

North Tyneside Council

Report to Cabinet

10 August 2015

ITEM 6(e)

**School Term and Holiday
Dates 2016/17**

Portfolio(s): Children Young People &
Learning

Cabinet Member(s): Councillor Ian
Grayson

Report from Service Area: Commissioning and Investment

Responsible Officer: Mark Longstaff, Head of Commissioning and Investment (Tel: (0191) 643 8089)

Wards affected: All Wards

PART 1

1.1 Purpose:

The purpose of the report is to seek Cabinet approval for the proposed school term and holiday dates for 2016/17.

At the time of writing, not all authorities in the region have confirmed their term dates for 2016/17. However the recommended calendar is in line with published dates for Northumberland and matches current proposals in all other Tyne and Wear authorities except Newcastle. The calendar published by Newcastle is almost identical, with the only difference being the Christmas 2016 holidays: Newcastle schools will break up and return slightly later.

1.2 Recommendation(s):

It is recommended that Cabinet approve the school term and holiday dates for 2016/17, as set out in Appendix 1 to this report.

1.3 Forward Plan:

Twenty eight days notice of this report has been given and it first appeared on the Forward Plan that was published on 7th July 2015.

1.4 Council Plan and Policy Framework

This report relates to the following priority in the 2014/18 Our North Tyneside Plan: *Our People will be supported to achieve their full potential, especially our children and young people.*

1.5 Information:

Background

- 1.5.1 Regulations require that 380 sessions, being 190 school term days be provided for pupils in each school year (see 2.2 below). In addition, 5 teacher training days must be identified in the school year; the dates are set at the discretion of the school.
- 1.5.2 In 2008 a short questionnaire was circulated to 280 parent governors in North Tyneside requesting views on the preferred maximum and minimum length of term, and about the factors which were most important to parents.
- 1.5.3 The responses to the survey did not indicate high demand for changes to the recognised pattern of term dates. However they did provide a useful indication of the factors that parents consider important. The key messages were that most parents would like no holiday to be longer than 6 weeks, no period of term time to be longer than 7 weeks, and that school holidays should take account of bank holidays, particularly those around Christmas and Easter.
- 1.5.4 Consultation with headteacher representatives and professional associations indicates that a major consideration for schools and school staff is consistency with neighbouring authorities, particularly Newcastle and Northumberland. Where there are differences between these authorities, the preference is generally for the best possible match with other authorities in the region. However please see point 1.5.8 below.
- 1.5.5 The proposed School Term and Holiday dates for North Tyneside schools 2016/17 are as set out at Appendix 1. It is likely that most neighbouring authorities will use this pattern of term dates. Northumberland and Gateshead have published calendars based on this model, and most other authorities in the region have indicated that they will be following a similar pattern.
- 1.5.6 Newcastle have confirmed and published a calendar which is broadly similar, but has a Christmas holiday that starts and ends a few days later. This calendar is set out at Appendix 2 and forms the basis of Option 2 below.
- 1.5.7 The Deregulation Act 2015, when fully implemented will provide for all maintained schools to set term dates independently of the local authority, however the relevant provisions are not yet in force. Many schools in North Tyneside are already able to set term dates independently, e.g. due to Trust or Voluntary Aided status, but most schools have indicated that their preference is for a consistent calendar, co-ordinated by the Local Authority.
- 1.5.8 Consultation on the 2016-17 calendar has indicated some differences between schools on the preferred model. All schools have had a number of opportunities to comment on the recommendations, and 22 have expressed a strong preference, with a slight balance in favour of the model at Appendix 2. 10 schools preferred the recommended calendar at Option 1, and 12 preferred Option 2. Professional associations were unanimously in favour of Option 1.

1.6 Decision options:

The following decision options are available for consideration by Cabinet:

Option 1

Cabinet can approve the calendar at Appendix 1 (recommended). This meets parent governor preferences for holidays to take account of the Christmas and Easter bank holidays, and for no period of term time to be longer than 7 weeks. The summer holiday in 2016 would be 6½ weeks, slightly over the parent governor preference for a limit of 6 weeks.

The proposed calendar gives 193 term days, of which 3 would be taken as teacher training days to be set at the discretion of the school. (Two further training days would be taken from holidays or as twilight sessions, to fulfil the requirement for 190 pupil days and 5 training days.)

In this calendar, schools would break up for Christmas on 16th December, over a week before Christmas Day, and would return on Tuesday 3rd January, the day after the New Year bank holiday.

This calendar is consistent with published dates for Northumberland and Gateshead, and with proposals in South Tyneside, Sunderland and Durham.

