



membership resources

## State of the Market Survey 2018

### Winter Maintenance



Briefing 18-41

November 2018



The state of the market survey was conducted by Rob Bailey, APSE Principal Advisor with assistance from Garry Lee, Research and Coordination Officer.

For any enquires in relation to the survey, Rob may be contacted on:

Tel: 0161 772 1810

Email: [rbailey@apse.org.uk](mailto:rbailey@apse.org.uk)

## Winter Maintenance

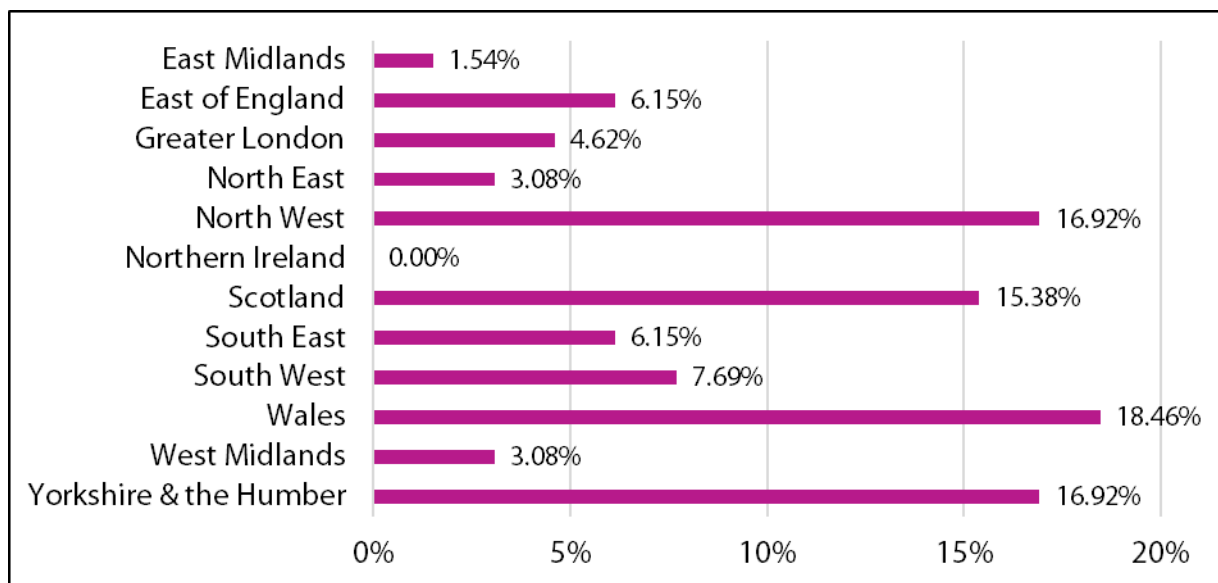
### State of the Market 2018

APSE conducted an online survey between May and June 2018. A series of questions were asked covering a range of issues of interest to those officers and councillors responsible for Winter Maintenance services.

The State of the Market surveys are an attempt to understand perceptions of the market amongst people directly involved in delivering services. There were 65 respondents to this year's survey.

