



**Corporate Policy &
Resources Committee**

13th November 2025

Subject: Christmas and New Year Opening Hours Arrangements for 2025/6

Report by:

Director of Change Management, ICT &
Regulatory Services

Contact Officer:

Lyn Marlow
Customer Strategy and Services Manager

lyn.marlow@west-lindsey.gov.uk

Purpose / Summary:

The report proposes the Council opening hours for the period between Christmas 2025 and New Year's Eve 2026 and includes options for early closing on New Years Eve and all day closure on Friday 2 January 2026.

RECOMMENDATION:

- 1) That Committee approves the closure of the Council offices at 2pm on 31st December 2025.
- 2) That Committee approves the closure of the Council offices on Friday 2nd January 2026

IMPLICATIONS

Legal: (N.B.) Where there are legal implications, the report MUST be seen by the MO
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The Constitution provides that the Head of Paid Service is able “To determine the closing time of Council offices and Depots on the last working day before Christmas Day following consultation with the Chairman of Corporate Policy and Resources Committee.”
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Any additional early or full closure recommendations for other days over the Christmas and New Year period would need to be considered and decided by Corporate Policy and Resources Committee.

Financial:

The recommendation is to close the Council office on Friday 2 nd January 2026 and not require annual leave to be taken. For those operational staffing having to work a day in lieu will be provided.
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The cost of closing the Council office on a normal working day would be £36.7k excluding temporary funded posts or £39.8k including temporary funded posts. As this day would normally be a working day the costs have already been budgeted for and will be paid.
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FIN REF: FIN/77/26/CPR/SSc

Staffing: Arrangements for use of annual leave and flexi leave is a decision between line managers and employees. The council’s constitution sets out that the Head of Paid Service has the delegated authority to determine the closing time of council offices and depots on the last working day before Christmas Day following consultation with the Chairman of the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee.

HR REF:HR251-10-24

Equality and Diversity including Human Rights : None

Data Protection Implications: None

Climate Related Risks and Opportunities: None
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Section 17 Crime and Disorder Considerations: None

Health Implications:

Title and Location of any Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:

Risk Assessment:

Closing early or for a full day may have reputational issues with our customers, although those will be mitigated with a communications plan advertising our opening hours and accessibility to out of hours support.

In addition, the out of hours service will commence at the point we close services with vulnerable customer situations being dealt with in accordance with our out of hours process.

Early closing may have reputational risks but mitigated by good communications and data showing low demand. Our Out of hours service ensures support for customers.

Risks	Mitigations
Reputational risk if customers perceive reduced availability negatively	Implement a comprehensive communications plan to inform customers in advance, using data to demonstrate low demand.
Essential services may be disrupted	Ensure out-of-hours and emergency cover is in place for vulnerable customers and critical services.
Staff confusion about arrangements	Provide clear, timely internal communications and guidance to all teams.
Inconsistent approach with tenant organisations or partners	Coordinate with tenants and partners to ensure alignment and support for their operational needs
Contractor confusion about arrangements	Provide clear, timely communications and guidance to all relevant contractors.

Call in and Urgency:

Is the decision one which Rule 14.7 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules apply?

i.e. is the report exempt from being called in due to urgency (in consultation with C&I chairman)

Yes

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No

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Key Decision:

A matter which affects two or more wards, or has significant financial implications

Yes

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No

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1. Summary

- 1.1 The report proposes office opening hours for the period between Christmas 2025 and New Year's Eve 2025, including early closing on Christmas and New Year's Eve and closure on Friday 2 January 2026.
- 1.2 For 2025/26 Christmas Day and New Years Day fall on a Thursday with Boxing Day being a Friday, all these days are statutory bank holidays, and the Council is closed on statutory bank holidays: Thursday 25 December 2025 (Christmas day), Friday 26 December 2025 (Boxing Day), Thursday 1 January 2026 (New Year's Day).
- 1.3 The Constitution provides that the Head of Paid Service, in consultation with the Chairman of Corporate Policy and Resources, can decide to close the Council offices early on the last working day before Christmas Day and this has been agreed as a 2pm closure.
- 1.4 Any additional early closure or full day closure recommendations for other days over the Christmas and New Year period must be considered and decided by this Committee and this report includes the recommendation for consideration by Committee for early closing on New Years Eve, Wednesday 31 December 2025 and closure on Friday 2 January 2026, as outlined in the recommendations.
- 1.5 Team Managers will provide the required cover over the Christmas and the New Year period, and each service will provide their detailed arrangements to the Customer Services Team to ensure smooth customer enquiry resolution during this period.
- 1.6 For earlier closing days, staff would use annual leave or flexi time, except for essential cover from CCTV, Property Services, ICT emergency remote cover and emergency out of hours cover. Other operational service area exceptions are notes in section 5 of this report.
- 1.7 The recommendation for a full day closure on Friday 2nd January 2026 will not require annual leave be taken as this will be an additional days leave for the 2nd January only and an alternative day in lieu will be provided for those who are required to be in work for operational reasons.