10 schools have indicated a strong preference for Option 1.

Option 2

Option 2 is consistent with the term dates published by Newcastle, and is almost identical to Option 1. The only difference from Option 1 is the later start and end of the Christmas holidays. In this calendar, schools would break up for Christmas on Wednesday 21st December, and return on Thursday 5th January.

This calendar meets parent governor preferences for holidays to take account of the Christmas and Easter bank holidays. The summer holiday in 2016 would be 6½ weeks, slightly over the parent governor preference for a limit of 6 weeks, and the second half of the Autumn term would be 7½ weeks, slightly over the preference for term time to be no more than 7 weeks.

This option gives 194 term days, of which 4 would be taken as teacher training days. One day would be taken from holidays or as twilight sessions to make up the required 5 training days.

12 schools have indicated a strong preference for Option 2.

Option 1 is the recommended option.

1.7 Reasons for recommended option:

Option 1 is recommended for the following reasons:

The calendar at Appendix 1 includes more of the factors that parent governors see as important. It matches the pattern in most neighbouring authorities, and is therefore likely to be the most acceptable to families and the majority of schools.

Professional associations have been consulted and were unanimously in favour of Option 1 because of the alignment with neighbouring authorities.

Of schools that responded to consultation, there is a slight balance in favour of Option 2, however the majority of schools did not respond to the recommendations. This suggests that they are content with the recommended option, or that they do not have any strong preference.

The calendar at Appendix 2 also meets many of the important factors, and is preferred by 12 schools, but would put the authority out of step with neighbouring authorities with regard to the timing of the Christmas holidays. This calendar also includes a split week before Christmas, which could give rise to attendance concerns.

1.8 Appendices:

Appendix 1: Proposed school term and holiday dates for North Tyneside schools in 2016/17. This calendar is in line with most authorities in the region, including Northumberland.

Appendix 2: Alternative option, consistent with the dates confirmed by Newcastle.

1.9 Contact officers:

Mark Longstaff, Head of Service, Commissioning and Fair Access
0191 643 8089

Jan Hawley, Information Systems & Governance Manager, Commissioning and Fair Access.
0191 643 8130

Alison Campbell, Finance Business Manager
0191 643 7038

1.10 Background information:

The following background papers/information have been used in the compilation of this report and are available at the office of the author:

- Parent governor survey results.
- Cabinet Report – School Term and Holiday Dates 2015/16, August 2014.
- School term and holiday dates 2016/17 for Northumberland, Newcastle and Gateshead.

PART 2 – COMPLIANCE WITH PRINCIPLES OF DECISION MAKING

2.1 Finance and other resources

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

2.2 Legal

The Education (School Day and School Year) (England) Regulations 1999 require that 380 sessions, equivalent to 190 school term days be provided for pupils in each school year. In addition the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document (STPCD) requires 5 training days to be identified. The dates of the training days are organised at the discretion of the school.

The Education Act 2002 that requires that the dates of the terms should be set by the local authority for maintained schools remains in force until full implementation of the Deregulation Act 2015, which will enable each school to set its own term dates.

The decision on the dates of the terms is a Cabinet decision in accordance with the Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) Regulations 2000

The Local Elections (Principal Areas) (England and Wales) Rules 2006 (no 3304) Schedule 2 provides for the use of schools and facilities in schools, free of charge, for the purpose of taking the poll or counting of votes.

There are currently thirty-five schools used as polling stations across the borough. Many of the schools allocate one of the required 5 training days to polling day(s). However, schools may explore the option to remain open on the day of poll, by the identification of an area within the school site, which can be used for the purposes of polling (being compliant with the regulations above), with the agreement of Electoral Services. For safeguarding reasons, such an area must be isolated from any pupil accessible areas of the site.

2.3 Consultation/community engagement

Consultation has been undertaken with headteachers and professional associations. Parent governors were also consulted via email. The proposed dates have been forwarded to all the authority's schools for comment.

2.4 Human rights

This report is relevant to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child Article 28: access to education.

2.5 Equalities and diversity

There are no equalities and diversity implications arising from this report.

2.6 Risk management

There are no risk management implications arising from this report.

2.7 Crime and disorder

There are no crime and disorder implications arising from this report.

2.8 Environment and sustainability

There are no environment and sustainability implications arising from this report.

PART 3 - SIGN OFF

- Deputy Chief Executive X
- Head of Service X
- Mayor/Cabinet Member(s) X
- Chief Finance Officer X
- Monitoring Officer X
- Head of Corporate Strategy X