

North Lanarkshire Council Report

Finance and Resources Committee

Does this report require to be approved? Yes No

Ref FW/ LC

Date 04/03/26

Additional Bank Holiday – Monday 15 June 2026

From Fiona Whittaker, Chief Officer (People Resources)

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Executive Summary

On 5 January 2026, the First Minister, John Swinney announced an intention to mark Scotland's qualification for the men's World Cup finals, their first appearance since 1998, by designating Monday 15 June 2026 as a national bank holiday to celebrate the men's football team's opening match against Haiti in Boston on the night of Sat 13th and into the early hours of Sun 14th June 2026. The Scottish Government further confirmed that this proposal received Royal Assent on Thursday 5th February 2026.

At this stage it is understood that support for awarding an additional bank holiday across Local Government is mixed and a significant number of councils are believed to be considering not to award the public holiday or have already communicated this position to their staff. The Scottish Government have confirmed in their announcement that there is no legal requirement for businesses to close and that employer policy regarding bank holidays should prevail. This means that councils remain free to choose their position, and there is no legal obligation to close buildings, schools, or public services based on statutory commitments, operational need, financial considerations, and the potential implications of setting future precedents relating to events of this nature.

Concerns have also been raised about the disruption such a holiday will cause to children's education, particularly given existing pressures on learning time and attendance. There is also recognition that a celebration centred on men's football may not be universally supported and risks excluding those who are not football fans or who do not identify with the associated culture of the event.

Additionally, the Employers Team within COSLA have indicated that they will defer to individual Local Authorities as employers to make the final decision, as has been the case for other additional public holidays in recent years. Similarly, it is understood that NHS Boards are not likely to award the 15th June as an additional public holiday and final consideration of their position on the matter is currently being reviewed at a national level. On this basis and considering other matters outlined within the report, officers are not recommending that the council agree to adopt Monday 15th June as an additional bank holiday.

Following announcement from the Scottish Government that the June holiday has been formally granted Royal Assent, the council now requires to consider its own position on this matter. This is necessary to enable timely communication to services and engagement with staff and trade unions on the matter. It should be emphasised that if a decision were to be deferred to the planned cycle 2 Finance & Resources Committee on the 27th May, it would

leave insufficient time to put arrangements in place for both staff and services should the holiday be awarded.

Elected Members will be aware that previously awarded additional bank holidays, aligned to events within the Royal Family in 2022 and 2023 received immediate Royal Assent, which allowed the Council more time to agree its position and manage the impact on services. This included a requirement to make a formal application to Scottish Government to reduce the number of statutory teaching days to support the agreed closure of schools.

It is important to emphasise that the council remains keen to support and endorse the wider intention behind the proposed public holiday for such an historic event, and its importance to the pride of the Scottish nation. Aligned to this we have included for consideration within the report additional measures which could be undertaken to enable as many staff as possible to participate with their families, without incurring significant costs or disruption to our services. We are also keen to ensure that we are enabling our communities to participate, to celebrate and to feel part of a national event, and information on early planning for community events to support this is included within the report.

Accordingly, and with the known information available to officers at this time, this report is designed to enable Finance and Resources Committee to consider the position and agree a clear way forward to enable the council and its services to proceed on this matter.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Finance and Resources Committee:

- (1) Acknowledge the First Minister’s designation that Monday 15 June 2026 be adopted as an additional bank holiday and that this has received Royal Assent.
- (2) Agree that Monday 15 June 2026 will not be recognised as a public holiday for North Lanarkshire Council employees, for the reasons outlined in this report.
- (3) Acknowledge the alternative arrangements that will be made available to employees to support their participation wherever possible.
- (4) Acknowledge the wider facilities being considered for the local community to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to enjoy Scotland’s participation in the World Cup.

