersion, meaning the predicted conditions might change drastically in subsequent runs. Medium confidence may extend to 70% chance of occurrence, and models are more aligned, but some variables remain inconsistent.

These forecasts are more challenging to make a clear decision, or there is a higher likelihood of a change in decision being required. To assist the decision makers during these periods the following process has been developed. This is a guide, and the judgement and experience of our teams also plays a key role.



Snow Treatments

Initiating treatments for Snow are included in Table 3 above. In addition, the following section sets out the additional treatments that are required to secure the resilience of the highway network.

Actions When Snow is Forecast

When a warning is received, either from the Met Office or from our weather forecast service, the Council team will begin communicating with our Term Maintenance Contractor to ensure that sufficient resources are available to manage the requirement to treat the highway network. At this point the service may decide to pre-treat the secondary routes.

The estimated severity of the impacts will be assessed to establish if suitable resources are available to manage response on the highway network, take communication from stakeholders and road users.

Consideration is also given to the length of the period that impacts are likely to be experienced for. This helps the service manage fatigue for individuals and the resilience of the service.

Clearing Snow Accumulations

The mobilisation of contractors and the prioritisation of snow clearance activities will be determined by a combination of factors, including the severity and forecast duration of snowfall, the impact on communities and access to essential services, and the requirements of the network hierarchy and overall network resilience. Consideration will also be given to the availability of resources and any advice or intelligence received from partner organisations and emergency response agencies to ensure an effective and coordinated response.

All snow clearance activities will be initiated by the Duty Control Officer and coordinated by our Term Maintenance Contractor. Both parties assess operational requirements and determine appropriate actions using a risk-based approach. Where necessary, activities may be undertaken in support of the Council's wider emergency response arrangements and in conjunction with emergency planning procedures.

Priority will be given to maintaining access along the Priority Route Network, key emergency service routes, critical infrastructure and essential community facilities. As resources permit, snow clearance operations may be extended to other parts of the network in accordance with the priorities and service levels established within this Plan.

During these times the Council employs support from those who undertake snow clearance as snow contractors. This vital service is part of our operational response and coordinated as such.

Record Keeping

Operational Log

All Winter Service treatment decisions will be made by the designated Duty Control Officer (DCO). During periods of severe or prolonged winter weather, additional suitably qualified staff may be consulted to support the decision-making process, particularly where conditions are complex, rapidly changing or likely to have significant operational implications. However, responsibility for the final operational decision will remain with the Duty Control Officer.

Comprehensive records of Winter Service activities will be maintained to support operational management, service monitoring, performance review and legal compliance.

Records maintained within Vaisala Roads Manager will include:

- Daily Winter Service decisions.
- Weather forecasts and weather station data.
- Salt usage records.
- Treatment instructions and treatment records.
- Operational logs and action reports.

In addition, separate records will be maintained by M Group Ltd. for:

- Vehicle, plant and equipment maintenance.
- Calibration certificates.
- Driver and operator hours.
- Training, competency and familiarisation records.
- Meeting minutes and operational reviews.
- Incident and emergency response reports.
- Other relevant Winter Service documentation.

These records provide a clear and auditable record of Winter Service activities and support service reviews, continuous improvement, performance reporting and, where appropriate, the Council's statutory defence under Sections 41 and 58 of the Highways Act 1980.

Severe Weather Logging

During periods of severe winter weather, an enhanced operational log will be maintained. This will provide a continuous record of:

- Weather conditions.
- Forecast updates.
- Reports received.
- Decisions taken.
- Actions instructed.
- Resources deployed.
- Times of significant events.
- Communications with partner organisations and stakeholders.

This information will normally be recorded electronically within Vaisala Roads Manager as part of the daily operational record.

Vaisala Roads Manager provides decision-makers with an integrated road weather management system that combines weather forecasts, real-time observations, treatment records, operational information and historical data. This supports evidence-based decision-making and enables effective planning, monitoring, auditing and review of Winter Service operations throughout the season.

Where practicable, the operational record will be supplemented by photographs taken before, during, and after treatment activities to provide a visual record of Winter Service operations. These photographs may be used to support operational reviews and performance assessments, demonstrate the effectiveness of treatments, assist in the investigation of customer enquiries and claims, and provide evidential records during periods of severe weather. They may also support public communications and stakeholder engagement by helping to illustrate operational activities, network conditions, and the Council's response to winter weather events.

The maintenance of accurate, timely and comprehensive records is a key element of effective Winter Service management and supports transparency, accountability and continuous improvement across the service.

Service Delivery Arrangements

People

Overall Responsibility

As the Highway Authority, Herefordshire Council has overall responsibility for ensuring that an effective Winter Service is provided in accordance with its statutory duties and policy objectives. The operational delivery of winter service activities across the highway network is undertaken by the Council's Term Maintenance Contractor, M Group Ltd., who are responsible for delivering the service in accordance with this Winter Service Plan and the requirements of the contract.

