

# North Lanarkshire Council Report

## Environment and Transportation

approval  noting

Ref

Date 28/08/19

## Winter Service Policy and Procedures 2020/21

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### Executive Summary

This report presents Elected Members with details of the proposed Winter Service Policy and Procedures for 2020/21. The council has an obligation under the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984 to take such steps as it considers reasonable to prevent snow and ice endangering safe passage of pedestrians and vehicles over public roads. This obligation is discharged through the council's term maintenance contract with our Limited Liability Partners Amey Public Services (APS). To ensure that these obligations are met the council is required to annually review its processes and procedures and approve an annual refresh of its policy.

### Recommendations

It is recommended that the Environment and Transportation Committee:

- (1) Considers the contents of this report and accompanying appendix, and
- (2) Agrees the proposed Winter Service Policy and Procedures 2020/21 as the base for winter service delivery in the coming year.

### The Plan for North Lanarkshire

Priority Improve economic opportunities and outcomes

Ambition statement (17) Ensure we keep our environment clean, safe, and attractive

## 1. Background

- 1.1 Under Section 34 of the Roads (Scotland) Act, 1984, North Lanarkshire Council has a statutory obligation to take such steps as it considers reasonable to prevent snow and ice endangering the safe passage of pedestrians and vehicles over their public roads which by definition includes carriageways, footways and footpaths.

- 1.2 The policy outlines how the winter service will be delivered across the council and how the road network has been prioritised for carriageways, footway, footpaths and cycle routes. The policy also details the levels of service that are to be achieved and procedures around the winter decision making process.
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## **2. Report**

- 2.1 The Winter Service provided by the council takes cognisance of the recommendations in new document Code of Practice "Well-Managed Highway Infrastructure (2018)" for Highway Maintenance Management. Winter Service reviews are undertaken annually to determine how the service can be improved with the resources available. A contingency plan has been prepared for extreme weather events.

- 2.2 Plans indicating the Primary and Secondary roads within each ward will be circulated to Local Members and relevant information placed on the council web site. Copies of the document will also be distributed to those listed in Appendix C of the document.

### **2.3 Winter Service Review**

- 2.3.1 Winter Service reviews are undertaken annually to determine how the service can be improved with the resources available. A review of the winter period was undertaken on the 27 May in conjunction with the council's partners APS which covered a range of items such as fleet, operations, monitoring of service, resources, health and safety etc. The key points are detailed further below.
- 2.3.2 The current partnership with APS operates a multi functional fleet meaning that it can be used for traditional road works and winter services. The primary carriageway gritting fleet has been renewed over the last two years and it was agreed that there were benefits in terms of salt application and reliability. APS are undertaking a further review of their fleet with the aim to remove older fleet from operations for the coming year.
- 2.3.3 This year APS renewed the footpath gritting fleet with new tractors, again this had significant benefits in terms of salt application and reliability. The fleet deployed was slightly larger than that previously used therefore some changes to the network were undertaken to ensure access, although these changes had wider accessibility benefits to the community out with winter (e.g, the provision of dropped kerbs).
- 2.3.5 It should be highlighted that the improvements above represent a significant investment in the Roads Street Lighting and Winter Services contract by APS. This ensures there is a high degree of confidence the fleet will be fit for purpose until the end of the contract.

- 2.3.6 The public perception of the last winter period is likely to be of a mild winter. However it is worth highlighting that there were more treatment and salt used in the 2019/20 winter period than in two of the previous three, many of which are through the night and go un-noticed by our communities. That said no difficulties were experienced with the available resources through the winter period. However, it is important to highlight that the ability to deliver winter services is highly dependent on drivers to operate the fleet and that these operatives have a knowledge of the routes and road network and to this end a winter route familiarisation exercise is planned to be undertaken in September ahead of the winter period. APS have continued to upskill the existing workforce for the coming winter to ensure they have sufficient capacity to deliver the required winter service. In addition APS have access to several sub-contractors that would supplement their resource during any significant winter event.
- 2.3.7 Whilst APS have a duty to provide a winter service there have been a number of incidents during the previous winter where driver safety has overridden this duty such as when missiles were thrown at operatives, the driver experienced accessibility difficulties and when a tractor overturned. Driver safety will be reinforced prior to the next winter period and a proactive approach taken to problematic areas to enable appropriate action ensuring the safety of the operatives and communities.

