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Report of: *Executive Director, Children, Young People and Families*
Report to: *Cabinet Member, Children, Young People and Families*
Date of Decision: *30 August 2016*
Subject: *School Calendar 2017/18*

Is this a Key Decision? If Yes, reason Key Decision:-

Yes ☒ No ☐

- Expenditure and/or savings over £500,000

☐

- Affects 2 or more Wards

☒

Which Cabinet Member Portfolio does this relate to? (*Children's Services*)

Which Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee does this relate to? (*Children & Young People*)

Has an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) been undertaken?

Yes ☒ No ☐

If YES, what EIA reference number has it been given? (*EIA935*)

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?

Yes ☐ No ☒

If YES, give details as to whether the exemption applies to the full report / part of the report and/or appendices and complete below:-

"The (report/appendix) is not for publication because it contains exempt information under Paragraph (insert relevant paragraph number) of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended)."

Purpose of Report:

This report is submitted in order to secure agreement of the school calendar for 2017/18 year for Voluntary Controlled and Community Schools. The proposed calendar is in line with that recommended by the Local Government Association. The calendar has been consolidated across all four South Yorkshire Authorities. The proposed calendar is also in line with that of Derbyshire with the one exception of the February half term.

Recommendations:

The Executive Director: Children, Young People and Families in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Children's Services are requested to support Option 3 Appendix C and approve –

- (i) That the recommended School Calendar for 2017/18 Academic Year fixes an Easter Break in the first 2 weeks of April. (Appendix C)

This option was supported by an overwhelming number of respondents to the consultation (71%)

Background Papers:

Summary of School seminar (Appendix A)

Option 1 – Traditional calendar (Appendix B)

Option 2 – Fixed Easter (Appendix C)

Summary of consultation responses (Appendix D)

Provision for religious observance (Appendix E)

Lead Officer to complete:-		
1	I have consulted the relevant departments in respect of any relevant implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist, and comments have been incorporated / additional forms completed / EIA completed, where required.	Finance: <i>John Doyle</i>
		Legal: <i>Nadine Wynter</i>
		Equalities: <i>Bashir Khan</i>
	<i>Legal, financial/commercial and equalities implications must be included within the report and the name of the officer consulted must be included above.</i>	
2	EMT member who approved submission:	<i>Jayne Ludlam</i>
3	Cabinet Member consulted:	<i>Cllr. Jackie Drayton</i>
4	I confirm that all necessary approval has been obtained in respect of the implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist and that the report has been approved for submission to the Decision Maker by the EMT member indicated at 2. In addition, any additional forms have been completed and signed off as required at 1.	
	Lead Officer Name: <i>John Bigley</i>	Job Title: <i>Manager, Admissions & Access, Inclusion & Learning Services</i>
	Date: <i>21 July 2016</i>	

1. PROPOSAL

- 1.1 The Local Authority is required to consult annually and determine the school term dates for Community, Voluntary Controlled and Community Special Schools under Section 32 of the Education Act 2002.
- 1.2 The Local Authority has always worked closely with schools that are their own Admission Authority and its neighbouring Authorities to try and agree the same school calendar for the benefit of parents.
- 1.3 Consistent school calendars are particularly important where school staff work in one Authority but their children attend school in another Authority. This is a common theme that emerges through consultation every year and is something that is supported by Unions.
- 1.4 The school year must contain 190 teaching days and 5 additional teacher training days. Any Governing Body wishing to determine its own term dates must adhere to this requirement.
- 1.5 There are many issues that are important to a wide range of stakeholders when considering the school calendar. These include the cost of family holidays, the length of some of the terms and the impact of operating a different calendar to neighbouring Authorities.

Primary and Secondary Headteacher representative groups have indicated strongly that they would wish the Local Authority to continue to set a model school calendar in the event that the statutory requirement is removed.

- 1.6 The Council is keen to obtain views from all stakeholders on the school calendar, especially from schools, parents and young people. A pre-consultation seminar was held with Schools on 15 March 2016 to open discussion and share ideas specifically about 3 options. A summary of the issues discussed at the seminar can be seen at **Appendix A**

Option 1 – The current model

The current model has a one week half term break at October, February and May and a six week summer break. The principles established enabled the four South Yorkshire Authorities to normally co-ordinate the main holidays within the year. During consultation this has been a regular request. There was some support at the seminar for maintaining the standard calendar.

Option 2 – Two week October half term

A significant number of schools were initially supportive of a two week October half term to benefit learning as well as children and staff well-being. The Autumn half terms are very long, normally being 8 weeks and 7 weeks respectively. There were concerns that the length of half terms were having a detrimental impact on children and teachers and that a two

week break would be beneficial.

Some secondary schools did express concerns about losing a week's teaching time for the Y11 cohort at this time of year.

In order to accommodate a two week break in October, a week must be taken from the summer break, reducing it from 6 weeks to 5 weeks. This would also have the direct consequence of extending the final summer half term to 8 weeks which caused concerns for most schools.