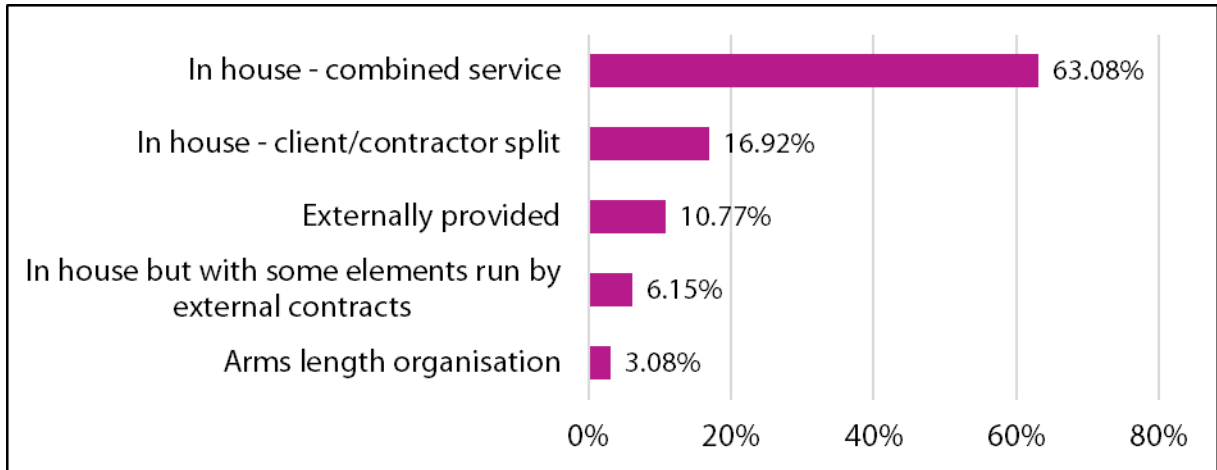
### Results of the Survey

#### 1. Where in the United Kingdom do you work?



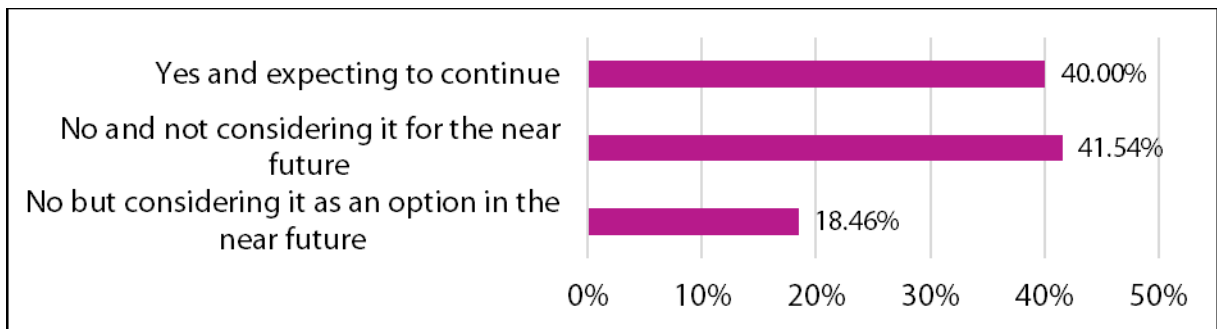
There were 65 respondents to this survey: 43 from England, 12 from Wales and 10 from Scotland.

#### 2. How are your winter maintenance services currently delivered?



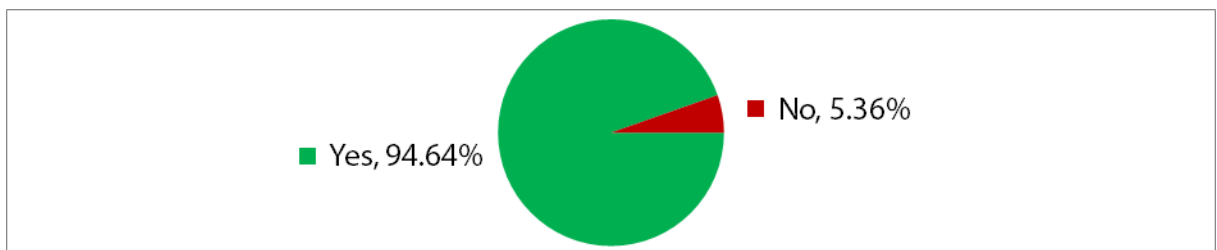
Out of the 65 respondents, 56 delivered the service in-house, 7 were externally provided and 2 had an arms-length organisation. The most popular responses was for an in-house combined service (41 people).

**3. Do you currently sell your services to organisations external to the council?**



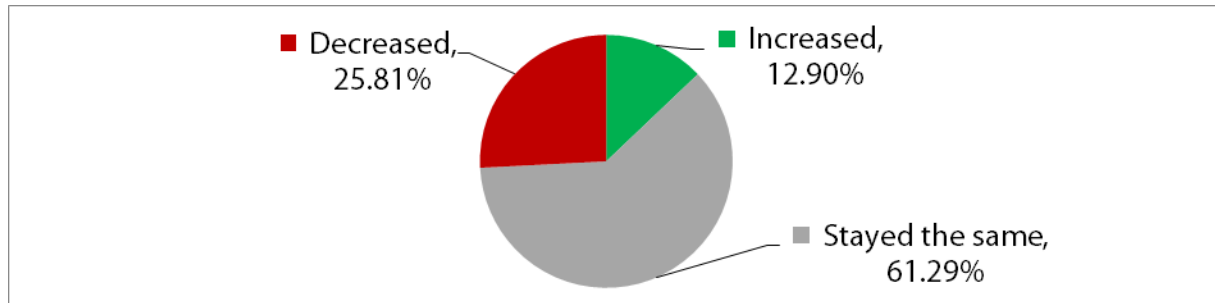
40% of respondents currently sell their services to organisations external to the council and expect to continue doing so. There were also a further 18% who are considering adopting this approach. Comments from those currently selling their services showed that some only currently deal with public sector bodies (e.g. NHS, schools) while others also carry out some private work. Some of the works carried out include selling salt, delivering trunk road salting and other gritter treatments, car parks and new developments prior to their adoption.