## **2.4 Innovation and Technology**

- 2.4.1 The use of technology and innovation is examined each year to establish what elements can be adopted to improve information provided to the public and for operations. It had been anticipated that real time gritter information would be available on the council website. Unfortunately due to unforeseen technical issues this was not rolled out however, it is anticipated that this will be in place for the start of the coming winter.

## **2.5 Salt Bins**

- 2.5.1 The number of salt bins provided across the network has continued to grow from 760 at the start of the contract to 2693 (includes 24 within recycling centres) which is considered an unsustainable level that cannot be serviced within an acceptable period.

At the council meeting of 24 February council approved a rationalisation of grit bins which would see a reduction of 20% of the asset with a focus on those areas that would be considered to have an over provision.

Salt bins would be provided in the vicinity of schools however, all other grit bin provision would be assessed on the criteria set out in appendix D of the Policy document. An exercise is currently underway to assess all grit bins against this criteria. If approved the grit bins would remain on site until the bins are empty, damaged or salt levels reduced to minimal quantities and at that stage the bin would be removed. It is likely to take a number of years to complete the rationalisation however, this method would reduce the costs involved in disposing of or transporting salt.

There is a requirement within the contract for APS to fill all salt bins by the start of October each year following receipt of an instruction. It is proposed that bins would

only be filled upon request going forward. This would allow data to be gathered regarding salt bin use for those that do meet the criteria and undertake further rationalisation if required where bins are not being used on a regular basis.

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### **3. Equality and Diversity**

- 3.1 Fairer Scotland Duty  
There are no unfair aspects contained with this report.
- 3.2 Equality Impact Assessment  
There are no adverse impacts on equality or diversity contained within this report.

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### **4. Implications**

#### 4.1 Financial Impact

Revenue funding for this service has been set aside from the Road Maintenance budget. The scale of demand over the winter period can make significant financial demands on the service. This is typically managed within the overall Roads Maintenance budget in normal winter conditions. However, in the event of a prolonged severe winter period any additional expenditure over the Road Maintenance budget would be met from the councils overall reserve. In the event of a mild winter a request would be made to carry funds forward to the next financial year to be used for undertaking summer works.

#### 4.2 HR/Policy/Legislative Impact

The introduction of this policy has no HR impacts but ensures that the council meets the duties contained Under Section 34 of the Roads (Scotland) Act, 1984

#### 4.3 Environmental Impact

The introduction of this policy has positive environmental impacts as a result of reduced carbon emissions and salt used.

#### 4.4 Risk Impact

The introduction of this policy will assist the council to meet the statutory duties and minimise the risk of claims relating to winter service.

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### **5. Measures of success**

- 5.1 The road network is generally available for residents, commerce and blue light services to use safely throughout the winter period enhancing the North Lanarkshire as the place to live, learn, work, invest and visit.

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### **6. Supporting documents**

- 6.1 Appendix 1 - Winter Service Policy and Procedures 2020/21.



**Nicole Paterson**  
**Head of Environmental Assets**

## **APPENDIX 1**

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## NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL

### WINTER SERVICE

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

Under Section 34 of the Roads (Scotland) Act, 1984, North Lanarkshire Council has a statutory obligation to take such steps as it considers reasonable to prevent snow and ice endangering the safe passage of pedestrians and vehicles over their public roads which by definition includes carriageways, footways and footpaths.

The A725, A8 trunk roads and the M73, M8, M80 and M74 motorways are the direct responsibility of the Scottish Government.

It is the aim of North Lanarkshire Council as the local Roads Authority to:-

- (i) provide a standard of service on public roads which will permit safe movement of vehicular and pedestrian traffic appropriate to the prevailing weather conditions;
- (ii) establish a pattern of working which will keep delays, diversions or road closures to a minimum during adverse weather conditions;
- (iii) conduct operations having regard to the requirements of the Health and Safety at Work Act, 1974.

This winter service policy has been developed taking account of Well Managed Highway Infrastructure A code of Practice (2018)'.

This document is supplemented by a Winter Service Operational Plan developed in conjunction with our Partner, Amey Public Services LLP (**APS**), and is reviewed annually.

The provision of the service is supported by the Council's Northline Customer Contact Centre service to the public.

## 2. POLICY

### 2.1 TREATMENT OF ROADS

North Lanarkshire Council has the following priorities for treatment of carriageways and footways/footpaths that has been formulated on a hierarchical basis:

#### CARRIAGEWAY PRIORITIES

<p>Primary Road Network</p> <p>These roads are treated on a Precautionary Salting basis</p>	<p>All 'A' , 'B' and some C classified roads, main distributor roads; main roads in the vicinity of schools; access roads to hospitals, ambulance depots, main police stations and fire stations, and main bus routes. Other main roads steeper than 1 in 10 gradient (10%) and roads that are of local or national importance for the delivery of essential services. Where severe weather conditions are predicted these roads will be pre-salted and this will normally be carried out before the morning peak. Depending on weather conditions this could also involve an evening pre-salt. Where severe conditions such as snow persist, resources will remain concentrated on these roads.</p>
<p>Secondary Road Network</p> <p>These are treated on a Post Salting basis, except as described for schools.</p>	<p>Secondary distributor roads; access to isolated villages and rural communities; a main access road to each school; rural through routes not included above; spine roads into residential and industrial areas. Residential areas with road gradients steeper than 1 in 12.5 (8%) where specific difficulties have been identified and where it is practical to do so.</p> <p>Secondary roads will be post treated when road surface temperatures are forecast to stay below zero for a significant period beyond 12 noon, following the precautionary treatment of the primary road network.</p> <p>Where road surface temperatures are forecast to stay below zero for a significant period beyond 12 noon and when resources are available secondary routes will be pre-treated to improve travel to school.</p>
<p>Other Roads</p> <p>These are treated on a Post Salting basis.</p>	<p>On the satisfactory completion of post salting of the abovementioned roads and if severe weather conditions persist, the remaining road network will be treated on a reactive basis. Treatment will be dependent on resources and changing weather conditions. Depending on weather conditions, treatment of the remaining network may take several days from onset of severe weather as priority will be given to, and concentrated on the above stated road hierarchy.</p> <p>Post salting will only be undertaken if severe weather conditions are likely to extend beyond 12 noon. Post salting operations will normally be undertaken out with the morning peak. During a period of prolonged severe weather conditions forecast to last longer than 7 days, blue light enquiries will be prioritised and priorities will also take into account funerals, weddings, births and anyone requiring immediate hospital treatment (the council will coordinate this element of operations with NHS Lanarkshire). Reactive squads will also prioritise special needs schools, cemeteries, council sheltered housing and ice on ponds.</p>

Snow Clearing Operations	Following the onset of heavy snowfalls the maximum available fleet of ploughing vehicles will be utilised. These operations will continue whilst snow is still falling with resources targeted to keep arterial routes open. After snow has stopped falling but is still lying, routes will be treated in line with salting priorities as resources permit. During prolonged events forecast to last more than 7 days additional resources supplied by Land Management will be deployed.
Patrolling	When marginal forecasts predict temperatures approaching but not expected to dip below zero degrees and when forecasters are low in confidence about their predictions, patrolling takes place. This operation is principally to check what the actual road conditions are on the network. A representative sample of the network will be patrolled to identify if a full pre-cautionary grit is necessary.

### FOOTWAY, FOOTPATH AND CYCLE ROUTE PRIORITIES

Primary Path Network - Treated on a Precautionary Salting basis	Urban Shopping areas, precincts and main pedestrian Routes remote from carriageways which link major residential /commercial / industrial / educational facilities.
Secondary Path Network – Treated on a Post Salting basis.	Footways and Footpaths not covered above and Cycle Routes

The treatment of primary path network will normally be carried out before the morning peak. The Secondary path network and other paved areas shall only be considered for treatment in times of persistent ice or snow.

