

**CABINET – 12TH JUNE 2018****LEICESTERSHIRE SCHOOL TERM-TIME PATTERNS
FROM AUTUMN 2019 TO SUMMER 2022****REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY
SERVICES****PART A****Purpose of the Report**

1. The purpose of this report is to advise the Cabinet of the outcome of the consultation on a new Leicestershire school term-time pattern for 2019-2022, for schools controlled by the Local Authority, and to seek approval of a preferred term time pattern.
2. The report also seeks approval to allow all schools under the Local Authority's control the ability to set their own teacher training (known as INSET) days.

Recommendations

3. It is recommended that:
 - a) Option 1, the current Leicestershire term-time pattern as set out in Appendix A to this report, is approved;
 - b) Approval is given to allow all schools under Local Authority control the freedom to set their own INSET (teacher training) days for the purpose of teacher training.

Reasons for Recommendations

4. The Education Act 2002 places a statutory obligation on the County Council to determine the number of school days that schools under its control must be open.
5. The County Council is required to determine a pattern that ensures at least 380 sessions (190 days) during a school year. In addition, there must be five INSET days for the purpose of teacher training and other duties.

Timetable for Decisions (including Scrutiny)

6. Although there is no prescribed timetable offering a framework by when term dates must be determined by, there is a general convention to determine dates at least a year before they come into force.

7. It is proposed that the results of the consultation will be shared with the Children and Family Service Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 4th June 2018 for information.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

8. Term dates are determined by the school employers following consultation, as is set out in the Education (School Day and School Year)(England) Regulations 1999.
9. As the Local Authority is the employer, any community, voluntary controlled and community special schools must seek the permission from the Director of Children and Family Services to alter dates once agreed.
10. Leicestershire's school term time dates were last agreed by the Cabinet in May 2014 when it was agreed that they would follow the traditional Leicestershire pattern for the period autumn 2015 to summer 2019.

Resource Implications

11. There are no resource implications arising from this report. The cost of administering the recommended term time pattern forms part of the existing Children and Family Service budget allocation.

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

12. None. Members will be advised, via the Members' News in Brief service, when the term time dates are published on the County Council's website.

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PART B

Background

13. The Local Authority is currently responsible for setting school term time dates for all community, voluntary controlled and community special schools, under Section 32 of the Education Act 2002. The length of the school day remains the responsibility of the governors.
14. From September 2015, Schedule 16 of the Deregulation Act 2015 amends Section 32 of the Education Act 2002 such that all state funded schools in England will be able to decide their own school term and holiday dates, a flexibility that is already available to academies and free schools. However, schools will still be expected to agree common dates so that families can continue to plan their holidays together. All local authority maintained schools will still be required to be open for a minimum of 190 days a year.
15. The Rt. Hon. Damian Hinds MP, the Secretary of State for Education, has not given any indication of a date for when maintained schools shall have the freedoms to set their own term time patterns, as has been previously suggested by the government. Until then the Local Authority retains the responsibility to set term time patterns, following consultation.
16. The traditional Leicestershire term dates include early autumn and spring breaks (half-term holidays) with the summer holidays including the last fortnight of July, the industrial 'July fortnight' when factories were usually closed.
17. It should be noted that with the advent of academies there is now a disparity of term time patterns in the County as some schools have moved away from the traditional Leicestershire pattern. There are also differences between maintained schools in Leicestershire, and adjoining authorities including Leicester City.
18. Leicester City Council when it last consulted, determined that it would have a different pattern of term dates to Leicestershire.

The Consultation Process

19. An eight-week consultation exercise was undertaken from 5th February 2018 to 2nd April 2018 (the consultation document is attached as Appendix A). This was widely publicised through the Local Authority's website and local press and the Council engaged with a range of stakeholders including parents/carers, schools, governing bodies, neighbouring authorities, the Diocese and the professional associations/trade unions. Views were sought views on three options:
 - Option 1 – Leicestershire's traditional term time pattern which includes an early autumn half-term break and an early spring half-term break.
 - Option 2 – A pattern identical to Leicester City Council with a later autumn half-term break and maintains an early spring half-term break.
 - Option 3 – An alternative term time pattern with a later autumn half-term break and spring half-term break.

Consultation Results

20. A summary of the consultation results is attached as Appendix B. By the close of the consultation on 2nd April, the Local Authority had received a total of 6122 responses. The majority of responses received (71%) were in favour of Option 1, i.e. to remain with Leicestershire's traditional patterns.
21. Option 2 (identical to Leicester City Council's pattern) received 22% support and Option 3 (similar to Warwickshire's pattern) received 6% support and 1% of respondents had no preferred preference. The majority of responses (77%) were from parents and grandparents with 18% from teachers or employers, the remainder being from students, members of the public and Early Years providers. More females (84%) responded than males (16%), with 94% of respondents categorised as white, and the remainder (6%) being from Asian/mixed race and other ethnic groups. Of interest, 9% of the respondents were Leicestershire County Council employees.
22. In very brief summary, the reasons cited by respondents who preferred option 1 ranged from *'cheaper holidays, less childcare costs, family time off together and could not afford a holiday otherwise'*.
23. With regard to the proposal to allow schools to set the dates for their INSET days, 60% supported the proposal with 13% opposed and 27% undecided. It is therefore recommended that this be agreed.
24. As the results of the consultation show overwhelming support for retaining the current pattern of Leicestershire school term dates, it is proposed that Option 1 is adopted for schools controlled by the Local Authority.

Equality and Human Rights Implications

25. The Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment (EHRIA), attached at Appendix C, highlighted a possible negative impact on those families whose children attend different schools where both do not follow the Local Authority term time pattern. This is particularly the case for academy schools.
26. It should be noted schools under the control of the local authority can apply to Director of Children and Family Services for an amendment to allow them to follow a localised pattern so families can have time off together.

Background Papers

House of Commons Library Briefing Paper: The School Day and Year (England)
<http://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/SN07148/SN07148.pdf>

Appendices

- Appendix A - Consultation document
- Appendix B - Summary of consultation results
- Appendix C - Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment