



# Minutes

Name of meeting	<b>POLICY AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES</b>
Date and time	<b>TUESDAY, 20 FEBRUARY 2018</b>
Venue	<b>COUNCIL CHAMBER, COUNTY HALL, NEWPORT, ISLE OF WIGHT</b>
Present	Cllrs Vanessa Churchman (Chairman), Debbie Andre, George Cameron, John Howe, Tig Outlaw.
Cabinet Members Present	Cllrs Paul Brading, Dave Stewart
Officers Present	Mrs Jennifer Beresford, Martin Goff
Apologies	Karl Love, Chris Whitehouse

22. **[Declarations of Interest](#)**

No declarations were received at this time.

23. **[Determine Academic Year/Term Dates For 2019 - 2020](#)**

The committee considered a report which outlined the results of a public consultation regarding changing the pattern of school terms times and proposed changes to the 2019/20 school holidays. In order to improve educational attainment it was proposed term times be balanced and the pattern of the school year be changed to alleviate tiredness resulting from long terms. The four options presented were a five week summer holiday and two week autumn (October) half term, a five week summer holiday and two week spring (May) half term, a four week summer holiday and a two week autumn and spring half term or no change.

Members were advised that the consultation had been successful; 1,877 responses had been received compared the previous consultation when no responses had been received. The balance of the responses, from staff, parents and pupils, had been good. The results of the consultation indicated respondents were not in favour of the current arrangements and supported a reduction of the summer holidays and increase in to the autumn half term. The schools on the Island which were not community or voluntary controlled schools had indicated they would follow the term dates set by the local authority.

The chair presented comments received from the Isle of Wight Association of Local Councils (IWALC) which suggested IWALC did not feel there was

substantial evidence supporting longer holidays being detrimental to children's learning, citing the results of private schools, which have significantly longer holidays compared to state schools, in support of this. They also raised concerns regarding a longer spring break impacting on exams. The comments went on to state that any changes adopted should be for all schools on the Island and that IWALC supported shortening the summer holiday and extending the autumn term.

Concerns were raised regarding the suggestion by Unison in its representation, that four teaching days per Year 11 pupil would be lost if the summer holidays were shortened. Members were reassured it was not uncommon for school years to vary since the schools holidays were not exactly six weeks long and officers had found that while there was a possibility of this in the year of transition, future years would not be affected.

The committee explored if shortening the summer holiday would negatively impact on teacher recruitment. It was not expected this would be the case; holiday entitlement was being reduced and anecdotal evidence suggested an extended autumn half term would be beneficial to teachers who often worked the first and last days of half term breaks. There was no expected impact on schools logistical arrangements (transport, catering etc.) which were already variable.

Consideration was given to the effect of a reduced summer holiday on the business community and children's work experience through summer jobs. Since the changes would provide a more structured summer holiday it was felt this would not be an issue.

Members questioned the impact of the changes on disadvantaged families. It was not expected this would be negative and after debate about the consultation being representative of all social classes, it was accepted that the opportunity had been provided for all members of the public to participate in the consultation, but as with voting, participation was not compulsory.

Discussion took place regarding the inclusion of the Easter festival in the Easter Holidays. The consultation had sought views on decoupling the Easter festival from the holidays, something which would only result in the Easter festival falling outside the holidays once every 10 years. The general consensus was that a more balanced school year would be beneficial. Initially it was proposed the recommendation be amended to include fixing the Easter holidays. However, officers advised it was already possible to do this and the question had been included to assess if there would be significant opposition to doing so.

RESOLVED:

THAT the committee support the recommendation to cabinet regarding reducing the summer holiday to five weeks and extending the autumn half term to two weeks.

CHAIRMAN