

Item: 7

Policy and Resources Committee: 3 March 2026.

World Cup 2026.

Report by Director of Infrastructure and Organisational Development.

1. Overview

- 1.1. The Scottish Government has announced that Monday ,15 June 2026 has been designated a public holiday in Scotland, for the Scotland Men’s National Football Team qualifying for the FIFA World Cup for the first time since 1998.
- 1.2. The granting of an additional public holiday will apply to any employees who work directly for the Scottish Government, however for other employers such as Local Authorities, it is for them to determine locally whether they wish to grant an additional public holiday on 15 June 2026.
- 1.3. The allocation of an additional public holiday will create an additional unplanned financial cost for the Council and no specific funding has been provided by the Scottish Government to cover these costs.
- 1.4. The allocation of an additional public holiday on 15 June 2026 would require the Council to seek special closure of schools as this would mean the provision of fewer than 190 school days as required by the Schools General (Scotland) Regulations 1975. The Council would need to submit a request to the Scottish Ministers for an exemption from the 190 school days requirement.
- 1.5. With regard to Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) provision, CoSLA has sought clarity from the Scottish Government, who have advised that providing 1140 hours of funded ELC over the course of the year is a statutory obligation. The decision on how to approach public holidays is at Local Authority discretion and therefore if an additional public holiday were to be provided, the resulting shortfall in ELC hours would have to be covered elsewhere in the year.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. It is recommended that members of the Committee:
 - i. Should not allocate an additional public holiday for Monday, 15 June 2026, due to the additional and unfunded financial impact this would present, and, instead, Council services should operate as normal.

3. Background

- 3.1. Current arrangements for the 10 public holidays can be summarised as follows:
 - i. 7 days designated as public holidays for the festive period close down.
 - ii. 3 other days in the year designated as public holidays – Easter Monday, May Day and Dounby Show.
- 3.2. Public Holidays are set by the Chief Executive each year in advance of the leave year which runs from 1 April until 31 March.
- 3.3. Variation of the Council conditions of service through granting an additional public holiday or fixed annual leave day requires approval through the Policy and Resources Committee.
- 3.4. Enhancing the Council conditions of service through granting an additional public holiday or fixed annual leave day would not require formal agreement with the Trade Unions. The Trade Unions have been informed that the matter has been considered by the Corporate Leadership Team and of the recommendation within this paper.
- 3.5. If Councils permit the closure of schools on 15 June 2026, that would mean the provision of fewer than 190 school days as required by the Schools General (Scotland) Regulations 1975, and Councils will need to submit a request to Scottish Ministers for an exemption from the 190 school days requirement.
- 3.6. With regard to Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) provision, CoSLA have sought clarity from the Scottish Government on behalf of Local Authorities, who have advised that providing 1140 hours of funded ELC over the course of the year is a statutory obligation. The decision on how to approach public holidays is at Local Authority discretion and therefore the Scottish Government position is that Local Authorities should consider how services are provided in line with the statutory requirement of providing 1140 hours of funded ELC over the course of the year. It was also communicated that Directors of Education will be written to shortly confirming this position.
- 3.7. Previously, where an additional Public Holiday was granted by the UK Government in 2022 for the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee and for the Coronation of His Majesty the King in 2023, the Council took the decision not to award an additional public holiday but instead provided an additional fixed day of annual leave.

4. Options and Implications

- 4.1. The Corporate Leadership Team considered three options before agreeing a final recommendation for this paper:
 - i. Choose to recognise the event by granting an additional public holiday on Monday 15 June 2026.
 - ii. Choose to recognise the event by granting an additional fixed day of annual leave to be taken on Monday 15 June 2026.
 - iii. Choose not to award the additional public holiday or a fixed day of annual leave, and employees would be expected to work as normal or book the day off using their existing annual leave entitlement.

Awarding an additional public holiday

- 4.2. If the option of granting an additional public holiday on the day of 15 June 2026 is chosen, then employees who would be required to work on 15 June would be entitled to the enhanced terms and conditions that are applied to other public holidays.
- 4.3. If the additional public holiday is provided, employees required to work on 15 June 2026 would be entitled to an additional day of annual leave this year to be taken at a future date to ensure equity of leave provision.
- 4.4. If the additional public holiday is granted on 15 June 2026, then the conservative estimated additional expenditure cost is in the region of between £100k - £120k. This does not include the potential for additional agency worker costs should these be required to cover additional working time in Social Care services.
- 4.5. In terms of lost productivity cost, i.e. the cost of paying people for a day when no work will be produced, this is estimated by Finance to be in the region of £400k - £600k.
- 4.6. The Council would need to submit a request to the Scottish Ministers for an exemption from the 190 school days requirement.
- 4.7. The Council would have to consider special measures around how to meet its statutory obligation to provide 1140 hours of annual ELC provision.

