

Item: 10

Policy and Resources Committee: 21 February 2023.

The Coronation of His Majesty the King.

Report by Corporate Director for Strategy, Performance and Business Solutions.

1. Purpose of Report

To consider public holiday arrangements associated with the coronation of His Majesty the King.

2. Recommendations

The Committee is invited to note:

2.1.

That the UK Government has announced an additional bank holiday on Monday, 8 May 2023, to mark the coronation of His Majesty the King.

2.2.

That the coronation ceremony itself is scheduled to take place on Saturday, 6 May 2023.

2.3.

That it is for individual councils to determine whether they wish to award an additional holiday on Monday, 8 May 2023.

2.4.

That the Council could choose to recognise the event by granting either:

- An additional public holiday; or
- An additional day of fixed annual leave that must be taken on Monday, 8 May 2023.

2.5.

That, alternatively, the Council could choose not to award the additional holiday and consider either:

- That the day would be a normal day of Council operations and all employees would be expected to work as normal; or
- The public holiday already agreed for Monday, 1 May 2023 (May Day) be moved to Monday, 8 May 2023 for this year.

2.6.

That, should the leave arrangements referred to at paragraphs 2.7 and 2.8 below be approved, the Council Offices, schools and all other services, other than those provided on a 24-hour basis, such as care homes, will be closed on Monday, 8 May 2023.

It is recommended:

2.7.

That employees, in the employment of the Council on Monday, 8 May 2023, be awarded an additional day of fixed annual leave to be taken on Monday, 8 May 2023.

2.8.

That those employees who are required to work on Monday, 8 May 2023 to provide essential services shall have a pro rata day in lieu added to their holiday entitlement for 2023/24.

3. Background

3.1.

The Coronation of His Majesty the King will be a three day event. Two grand processions and a religious service will take place on Saturday, 6 May 2023 and will be the formal coronation ceremony. This will be followed by a concert at Windsor Castle on Sunday, 7 May 2023, featuring global stars and the Coronation Choir, which will be broadcast live on television. There will also be a 'lighting up the nation' moment during the concert. Landmarks across the United Kingdom will be lit up with projections, lasers, drone displays and illuminations, and street parties will be encouraged around the country.

3.2.

The celebrations will culminate on the announced Bank Holiday on Monday, 8 May 2023, when citizens will be encouraged to volunteer in their local areas – an event that's being billed as 'The Big Help Out'.

3.3.

The Scottish Government has issued a letter to Directors of Education, which provides guidance on making a request for an exceptional closure of schools in the Authority area.

3.4.

It is for individual Councils to determine whether they wish to award the additional holiday and what form that additional day may take.

4. Options

4.1.

The Council could choose to recognise the event by granting either:

- An additional public holiday and anyone required to work on Monday, 8 May 2023 would be recompensed in accordance with local arrangements in place for public holiday working; or
- An additional day of fixed annual leave to be taken on Monday, 8 May 2023 wherever possible. Employees required to work on that day instead being entitled to an additional day of annual leave pro rata, to be taken as part of their annual leave entitlement.

4.2.

Alternatively the Council could choose not to award the additional annual leave date and employees would be expected to work as normal, however there may be adverse staff morale implications if this option is chosen.

4.3.

A fourth option would be for the Council to move the existing public holiday from Monday, 1 May 2023 (May Day) to Monday, 8 May 2023. The Public Holiday schedule for 2023/24 has already been set and agreed through normal processes so there may be opposition to changes at this stage from employees or Trade Unions.

4.4.

May Day is a holiday for schools also, meaning that moving it to 8 May 2023 would require an alteration to the school calendar, which would create further issues.

4.5.

Any decision regarding the holiday must be consistently applied across the workforce. In line with previous royal celebrations, the Scottish Government has issued a letter giving authority for an exceptional closure of local authority schools, whilst recognising that the holiday is not prescriptive and it is up to individual councils to consider how they will celebrate the occasion. The allowance to close schools does not cover Early Learning and Childcare, and if a decision is made to accept the recommendations in the report, some further work would be required to decide how best to implement that decision within the service.

4.6.