Herefordshire Council and M Group Ltd. are committed to working collaboratively to continually improve the Winter Service. Responsibilities are allocated to those best placed to make operational and strategic decisions, ensuring an efficient, resilient and responsive service for the communities of Herefordshire.

The Highway Service also performs a key role within the Council's response to severe weather emergencies. Through its responsibilities under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004, the Council works alongside emergency services, neighbouring authorities and other partner agencies to prepare for, respond to and recover from the impacts of severe weather events, including freezing temperatures, ice and snow. The Council's wider response to such events is coordinated through its Emergency Planning arrangements and associated multi-agency response plans.

Highway Service Leadership

The Council's Highway Service Leadership Team will provide strategic oversight of Winter Service operations and ensure that the personnel, equipment, facilities, resources, and systems required to deliver this Plan are available, maintained, and capable of responding throughout the winter season. Its responsibilities include overseeing the effective delivery of the Winter Service, monitoring performance against established service standards, and ensuring that adequate resources are available to meet operational demands. The Leadership Team will also support emergency response and business continuity arrangements, while driving continuous improvement through performance monitoring, post-event reviews, and the application of lessons learned to enhance future service delivery.

Service Delivery Partners

M Group Ltd., as the Council's Term Maintenance Contractor, is responsible for managing the operational delivery of Winter Service activities in accordance with this Plan.

The Council also works closely with a range of service delivery partners who may provide support during severe weather events. These arrangements help improve resilience and maximise the availability of resources during periods of increased demand.

Examples include:

- Contractors providing specialist plant, equipment and labour.
- Waste management service providers, including FCC, who may make vehicles and resources available for snow clearance and related activities when normal waste collection services are disrupted.
- Town and Parish Councils supporting local resilience initiatives.
- Emergency services and utility providers responding to incidents affecting the transport network.

The health, safety and welfare of all personnel involved in Winter Service operations remain paramount. M Group Ltd. will maintain and implement appropriate health and safety procedures, risk assessments and safe systems of work to ensure the safe deployment of staff, contractors and vehicles throughout the winter season.

Duty Control Officer (DCO)

Duty Control Officers (DCOs) will be appointed by the Council prior to the commencement of each winter season.

The DCO provides operational leadership for Winter Service delivery and will normally operate as part of a duty rota providing 24-hour coverage throughout the winter period.

Key responsibilities include:

- Reviewing forecast and weather information.
- Leading daily winter operational review meetings.
- Assessing information received from inspection teams and weather providers.
- Determining and authorising Winter Service actions.
- Coordinating responses to changing weather conditions.
- Managing exceptional operational situations and emergency requests.
- Maintaining operational records and audit trails of decisions.

Daily winter review meetings will be attended by relevant members of the winter management team, including the DCO, Winter Coordinator, operational representatives and other officers as required.

Salt stock levels and usage will be regularly reviewed. M Group Ltd. will maintain salt stock records and provide operational monitoring information, whilst the Council will maintain liaison with salt suppliers and strategic supply arrangements. Salt usage and operational data will be recorded through Vaisala Roads Manager and reviewed as part of routine operational management processes.

Verification Officer (VO)

The Verification Officer provides independent support and resilience within the Winter Service decision-making process.

The Verification Officer will:

- Review and verify treatment decisions where appropriate.
- Provide operational advice and support to the DCO.
- Assist in responding to rapidly changing weather conditions.
- Provide additional resilience within the forecasting and decision-making process.

Inspection Teams

Where Inspection Teams are deployed, each team normally comprising two suitably trained personnel, together with reserve personnel where available.

Responsibilities include:

- Monitoring highway conditions.
- Inspecting known cold spots and high-risk locations.
- Reporting localised weather conditions and emerging hazards.
- Verifying forecast information through on-site observations.
- Supporting the DCO in assessing treatment requirements.

Inspection routes are specifically designed to cover representative locations across the county, including known frost-prone sites and areas susceptible to winter weather hazards.

Training and Competence

All personnel involved in the delivery of Winter Service activities will receive appropriate training and competency assessments relevant to their roles.

New personnel will undertake a structured induction programme covering Winter Service procedures, operational requirements and health and safety responsibilities.

Training for Winter Service drivers will typically include:

- The Council's Winter Service policy and statutory duties.
- The content and operation of the Winter Service Plan.
- Route familiarisation and operational procedures.
- Weather forecasting and monitoring systems.
- Driving in adverse weather conditions.
- Safe working practices and duty of care responsibilities.
- Circumstances requiring additional safety precautions.
- Snow ploughing operations, including level crossings and segregated infrastructure.
- Emergency response procedures.
- Responding to post-winter weather impacts, including flooding events.