The Plan for North Lanarkshire

Priority	Improve North Lanarkshire's resource base
Ambition statement	(23) Build a workforce for the future capable of delivering on our priorities and shared ambition
Programme of Work	All Programmes of Work

1. Background

- 1.1 The First Minister has announced his intention to designate Monday 15 June 2026 as a bank holiday to mark Scotland men's football team's participation in the World Cup and this received Royal Assent from His Majesty the King on 5th February 2026.
- 1.2 The Council does not normally recognise bank holidays, although it is accepted that in recent years there have been several unforeseen and exceptional circumstances that have resulted in the closure of services and schools and a bank holiday being recognised including the funeral of Queen Elizabeth II and the Coronation of the King.
- 1.3 For clarification, bank holidays (although not normally recognised by the council) are holidays when banks and many other businesses are closed for the day. Public holidays are holidays which have been observed by custom and practice i.e. Christmas day and Easter Friday.
- 1.4 Although the council has supported recent additional bank holidays, these decisions were also backed by national guidance, with COSLA encouraging all councils to observe the specific day and occasion. However, no such guidance has been issued in relation to the proposed bank holiday on 15 June 2026, and COSLA has confirmed that it will be for individual councils to decide whether they wish to recognise this additional bank holiday.
- 1.5 Furthermore, previous additional bank holidays have marked events of national significance across the whole of the United Kingdom and were supported by clear guidance. In contrast, the proposed bank holiday on 15 June 2026 relates solely to a sporting event, which does not carry the same broad public relevance.
- 1.6 There are also concerns about setting a precedent for recognising future events in which Scotland participates, and whether doing so could be viewed as inconsistent or discriminatory given that a similar gesture was not proposed when Scotland's women's national football team reached the World Cup group stages in 2019.
- 1.7 Consideration must also be given to the potential disruption to service delivery, including the closure of schools and early years establishments, as well as the additional costs associated with enhanced overtime rates required to maintain essential services.
- 1.8 The Scottish Government have confirmed with regard to schools and closures arising from observance of the bank holiday on 15 June, that if a council permits the closure of its schools on 15 June resulting in the provision of fewer than 195 school days as required by the Schools General (Scotland) Regulations 1975, then a request to the Scottish Ministers for an exemption from the 195 school days would be required.
- 1.9 Similarly, with regard to Early Learning & Childcare (ELC) Provision, councils have been advised that providing 1140 hours of funded ELC over the course of the year is a statutory obligation, and that individual councils would need to consider how services would need to be adjusted in order to maintain their statutory requirement of providing 1140 hours of funded ELC over the course of the year.
- 1.10 Without clear national direction or a compelling public interest case and given the operational and financial implications for council services, it is considered that there is a reasonable basis for the council to decide not to recognise this additional bank holiday.
- 1.11 Finally, although exact figures were not available at the time of writing, it is understood that the majority of local authorities are planning not to recognise the bank holiday on

15 June 2026, with some having already formally communicated this position to their staff.

2. Report

Legal Position

- 2.1 Under the Scotland Act 1998, Scottish Ministers are responsible for setting bank holidays, while the Banking and Financial Dealings Act 1971 provides the statutory basis for UK and Scottish bank holidays, including provisions for appointing special one-off holidays by royal proclamation. On 5 January 2026, the First Minister announced his intention to designate Monday 15 June 2026 as a national bank holiday in Scotland to allow those who wished to do so to participate in Scotland's opening World Cup match. It should be noted that the match itself takes place in the early hours of the morning of Sunday 14 June and therefore the proposed bank holiday does not cover the football event itself.
- 2.2 There is no statutory right for employees to get public holidays off work. Any right to time off depends on the terms of the employee's contract of employment. If the contract of employment entitles the worker to a specified number of days' holiday inclusive of bank and public holidays, then the additional holiday will have no effect on the overall contractual entitlement. If the contract entitles the worker to a specified number of days' holiday plus all recognised bank and public holidays, they will be contractually entitled to the additional day.
- 2.3 As contracts of employment within the council outline the number of days leave inclusive of public holidays, which are clearly specified, there is no contractual entitlement to the additional days leave. It is the decision of the council as to whether to award the additional day and whether this should be a bank holiday or annual leave day.
- 2.4 The conditions that govern single status staff (known as the Red Book) state that general and public holidays recognised by the council for its employees will be granted as holidays with pay and that by local agreement some of these may be added to annual leave. However, where a decision is taken that an additional day is to be classed as a bank holiday, enhanced rates are applied for those who are required to work as part of their normal working week and for those who are undertaking overtime.

Operational and Organisational Issues

- 2.5 If the council was to recognise the additional bank holiday on Monday 15 June 2026, all schools and educational establishments would be required to close, reducing the statutory number of school days in North Lanarkshire. As confirmed, such reduction requires separate approval from the Scottish Government and the administrative and educational impact could be viewed as disproportionate by parents and guardians, particularly if they have to attend their own work on this day with no childcare available.
- 2.6 An additional bank holiday also creates challenges for ensuring continuity of essential services, particularly in areas such as social care, waste and housing, where staffing levels must be maintained to protect vulnerable individuals and meet statutory obligations. Additionally, those who are required to work in essential services either as part of their normal working week or as overtime, will attract enhanced rates and benefits, increasing the costs of operating the services on that day. It is estimated that the last exceptional bank holiday provided in recognition of the Coronation of the King resulted in a cost to the Council of circa £500k.

- 2.7 As outlined above, additional bank holidays result in significant additional expenditure, and given the ongoing financial pressures on the council, the cost of granting a discretionary holiday, including the closure schools and early years establishments, for the purpose of a football match may be difficult to justify to the public. Such a decision could also attract negative publicity and risk adversely affecting the reputation of both the council and its employees.
- 2.8 North Lanarkshire Council promotes equalities in employment and in the services it provides. A bank holiday to watch a sporting event is unlikely to benefit all employees equally and could be viewed as less inclusive and could jeopardise the reputation of treating all staff fairly, equally and consistently.

Proposal

- 2.9 Although Scotland's participation in the 2026 World Cup is an important sporting achievement, it remains fundamentally a sporting event. Not all employees have an interest in sport, and its significance is not comparable to the nationally important occasions for which bank holidays have previously been granted. Introducing an additional bank holiday for a sporting event may therefore lack broad public support and would not align with the rationale applied to previous decisions.
- 2.10 Furthermore, without national guidance or COSLA direction, the Council would be taking an exceptional and potentially inconsistent approach by designating a local bank holiday for a sporting occasion. It must also consider operational, financial and service delivery impacts which may be difficult to justify in the absence of a clear national mandate or compelling public interest case.
- 2.11 Based on the above, it is proposed that the Council decline to designate Monday 15 June 2026 as an additional bank holiday. It should be noted that early discussions have taken place with Trade Unions to indicate that the proposed bank holiday is not a given for approval, and that this reflects the predominant position across other local authorities.

Arrangements for Employees

- 2.12 In recognition that some employees will wish to watch Scotland's first match against Haiti, managers will be asked to approve annual leave requests for Monday 15 June 2026 where operationally feasible, and to consider reduced staffing levels where appropriate to accommodate a higher volume of requests. Managers should also consider flexible arrangements around start and finish times on days when matches are broadcast late in the evening or early in the morning, provided such arrangements can be supported without detriment to service delivery. Overall, all services are expected to operate as normal, with no noticeable impact on performance or service standards.

Wider Community Arrangements

- 2.13 Building on the success of the Fan Zone at Broadwood Stadium, which provided an inclusive, family friendly environment for communities during the UEFA European Championships to enjoy the football, consideration is being given to organising similar events. Initial plans are focused on a family-focused afternoon packed with inflatables, face painting, and "come and play" sports taster sessions which are perfect for kids and adults alike. With an overall focus on celebrating Scotland's achievements and our hopes, the event is proposed to take place at Ravenscraig Regional Sports Facility, using our FIFA standard pitch as the base for all activities. Live entertainment and refreshments will allow customers of all ages to spend the day building excitement

ahead of the match friendly environment for communities -friendly environment for communities

- 2.14 While the Council recognises that screening World Cup matches in local licensed premises may bring benefits to customers, the local economy and local businesses, it is currently awaiting the statutory guidance to be issued by the Scottish Government under section 142 of the Licensing (Scotland) Act before bringing forward any options for consideration.
- 2.15 It will be a matter for the Licensing Board, in the exercise of its independent statutory functions, to consider that guidance and to determine what, if any, approach should be adopted within its area. The Clerk to the Licensing Board is awaiting that guidance before proposing any recommendations or options to the Licensing Board for its consideration.

Next Steps

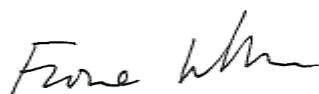
- 2.16 Once the Council's proposed position has been agreed by Finance & Resources Committee, appropriate communications will be issued to staff, parents and the local community and work will continue to ensure that both employees and residents have an opportunity to enjoy this significant sporting event.

3. Measures of success

- 3.1 A fair and consistent approach is taken to ensure employees are provided with an opportunity to watch the football during the period of the World Cup if they desire to do so.
- 3.2 The Council is seen to support and endorse the importance of this event, whilst not incurring additional costs or impacting on local services for residents and those who are most vulnerable in our communities.
- 3.2 The Council will continue to be regarded as a professional organisation that upholds strong business standards and remains committed to equal opportunities.

4. Supporting documentation

- 4.1 Not applicable



Fiona Whittaker
Chief Officer (People Resources)

5. Impacts

<p>5.1 Public Sector Equality Duty and Fairer Scotland Duty Does the report contain information that has an impact as a result of the Public Sector Equality Duty and/or Fairer Scotland Duty? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?</p> <p>Equality Impact Assessments will form a key part of the review process and will be undertaken at the appropriate point in the project.</p> <p>If Yes, has an assessment been carried out and published on the council's website? https://www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk/your-community/equalities/equality-and-fairer-scotland-duty-impact-assessments Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>5.2 Financial impact Does the report contain any financial impacts? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If Yes, have all relevant financial impacts been discussed and agreed with Finance? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?</p> <p>Costs will only be applicable if the proposal is rejected and the decision is taken to designate Monday 15 June 2026 as an additional bank holiday.</p>
<p>5.3 HR policy impact Does the report contain any HR policy or procedure impacts? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If Yes, have all relevant HR impacts been discussed and agreed with People Resources? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?</p> <p>Contractually, employees are not entitled to an additional day's leave and therefore there is no change to terms and conditions or contractual entitlements.</p>
<p>5.4 Legal impact Does the report contain any legal impacts (such as general legal matters, statutory considerations (including employment law considerations), or new legislation)? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If Yes, have all relevant legal impacts been discussed and agreed with Legal and Democratic? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?</p>
<p>5.5 Data protection impact Does the report / project / practice contain or involve the processing of personal data? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If Yes, is the processing of this personal data likely to result in a high risk to the data subject? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If Yes, has a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) been carried out and e-mailed to dataprotection@northlan.gov.uk Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>

<p>5.6 Technology / Digital impact Does the report contain information that has an impact on either technology, digital transformation, service redesign / business change processes, data management, or connectivity / broadband / Wi-Fi? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?</p> <p>Where the impact identifies a requirement for significant technology change, has an assessment been carried out (or is scheduled to be carried out) by the Enterprise Architecture Governance Group (EAGG)? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>5.7 Environmental / Carbon impact Does the report / project / practice contain information that has an impact on any environmental or carbon matters? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?</p>
<p>5.8 Communications impact Does the report contain any information that has an impact on the council's communications activities? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact? There will be a requirement to communicate to staff and the wider community if the proposal is agreed not to designate Monday 15 June 2026 as an additional bank holiday.</p>
<p>5.9 Risk impact Is there a risk impact? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the key risks and potential impacts, highlighting where the risk(s) are assessed and recorded (e.g. Corporate or Service or Project Risk Registers), and how they are managed?</p>
<p>5.10 Armed Forces Covenant Duty Does the report require to take due regard of the Armed Forces Covenant Duty (i.e. does it relate to healthcare, housing, or education services for in-Service or ex-Service personnel, or their families, or widow(er)s)? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the provision which has been made to ensure there has been appropriate consideration of the particular needs of the Armed Forces community to make sure that they do not face disadvantage compared to other citizens in the provision of public services.</p>
<p>5.11 Children's rights and wellbeing impact Does the report contain any information regarding any council activity, service delivery, policy, or plan that has an impact on children and young people up to the age of 18, or on a specific group of these? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact and the provision that has been made to ensure there has been appropriate consideration of the relevant Articles from the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).</p> <p>If Yes, has a Children's Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment (CRWIA) been carried out? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p>