

WINTER MAINTENANCE POLICY 2023-25

1. Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, through its Asset's, Finance and Resources Department, aims to provide a winter maintenance service which allows the safe movement of traffic and keeps to a minimum the impacts caused by adverse winter conditions.
2. The Comhairle, as Roads Authority, will approve a carriageway and footway hierarchy, set the standards and level of service, and make adequate budgetary provision to achieve these standards.
3. The Assets, Finance and Resources Department will prepare a Winter Maintenance Policy statement and a carriageway and footway hierarchy for carriageway and footway precautionary gritting, post gritting, and snow clearing. The Policy Statement will be reviewed periodically following any significant changes in the available budget or the Comhairle's delivery of services.
4. The winter maintenance service will be delivered by the procured winter maintenance contractors together with, the Comhairle's own in-house staff.
5. The service will be provided on a geographical lot basis with lots being established as follows:
 - **Lot 1 – North Lewis** to include *Stornoway to Port of Ness and Stornoway to Tolsta.*
 - **Lot 2 – West Lewis and Uig** including *Benera*
 - **Lot 3 – Stornoway and Point**
 - **Lot 4 – South Lewis** to include *North and South Lochs*
 - **Lot 5 – Harris** to include *all roads south of Balallan*
 - **Lot 6 – North Uist** to include *Berneray*
 - **Lot 7 – South Uist** to include *Benbecula and Eriskay*
 - **Lot 8 – Barra and Vatersay**
6. The Head of Property and Infrastructure will monitor the Winter Maintenance Plan and report to the Comhairle on the budgetary provision for the execution of the plan and on any improvements, which may be required to the Plan.
7. The Head of Property and Infrastructure may in certain circumstances, for example, adverse weather conditions, amend or suspend part of the Winter Maintenance Plan to achieve the best service the available resources and prevailing conditions will allow.
8. The Head of Property and Infrastructure may carry out trials whenever necessary on proposals to improve the service prior to the review.

WINTER MAINTENANCE OPERATIONAL PLAN

SALTING, GRITTING AND SNOW CLEARING

1. Statement of Service

The winter maintenance operation shall be delivered in accordance with the Comhairle's Winter Maintenance Policy.

2. Response Time

The target response time from the time a specific request from the Roads Maintenance Officers is made to the commencement of gritting is one hour.

3. Period of Cover

The winter maintenance service will be delivered during the period 1 October - 31 March the following year and may be extended as necessary.

Routine treatment and snow clearing will be delivered throughout the winter season with the exception of Sundays, Local Public Holidays and core school holidays when only a limited service will be provided.

On Sundays and Local Public Holidays when limited service is being provided gritting will commence no earlier than 8.00am and shall be limited to Priority 1 and Priority 2 routes.

On core school holiday's commencement of gritting and snow clearing will be restricted to Priority 1 and Priority 2 routes. The target treatment times for these routes will be in accordance with the normal policy.

In the event of an emergency, salting, gritting and snow clearing operations will be undertaken at any time as directed by the Head of Property and Infrastructure. The Police will be involved in the assessment of emergency situations.

4. Target Treatment Times

(i) Roads - *pre-gritting and post-gritting*

Routine salting and gritting to commence no earlier than 6.00am. Target gritting times for the priorities are as follows:

Priority 1 routes - routes to be gritted by 7.30am

Priority 2 routes - routes to be gritted by 8.30am

Priority 3 routes - routes to be gritted by 9.30am

Priority 4 routes - routes to be gritted only in persistent icy conditions following completion of higher priority routes.

Priority 5 routes - routes to be gritted only on the Duty Officer's request.

On Sundays and Local Public Holidays, the target treatment times will be delayed by 2 hours.

In the event of evening gritting being deemed appropriate, gritting will be restricted to Priority 1 routes, with a gritting decision normally made by 5pm and no gritting runs commenced after 6.00pm, apart from high risk areas such as the Clisham.

In the event of extreme weather efforts will initially focus on maintaining a minimum network comprising Priority 1 routes.

(ii) Roads - snow clearing

In the event of heavy snow, snow clearing will commence as soon as practical starting with the high priority routes then moving to lower priority routes as necessary. Snow clearing after 6pm will only be carried out on high risk locations such as the Clisham.

(iii) Footpaths

A limited service will be provided Monday to Saturday following completion of the treatment of the road network and up till 1.00pm, except for recognised public holidays.

Footpath gritting on Sunday shall only be undertaken in the case of an emergency and shall be restricted to footways around open public facilities.

5. Target Standards

(i) Roads - pre-gritting

Pre-gritting will be carried out when forecast conditions are likely to impact on traffic movement during core treatment times (6am -6pm), or where continuity of the service is at risk.

(ii) Roads – Post gritting

Post gritting will be carried out following confirmation of snow or ice being present on the road surface.

(iii) Snow Clearance Roads

Snow clearing shall be carried out when the depth of snow on the road surface exceeds 20mm. Snow shall be removed to the surface and salt applied.