All gritter drivers will undertake pre-season familiarisation runs, with additional familiarisation provided where routes or personnel change during the season.

Records of all training, toolbox talks, familiarisation exercises, exercises and competency assessments will be maintained.

Annual refresher training on forecasting systems and Winter Service procedures will be provided for all relevant personnel.

Where appropriate, Winter Service decision-makers will be encouraged to maintain professional competence through recognised industry qualifications.

Briefings and Continuous Improvement

Prior to each winter season, M Group Ltd. will deliver operational briefing sessions for employees, subcontractors, and other personnel involved in the delivery of Winter Services. These briefings will communicate the arrangements for the forthcoming winter season, including any changes to treatment routes and the network, updates to policies, procedures, and technology, relevant health and safety requirements, and lessons learned from previous seasons. A mid-season operational review will also be undertaken to assess performance, identify emerging challenges, and implement corrective actions or service improvements where necessary.

At the conclusion of each winter season, a formal debrief and service review will be carried out involving Council officers, M Group Ltd., operational personnel, and other relevant stakeholders. The review will evaluate Winter Service performance, consider customer feedback and complaints, examine operational challenges and incidents encountered during the season, assess salt usage and resource management, and identify lessons learned and opportunities for future improvement. Any issues arising during the winter season should be raised with the Winter Coordinator, who will ensure that appropriate actions are taken and, where necessary, arrange additional meetings or reviews to address operational concerns and support the continual improvement of the Winter Service.

Vehicles and Plant

A range of specialist vehicles, plant and equipment is utilised to deliver the Winter Service across Herefordshire. To ensure operational readiness, reliability and compliance with performance standards, an extensive programme of inspection, servicing, maintenance and preparation is undertaken prior to the commencement of each winter season.

Fleet maintenance activities are primarily carried out during the summer months, ensuring that all vehicles and equipment are available, fully operational and appropriately equipped for winter operations.

Fleet replacement and investment decisions are made in accordance with the Council's fleet replacement strategy, taking account of operational requirements, service resilience, whole-life costs, environmental considerations and the need to maintain effective treatment coverage across both the Priority and Secondary Route Networks.

The fleet is configured to provide sufficient operational capacity to enable all planned gritting routes to be undertaken simultaneously where required. Additional operational resilience is provided through the availability of reserve vehicles to minimise service disruption in the event of vehicle breakdowns, maintenance requirements or other unforeseen circumstances.

Calibration

To ensure the accurate application of salt and compliance with operational requirements, all gritting vehicles will be calibrated prior to the start of each winter season by a suitably qualified calibration provider.

Calibration ensures that vehicles deliver the specified spread rates and treatment widths required by the Winter Service Plan and prevailing operational guidance.

Calibration certificates for each vehicle will be retained as part of the Winter Service records and made available for inspection where required.

Vehicles will normally be calibrated once per season; however, additional calibration may be undertaken if concerns arise regarding the accuracy or operation of any vehicle or spreading equipment.

All gritting vehicles will be calibrated for the application of 6mm dry rock salt unless alternative treatment materials are being utilised. Calibration activities will be managed by M Group Ltd.

Snow Clearance Equipment

To support snow clearance operations during periods of significant snowfall, a range of specialist snow removal equipment is maintained and available for deployment. This includes tractor-mounted snow blowers, dedicated snow blowers, snow ploughs fitted to gritting vehicles, and other specialist snow clearance plant where operationally required. The deployment of snow clearance equipment will be determined by prevailing weather conditions, operational requirements, and the priorities established within this Plan to ensure that resources are directed to areas of greatest need. M Group Ltd. will maintain detailed records of all snow clearance equipment, including inspection, maintenance, and service histories, to ensure that assets remain available, safe, and fit for operational use throughout the winter season.

Footway Treatment Equipment

To facilitate the treatment of footways, pedestrian areas and cycleway networks, a range of smaller-scale specialist equipment is available.

This will typically include:

- Quad bike-towed spreaders.
- Pedestrian-operated spreaders.
- Hand-propelled spreading equipment.
- Other equipment suitable for treating locations inaccessible to conventional gritting vehicles.

These resources will primarily be used to support the treatment of designated footways and cycleways within Hereford, the market towns and other identified locations.

Records relating to all Winter Service equipment will be maintained by M Group Ltd.

GPS and Vehicle Tracking

All gritting vehicles are equipped with Global Positioning System (GPS) technology and vehicle tracking systems that provide real-time operational monitoring and recording.

The system records:

- Vehicle location and route progress.
- Treatment start and finish times.
- Vehicle speed.
- Salt spreading activity.
- Spread rates.
- Treatment widths.
- Operational exceptions and interruptions.

