

Universal Services

Name of SP25 proposal: Highways Winter Service	SP25 Proposal Reference: <i>EIA – US18</i> Universal Services
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EIA writer(s) and authoriser

No.		Name	Department	Position	Email address	Phone number	Date	Issue
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2	EIA authoriser	Patrick Blogg	Universal Services	Director – Universal Services			15/04/2024	
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Section one – information about the service and service change

Service affected	Highways Winter service
Please provide a short description of the service / policy/project/project phase	The County Council works closely with its highway service provider to look after Hampshire’s 5,500 miles of roads and associated assets during the winter period (1 st October – 30 th April). The County Council, as the Highway Authority, is required to take all reasonable and practical steps to keep the highway network clear of snow and ice. To discharge this duty our winter service includes salting and snow clearance during the

	winter season on prioritised routes which are largely based on road category, usage and strategic importance.
Please explain the new/changed service/policy/project	<p>Changes to the provision of highway winter services would be sought by a review of the winter service provision against statutory requirements, which would include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewing and updating the criteria used to determine which roads should be included and treated as part of the Priority One, Priority Two and Community Route networks • Assessing the road network against this set of criteria to develop the revised set of routes • Reviewing the placement of salt bins • Longer-term, innovative route-based forecasting would be explored

Engagement and consultation

The County Council's *Making the Most of your money budget* consultation (2024-2026) sought residents' and stakeholders' views on strategic options for funding the Authority's budget gap. Where applicable, detailed proposals for making savings were subject to further, more detailed 'stage two' consultation (detailed below).

Has any pre-consultation engagement been carried out?

No

Describe the consultation or engagement you have performed or are intending to perform.

Describe who was engaged or consulted. What was the outcome of the activity and how have the results influenced what you are doing? If no consultation or engagement is planned, please explain why.

A stage 2 public consultation took place in early 2024 and closed on 31st March 2024. A total of 4,665 responses were received and analysed in relation to this proposal, and feedback has identified that 60% of respondents disagreed with the proposed reduction to the winter service budget, with 27% in agreement, and 12% neither agreeing nor disagreeing and 1% stating that they didn't know. Comments regarding the proposal mentioned safety issues and negative financial impacts for the public associated with an increase in vehicle repairs, and an increase in costs for the County Council due to additional legal and administration resources for dealing with claims for vehicle damage. Alternative suggestions included maintaining or increasing the current service level, and the view that more personal responsibility should be encouraged among residents during winter conditions. Other comments included that the condition of road surfaces and safety/accessibility should be a priority.

In terms of perceived impacts to protected characteristics relating to this proposal, there were 28% relating to age and 28% relating to disability when considering a base of 926 responses.

Section two: Assessment

Carefully and consciously consider the impacts of the proposed change.

Consider at this point whether the assessment is of impacts on staff or service users. If it is both the impacts may be contradictory for each group (negative for staff but positive for customers, or vice versa). Consider completing two assessment tables (one for staff and one for customers) and providing one equality statement for both groups.

If the proposed change is expected to have a positive, neutral (no impact) or negative (low, medium or high) impact on people in protected characteristics groups or those who may be impacted by poverty or rurality. Indicate the impact by entering the risk score in the relevant column in the table below.

If an overview assessment of due regard is appropriate, please go to box 2.

Table 1 Impact Assessment [add ✓ to relevant boxes)

Protected characteristic	Positive	Neutral	Negative - low	Negative - Medium	Negative - High	Affects staff, public or both?
Age			✓			Public
Disability			✓			Public
Gender reassignment		✓				Public
Pregnancy and maternity		✓				Public
Race		✓				Public
Religion or belief		✓				Public
Sex		✓				Public
Sexual orientation		✓				Public
Marriage & civil partnership		✓				Public

Poverty		✓				Public
Rurality			✓			Public

Table 2 Geographical impact

Does the proposal impact on a specific area? Consider the [demographic data](#) of the locations.

Area	Yes / no
All Hampshire	✓
Basingstoke and Deane	
East Hampshire	
Eastleigh	
Fareham	
Gosport	
Hart	
Havant	
New Forest	
Rushmoor	
Test Valley	

Winchester	
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Section three: Equality Statement

For all characteristics marked as either having a neutral or low negative impact, challenge your assessment - carefully consider the protected characteristics, if necessary, review the Inclusion and Diversity eLearning, discuss with an EIA co-ordinator.

Table 3 Consideration of and explanation for neutral or low negative impacts

Protected characteristic	Brief explanation of why this has been assessed as having neutral or low negative impact
Age and Disability	<p>LOW NEGATIVE: A Low Negative impact has been identified for these characteristics as follows:</p> <p>Older people and people with disabilities could find it particularly difficult to negotiate untreated roads and sections of footway on foot.</p> <p>Younger and older people could be particularly disadvantaged by the inaccessibility of schools and community centres.</p> <p>28% of respondents to the consultation expressed concerns about the potential impact of this proposal on these characteristics.</p> <p>To mitigate these impacts, the Priority One network would follow national guidelines and maintain accessibility to key essential services and transport hubs, such as bus and rail stations. Also, details of roads that have been removed from the Priority One network would be communicated to the public in advance and during the 2025/26 winter season. Further, the County Council would review the location of salt bins.</p>

Rurality	LOW NEGATIVE: Although Rurality is not a statutory protected characteristic, roads in urban areas are more likely to be prioritised for treatment than those in rural areas, thus disadvantaging some rural road users,
Other	NEUTRAL: It is not anticipated that the impacts of this change would disproportionately affect other protected characteristics.

For all characteristics marked as either having a 'medium negative' or 'high negative', please complete table 4:

Table 4 Explanation and mitigation for medium and high impacts

Protected characteristic	Brief explanation of why this has been assessed as having medium or high negative impact	Is there a Geographical impact? If so, please explain - use list above to identify geographical area(s)	Short explanation of mitigating actions

If you have specified mitigations as part of the assessment, now consider reviewing the impact severity/risk assessment.

For all characteristics marked as either having a positive impact please explain why in table 5.

Table 5 Consideration of and explanation for positive impacts

Protected characteristic	Brief explanation of why this has been assessed as having positive impact

Further actions and recommendations to consider:

- If neutral or low negative impacts have been carefully considered and identified correctly, the activity is likely to proceed.
- If medium negative or high negative have been identified:
 - The policy, service review, scheme or practice may be paused or stopped
 - The policy, service review, scheme or practice can be changed to remove, reduce or mitigate against the negative impacts.
 - Consider undertaking consultation/re-consulting¹.
 - If all options have been considered carefully and there are no other proportionate ways to remove, reduce, or mitigate - explain and justify reasons why in the assessment.
 - Carry out a subsequent impact severity assessment following mitigating actions.

Box 1

Please set out any additional information which you think is relevant to this impact assessment:

The main concerns raised from the feedback have been noted. In response to the majority of concerns raised the proposals would only entail a relatively small change to the length of untreated network during freezing conditions. Approximately 65% of roads are currently not treated in advance of freezing conditions and most people would undertake part of their daily journeys on untreated roads during the winter season. If the proposed changes are approved, it would result in only a small percentage increase to the untreated network. As part of the review some roads that no longer meet the criteria would be removed but other roads would be added to the network that were not previously treated. The national guidance provides criteria to be considered when determining what roads are to be included in treatment networks and the review would ensure that this is followed. The review has involved consultations with other directorates and teams across the County Council to ensure key public services are maintained.

Box 2

If appropriate, (i.e., it is immediately evident that a full EIA is not necessary) please provide a short succinct assessment to show that due regard has been given and that there is no requirement for a full EIA: