

Comhairle Contae South Dublin
Átha Cliath Theas County Council

COMHAIRLE CONTAE ÁTHA CLIATH THEAS
SOUTH DUBLIN COUNTY COUNCIL



WINTER SERVICE PLAN 2026 - 2027

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1. PURPOSE OF SCOPE

The purpose of this document is to identify the processes, procedures and key personnel employed by South Dublin County Council to deliver the winter maintenance programme for the 2026/2027 Winter Season.

The percentages of roads salted within SDCC are summarised below

2. POLICY

2.1 Road Network

It is the Council's policy to attempt to maintain the principal roads within the county and to keep them open for traffic and free from ice at all times.

The road network in South Dublin comprises all categories of road from Motorway to Local Tertiary. The responsibility for general and winter maintenance of Motorways has been awarded to private contractors employed directly by Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII).

South Dublin County Council are responsible for carrying out winter maintenance on National Secondary, Regional and Local roads within the county.

Due to the length of road network in South Dublin it is not possible to treat all roads during a standard treatment run. Winter maintenance is based on a hierarchy of priority;

Category	Road Description	Level of Service
Priority One	All National Routes, major county distributors and access to essential services (emergency services)	Routes will be kept serviceable as far as is reasonably practicable in all weather conditions
Priority Two	Roads that are treated as part of a standard call out but not rated as priority one	Roads will be treated as part of a standard call out but in the event of severe weather they will not be treated until priority one routes are serviceable
Priority Three	All other roads	Not treated as part of the normal winter service but may receive intermittent treatment during certain severe weather events.

Appendix One identifies the normal salting routes and priority 1 routes

2.2 Pedestrian & Cycle Infrastructure

Footpaths and Cycleways are not included in our standard winter maintenance operating process. During severe weather events such as heavy snow or prolonged icy periods resources may be re-allocated to clearing specific areas such as villages and bridge decks.

2.3 Salt Bins

SDCC have 100 salt bins located around the county. These bins enable members of the public to access salt and treat locations that are not included in the standard treatment routes if they deem it necessary. Instructions on spread rate are provided at each bin.

Locations of these can be found on SDCC website ([here](#)) and a map is included as Appendix 2.

3. Community Involvement During Severe Weather Events

3.1 Schools and Community Groups

Schools and Community Groups are advised to plan ahead for severe weather events and to make the necessary arrangements to have sufficient supplies of materials, plant and equipment in storage or available to them to cater for their anticipated needs during such events. Materials and equipment should be acquired in a timely manner in advance of the winter season while stocks are available.

3.2 Business Sector

The Commercial, Retail & Business sectors are requested to assist efforts in periods of severe weather by clearing snow and ice from footpaths in front of their premises. Legal opinion on the matter states that no legal liability exists to those carrying out such works once they are executed in a safe manner. It should be noted that the application of hot water to remove snow and ice from footpaths is not a safe or an acceptable method as more often than not the water refreezes and exacerbates the initial problem.

3.3 Agricultural Sector

The Local Authority will endeavour to work with rural communities & the IFA where possible. The treatment of rural roads by third parties should be carried out in accordance with national policy in this area once published.

4. Responsibilities

4.1 Winter Services Manager

The Winter Services Manager (WSM) is responsible for co-ordinating the overall delivery of South Dublin County Councils response to cold weather events, in particular the winter salting response.

The WSM is required to;

- Ensure the Winter Service Plan is updated as required.
- Ensure all personnel listed in the document are briefed on their roles and responsibilities and that contact details are validated.
- Make The Winter Service Plan available to the public.
- Ensure that all plant and equipment used in winter Maintenance activities is properly maintained and fit for purpose.
- Arrange calibration of plant and equipment and maintain up to date records of same.
- Prepare a rota of Duty Engineers for the winter maintenance season.
- Co-ordinate the activities of the Duty Engineers and provide support and training as required.
- Monitor stocks of salt and ensure that adequate supplies of salt are maintained throughout the winter service season.
- Ensure that salt depots are properly maintained and liaise with Municipal District Engineers with regard to the upkeep and maintenance of salt depots.
- Be responsible for the overall management of Health, Safety and Welfare for all Winter Maintenance operations.

4.2 Winter Service Duty Engineers

South Dublin County Council maintains a roster of four Duty Engineers who operate the Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) WX Horizon Weather Prediction System for the winter service season.

The Duty Engineers work on a two weekly rota throughout the season and the handover time is 9am on Monday mornings or as agreed between the Duty Engineers.

Using the Vaisala WX Horizon Weather Prediction System it is the Duty Engineer's responsibility to determine;

- Whether a call out is required
- What routes are to be treated
- What time to carry out treatment
- What the treatment rate is to be

Once a decision has been determined the Duty Engineer is required to inform the Area Engineers and Inspectors/Assistant Foremen of the decision and to get confirmation that it has been received.

In addition the Duty Engineers will commit to the following duties & procedures:

- To be available outside normal working hours (this means ANY TIME, for the rostered period)
- Keep a log of activities, operations, decision making etc.
- Update the National Salt Management System (NSMS) on a weekly (or daily) basis and coordinate salt deliveries/collections for your county as required.

Outside of working hours, from their home the duty engineer will:

- Access the WX Horizon system as required.
- Track the actual conditions over their area.
- Obtain updated or more detailed road weather forecasts by talking to a forecaster using The Telephone Consultancy Service phone number 01 8064219 or 8064255 as a backup number.

The roster and rota for the upcoming season is contained in Appendix 3.

4.3 Area Engineers

South Dublin has two Area Engineers, one in Palmerstown that covers the North of the county and one in Ballymount that covers the South.

Area Engineers have overall responsibility for the delivery of the Winter Service Programme within their area in accordance with the policies and procedures set out in the Winter Service Plan. They are also responsible for the operation, maintenance and upkeep of the Road Maintenance Depots within their Area and shall ensure that they have sufficient manpower, machinery and resources to enable them to provide a satisfactory and safe service.

The Area Engineers shall immediately report any Machinery defects or any Health, Safety and Welfare related issues to the Winter Service Manager/ Machinery Yard Engineer

4.4 Roads Inspectors & Assistant Foremen

The Roads Inspectors and Assistant Foremen are responsible for the co-ordination of the Winter Service Programme on the ground in their respective areas. They shall act on the instruction of the Duty Engineer in relation to issues relating to the delivery of the Winter Service Programme.

Road Inspectors will liaise directly with the Duty Engineer responsible for monitoring salt stocks regarding stock levels and replenishing supplies; the Duty Engineer will then inform the WSM of any need for additional salt supplies that be

required. This will generally be on a weekly basis, but may become more frequent during extreme weather events.

Roads Inspectors & Assistant Foremen will also immediately report any Health, Safety and Welfare issues or problems to their Area Engineer.

4.5 Drivers

The Area Engineers shall endeavour to ensure that sufficient drivers are available for the satisfactory delivery of the Winter Service Programme within their Area. This will include a list of reserve drivers to provide cover during prolonged periods. Drivers shall report any machinery or plant defects to the Roads Inspector or Assistant Foremen upon discovery to ensure no interruption to delivery of the Winter Service Programme.

Drivers will also immediately report any Health, Safety and Welfare issues to their Inspector or Assistant Foreman.

5. Decision Process

The duty engineer consults the WX Horizon system on a daily basis.

Duty Engineers will review the forecast data and determine whether to treat or not treat. A decision will be made and communicated to the relevant people at that time. It will include the decision to go ahead and salt roads at a specified time or a decision not to salt roads.

The WX Horizon forecast will be monitored regularly and based on updated information the Duty Engineer may alter the treatment decision from earlier.

The Duty Engineer will continue to monitor the weather forecast and if the weather deviates significantly from the forecast an amended treatment plan may be issued.

The timing of the salting run is intended to pre-treat the roads prior to the time of forecasted ice formation. The object is to treat the road as close to this time as is feasible. The target rate of spread of salt in South Dublin is 10g/m².

The rate of spread may be varied depending on the severity of the weather conditions and the duration of it.

Where snow is forecast, snowblades are fitted to Council vehicles, and they will be used where a sufficient depth of snow exists for their deployment. Where such conditions are forecast, intensive engagement with Met Eireann better informs the Duty Engineer as to the timing of treatment. Lorries with snowblades mounted to the front, are more difficult to manoeuvre on narrow roads. For this reason, the snowblades should only be mounted, when there is a significant or high risk of snowfall.

6. Decision Matrix

The table below indicates the decision matrix used by the Duty Engineer when deciding on a winter service call out

Road Surface Temperature	Precipitation	Predicted Road Conditions		
		Wet	Wet Patches	Dry
May fall below 1°C	Possible hoar frost	Possible Hill Run Salt before frost	Possible Hill Run Salt before frost	No action likely, monitor weather
May fall below 0°C	No rain No hoar frost No fog	Salt before frost	Salt before frost	No action likely, monitor weather
Expected to fall below 0°C	No rain No hoar frost No fog		Salt before frost (see note a)	
	Expected hoar frost Expected fog			
	Expected rain before freezing		Salt after rain stops (see note b)	
	Expected rain during freezing	Salt before frost, as required during rain and after rain stops (see note c)		
	Possible rain Possible hoar frost Possible fog	Salt before frost		Monitor weather conditions
Expected Snow		Salt before snow fall		
The decision to undertake precautionary treatments should be, if appropriate, adjusted to take account of residual salt or surface moisture. All decisions should be evidence based, recorded and require careful monitoring and review.				

Notes:

- (a) When a weather warning contains reference to expected hoar frost, considerable deposits of frost can occur. Hoar frost usually occurs in the early morning and is difficult to cater for because of the probability that any salt deposited on a dry road too soon before its onset, may be dispersed before it can become effective. Careful monitoring is required under this forecast condition which should ideally be treated just as the hoar frost is forming. Such action is usually not practicable and salt may have to be deposited on a dry road prior to but as close as possible to the expected

time of the condition. Hoar frost may also be forecast at other times of the day, in which case the timing of salting operations should be adjusted accordingly.

- (b) If under these conditions, rain has not ceased by early morning, crews should be called out and action initiated as rain ceases. Where possible, salting will be timed to coincide with the end of rainfall.
- (c) Under these circumstances rain will freeze on contact with running surfaces and full precautionary treatment should be provided even on dry roads. This is a most serious condition.

7. Treatment Matrix

The following table illustrates the treatment matrix to be used.

PRE-Wet Combination of RockSalt and Brine				
Weather Conditions Road Surface Conditions Road Surface Temperature (RST)	Treatment Air Temperature	Treatment Rate		Ploughing
		Rocksalt (gm/m ²)	Brine (ml/m ²)	
Frost or forecast frost RST at or above -1°C		8	10	No
Frost or forecast frost RST below -1°C and above -5°C		8	10	No
Frost or forecast frost RST below -5°C and above -10°C and dry/damp road conditions		12	20	No
Frost or forecast frost RST below -5°C and above -10°C and wet road conditions (existing or anticipated)		Minimum 1 run X 20	N/A	No
Light snow forecast (<10mm)		Minimum 1 run X 20 and reload	20	Ploughs mounted
Forecast for Medium/heavy snow or a freezing rain forecast		Minimum 1 run X 20 and reload	20	Ploughs mounted
Ice formed	Above -5°C	20	20	Not possible
Ice formed	At or below -5°C	Minimum 1 run X 20 and reload	N/A	Not possible
Snow covering exceeding 30mm		20 to supplement ploughing, up to two runs X 20 on if temperatures are falling	20	Required
Snow accumulations due to prolonged falls		1 to two runs X 20 on to supplement ploughing	20	Required
Hard packed snow/ice	Above -8°C	Successive treatments at 20 (repeat as needed)	N/A	Not possible
Hard packed snow/ice	At or below -8°C	Successive treatments at 20, supplemented by abrasives (repeat as needed)	N/A	Not possible

Sustained low temperatures	Below -10°C	Successive treatments at 20 during prolonged periods of bad weather	N/A	Not possible
Hard packed snow/ice	At or below -8°C	Successive treatments at 20, supplemented by abrasives (repeat as needed)	N/A	Not possible
Sustained low temperatures	Below -10°C	Successive treatments at 20	N/A	Not possible

Rocksalt Only			
Weather Conditions Road Surface Conditions Road Surface Temperature (RST)	Treatment Air Temperature	Salt Spread Rate (gm/m ²)	Ploughing
Frost or forecast frost RST at or above -1°C		10	No
Frost or forecast frost RST below -1°C and above -5°C		10	No
Frost or forecast frost RST below -5°C and above -10°C and dry or damp road conditions		15	No
Frost or forecast frost RST below -5°C and above -10°C and wet road conditions (existing or anticipated)		Minimum 1 run X 20	No
Light snow forecast (<10mm)		Minimum 1 run X 20 and reload	Ploughs mounted
Forecast for Medium/heavy snow or a freezing rain forecast		Minimum 1 run X 20 and reload	Ploughs mounted
Ice formed	Above -5°C	20	Not possible
Ice formed	At or below -5°C	Minimum 1 run X 20 and reload	Not possible
Snow covering exceeding 30mm		20 to supplement ploughing, up to two runs X 20 on if temperatures are falling	Required
Snow accumulations due to prolonged falls		1 to two runs X 20 on to supplement ploughing	Required

Hard packed snow/ice	Above -8°C	Successive treatments at 20 (repeat as needed)	Not possible
Hard packed snow/ice	At or below -8°C	Successive treatments at 20, supplemented by abrasives (repeat as needed)	Not possible
Sustained low temperatures	Below -10°C	Successive treatments at 20 during prolonged periods of bad weather	Not possible
Hard packed snow/ice	At or below -8°C	Successive treatments at 20, supplemented by abrasives (repeat as needed)	Not possible
Sustained low temperatures	Below -10°C	Successive treatments at 20	Not possible

Notes:

- (a) Rate of spread for precautionary treatments may be adjusted to take account of variations occurring along the route such as residual salt, surface moisture (in the air or on the road surface) and traffic density.
- (b) All South Dublin County Council salt is currently stored in a barn or in a salt silo. The capacity of salters and the length of routes currently salted limit the ability to exceed the spread rate.
- (c) All decisions should be forecast based, recorded and require careful monitoring and review.
- (d) Ice refers to all ice on the road surface, including black ice.
- (e) A decision to plough is taken by the Roads Inspectors and Assistant Forement based on the local conditions in their area. This is due to the localised nature of snowfall events and the variation that may occur throughout the county.
- (f) During prolonged periods of bad weather, it may be necessary to prioritise resources on Priority 1 routes, as a consequence other standard routes may be omitted if resources are unavailable.
- (g) The earliest start time for a salting run is 7.00pm, as traffic volumes on the routes prevent salt being deposited on the road at the required spread rate before this time
- (h) The latest start time for a salting run is 5.00am, as traffic volumes on the routes prevent salt being deposited on the road at the required spread rate before the salting run is completed
- (i) On the basis of multiple salting runs on previous nights without any wet weather periods, the Duty Engineer can reduce the requirement for salting runs.
- (j) In certain or extreme circumstances and based on the discretion of the Area Engineer, roads other than those on the official routes, may be treated on an unplanned basis

8. Plant, Vehicles and Equipment

South Dublin County Council operates a fleet of 6 trucks with fully demountable salting units and 2 permanently mounted salters, all equipped with snow ploughs to deliver the Winter Service Programme.

Two teleporters are used to load the Salt spreaders in the Depots.

9. Winter Service Depots

The delivery of the Winter Service Programme is undertaken from both Palmerstown and Ballymount Depots.

Both depots are equipped with 1300t dry salt storage barns and lorries will load from both depots and there is a brine production facility located at the Palmerstown barn.

10. Materials

10.1 Rock Salt

South Dublin County Council will be assigned an allocation, by the TII, of salt for use on National Roads (N81) for the current operative period. A further allocation of salt will be made available, by the Department of Transport, for use on Regional and Local Roads for the same period. Both these allocations will be made based on tonnage of salt used in previous seasons.

The salt supplied is a dry brown rock salt that is in granular form, approximately 5mm in diameter. Rock salt requires the wheels of vehicles to crush it so that the salt is activated to its optimum level.

10.2 Brine

For the coming season we are now adding a brine treatment. Brine is a mixture of 23% white salt with 77% water and this solution is sprayed on to the road.

The benefits of brine is that it is a faster acting agent that doesn't require the crushing action of cars to activate it. It will also help reduce "bounce off" by the rock salt.

The Winter Service Manager is responsible for reporting salt consumption on a weekly basis to the TII, via the web based National Salt Management System. The Duty Engineers also co-ordinate the ordering and collection of salt allocated under the two allocations to the Winter Service Depots.

11. Additional Route Requests

In the event that South Dublin County Council Duty Engineers or overseers are contacted by the emergency services (Guards, Fire Service, Control Centre) or a member of the public regarding additional salting routes or areas, then the procedure is to note the request, the person making the request and review whether to incorporate the request in subsequent salt runs.

It will not be possible to alter a salt run immediately on the basis of a request from the emergency services in the interest of health and safety of the machinery operators.

Please note that based on our current vehicle size there is no capacity to increase the existing route lengths currently.

12. Severe Weather Protocol

During periods of severe weather SDCC will treat roads as required throughout the day and night time. Additional staff resources are brought in from other sections if required and contractors who have appropriate equipment are also utilised.

SDCC winter maintenance operations are intended to provide the best value for money to the people of South Dublin and for that reason we prioritise areas of dense population. (We do not do estate roads, only distributor roads)

As the road network in built up areas become satisfactory we then turn to the rural areas and target roads that have the highest number of residences along them.

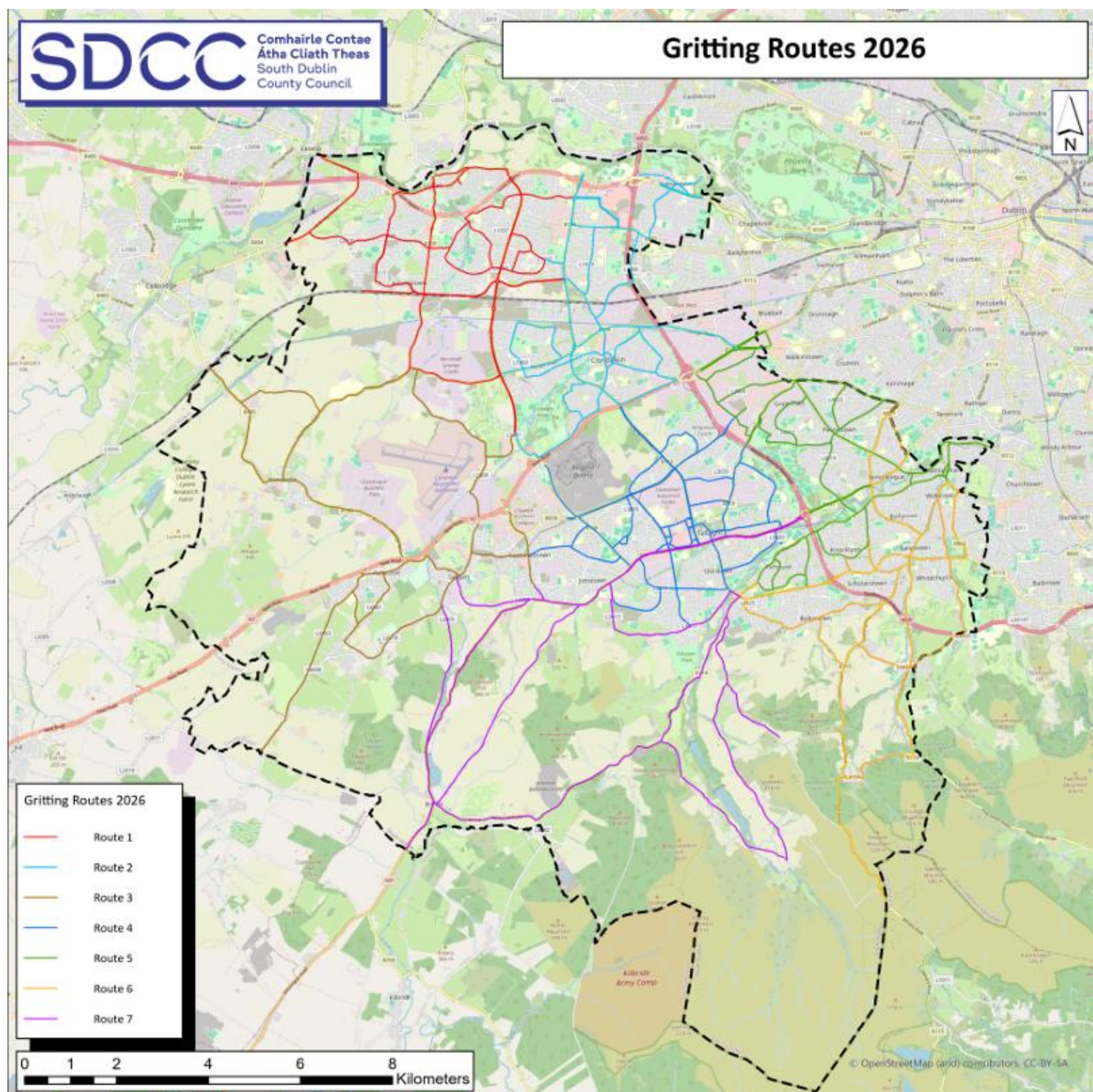
Our operations continue in this fashion until we are targeting roads with a small number of residential units on them.

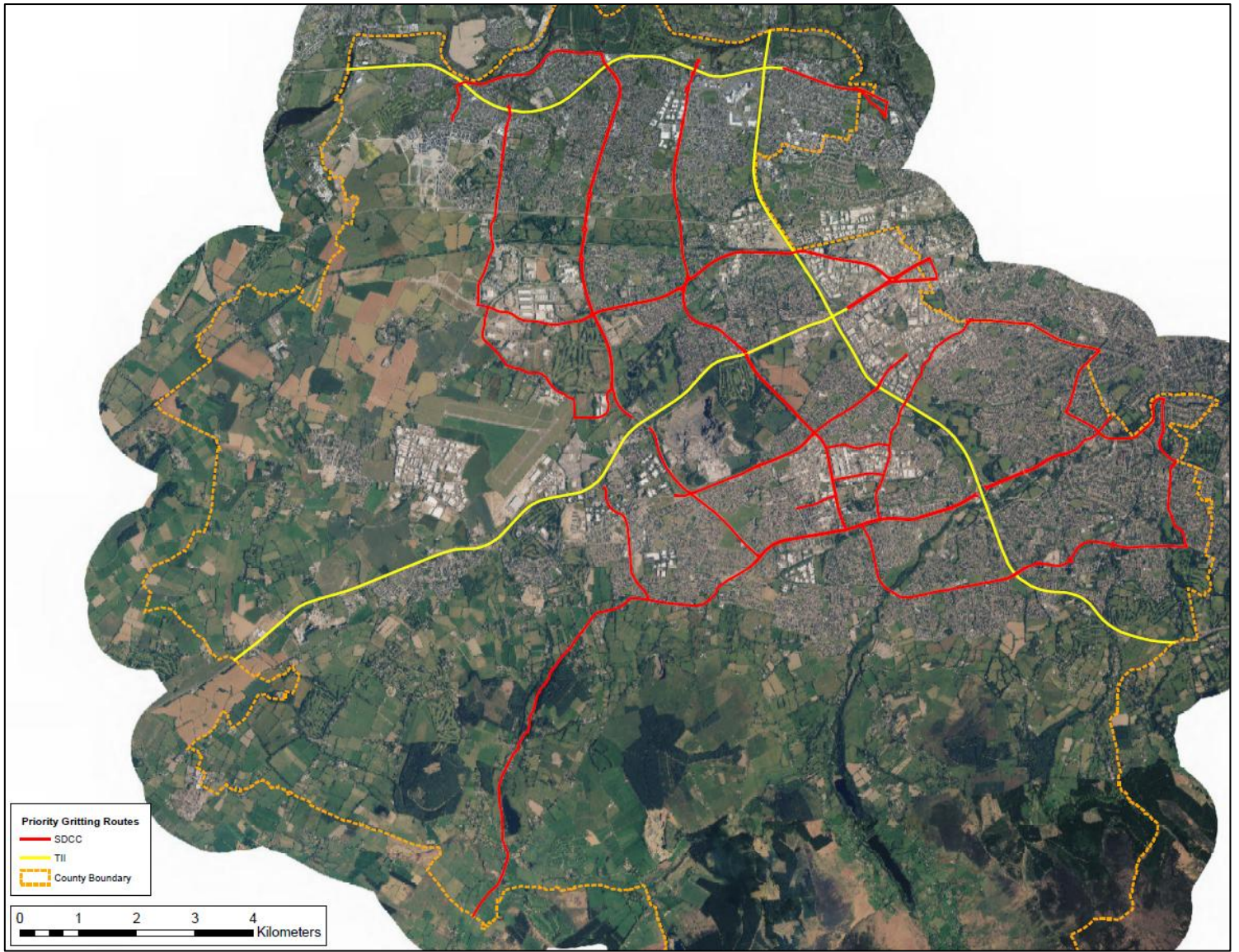
This priority will only be altered if we get requests for assistance from emergency services.

