

## **REGENERATION, COMMUNITY AND CULTURE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**10 APRIL 2014**

### **SUGGESTION FROM MEMBER – POSSIBLE SNOW ANGELS PROJECT**

Report from: Robin Cooper, Director of Regeneration, Community and Culture

Author: Phil Moore, Head of Highways and Parking

#### **Summary**

This report sets out the response to an issue raised by Councillor Osborne as to the possibility of the Council introducing a scheme along the lines of the 'Snow Angels' project.

The report sets out a framework to enable pavements to be cleared of snow and ice during winter conditions by enlisting the assistance of individuals and community groups on a voluntary basis.

#### **1. Budget and Policy Framework**

- 1.1 This report has been produced in response to a suggestion made by Councillor Osborne at the meeting held on 3 October 2013.
- 1.2 The report is based on a pilot Snow Angels project proposed for the 2014/2015 winter period.

#### **2. Background**

- 2.1 During the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting on the 3 October 2013, Councillor Osborne advised the committee of the Snow Angels project, which was a volunteer scheme aimed at assisting residents that are community minded and want to help vulnerable members of the community get on with their daily activities without the dangers when snow and ice hit. The committee agreed that an item on the possibility of introducing the scheme be brought to the committee.
- 2.2 The snow angel scheme (which could be renamed for a scheme in Medway), allows residents to sign up to holding at their home a small stock (25kg) of road salt, along with a snow shovel and high viz safety vest, that can be used for clearing and treating the footpaths along a designated section of pavement, normally where they live.

- 2.3 It is envisaged that with careful planning officers will be able to map into CONFIRM (councils asset management system) which residents are signed up and the area of footpath they are responsible for, thus allowing officers to coordinate the clearance of entire lengths of pavements, subject to sufficient volunteers signing up.
- 2.4 A negative aspect of this proposal is that residents may not sign up until there is snow on the ground at which point demand for supplies may exceed supply, thus giving a view to the public that the council cannot deliver the service. This needs to be carefully managed as perception is a very important aspect of any new or existing service, but as we all know, when there is snow on the ground “every” resident wants their area treated.
- 2.5 Given the uncertainty of take up for this type of scheme, it is suggested that a pilot scheme be considered in three wards across the authority in namely, an inner urban, outer urban and rural setting, which would allow officers to gauge the potential of such a scheme and the financial implications ahead of going authority wide.

### 3. Options

- 3.1 It is unknown at this time how many volunteers will sign up to a Snow Angels Project therefore the costs set out below have been based on 100, 250 and 500 residents. The table also shows how these costs will vary from year one through to year three. It is assumed that annual cost for subsequent years will be the same as the year three figures.
- 3.2 If the committee consider this new service is progressed officers should approach the Highways term contractor, VolkerHighways to see if they would consider sponsoring or make a contribution to the costs for venture in the pilot areas

Table of Estimated Cost

<b>Year One (Initial set up)</b>			
<b>Item</b>	<b>100 units</b>	<b>250 units</b>	<b>500 units</b>
Initial advertisement and administration costs	£7,500	£7,500	£7,500
Container (Inc. depot, lighting & accommodation works)	£3,800	£3,800	£3,800
Snow shovels	£675	£1,688	£3,375
Hand salt spreader	£349	£873	£1,745
Rock salt (25kg bags)	£363	£907	£1,813
PPE (High vis vest with Logo and gloves)	£331	£780	£1,205
Estimated Total Cost	<b>£13,018</b>	<b>£15,548</b>	<b>£19,438</b>
<b>Year Two</b>			
<b>Item</b>	<b>100 units</b>	<b>250 units</b>	<b>500 units</b>
Advertisement and administration costs	£4,000	£4,000	£4,000

Container (Inc. depot, lighting & accommodation works)	£200	£200	£200
Snow shovels	£675	£1,688	£3,375
Hand salt spreader	£349	£873	£1,745
Rock salt (25kg bags)	£363	£907	£1,813
PPE (High vis vest with logo and gloves)	£331	£780	£1,205
Estimated Total Cost	<b>£5,918</b>	<b>£8,448</b>	<b>£12,338</b>

