

Agenda Item	8
Report No	RES/06/26

The Highland Council

Committee: Corporate Resources

Date: 19 March 2026

Report Title: Additional Bank Holiday

Report By: Assistant Chief Executive – Corporate Cluster

1 Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report is to determine if the additional bank holiday Monday 15 June 2026 be granted by the council to mark Scotland's participation in the men's football world cup finals.
- 1.2 Granting of an additional bank holiday is a local issue and will have financial and resourcing implications for the council due to the requirement to provide essential services involving housing repairs, homelessness service, emergency social work, bus drivers, mechanics, Corran ferry, welfare benefits. Consideration of the provision of refuse collection and any pre-booked weddings due to take place on Monday 15 June. Provision of maintaining early learning childcare would also have to be addressed to ensure no reduction to the 1140 hours over the course of the year. Closure of schools will require approval from Scottish Government where school days drop below 190 in the academic school year.
- 1.3 Not granting the bank holiday would ensure council service provision continues as normal on 15 June. Annual leave requests that day would be considered in the normal way by managers taking account of staffing levels for safe service delivery.
- 1.4 **Option 1** – Grant Monday 15 June 26 as a bank holiday. Essential Services will be identified by managers to ensure vulnerable people are not adversely impacted by the holiday. The bank holiday will apply to all council staff and staff not due to work this day would receive the appropriate time off at a later date. It is estimated the additional cost to implement this option will be £150k.

Option 2 - Do not grant Monday 15 June 26 as a bank holiday; it continues to operate as a standard working day. Leave requests where appropriate should be approved by managers in the normal way and managers ensure adequate staff are working to provide safe service delivery. Absences which are unauthorised will be dealt with through the council's disciplinary procedure.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to approve option 2:

- i. Monday 15 June is not granted as a bank holiday and services will continue to operate as a standard working day;
- ii. Leave requests, where appropriate be requested for 15 June following the standard process and granted on the basis there is a level of staffing which will maintain a safe service delivery. Leave will not apply to staff working in schools; and
- iii. Unauthorised absences will be dealt with through the normal disciplinary procedure.

3 Implications

- 3.1 **Resource** – Work undertaken on a public/bank holiday attracts enhanced payment either enhance payment or time off in lieu (TOIL). Essential services such as housing maintenance/repairs, homelessness services, emergency social work, waste collection, buses, mechanics. Any pre-booked weddings on Monday 15 June will be honoured. There will also be implications for staff It is estimated that there would be an additional financial cost of £150k to cover staff who will require to work on the bank holiday. There will also be implications for staff undertaking time critical work due to loss of productive that day with work required to be rescheduled which is likely to involve overtime.
- 3.2 **Legal** - Individual councils set their own bank holidays and payment if worked is contained in staff's contractual provision. If there was an allocation of an additional bank holiday, this will result in schools closing and an exemption request submitted to Scottish Government if school days drop below 190.
- 3.3 **Risk** – If a bank holiday is granted vulnerable people may be put at risk if essential services are not provided. Allocation of an additional public holiday will result in a reduction in teaching days. The Council is required to seek permission for this from the Scottish Government. Failure to do so will breach of legislation.
- 3.4 **Health and Safety (risks arising from changes to plant, equipment, process, or people)** - There are no implications arising from this proposal.
- 3.5 **Gaelic** -There are no implications arising from this proposal.

4 Impacts

- 4.1 In Highland, all policies, strategies or service changes are subject to an integrated screening for impact for Equalities, Poverty and Human Rights, Children's Rights and Wellbeing, Climate Change, Islands and Mainland Rural Communities, and Data Protection. Where identified as required, a full impact assessment will be undertaken.
- 4.2 Considering impacts is a core part of the decision-making process and needs to inform the decision-making process. When taking any decision, Members must give due regard to the findings of any assessment.
- 4.3 **Integrated Impact Assessment - Summary**
- 4.3.1 An Integrated Impact Assessment screening has been undertaken on 5.3.26 if the bank holiday is granted. The conclusions have been subject to the relevant Manager Review and Approval.

4.3.2 The Screening process has concluded if the public holiday is granted there are equalities issues relating to age and disability, along with children's rights and wellbeing issues due to the closure of schools. Older adults may also be impacted due to reduced public transport and other essential services provided by the council however this will be mitigated by continuing to provide an emergency provision with enhanced payment to staff. Social economic impact will be mitigated through provision of emergency service continuing to be provided to residents on 15 June such as welfare benefits. Members are asked to consider the summary in **Appendix 1** to support the decision-making process.

4.3.3

Impact Assessment Area	Conclusion of Screening
Equality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children and Young People – there will be an impact on pupils accessing schools if closed and on the provision of 1140 per year early learning and childcare, although this may be negligible. • Children affected by disability – impact pupils attending the council's 3 specialist schools with disruption to education, although this may be negligible. • Older adults – essential services will be provided to mitigate any impact such as emergency social work, housing repairs, homelessness, welfare benefits, bus services
Socio-economic	<i>Negligible negative impact as essential services will continue to be provided for Highland residents</i>
Human Rights	<i>No anticipated impact</i>
Children's Rights and Well-being	<i>Potential positive and negative impact. A day off school could provide pupils with positive impacts, however there will be disruption to learning, this is considered to be a minimal negative impact.</i>
Island and Mainland Rural	<i>No anticipated impact</i>
Climate Change	<i>No anticipated impact</i>
Data Rights	<i>No anticipated impact</i>

5 Background

5.1 There is no statutory right to a bank holiday. Whether or not a worker is entitled to be off work on a bank holiday is determined by their contract of employment which is determined by the Council.

