

To: Finance, Resources & Customer Services Policy Board

On: 21 November 2024

Report by: Report by the Director of Finance & Resources

Heading: 2025 Public Holidays for Local Government Employees

1. Summary

- 1.1 In accordance with established practice and the Council's Statement of Particulars of Employment for Local Government Employees, members of the Finance, Resources and Customer Services Policy Board each year approve the dates of the 12 fixed public holidays, plus the 1 day of no work requirement. The 1 day of no work requirement is provided to Local Government Employees who are generally employed in non-essential services (traditionally office-based roles).
- 1.2 Benchmarking information confirmed that Councils across Scotland are currently providing public holiday entitlements ranging from 6 days to 12 days, with 8 days being the average entitlements.
- 1.3 At the 12 September 2024 Finance, Resources and Customer Service Policy Board, Members were asked to note that Council Officers were in discussions with trade union colleagues with a view to modernising public holiday entitlement for Local Government Employees for 2025, and to agree changes to public holidays with effect from 1 January 2025, subject to full agreement being reached with trade unions.

2 Proposal to Unison, Unite and GMB Trade Unions

- 2.1 Council Officers presented proposals to Unison, Unite and GMB Trade Unions to convert 6 of the current 12 public holidays into annual leave days for employees, retaining the following fixed public holidays:

- New Year (1st and 2nd January),
 - Good Friday (18th April),
 - Easter Monday (21st April),
 - Christmas (25th and 26th December).
- 2.2 Approx 6400 employees would be impacted by these changes if agreed, none of which would receive a reduction in overall leave entitlement. Employees would have more flexibility to decide when to use their 6 converted annual leave days (pro rata) throughout the year.
- 2.3 The proposal also factored in feedback from Trade Union Colleagues that those who work on a scheduled or voluntary overtime basis, on any of these 6 fixed public holidays, may be financially impacted as enhanced rates of pay would no longer be applicable for these days. Council Officers therefore used overtime data available from the last 3 years and proposed a one-off compensation payment to those they believe may be impacted in future by a potential loss of future earnings.
- 2.4 The key groups of employees who would receive this compensation payment work in Health and Social Care Partnership and Environment, Housing, and Infrastructure, for example, Home Care Workers, Social Care Workers, Residential Workers, Streetscene and Waste Operatives, Drivers, and Community Support Officers.
- 2.5 Council Officers also listened to concerns from Trade Union Colleagues around managing annual leave requests fairly and equitably on these days, considering those employees with caring or childcare commitments. Officers agreed to work closely with Trade Union Colleagues to develop and implement guidance and FAQs for managers and employees, whilst setting out the clear expectations of services in terms of resources required for the first year of implementation, i.e., skeleton resource being in place for non-essential services on 3rd January 2025, to make for an easier transition in year 1.
- 2.6 As part of this proposal, Council Officers also sought a commitment from Trade Union Colleagues to continue discussions in early 2025, to review and propose improvements to the current annual leave provisions and festive closure arrangements. Improving and modernising conditions of service will help the Council to ensure it can continue to attract, recruit, and retain key talent, remaining an employer of choice, whilst improving the employee experience and further enhancing the work life balance for all.

3 Current Position

- 3.1 Whilst discussions were ongoing with Trade Union Colleagues to reach an agreement, Council officers had been working in the background with services to ensure there was no detriment to service provision, and the operational impacts of the changes were clearly understood and planned for.

- 3.2 Colleagues from all three Trade Unions have now responded to the Council's proposal. Despite substantial discussion, Council officers have not been able to reach a collective agreement with Trade Union Colleagues at this time.
 - 3.3 Trade Union Colleagues have asked officers to reconsider the overall number of public holidays to be converted into annual leave, to review the composition of the one-off compensation payment to employees, and to review the group who it may apply to.
 - 3.4 Council Officers remain committed to reaching an agreement with Trade Union Colleagues and will continue discussions into 2025. Any future agreement will be brought to members for approval.
 - 3.5 Given agreement has not been reached in respect of implementation of changes to public holidays in 2025, Members are now asked to approve the public holidays as set out in **Appendix 1**.
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4 Recommendations

- 4.1 Members are asked to note the current position on discussions with Unison, Unite and GMB Trade Unions, and that the full agreement of terms associated with the proposed changes to public holidays has not been secured.
 - 4.2 Members are therefore asked to note that the changes to public holidays from 2025 as approved by the Board in September 2024 cannot now be actioned; and therefore approve the public holidays as detailed in **Appendix 1**.
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Implications of the Report

1. **Financial** – Analysis from the last 3 years of workforce data shows that converting the chosen 6 public holidays into annual leave entitlement for this group of employees could have generated annual savings to the Council of around £350k in enhanced payments currently paid on these days.
2. **HR & Organisational Development** – as outlined in the report.
3. **Community/Council Planning** – None.
4. **Legal** - None
5. **Property/Assets** – None
6. **Information Technology** – None

7. **Equality & Human Rights** – Given the recommendations contained within this report now do not make any changes to existing arrangements, no negative impacts on equality groups or potential for infringement of individuals' human rights have been identified.
 8. **Health & Safety** – None.
 9. **Procurement** – None
 10. **Risk** – None.
 11. **Privacy Impact** – None.
 12. **Climate Risk** – None.
 13. **Children's Rights** – None.
 14. **Cosla Policy Position** – None.
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List of Background Papers - None

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Appendix 1 – Public Holidays for Local Government Employees

Holiday	2025
New Year	Wednesday 1 January 2025 Thursday 2 January 2025 Friday 3 January 2025
Good Friday	Friday 18 April 2025
Easter Monday	Monday 21 April 2025
May Day	Monday 5 May 2025
Spring Bank Holiday	Monday 26 May 2025
Fair Holiday	Monday 4 August 2025
Autumn Holiday	Friday 26 September 2025 Monday 29 September 2025
Christmas	Thursday 25 December 2025 Friday 26 December 2025
Day of no work requirement	Wednesday 31 December 2025

Non-teaching staff in schools

Children’s Services issue a separate list of school holidays for term time employees.