This information provides an auditable record of Winter Service activities and supports operational management, performance monitoring and customer enquiries. Vehicle tracking data is particularly valuable when treatments are extended beyond the Priority Route Network to Secondary Routes or other locations that may be less familiar to drivers.

The data also supports service reviews, incident investigations, performance reporting and continuous improvement activities.

Fuel Supplies

Adequate fuel stocks will be maintained at operational depots throughout the winter season to support continuous Winter Service operations.

Fuel supplies will be:

- Monitored regularly.
- Managed to ensure sufficient contingency capacity.
- Replenished as required.
- Incorporated within Winter Service business continuity arrangements.

M Group Ltd. is responsible for the management, control and monitoring of fuel stocks to ensure that sufficient fuel is available to support planned and emergency Winter Service operations across the County.

Contingency arrangements are in place to mitigate against disruptions to fuel supply and to maintain service delivery during periods of exceptional demand or supply-chain disruption.

Advice on the Use of Red Diesel

The HM Revenue & Customs has previously confirmed that during extreme weather farmers can use red diesel in their tractors to help grit and clear snow from public roads. Under normal rules

any vehicle that is specifically constructed or adapted for dealing with frost, ice and snow – such as a snow plough – can work on public roads while using red diesel.

Recognising the vital role played by farmers in helping to keep rural roads clear, we have welcomed the pragmatic approach that has been adopted by HM Revenues and Customs, during clearly recognisable periods of extreme weather. This has enabled tractors to use red diesel on public roads whilst clearing snow or gritting to provide access to schools, hospitals, a remote dwelling, or communities cut off by ice and snow.

Detailed guidance on the use of red diesel are available on the HM Revenues & Customs website or by using the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/using-rebated-fuels-in-vehicles-and-machines-excise-notice-75#when-you-can-use-rebated-fuel>

Managing Salt

Road salt is procured through a regional framework contract managed by the Eastern Shires Purchasing Organisation (ESPO) on behalf of participating local authorities. The framework provides access to multiple suppliers, helping to strengthen resilience within the supply chain and enabling participating authorities to benefit from collaborative procurement arrangements.

M Group Ltd. works closely with Herefordshire Council and approved suppliers to manage the delivery of salt supplies throughout the winter season and to maintain agreed stock levels at operational depots.

The framework includes access to both UK and overseas sources of road salt, providing flexibility and resilience in securing supplies ahead of, and during, the winter season. The Council's objective is to maintain sufficient stock levels to support the delivery of this Winter Service Plan and respond to periods of prolonged or severe winter weather.

The target stockholding at the commencement of each winter season is 6,200 tonnes of road salt.

Strategic Salt Stock Monitoring

To support local, regional and national resilience arrangements, salt stocks will be subject to a structured monitoring and review process.

Stage 1 – Pre-Season Readiness

Prior to the commencement of the winter season, the Council aims to hold a minimum stock of 6,200 tonnes of road salt.

Salt stocks will be managed using agreed replenishment thresholds to ensure continuity of supply throughout the season. Orders for replenishment will normally be placed when stock levels fall to approximately 75% of storage capacity.

Indicative storage capacities are:

- Thorn Depot – 4000 tonnes
- Kingsland Depot – 2,200tonnes

Stock levels will be monitored regularly to ensure that agreed minimum reserves are maintained.

Stage 2 – In-Season Review

A strategic review of salt stocks will be undertaken at the end of December each year.

This review will consider:

- Salt consumption to date.
- The severity and duration of winter weather experienced.

- Forecast weather conditions for the remainder of the season.
- Available stock levels.
- Supply chain performance and resilience.
- Regional and national salt availability.

The outcome of the review will be used to determine whether any additional measures are required to safeguard service delivery and maintain resilience for the remainder of the winter season.

When stock levels reach the agreed replenishment threshold, the Salt Administrator will arrange for replacement deliveries to be ordered. During periods of severe or prolonged winter weather, monitoring and ordering frequencies may be increased to ensure continuity of supply.

Close monitoring of stock levels enables the Council and M Group Ltd. to proactively manage consumption, identify emerging supply risks and secure replacement stocks where necessary.

At Thorn Depot, the weighbridge facility will be utilised to monitor salt usage accurately through the recording of vehicle weights before and after loading. Appropriate records will be maintained to support stock reconciliation and auditing processes.

Salt stocks will be reviewed as part of daily winter operational meetings to ensure that sufficient materials are available to support the delivery of Winter Service activities. The review will consider current stock levels, weather forecasts, planned winter service actions, forecast salt consumption rates, and established minimum stock thresholds. Consideration will also be given to seasonal factors that may affect supply and demand, including public holidays, severe weather events, and potential supply chain constraints. This process supports informed operational decision-making, enables proactive stock management, and helps ensure that adequate salt reserves are maintained throughout the winter season.

