

Surrey Heath Borough Council
Employment Committee
13th October 2022

Christmas Working Arrangements

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| Strategic Director/Head of Service | Louise Livingston |
| Report Author: | Louise Livingston – Head of Human Resources, Performance & Communication |
| Wards Affected: | All |

Summary and purpose

To consider the Christmas working arrangements recommended by the Joint Staff Consultative Group held on 22nd September 2022.

Recommendation

The Committee is advised to RESOLVE that;

- (i) from December 2023 the current established arrangements over the Christmas period be continued including the discretionary award of a day's leave matched by staff taking a day's leave from their annual leave entitlement, be continued; and
- (ii) to avoid further uncertainty, the current established arrangements be made an on-going contractual entitlement.

1. Background and Supporting Information

- 1.1 The Joint Staff Consultative Group received a presentation from the Staff Representatives regarding the views of Officers on future Christmas Closure arrangements collated from the staff survey. It concluded that the current arrangement was valued by staff and they wanted to see this continued.
- 1.2 The presentation also set out that whilst the Council office building was closed to customers a number of services continued to be delivered over the Christmas period, eg Meals at home, community alarm service, street cleaning, bins service, the leisure centre, the theatre, homelessness service, family support, out of hours contact centre, building control dangerous structures inspection etc. It was agreed that a full list of services would be collated and shared with all Councillors.

- 1.3 It was further clarified that the contact numbers for the Council do not change and residents can call the usual contact number and their call will be answered.
- 1.4 There were questions raised by Councillors asking if the Council received any complaints from residents about services not being available over the Christmas period, it was confirmed by the Customer Relations Manager, the Chair of the staff representatives that to date she had no records of any such complaints.
- 1.5 It was noted that Officers currently receive Bank Holiday days, a statutory day of leave in Staff Terms & Conditions of Employment, plus an additional discretionary day of leave added to their holiday entitlement with staff then required to book a day's leave from their annual leave entitlement. This enabled the Council Offices to remain closed between Christmas and New Year. Those officers who are required to work over the Christmas period received the additional day in their leave entitlement.
- 1.6 The proposals set out in this paper relate to the Christmas period starting December 2023. The Christmas arrangements for December 2022 have already been agreed by the Employment Committee??.

2. Reasons for Recommendation

- 2.1 The recommendation put forward to the Employment Committee is as agreed by the by Joint Staff Consultative Group which includes both Member and staff representatives.

3. Proposal and Alternative Options

- 3.1 The Employment Committee need to decide if the proposed Christmas period arrangements should be agreed as set out in the recommendation.
- 3.2 Alternatively the employment committee may ask the Joint Staff Consultive Group to reconsider options for Christmas opening.

4. Contribution to the Council's Five Year Strategy

- 4.1 There are no direct implications arising from this report.

5. Resource Implications

- 5.1 There are no resource implications as the arrangement being recommended is what is currently in place. If the Committee decides instead to open Surrey Heath House over the Christmas period, there will be increased costs associated with heating and lighting the building and the costs associated with providing the minimum staffing necessary to enable the safe operation of the building. This includes cleaning arrangements, security and facilities management, staff supervision, fire wardens, first aiders etc.

6. Section 151 Officer Comments:

6.1 The Chief Finance Officer advises that there are no additional budgetary implications arising from the recommendation.

7. Legal and Governance Issues

7.1 If this recommendation is agreed then the arrangement will become a contractual term

8. Monitoring Officer Comments:

8.1 Noted the content of the report no comments to add.

9. Other Considerations and Impacts

Environment and Climate Change

9.1 None

Equalities and Human Rights

9.2 There was some discussion about the fact that some staff do have to work over the Christmas period whereas others don't but this is dependent on the job role they are employed to undertake. It is made clear when staff are appointed what the arrangement will be for their role and staff that work are awarded the extra leave in their overall holiday entitlement.

Risk Management

9.3 None.

Community Engagement

9.4 None

Annexes

Annex A - Christmas Service Cover 2022

Background Papers

None