**4. If the service is currently provided in-house, do you expect the service to remain in-house over the next 12 months?**



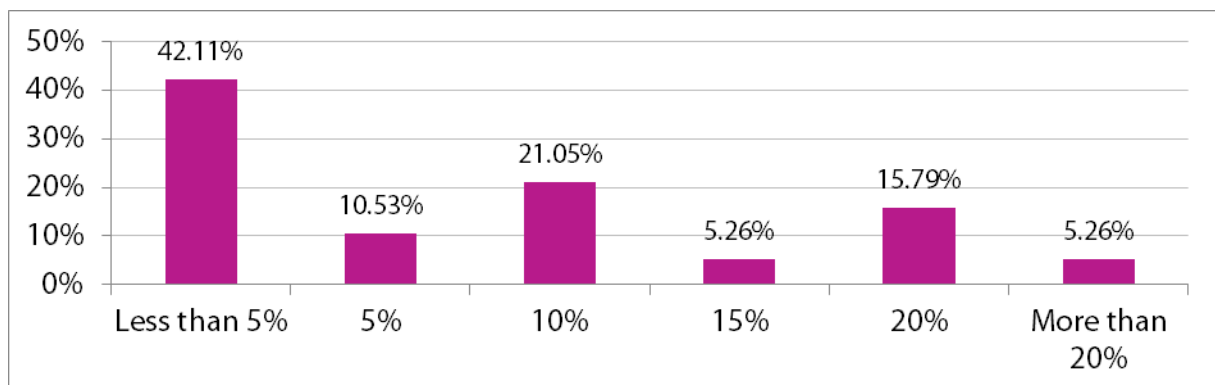
The majority of respondents did expect their in-house services to remain in-house over the next 12 months; only 3 respondents expected this to change.

**5. How has the budget for the winter maintenance service changed from 2017-18 to 2018-19?**



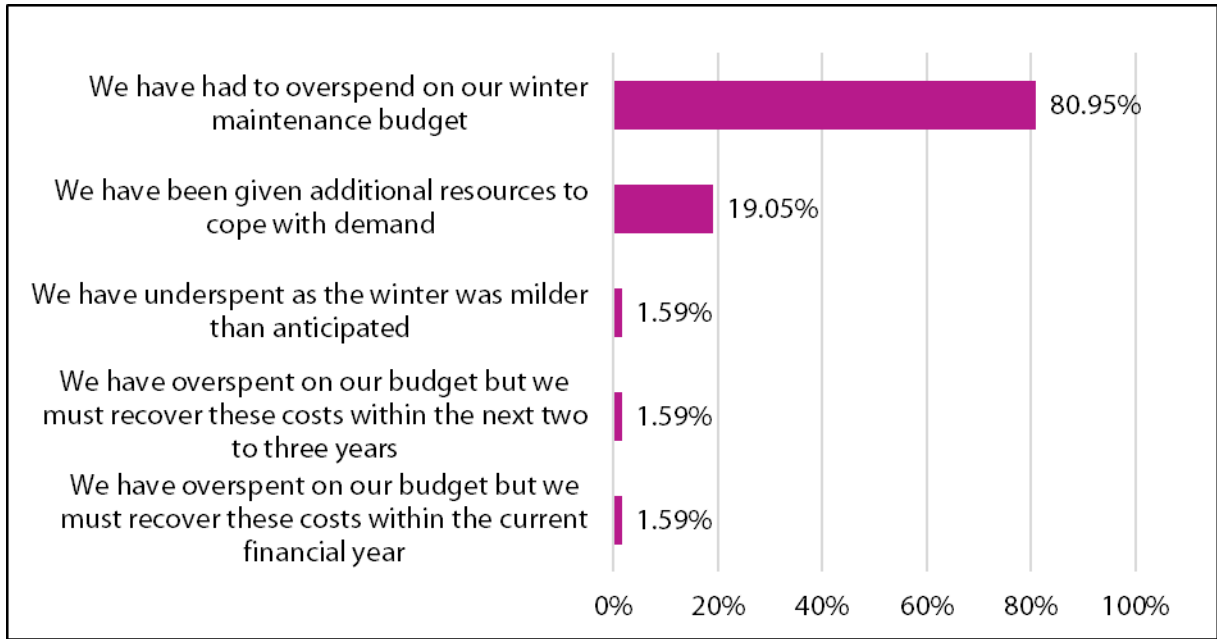
While the majority had indicated their winter maintenance service budget remained unchanged for 2018-19, 16 respondents said it had decreased and 8 said it had increased.

