



General Purposes Committee
7 December 2020

**Report from the
Head of Paid Service**

Christmas Closure 24th December 2020

Wards Affected:	None
Key or Non-Key Decision:	N/A
Open or Part/Fully Exempt: (If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)	Open
No. of Appendices:	None
Background Papers:	None
Contact Officer(s): (Name, Title, Contact Details)	Martin Williams, Head of Human Resources Email: martin.williams@brent.gov.uk Tel: 020 8937 3209

1.0 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To provide the Committee with a proposal to recognise 24th December 2020 as an additional days Bank Holiday for staff.

2.0 Recommendation

- 2.1 That the Committee agree that the 24th December 2020 is to be treated as an additional Bank Holiday leave for staff.

3.0 Background

- 3.1 Many staff wish to take the 24th December as annual leave. In recognising this and acknowledging the commitment of Brent staff throughout the year in the most difficult of circumstances it is proposed to allocate the 24th December 2020 as an additional days Bank Holiday leave.

4.0 Detail

- 4.1 2020 has been a significant year for the whole of the country as it has dealt with the challenges of COVID-19. Local Authorities and Brent in particular have had to operate in a way and raise to challenges that even twelve months ago no one could have foreseen. Brent was the local authority that was hardest hit by the COVID-19 virus. Not only did the Council continue to delivered a range of outstanding day to day services to residents but it developed 'on the hoof' new ways of operating and delivering services that it had not previously delivered.

4.2 Of particular note, we have, as an organisation:

- Put in place the necessary robust technology to allow staff to work effectively from home and ensuring the Council's Governance arrangements continued seamlessly.
- Coordinated the provision of sufficient PPE for staff, care homes and schools.
- Built and operated a temporary mortuary using volunteers from within the workforce.
- Organised the delivery of food parcels to vulnerable and sheltering residents.
- Built on our already good relationship with the Voluntary sector and Community groups to ensure all Brent communities were safe.
- As lockdown was lifted our Enforcement staff have carried out difficult duties with a firm hand and good humour. Which has been well received.

4.3 The bullet points above are just the surface of many actions initiatives and projects large and small which staff, across the Council have undertaken tirelessly to keep our resident and staff safe. All whilst continuing business as usual.

4.4 I can reassure members that if this proposal is agreed we have a high performing range of out of hours' services that are able to respond quickly when required to do so and in particular, mobilise additional resources at short notice to respond to major incidents. These services are deployed at evenings, weekends and on Bank Holidays. By treating the 24th December as an additional Bank Holiday, those staff who undertake out of hours' work will not be disadvantaged.

4.5 If members are minded to agree this proposal there will be no consequential financial savings as the Civic Centre will still be open to accommodate external tenants. However, the positive impact this will have as a goodwill gesture to our workforce will be well received and very welcome at what is still, and will be into the foreseeable future, a very difficult time.

5.0 Financial Implications

5.1 There are no specific Finance implications in this report.

6.0 Legal Implications

6.1 There are no specific legal implications in this report.

7.0 Equality Implications

7.1 Any equality implications in this report will be assessed on an on-going basis using data available.

Report sign off:

Carolyn Downs
Chief Executive