Salt Stock Assessment and Planning

Target stock levels are determined through analysis of:

- The extent of the Priority and Secondary Route Networks.
- Historic salt usage data.
- Previous winter weather conditions.
- Operational experience and resilience requirements.
- Storage capacity available within the county.
- The capability and reliability of the supply chain.

The Council aims to maintain sufficient reserves to support normal winter operations whilst ensuring flexibility to respond to severe and prolonged winter weather events.

Monitoring and Auditing

Salt stocks will be regularly monitored throughout the winter season.

Physical surveys of salt barns and storage facilities will be undertaken at least twice each season to verify recorded stock levels and ensure inventory accuracy. These surveys will complement daily operational monitoring of salt usage and stock movements through the Council's Winter Service management systems.

Accurate monitoring of stock levels enables informed operational decision-making, supports resilience planning, and helps ensure that sufficient salt resources remain available to maintain the agreed Winter Service throughout the season.

Alternative Salt Supplies and Mutual Aid

To strengthen the resilience of winter service operations, the Council maintains access to a number of alternative suppliers of road salt and other winter treatment products. These arrangements provide additional flexibility should normal supply routes be disrupted or demand exceed anticipated levels.

Details of approved alternative suppliers and their indicative supply capabilities are contained within the appendices to this Plan.

In addition, the Council participates in established Mutual Aid Arrangements with neighbouring authorities and partner organisations. These arrangements allow the Council to both request and provide assistance where operational circumstances, resource availability or severe weather conditions make such support necessary and appropriate.

Mutual Aid may include the sharing of:

- Road salt stocks and treatment materials.
- Specialist plant and equipment.
- Operational resources and expertise.

Information relating to weather forecasts and winter service activities. Details of current Mutual Aid arrangements are provided in the appendices.

Stock Verification and Storage Inspections

A formal salt stock verification and storage condition inspection will normally be undertaken at least monthly by the Salt Administrator.

The inspection will include:

- Verification of recorded stock levels.
- Assessment of storage conditions.
- Identification of any contamination, losses or storage issues.
- Review of replenishment requirements.

Any discrepancies in stock records will be reported to the Highway Service Leadership Team for investigation. Likewise, any issues relating to salt storage facilities or stock condition will be communicated to M Group Ltd. for appropriate action.

National Salt Cell Arrangements

The Department for Transport (DfT) coordinates a national Salt Cell arrangement to support the management and equitable distribution of road salt supplies during periods of national shortage or exceptional demand.

The Council will continue to participate in these arrangements where activated and will cooperate with national and regional resilience measures aimed at maintaining winter service capability across the country.

Information on salt stocks, usage rates and forecast operational requirements may be provided to the DfT and other authorised bodies as required. Participation in the Salt Cell helps support informed decision-making at a national level and contributes to the efficient allocation of available resources during periods of supply constraint.

The Council will take all reasonable steps to maintain adequate salt supplies and support regional resilience arrangements so that winter service operations can continue under all but the most exceptional circumstances.

Environmental Management

The Council is committed to delivering Winter Service operations in a manner that minimises environmental impact whilst maintaining highway safety.

Road salt will be stored, handled and managed in accordance with recognised good practice to minimise pollution risks arising from the leaching of dissolved salt into soils, watercourses and drainage systems.

The Council will seek to make the most effective and efficient use of salt resources by ensuring that treatments are only undertaken when weather conditions and road surface forecasts justify intervention. Forecasting information will be used to target treatments accurately and optimise operational decision-making, while spreading equipment will be regularly calibrated to ensure that salt is applied at the correct rates. Route optimisation techniques and modern spreading technologies will be utilised to maximise effectiveness and minimise waste. Salt usage and operational performance will be monitored throughout the winter season to support continual improvement and informed resource management. The Council will also review opportunities to adopt more sustainable products, technologies, and working practices where these can deliver operational, environmental, or financial benefits without compromising service effectiveness.

By taking a proportionate and risk-based approach to winter maintenance, the Council seeks to balance the need for safe and reliable transport networks with its wider commitments to environmental stewardship, sustainability, biodiversity and the protection of Herefordshire's natural and historic environment.

A number of alternative suppliers for salt products have been identified to ensure delivery of the core winter service throughout. Details of these suppliers and their outline capabilities are included in the appendices.

In addition to this Mutual Aid arrangements are in place through which Herefordshire Council can either gain or offer support to other local authorities as the need and the service capacity to do so requires, the detail of these mutual aid arrangements is in the appendices.