**6. If your budget has decreased from 2017-18 to 2018-19, how much has it decreased by?**



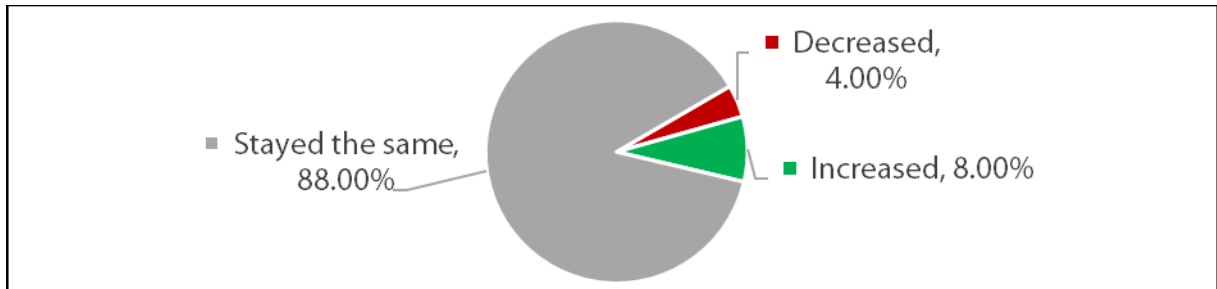
Most of the budgets cut decreased by less than 5%, but 3 people reported a budget decrease of 20% and 1 respondent had a budget decrease of more than 20%.

**7. With reference to the weather during the winter 2017-18, what has been the impact on your winter maintenance budget?**



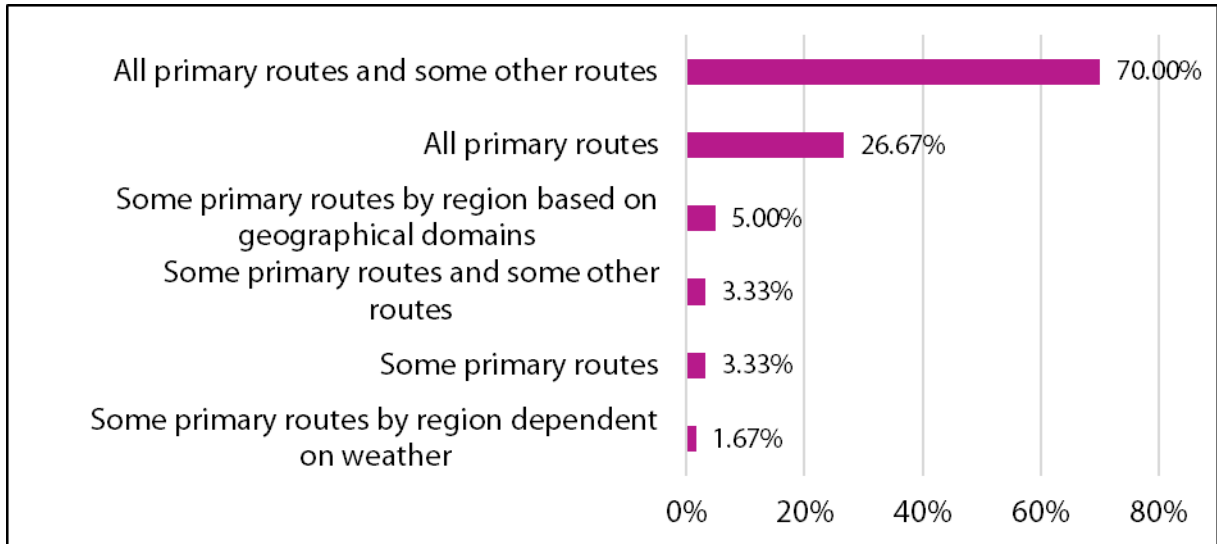
In a stark contrast to last year’s Winter Maintenance State of the Market survey where the majority of respondents (58.24%) ‘underspent as the winter was milder than anticipated’, 80.95% of this year’s respondents have had to overspend on their winter maintenance budget, and 19.05% have been given additional resources to cope with demand.

