



Delegated decision report

DECISION UNDER DELEGATED POWERS

DECISION CANNOT BE TAKEN BEFORE 17 APRIL 2019

TITLE DETERMINE ACADEMIC YEAR/TERM DATES FOR 2020/2021

**REPORT OF CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES,
EDUCATION AND SKILLS**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The purpose of this paper is to inform the Cabinet on the determination of the pattern of school term and holiday dates for the school year 2020/2021 and to note the outcomes of the consultation process that has been followed. For 2019/2020 the Isle of Wight Council introduced a 2-week October half term, this will be the 2nd year in which this pattern of term dates operates.
2. The recommendation is to agree the proposed school term dates for 2020/2021, 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

3. 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 2020 and then best provides balanced half terms and holiday periods. There has been agreement with Island schools that one of the non-teaching days is taken on the first day of the autumn term (this being 31 August 2020), and the remaining four are determined and allocated by the school as they wish.

STRATEGIC CONTEXT

4. 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.
5. Following a major consultation for the 2019/2020 School Year the IWC introduced a 2 week October half term break. A consequence of the additional week in the autumn is a shorter summer break. Two schools on the Island with responsibility for setting the school year chose not to adopt the IWC's pattern. The next consultation, for 2021/2022 term dates, will be carried out with schools having had experience of the new pattern.

CONSULTATION

6. A consultation with all schools and professional associations began in December 2018. Comments were invited on their preferred pattern of dates, responses being required by January 2019.

The school year proposed in the consultation presented an eight-week first half autumn term with a shorter second half term. Many comments were received, from both primary and secondary phase schools suggesting that the half term holiday is moved so that the teaching periods in the term are of equal length. This change is reflected in the recommended pattern and has been shared with schools for further comment.

Also, one school commented that the autumn half term might finish on Friday 18 December to enable two full weeks and three weekends over the Christmas period. To achieve this the last day of the summer term would need to move from 23 July to 27 July. The same school also proposed that Easter holidays can be 1 week earlier.

The pattern of dates includes schools being open on Monday 21 December. Schools are encouraged to take this day as a teacher day to allow for the school to be closed to children for two weeks.

7. Following consultation, the proposed pattern of holiday and term dates is shown in Appendix 1. Key features of the proposed pattern are:
 - the two-week October half term break,
 - equal lengths of half terms in the autumn term.
 - a longest possible time after Easter but before summer half term which will be helpful for schools supporting children taking KS2 SATs and KS4 examinations.

FINANCIAL / BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

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

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

9. Under s32 Education Act 2002, the local authority shall determine the dates when the school terms and holidays are to begin and end for community, voluntary controlled or community special schools.

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

10. The proposed calendar for 2020/21 term dates applies to all community, voluntary-controlled schools, community special schools, and maintained schools on the Island. This excludes academies and Free Schools 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 of any of the protected characteristics.

OPTIONS

11. There has been careful consideration to the proposed calendar 2020/21. The majority of neighbouring authorities will be consulting, or have consulted, on a very similar calendar. There is, of course, no guarantee that all local authorities will agree the same option, but we hope this will lead to more consistent holiday dates between local authorities.

RISK MANAGEMENT

12. 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 it is failing in its statutory duty to comply with section 32 of the Education Act 2002.

EVALUATION

13. The proposed calendar has been carefully considered in light of the change that applied for 2019/2020.

Having considered the above, it is felt that the option in Appendix 1 is the most suitable.

RECOMMENDATION

14. To approve the proposed calendar for term dates 2020/21 as set out in Appendix 1.

APPENDICES

15. [Appendix 1: Draft calendar of term dates for 2020/21](#)

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Decision

Signed

Date