#### **Salt Stock Levels**

In extreme conditions salt stock levels can fall significantly in a very short period of time. In certain rare and unusual circumstances normal re-stocking of salt has in the past been prevented by external forces out with the control of the Council and its partners APS. In the event that such an occurrence is repeated in the future, to conserve limited salt stocks, the winter service provision will be dedicated to the treatment of the primary networks only.

APS have covered storage areas that hold a maximum of 10,000 tonnes of salt. The salt held in stock is monitored on a weekly basis to ensure that the average stock level of 7,500 tonnes is maintained during the high season. This average stock level is reduced to 4,500 tonnes at the end of February.

The Council also has a covered strategic salt stock of 10,000 tonnes to enhance corporate resilience for the delivery of all services during periods of prolonged severe winter weather.

## **2.2 LEVEL OF SERVICE**

The decision to initiate winter service operations will normally be based upon the forecast received from the council's weather service provider during the winter period. These forecasts will be provided every day at 0600hrs, 1200hrs and 1800hrs (including week-ends and public holidays) to staff providing the winter service. In addition, the weather service provider will contact the Council's partner, APS if there is any major change in the projected weather conditions.

Winter service operations will also be initiated by APS on confirmed reports of adverse weather conditions.

As the decision to initiate winter service operations will normally be based on the weather service forecast, it is proposed where possible to treat primary roads out with the hours of peak traffic flows. Therefore, it is intended that the treatment of all primary roads will be completed prior to the morning peak (0730 hrs). Where forecasts indicate adverse conditions in the evening, all reasonable effort will be made to treat primary roads out with the evening peak but this will not always be practicable.

Primary Path Network salting operations will be generally undertaken between the hours of 0500 hrs and 0800 hrs. Following prolonged periods of cold dry weather salting may not be undertaken if it is considered that sufficient residual salt is present. If severe weather is forecast in the evening, treatment of footpaths will be undertaken during daylight hours where there is no residual salt present and heavy precipitation is not forecast.

Carriageway treatment will normally be undertaken within the following timescales;

Primary Road Network – completed within 3.5 hours of commencement of treatment.

Secondary Road Network – completed within 3.5 hours of the completion of Primary roads network.

Other Roads – these are dependent on weather conditions and resource availability and may be measured in timescales of several days from onset of severe weather.

In recent years a number of attacks on the winter fleet have been perpetrated by youths throwing missiles. This has caused damaged to vehicles and had the potential to seriously injure winter service operatives. Where such instances occur the service will be withdrawn / restricted until a risk assessment considers it is safe to reinstate the normal level of service.

### **3. PROCEDURES**

#### **3.1 PREPARATION OF ROUTES**

Prior to the commencement of the winter service period, APS will prepare a list of priority routes based on the carriageway, footway, footpath and cycle path priorities shown in section 2. However, in order to minimise unproductive mileage some roads in a lower category may be treated out of sequence.

A full set of priority routes will be kept by the Head of Environmental Assets. APS will have a full set of routes.

Any alterations to the carriageway, footway and footpath priorities will be notified in writing to APS who will make the necessary adjustments to the routes.

#### **3.2 METEOROLOGICAL REPORTS**

Arrangements shall be made by the Head of Environmental Assets, through the West of Scotland Weather Consortium, for the weather forecast to be provided for the North Lanarkshire Area from early October to the middle of May each year.

The weather service provider will provide the Council and APS with the forecast each day at 0600hrs, 1200hrs and 1800hrs and any other weather warnings out with these times throughout the winter service period.

The Council will ensure that weather service provider is provided with the telephone numbers of the members of staff responsible, on a rota basis, for initiating action out with normal working hours.

APS and Council staff has the facility at any time to contact the weather service provider's duty forecaster to discuss/clarify the forecast.

