

From: Patrick Leeson, Corporate Director, Education and Young People's Services

To: Education and Young People's Services Cabinet Committee - 17 March 2016

Subject: Proposed Term Dates For The School Years 2017-18, 2018-19, 2019-20

Classification: Unrestricted

Future Pathway of Paper: Cabinet Member decision

Electoral Division: All

Recommendations:

Education and Young People's Cabinet Committee is asked to:

- i. consider and make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Education and Health Reform on the decision to determine the School Year dates for 2017-18, 2018-19, 2019-20 and in light of amendments made following consultation.
- ii. endorse a further consultation on elongating the half term breaks and shortening the Summer break for 2018-19 and 2019-20

Introduction

- 1.1.1 KCC is responsible for setting term dates for community and voluntary controlled schools, while governing bodies of foundation and voluntary aided schools are responsible for setting their own term dates. Academies and free schools also have the freedom to decide their dates and length of terms.
- 1.2 In previous years the Local Government Association (LGA) has coordinated the preparation of a Standard School Year draft for each year. However, the LGA has decided to stop coordinating the development of draft models for standard school years. This is because only around 40% of areas are now following the Standard School Year. As more schools become academies and free schools it will mean that increasingly school governing bodies will be determining the school term dates for their schools.
- 1.3 Over a school year, pupils are required to attend for 190 days/380 sessions. In total, teachers may be required to be available for work on up to 195 days, with the additional days specified by individual schools as non-contact days. Schools may also require teachers to work additional hours before or after school sessions, as an alternative to full non-contact days, provided that any teacher is not required to work in aggregate more than 1,265 hours during a school year. Schools may therefore choose to require teachers to make up the full equivalent of the 5 non-contact days wholly through additional hours, or use a mixture of additional hours and non-contact days.

- 1.4 The Department of Education (DfE) recently announced that the proposed Deregulation Bill will not allow Maintained Schools the power to set their own term dates, as there has been no real clamour from schools that do not have this power to have this freedom. The Government decided that due to the lack of interest, and the concerns raised by the National Union of Teachers (NUT) regarding parental confusion and lack of cohesion between schools, it would not be appropriate to allow all Maintained Schools to set their own dates. However, the DfE does encourage local authorities to listen to arguments for change from these schools.
- 1.5 In determining the proposed future school term dates, KCC is required to consult on the proposed dates.

2. Financial Implications

- 2.1 There are no direct cost implications arising from the decision on the school calendar. However, if individual foundation, voluntary aided schools, academies or free schools determine a different pattern of term dates, they may incur additional costs in relation to home to school transport, as the authority passes any additional costs on to the schools concerned.

3. Policy Framework

- 3.1 One of our key challenges in Kent is to improve attendance to at least that of the national average. A strong focus of the Education and Young People's Services' strategic plan (Vision and Priorities for Improvement 2016-19) is to improve school attendance.

4. Consultation and Statutory Public Notice

- 4.1 KCC consulted on the proposed term dates for the academic years 2017-18, 2018-19 and 2019-20 from 8 January to 28 February 2016. The consultation was circulated to all schools via the e-bulletin and with other key stakeholders such as governors (including parent groups), the Diocesan bodies, trade unions and neighbouring local authorities. The general public was also encouraged to participate.
- 4.2 The consultation received 80 responses as follows: 19 Headteachers (including Head of school and a deputy head), 30 teachers including teaching assistants of which two were parents, 24 parents, 3 school admin and site managers, 1 private tutor, 2 union reps, and 1 member.
- 4.3 The majority of respondents commented that the Christmas holiday periods in 2017-18 and 2018-19 were too short and asked that they be extended to two full weeks. Consequently, taking this into consideration, both sets of term dates have been amended:
- i. 2017-18, term 2 will end on 20th December 2017 as originally consulted on with term 3 commencing on 4th January 2018 instead of 2nd January 2018.

- ii. 2018-19, term 2 will end on 19th December 2018 instead of 21st December 2018 with term 3 commencing on 3rd January 2018 instead of 2 January 2018.
- 4.4 A number of respondents commented on the positioning of Easter. The LGA recommends a two-week spring break in early April, irrespective of the incidence of the Easter holiday, but many parents have found this to be difficult with regard to childcare arrangements and financial implications. Following further feedback, teachers suggested that attendance and student concentration levels would be lower if they returned one day following Easter Monday.
- 4.5 Consequently, the proposed dates in 2020 for term 4 have been amended so this will end on 1st April 2020 instead of 27 March 2020, and term 5 will begin on 16 April instead of 14 April 2020. However, the same adjustment could not be made for April 2019 as term 5 would then be too short.
- 4.6 In addition, a few teachers asked that term 5 should end later in 2018–19 and 2019-20. For 2018-19 this would elongate the term from 23 to 27 days, so that the term ends on 31st May and the new term begins on 10th June 2019. However, this will mean the summer holidays are reduced by one day.
- 4.7 For 2020 the term length will be extended from 25 days to 28 days so that term 5 ends on 29 May 2020 and term 6 begins on 8th June which will allow equalisation of the terms' length. Consequently, the summer holidays are reduced by one day as the pupils will break up on 24rd July instead of 23rd July.
- 4.8 Sixteen respondents commented that they would prefer two week breaks during the year and shorter summer holidays. However, this was counter balanced by some parents arguing that increasing the length of the breaks would cause childcare issues.
- 4.9 A recent report by the NUT appreciated the concerns of parents regarding the length of the summer holidays and the pressure of childcare. However, it considered that reducing the length of the summer holidays may lead to an increase in absenteeism as families, particularly those with families overseas, use the long summer break to visit relatives and any change will have an impact on their ability to do this. In turn this could lead to schools receiving additional requests for pupils to be taken out of school during term time, with serious long-term implications for the education of those pupils.
- 4.10 In light of this Members are asked whether the Local Authority should hold talks with Headteachers and conduct a further consultation later this year on possible changes to the length of the summer break. This however, will not affect the term dates for 2017-2018.
- 4.11 A few teachers asked that term 1 in 2019 began later to shorten the first term length, however the LGA recommend that pupils return to school as close to the 1st of September as possible. Therefore, it is proposed that the first day of term remains as Monday 2nd September 2019.