It is recommended that employees are awarded an additional day of fixed annual leave, in 2023/24, which must be taken on Monday, 8 May 2023 where possible and those required to work on that day will be entitled to an additional day of annual leave entitlement, to be taken at a future date within the leave year. This would provide for the day to be recognised in line with the Government approach but avoid the additional cost of providing enhanced public holiday terms and conditions to those employees required to work that day.

4.7.

This would mean that Council Offices, schools and all other services other than those provided on a 24 hour basis e.g. care homes, are closed on Monday, 8 May 2023.

5. Benchmarking

5.1.

Many Councils have not yet made a formal decision on the granting of an additional holiday for the Coronation and are considering this through their governance processes this month or next.

5.2.

However there has been some benchmarking undertaken to establish the intended proposal in different Local Authorities. Of those who responded, 11 councils are considering an additional public holiday; 10 considering an additional fixed day of annual leave; and one considering moving another public holiday to 8 May 2023.

6. Human Resources Implications

6.1.

Terms and conditions of Council employees provide that the suggested additional day is not contractually required to be granted.

6.2.

If the option of granting an additional public holiday on the day of Monday, 8 May 2023 is chosen, then employees who would be required to work on that date would be entitled to the enhanced terms and conditions that are applied to other public holidays.

6.3.

The additional day of fixed annual leave is specific to Monday, 8 May 2023, therefore if the option of awarding an additional day of annual leave is chosen, it should only be applied to those who are classed as employees on Monday, 8 May 2023.

6.4.

Choosing to award an additional day of fixed annual leave to be taken on Monday, 8 May 2023 would avoid the need to provide enhanced terms and conditions to those required to work on that day.

6.5.

Current arrangements for the 10 public holidays can be summarised as follows:

- Seven days designated for the festive period close down.
- Three days designated as public holidays – Easter Monday, May Day and Dounby Show.

6.6.

Public Holidays are set by the Chief Executive each year in advance of the leave year which runs from 1 April until 31 March. Therefore in consultation with Trade Unions any days can be allocated to any dates in theory.

6.7.

The public holiday days for 2023/24 have already been set and communicated to staff, therefore changing any of these at this relatively late stage may be problematic with staff and Trade Unions.

7. Corporate Governance

This report relates to the Council complying with its duties as an employer and therefore does not directly support and contribute to improved outcomes for communities as outlined in the Council Plan and the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan.

8. Financial Implications

8.1.

Based on previous financial estimates for additional days being granted for Royal events, the financial implications associated with each of the options outlined at section 4 above are as follows:

- Public Holiday – up to £70k per day:
 - Any employee required to work on a public holiday day would normally be entitled to either a day off in-lieu or pay at double time, but excluding staff that work on a rota or shift system, who simply have the additional day added to their overall leave entitlement.
 - For all services where relief arrangements are in place, such as the provision of care for the elderly, all relief staff would be entitled to double time for working on a public holiday.
 - For all staff that are required to be on stand-by duty on a public holiday, then higher rates of pay would normally apply.

- Annual leave – up to £35k per day:
 - Where the additional day's annual leave is to be taken on a designated day, then the similar relief arrangements would apply as for a public holiday, but without the requirement to incur any enhanced rates of pay for relief staff or standby payments.
- No award – no financial implications would arise from this option.

8.2.

These costings are based on the assumption that additional relief cover would be required for all staff that operate on a rota or shift system in the care service including residential and home care, plus an allowance in respect of property, operations and marine services to maintain a minimum level of service, and as such it is considered to represent a prudent estimate.

8.3.

No allowance has been made for the impact that an additional fixed day of annual leave will have on productivity levels across the Council's services.

9. Legal Aspects

Awarding employees an additional day of fixed annual leave to be taken on Monday, 8 May 2023, service permitting, or awarding those employees who may be required to work on that day an additional day of annual leave pro rata, are matters that the Council can determine at its discretion.

10. Contact Officers

Karen Greaves, Corporate Director for Strategy, Performance and Business Solutions, extension 2202, Email: karen.greaves@orkney.gov.uk

Andrew Groundwater, Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development, extension 2253, Email: andrew.groundwater@orkney.gov.uk.