

DUNDEE CITY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Personnel Committee - 18 October 2004

REPORT ON: Public Holidays Christmas 2004/New Year 2005

REPORT BY: Chief Executive and Assistant Chief Executive (Management)

REPORT NO.: 703-2004

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To advise Committee of the discussions held between management and trade unions and the results of an employee survey, and to seek approval for a change in the public holidays.

2 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Committee notes the contents of this report and, for this Christmas and New Year only, approves the transfer of the third public holiday at the New Year (scheduled for Wednesday 5 January 2005) to Friday 24 December 2004.

3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The transfer of the public holiday (please refer to 2.1 above) would not result in any additional expenditure. Employees who are required to work on Friday 24 December 2004 would receive additional remuneration in accordance with the relevant National Agreements. As Wednesday 5 January 2005 would be a normal working day, no premium payments would be necessary for that day.

4 LOCAL AGENDA IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 None.

5 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 In the survey, a number of employees commented that, as Dundee school pupils do not return to school until Thursday 6 January 2005, parents would need to make arrangements for their children to be looked after on Wednesday 5 January 2005 if that is a working day. The schools are also closed on Christmas Eve and Hogmanay.

6 BACKGROUND

- 6.1 At present, there are 5 public holidays enjoyed by employees at Christmas/New Year (2 at Christmas and 3 at New Year). In 2003/04, these holidays fell on the following dates:-

Thursday 25 December 2003;
Friday 26 December 2003;

Thursday 1 January 2004;
 Friday 2 January 2004;
 Monday 5 January 2004.

- 6.2 The fact that Council offices were not open and that Council services were not provided on Monday 5 January 2004 attracted criticism from members of the public and the local press, particularly as the vast majority of other organisations and businesses were open on that day.
- 6.3 As a result, the Chief Executive and the Assistant Chief Executive (Management) advised the trade unions that, to improve customer satisfaction and to avoid further criticism, they wanted to transfer the third public holiday at New Year to another date. The total number of public holidays would remain the same.
- 6.4 It was agreed to set up a small working party comprising representatives from the trade unions and the Personnel Department to discuss this possibility. While several options were discussed, it was agreed that the best course of action would be to carry out an employee survey to ascertain whether employees preferred the holiday to be transferred to Christmas Eve or Hogmanay (for this year only). It was also agreed that the trade unions would have sight of the survey form before it was issued.
- 6.5 A draft survey form (please refer to Appendix 1) was issued to the trade unions at one of the regular management/trade union consultation meetings on 6 July 2004, and the trade unions were asked to submit any comments to the Chief Executive by 14 July 2004.
- 6.6 No comments were received by that date but, shortly thereafter, the Assistant Chief Executive (Management) was advised by the Branch Secretary of UNISON that UNISON wanted a third option (the status quo) added to the form. The Assistant Chief Executive (Management) advised the Branch Secretary that the status quo was not an option which management would consider; however, the Assistant Chief Executive (Management) agreed to add a space on the form to allow employees to comment on this and any other related issue.
- 6.7 The final draft of the form (please refer to Appendix 2) was submitted to the trade unions at the management/trade union consultation meeting held on 3 August 2004 and no further comments were received. The form was then issued to employees.
- 6.8 Approximately 5,300 forms were distributed and the following preferences were expressed:-
- | | |
|---------------|-------------|
| Christmas Eve | 1,430 votes |
| Hogmanay | 1,049 votes |
- 6.9 Comments were also received from approximately 700 employees. The vast majority of comments broke into 3 distinct categories:-
- | | |
|---|-----|
| Prefer the status quo | 523 |
| Prefer a total closedown over Christmas/New Year | 80 |
| Prefer the third day at New Year to become a 'floating' day | 46 |
- 6.10 These results were conveyed to the trade unions at the management/trade union consultation meeting on 28 September 2004.

7 PROPOSAL

- 7.1 The Chief Executive and the Assistant Chief Executive (Management) confirm that, from the outset, it was made clear to the trade unions that the status quo was not considered to be an option as members of the public were dissatisfied that services were not provided on the third day at New Year and that the holiday should be transferred to another date. The Chief Executive and Assistant Chief Executive (Management) considered that Christmas Eve or Hogmanay were the most appropriate possibilities as there was likely to be less public demand for services on these days.
- 7.2 The survey was carried out with the agreement of the trade unions and the response showed a clear preference for Christmas Eve.
- 7.3 Accordingly, the Chief Executive and Assistant Chief Executive (Management) are of the view that the public holiday scheduled for Wednesday 5 January 2005 should be transferred to Friday 24 December 2004, and the Committee's approval is requested.
- 7.4 The Committee is requested to note that, in departments where a service has to be provided at all times of the year and employees have to work on the actual festive days whether or not they fall at the weekend, the existing practice of concluding local agreements will continue to apply.
- 7.5 The Committee is requested to note that this change is only for 2004/05, as management are of the opinion that other alternatives should be considered for the future. These alternatives would be the subject of consultation with the trade unions.

8 CONSULTATION

- 8.1 The trade unions have been consulted throughout this process.

9 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 9.1 None.

A. Stephen
Chief Executive

11 October 2004

J.C. Petrie
Assistant Chief Executive (Management)

11 October 2004

(THIS FORM TO BE ISSUED TO ALL EMPLOYEES - BUT NOT TEACHERS)**PUBLIC HOLIDAYS CHRISTMAS 2004/NEW YEAR 2005**

There are normally 2 public holidays at Christmas and 3 public holidays at New Year. This year, these are due to be taken on the following days:-

Monday 27 December 2004

Tuesday 28 December 2004

Monday 3 January 2005

Tuesday 4 January 2005

Wednesday 5 January 2005

For this year only, the Council wishes to transfer the public holiday due to be taken on Wednesday 5 January 2005 to either Christmas Eve (Friday 24 December 2004) or Hogmanay (Friday 31 December 2004) and this is your chance to say which day you prefer.

You should, therefore, tick **one** of the boxes below to show your preference:-

I would like the public holiday transferred to:-

Christmas Eve (Friday 24 December 2004)

Hogmanay (Friday 31 December 2004)

Please note that the wording of this form has been agreed with the trade unions.

(Tangerine in colour)

DUNDEE CITY COUNCIL

EMPLOYEE SURVEY ON PUBLIC HOLIDAYS CHRISTMAS 2004/NEW YEAR 2005

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You should, therefore, tick **one** of the boxes below to show your preference:-

I would like the public holiday transferred to:-

Christmas Eve (Friday 24 December 2004)

Hogmanay (Friday 31 December 2004)

If you wish to make any comments, please state these below:-

.....
.....
.....
.....

Please note that the wording and issue of this form has been agreed with the trade unions.