

ANGUS COUNCIL

CHILDREN AND LEARNING COMMITTEE – 17 NOVEMBER 2020

SCHOOL TERMS AND HOLIDAYS 2022-23, 2023-24 AND 2024-25

REPORT BY KELLY MCINTOSH, DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND LIFELONG LEARNING

ABSTRACT

This report seeks the approval of the Children and Learning Committee for a consultation exercise on proposals for the 2022-23, 2023-24 and 2024-25 school terms and holiday dates.

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Children and Learning Committee:

- (i) Authorise a consultation exercise on the draft schedule of school terms and holiday dates for session 2022-23, 2023-24 and 2024-25, provided in Appendices 1-3.
- (ii) Note that the outcomes of this exercise, if authorised, will be subject of a future report to the Committee.
- (iii) Approve an amendment to the published dates for 2021-22 to remove reference to Primary 1 pupil attendance in August 2021.

2. ALIGNMENT TO THE ANGUS LOCAL OUTCOMES IMPROVEMENT PLAN/CORPORATE PLAN

This report contributes to the following local outcome(s) contained within the Angus Local Outcomes Improvement Plan 2017-2030 and the Council Plan 2024:

- Local Outcome 4 - The best start in life for children

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 It is a duty of the Council to set a schedule of School Terms and Holiday Dates. These dates must be set following consultation, and, must comprise a total pupil school year of 190 days (except where prevented by circumstances out with the control of the education authority). In addition, the Council must set aside 5 days within the school year for the purposes of In-Service Training for staff.

3.2 Reference is made to the meeting of the Education Committee of 24 April 2009 (Article 9 refers) and the approved proposal that, in future, the October school holiday should commence on the first Monday of October each year. Reference is also made to the meeting of the Children and Learning Committee of 10 November 2015 (Article 7 refers) which confirms the result of a consultation on the proposal to amend the October school holiday to the second and third week of October. The recommendation following this consultation was that the October school holiday should not be amended and it continues to start on the first Monday in October.

4. CURRENT POSITION

4.1 The schedule provided in Appendices 1, 2 and 3 represents a pattern which is consistent with that adopted in previous years.

4.2 The dates proposed for the Spring holidays in 2023, 2024 and 2025 are broadly consistent with the pattern which has been adopted for some time, which includes Easter Monday in any given year.

- 4.3 The published school holiday dates for 2020-21 indicated that Primary 1 pupils would begin full-time from 24 August 2020. Due to Covid-19, this arrangement was altered and all Primary 1 pupils attended for full days from the start of term on Wednesday 12 August. A small number of concerns were highlighted regarding this change and it is therefore proposed to make this change permanent. As this is an operational matter which does not impact the overall term dates, it is considered that consultation is not required for this change. Approval is required to amend the term dates for session 2021-22 to remove the reference to Primary 1 attendance.
- 4.4 Angus Council now has three delivery models for school-based Early Learning & Childcare (ELC) provision. Delivery Model 1 settings will follow the proposed terms and dates as set out in Appendix 1. Bespoke arrangements will be developed for the previously agreed Delivery Model 2 and 3 settings. Finalised dates will be prepared based on the results of the Terms and Holidays consultation exercise and reported to Committee at a later date. Consultation on the ELC dates is not required.
- 4.5 Over the last few years, exchanges of correspondence about school terms and holidays have taken place with neighbouring Councils. Each Council undertakes similar consultation exercises. The clear outcome of recent exercises is that it is proving very difficult to agree a common pattern for every school holiday period, and in particular the October holiday.
- 4.6 However, the timings of the Summer holiday and the Christmas/New Year holiday are very similar to those of our neighbouring authorities. We have also reached an informal agreement that the Spring holiday should always start on the first Monday in April.
- 4.7 Whilst there appears to be little prospect of a uniform pattern of school holidays/terms, neighbouring Councils should be given the opportunity to comment on the attached tables in accordance with standard consultation procedures.
- 4.8 In 2010 the Education Committee agreed to the setting of school holiday dates several years in advance. Such an approach allows parents and staff to plan with a greater degree of certainty. Publication of school holiday dates three to four years in advance helps reduce related anxieties sometimes expressed by individual parents and parent groups. Aberdeenshire, Dundee City and Perth & Kinross Councils also set their school terms and holiday dates two or more years in advance.

5. PROPOSALS

- 5.1 The principal constraint under which the proposed schedule must operate is the need to fix precisely 190 pupil days in the course of the school year.

The principal issues on which comment is now being sought are:

- The precise dates of the Christmas, Spring and Summer Holidays
- The dates for the mid-term holiday in February
- The dates of in-service school closure days
- The dates for the St Andrew's Day and May Holiday

- 5.2 A consultation on proposed future holiday dates should take place and seek the views of parents/carers, school staff and trade unions. Neighbouring authorities will also be consulted. The proposed consultation will take place in November/December 2020.

- 5.3 If authorised, the outcome of the consultation will be the subject of a future report to the Committee.

- 5.4 The published holiday dates for 2021/22 should be amended to remove reference to Primary 1 attendance.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

NOTE: No background papers, as detailed by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to a material extent in preparing the above report.

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List of Appendices:

Appendix 1 – School Terms and Holidays 2022-23, 2023-24, 2024-25