

# Employment Committee

Date: **Friday 17 February 2023**

Time: **3pm**

Venue: **Council Chamber, County Hall, Martineau Lane, Norwich NR1 2DH**

## **SUPPLEMENTARY A g e n d a**

### **Advice for members of the public:**

This meeting will be held in public and in person.

It will be live streamed on YouTube and members of the public may watch remotely by clicking on the following link: [Norfolk County Council Democratic Services - YouTube](#)

We also welcome attendance in person, but public seating is limited, so if you wish to attend please indicate in advance by emailing [committees@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:committees@norfolk.gov.uk)

We have amended the previous guidance relating to respiratory infections to reflect current practice but we still ask everyone attending to maintain good hand and respiratory hygiene and, at times of high prevalence and in busy areas, please consider wearing a face covering.

Please stay at home if you are unwell, have tested positive for COVID 19, have symptoms of a respiratory infection or if you are a close contact of a positive COVID 19 case. This will help make the event safe for attendees and limit the transmission of respiratory infections including COVID-19.

### **6 Christmas Eve – Concessionary Half Day**

**(Page A3)**

Report by the Executive Director of Strategy and Transformation

**Tom McCabe**  
**Head of Paid Service**

County Hall  
Martineau Lane  
Norwich  
NR1 2DH

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# Employment Committee

Item No: 6

**Report Title: Christmas Eve – Concessionary half day**

**Date of Meeting: 17/02/2023**

**Responsible Cabinet Member: Cllr Andrew Proctor, (Leader and Cabinet Member for Strategy & Governance)**

**Responsible Director: Paul Cracknell, Executive Director for Strategy and Transformation**

**Is this a Key Decision? No**

**If this is a Key Decision, date added to the Forward Plan of Key Decisions: N/A**

## **Executive Summary / Introduction from Cabinet Member**

This paper brings a recommendation to formalise leave arrangements in relation to Christmas.

Prior to 2012, employees received an allocated days leave over Christmas in addition to a half day which applied in some years (depending on when Christmas day fell).

In 2012, NCC consolidated the allocated days leave into the wider leave arrangements as part of the Fit for Future Collective Agreement. However, the half day was unintentionally excluded from the agreement/ consolidation process, and since then, the application of the half day has been considered each year.

This recommendation would apply to employees covered by the green book (NJC for LGS National Agreement on Pay and Conditions of Service) – excluding schools and anyone on other terms and conditions where separate leave arrangements apply.

## **Recommendation:**

To formalise the current practice of employees receiving time off on Christmas Eve (half a day) by incorporating it into policy, as detailed in option 3.

## **1. Background and Purpose**

- 1.1 National leave arrangements are set out in part 2 of the green book (NJC for LGS National Agreement on Pay and Conditions of Service).
- 1.2 These national arrangements are supplement by local arrangements within NCC, which include:
  - 1 additional day – annual leave (incorporated into policy)
  - Half a day – Christmas early closure (agreed each year – not incorporated into policy)
- 1.3 Historically, the Christmas half day used to be part of NCC's contractual leave arrangements (alongside an additional day allocated over the Christmas period). Whilst the whole day was given each year, the half day only applied in some years depending on the day of the week that Christmas fell on. In 2012, NCC consolidated the additional day into the general leave arrangements for the year as part of the Fit for Future Collective Agreement. However, the half day was unintentionally excluded from the agreement/ consolidation process. Since then, the application of the half day has continued to be considered on a year-by-year basis.
- 1.4 For the last 6 years, it has been agreed that the half day should be applied to all employees in scope in every year.

## **2. Options**

- 2.1 There are a number of options the committee could choose to take:
- 2.2 Option 1:

Negotiate with UNISON to end the half day arrangement. This option would end employee uncertainty around whether the leave will be given in any particular year and will mean that no changes to the current policy would be required. However, it is likely to create tensions within the workforce and would be an unpopular option. UNISON is unlikely to support it, certainly without concessions being made elsewhere to the employment package. There is no current drive from the business to remove the half day.

- 2.3 Option 2\*:

Maintain the Status Quo. This would mean that application of the Christmas half day would continue to be considered on a year-by-year basis. It would also mean that no changes to the current policy would be required. Whilst this option would be received well when the time off is agreed, this would very unpopular

should the decision be made that it would not apply in any one year and continues to provide employees with uncertainty. This option also comes with a resource requirement in terms of presenting/reaching an agreement and dealing with the communications and queries. There is a risk of inconsistent application of this approach across the organisation as it would need to be managed locally/outside of the HR and Finance system (myOracle).

#### 2.4 Option 3\*:

Formalise the current practice of employees receiving time off on Christmas Eve (half a day) by incorporating it into policy. This option is likely to be supported by UNISON and employees, as it formalises the current practice and ends the need to consider this each year and the uncertainty for employees. This option also enables a consistent approach in its application as it would be managed in the same way as other leave through the HR and Finance system (myOracle). It would be applied to the leave entitlement in system from 2023/24. This option will not prevent a review in the future, should the committee be minded to progress option 1 at a later date.

- 2.5 \*In options 2 and 3, employees would be required to take this time off where Council offices and services close early on the last working day before Christmas (where possible). Employees who are required (e.g., for reasons of service delivery) or not scheduled to work on this day can take the time off at a later date (as close to Christmas as possible), subject to normal leave approval arrangements. Part time employees would receive the time off on a pro rate basis.

### **3. Financial Implications**

- 3.1 There is no additional financial outlay associated with the proposal as contractual paid timer off is included in the annual salary for the role. There is an impact on production time but as this leave has been given consistently for a number of years and there is the ability for services to apply it flexibly to maintain service provision there is no anticipation of extra resource need.

### **4. Other Implications**

- 4.1 **Legal Implications:** None

- 4.2 **Human Rights Implications:** None

4.3 **Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) (this must be included):** The leave would be applied consistently for all employees in scope, there is no detrimental impact for anyone with protected characteristics.

4.4 **Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIA):**

No new data protection impacts arise from these proposals.

## 5. Recommendations

5.1 It is recommended that option 3 is progressed, subject to agreement from UNISON.

### Officer Contact

If you have any questions about matters contained within this paper, please get in touch with: Hayley Sendall, Senior HR Consultant

**Officer name: Hayley Sendall**

**Telephone no.: 01603 638133**

**Email: [hayley.sendall@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:hayley.sendall@norfolk.gov.uk)**



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