

North Tyneside Council Report to Cabinet Date: 15 August 2016

ITEM 6(a)

Title: School Term and
Holiday dates 2017/18

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 Executive Summary:

The purpose of the report is to seek Cabinet approval for the proposed school term and holiday dates for 2017/18.

In August 2015, Cabinet resolved that for future years, consultation on school term and holiday dates should consider all viable options put forward. Consultation has been held with Schools, parents and the wider public, to explore factors that should influence the structure of future Term and Holiday dates. Two questionnaires were developed to support this consultation, and the results have informed the recommended option.

1.2 Recommendation(s):

It is recommended that Cabinet approve the school term and holiday dates for 2017/18 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 11th July 2016.

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 ready for school – giving our children and their families the best start in life

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 The Deregulation Act 2015 provides for maintained schools to set term dates independently of the local authority, however the relevant provisions have not come into force. DfE advised in Sept 2015 that this provision would not come into force, and the duty would be retained by Local Authorities. 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.
- 1.5.3 In 2015, Cabinet resolved that for future years, consultation on school term and holiday dates should consider all viable options put forward. To support this consultation, two questionnaires were developed to explore factors that, in the view of consultees, should influence the structure of future Term and Holiday dates:
- Questionnaire specifically for Head teachers and Chairs of Governors of North Tyneside Schools
 - Questionnaire for Parents, Governors, Residents and any other interested parties.

The public questionnaire was publicised on social media and via the Council website. Details of the proposed questionnaires were also circulated to schools during May 2016, and schools were asked to promote the public questionnaire through their own newsletters and websites. Professional associations were also notified of the questionnaires.

- 1.5.4 Details of the survey results are given at Appendix 3. There were 41 responses to the Headteacher/Chair of Governor survey, and 4,392 responses to the public survey. The majority of respondents to the public survey were parents (3149/71.7%), and the second highest proportion of respondents were working in the education sector (833/19%). The remaining responses were from the categories 'resident', 'school governor' and 'interested party'.
- 1.5.5 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 consultees, particularly parents, consider important. The following key preferences were identified:
- In response to a question about important factors, a key consideration for 83% of both groups was that Christmas and New Year holidays should be taken account of in setting school holidays.
 - Less than 10% of respondents to the public survey attached importance to any other single factor.
 - For headteachers and chairs of governors, the next most important consideration was consistency across the borough, followed by terms of equal length, and allowing for Easter bank holidays – all the above were important to over 50% of respondents.

- In response to a question about the length of school holidays, a key consideration for both groups was that no school holiday should be longer than 6 weeks.
- In response to a question about the length of school terms, the largest group of participants in the public survey (42%), felt the longest period of term time should be 6 weeks. The next-largest group (34%) thought the longest should be 7 weeks.
- 51% of headteachers and chairs of governors who responded felt the longest period of term time should be 7 weeks.

1.5.6 Consultation with professional associations indicates that consistency with neighbouring authorities is a major consideration for employees of schools and school support services.

1.5.7 Taken separately, the above preferences can be applied in a number of ways, however there is considerable difficulty in applying all the key preferences in one calendar, whilst also allowing for statutory requirements and dates of exams and assessments.

For instance, it is not possible to have no period of term time over 6 weeks and terms of equal length, whilst also providing 190 days over a traditional 6 half-term pattern. This can be done if the school year is divided into 7 or 8 smaller blocks of term time, however this makes it very difficult to accommodate holidays at Christmas and New Year, plus exam times in May and June which are set nationally.

1.5.8 Therefore in reviewing the options available, the consultation preferences that had the highest level of support have been prioritised.

1.5.9 Expected dates of national assessments and exams are shown in bold in the appendices. Key Stage and phonics assessments have been confirmed as w/c 14th May, w/c 4th June and w/c 11th June. GCSE and A level dates have not yet been published, but based on recent years and confirmed dates for 2017, the exam dates are likely to fall between 14th May and 25th June, with no exams in the week of the late May Bank Holiday.

1.5.10 The proposed School Term and Holiday dates for North Tyneside schools 2017/18 are as set out at Appendix 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 statutory requirements and takes account of national exams and assessments, whilst meeting a number of key consultation preferences. Option 1 is in line with proposals in all other authorities in the region. Professional associations were unanimously in favour of Option 1.

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.)

Option 2

Option 2 is an alternative option, with periods of term time of more even length. Option 2 is different from proposals in the rest of the region, but also takes account of some key consultation preferences.

This option gives 192 term days, of which 2 would be taken as teacher training days. Three days would be taken from holidays or as twilight sessions to make up the required 5 training days.

The table below compares both options against key consultation preferences.

Preference	Option 1	Option 2
Takes account of Christmas / New Year Bank Holidays	Yes	Yes
Maximum holiday 6 weeks	Yes	Yes
No term-time longer than 6 weeks (<i>public preference</i>)	3 out of 6 half-terms fit this preference	2 out of 6 half-terms fit this preference
No term-time longer than 7 weeks (<i>Headteacher / Chair of Governors preference</i>)	5 out of 6 half-terms fit this preference	Yes
Takes account of Easter Bank Holidays	Yes	Yes
Takes account of Christmas / New Year Bank Holidays	Yes	Yes

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 meets statutory requirements and takes account of national exams and assessments, whilst meeting a number of key consultation preferences. It is in line with proposals in all other authorities in the region.

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

The calendar at Appendix 2 also meets statutory requirements and many of the key preferences. However this would give North Tyneside a different calendar to the rest of the region, and was not preferred by the professional associations.

1.8 Appendices:

Appendix 1: Proposed School Term and holiday dates for North Tyneside schools in 2017/18.

Appendix 2: Alternative option which also meets a number of consultation preferences.

Appendix 3: Analysis of survey results.

1.9 Contact officers:

Mark Longstaff, Head of Service, Commissioning and Investment
0191 643 8089

Jan Hawley, Information Systems Manager, Commercial and Business Redesign
0191 643 8130

Rachael Coyne, Manager - School Organisation and Investment, Commissioning and Investment
0191 643 8074

Alison Campbell, Senior Business Partner
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:

- [Cabinet Report – School Term and Holiday Dates 2016/17, August 2015.](#)
- Proposed School Term and Holiday dates 2017/18 for Tyne and Wear authorities, Northumberland and Durham.
http://october.northtyneside.gov.uk:7778/pls/portal/NTC_PSCM.PSCM_Web.download?p_ID=566229
http://october.northtyneside.gov.uk:7778/pls/portal/NTC_PSCM.PSCM_Web.download?p_ID=566230
http://october.northtyneside.gov.uk:7778/pls/portal/NTC_PSCM.PSCM_Web.download?p_ID=566231
http://october.northtyneside.gov.uk:7778/pls/portal/NTC_PSCM.PSCM_Web.download?p_ID=566234

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 35 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 parents and other stakeholders via public survey. Headteachers and chairs of governors were also surveyed. The proposals have been reviewed at a meeting of professional associations. 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 direct 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