

TO: EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR CHILDREN YOUNG PEOPLE AND LEARNING
DATE: 29 March 2022

TERM DATES FOR 2023/24
Executive Director, People

1 PURPOSE OF DECISION

- 1.1 To set term dates for Bracknell Forest Community and Voluntary Controlled schools and to recommend these to voluntary aided or academy schools for possible adoption.
- 1.2 When considering Bracknell Forests term dates a great deal of time is invested in communicating with our neighbouring local authorities and making every effort to align dates as much as possible.
- 1.3 It should be noted that our neighbouring local authorities have shared with us the term dates on which they are consulting schools, whilst the outcome of the Bracknell Forest consultation with our schools is set out in the body of the report, the outcomes of our neighbours consultations with their schools are not yet known.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 To review and select from the options for term dates for the 2023/24 academic year set out in the attached Appendix 2.
- 2.2 To approve that Friday 1 September 2023 be set as an in-service training day for all schools.
- 2.3 To note that individual schools will set the remaining 4 inset days throughout the year.

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Term dates are not set nationally.
- 3.2 It is a statutory requirement that the local authority set dates for Community and Voluntary Controlled schools.
- 3.3 Academies and Voluntary Aided schools are free to set their own term dates.

4 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 There are 11 options that have been identified as follows:

Option 1 – Is the proposed Bracknell Forest dates in Appendix 1 (two formats Excel and Word). These dates have been consulted on with Bracknell Forest Schools and align with Wokingham and Hampshire's proposed dates that are currently being consulted on by these local authorities.

The Bracknell Forest proposed dates are very similar to RBWM's option 1, which the majority of schools have requested are determined. However, RBWM are still waiting for Bucks to confirm their dates before deciding to go with their option 1 or option 2. Should they determine their option 2, the Bracknell Forest proposed dates will not align with the end of the autumn term and the beginning of the spring term.

The Bracknell Forest proposed dates are also very similar to Surrey's proposed option 2, but will not align with the end of the autumn term and the beginning of the spring term should they go with their option 1.

- Option 2** – Is the Bracknell Forest proposed dates as amended by Cranbourne Primary School. This would adjust the proposed mandatory inset day from 1 September to 4 September, create 3 extra school days on 18, 19, 20 December and create 2 extra holiday days on 22,23 of July.
- Option 3** – Is the Bracknell Forest proposed dates as amended by Uplands Primary School. This would adjust the proposed mandatory inset day from 1 September to 4 September, create 2 extra school days on 18, 19 December and two extra holiday days on 2 and 3 January. This option would have one school day less than the statutory 195, so an extra school day would need to be entered somewhere in the school year.
- Option 4** – Is the Bracknell Forest proposed dates as amended by Crowthorne Primary School. This would adjust the proposed mandatory inset day from 1 September to 4 September, create three extra school days on 18, 19 and 20 December, create an extra holiday day on 2 January and create an extra holiday day on 28 March.
- Option 5** – Is the RBWM proposed option 1. This would adjust the Bracknell Forest proposed mandatory inset day from 1 September to 4 September, create an extra holiday day on 2 January and 2 extra school days on 24, 25 July. RBWM have not yet decided on which option to agree.
- Option 6** – Is the RBWM proposed option 2. This would adjust the Bracknell Forest proposed mandatory inset day from 1 September to 4 September, create 4 extra school days 18,19,20,21 December, create 4 extra holiday days 2,3,4,5 January and create 1 extra school day on 24 July. RBWM have not yet decided on which option to agree.
- Option 7** – Is the proposed Wokingham dates. This would require no changes to the Bracknell Forest proposed dates in Appendix 1. Proposed dates for both authorities currently align, however Wokingham have not yet confirmed their agreed dates.
- Option 8** – Is the proposed Surrey option 1. This would create 4 extra school days on 18,19,20,21 December, 4 extra holiday days on 2,3,4,5 January and 1 extra school day on 24 July. Surrey have not yet decided on an option.
- Option 9** – Is the proposed Surrey option 2. This would require no changes to the Bracknell Forest proposed dates in Appendix 1. Proposed dates for both authorities currently align although Surrey does not set the mandatory inset day at the beginning of September. However, Surrey have not yet confirmed their agreed dates an option.

