

# **Service and Community Impact Assessment (SCIA)**

## **Front Sheet:**

### **Directorate and Service Area:**

Environment & Economy – Network & Asset Management

### **What is being assessed (e.g. name of policy, procedure, project, service or proposed service change):**

Budget Proposal 'E&E15 Winter Maintenance'

This proposal would reduce the number of roads gritted in the county in order to achieve the proposed budget reduction.

### **Responsible owner / senior officer:**

Owen Jenkins

### **Date of assessment:**

11/01/2016

### **Summary of judgement:**

The proposal could, if implemented, reduce the gritting network from 43% to 35% of Oxfordshire's roads. This has a potential impact on areas with less used roads (such as small rural roads).

This will be mitigated in part through an exercise to re-profile the revised network and the number of routes on it, and a subsequent prioritisation of most used roads as well as roads near day centres and GP surgeries. New salted routes would be advertised to ensure communities know where the nearest treated main road is for journeys to and from major conurbations.

## **Detail of Assessment:**

### **Purpose of assessment:**

The assessment has been undertaken to consider the impacts of a reduction in service arising from the need to meet budgetary pressures.

### **You should also include the following statement to clearly set out the reasons and context for undertaking the assessment:**

Section 149 of the Equalities Act 2010 (“the 2010 Act”) imposes a duty on the Council to give due regard to three needs in exercising its functions. This proposal is such a function. The three needs are:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic, and those who do not.

Complying with section 149 may involve treating some people more favourably than others, but only to the extent that that does not amount to conduct which is otherwise unlawful under the new Act.

The need to advance equality of opportunity involves having due regard to the need to:

- remove or minimise disadvantages which are connected to a relevant protected characteristic and which are suffered by persons who share that characteristic,
- take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and which are different from the needs of other people, and
- encourage those who share a relevant characteristic to take part in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such people is disproportionately low.
- take steps to meet the needs of disabled people which are different from the needs of people who are not disabled and include steps to take account of a person’s disabilities.

The need to foster good relations between different groups involves having due regard to the need to tackle prejudice and promote understanding.

These protected characteristics are:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- pregnancy and maternity
- race – this includes ethnic or national origins, colour or nationality

- religion or belief – this includes lack of belief
- sex
- sexual orientation
- marriage and civil partnership

## **Social Value**

Under the Public Services (Social Value Act) 2012 the Council also has an obligation to consider how the procurement of services contracts with a life value of more than £173,934<sup>1</sup> might improve the economic, social, and environmental well-being of the area affected by the proposed contract, and how it might act to secure this improvement. However, it is best practice to consider social value for all types of contracts, service delivery decisions and new/updated policies. In this context, 'policy' is a general term that could include a strategy, project or contract.

## **Context / Background:**

This is part of a broad range of highway savings. The highway service has had reduced revenue budgets that impacted on virtually all parts of the service, and many now reduced to the statutory minimum. Currently OCC salts 43% of the network (which is higher than some authorities). The proposal could see this reduced to 35%. In comparison Gloucestershire and Wiltshire treat just 29% and 25% respectively whilst Northamptonshire is believed to treat 46% of its network.

## **Proposals:**

This saving is considered difficult, but achievable if properly planned through a route optimisation exercise. This would see the number of routes salted and therefore the number vehicles needed for the work reduced. In planning this reduction consideration would be given to traffic volumes, locations of key infrastructure such as hospitals, and key routes to access the main conurbations within the County.

## **Evidence / Intelligence:**

*Benchmark information from other authorities relating to route lengths salted (see above).*

## **Alternatives considered / rejected:**

Consideration was given to more drastic reductions, however, it was felt that in order to preserve access to main towns and villages this would be the minimum level of service that can be provided and therefore the biggest possible budget reduction possible.

<sup>11</sup> [EC Procurement Threshold for Services](#)

## **Impact Assessment:**

Identify any potential impacts of the policy or proposed service change on the population as a whole, or on particular groups. It might be helpful to think about the largest impacts or the key parts of the policy or proposed service change first, identifying any risks and actions, before thinking in more detail about particular groups, staff, other Council services, providers etc.