Coordination and Collaboration

Herefordshire shares its boundaries with the following highway authorities:

- Worcestershire County Council
- Powys County Council
- Gloucestershire County Council
- Monmouthshire County Council

The Council recognises the importance of maintaining a consistent and coordinated winter service across administrative boundaries. To support this objective, cross-border working arrangements are established with neighbouring authorities where operationally beneficial. These arrangements help to ensure that treatment routes remain effective and continuous across county boundaries, improving safety and network resilience for all road users.

Where reciprocal treatment arrangements exist, the Council will seek to formalise these through written agreements that clearly define the responsibilities of each authority, the routes concerned and any associated operational requirements. Details of all current cross-border agreements and operational arrangements, whether formal or informal, are provided within the appendices to this Plan.

Throughout the winter season, regular liaison will take place between neighbouring highway authorities to promote cooperation, share information and coordinate operational decisions where

appropriate. This collaboration assists in providing a consistent approach to winter maintenance across the wider region and supports effective responses during severe weather events.

Winter Service Communications

The Council uses Vaisala Roads Manager as the primary system for recording winter service decisions and supporting operational communications. The system facilitates communication with neighbouring authorities and operational teams, including:

- Sharing winter service decisions and treatment intentions.
- Automated email notifications to neighbouring highway authorities.
- Text and electronic communications to operational staff and drivers.
- Recording and auditing treatment decisions and actions.

Where configured, notifications will be generated automatically when a treatment decision is entered into Vaisala Roads Manager, helping to ensure timely communication and situational awareness across organisational boundaries.

National Highways

National Highways is responsible for the winter maintenance and treatment of the Strategic Road Network within Herefordshire, including trunk roads and motorways.

The Council and its service provider maintain close working relationships with National Highways and its delivery partners to support a coordinated approach to winter service operations, incident management and network resilience.

Communication

The Council will be responsible for providing winter service information. This information is supplied on a regular basis during periods of adverse weather.

Communications are supplied detailing the following:

- Road closures;
- Driving advice;
- Gritting routes; and
- Snow clearance.

Communications protocols are adhered to in line with Council policy.

Operational Communications

Where winter service action is required, operational staff will be notified through established communication systems, including telephone, text message and other electronic communication methods.

Treatment decisions and associated notifications will be recorded within Vaisala Roads Manager, providing a complete audit trail of operational actions and communications.

Following completion of operations, actual treatment details will be entered into Vaisala Roads Manager, including:

- Vehicle departure times.
- Route completion times.
- Treatment start and finish times.
- Salt usage and treatment information.

Highway Inspections Supporting Winter Decisions

Highway inspections provide additional information to support decision-making during marginal or uncertain weather conditions.

When instructed by the Duty Control Officer, Inspection Teams will normally commence inspections from 02:30 hours, unless alternative arrangements are specified.

Inspection personnel will undertake designated inspection routes covering representative locations across the county, including known cold spots and other locations vulnerable to winter weather hazards. Inspection findings will be communicated to the Duty Control Officer and shared amongst inspection teams as required.

Inspection information, together with ongoing forecast reviews and weather station data, will be used to determine the most appropriate operational response.

Following assessment, the operational response may include:

- No action.
- Treatment of the full Priority Route Network.
- Treatment of selected routes or domains.
- Targeted treatment of known ice-prone locations or other identified problem areas.

Media Information

In order to ensure that consistent information is provided, contact with the media on winter service operations will be through the Council's Communications Team. Local press, radio and TV stations provide an invaluable service, making the public aware of winter problems and providing proactive information including travel information, network availability and risk of severe conditions such as snow and black ice.

Social Media notifications (tweets) are also sent out as necessary via MetDesk by the on duty DCO and/or Comms team when action decisions have been confirmed.

Advice and Guidance for the Travelling Public

Information is made available to members of public on the winter work carried out by the Council to maintain safety on the roads. This information is available on the Council website and reviewed annually.

Information is provided about the priority routes across the county on a map, together with more detailed maps of Hereford and each of the market towns. Contact telephone numbers for core hours and out of hours are also provided. A section of general information and useful driving tips and considerate parking (to enable snow clearance operations to take place) is also incorporated.

Information and advice is also provided on clearance of footways and roads through self-help. The snow code provides helpful advice to members of the public about how they can provide help in a safe way.

Whilst we may not be able to communicate the full range of potential responses to the winter weather, we will also provide some guidance on the levels of service that can be expected by our customers through the winter. We recognise the increasing desire for 'real time' information to be posted on the website, enabling customers to make informed decisions about travel in severe weather. To support this, real time communications will be enhanced through use of relevant social media channels.

We will look to provide, where possible, high quality and timely information about winter service activities, particularly during severe or prolonged winter weather. We will continue with our use of social media via MetDesk and explore the use of multimedia communications, jointly with other services and agencies.

