

## Bath & North East Somerset Council

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| MEETING/<br>DECISION<br>MAKER:   | <b>Cabinet</b>                               |  |
| MEETING/<br>DECISION<br>DATE:  | <b>14 May 2014</b>                           | EXECUTIVE<br>FORWARD PLAN<br>REFERENCE:<br><br>E2632 |
| TITLE:   | <b>School Term and Holiday Dates 2015-16</b> |  |
| WARD:  | All  |  |
| <b>AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM</b>   |  |  |
| <b>List of attachments to this report:</b><br><br><b>Appendix A Proposed Term Dates 190 day model</b><br><br><b>Appendix B Proposed Term Dates 195 day model</b> |  |  |

### **1 THE ISSUE**

- 1.1 To consider the School Term and Holiday Dates for the Academic Year 2015-16.

### **2 RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 To note that the majority of local schools and academies can already set their own term and holiday dates, by virtue of being an Academy, Voluntary Aided or Foundation School and that the Deregulation Bill currently before parliament proposes to allow every school to set their own dates;
- 2.2 In order to maximise consistency of dates for the benefit of children and their parents, to recommend to all schools and academies the Council's preferred calendar of School Term and Holiday dates for the academic year 2015-16 based on a 190 day calendar, as set out in Appendix A.
- 2.3 To recommend to all school and academy governing bodies that good practice would be to consult parents and take account of their views in the event that they propose any variation from the recommended calendar.
- 2.4 As a number of schools and academies have already indicated that they may still prefer to set a 195 day calendar, to also recommend that in this event, such schools adopt the 195 day calendar at Appendix B, which most logically fits with the Council's recommended 190 day calendar.

### **3 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCE, PROPERTY, PEOPLE)**

- 3.1 The standard academic year is based on 195 school days. Schools are open for 190 days and 5 days are used for in-service training. The Home to School transport budget is based on the financial year and is adjusted annually depending on the number of days which schools are open in the financial year. There will normally be 190 school days when we provide transport. However depending on when the Easter Holiday falls this can vary slightly from year to year. If the Easter holiday means the number of days increase in one year this is usually compensated by a fall in the following year and vice versa.
- 3.2 If as a result of a school adopting their own dates there is an increase in Home to School Transport costs the Council will recover the additional cost from the school.

### **4 STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS AND BASIS FOR PROPOSAL**

- 4.1 The Education [Schools and Further Education] Regulations indicate that in each academic year a school shall be open to receive pupils for not less than 380 sessions or 190 days. These proposed dates satisfy those requirements.
- 4.2 Currently the Local Authority determines dates for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools. Academy, Free, Foundation and Voluntary Aided Schools have the power to set their own dates.
- 4.3 The Draft Deregulation Bill currently progressing through the House of Commons proposes to give the Governing Body of all schools the power to set their own term dates.
- 4.4 To try and achieve consistency in dates across all schools the Local Authority will recommend a set of dates for approval by individual Governing Bodies.

### **5 THE REPORT**

- 5.1 Before the 2014-15 Academic year the calendar was based on a 195 day model with 5 in-service days being taken within these dates.
- 5.2 For the 2014-15 Academic Year the Cabinet agreed to set a calendar based on a 190 day model with 5 in-service days being taken outside of these dates.
- 5.3 This decision has not been universally popular with schools and as a result for 2015-16 the Local authority consulted on a 190 and 195 day model. These are attached as Appendices A&B.
- 5.4 The 190 day model allows parents to know exactly which days their children will be in school. However it gives schools less flexibility in determining in-service days particularly if schools wish to send staff to other schools while they are operational and restricts schools to setting days at the beginning and end of terms. Training suppliers and visiting speakers will be restricted to those dates making it harder to book the best ones. School like the flexibility to plan days in the school year which they find most useful.
- 5.5 The 195 day model means parents will not always know the exact days their children will be in school. This can prove difficult for working parents or parents who have children in different schools. It does give schools greater

flexibility over selecting in-service days. This model has terms 4 and 5 of equal length.

5.6 A total of 11 schools responded in favour of a 195 day model. A joint response on behalf of the Norton Radstock Schools also favoured the 195 day model. A number of schools suggested bringing the holiday in the 195 day model at the end of term 4 forward a week so it follows on from the two public holidays at Easter. This will mean term 4 four is just short of 5 weeks and term 5 is 7 weeks in length. Two schools responded in favour of the 190 day model.

## **6 RATIONALE**

6.1 The two sets of dates recommended in this report ensure where possible terms are of equal length which improves learning opportunities for children and young people.

## **7 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

7.1 To set a 190 and 195 day calendar where the two week holiday at the end of Term 4 follows on immediately from the Easter Monday holiday. This however will lead to terms 4 and 5 being of unequal length.

## **8 CONSULTATION**

8.1 Consultation took place with all schools in Bath and North East Somerset during January 2014.

8.2 Consultation has also taken place with neighbouring authorities who consulted on a similar set of dates with their schools. The only authority to determine their recommended dates is North Somerset Council. They have adopted the 195 day model shown in Appendix B with one change. The Academic Year starts on Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2015 and finishes on Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2016.

8.3 Consultation took place with the Trade Unions, including the Recognised Teacher Professional Associations, via the Joint Consultative Forum on the 25<sup>th</sup> April 2014. The view of the Forum was a preference for a 195 day model.

8.4. A comment has also been received from the Bath and North East Somerset Parent Partnership Service. Preference is for term dates of equal length regardless of when the Easter holiday dates fall.

8.5 The dates were considered by the Early Years Children and Youth Policy Development & Scrutiny Panel on the 24<sup>th</sup> March 2014. The Panel opted for a 195 day model.

## **9 RISK MANAGEMENT**

9.1 A risk assessment related to the issue and recommendations has been undertaken, in compliance with the Council's decision making risk management guidance.

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| <b>Background papers</b> |  |
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