**8. If you have a dedicated training budget for winter maintenance, what has happened to it over the past 12 months?**



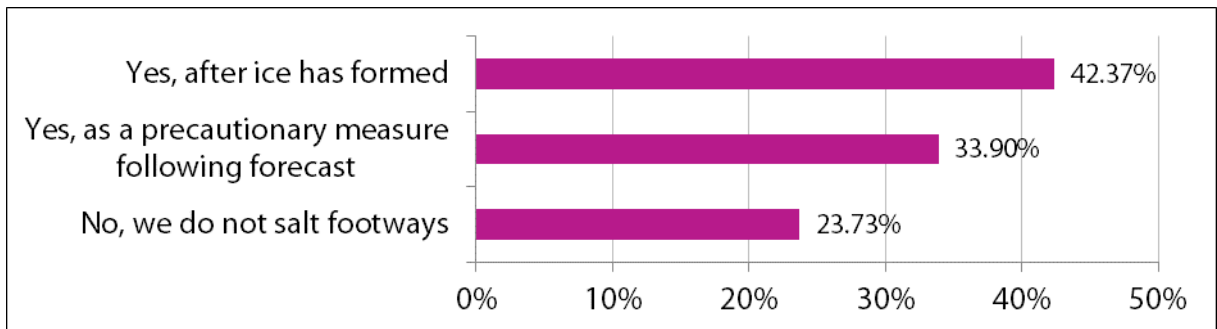
While most respondents indicated that they did not have a dedicated training budget, 22 said their budget had stayed the same, 2 said it had increased and 1 said it had decreased.

**9. With regard to your road network, which of the following are salted?**



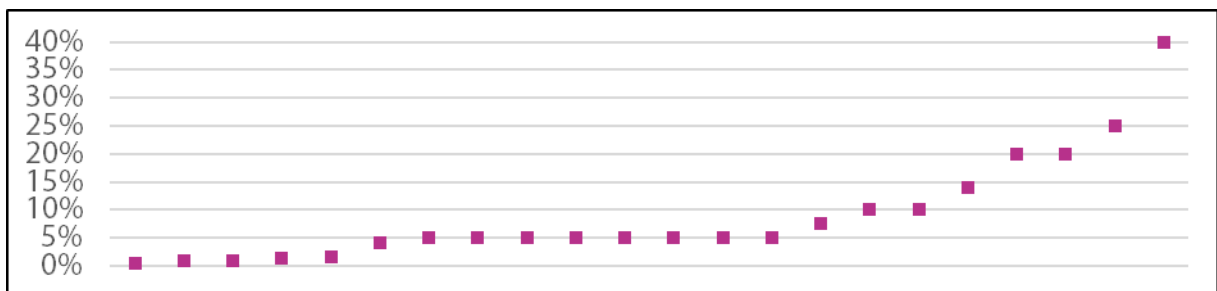
The majority of respondents salted all primary routes and some other routes (42 people) and 16 people said all primary routes.

**10. Do you salt footways?**



Only 14 of the 59 respondents to this question said that they did not salt footways. 25 did so after ice has formed and 20 did so as a precautionary measure following forecast.

**11. If you do salt footways, approximately what percentage of the footway network do you salt?**



As shown in the table above, the responses to this question varied considerably with some salting as low as 0.5% of the footway network and some salting as high as 40%. The percentage will be heavily affected by the geographic nature of the responding local

authorities, as well as their resources, areas of priority, methods of salting and other factors.

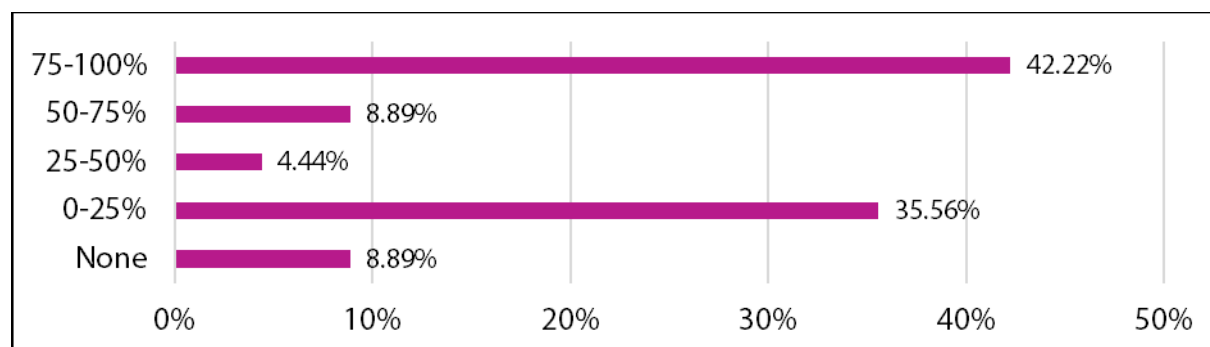
### 12. If you do salt footways, which of these do you salt?



