Purpose of Report
To propose awarding ENC staff a one-off additional half day’s leave (pro rata for part-time staff) by closing the council offices for the whole of Christmas Eve.

1.0 Introduction
1.1 At Personnel Sub-Committee meetings in June 2013 and September 2017, decisions were taken to award staff an extra day’s annual leave as a thank you in recognition of their hard work and commitment during several years of austerity. Those extra days were awarded in 2013/14 and 2017/18 only, and did not increase staff’s general leave allowance. There was no increase in costs, as backfill for the extra leave was not provided, and there was no noticeable impact on customers or services.

1.2 The Sub-Committee also approved closure at 12.00 noon on Christmas Eve in 2017, and that early closure has been maintained since on the last working day before Christmas, as again there was no noticeable impact on customers or services.

1.3 Due to the unitary restructure, Christmas 2020 will be the last Christmas for the council, so it seems appropriate to mark this event. This will also be the end of a very difficult and challenging year as staff have dealt with the Covid pandemic, be that by supporting businesses or vulnerable individuals, by maintaining other essential services or by enabling remote / flexible working or otherwise supporting front-line staff.

2.0 Proposal
2.1 While this council has always supported staff and recognised their invaluable contribution to our district, its towns, villages and communities, it is important to strike the right balance between rewarding staff and maintaining service delivery. This is particularly important this year as the Covid pandemic is ongoing, and cover will need to be maintained throughout the Christmas and New Year break.

2.2 It is therefore proposed to award staff an extra half day's leave, pro rata for part-time staff, by closing the council offices at close of business on Wednesday 23rd December, thereby providing that extra leave on Christmas Eve morning. Where part-time staff would not be working that morning anyway, they would be free to take that pro rata leave at any point prior to 31st March 2021. Where staff are required to work that morning to maintain essential services, e.g. ICT staff, the extra half-day can also be taken at any point prior to 31st March 2021.

3.0 Equality implications
3.1 There are no equality implications of this proposal. All staff would have the same entitlement, pro rata for part-time staff.

4.0 Privacy implications
4.1 There are no privacy implications of this proposal.
5.0 Health implications
5.1 It is likely that this proposal would provide a modest boost to staff health and wellbeing.

6.0 Legal implications
6.1 There are no legal implications arising from these proposals.

7.0 Risk management
7.1 There are no new risks arising from these proposals. They are designed to help mitigate the risk of increased staff sickness levels by rewarding and recognising staff commitment and hard work.

8.0 Resource and Financial implications
8.1 There are no financial implications arising from these proposals. In theory, fewer hours could mean reduced productivity but given the low levels of activity on Christmas Eve and the expected boost to morale that the award of an extra half day's leave would create, based on our experience in 2013/14 and 2017/18, it is unlikely that there will be any negative impact on productivity in practice.

9.0 Constitutional Implications
9.1 There are no Constitutional implications arising from these proposals.

10.0 Implications for our Customers
10.1 There are not expected to be any negative customer services implications arising from these proposals. We operate an emergency out of hours service which will come into effect as soon as the offices close on 23rd December.

11.0 Corporate outcomes
11.1 This proposal contributes to the Corporate Outcome of Effective Management, by recognising the value and contribution of our staff.

12.0 Recommendations
12.1 Members are recommended to approve closure of the council offices at 5.00 p.m. on Wednesday 23 December 2020, to be awarded as a further half-day's leave with appropriate arrangements for part-time staff.

(Reason - in recognition of continued staff contribution to the council’s service delivery during a prolonged challenging period for local government)

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<tr>
<th>Legal</th>
<th>Power: Local Government Act 1972</th>
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<td>Other considerations: Report to Personal Sub Committee 11/6/13</td>
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Person Originating Report: David Oliver, Chief Executive - 01832 742105
Date: 25 November 2020

(CFO) MO 25/11/20
(CX) 25/11/20

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