Community Self Help

Whilst the legal obligations of the Council as a Highway Authority focus on the safe passage of traffic it is recognised that prolonged and severe winter conditions can lead to isolation being experienced in both rural and urban situations. The issue of isolation can be most acute in rural communities where the distance to a treated road may prevent access and egress for significant periods.

The existing Parish Lengthsman Scheme was developed to provide a local winter service capability in parishes where there is a greater risk of communities becoming isolated during severe weather, where that risk cannot be effectively managed through the provision of grit bins alone, and where the parish has the capacity to respond through community-led self-help arrangements. Under this scheme, participating parishes may enter into an agreement with Herefordshire Council to support resilience during periods of severe or prolonged winter weather. Any salt stored locally must be kept in facilities that meet relevant environmental standards, and activities undertaken through the scheme are intended solely to address the risk of isolation arising from exceptional winter conditions. Salt will be supplied by Herefordshire Council, subject to resource availability, and must be used exclusively for highway-related purposes in accordance with the terms of the agreement.

Drainage Issues on the Highway Network

Through the Council's highway inspection regime, as detailed within the Highway Safety Inspection Manual, defects that may contribute to the formation of ice on the highway network will be identified and assessed. Particular attention will be given to locations on the Priority Route Network where drainage deficiencies, water seepage, standing water, blocked drainage assets or other highway defects may increase the likelihood of ice forming despite precautionary treatment.

Each identified defect will be subject to a risk-based assessment in accordance with the criteria and intervention levels set out in the Highway Safety Inspection Manual. The assessment will consider factors including the likelihood of ice formation, the potential consequences for highway users, traffic volumes, route importance and any history of previous incidents or complaints.

Where a risk is identified, appropriate mitigation measures will be assessed and, where appropriate, implemented. The response will be proportionate to the nature of the risk and may include reactive repairs to highway or drainage assets, routine maintenance activities such as cleansing or drainage works, the installation of temporary warning signs or other traffic management measures, and targeted monitoring or inspection. The approach taken to the assessment of risk follows the content of Herefordshire Council's Highway Safety Inspection Manual. In some cases, risks may be mitigated by undertaking additional winter service treatments where these are operationally justified.

All defects identified through inspections, reports from highway users, winter service operations or other sources will be recorded and managed through the Council's systems, which includes Kaarbontech and Confirm for the drainage asset group.

The Confirm system provides a consistent process for recording, assessing, monitoring and managing defects, ensuring that information is communicated efficiently to the appropriate

operational teams. This enables mitigation measures and repair works to be prioritised and delivered through reactive, routine or planned maintenance programmes in accordance with the risk-based timescales and intervention criteria established within the Highway Safety Inspection Manual.

By integrating highway inspections, asset management systems and winter service operations, the Council aims to proactively identify and address locations vulnerable to winter-related hazards, thereby improving network safety, resilience and operational efficiency.

Planning for the Future

Changes in the extent and scope of winter treatments can have significant implications for the council and may require significant investment to facilitate the desired change, for example the addition of a road to the priority gritting routes may lead to the need for an additional gritter, driver and salt. We recognise the importance of this service to our communities and our need to further our understanding of what is wanted from our winter service over time. For all highway services we welcome comments, requests for service or inquiry through the customer services team.

Review

The Winter Service Plan will be reviewed annually and approved by an appropriate officer prior to the commencement of each winter season.

All vehicles, plant, fuel provision, equipment and maintenance arrangements will be checked annually and in accordance with manufacturers’ requirements to ensure that any necessary action can be taken to ensure full Operational service status prior to the Winter Service season. This will include checking the calibration of all de-icing equipment and spreaders.

The Annual Review will include analysis on whether service delivery meets the Winter Service policy and plan. Service efficiency improvements such as route optimisation will also be taken into consideration.

Following any significant winter weather event, a formal review involving representatives from all levels of the management and delivery of Winter Service will be carried out. The review is intended to identify the successful elements of the service as well as potential improvements and actions to be taken. Where applicable, other stakeholders will be invited to provide feedback. Lesson learned will be captured and actioned and this will feed into the Annual Review of the service.

Version	Summary of Changes	Date
1.00	First Draft	June 2026

Table 4 – Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Policy Change Log

Appendix 1 – Priority and Secondary Routes

The link below is to the current page on the Herefordshire Council website where a map of the gritting routes can be viewed.