Town/city centre streets were the most common areas where footways were salted (35 people). Other popular answers were shopping centres (33) and council premises (24). The comments to this question showed that some authorities only salt in main urban areas that are heavily trafficked, while others also treat the strategic cycle network, areas near schools and sheltered accommodation, hilly areas, underpasses, markets and town squares.



### 13. What proportion of necessary footway salting do you consider was achieved?



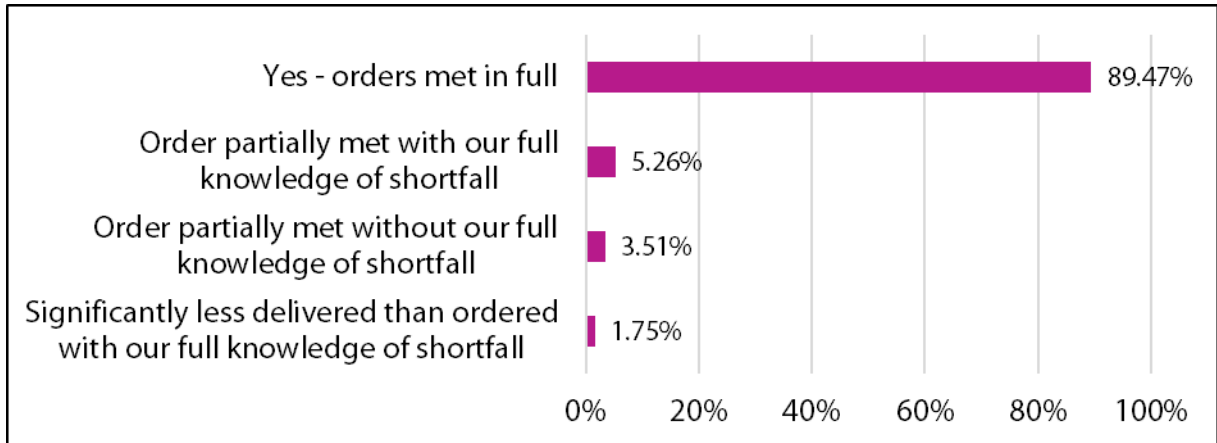
There was a wide variance in the responses to this question, with the majority considering that 75-100% of necessary footway salting was achieved (42.22%) while many others (35.56%) believed that 0-25% was achieved. This will greatly depend on the size of the authority, the budget, the priorities for the service and the size of the workforce the authority has to carry out footway salting.

### 14. What changes have you made to service arrangements as a result of severe weather over recent years?

Changes to service arrangements include:

