
SCHOOL HOLIDAY AND TERM DATES 2006/2007

Councillor Chris McEwan, Children's Services Portfolio
Responsible Director – Margaret Asquith, Director of Children's Services

Purpose of Report

1. To consider and set school holiday dates and associated professional development arrangements (inset days) for the academic year 2006/07, commencing in September 2006.

Background

2. The appropriate consultation process regarding holiday dates with schools, neighbouring authorities and staff representative organisations has been completed. The Authority consulted on a traditional basis for 2006/07 with an agreement to standardise as far as possible, term and holiday dates, and to consider the introduction of a 'fixed' Spring half term break falling in the first two weeks of April each year.

Information and Analysis

3. All North East authorities consulted on the same holiday pattern, (**Proposal A**), although there was late consideration given to a proposal from Head Teachers to use full week breaks, rather than breaking up and starting back midweek (**Proposal B**). A third proposal (**Proposal C**), put forward by the Local Government Association (LGA) was considered but discounted, as this did not match the introduction of the preferred Spring half term break. Both proposals include a fixed Spring half term break of the first two weeks in April. The introduction of this fixed Spring half term break will mean that the future pattern for term dates will be set and will only change at the margins, to coincide with weekends and specific holiday dates. For all proposals, see **Appendix A**.
4. Both options fulfill statutory requirements for 190 contact teaching days for pupils. **Proposal A** provides for 195 days teachers will be available for duty (which allows for five Continued Professional Development days to be agreed), **Proposal B** provides for 194 available days and will require schools to take up the additional day through Planning Preparation and Assessment time, Continued Professional Development or non contact time for teachers.

Outcome of Consultation

5. There were very few comments on the draft school dates from consultees, the one comment of note was that for 2007, half term will coincide with Easter, (which falls on 8th April 2007), and therefore Roman Catholic Schools may consider opening that week in 2007. Staff Associations did not comment on either proposal and are content if Darlington can match holiday dates with neighbouring authorities. The North East Chief Education Officers agreed

to implement the pattern at **Proposal A**, with the agreement that some authorities will adopt pattern at **Proposal B**, as they are substantially the same.

6. Consultation has been undertaken with trade unions, schools and neighbouring authorities. Schools have expressed their support for facilitating the arrangements to coincide with our neighbours, and in particular Durham, who have both confirmed similar pattern of dates. However North Yorkshire County Council has adopted a different pattern, in line with its more Southerly neighbours in the Yorkshire and Humberside region, which is out of alignment for the Spring break. This pattern is also out of alignment with the pattern suggested by the LGA.

Legal Implications

7. This report has been considered by the Borough Solicitor for legal implications in accordance with the Council's approved procedures. There are no issues which the Borough Solicitor considers needs to be brought to the specific attention of Members, other than those highlighted in the report.

Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998

8. The contents of this report have been considered in the context of the requirements placed on the Council by Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, namely, the duty on the Council to exercise its functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent, crime and disorder in its area. It is not considered that the contents of this report have any such effect.

Council Policy Framework

9. The issues contained within this report do not represent significant change to Council policy or the Council's policy framework.

Decision Deadline

10. For the purpose of the 'call-in' procedure this does not represent an urgent matter.

Recommendation

11. That the proposed holiday and term dates and associated professional development arrangements as set out in **Proposal B** be agreed in order to make use of full week breaks, as suggested by Head Teachers.

Reason

12. To agree the school holiday and term dates for 2006/07 to assist schools in planning processes.

Margaret Asquith
Director of Children's Services

Appendix A: Proposals A, B and C

Background Papers: Consultation documents

Paul Campbell Ext. 2813