

Agenda item: 

**Title of meeting:** Employment Committee

**Date of meeting:** 1<sup>st</sup> October 2013

**Subject:** Christmas Closure - Sandwich Day

**Report by:** Jon Bell - Head of HR, Legal & Performance

**Wards affected:** N/A

**Key decision:** No

**Full Council decision:** No

---

### 1. Purpose of report

The purpose of this report is to inform Employment Committee of the impact of a one day Christmas Closure for Friday 27<sup>th</sup> December 2013 (sandwich day).

### 2. Recommendations

It is recommended that:

- (i) Employment Committee agree for Christmas Closure to be implemented for 27<sup>th</sup> December 2013, for the Civic Offices and non-essential services out stations.
- (ii) That all employees are given additional leave to take account of the Christmas Closure (pro rata'd for part time workers)
- (iii) That those staff required to work are given time off in lieu at a later date
- (iv) For Heads of Service to determine which staff will be required to work, based on essential service delivery requirements.

### 3. Background

- 3.1 In previous years, where Christmas Day and Boxing Day have fallen on Tuesday & Wednesday or Wednesday & Thursday, Portsmouth City Council (PCC) have given staff a "sandwich day" on Monday 24<sup>th</sup> or Friday 27<sup>th</sup> December. This continues to be custom and practice amongst other Local Authorities and some local businesses.

3.2 Historically, we have given staff an additional day's leave (pro rata'd for part time staff). Those staff that are required to work on 27<sup>th</sup> December, providing essential services to the residents, are given time off in lieu.

#### **4. Feedback from Heads of Service**

4.1 Heads of Service have provided information to assess the impact of the day's closure, in terms of customer service, staff morale and financial costs. Predominantly, Head of Services' responses have been positive and they feel that this will be beneficial to staff whilst having limited impact on our customers. Service provision will be at the same level as bank/public holidays.

4.2 However, there are a number of services that operate essential services to residents that will continue to work throughout the Christmas period. These staff members will be required to take their leave at a later date. This may cause operational difficulties in some areas, where staffing is short and it is already difficult to cover annual leave.

4.3 The additional cost for Adult Social Care (approximately £35,000 for residential day care costs) will create a budget pressure for the service. The Head of Service has also expressed concern about the potential impact on staff morale, as those required to work may feel disadvantaged compared to their colleagues. Similar issues may exist in Children's Social Care.

4.4 Housing and Property Management will require staff in some services to continue to work on this day, for example, Green and Clean teams, Sheltered Housing and Emergency Repairs.

4.5 Heads of Service will make the decision as to which teams are required to provide a service on the 27<sup>th</sup> December 2013 and will communicate this to the relevant staff. Time off in lieu will be given to those required to work.

#### **5. Reasons for recommendations**

5.1 It has become custom and practice for PCC to give a "sandwich day" to all staff when Christmas Day falls on a Tuesday or Wednesday. This is seen as a gesture of goodwill and allows staff more time to spend with families and friends over the holiday period.

5.2 The needs of the organisation will continue to be met (as they are on Bank and Public Holidays) with the continuous provision of essential services balanced with closure of the offices during the quiet period. The customer activity during the Christmas period in 2011 was a total of 189 visits, 12 of which used the cash desk.

5.3 If, during the closure, the building management system is set to that of weekends, there is an opportunity to save £5,500 and 40 tonnes of carbon dioxide, over the 5 day period.

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

A preliminary Equality Impact Assessment has been completed.

**7. Legal implications**

There are no immediate legal implications arising from this report.

**8. Finance comments**

The additional net costs of a sandwich day on 27<sup>th</sup> December 2013 are estimated to be £44,000 which will have to be met from existing service budgets.

.....  
Signed by:

**Appendices:**

None

**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