Year Three			
Item	100 units	250 units	500 units
Advertisement and administration costs	£4,000	£4,000	£4,000
Container (Inc. depot, lighting & accommodation works)	£200	£200	£200
Snow shovels	£675	£1,688	£3,375
Hand salt spreader	£349	£873	£1,745
Rock salt (25kg bags)	£363	£907	£1,813
PPE (High vis vest with logo and gloves)	£331	£780	£1,205
Estimated Total Cost	<b>£5,918</b>	<b>£8,448</b>	<b>£12,338</b>

#### 4. Advice and analysis

- 4.1 If the introduction of the Snow Angels Project is supported, it could be rolled out in advance of the 2014/15 winter season.
- 4.2 The above example has been based on one shipping container, which can hold a maximum of 500 units. It is unlikely that this number will be exceeded however, if this is the case then an additional shipping container and therefore additional funding will be required.
- 4.3 The proposal is to utilise the customer enquiry module within Confirm along with external GIS systems to manage the day to day running of the Snow Angel programme over the winter maintenance period.
- 4.4 The GISMO 2 corporate mapping system will be updated to visually display the snow angel information on the GIS section of the Medway Council website. Members of public can then view this information to see if their desired area has already been allocated or is available.

#### 5. Risk management

- 5.1 The following table considers any significant risks we have foreseen with the Snow Angels project.

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Action to avoid or mitigate risk</b>	<b>Risk rating</b>
Equipment misuse	Volunteers may just take and keep equipment for their own use.	Volunteer details to be recorded before hand.	C3
Volunteers	Volunteers may decide not to undertake snow clearance, once signed up.	Volunteer details to be recorded within confirm.	D3
Third party damage	Accidental damage to property e.g. private property, walls and vehicles	Volunteers to have training and covered by Council's insurance	E3
Liability for accidents	Volunteers who injure themselves and attempt to sue the council	Full and detailed information on personal safety will be issued to all volunteers.	E4
Manual handling	Injuries received undertaking snow clearance.	Volunteers to have an induction on safety issues when signing up to take part..	D4
Little take up prior to snow, with huge demand when snow falls. Council image on delivering service damaged	Facility advertised in Medway Matters, but take up could only happen after snow falls and staff cannot deal with demand, thus adversely affecting councils image	Staff in highways to be available during the working day when snow on ground	B2
Loss of depot facility	Depot facility must be retained to allow the stock to be made available to the public.	If highways are moved then depot facility must be provided as part of the move	C2

**Risk Rating Key**

**Likelihood**

**A - Very high**

**B - High**

**C - Significant**

**D - Low**

**E - Very low**

**F - Almost impossible**

**Impact**

**1 – Catastrophic**

**2 – Critical**

**3 – Marginal**

**4 – Negligible**

5.2 Officers will look into the production of a video to assist with the training of volunteers to ensure that their health and safety is uppermost when carrying out this voluntary work.

**6. Consultation**

6.1 Not applicable

## **7. Financial implications**

- 7.1 The costs will be as tabled in section 3 and pro rata for a greater take up. If progressed this will be a new service and cannot be contained within the existing resources.
- 7.2 Cabinet approval will be required to fund the initiative and if it is to be implemented next winter will have to be a virement in 2014/15 or if not will need to be included in the budget setting process for 2015/16.

## **8 Legal implications**

- 8.1 The Council should have a system in place to identify and minimise risks associated with the project. Robust risk assessments should be carried out, appropriate training and equipment should be provided to the volunteers. Volunteers should have access to a single point of contact at the Council and regular monitoring and reviewing of the systems should take place.

## **9. Recommendations**

- 9.1 The Committee is requested to consider whether it wishes to recommend the introduction of a Snow Angels Project in 2014/5 and recommend a virement to meet associated costs. Alternatively, it may recommend to Cabinet that this be considered as part of the 2015/16 budget setting process.
- 9.2 If supported, it is recommended that in year 1 the Council proceeds with 250 units and that this be reviewed in year 2 dependent on uptake by volunteers.
- 9.3 That a pilot scheme be considered in three wards across the authority.

### **Lead officer contact**

Phil Moore  
Head of Highways and Parking  
Civic Centre, Strood  
01634 331146  
[phil.moore@medway.gov.uk](mailto:phil.moore@medway.gov.uk)

### **Background papers**

Minutes from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting on the 3 October 2013.