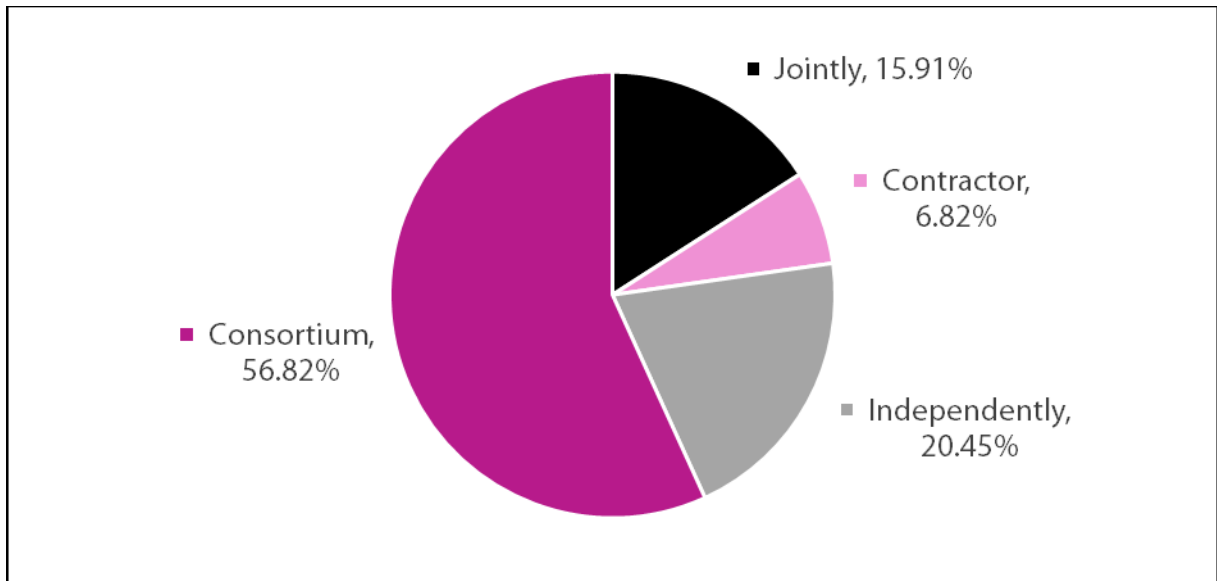
- Increasing salt stocks – one respondent said that they kept '2000 tonnes of reserve salt in a regional barn'
- Increasing the number of gritting routes
- Increasing the number of grit bins
- Purchase of new vehicles and equipment – e.g. use of more multi-functional vehicles
- Reviewing standby and driver coverage
- Service reviews – e.g. the Winter Maintenance Plan is now reviewed annually
- Public facing story-book version of the Winter Maintenance Plan

### 15. Have the orders you placed for salt to cover winter maintenance over 2017-18 been met by your suppliers?



While the majority (89.47%) have had their orders met in full, there were a few instances where respondents' orders have been met without their full knowledge of a shortfall (5.26%). It is important to have processes and policies in place to ensure that your local authority can handle this kind of issue either by maintaining a minimum supply or ordering as early as possible.

**16. How do you purchase salt supplies (jointly with other authorities, via Highways Agency, independently, via consortium such as YPO or other)?**



**17. Which company supplies your salt?**

Company	Responses
Compass Minerals	61%
Irish Salt Sales	11%
Salt Union	11%
Cleveland Potash	7%
ICL	6%
YPO	4%

**18. Do you have any suggestions for how councils or suppliers can act to avoid salt shortages in times of very bad weather in future?**

Responses to this question included:

- Better stock management (e.g. higher stock held by local authorities, stock ordered in advance)
- Specify minimum stock levels in your contract
- Build a salt dome
- Calibrate equipment to reduce spread rates
- Working together with other local authorities and sharing resources

**19. Where do you see growth areas for the service over the next 12 months?**

A number of areas were identified as having potential for growth:

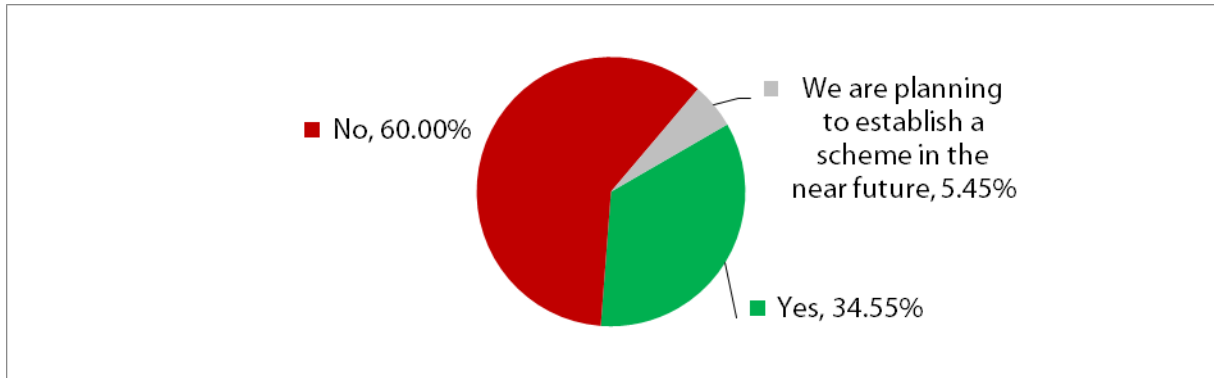
- Technology (e.g. forecasting, on-board vehicle systems)
- Commercialisation - Private sector contracts and offering services to adjacent authorities
- Support for community self-help / provision of more salt/grit bins
- Increased use of social media
- Footway / cycle patch treatments
- Car parks

