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Purpose: For Decision

Committee report

Committee	EXECUTIVE
Date	13 JULY 2017
Title	DETERMINE ACADEMIC YEAR/TERM DATES FOR 2018/2019
Report to	CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The purpose of this paper is to inform the Executive Member for Children's Services on the need to determine the pattern of school term and holiday dates for the school year 2018/2019.

The recommendation is to agree the proposed school term dates for 2018-2019, to provide a consistent and appropriate term date calendar for schools across the Isle of Wight, taking into consideration the usual pattern of local authority calendars across the UK and the ongoing partnership arrangements with Hampshire County Council.

BACKGROUND

2. It is the responsibility of a local authority to schedule a school year which provides the statutory 190 pupil days and 195 teacher days in voluntary controlled and community schools. The structure for delivering this entitlement has been the subject of national and local debate in recent years.

The Local Government Association (LGA) National Standing Committee on the School Year has, in the past, been active in seeking to establish a National School Year but this process has now ended.

Establishing more balanced term lengths with regular breaks supports an aim of the corporate strategy, to maximising wellbeing, by helping schools and families to plan learning more effectively.

Children benefit from good attendance in school; in particular it supports educational achievement and lays the foundation for a positive contribution to society and economic well-being. Properly structured periods of learning and rest help children to remain healthy, enjoy their school time and achieve more. The publication of dates well in advance enables families to plan holidays and arrange childcare so that school attendance need not be compromised.

The Government proposed that all schools shall set their own school year. They progressed legislation that would require this but have since advised that they do not intend enacting the new legislation.

The proposed pattern for term and holiday dates takes account of the last day of term in July 2018 and then best provides balanced half terms and holiday periods. The proposed calendar is also in alignment with Hampshire County Council's 2018-19 term dates to support the ongoing partnership between the two local authorities.

There has been agreement with all Island schools that one of the non-teaching days is taken on the first day of the autumn term (this being 3 September 2018), and the remaining four are determined and allocated by the school as they wish.

STRATEGIC CONTEXT

3. Raising educational achievement is a priority of the council as set out in the council's Corporate Plan. The standardisation of dates helps all schools to plan effectively.
4. The Isle of Wight Council intends to proceed in due course to consult widely about changes to those dates for future years. The process to explore that will require a discussion with schools during the first half of the autumn term 2017 with any consequent proposals for a new pattern of term and holiday dates are shared more widely in the 2nd Autumn half term.

If a consensus for change can be reached then for 2019/20 the IWC will provide a more radical pattern of term and holiday dates; otherwise a current more traditional pattern will be adopted. A key feature to be explored is whether parents and school staff can have the opportunity to take holidays when prices are less expensive given the seasonal nature of work on the Island which makes summer holidays difficult for some families.

CONSULTATION

5. The proposed pattern of holiday and term dates is shown in the Appendix. Key features of the proposed pattern are half term lengths that are consistent with the usual school year pattern taking account of Christmas, Easter and summer GCSE and A Level examinations timetable.

Much of the school year was straightforward to devise. Schools were asked for comments on the best form for the Christmas holiday period. Schools preferred, by a majority of 16 to 2, for a break that begins on the last Friday before Christmas (21st December) 2018 and has two full weeks before the Spring term starts on 7th January 2019.

FINANCIAL / BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

6. There are no financial implications from this report. School dates are a statutory requirement.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

7. The council is required, under section 32 of the Education Act 2002, to set school term and holiday dates for community, voluntary-controlled schools, community special schools, and maintained schools.

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

8. The proposed calendar for 2018/19 term dates applies to all community, voluntary-controlled schools, community special schools, and maintained schools on the Island. This excludes academies and Free Schools (including IW Studio school) who are free to set their own term dates. The proposed calendar is applied across all of our schools in the same way and therefore does not have any impact on any of the protected characteristics.

OPTIONS

9. There has been careful consideration to the proposed calendar 2018-19. Other small variations on the proposed pattern have been considered and the proposal has been discussed with schools. Varying the pattern that schools have had chance to comment on is possible but not usual given the involvement of schools in providing a steer on both the pattern and some of the specific features employed in this model.

RISK MANAGEMENT

10. It is a requirement for the local authority to set school term and holiday dates for all its maintained schools, other than voluntary aided and foundation schools, to whom the dates are recommended. If the Council fails to agree term dates for 2018-19 it is failing in its statutory duty to comply with section 32 of the Education Act 2002.

EVALUATION

11. The proposed calendar has been carefully considered and falls within historic and accepted patterns of school term dates.

It has also been considered to ensure that it is aligned with Hampshire County Council's 2018-19 term dates to support the ongoing partnership between the two local authorities and ensure that teachers and families are having the same holiday pattern. Having considered the above, it is felt that the option in the Appendix is the most suitable.

RECOMMENDATION

12. To approve the proposed calendar for term dates 2018/19 as set out in the Appendix.

APPENDICES ATTACHED

13. [Appendix](#) - Draft calendar of term dates for 2018/19

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