

Report to the Cabinet



Report reference: C/064/2007-08.

Date of meeting: 12 November 2007.

**Epping Forest
District Council**

Portfolio: Finance, Performance Management and Corporate Services.

Subject: Christmas and New Year Leave Arrangements 2008 – 2013.

Officer contact for further information: Paula Maginnis (01992–564536).

Democratic Services Officer: Gary Woodhall (01992–564470).

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

That, as recommended by the Joint Consultative Committee, an extension of the current Christmas and New Year leave arrangements to 2012-13 be agreed as per the schedule at Appendix 1.

Report:

1. At its meeting on 20 September 2007, the Joint Consultative Committee considered the future arrangements for the Christmas and New Year leave arrangements from 2008-09 to 2012-13.
2. The schedule at Appendix 1 was prepared in response to feedback from the Employee Survey. In addition the current arrangements for Christmas and New Year closures come to an end in 2007-08.
3. The results of the Employee Survey 2006 showed that 75% of staff who responded indicated that the use of special leave days and the 2 statutory days, (which enable a closure of the offices between Christmas and New Year) were the most valued current benefit.
4. The Committee noted that comments were obtained from managers whose teams provide frontline services to determine if the public had made any adverse comments to the previous office closure arrangements. The service areas consulted included Housing Management, Older People Services, Homelessness Team, Repairs, Standby Officers, Revenues and Benefits.
5. Housing (and Works Unit) provide essential cover in a number of areas i.e. Scheme Wardens, Repairs and the Homelessness Team and the public are unlikely to notice a difference in service provision in these areas during this time. Management in these service areas did not receive any adverse comments made by the public. In addition, Revenues and Benefits had not experienced any adverse comments. With regard to the cashier services, there are automated payment methods available now that were not in place in 2002 so the public are still able to pay their bills during this period.
6. The Standby Officers based at the Civic Offices have not reported any public reaction and it seems as though the public expect the Council Offices to be closed at this time.

Statement in Support of Recommended Action:

7. Three quarters of the staff who responded to the Employee Survey indicated that the Christmas and New Year leave arrangements was the most valued current benefit the Council offer staff.

8. Officers have not received adverse comments from the public regarding the officer closures and essential cover in a number of areas will continue during the closures.

Other Options for Action:

9. The Cabinet could decide not to agree to the Schedule or to substitute other arrangements.

Consultation Undertaken:

10. Employees and the recognised trade unions were consulted via the Employee Survey in December 2006.

Resource Implications:

Budget Provision: Can be met within existing budgets.

Personnel: As set out in the report.

Land: Nil.

Council Plan 2006-10/BVPP Reference: N/A.

Relevant Statutory Powers: N/A.

Background Papers: Report to the meeting of the Joint Consultative Committee, held on 20 September 2007.

Environmental/Human Rights Act/Crime and Disorder Act Implications: N/A.

Key Decision Reference (if required): N/A.