
NORTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

24 September 2019

Cabinet

Title: VE Day 75 Commemorations

Purpose: Inform Cabinet of the UK and Scottish Government's decision to change the date of the May public holiday to mark the 75th anniversary of VE day, and to seek agreement on the local arrangements for this public holiday

Recommendation: Cabinet approves the proposal that Friday 8 May (VE Day) be recognised as a public holiday, and that the May Day (4th May) be provided as an additional annual leave day for 2020 only

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The UK Government and Scottish Government have approved a change to the date of next year's early May Bank holiday from Monday 4 May to Friday 8 May 2020 to mark the 75th anniversary of VE Day.
- 1.2 The timing of the decision to change the May Bank holiday means that an amendment is required to the school session term dates for 2019/20, and North Ayrshire Council's usual public holidays.
- 1.3 This paper proposes that North Ayrshire Council recognise Friday 8th May as a public holiday and also provide Monday 4th May as an additional annual leave day. The impacts of this are outlined in section 3, this includes specific consideration of the additional costs and the potential amendment to school term dates.
- 1.4 Trade Union representatives have highlighted concerns around swapping the public holiday. May Day represents International Workers day and is of particular significance to the trade union.
- 1.5 The proposal of providing an additional days annual leave is welcomed by the Trades Unions. It is also anticipated that the additional annual leave day will have a positive impact on employee morale, whilst allowing the Council to honour both International Workers Day and the 75th Anniversary of VE Day.

2. Background

- 2.1 8 May 1945 was the day peace emerged after nearly six years of war and the 75th anniversary on 8 May 2020 represents a milestone in history.

- 2.2 National celebrations of VE Day 75 are being held with three days of commemorations planned throughout the UK from Friday 8 May to Sunday 10 May 2020.
- 2.3 In addition, the UK Government and Scottish Government have agreed that the existing May Day public holiday should be moved to Friday 8 May to mark VE day 75.
- 2.4 Consultation with the Trade Unions began with the proposal to move the day as above, however the feedback was that moving the day was not suitable due to the significance of the May Day holiday being International Workers Day.
- 2.5 The request from the Trade Union was to leave the public holiday unchanged, or to have an additional public holiday for one year only. This request was again raised following publicity around Inverclyde Council having announced an additional day's annual leave.
- 2.6 This request for an additional public holiday carried two main areas for consideration;
- Cost implications of paying overtime rates for a public holiday, and the indirect financial costs and impact of having a reduced number of working days over the year
 - Increasing the number of school closure days would require the Head of Service (Education) to seek approval from the Scottish Government
- 2.7 The proposal of providing an additional annual leave day, rather than an additional public holiday removes the requirement for enhanced overtime rates, and therefore lessens the additional financial costs to the Council. However, services will need to cover any additional costs from existing budgets. These costs will arise when providing employees who are required to work on the 4th May a compensatory day off at another time, where this later day off in lieu requires to be covered by supply/bank staff.
- 2.8 The indirect financial cost is that the Council will continue to pay salaries to employees who are not at work. This will have an impact on the overall efficiency of the Council and may result in an increase in wait times as teams will have workload to catch up on from an additional day off.
- 2.9 There will also be one less teaching day for school pupils. It has already been agreed that two additional in-service days should be made available in the academic year 2019-20 to support professional learning, as part of the package of wider measures in the three-year pay deal. The standard number of teaching days per year is 190, if an additional day is agreed this would reduce the number of teaching days to 187 for academic year 2019-20.
- 2.10 A further consideration which requires local arrangements to be made, is the SQA have planned the Higher English and Advanced Higher English exams to take place on the 4th May. This situation has occurred before and Education colleagues should link with Facilities Management regards janitorial and catering support.
- 2.11 Consideration has also been given to swapping an existing school holiday, instead of an additional day, however this would mean teachers and other school-based staff (janitors, cleaners, clerical, catering) would not benefit from an additional day off like other Local Government Employees. It is also difficult to provide a day off in lieu to be taken at another time due to the nature of the work and requirement to provide cover.

3. Proposals

3.1 Cabinet is asked to recognise Friday 8 May 2020 as a public holiday and recognise Monday 4 May 2020 as an additional annual leave day.

- On both days main Council buildings will be closed.
- Any employee required to work on Friday 8 May would receive enhanced overtime rates.
- Any employee required to work on Monday 4 May would receive their normal rate of pay and a day in lieu to take another time. No enhanced rates would be payable.
- An additional cost to services will arise when employees request their day off in lieu, where the service are required to arrange and pay for cover e.g. supply/bank
- Due to the Higher English and Advanced Higher English exams scheduled for 4 May 2020, Education and Facilities Management are required to ensure appropriate arrangements are in place at nine secondary schools.

4. Implications/Socio-economic Duty

Financial

4.1 If this proposal is endorsed this would result in an estimated additional cost of £32,000.

Human Resources

4.2 Services will be required to ensure employees are aware if they are required to work on Monday 4 May, that a day off in lieu will be provided as compensation. The day off in lieu should be taken by 31st December 2020.

Legal

4.3 The Head of Service (Education) will require to seek permission from the Scottish Government for an additional school closure day. Inverclyde have already secured permission.

Equality/Socio-economic

4.4 None

Environmental and Sustainability

4.5 None

Key Priorities

4.6 None

Community Wealth Building

4.7 None

5. Consultation

- 5.1 The trade unions have been consulted and have indicated they would support this paper.
- 5.2 If this proposal is endorsed, this would involve writing to the Scottish Government requesting this reduction in teaching days. There would also be a requirement to agree the dates with the LNCT (Local Negotiating Committee for Teachers).

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For further information please contact **Fiona Carlyle (Senior HR Advisor)** or **Fiona Walker (Head of Service – People & Transformation)**, on **01294 324616**.

Background Papers

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