**20. Where do you see areas where work may decrease over the next 12 months?**

Areas where work may decrease included:

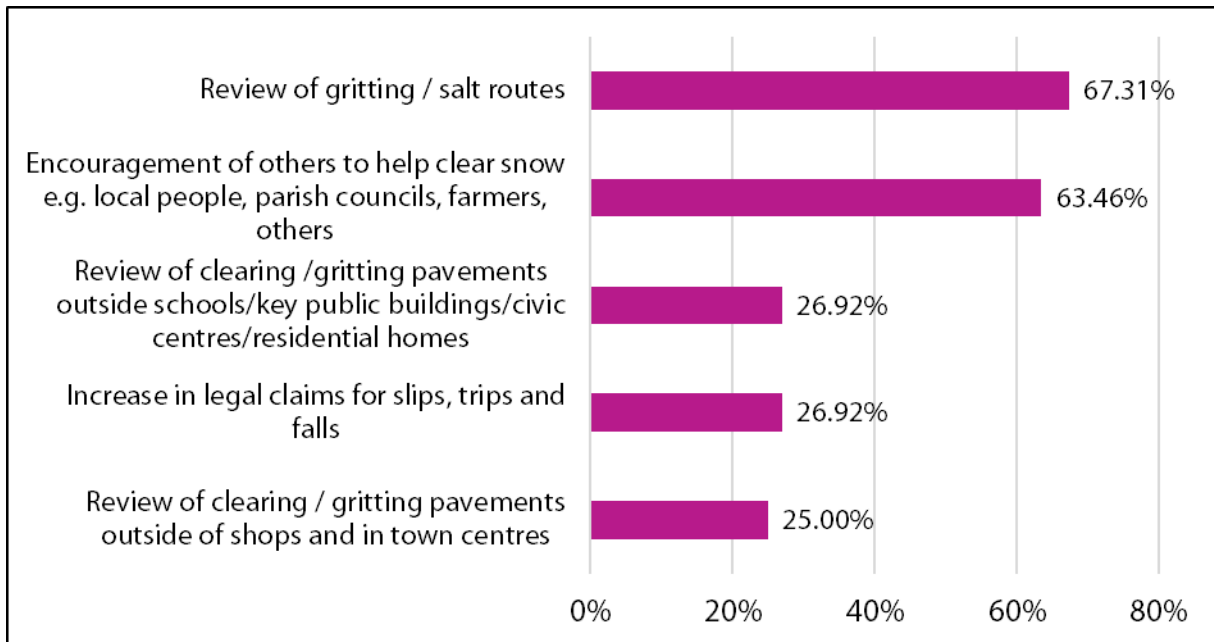
- Reductions in routes covered
- Treatment of minor roads
- Less grit bin provision
- Rural salt heaping

**21. Do you have a snow warden (or similar) scheme in place?**



34.55% of respondents have a snow warden in place, and 5.45% are planning to establish a snow warden scheme in the near future.

**22. Has the severe winter over the recent years led to any of the following?**



The most common approach to severe winters has been to review the gritting/salt routes (67.31%) to target areas that have previously ran into issues, and to encourage residents to help clear snow (63.46%).

## **Local Authority Winter Maintenance Services**

### **State of the Market 2018**

#### **The Association for Public Service Excellence**

APSE member authorities have access to a range of membership resources to assist in delivering council services. This includes our regular advisory groups, specifically designed to bring together elected members, directors, managers and heads of service, together with trade union representatives to discuss service specific issues, innovation and new ways of delivering continuous improvement. The advisory groups are an excellent forum for sharing ideas and discussing topical service issues with colleagues from other councils throughout the UK.

Advisory groups are a free service included as part of your authority's membership of APSE and all end with an informal lunch to facilitate networking with peers in other councils. If you do not currently receive details about APSE advisory group meetings, and would like to be added to our list of contacts for your service area, please email: [enquiries@apse.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@apse.org.uk).

Our national advisory groups include: -

- FM & Building Cleaning
- Catering (school meals)
- Cemeteries and Crematoria
- Environmental Health
- Highways and Street Lighting
- Housing Construction and Building Maintenance
- Local Authorities Commercialisation, Income and Trading Network
- Parks, Horticulture and Grounds Maintenance
- Renewables and Climate Change
- Sports and Leisure Management
- Vehicle Maintenance and Transport
- Waste Management, Refuse Collection and Street Cleansing