Option 3 – Fixing the Easter Break

Easter Day falls on the Sunday following the first full moon after the first day of Spring, 21 March. This means that Easter can be as early as 22 March or as late as 25 April. If the Easter Break falls in late April this creates a long half term and impacts on SATS preparation, not least because there is also the May Day bank holiday. All schools present unanimously supported the idea of fixing the Easter Break at the first two full weeks of April, irrespective of where the actual Bank Holiday falls. This would allow for more even Spring Terms and also provide a minimum of 3 weeks preparation time for SATS which all schools were supportive of.

There were two Voluntary Aided Schools represented at the seminar and both were equally supportive of this proposal as they stated that the Aided schools would continue to arrange the break around Easter as usual. All Voluntary Aided school are free to determine their own Easter break if they do not wish to follow the Council's model calendar.

If the Authority proposed a fixed Easter in 2017/18 commencing 2 April, we would be out of line with neighbouring Authorities which are proposing Easter a week earlier.

This model has been profiled up to and including the 2021/22 academic year and it provides a balanced calendar, largely with even terms. The only variables in this model are when the first two weeks in April fall and when the Spring Bank holiday falls. If Spring Bank is in the last week in May, the final summer term will be around 7 weeks long, if it is in the first week in June it will be around six weeks long.

1.7

Following the seminar it was decided to consult on just two options, Options 1 and 3. These are represented as Options 1 (**Appendix B**) and 2 (**Appendix C**) for the consultation. The option that proposed a two week October half term was withdrawn because of lack of support at the seminar.

2. HOW DOES THIS DECISION CONTRIBUTE ?

2.1 Thriving neighbourhoods and communities

A common school calendar supports families with primary and secondary

aged children and ensures that children are not taken out of school during term time for the purposes of holidays. A common school calendar across neighbouring authorities supports teachers and non-teaching staff with children who attend schools in another authority.

2.1 As an in touch organisation

The school calendar can impact on communities in different ways, both in Sheffield and with neighbouring Authorities. The Authority wants to hear the views of all stakeholders to arrive at the most effective and consistent school calendar.

3. HAS THERE BEEN ANY CONSULTATION?

3.1 The Authority carried out an extensive consultation process from 9 June to 7 July 2016.

Full details of the consultation are provided at **Appendix D**. Headlines are as follows:

There were 1200 responses received. 71% of those responding preferred Option 2, 26% Option 1 and 4% didn't have a preference.

There were three responses from trade unions:

- NUT (National Union of Teachers)
- NASUWT (National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers)
- ATL (Association of Teachers and Lecturers)

NUT and NASUWT support Option 1; ATL supports Option 2.

NUT was the only union to give a detailed response and this was mainly about the issue of consistency and the importance of considering the wider impact of such a change:

“The NUT position is that consideration should be given to;

- *Any change affects parents and teachers in bordering LAs which have children in schools/teachers who live outside Sheffield*
- *Academies don't have to follow the pattern so difficult for parents with a child in an LA school and a child in an academy*
- *Affects teacher recruitment – teachers from an LA which does not follow the pattern may not be able to start with Sheffield at start of the new term, teachers leaving Sheffield may in some circumstances be off for 3 or more weeks before they start with their new employer (say first two weeks of April fixed Easter in*

*Sheffield with next two weeks tradition Easter in other LA)
although in practice the overlap more likely to be around 3
weeks except in exceptional circumstances*

- Likewise pupils may have two weeks off for a fixed Easter, followed by further holiday time for Good Friday and Easter Monday which shortens the teaching week(s).*
- Changes to the school holiday pattern need to be coordinated – any one school or LA changing its holiday pattern it likes to create difficulties as above which are not to the benefit of or related to pupils education. Its ad hoc education policy with schools and LAs failing to take into account or have any regard to the wider consequences for pupils, parents, teachers and education.*

4. RISK ANALYSIS AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION

4.1 Equality of Opportunity Implications

- 4.1.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment has been carried out. The report makes provision for schools to make arrangement for religious observance in order to respond to different community requirements. **(Appendix E)**

4.2 Financial and Commercial Implications

- 4.2.1 There are no financial or commercial implications to this report.

4.3 Legal Implications

- 4.3.1 The legal implications are set out in the main body of this report. The only legal implication for the Authority is the failure to set a calendar for Community, Voluntary Controlled and Community Special Schools.

5. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 5.1 Option 2 was originally considered as described in paragraph 3 above. This option proposed a two week October half term break. To achieve this the summer break would have to be reduced by one week from six to five. This option was not supported by schools at the seminar because it would extend the final summer term by one week.

6. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 It is recommended that Option 2 (Appendix C) be approved as the model school calendar for the 2017/18 academic year. This model fixes Easter at the first two weeks in April 2018. The calendar applies to all Community schools, Voluntary Controlled Schools and community Special Schools. Voluntary Aided Schools, Trusts and Academies that

are their own Admission Authority are recommended to adopt the model calendar to promote consistency across the City.

- 6.2 The purpose of the extensive consultation was to invite opinion and comment from all stakeholders. There is overwhelming support for Option 2 from those consulted and approval of this Option demonstrates that the Authority has listened to the opinions of those who responded to the consultation.