All staff involved in decision making for the delivering of the Winter Service shall be trained in the interpretation and comprehension of climatic, temperature and weather conditions and forecasts.

### **3.3 DECISION MAKING PROCESS**

The topography of North Lanarkshire is such that three distinct geographical areas of potential climatic variation have been identified. The weather forecast provides information for these geographical areas to reflect different climatic conditions. These forecasts will be used by APS to determine and plan the scope of work necessary and to minimise unnecessary treatment and action.

The winter service period is split into a High and a Low Period. During the High Period, mid October to mid April, APS has resources on standby to react to prevailing weather forecast. During the Low Period, between early October and mid October and mid April to mid May APS may not be on standby and therefore reaction times may be greater. These periods can be altered as required to reflect longer term weather forecast.

When the appropriate APS staff member receives weather forecast between 1200 hrs and 1400 hrs they shall make a decision on whether or not action is required. All proposed actions will be acknowledged by the Client standby officer. Further, the Client reserves the right to amend the proposed action if deemed necessary. The Client standby officer will approve all actions. The Council has access to 5no. weather stations to assist the decision making process.

When updates to the forecast are received out with normal working hours the APS staff member on standby shall take appropriate action based on the update. If there is a significant change to the weather forecast and / or proposed actions the appropriate Client staff will be informed.

During periods of low temperature, if there is uncertainty about the course of action required by the update, consultation will take place with trained members of staff and /or the duty forecaster from the weather service provider.

The provision of an internet Weather Consortium Message Board for posting of decisions taken by North Lanarkshire Council and by adjacent Authorities will allow continuity of service to be monitored and action taken where it is considered appropriate. North Lanarkshire Council actions will be posted together with updates to proposed actions.

Decisions taken regarding North Lanarkshire routes will be recorded on the Viasala Manager electronic management system.

### **3.4 RESOURCES**

#### **(a) Salt**

Under the Road Street Lighting and Winter Services contract, it is the responsibility of APS to organise the provision of salt to each depot and ensure the levels of salt do not fall below the prescribed minimum levels.

At main recycling centres within the Council Area, a single quantity of 20kg or less of sand salt mix will be available for issue free of charge to the public, subject to them supplying a suitable container.

#### **(b) Personnel**

APS will provide a stand-by rota of supervisors and manual operators for the winter service period. Standby will commence in mid October and continue until the middle of April. However, this period may commence earlier or finish later should conditions warrant.

During moderate winter weather it is envisaged that resources of APS will be able to provide the level of service described in section 2.2. In extreme conditions, however, additional labour may be required from other sources, including other services of the Council.

#### **(c) Plant**

During the summer period, all equipment for salting roads and clearing snow will be maintained to ensure it is in working order prior to the start of the winter service period and where appropriate ensure that ancillary items can be fitted to vehicles without difficulty.

APS will provide a communications system between the depot and all of the winter service fleet.

The winter fleet is fitted with data logging and a Geographic Positioning System (GPS).

### **3.5 Road Condition Reports**

Each working day throughout the winter service period, a daily report of the operations that have taken place during the previous 24 hours will be available on the electronic manager system. The report shall provide information on routes treated, salt used, time operations started, roads closed, additional resources used and details of any other major problem.

The report is available to the Head of Environmental Assets and the Roads Operations Teams, any major incident will be reported immediately to Client staff.

### **3.6 Liaison with Police**

In recognition of the role of the Police during difficult weather conditions, APS shall advise the Police of all adverse forecasts relating to winter operations. APS shall also request appropriate assistance from the Police when moving equipment, arranging road closures and dealing with abandoned vehicles.

Where appropriate, APS shall advise the Police at the Force Control Room of all extreme adverse road conditions, including roads closed or conditions which may lead to roads being closed. The Police may report such matters to the broadcasting authorities. Such communications will be followed up by reports on progress and clearance, particularly when conditions are returning to normal. On request to their Group Traffic Superintendent, the Police have agreed to assist the movement of ploughs and salting vehicles on principal traffic routes.

