

**Title of meeting:** Employment Committee

**Date of meeting:** 2nd October 2012

**Subject:** Christmas Closure 2012

**Report by:** Head of Human Resources (Acting)

**Wards affected:** N/A

**Key decision:** No

**Full Council decision:** No

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**1. Purpose of report**

To inform Employment Committee of the impact of a 1 day Christmas closure for 24<sup>th</sup> December 2012 (sandwich day)

**2. Recommendations**

It is recommended that:

- (i) Employment Committee agree for Christmas Closure to be implemented for 24<sup>th</sup> December 2012.

**3. Background**

**Sandwich Day – closure on 24<sup>th</sup> December 2012**

- In previous years, where Christmas Day and Boxing Day have fallen on Tuesday and Wednesday or Wednesday and Thursday, Portsmouth City Council have given staff a sandwich day on Monday 24<sup>th</sup> or Friday 27<sup>th</sup> December. This remains to be custom and practise among other local authorities and some local businesses.
- Staff are not required to take annual leave, flexi or unpaid leave for the period of closure. It is suggested that allowing a day's leave would be a goodwill gesture to staff who have not received a pay increase in recent years.

- Heads of Service have provided information to inform the financial cost and impact of a 1 day closure for 2012. This particularly affects those service providing a statutory function and would therefore need to compensate staff who are required to work with alternative time off in lieu. The backfill costs for the services that would have to maintain service delivery are estimated to be £55,600

#### **4. Reasons for recommendations**

- The numbers of staff in the Civic Offices from 12 noon on the 24<sup>th</sup> December 2011 to the 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2012 was nominal and does not warrant the expense of temporary cover, consultancy activity and utility payments.
- During the Christmas break in 2011, 189 members of the public visited the Civic Offices. 12 of these used the Cash Desk.
- The closure would assist in Portsmouth City Council's Carbon Management Programmes such as CRC, Energy Efficiency Programme and 10:10 Scheme that PCC has signed up to, which aims to encourage individuals, business, education and other organisations (including local Authorities) to reducing carbon emissions by 10% in 2010 and 10% each year up to 50% in year 5.
- The total savings in respect of energy for closing the Civic Office for the proposed 3 days in December 2012 (24<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> inclusive) is estimated as follows:

Total tCO2	18 tonnes
Total kwh	54,744 kwh
Total saving	£3,000 - £4,000

- Other estimated savings for the 3 day closure of the Civic Office over the Christmas period are:
  - £1,300 savings on cleaning charges
  - £6,300 for agency staff
- Organisations regard closing at Christmas as enhancing staff wellbeing. Allowing staff a greater ability to spend time with friends and family.
- The needs of the organisation will still be met (as they are on any Bank or Public holiday) and closure represents a balanced approach during a quiet period.
- Christmas closure is seen as a non-financial benefit and is promoted by organisations at recruitment. The following organisations have provided information on their plans for Christmas 2012.
- Citizens Advice Bureau and the Portsmouth Advice Centre, closed on Christmas Day and Boxing Day only.

- Community Legal Advice Centre, closed on Christmas Day and Boxing Day only
- Portsmouth University is closed for non-academic staff from Christmas Eve to 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2013. This includes the University Library.
- Learning Links, closed between Christmas and New Year.
- H+S Aviation will be closing Christmas Eve, Christmas Day and Boxing Day, otherwise open as normal, including New Year's Eve.
- BAE Systems Surface Ships, will be closed on the 24<sup>th</sup> December 2012 and will start up production on 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2013
- Not working at this time is obviously important to non-essential staff given the high proportion of leave taken. Whilst the savings currently identified are less than that at Oldham it seems a logical efficiency saving action for us to take.

**5. Equality impact assessment (EIA)**

An effective EIA has been completed for this report.

**6. Head of legal, licensing & registrars' comments**

The are no immediate legal implications arising from this report.

**7. Head of finance's comments**

The additional net costs of a sandwich day on 24<sup>th</sup> December 2012 are estimated to be £44,500 which will have to be met from existing service budgets

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Signed by City Solicitor and Strategic Director

**Appendices:**

**Background list of documents: Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972**

The following documents disclose facts or matters, which have been relied upon to a material extent by the author in preparing this report:

Title of document	Location

The recommendation(s) set out above were approved/ approved as amended/ deferred/ rejected by ..... on .....

.....  
Signed by: