

7. PUBLIC HOLIDAYS - CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR (AN410-2005)

When the Council came into existence in 1996, it was agreed, in the main, to continue the public holiday arrangements of the former Dundee District Council. These arrangements included a two day closedown at Christmas (Christmas Day and Boxing Day) and a three day closedown at New Year (first three days of the New Year).

Since 1996, the Council has received considerable criticism from the public in respect of the public holiday taken on the third day at New Year as the vast majority of other organisations are open for business on that day.

To address these public concerns, adjustments have been made over the years and, for the 2004/05 Festive Period, the third public holiday at New Year was transferred to Christmas Eve. This decision was made after an employee survey and was for one year only.

To assist in the introduction of a longer term arrangement, a further employee survey was conducted in August and September of this year. Employees were advised that the Council could not sustain a third public holiday at New Year and were asked to indicate their preference for one of three options, ie transferring that public holiday to Christmas Eve, Hogmanay or annual leave. The result of the survey was as follows:-

Christmas Eve	48.8%
Hogmanay	15.7%
Annual Leave	35.4%

Accordingly, the Committee is requested to approve the transfer, until further notice, of the third public holiday at New Year to Christmas Eve, or to the last working day before Christmas Eve if Christmas Eve falls at the weekend. The Public Relations Department will ensure that this change is communicated to the public well in advance of the 2005/06 Festive Period.

There are, of course, a number of major services which must be provided by departments to the people of Dundee throughout the year, regardless of when public holidays are set, and the Chief Officers of the following departments have concluded local agreements with the trade unions in relation to the following groups of employees at Christmas and New Year:-

Economic Development -	Dundee Airport employees;
Leisure and Communities -	Grounds Maintenance employees and Community Wardens;
Planning and Transportation -	Parking Attendants;
Social Work -	employees in residential homes for the elderly and in children's units, and other employees who, by the nature of the service, are required to work on public holidays;
Contract Services -	all employees;
Waste Management -	all employees other than administrative and clerical employees at Marchbanks;
Education -	all employees in schools.

In addition, there may be other services where Chief Officers and trade unions agree that local agreements would be beneficial.