5.2 Highland Council has a total of 15 Public Holiday provision (pro-rata for staff who work less than 5 days per week) for staff working under Scottish Joint Council (SJC) conditions of service.

5.3 Teaching staff and staff paid under NHS conditions of service have separate leave arrangements. In the case of schools, Regulation 5 of the Schools Scotland General (Scotland) Regulations 1975, as amended, requires schools to be open for a

minimum of 190 days per school year. If the council were to approve an additional bank holiday, the council require to submit a request to Scottish Ministers for an exemption if the teaching days fall below 190. With regard to early learning childcare (ELC) provision, the council is legally required to provide 1140 hours of funded ELC over the course of the year. A decision will require to be made whether to continue to provide early learning childcare on a bank holiday or make alternative arrangements to maintain the statutory 1140 hours.

- 5.4 Annual leave can be requested, where appropriate on 15 June and managers consider requests in accordance with normal procedure and taking account of safe service level provision.

6 Options

- 6.1 Option 1 - Grant Monday 15 June 2026 as an additional bank holiday Services will identify essential services which will require to be covered that day, incurring additional financial cost which is estimated to be £150k. Staff who do not work the bank holiday will receive compensatory time off at a later date.
- 6.2 Option 2 – Do not grant Monday 15 June 26 as a bank holiday. Continue to operate as a normal work day on 15 June, with staff who wish to request annual leave submitting their request to their line manager in the normal way for consideration. Staff who wish to take a day's leave on 15 June should submit their request in the normal way. There is no guarantee all leave requests for this day can be approved. Managers must consider the standard of service provision and not place any service users at risk. Unauthorised absences will be dealt with through the council's disciplinary procedure.

7 Benchmarking with other councils

- 7.1 COSLA have collated information from other councils regarding their approach to the Royal Proclamation that 15 June has been confirmed as a bank holiday. The position at 27 February is:
- 2 councils have granted the bank holiday
 - 9 councils have not granted the bank holiday
- 7.2 NHSH have not as yet determined their approach to the bank holiday.

Designation: Assistant Chief Executive – Corporate Custer

Date: 6 March 2026

Author: Elaine Barrie, Head of People

Background Papers: None

Appendices: Appendix 1 – Integrated Impact Assessment

Appendix 1 Integrated Impact Assessment – Additional Football Bank Holiday

High level summary of the proposal

A Royal Proclamation has officially confirmed a bank holiday on Monday 15 June to mark Scotland's participation in the men's football world cups finals. There is no obligation on any employer to grant the holiday, a decision will be taken by individual employers. Due to the nature of services provided by the council, if a bank holiday were to be approved consideration must be given to the provision of essential services to mitigate any risks to service users on the additional bank holiday and costs associated with this. Consideration on how to deal with staff who don't usually work on a Monday and/or are part time.

Individuals affected by the proposal

Housing tenants who require emergency repair services, residents presenting as homeless, children and vulnerable adults who require emergency social work services/intervention, welfare benefits service users, school pupils and early years childcare as premises will close if the additional bank holiday is granted.

Protected characteristics impact details

Age and disability - schools will close if an additional Bank holiday is approved and would drop the school days per year below 190, requiring permission from Scottish Government. Indication is this would be approved. Consideration on alternative arrangements in provision of 1140 hours funded ELC.

Poverty and socio-economic

There will be an impact on ability to access education as all schools will be closed however the reduction in one day's learning in schools and attendance at early years childcare is regarded as minimal impact. Services would continue to be provided to vulnerable residents covering emergency social work, housing repairs, homelessness, welfare benefits, public transport via council bus services would not put residents of the Highlands at a socio-economic disadvantage.

Human rights

There is no anticipated impact on human rights as the reduction in one day's learning in schools and early years childcare is regarded as minimal impact. Permission will be sought from Scottish Government to approve the closure of schools resulting in school days dropping below 190 per year. Consideration of alternative ELC provision where the bank holiday is likely to impact on users of the service.

Equalities, poverty and human rights screening assessment

Continuation of essential services on Monday 15 June will protect children and residents of the Highlands who require to use key services that day, such as emergency housing repairs, homelessness services, emergency social work, waste collection, welfare benefits, bus transport, EL to maintain 1140 hours per year provision if necessary.

Children's rights and wellbeing screening

It is anticipated that the reduction in one day's learning on the proposed Bank holiday will have minimal impact on learning. There is a risk of higher pupil absence level that day if bank holiday is not granted. School closures will require permission from Scottish Government as school days will drop below 190 per year. Consideration of continued 1140 hours for ELC where there is a requirement.

Children have a right to education (Article 28) and the closure of schools arising from granting the additional bank holiday on 15 June would mean the number of school days will drop below the 190 minimum per year required by the Schools General (Scotland) Regulations 1975. It is estimated the loss of one day is deemed to be minimal. ELC provision may be marginally impacted due to the closure of facilities. This will be mitigated by alternative provision.

A day off school can also provide positive impact on pupils.

Data Protection

No new data being processed.

Island and mainland rural communities

There are no implications arising for island and mainland rural communities.

Climate change

There are no climate change implications anticipated if staff and pupils were to be given the 15 June as a bank holiday.