

**CABINET – 8 SEPTEMBER 2026****PROPOSED LEICESTERSHIRE SCHOOL TERM DATES**
AUTUMN 2027 TO SUMMER 2032**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 Leicestershire school term and holiday dates for autumn 2027 to summer 2032 for schools maintained by the local authority and seek approval to implement the preferred term date model.

Recommendations

2. The Cabinet is recommended to:
 - a) Note the outcome of the consultation on proposed Leicestershire term dates for the academic years 2027/28 to 2031/32;
 - b) Approve the recommended term date model as set out in paragraphs 47 to 55 of this report (dates given in Appendix A) for implementation.

(KEY DECISION)

Reasons for Recommendations

3. To note the feedback received from the public consultation exercise on two potential term date models which has informed a recommended term date model for implementation.
4. The recommended model is based on the option preferred by the highest number of respondents to the public consultation for a one-week October half term, with the October half term holiday moved one week earlier in response to consultation feedback.
5. 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 open. The County Council is required to determine a pattern that ensures at least 380 sessions (190 days) during each school year.

Timetable for Decisions (including Scrutiny)

6. A 6-week public consultation exercise on the potential term date models was held from 5 May 2026 until 15 June 2026.
7. The Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee received a report as part of the consultation process at its meeting on 2 June 2026 and its comments are set out in paragraphs 45 to 46 below.
8. Subject to approval by the Cabinet, agreed term dates will be communicated to schools in Leicestershire. Community, voluntary controlled and community special schools will implement the new term dates as agreed from autumn 2027, and academies will consider the alignment of their future term dates to the dates agreed by the Cabinet and will set their own patterns.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

9. Term dates are determined by school employers following public consultation, as is set out in the Education (School Day and School Year) (England) Regulations 1999.
10. As the local authority is the employer for community, voluntary controlled and community special schools, any changes to agreed term time dates proposed by such schools must be agreed in advance by the Director of Children and Family Services.
11. Leicestershire's term dates were last reviewed by the Cabinet in September 2021 when it was agreed that they would follow the traditional Leicestershire pattern for the period autumn 2022 to summer 2027.
12. The Cabinet at its meeting on 24 March 2026 considered a report regarding proposed consultation on three potential models for Leicestershire school term and holiday dates. The Cabinet agreed that it did not support a model that would impact on the "*Leicestershire fortnight*" and asked that the other two models should be reconsidered and presented to the Cabinet at its next meeting in April, prior to a consultation process being undertaken.
13. The Cabinet received a further report on 28 April 2026 which presented two revised term date models, both retaining the "*Leicestershire fortnight*", for their further consideration. It was agreed that a consultation process be undertaken on the two proposed term date models for Leicestershire for the academic years 2027/28 to 2031/32.

Resource Implications

14. There are no resource implications arising from this report. The cost of implementing the agreed term date pattern following approval by the Cabinet forms part of the existing Children and Family Services budget allocation.

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

15. This report has been circulated to all Members of the County Council.

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PART B

Background

16. The local authority is responsible for setting school term dates for all maintained schools, which includes all community and voluntary controlled schools and community special schools, under Section 32 of the Education Act 2002. Maintained schools are state-funded schools that are maintained by the local authority. Academies are also state funded but are run by academy trusts and operate independently of local authority control.
17. There are 285 state-funded schools in Leicestershire. Of these, 24% are local authority maintained, including 65 primary schools and 2 special schools. All other state-funded schools within the County, including all secondary schools, are academies.
18. Following the Deregulation Act 2015, academies are responsible for setting their own term dates. In practice, the majority of schools in Leicestershire tend to follow the pattern set by the County Council, although some schools have moved away from the traditional Leicestershire term date pattern.
19. Schools in England must be open to pupils for 190 days in an academic year and 195 days for teachers.
20. The County Council sets term date patterns for 190 days, providing all schools in the County, including those maintained by the Council, with the flexibility to identify five staff training days (often known as inset days) outside of the 190 days the school is open to pupils each academic year. While this approach is in contrast to neighbouring authorities who include suggested inset days in their term date patterns, it enables maintained schools to, where possible, align their inset days with other schools in their local area.
21. Home to school transport is provided on the days that schools are open to pupils.
22. The County Council has previously worked with Leicester City Council to set proposed dates for future academic years. This approach has been in place for a number of years to ensure that school term dates are aligned where possible to minimise the impact on families and school transport providers working across both areas.
23. The traditional term date pattern for Leicester and Leicestershire reflected the County's industrial heritage and included the *Leicestershire Workers' July Fortnight*, a county-wide holiday period introduced in 1965 where factories and businesses closed for the first two weeks of July to enable workers to avoid peak holiday periods. The July fortnight shutdown period is no longer widely observed as a result of the changing nature of employment and industry in the County.