APS shall issue out of hours rotas (including amendments) to the Chief Constable, Divisional Commander's Office and local Police Offices.

Reports from the Police regarding dangerous road conditions shall be acted upon by APS designated staff on stand-by as soon as practicable, having regard to priorities in this document and the conditions pertaining throughout the Council's area.

### **3.7 Warning Signs**

The Head of Environmental Assets shall at appropriate locations arrange for the erection of signs giving warning of sections of road liable to icing.

### **3.8 Road Closures**

Where a road is closed, APS is responsible for ensuring that the Police and Council staff are advised and that appropriate signs are erected. When the road continues into an adjoining Council area that Council shall be kept informed.

### **3.9 Salt Bins**

Salt bins may be provided at specific locations and in the vicinity of schools to assist the local community in areas not on priority routes or at known trouble spots including steep gradients and sharp bends. **Bins will only be provided at those locations that meet the minimum scoring criteria set out in appendix D and where agreement can be reached with the adjacent property owner/ occupier.**

It is intended that these salt bins are for the self-use of the public as an enhancement to the service provided by the Council. Records of existing salt bin locations are held by the Head of Environmental Assets and detailed on the Council's website winter service page.

### **3.10 Keeping and Retention of Records**

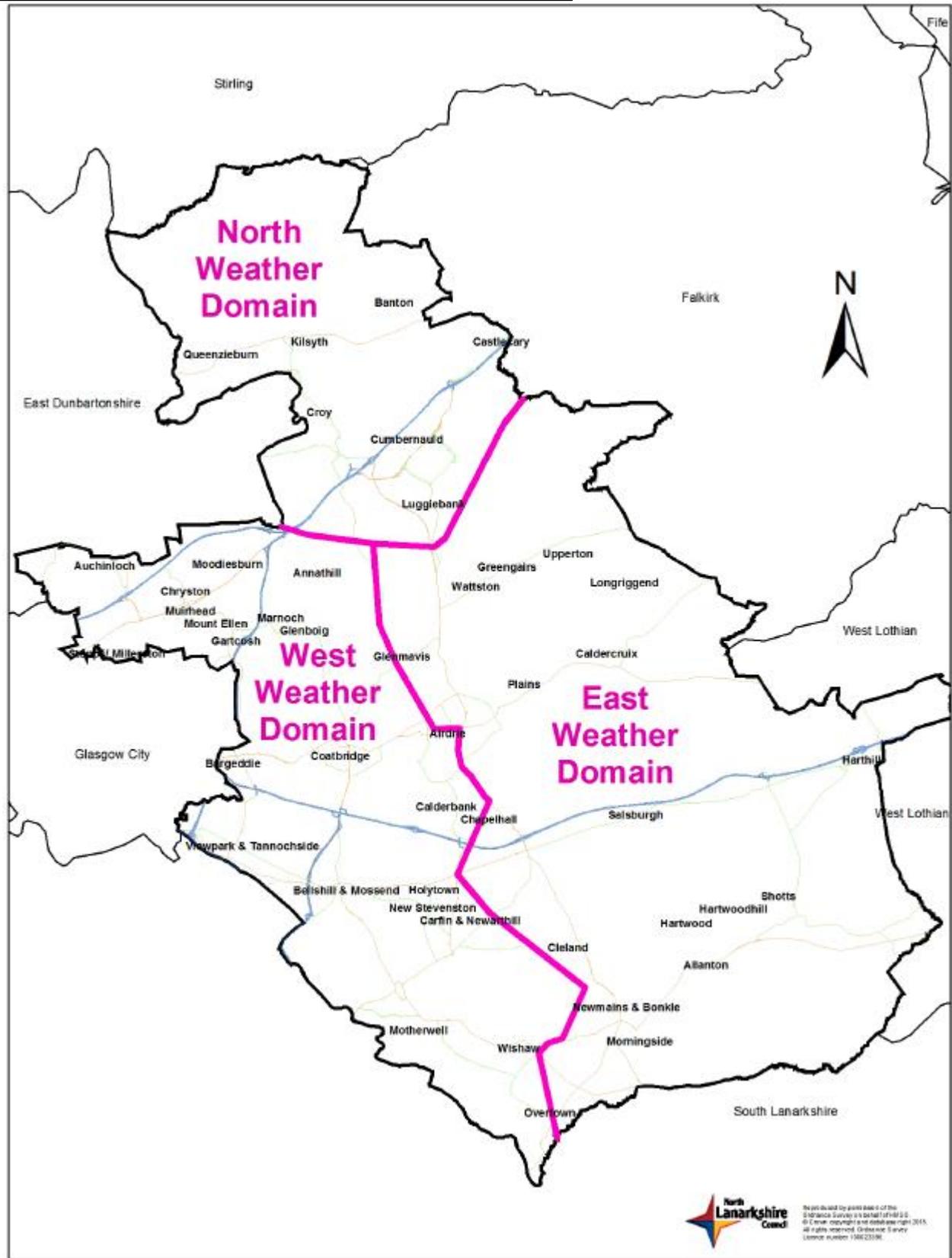
Appropriate records will be kept of the following by APS :-

- (a) The weather forecasts, including updates.
- (b) Decisions taken based on the weather forecasts.
- (c) Decisions taken based on other reports. e.g. police reports.
- (d) Maximum and minimum air temperatures at each depot.
- (e) Details and timings of routes salted.

APS will be responsible for preparing, and retaining the above records for a minimum period of 7 years. Records from the Council weather stations are held by the service provider.

## Appendix A

### Plan of North Lanarkshire and Weather Domain Areas



## **Appendix B - Road and Transportation Office**

Fleming House,  
2 Tryst Road,  
Cumbernauld  
G67 1JW

All enquiries should be directed to Northline the Council's Customer Contract Centre;

Telephone Number: **01698 403110**.

Website: [www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk](http://www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk)

In the event of an emergency Police Scotland should be the first point of contact.

## **Appendix C - Distribution List**

### **Internal :-**

North Lanarkshire Local Members  
Chief Executive  
North Lanarkshire Council Assistant Chief Executives  
Head of Business for Legal and Democratic Solutions

### **External :-**

Trunk Road Operators  
Amey Public Services LLP  
Automobile Association (AA)  
Chief Executives of Adjacent Councils :-  
(East Dunbartonshire, South Lanarkshire, City of Glasgow, West Lothian, Falkirk, Stirling )  
Community Councils  
Grid Controller, Scottish Gas  
Road Haulage Association  
Royal Automobile Club (RAC)  
Scottish Ambulance Service  
Scottish Government  
Scottish Fire & Rescue Service – Service Delivery Director - West  
Scottish Fire & Rescue Service – Chief Officer  
Strathclyde Partnership for Transport  
(Local Bus Companies distributed via SPT)  
Police Scotland - Divisional Commanders  
Scottish Road Partnership Project Ltd

## Appendix D – Grit Bin Decision Matrix

Road name and number	
Would this bin be placed on a public road	If not do not proceed with assessment
Is there a suitable hardstanding location for a grit bin	If not do not proceed with assessment
Is there agreement from the adjacent property owner/ occupier	If not do not proceed with assessment

Characteristic	Severity	Standards Score	Assessed Score
Gradient	Steep (>1 in 20)	50	
	Moderate (1 in 20 to 1 in 30)	30	
	Slight (< 1 in 30)	0	
Bend	Sharp (> 90 degrees)	20	
	Moderate (45 to 90 degrees)	10	
	Slight < 45 degrees)	0	
Close proximity to and falling towards	Heavy trafficked roads	50	
	Moderately trafficked roads	30	
	Lightly trafficked roads	0	
On a treated route	Primary	-30	
	Secondary	10	
	Not on treated route	20	
Vertical traffic calming measures	Yes	10	
	No	0	
Any special features (Hospital, doctors surgery)	Yes	20	
	No	0	
Salt bin already in area (within walking distance)	Within 100m	-50	
	Within 300m	0	
	Greater than 300m	20	
		Total of 40 or above qualifies	