

**ANGUS COUNCIL**

**ROADS COMMITTEE**

**2 MAY 2002**

**WINTER MAINTENANCE EXPENDITURE**

**REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR OF ROADS**

**ABSTRACT**

This Report informs the Committee of the estimated outturn expenditure on winter maintenance for 2001/02.

**1 RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that the Committee agree to note that:-

- (i) the projected outturn expenditure on Winter Maintenance for 2001/02 is £1,404,000 (compared to a budget of £1,310,000 for third party payments);
- (ii) this excess expenditure on Winter Maintenance will be contained within the overall Roads Revenue Budget for 2001/02 by budget virement;
- (iii) the 2002/03 budget provision for winter maintenance will be re-assessed in framing the Winter Maintenance Policy and Service Provision proposals for 2002/03.

**BACKGROUND**

This report provides members of the Committee with an estimate of the expenditure position on winter maintenance for financial year 2001/02. The final position will not be known until the final accounts process has been concluded but it is considered appropriate to report on an estimate basis at this stage as the period of winter maintenance cover draws to a close.

**2 DETAILS**

The winter of 2001/02 has been a relatively uneventful year compared to the previous winter. Following a mild start to the winter season there were several short snow falls with more prolonged periods of snow over Christmas and New Year. January, February and March also saw snow falls, heavy at times but not prolonged.

Sub-zero road surface temperature forecasts resulted in considerable continuous periods of salting activity particularly in December and January. Over the last week of January the weather varied with flood warnings at the start of the period, heavy snow

fall on the 25<sup>th</sup>; rain falling on sub-zero roads resulting in ice problems on the 27<sup>th</sup>; the worst gales for 20 years on 28<sup>th</sup>; and snow again on the 29<sup>th</sup>. A full analysis of the winter activities will be reported to Committee when this year's policy review is undertaken.

The salt stock of 14,000 tonnes (2,000 tonne increase on previous years) was sufficient for the year with no requirement to import additional stocks at premium rates during the winter.

The A90 Trunk Road in Angus maintained by BEAR Scotland Ltd suffered the same weather conditions as the local roads but it was not necessary for the Council to assist with the winter maintenance on the Trunk Road at any time and no requests for such assistance were received from BEAR Scotland Ltd

### 3 **BUDGET PROVISION FOR WINTER MAINTENANCE**

The core winter maintenance budget of £1,250,000 based on an “average winter” was established in financial year 1998/99. An additional £60,000 was added to this budget through the 1999/00 budget process (£30,000 of which is recovered from the Education department) to allow the provision of an improved service on the Auxilliary (School Bus) Routes, giving a total budget for third party payments of £1,310,000. The core budget of £1,250,000 has however remained fixed due to restrictions on the Council's overall budget. In particular it has not been possible to increase the budget to allow for the effect of inflation or increasing standing charges, since 1998/99.

The increase year on year in standing charges, and the increase in the salt stock holdings now means that only some £600,000 or 46% of the total winter maintenance budget (£1,310,000) is available for the day-to-day operational costs of gritting/snow clearing activities.

#### EXPENDITURE TRENDS

Based on actual winter maintenance expenditure over the last 5 years, (which includes the heavy snow events of 2000/01 which was considered to be the most severe winter since 1992/93) the day-to-day operational costs of snow clearing/gritting show an average of £767,000 compared to a budget of around £600,000 per annum. This suggests a shortfall of £167,000 per annum on operational costs for an “average winter”. Members will however appreciate that this shortfall is largely notional given the theoretical nature of the “average winter” assumption and may be distorted by the events of the 2000/01 winter.

Nevertheless the above expenditure trend figures do highlight that, because of inflationary pressures, the resources available for day to day winter maintenance operations are gradually being eroded.

### 2001/02 ESTIMATED OUTTURN

Although the winter of 2001/02 has on the whole been relatively mild, especially compared to the previous year, a projected over-expenditure of £94,000 compared to the budget provision is still currently projected. It is not possible to attribute this overspend to a particular reason or event but it may be a reflection of the reducing amount of resources within the budget available for day to day winter maintenance operations.

### FUTURE YEARS BUDGETS

The 2002/03 budget process has only recently been concluded and at this stage it is not proposed to make any adjustment to the budget provision for winter maintenance which remains at £1,310,000 in total. It is however considered appropriate to reassess the budget position for 2002/03 in framing the Winter Maintenance Policy and Service Provision proposals for 2002/03. These proposals will be submitted to Committee for consideration in due course.

### FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The final position on winter maintenance expenditure will not be fully known until the final accounts process has been concluded but an overspend of circa £ is currently anticipated. The confirmed budget overspend will be contained within the overall Roads Department Revenue Budget for 2001/02 but as a result the budget for other road maintenance works has reduced.

#### **4 HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS**

There are no human rights implications arising from the proposals in this report.

#### **5 CONSULTATION**

The Chief Executive, the Director of Law and Administration and the Director of Finance have been consulted in the preparation of this Report.

#### **6 CONCLUSION**

The Committee is asked to note the projected outturn expenditure on winter maintenance of £1,404,000 for 2001/02 and that the additional expenditure against the budget allocation for winter maintenance of £94,000 has been contained within the overall Roads Department Revenue Budget.

R W McNeil  
DIRECTOR OF ROADS

NOTE:

No background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to any material extent in preparing the above Report.

IC/AS

27 March 2002

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