Option 10 – Is the proposed Hampshire dates. This would require no changes to the Bracknell Forest proposed dates in Appendix 1. Proposed dates for both authorities currently align, however Hampshire have not yet confirmed their agreed dates.

Option 11 – Is to wait to set our dates until all four neighbouring authorities have agreed and shared their confirmed dates. There is no statutory timeframe for these to be set so we do not know how long it may take each authority. The risk to Bracknell Forest is parents may want to start booking holidays and Bracknell Forest could receive criticism for not having determined term dates far enough in advance. There is also no guarantee that after all authorities have determined their dates that we will be able to align with all of them.

Appendix 2 shows full details of all above options comparing our proposed dates with the other options identified in the above proposals.

5 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 5.1 It is a statutory requirement that there be 195 school days in an academic year, including 5 in-service training days for school staff. Various patterns of days are possible around the fixed points of Christmas, Easter and bank holidays, the wish for terms lengths to be as equal as possible and holidays to be of a reasonable length to allow pupils and staff to rest and refresh.
- 5.2 In deciding dates the Council considers dates being set in neighbouring authorities to avoid inconvenience to parents having children at schools in two different authorities, or where parents may work in a school in one authority but have children at a school in a different authority.

6 CONSULTATION

Principal Groups Consulted

- 6.1 All Headteachers and neighbouring authorities were invited to comment.
- 6.2 Academies and aided schools have been copied into the consultation and were also invited to comment.

Method of Consultation

- 6.3 By email and comments were invited.

Representations Received

- 6.4 8 responses to the consultation were received in total. The full responses are included in Appendix 3
- 6.5 1 of these responses was received from an academy school and was just thanking the LA for sharing the dates with them.
- 6.6 3 of these responses related to the wish to ensure the dates matched that of neighbouring local authorities. Two of these were from community schools, which are obliged to comply with LA set dates, and two were from academy schools which set their own dates.
- 6.7 1 of these responses was received from an academy school, not obliged to comply with LA set dates, relating to the wish to consider setting dates around cold, flu and covid season, and

suggested that some areas of the country are proposing a two week October half term break. None of Bracknell Forest neighbouring local authorities are considering this.

6.8 3 of these responses were received from Bracknell Forest community and voluntary controlled schools wishing to make the below changes to the proposed dates:

- Cranbourne, Uplands and Crowthorne Primary Schools all suggested starting the autumn term with the LA set inset day on Monday 4 September as opposed to Friday 1 September.
- Cranbourne Primary School suggested ending the autumn term on Wednesday 20 December as opposed to Monday 18 December. And ending the summer term on 19 July as opposed to 23 July.
- Uplands Primary School suggested ending the autumn term on Tuesday 19 or Wednesday 20 December as opposed to Monday 18 December. And starting the spring term on Thursday 4 January as opposed to Tuesday 2 January.
- Crowthorne CE Primary School suggested ending the autumn term on Wednesday 20 or Thursday 21 December as opposed to Monday 18 December. Starting the spring term on Tuesday 3 January as opposed to Tuesday 2 January. And ending the spring term on 27 March as opposed to 28 March.

These change suggestions are also included in Appendix 3 and in addition in Appendix 2 as an easier comparison.

Some of the above requested changes could be met when schools set their additional 4 inset days.

7 OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Legal Advice

7.1 Requested but not yet received.

Director of Resources: Finance

7.2 The Director of Resources: Finance is satisfied that no significant financial implications arise from this report.

Equalities Impact Assessment

7.3 An initial screening has been completed.

Strategic Risk Management Issues

7.4 Significant risks include:

| ISSUE | RISK | COMMENT |
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| Term Dates must be set across the borough for community and voluntary controlled schools to ensure all schools follow the same schooling dates | LOW | Schools may not comply with the compulsory schooling days per year. |
| Neighbouring Local Authority dates | MEDUIM | Neighbouring local authorities or admission authorities may determine different dates to that drafted and consulted on in Appendix 2 and could result in not matching that of Bracknell Forest dates. |

Climate Change Implications

- 7.5 The recommendations above are expected to have no impact on emissions of CO₂.

Background Papers

None

Contact for further information

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