

Open Report on behalf of Peter Duxbury, Executive Director for Children's Services

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| Report to: | Cllr Mrs P A Bradwell, Executive Councillor |
| Date: | 31 March 2011 |
| Subject: | LCC School Term Dates 2012-13 & 2013-14 |
| Decision Reference: | 01844 |
| Key decision? | No |

Summary:

This paper proposes a pattern of school term dates and holidays for the school years 2012/13 and 2013/14 which are recommended for adoption by the County's community and controlled schools and strongly recommended to foundation and aided schools, as well as to academies, in the County.

The proposal, if adopted, would meet the local authority's legal obligation to set dates for the school openings and holidays if adopted.

Recommendation(s):

The pattern of school term dates and holidays for each of the two school years 2012/13 and 2013/14 attached are recommended for adoption as the County Council's dates. The recommended dates are reproduced as Appendix A.

Alternatives Considered:

1. In the consultation, a similar pattern of dates was put forward to schools, colleges and other stakeholders. This met with general approval with the exception of the date of the Autumn term break in 2013, which was considered by a significant number of schools to be a week early. The term break has therefore been moved in this proposal to the following week, ie w/c 28th October 2013.

The term dates pattern is a '6 term year' pattern but is consistent with the three-term year with six half-terms used by some other authorities.

Reasons for Recommendation:

The setting of two years of term dates and holidays is intended to give some predictability and stability for parents, schools and other stakeholders at a time of great change. Many neighbouring authorities are also intending to set term dates for two school years until July 2014.

The actual pattern of dates has been consulted on with schools, colleges and other stakeholders such as diocesan groups, the youth service etc. The results of the consultation were overwhelmingly in agreement with the proposals, with the notable exceptions of the proposal date of the autumn holiday in October 2013. A significant minority of respondents favoured the holiday to be the week commencing 28th October 2013 rather than week commencing 21st October. The proposal has been changed to accommodate the change which gives a better balance between terms 1 and 2 in 2013/14.

1. Background

The County Council has to determine the school term dates for its community and notify the schools in good time. By determining school term dates for the 2 school years beginning in September 2012 we are able to give eighteen months notice of the dates

During January and February 2011 school heads, governing bodies and others were consulted on the proposed school dates for September 2012 to July 2014 – two school years. The pattern of dates follows the six term year pattern which Lincolnshire, along with many other local authorities, adopted in 2004.

The pattern of term dates presented for approval below covers the school years 2012/13 and 2013/14, and provides for;

- 190 dates in each year of school opening days
- Sufficient days outside these days for schools to identify the statutory 'INSET' or staff development days
- Holiday breaks of two full weeks for Christmas and Easter in each of the school years

2. Conclusion

The proposals will, if adopted, meet the County Council's obligations in respect of setting school terms and holidays.

3. Legal Comments:

The Education (School Day and School Year) (England) Regulations 1999 (SI 1999 No. 3181) require schools to have at least 380 half-day sessions (190 days) in each school year, beginning with the first term to start after July. The Local Authority is under and duty to set the school term and holiday dates for community and voluntary schools following consultation. It is also advisable to co ordinate the dates with foundation, aided and academies. The paper sets out the outcome of that consultation and it is a decision within the remit of the Executive councillor.

4. Resource Comments:

There are no significant financial implications arising from the recommendation in this report.

5. Consultation

Consultation took place with heads and governors of the County's community and controlled schools, as well as with aided and foundation schools and academies. They were encouraged to share the information with stakeholders such as parents, teacher association and other user groups. The consultation was also extended to included colleges and other providers of education and training and neighbouring and regional local authorities. The consultation letter is reproduced as Appendix B.

The results of the consultation for the proposals were as follows

2012/13 School Year

168 written responses

156 for the proposed term dates pattern

12 against the proposed term dates pattern

2013/14 School Year

166 written responses

142 for the proposed term dates

24 against the proposals

In respect of comments on the proposals, these are reproduced, with the summary of the returns, as Appendix C.

Most of the comments made related to the timing of the Autumn holiday in 2013. It was felt that the date of the holiday should be the week commencing 28 October 2013 rather than week commencing 21 October as was originally proposed. Accordingly, this amendment has now been made for the proposal to the Executive Councillor.

a) Has Local Member Been Consulted?

n/a – County-wide applicability

b) Has Executive Councillor Been Consulted?

Yes

c) Scrutiny Comments

n/a

d) Policy Proofing Actions Required

n/a

6. Appendices

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| These are listed below and attached at the back of the report | |
| Appendix A | Proposed School Terms & Holidays 2012/13 & 2013/14 |
| Appendix B | Consultation Letter |
| Appendix C | Term Dates Consultation Results |

7. Background Papers

No background papers within Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 were used in the preparation of this report.

This report was written by David Robinson, who can be contacted on or david.robinson@lincolnshire.gov.uk.