



Committee report

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| Committee | CABINET |
| Date | 9 NOVEMBER 2017 |
| Title | TO AGREE TO CONSULT ON SCHOOL TERM DATES |
| Report to | CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES |

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Isle of Wight Council wishes to investigate the patterns of term and holiday dates within the IWC school year to ensure that they best support learning and outcomes for children as well as best supporting our education and wider communities in how they organise the work and home life calendars.
2. This paper seeks approval for a consultation to ask all interested parties for their views in seeking to introduce the options presented within the paper. Subject to the outcome of a consultation the first year in which a new school year can be implemented is September 2019 to August 2020.

BACKGROUND

3. It is the responsibility of a local authority to schedule a maintained school year which provides the statutory 190 pupil days and 195 teacher days in voluntary controlled and community schools. In other status of school the governing body must set a school year. The current pattern of term and holidays includes:
 - A start of term in very early September and a long autumn term with a single week's half term holiday
 - Christmas holidays of about two weeks which wherever possible include three weekends
 - a shorter spring term with a single week's half term holiday
 - Easter holidays which are scheduled to include the Easter weekend
 - a summer term, punctuated by public examinations, again with a single week's half term holiday
 - The long summer holiday break lasting up to 6 weeks

4. The Isle of Wight Council has committed to consult on alternatives to the current school year. This paper details the options on which it proposes to consult.

STRATEGIC CONTEXT

5. The proposals for a revised school year promote Corporate Plan 2017-2020 priorities:
 - A well-educated and skilled community

WHY CHANGE?

6. The Council is committed to school improvement and better outcomes for children. The Council is considering changes to the school year to address:
 - Learning loss that occurs in the long summer holiday
 - The long autumn term that is tiring for children, families and school staff
 - Irregularities in the current patterns which make some school years 'fit badly' with the natural rhythms of school e.g. recent shorter Christmas holiday breaks.

The cost of holidays can be prohibitive for families when they are restricted to taking holidays in school time. By reviewing the year and achieving any departures from the pattern that proliferates across the country the Council hopes that some affordable choice might be achieved.

7. Certain aspects of the school year will be retained. In particular no changes will be made if they might compromise school improvement. Public examinations require schools to be in session during May and June, restricting options in the summer. Also the outcomes of GCSE results in late August restrict the school year that can be followed by secondary phase schools. .
8. The authority sets the school year for 27 of the Island's 48 schools. It is hoped that through the consultation phase we would seek to agree in principle with other educational facilities whose term dates the LEA do not set but it is accepted that the local education authority cannot compel this. It is proposed to further consult these other educational establishments as part of the consultation exercise and the report brought back to members for final decision will summarise their replies including if they would intend to mirror any changes the LEA. In designing any new school year the IWC will be cognisant of the Island's economy, including but not exclusively tourism, and how families and businesses can best be economically active while also supporting residents who are in education or working in education

OPTION 1

9. The summer holiday is reduced by one week and will, whenever possible, be a full five week break. The Council will then establish a two week half term holiday as the break in the Autumn Term or the Spring Term. Public examinations in secondary schools prevent a two week half term break in the summer term.

Option 1A, a two week break in the Autumn Half Term, would create a typical pattern of the school year as shown below:

| | |
|----------------------------------|---------|
| Autumn First Half Term | 7 weeks |
| Two weeks Half Term Holiday | |
| Autumn Second Half Term | 7 weeks |
| Two weeks Christmas Holiday | |
| Spring First Half Term | 6 weeks |
| One week Half Term Holiday | |
| Spring Second Half Term | 6 weeks |
| Two weeks Easter Holiday | |
| Summer First Half Term | 6 weeks |
| One week Half Term Holiday | |
| Summer 2 nd Half Term | 7 weeks |
| 5 week Summer Holiday | |

There would need to be slight changes to the pattern over time, taking account of the movements of the Easter weekend. The particular dates that would apply for the school year 2019-20 are attached in Appendix 1.

Option 1B, a two week break in the Spring Half Term, would create a typical pattern of the school year as shown below,

| | |
|----------------------------------|---------|
| Autumn First Half Term | 8 weeks |
| One week Half Term Holiday | |
| Autumn Second Half Term | 7 weeks |
| Two weeks Christmas Holiday | |
| Spring First Half Term | 6 weeks |
| Two week Half Term Holiday | |
| Spring Second Half Term | 5 weeks |
| Two weeks Easter Holiday | |
| Summer First Half Term | 6 weeks |
| One week Half Term Holiday | |
| Summer 2 nd Half Term | 7 weeks |
| 5 week Summer Holiday | |

The particular dates that would apply in that year are attached in Appendix 2.