24. Following the most recent term date consultation in 2021, Leicestershire maintained schools retained an early July finish to the school year, which is around two weeks earlier than some adjoining local authorities. Previous term dates for 2022/23 to 2026/27 are included as Appendix B.

Proposed Term Date Models for Autumn 2027 to Summer 2032

25. Leicestershire County Council, in collaboration with Leicester City Council, developed two potential term date models for the five academic years between autumn 2027 and summer 2032. All proposed models provide for 190 school days. The proposed dates were also shared with Rutland Council.
26. Many families favour Leicestershire's traditional approach, which includes a very early summer break which can mean potentially cheaper family holidays.
27. Taking into account the ongoing popularity of the existing term date model, both proposed term date models for the County Council retained the existing early July finish to the school year which is around 2 weeks earlier than neighbouring local authorities.
28. As explained in the previous report to the Cabinet, while the County Council worked closely with Leicester City Council on proposed term date patterns for autumn 2027 to summer 2032, the models developed for consultation were slightly different across both local authority areas. All proposed dates for October half-term, Christmas break, February half-term, Easter break and May half-term were aligned to those proposed by Leicester City Council, however the City Council proposed a slightly later start to the summer school holidays than patterns proposed by the County Council.
29. As part of its consultation, the City Council proposed to start the summer holidays 1 week later than the County Council in July 2028, and 2 days later in each subsequent school year. Leicestershire County Council patterns ensured that the school year finishes around 2 weeks earlier than neighbouring local authorities.
30. The proposed models agreed for consultation were:
- **Model 1:** retained the historic term date pattern with a very early summer break and a one-week autumn half-term. The October half-term was proposed to move to a week later to provide a better balance of weeks between school holiday periods during the long autumn term.
 - **Model 2:** retained the same very early summer break as Model 1, with an earlier return to school in August proposed to accommodate a two-week autumn half-term.
31. The current 6-week summer break means schools in the County see a rise in child protection referrals; it also results in a loss of learning, and some families also struggle with the cost of childcare. The existing pattern includes terms of significantly different lengths, with a longer autumn term which children can

struggle to manage, impacting their attendance, and shorter spring and summer terms.

32. The consultation asked for views on whether Leicestershire should keep the existing one-week October half-term pattern or move to a model which would introduce a two-week October half-term to help to address some of these concerns while retaining the same early summer break previously favoured by Leicestershire families.
33. Both options aimed to ensure a similar number of days for the spring and summer terms. This means that while the Good Friday and Easter Monday bank holidays will be maintained and will be incorporated into the Easter holiday period, the two-week break may not always follow the traditional Easter pattern of the bank holidays being on the middle weekend of the two-week break. Depending on the timing of Easter, the Easter bank holidays may sometimes fall at the beginning or end of the holiday period.

Consultation Outcomes

34. A public consultation process on the two potential term date models took place between 5 May and 15 June 2026. This sought to inform a recommended model for implementation and enabled stakeholder feedback to be considered before deciding on a final model. The full consultation report setting out both the activity undertaken and the findings is attached at Appendix D and a summary is given below.
35. The consultation sought the views of parents, grandparents and carers, school staff and governors, students, early years providers, local communities and other partners. An online survey was available to all visitors to the council's website during the consultation period on the 'have your say' page. A paper copy of the survey was made available upon request to ensure all those wishing to take part in the consultation were able to.
36. The consultation was promoted through multiple media releases, via social media including posts on the Council's Facebook page and LinkedIn, and targeted communications to schools for onward sharing to staff and families through the Headteacher's Briefing and updates at regular Headteacher forums.
37. The consultation was aligned with a similar exercise run by Leicester City Council, although each council consulted on slightly different term date models. The consultations ran independently to the same time scales.
38. Leicestershire received 8,452 responses during the consultation period. Respondents were asked to indicate in what role they were responding. The majority (77.6%) were parents, grandparents or carers, while 18.5% were school staff and 3.7% were made up of members of the public, students, early years providers, governors, councillors and local authority officers. 0.2% of respondents did not answer this question.

39. Respondents preferred Option 1 by a small margin, with 51.1% of respondents preferring a 1-week October half term, while 46.5% of respondents preferred a 2-week October half term. There were 393 more votes received for Option 1. Additionally, 187 respondents (2.4%) were not sure or had no preference between the options.
40. Almost all areas of the County showed a preference for Option 1, with the preference for this model highest in North West Leicestershire at 55.6%, Melton at 53.2% and Charnwood at 52.4%. Both Blaby and Harborough respondents were 51.2% in favour of Option 1. Hinckley and Bosworth and Oadby and Wigston respondents were evenly split between the options at 50%.
41. By respondent type, a slightly higher proportion of parents, carers and grandparents had a preference for Option 1 (51.1%) than school staff members (50.8%). As these two respondent groups made up 96.1% of respondents, there are insufficient responses from other groups making up the remaining 3.9% of responses to draw significant conclusions from the data.
42. In terms of the importance of both Leicestershire and Leicester having matching term time patterns, 39% of County respondents felt this was important.
43. A range of comments were provided by respondents; key trends from this feedback have been reviewed and are included in the detailed consultation analysis available in Appendix D. Key themes included:
 - Positive feedback on the retention of the Leicestershire Fortnight.
 - Maintaining the existing length of summer break to make the most of generally better weather and outdoor time, with respondents noting the existing pattern works well for them.
 - A smaller number of respondents noted the impact of the long autumn term on children and schools and suggested that a 2-week would provide an opportunity for more of a break for children who need rest.
 - Childcare practicality and cost was identified as a concern, with comments setting out both positive and negative aspects of longer summer holidays and practicality of childcare availability through a poorer choice of options in October.
 - Alignment with City Council term dates was considered positively.
 - Respondents suggested that the return to school dates for Option 2 were too early in August, with some noting that they would fall before GCSE exam results had been released.
44. While the October half-term break was proposed to move to the last week in October to better balance out the length of the terms in Option 1, a number of respondents expressed concerns around the later timing of the October half term break in this option due to alignment of proposed dates with other surrounding local authorities and the impact on holiday costs.

Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee

45. The Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee received a report as part of the consultation process at its meeting on 2 June 2026. Arising from discussion, the following points were made:
- i) The way in which the consultation options had been presented was discussed, noting that one was described as maintaining the existing pattern, however in some years the timing of the October half term was amended to better balance out the number of weeks in the autumn term and this had led to alignment of October holiday dates more closely with other neighbouring authorities. It was explained that residents' views were being sought on the opportunity for a two-week October half term, and any feedback on the timing of the October break under both models would be considered in the final recommendations back to Cabinet.
 - ii) Members welcomed the fact that both options retained the Leicestershire fortnight, recognising the benefit this provided for families in relation to holiday costs and noting that it provided certainty for parents and carers.
 - iii) The importance of alignment with Leicester City Council, particularly for families with children attending schools in both the city and county. The County Council had worked with the City Council and remained keen to align term dates where possible, particularly in the context of local government reorganisation, but each authority would ultimately make its own decision. It was noted that at the time the County Council's consultation had been prepared, the City Council's position had not been sufficiently clear to include this within the consultation material.
 - iv) A Member asked whether the consultation should have been delayed so that information about Leicester City Council's proposals could have been included, as this could influence how residents responded. The Director advised that there had been considerable dialogue with the City Council and delaying the consultation would create planning difficulties for schools, parents and wider stakeholders. It was reported that over 5,000 responses had already been received and that the consultation would capture how important alignment with Leicester City Council was to residents, so that this could be taken into account alongside the other consultation responses.
 - v) Leicester City Council's proposals differed from the County Council's options only by a small number of days in some years. For 2027/28, the City Council was proposing to finish a week later than the County Council, but by 2028/29 the difference between the patterns was expected to reduce to approximately two days. It was noted that the County Council did not set school inset days, which were determined by headteachers and academy trusts, giving a degree of local flexibility around the start and end of term dates.