2. Rationale

- 2.1 Officers have shown commitment, professionalism, and adaptability, allowing the Council to consistently deliver high-quality services and

achieve key objectives, as highlighted in the Council's Progress and Delivery reports.

- 2.2 Analysis of service demand data confirms that the proposed opening hours will have minimal impact on customers, with robust out-of-hours arrangements in place and operational services delivery still in place.

3. Arrangements for Staff

- 3.1 Staff who do not have the option to be off for the proposed closure day - such as the teams from Trinity Arts Centre, Operational Services, CCTV, Crematorium - will be able to take time off in lieu to be use on an alternative date. The provision will be pro-rated for part-time workers.
- 3.2 Should Committee approve the recommendations, the offices will be closed on 2nd January 2026 and officers based at the Guildhall will not be required to attend work, save for the CCTV officers. For officers based at other sites and for those who are required to work on 2 January 2026, they will be provided with hours in lieu to take, equivalent to an average workday for their weekly work pattern, to be taken within their current leave year, subject to usual line manager approval.

4. Service Provision

- Out of hours support and emergency cover in place when offices are closed.
- Customers can find information and transact on the WLDC Website and our chatbot (Lindsey) available 24/7.
- Notices about opening/closing times will be widely communicated via our website, social media, press release, and messages on the telephone system in the lead up to Christmas, within reception and entry doors facing outwards.

5. Service Exceptions

- **Crematorium:** services to be delivered dependent on bookings over the Christmas and New year period
- **Operational Services:** Working on 27 & 28 December 2025, as part of their normal working week with published festive season collections over Christmas and the New Year with the normal Thursday collections being due to be completed on Friday 02 January <https://www.west-lindsey.gov.uk/bins-waste-recycling/bank-holiday-waste-recycling-collection-information>
- **Trinity Arts Centre:** Open for Pantomime on 24, 27 to 31 December 2025, as normal.

- **CCTV:** 24/7 operational throughout.
- **ICT:** 24/7 emergency out of hours remote cover throughout
- **Building Control:** 24/7 emergency out of hours duty system throughout
- **Tenant organisations:** Arrangements have been made for access and support as required.

6. Operating Hours (Week Commencing 22 December 2025)

Day	Times	Changes Proposed
Monday 22 December	9am till 5pm	N/A
Tuesday 23 December	9am till 5pm	N/A
Wednesday 24 December	9am till 2pm	Close at 2pm and switch to Emergency Out of Hours (as per Head of Paid Service delegation)
Thursday 25 December	Bank Holiday - Closed	N/A Emergency Out of Hours in operation
Friday 26 December	Bank Holiday - Closed	N/A Emergency Out of Hours in operation

7. Operating Hours (Week Commencing 29 December 2025)

Day	Time	Changes Proposed
Monday 29 December	9am till 5pm	N/A
Tuesday 30 December	9am till 5pm	N/A
Wednesday 31 December	9am till 2pm	Close at 2pm and switch to Emergency Out of Hours
Thursday 1 January 2026	Bank Holiday - Closed	N/A Emergency Out of Hours in operation
Friday 2 January 2026	9am till 5pm	Closed all day – Emergency Out of Hours in operation

8. Neighbouring Councils

Benchmarking with other councils; some are close for extended periods; others have similar arrangements to the recommendations for West Lindsey:

- **City of Lincoln** will be closing early on Christmas Eve and closed Friday 2 January with staff taking annual leave
- **South Kesteven District Council** will close at noon on Christmas Eve and New Years Eve, and staff are to be gifted the afternoons off and closed on 2 January with staff taking annual leave or lieu time.
- **North Kesteven District Council** will close on Wednesday 24 December and will reopen on Friday 2 January 2026 with staff taking annual leave for the days that are not bank holidays. This pattern will be followed every year going forward.
- **Boston Borough Council/South Holland District Council and East Lindsey District Council** will be closing at 2pm Christmas and New Years Eve and closed all day on 2 January with staff taking annual leave or lieu time.
- **Lincolnshire County Council** will be working be closing 5pm and Christmas and New Years Eve and open on Friday 2 January 2026

9. Recommendations

- To approve the closure of the Council offices at 2pm on 31st December 2025
- To approve the closure of the Council offices on 2nd January 2026