13. Plan Review

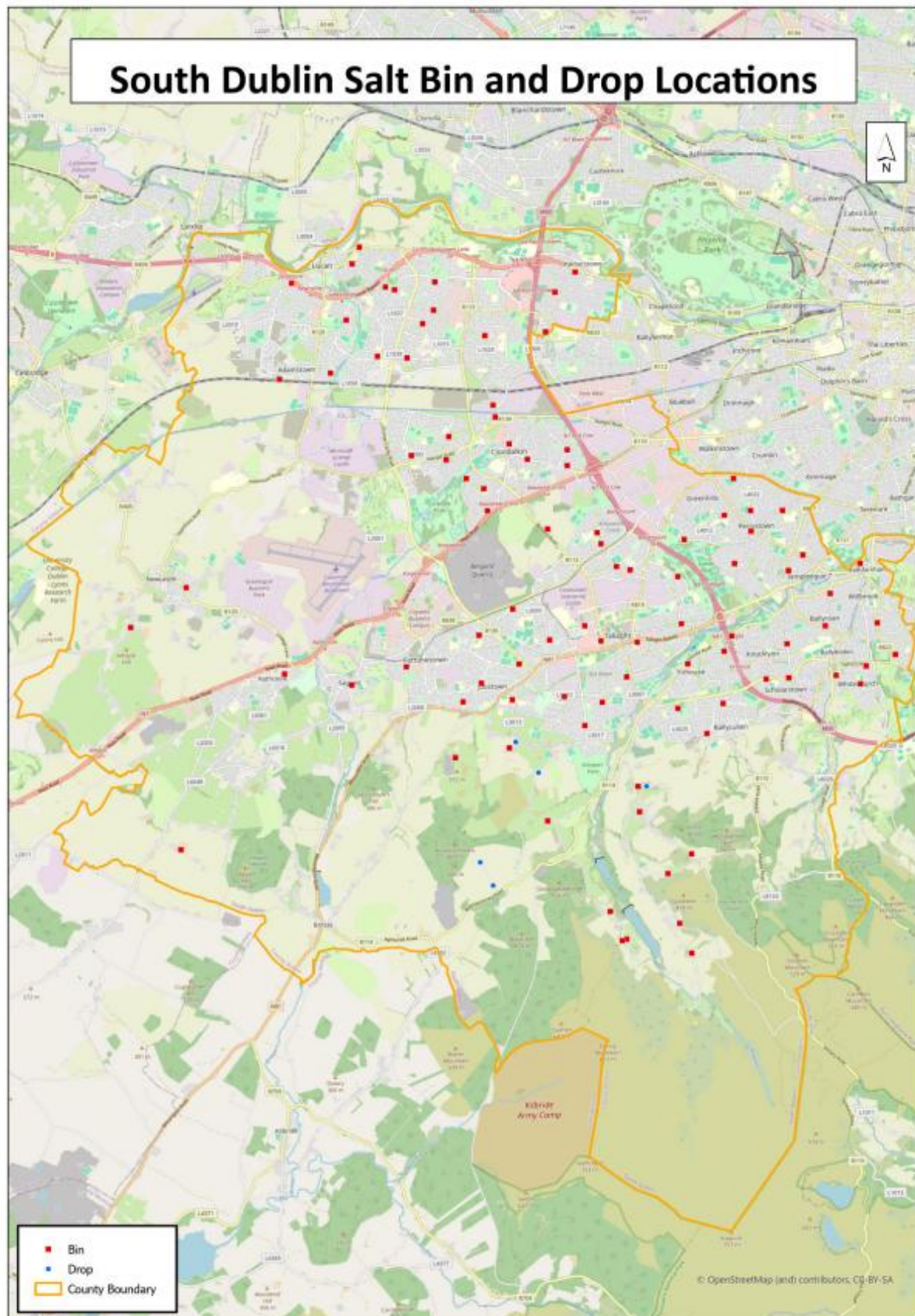
The Winter Service Plan is considered a live document subject to change during the winter season. The Plan may be altered in response to changes in resources, strategy and experience gained.

Appendix 1 - Salting Routes and Priority 1 routes





Appendix 2 – Salt Bin Locations



Appendix 3 – Duty Engineer Roster and Rota

	Duty Engineer	Initials
Duty Engineer 1	Gary Walsh	GW
Duty Engineer 2	Diarmuid Corry	DC
Duty Engineer 3	Caitriona Lambert	CL
Duty Engineer 4	Richard McCormack	RM

Week Com- mencing	Initials		Week Com- mencing	Initials		Week Com- mencing	Initials
12/10/2026	DC		21/12/2026	GW		01/03/2027	CL
19/10/2026	DC		28/12/2026	GW		08/03/2027	CL
26/10/2026	GW		04/01/2027	CL		15/03/2027	RM
02/11/2026	GW		11/01/2027	CL		22/03/2027	RM
09/11/2026	CL		18/01/2027	RM		29/03/2027	DC
16/11/2026	CL		25/01/2027	RM		05/04/2027	GW
23/11/2026	RM		01/02/2027	DC		12/04/2027	CL
30/11/2026	RM		08/02/2027	DC		19/04/2027	RM
07/12/2026	DC		15/02/2027	GW		26/04/2027	GW
14/12/2026	DC		22/02/2027	GW			