It is worth remembering that 'impact' can mean many things, and can be positive as well as negative. It could for example relate to access to services, the health and wellbeing of individuals or communities, the sustainability of supplier business models, or the training needs of staff.

We assess the impact of decisions on any relevant community, but with particular emphasis on:

- Groups that share the nine protected characteristics
  - age
  - disability
  - gender reassignment
  - pregnancy and maternity
  - race – this includes ethnic or national origins, colour or nationality
  - religion or belief – this includes lack of belief
  - sex
  - sexual orientation
  - marriage and civil partnership
- Rural communities
- Areas of deprivation

We also assess the impact on:

- Staff
- Other council services
- Other providers of council services
- Any other element which is relevant to the policy or proposed service change
- How it might improve the economic, social, and environmental of the area affected by the contract **if** the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 applies

For every community or group that you identify a potential impact you should discuss this in detail, using evidence (from data, consultation etc.) where possible to support your judgements. You should then highlight specific risks and any mitigating actions you will take to either lessen the impact, or to address any gaps in understanding you have identified.

If you have not identified an impact on particular groups, staff, other Council services, providers etc. you should indicate this to demonstrate you have considered it.

### **Impact on Individuals and Communities:**

Currently only roads are gritted so impact is on road users (i.e. car drivers, lorries, etc) and less on other groups except potentially cyclists and motorcyclists. The impact will affect rural communities more as the roads no longer being gritted will be those with lower traffic volumes. This could impact on all road users in those communities.

There is likely to be impact on other services where they are road users, for example mobile libraries, carers that carry out home visits. The indirect impact is therefore on vulnerable customers such as the elderly and disabled that rely on these services being provided by the Council or its providers.

Risks	Mitigations
Likely to result in fewer rural roads salted and therefore access restrictions to some areas during severe winters.	New routes will be based on road use and traffic volumes, therefore changes affecting smallest number of travelling public as possible. The road hierarchy is based on usage numbers and other factors such as strategic bus routes.  Concentrated communication to advertise revised routes enabling people to select routes that are still salted.
Fewer roads treated with salt means more icy roads during freezing conditions, and more routes unpassable to traffic during snow conditions, potentially leading to increased risk of accidents and increased risk of areas being cut off during adverse weather.	Advertising and communication to the general public, local Parish Councils and via internet showing safe salted routes.  Town and Parish Councils are able to purchase additional salt and salt bins to deal with untreated areas they see as a priority (generally specific locations such as a junction)
Indirect risk to vulnerable people reliant on Council services such as elderly care.	Salted routes will be well advertised to enable service planning for other departments/ services.

### **Impact on Staff:**

Risks	Mitigations
-------	-------------

No direct impact on staff over and above any impacts on general public.	
---	--

### Impact on other Council services:

Risks	Mitigations
Likely to result in fewer rural roads salted and therefore access restrictions to some areas during severe winters. This could impact on carers' ability to reach and provide services to people in these areas.	All new routes will be widely advertised internally and externally to Council and enable other services to plan. During severe weather impact cannot always be mitigated against.

### Impact on providers:

Risks	Mitigations
There is a small impact on Councils highways contractor as there will be fewer vehicles and staff required to provide service. This is however minimal and part of normal service changes.	None required

### Social Value

*If the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 applies to this proposal, please summarise here how you have considered how the contract might improve the economic, social, and environmental well-being of the relevant area.*

**How might the proposal improve the economic well-being of the relevant area?**

N/A

**How might the proposal improve the environmental well-being of the relevant area?**

N/A

### Action plan:

Action	By When	Person responsible
Review of Winter Maintenance Routes for salting	End June 2016	Paul Wilson
Review of Winter Maintenance Policy	End September 2016	Paul Wilson
Communication to public on changes to salted roads	Sept to Nov 2016 and ongoing	Paul Wilson

### **Monitoring and review:**

**Person responsible for assessment: Owen Jenkins**

Version	Date	Notes (e.g. Initial draft, amended following consultation)
1.0	January 2016	Initial draft