CABINET
25 JULY 2013
GRITTING OF COUNCIL TOWN CENTRE CAR PARKS

1 Purpose of Report

1.1 To consider the continuation of winter gritting of town centre car parks, in light of the results of the 2012-13 pilot scheme.

2 Recommendation

2.1 That the Council owned town centre car parks and bus stations detailed in Appendix 1 are gritted during the winters of 2013-14 and future years.

3 Key Issues and Reasons for Recommendation

3.1 The three year General Fund Revenue Budget for 2013-14 to 2015-16 includes (as a “growth item”) £27,500 per annum for the winter gritting of town centre car parks, subject to Cabinet’s consideration of the results of the 2012-13 pilot scheme.

3.2 The results of the pilot scheme are presented in the report and this is considered to have been a success. The pilot scheme has also enabled a number of deficiencies in relation to the initial service standard to be identified. These include the gritting of the Cannock and Rugeley Town Centre bus stations which are not designated highways and are therefore the Council’s responsibility.

3.3 It is therefore proposed that the winter gritting of the Council owned town centre car parks and bus stations (identified in Appendix 1) should continue during the winters of 2013-14 and future years.
4 Relationship to Corporate Priorities

4.1 Subject to Cabinet’s consideration of the 2012-13 pilot scheme, the winter gritting of Council owned car parks is a specific action within the Environment Portfolio section of the agreed 2013-14 “Place” Priority Delivery Plan.

5 Report Detail

5.1 Council on 13 February 2013 approved the three year General Fund Revenue Budget for the period 2013-14 to 2015-16. This includes, as a “growth item”, annual provision of £27,500 for the winter gritting town centre car parks, subject to the results of the 2012-13 pilot scheme being considered by Cabinet.

5.2 The 2012-13 pilot scheme was agreed by Cabinet on 20 September 2012 and operated for the period 1 November 2012 to 31 March 2013 at the locations identified in Appendix 1.

5.3 During this time daily reports were received from Staffordshire County Council detailing any actions they were taking as the Highway Authority, following receipt of weather forecasts. On the basis of this information and local weather reports, a decision was made daily whether or not to grit.

5.4 Gritting was undertaken on 92 separate occasions. Of these, 60 were as a result of frost forecasts, whilst 32 were combined with snow clearance following heavy snowfalls.

5.5 In overall terms the pilot scheme is considered to have been a success, as in comparison to previous years (when no gritting or snow clearance was undertaken) no complaints were received. The pilot scheme also identified a number of deficiencies in relation to the initial service standard, which was amended during the pilot time period to incorporate:-

(a) The gritting of the Cannock and Rugeley Town Centre bus stations which are not designated highways and are therefore Cannock Chase Council’s responsibility.

(b) The gritting of the pedestrianised links within certain car parks where thick ice accumulated following heavy snowfall.

(c) Additional resources for snow clearance.

5.6 The total cost of the pilot scheme was £26,000. This cost included the hire of a four wheel drive vehicle and a demountable gritting unit, labour costs and standby payments and the supply of salt. Following heavy snowfalls, a “JCB” and driver were also hired to supplement the Council’s own “JCB Loader”. This additional hire cost is included within the £26,000 pilot cost.

5.7 In view of the success of the pilot scheme it is considered that the winter gritting of the Council owned town centre car parks and bus stations should continue
during the winters of 2013-14 and future years. Whilst the cost of this action is dependent on the frequency and severity of future winter weather conditions, it is considered that based on the weather experienced during the 2012-13 pilot scheme, the annual budgetary provision of £27,500 remains as the appropriate estimate of future costs.

5.8 Prior to the 2012-13 pilot scheme it was the Council’s policy not to grit town centre car parks. As a result, each car park has a sign stating this policy and warning the public to take additional care during adverse weather conditions. Subject to the proposed gritting policy being agreed these signs would be removed.

6 Implications

6.1 Financial

Funding for winter gritting of Council owned town centre car parks is covered within the 2013-14 budget agreed by Council on 13 February 2013 with a budgetary provision of £27,500 subject to this report coming to Cabinet for consideration. The total cost of the trial scheme for the winter of 2012-13 was £26,000, as already stated in section 5.5 of this report, which therefore is within the budget proposed. If Cabinet agree to winter gritting continuing it is considered that the original provision of £27,500 remains the appropriate estimate of future costs. If any unforeseen additional costs to this budgetary sum are incurred then this would need to be found from elsewhere.

6.2 Legal

The Council as landowner owes users of its car parks a duty to take reasonable care to ensure that they are reasonably safe (Occupiers’ Liability Act 1957 and Occupiers’ Liability Act 1984). It is therefore appropriate for the Council to consider outcome of the pilot scheme to grit the town centre car parks.

6.3 Human Resources

For the purpose of the trial standby payments to operatives were considered non-contractual, however should the service become permanent then standby payments may become contractual.

6.4 Section 17 (Crime Prevention)

None

6.5 Human Rights Act

None

6.6 Data Protection

None
6.7 **Risk Management**

In gritting and/or clearing of snow from Council owned car parks there may be a risk of increasing the Council's liability for injury in that we would “create” the hazard ourselves (e.g. icy surfaces on areas previously cleared of snow). This may also affect the Council's ability to defend claims that may arise from injuries caused by slipping on snow and ice.

6.8 **Equality & Diversity**

The winter gritting of one Council owned town centre car park and bus station has been subject to an Equality Impact Assessment. The outcome is that the scheme would have a positive impact for certain of the protected characteristics with no identified negative implications.

6.9 **Best Value**

None

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**7 Appendices to the Report**

| Appendix 1: | Winter Gritting of Council Owned Car Parks and Bus Stations |

**Previous Consideration**

| Gritting Trial on Council Town Centre Car Parks | Cabinet | 20 September 2012 |

**Background Papers**

None
**WINTER GRITTING OF COUNCIL OWNED CAR PARKS AND BUS STATIONS**

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<th>Location</th>
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<td>St. Joseph’s Church</td>
<td>Wharf Road (railway station)</td>
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** Civic Office rear and Members car parks are pay and display outside normal office hours.