- vi) The value of a two-week October half term was questioned. The Director reported that educational considerations associated with the length of the autumn term, including the potential impact of staff and pupil illness was a factor. There was also evidence that some children regressed during the long summer holiday. Members noted an additional week in October could also provide families with an opportunity to further access holidays at a less expensive time of year.
 - vii) While the Leicestershire fortnight had been heard consistently as the most important factor for parents, there was also evidence of an appetite for a different pattern, including the two-week October half term. Responses to the consultation so far were broadly equally split between the two options.
 - viii) In relation to safeguarding, a member asked whether there were implications arising from the length of school holidays. It was explained that referrals tended to increase before the summer holidays as schools raised concerns ahead of the break, and that the Council also saw an increase during the summer, considered to be linked to the length of the summer holiday rather than to the specific term dates.
 - ix) The Committee discussed whether schools could be encouraged to group inset days together to provide families with additional flexibility. The Director suggested that clustering them into week-long blocks could have a detrimental impact on the quality of education and on staff development.
46. The Committee resolved that its comments be presented to the Cabinet for consideration.

Recommended Term Date Model

- 47. Consultation feedback has been jointly reviewed by officers from Leicestershire County and Leicester City Councils to consider opportunities to align dates. The recently announced decision on local government reorganisation for Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland reinforces the benefits of aligned dates where this is possible in supporting any future transition arrangements.
- 48. On the basis of feedback from both consultation processes, officers have agreed to recommend that both the County and City Councils implement a slightly revised term date model aligned to Option 1, retaining a 1-week October half-term.
- 49. The proposed revision to the timing of the Easter break around Good Friday and Easter Monday in order to better balance out term lengths was not raised as a concern within the consultation feedback. The Easter break dates included within the consultation on both options have therefore been incorporated into the recommended model.
- 50. In recognition of feedback received during the consultation both through the survey as set out in paragraph 44 and by members of the Children and

Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee, it is recommended that the model is revised to move the October half-term break to the third week of October.

51. The recommended term date model for Leicestershire is attached at Appendix A. This incorporates a slightly earlier 1-week October half term from the previous Option 1 and includes the revisions to the timing of the Easter break as set out in the consultation.
52. While the recommended term date model is largely aligned with the Leicester City model, there remains a small anomaly between the patterns. The City Council has proposed to start the summer holidays 3 days later than the County Council in July 2028, however all remaining years are now aligned around the start date for the summer break and all other holiday periods. Leicester City dates for the end of the summer term are highlighted on Appendix A.
53. For 2028, it is intended to continue with the original proposed date for the end of the summer term for Leicestershire. This will ensure the school year finishes around 2 weeks earlier than neighbouring authorities, maintaining the Leicestershire fortnight.
54. Leicester City Council has agreed to continue to set 2 inset days for schools, which it has added to the start of the autumn term each year. As stated previously, in Leicestershire maintained schools the responsibility for setting all 5 yearly inset days sits with Headteachers. It is anticipated that Leicestershire dates may vary slightly between schools depending on decisions taken by individual Headteachers and academy trusts.
55. Recommendations are being presented to the respective decision-making bodies of both Councils, with ultimate decision-making remaining the responsibility of each local authority.

Equality Implications

56. An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed to consider the impact of the proposed term date patterns on individuals with protected characteristics, attached as Appendix C. There are no adverse equality implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

Human Rights Implications

57. There are no human rights implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

Partnership Implications

58. The recommended school term date patterns have been developed in collaboration with Leicester City Council to align dates where possible across both areas.

Background Papers

Report to the Cabinet on 17 September 2021 “Leicestershire School Term-Time Patterns from Autumn 2022 To Summer 2027”

<https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/documents/s163631/Term%20Dates%20Consultation.pdf>

Report to the Cabinet on 24 March 2026 “Leicestershire School Term Dates Autumn 2027 to Summer 2032”

<https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=135&MId=8305>

Report to the Cabinet on 28 April 2026 “Leicestershire School Term Dates, Autumn 2027 to Summer 2032”

<https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=135&MId=8306&Ver=4>

Report to the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 2 June 2026 “Leicestershire School Term Dates Autumn 2027 to Summer 2032”

<https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=1043&MId=8412&Ver=4>

Appendices

Appendix A - Recommended school term dates for autumn 2027 to summer 2032

Appendix B - Previous school term dates for 2022/23 to 2026/27

Appendix C - Equality Impact Assessment

Appendix D - Consultation findings

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