

Report of Governance and Partnership Officer

Report to The Deputy Director, Learning Skills & Universal Services

Date: 23 June 2014

Subject: Leeds School Calendar 2015-16



Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Summary of main issues

1. The purpose of this report is to outline the recent consultation on the Leeds school calendar, and recommend the dates to be adopted in 2015-16.

Recommendations

2. The Deputy Director (Learning Skills and Universal Services) is recommended to approve option 1 for the 2015-16 school calendar, as detailed in appendix 1.

1 Purpose of this report

2 The purpose of this report is to outline the recent consultation on the Leeds school calendar, and recommend the dates to be adopted in 2015-16.

3 Background information

3.1 As agreed by Education Committee in November 1996 the proposed calendar is based on a three term model unified across primary and secondary schools.

3.2 Dates in Leeds have been set on an annual basis. Draft dates are shared with 23 local authorities across Yorkshire and the North East region. Each year draft school calendar options are shared with the Primary Headteacher Forum, Leeds Secondary Heads and Principals, a strategic governor group and the Teachers Joint Consultative Committee.

3.3 Prior to 2011 Leeds always had an Easter break that moved with the Easter bank holiday. As a result of growing support within the education community for more consistency with the length of the spring and summer school terms, in 2008 Leeds consulted on fixing the Easter break to the first two full weeks in April. Public opinion was 60% in favour of this arrangement. And in May 2009 the Executive Board adopted a fixed break of the first two full weeks in April, irrespective of when Easter falls.

3.4 In 2013 Children's Services re-consulted on this arrangement. Results of the consultation demonstrated that overall 78% of respondents were in favour of a fixed break. The decision to continue with this arrangement was taken at the June 2013 Executive Board.

3.5 The Easter bank holidays usually fall within the two week school break, either at the beginning, middle or end, but once every four to five years they fall entirely outside of the school break.

4 Main issues

5 Whilst many (78%) have welcomed knowing when the Easter break will be, it is also true that some respondents (22%) do not like the fixed break and would prefer the school break to wrap around the bank holidays. Parents who live and work across local authority boundaries fall into this category.

6 In those years where Leeds is out of line with all of its immediate neighbours, we do receive more complaints. However we do believe we have listened to the views of Leeds residents and opted for term dates that are ultimately in the best interests of our children and young people. Other authorities have considered introducing a fixed Easter break and we are hopeful that others may follow this model in future years, which would alleviate some of the inconsistencies across the region.

7 Corporate Considerations

7.1 Consultation and Engagement

7.1.1 Two calendar options for 2015-16 were shared with the Primary Headteacher Forum, Leeds Secondary Heads and Principals, a strategic governor group, the Teachers Joint Consultative Committee and Lead members for Children's Services. With the exception of the TJCC, all favoured the adoption of option 1 as term lengths are more equal, and pupils do not return to school during the August bank holiday week.

7.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

7.2.2 An Equality Impact screening has been undertaken and identified that a full assessment is not required (see appendix 2).

7.3 Council policies and City Priorities

7.3.3 It is a statutory requirement that the local authority produces and publishes the annual school calendar at least four school terms in advance of the commencement of the calendar.

7.4 Resources and value for money

7.4.4 There are no immediate implications.

7.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

7.5.5 There are no immediate implications. This report is subject to call-in.

7.6 Risk Management

7.6.6 Failure to agree the school calendar will result in us not meeting the statutory timeframe for publishing the calendar.

8 Conclusions

8.6.7 The majority of people consulted favour option 1 as term lengths are more equal, and pupils do not return to school during the August bank holiday week.

9 Recommendations

10 The Deputy Director (Learning Skills and Universal Services) is recommended to approve option 1 for the 2015-16 school calendar.

11 Background documents¹

11.1 None

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.