OPTION 2

10. To achieve more regularity in the School Year IWC has a further proposal that might, with support from the consultation process, be used in the school year 2020/21 . Using the above model as a starting point the proposal is to reduce the summer holiday by a further week, to regularise the length of the spring term (to 11 school weeks), and to provide a 2 week Spring Half Term Holiday.

11. The term would need to be ‘decoupled’ from the Easter weekend; schools would not be open on Good Friday or Easter Monday but what has traditionally been the Easter break would not necessarily include the religious Easter weekend.
12. There are either 20 or 21 weeks counting from the first full week of January up to the summer term half term holiday week prescribed by the examination timetable. This allows 16 or 17 weeks of learning and 4 weeks of holiday (within the proposal) which naturally creates 5 or 6 weeks half terms in the Spring Term and 5 weeks in the first half of the summer term. The second half of the Summer term will be 8 or 9 weeks to ensure the 39 week school year.
13. The pattern of the school year, with the Easter break referred to as the Easter/Spring Holiday, would typically become

| | |
|----------------------------------|---------|
| Autumn First Half Term | 7 weeks |
| Two weeks Half Term Holiday | |
| Autumn Second Half Term | 7 weeks |
| Two weeks Christmas Holiday | |
| Spring First Half Term | 6 weeks |
| Two week Half Term Holiday | |
| Spring Second Half Term | 5 weeks |
| Two weeks Easter/Spring Holiday | |
| Summer First Half Term | 5 weeks |
| One week Half Term Holiday | |
| Summer 2 nd Half Term | 9 weeks |
| 4 week Summer Holiday | |

This arrangement can be first implemented in school year 2020/21. The particular dates that would apply in that year, assuming option 1 has been accepted, are attached as in Appendix 2.

OPTION 3

14. To retain the current arrangement whereby the long standing pattern of term and holiday dates fitted into the particular key dates of Christmas, Easter and the public examinations timetable.

CONSULTATION

15. There has been no wider consultation to date. The paper seeks approval to consult. The timetable for the consultation and eventual decision is as follows

| | |
|---------------------------------|------------|
| Launch Consultation | 24/11/2017 |
| Headteacher Conference | 07/12/2017 |
| Joint Consultative Meetings | 07/12/2017 |
| End of Consultation | 12/01/2018 |
| Cabinet (for eventual decision) | 08/03/2018 |

16. Head Teachers have discussed the school year at their Forum in December 2016 and the issue was raised at summer’s Policy and Scrutiny Committee for

Children's Services when the Council considered the recommendation for the 2018/19 School Year.

17. If approved consultation would need to take place with the public, business group, schools and their governing bodies, the IoW College, Independent Schools and diocesan boards of education.

FINANCIAL / BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

18. No financial implications arising from any future variation of the school year are expected.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

19. It is the responsibility of a local authority to schedule a maintained school year which provides the statutory 190 pupil days and 195 teacher days in voluntary controlled and community schools. The Isle of Wight Council must set the school year for 27 of the 48 schools on the Island.

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

20. The council as a public body is required to meet its statutory obligations under the Equality Act 2010 to have due regard to eliminate unlawful discrimination, promote equal opportunities between people from different groups and to foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it. The protected characteristics are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
21. An Equality Impact Assessment will be completed following the consultation and submitted to the Cabinet along with the outcome of the consultation to be considered by the Members.

OPTIONS

26. That the Isle of Wight Council consults on revising its School Year using the options as basis for that consultation. The outcome of the consultation will be reported back to Cabinet in March before setting the school year dates for 2019-20.

RISK MANAGEMENT

22. The paper seeks approval to consult on the options in this paper. The Council must set the school year for its community and voluntary controlled schools. In the event that the Council chooses not to pursue either of Option 1 or 2, without consulting then, as stated above, the Council will need to take its usual approach and devise a school year that follows the existing typical pattern.

EVALUATION

23. A consultation is required to establish the school year in 2019/20. This paper introduces the prospect that the consultation will identify options that deviate

from the more typical pattern of term and holiday dates, including the option for there to be no change from the current typical pattern.

24. In future years the authority will need to consult on school years; this will allow other patterns to be introduced.

RECOMMENDATION

25. That the Isle of Wight Council consults on revising its School Year using the options as basis for that consultation. The outcome of the consultation will be reported back to Cabinet in March before setting the school year dates for 2019-20.

APPENDICES ATTACHED

26. [Appendix 1](#), Option 1A, proposed 2019/20 School Year, 2 week Autumn Half Term Holiday;

[Appendix 2](#), Option 1B, proposed 2019/20 School Year, 2 week Spring Half Term Holiday and

[Appendix 3](#), Proposed 2020/21 School Year, 2 week Autumn Half Term Holiday, 2 Week Spring Half Term Holiday and 'regular' 11 week Spring term.

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