[Gritting routes map - Herefordshire Council](#)

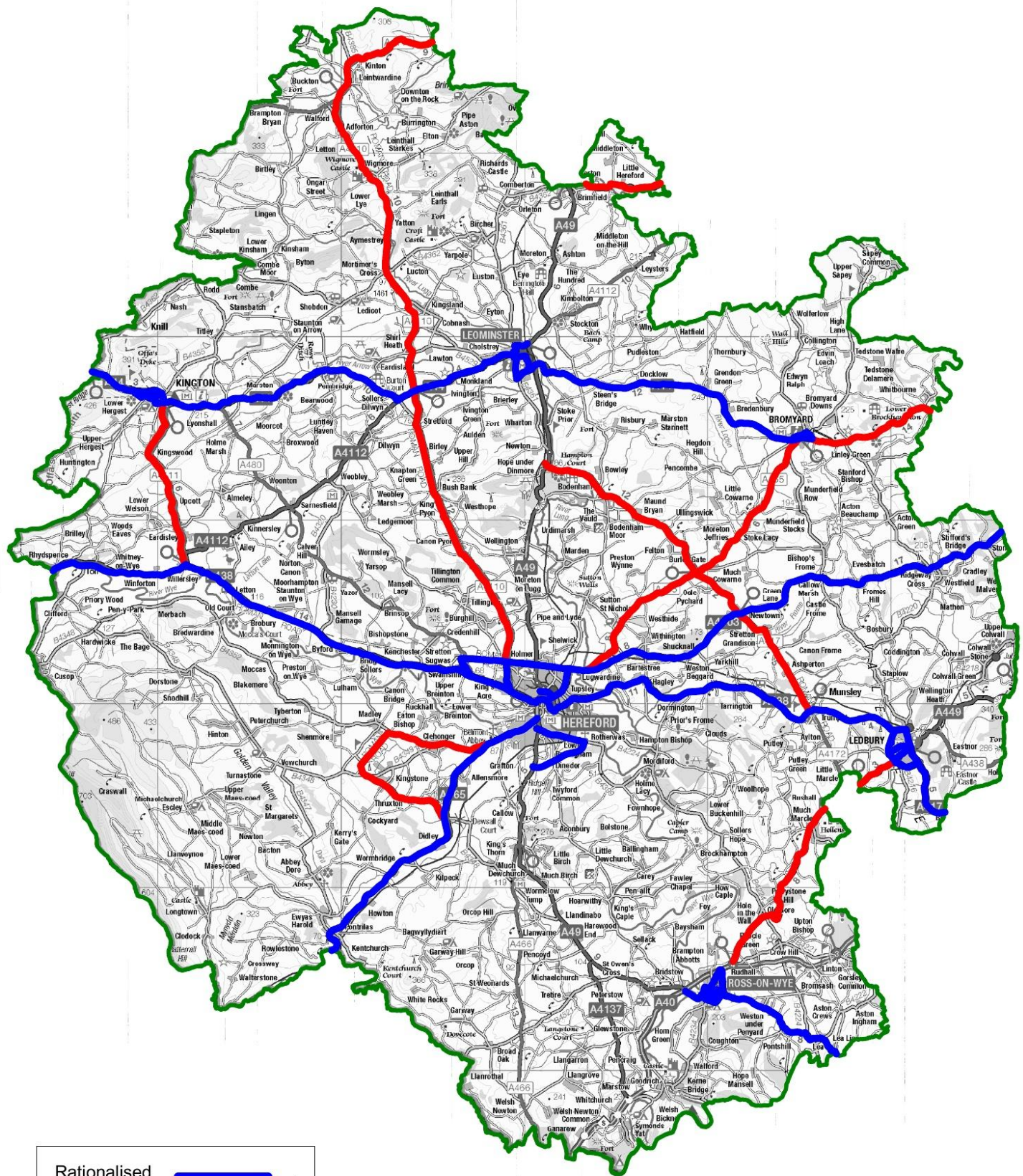
Appendix 2 – Grit Bin Assessment Form

The link below is to the current page on the Herefordshire Council website where information about Grit Bins can be found.

[Grit bins - Herefordshire Council](#)

Appendix 3 - Weather Station Locations

Appendix 4 – Minimum Winter Network



Rationalised +
Severely Rationalised

LOCATION - Winter Maintenance - Route Rationalisation

SCALE 1:300,000

This plan is based on information that is currently available to the County of Herefordshire District Council. It is given on the strict understanding that neither the Council or any of its officers will be held responsible for the accuracy of this information or accept any liability whatsoever for any error or omission therein, or direct or consequential loss or damage arising from the interpretation or use of the information supplied. With regard to scale, this plan may be subject to distortions in scale and any measurements scaled from this plan may not match measurements between the same points on the ground. Please also be aware that the Ordnance Survey mapping that forms the basis of this plan may be up to 2 metres out at this scale. The enquirer should rely on the results of their own investigations.



Herefordshire Council,
Highways and Transportation,
Plough Lane, Hereford, HR4 0WZ.
Tel: 01432 260000
Fax: 01432 383031