Awarding an additional day of fixed annual leave

- 4.8. If awarding an additional day of fixed annual leave this would be specific to 15 June 2026, therefore it should only be applied to those who are classed as employees on 15 June 2026. It should not be applied to pro-rata calculations for employees commencing employment with the Council after 15 June 2026 and before the end of the 2026/27 leave year.
- 4.9. Choosing to award an additional day of fixed annual leave to be taken on 15 June 2026 would avoid the need to provide enhanced terms and conditions to those required to work on that day. Anyone required to work on the day would be entitled to an additional day of annual leave to be added to their annual leave entitlement to ensure equity of leave provision.
- 4.10. If a fixed day of annual leave is granted on 15 June 2026, then the conservative estimated additional expenditure cost would be approximately £55k. This does not include the potential for additional agency worker costs should these be required to cover additional working time in Social Care services.
- 4.11. In terms of lost productivity cost, i.e. the cost of paying people for a day when no work will be produced, this would be the same as the estimate for awarding an additional public holiday covered in section 4.5 above.
- 4.12. The Council would need to submit a request to the Scottish Ministers for an exemption from the 190 school days requirement.
- 4.13. The Council would have to consider special measures around how to meet its statutory obligation to provide 1140 hours of annual ELC provision.

Recommended option – do not award an additional public holiday or fixed day of annual leave.

- 4.14. The option to not recognise the day as either a public holiday or fixed day of additional annual leave may result in adverse staff morale implications as an expectation of time off may already have been built up given the publicity around the announcement and the granting of the day off to other public bodies that are directly under Scottish Government control.
- 4.15. However, this needs to be balanced with the financial cost of making any award. The allocation of an additional day off in any format is entirely unfunded and leads to both direct additional expenditure, and a significant lost productivity cost.

- 4.16. This recommendation avoids the need to close schools and ELC provision and the potential disruption that could create for young people, parents and carers.
- 4.17. Given the pressure on Council budgets and demands on services, this is felt by Officers to be the most prudent and appropriate course of action.

5. Benchmarking

- 5.1. Many Councils are still deciding on their position, however the most up to date available information from CoSLA shows that only one Local Authority is currently recommending the award of an additional public holiday.

No Decision yet	15
Holiday not to be recommended	6
Holiday paper with no recommendation	7
Holiday to be recommended	1
Unknown/no response	3

- 5.2. Of those yet to make any decision, a number are indicating informally they are likely to not recommend an additional public holiday or will make no officer recommendation.

For Further Information please contact:

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Implications of Report

- 1. Financial** – The financial costs associated with an awarding an additional public holiday or fixed day of annual leave are covered in Section 4 of the report, along with estimated lost productivity costs.
- 2. Legal** –Awarding employees an additional public holiday or an additional day of fixed annual leave to be taken on Monday, 15 June 2026, service permitting, or awarding those employees who may be required to work on that day an additional day of annual leave pro rata, are matters that the Council can determine at its discretion. The legal aspects on the closure of schools and the statutory obligations in respect of ELC provision are covered in the body of the report.
- 3. Corporate Governance** – N/A
- 4. Human Resources** - HR implications are covered within the body of the report.
- 5. Equalities** – We have not undertaken an Equalities Impact assessment.

6. **Island Communities Impact** – It is not considered that there is any potential differential impact for Island Communities, therefore an impact assessment is not required.
7. **Links to Council Plan:** The proposals in this report support and contribute to improved outcomes for communities as outlined in the following Council Plan strategic priorities:
 - Growing our economy.
 - Strengthening our Communities.
 - Developing our Infrastructure.
 - Transforming our Council.
8. **Links to Local Outcomes Improvement Plan:** The proposals in this report support and contribute to improved outcomes for communities as outlined in the following Local Outcomes Improvement Plan priorities:
 - Cost of Living.
 - Sustainable Development.
 - Local Equality.
 - Improving Population Health.
9. **Environmental and Climate Risk**–N/A
10. **Risk** - N/A
11. **Procurement** – N/A
12. **Health and Safety** – N/A
13. **Property and Assets** – N/A
14. **Information Technology** – N/A
15. **Cost of Living** – N/A

List of Background Papers

None.