Under adverse conditions when snow is drifting, resources may be withdrawn from the lower priority routes to focus resources on the high priority routes, minimum network. The minimum network shall be as Priority 1 routes.

(vi) Salting and Gritting - Footpaths and Pedestrian Areas

Salting and gritting of footpaths and pedestrian areas shall be carried out on lengths as deemed appropriate and in accordance with the priority indicated on the footway gritting plan.

This service will only be carried out in times of persistent ice conditions where the footway state is not expected to improve naturally prior to treatment and shall be instructed by the Head of Property and Infrastructure.

(v) *Snow Clearing - Footpaths and Pedestrian Areas*

Snow clearing of footpaths and pedestrian areas shall be carried out on lengths of footways as required in accordance with the priority indicated on the footway gritting plan.

This service will include the forming of gaps in snow piled by the roadside, at bus stops and crossing points.

Other areas shall not normally be cleared except in the case of an emergency.

6. Roads and Footway Hierarchy

(i) *Salting, Gritting and Snow Clearing Roads will be prioritised based on the following hierarchy:*

1. Main arterial roads (Strategic Route)
2. Principal roads (Main Distributor)
3. Village roads and selected bus routes (Secondary Distributor)
4. Minor village roads and Stornoway side streets (Link Road)
5. Cemetery access roads and farm access roads (Local Access Road) and other roads to be gritted by specific request only.

The final priority assigned to a specific road shall follow an assessment of the road network consistent with guidance from the Code of Practice "Well Managed Highway Infrastructure". Altitude, alignment, coastal proximity, thermal mapping outputs local knowledge and traffic volumes are factors to be considered in this assessment.

(ii) *Salting, Gritting and Snow Clearing Footways and Pedestrian Areas*

A limited service shall be provided on Monday to Saturday following completion of the treatment of the road network and up until 1.00pm, except on recognised local public holidays when a reduced service will be provided

- (a) Salting and Gritting - the over spread from salting and gritting the roads is usually adequate in most situations to cover footways. However, some footways in Stornoway town centre are not covered by this and should receive priority action in the event of persistent ice conditions. These footways are identified in the footway gritting plan.
- (b) Snow Clearing - should commence in Stornoway town centre progressing through the priority list as appropriate.
- (c) General - although this service cannot be extended to housing developments, industrial areas etc., residents should be encouraged to apply for self-help schemes.

(iii) *Salting and Gritting Car Parks*

The service for salting, gritting and snow clearing of car parks shall be extended to the main town car parks and bus parks in Stornoway, Tarbert, Lochmaddy, Balivanich, Lochboisdale and Castlebay.

The service shall be provided Monday to Saturday except on public holidays with the same target treatment times of Priority 3 roads.

(iv) *Salting, Gritting and Snow Clearing of Unadopted Roads*

Two categories exist; private roads and Comhairle maintained roads, such as schools, care homes and Comhairle offices.

Private /unadopted roads will not be treated but may benefit from salt overspill at junctions.

For Comhairle maintained unadopted roads the treatment will be as agreed with the responsible Department.

7. Weather Forecasts

Winter service forecasts will be obtained daily from the forecast provider and shall comprise of a 24hr road surface state forecast, 5 site specific forecasts and a 2-5 day forecast.

These forecasts together with road sensor information, radar information and road inspections will form the objective basis on which operational decisions will be made.

A copy of the 24-hour forecast will be forwarded to all contractors by no later than 3.00pm on each day.

8 Supervision and Operational Personnel

Duty staff will be trained in the interpretation of forecast information. The Duty Officer will make the decision on any treatment required. The operational personnel shall be engaged by and trained by the service providers. Quality checks will be carried out on all contractors' work during the gritting season. The information will be used in subsequent reviews of the policy. Duty schedules and rotas will be put in place by the duty staff at the commencement of the gritting season.

9. Plant and Vehicles

The provision, maintenance and replacement of all winter maintenance plant and vehicles will be carried out by the service provider or Assets, Finance and Resources Department. All plant and vehicles shall conform to the Comhairle's specification and shall be inspected by the Comhairle's nominated inspector prior to commencing work.

10. Operational Communication System

- (i) The Comhairle will supply and fit mobile radios in most operational vehicles employed on snow clearing operations.
- (ii) The contractor will ensure the correct procedures for use and maintenance of these radios.
- (iii) The radios will be removed during the summer months.
- (iv) The contractor will ensure a mobile telephone is installed and maintained in all operational vehicles.
- (v) The contractors will be required to confirm start and finish times of requested gritting runs.
- (vi) Telephone answering and e-mail facilities shall be provided by all contractors at their depots.

11. Ice Detection System

The Comhairle will manage ten ice detection stations throughout the Western Isles. The system will be used in the determination of treatment. The system will be maintained by Vaisala TMI.

12. Bulk Salt

Bulk salt shall be purchased through the national procurement contract with Scotland Excel and will be supplied by the Comhairle to the contractors from nominated stockpiles. The Head of Property and Infrastructure will manage the Comhairle's own stockpiles. Service providers may hold small quantities of salt to enable operational efficiencies.

All salt piles shall be covered to preserve quality and moisture content of material.

In order to manage the risk of salt shortage it is proposed to hold stock as detailed below. The stock quantities are based on one full run and one priority 1 run per day, assuming salt has a moisture content of less than 4%.

Target stock levels (based on 20gms/m ²)		Start of Season October	Mid-Season Mid-December	Mid-February
		20 days treatment	15 Days Treatment	10 Days treatment
Proposed Salt stocks	Tonnes/day			
Priority one routes	76	1520	1140	760
Full Gritting Run	247	4940	3705	2470
Footpath Gritting	6	120	90	60
Totals	329	6580	4935	3290

13. Salt Heap and Grit Bins

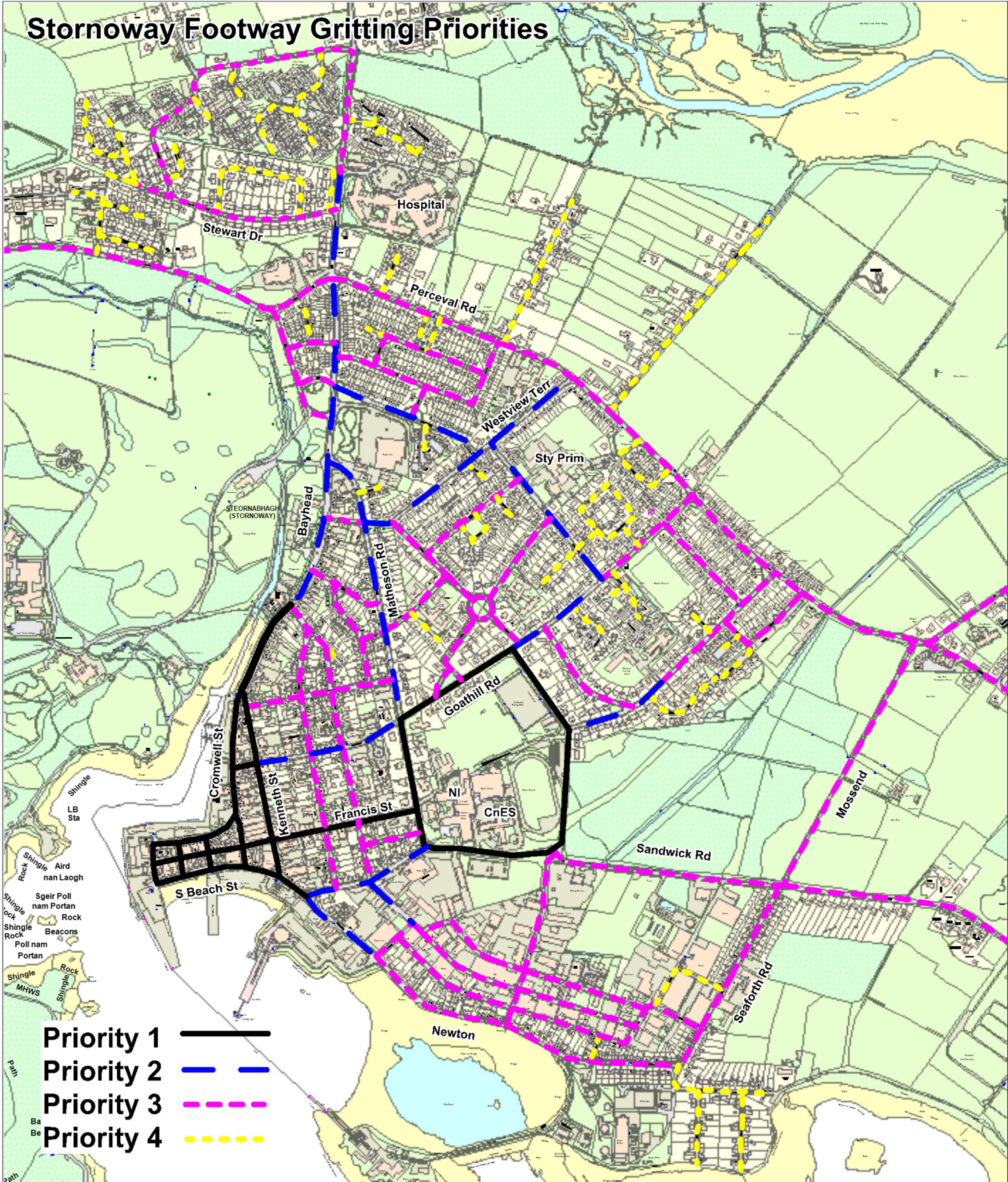
Salt heaps may be deposited and maintained in locations such as known trouble spots, steep hills, troublesome bends etc.

Grit bins may be situated and maintained at accessible locations for self-help use.

14. Information and Publicity

All Press communication shall be agreed with the Head of Property and Infrastructure.

Stornoway Footway Gritting Priorities



- Priority 1** ———
- Priority 2** ———
- Priority 3** ———
- Priority 4** - - - -