5. Equality Impact Assessment

- 5.1 An impact assessment has been completed and is available at the following link: <http://consultations.kent.gov.uk/consult.ti/TermDates/consultationHome>
The conclusion following the public consultation is that the presumptions made in the initial assessment still remain and that it is not necessary to initiate a further Equality Impact Assessment.

6. Conclusions

- 6.1 Following the feedback from the consultation Members are asked to comment on and endorse the proposed school term dates calendar for 2017-18, 2018-19 and 2019-20, and give a view on whether KCC should hold further consultation on proposals to elongating the half term breaks and shortening the Summer breaks for 2018-19 and 2019-20

7. Recommendation(s)

Recommendations:

Education and Young People's Cabinet Committee is asked to:

- i. consider and make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Education and Health Reform on the decision to determine the School Year dates for 2017-18, 2018-19, 2019-20 and in light of amendments made following consultation.
- ii. endorse a further consultation on elongating the half term breaks and shortening the Summer breaks for 2018-19 and 2019-20

8. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Proposed term dates pre-consultation

Appendix 2 – Proposed term dates post-consultation

9. Background Documents

- 9.1 The public consultation document is available via the following link:

<http://consultations.kent.gov.uk/consult.ti/schooltermdates/consultationHome>

10. Contact details

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KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – PROPOSED RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION TO BE TAKEN BY:

Roger Gough,

Cabinet Member for Education and Health Reform

DECISION NO:

16/00037

For publication

Subject: School Year dates for 2017-18, 2018-19, 2019-20

Decision:

As Cabinet Member for Education and Health Reform I agree to:

- i. to determine the School Year dates for 2017-18, 2018-19, 2019-20.
- ii. endorse a further consultation on elongating the half term breaks and shortening the Summer break for 2018-19 and 2019-20.

Reason(s) for decision:

- 1.4 KCC is responsible for setting term dates for community and voluntary controlled schools, while governing bodies of foundation and voluntary aided schools are responsible for setting their own term dates. Academies and free schools also have the freedom to change the length of terms.
- 1.5 In previous years the Local Government Association (LGA) has coordinated the preparation of a Standard School Year draft for each year. However, the LGA has decided to stop coordinating the development of draft models for standard school years. This is because only around 40% of areas are now following the Standard School Year. The Government's policies to promote academies and free schools will mean that increasingly school governing bodies will be determining the school term dates for their schools.
- 1.6 Over a school year, pupils are required to attend for 190 days/380 sessions. In total, teachers may be required to be available for work on up to 195 days, with the additional days specified by individual schools as non-contact days. Schools may also require teachers to work additional hours before or after school sessions, as an alternative to full non-contact days, provided that any teacher is not required to work in aggregate more than 1,265 hours during a school year. Schools may therefore choose to require teachers to make up the full equivalent of the 5 non-contact days wholly through additional hours, or use a mixture of additional hours and non-contact days.
- 1.4 The Department of Education (DfE) recently announced that the proposed Deregulation Bill will not allow Maintained Schools the power to set their own term dates, as there has been no real clamour from schools that do not have this power to have this freedom. The Government decided that due to the lack of interest, and the concerns raised by National Union of Teachers (NUT) regarding parental confusion and lack of cohesion between schools, it would not be appropriate to allow all Maintained Schools to set their own dates. However, the DfE does encourage local authorities to listen sympathetically to arguments for change from these schools.
- 1.5 In determining the proposed future school term dates, KCC is required to consult on the

proposed dates.

Financial Implications:

There are no direct cost implications arising from the decision on the school calendar. However, if individual foundation, voluntary aided schools, academies or free schools determine a different pattern of term dates, they may incur additional costs in relation to home to school transport, as the authority passes any additional costs on to the schools concerned.

Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:

17 March 2016

To be added after the meeting

Any alternatives considered:

KCC consulted on the proposed term dates for the academic years 2017-18, 2018-19 and 2019-20 from 8 January 2016 to 28 February 2016. The consultation was circulated to all schools via the e-bulletin and with other key stakeholders such as governors (including parent groups), the diocesan bodies, trade unions and our neighbouring authorities. The general public was also encouraged to participate. The dates were altered following the feedback from this consultation

Any interest declared when the decision was taken and any dispensation granted by the Proper Officer:

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Signed

Date