

REPORT TO: Executive Board

DATE: 16 July 2009

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director – Children and Young People

SUBJECT: Standard School

PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 This report provides the results on the joint consultation with the Greater Merseyside Local Authority Learn Together Partnership on proposals for a standard school year. The report recommends approval for the Standard School Year and its implementation in Halton from September 2010.

2.0 RECOMMENDED: That

(1) Halton adopt the Standard School Year and agree to its implementation from September 2010.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 The Local Government Association (LGA) is championing the splitting of the school year (September – July) into six terms of roughly equal length and fixes them, whilst accommodating the Easter celebration.

3.2 In May 2008, it was agreed by the Greater Merseyside Directors of Children's Services to conduct a joint consultation to implement the standard school year based on the following principles.

- o All terms will start on a Monday (except where a bank holiday prevents this, in which case term will start on a Tuesday).
- o October half term will always be the last full week in October.
- o February half term will always be third full week in February.
- o The Easter Break will be moved to a fixed holiday at the beginning of April, and will be known as the Spring Holiday. This will always be the first two full weeks in April and will not move with the Easter celebration. Where Easter falls outside the spring break, this important point in the religious calendar will be protected by the observation of the two Bank holidays for Good Friday and Easter Monday. The Dioceses are supportive of this approach.
- o Where the school is open for part of the week it will be for a minimum of 3 days.

- 3.3 Liverpool, Sefton, St Helens, Knowsley and Halton have all participated. Wirral, Warrington and Cheshire (as was) declined to participate this year but have asked to be kept informed of the results.
- 3.4 In Halton 22,000 hard copies of the consultation document were sent out to stakeholders. Information was also on intranet, internet, local media and the Inside Halton magazine which is delivered to every residence in the borough.
- 3.5 In Halton there were 751 respondents - 210 of these were submitted via the on-line form. This represents a response of 3.4% based on the 22,000 that were distributed. Although this is low, there were more returns that anticipated
- 3.6 Out of the returned forms, 661 agreed with the proposals. This represents 88%. In total only 65 disagreed, which represents 9%. The remaining did not declare their thoughts.
- 3.7 In Halton, the majority of responses were from the primary sector (528), followed by secondary sector (270), There were 45 responses for both special schools and nursery schools and 2 on behalf of the PRU. Please note that some forms listed multiple stakeholders.
- 3.8 In Halton the majority of responses from stakeholder groups were from Parents with 557 responses. There were also 195 from staff and 55 from Governors. There were 2 formal responses from the Diocese of Liverpool and Diocese Shrewsbury. Appendix 1 contains the details of the consultation responses.
- 3.9 The results from other Local Authorities that participated in the consultation were similar to Halton's with an overwhelming 83% of all respondents agreed to the proposals. Liverpool will commence the Standard School Year from September 2009. Knowsley and St Helen's have agreed to implement the standard school year and this will start from the academic year 2010/2011 (see attached school calendar). Wirral are considering adopting the standard school year from 2011/2012 but are awaiting to see the position of West Cheshire and Chester before proceeding. It is recommended that Halton adopt the Standard School year from 2010/2011 in line with Knowsley and St Helen's.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 If it was agreed to implement the standard school year, where Easter falls outside the fixed spring holiday in April this would have an additional financial implication to working parents who would need to cover 2 additional holidays.

4.2 Although part of the consultation was to look into a holiday discount scheme currently run by Liverpool City Council, some respondents thought that this would actually increase the cost of holidays as all Councils will have the same dates, therefore increasing demand at the same time.

4.2 This was also a consideration for employers who would have requests for annual leave at the same time if holiday periods were standardised.

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

5.1 If Warrington, Cheshire East and Cheshire West and Chester continue to abstain from this proposal, this could create difficulty where families cross these borders to work and/or attend school. However, it must be noted there would still remain inconsistency in the current arrangements.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children and Young People

The school holiday pattern will be fixed for each year based on the principles agreed above.

6.2 Employment Learning and Skills in Halton

Establishing a set holiday period with the principles proposed may have a positive impact on school attendance which in turn may bring improved achievement and attainment for pupils.

6.3 A Healthy Halton

Establishing a school holiday period will even out the length of school terms, which benefits children and young people and school based staff with regard to work-life balance.

6.4 A Safer Halton

A joined up approach to school holiday patterns may benefit police and emergency services, as they will always be aware of when school premises will be empty.

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

N/A

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

- 7.1 The concerns over some Local Authorities not being involved could be an issue for Halton due to our geographical location. However, over time this is likely to change.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

- 8.1 This standard school year would promote diversity and choice to parents as they would be able to access a wider choice of schools without having to consider the implications of differing term dates.

9.0 REASONS FOR DECISION

To establish set holiday periods and even out the length of school terms.

10.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

Not to establish a standard school year.

11.0 IMPLEMENTATION DATE

The implementation date would be the academic year 2010/2011.

12.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

Documents	Place of Inspection	Contact Name
The Rhythms of Schooling – Independent Commission on the organisation of the School Year - LGA	Grosvenor House - Runcorn	Karen Mitchell
Guide to the Standard School Year - LGA	Grosvenor House - Runcorn	Karen Mitchell
Standard School Year Statement – May 2007 – LGA	Grosvenor House - Runcorn	Karen Mitchell
Learn Together	Grosvenor House - Runcorn	Karen Mitchell

Partnership School Term and Holiday Dates Meetings. Copies of minutes and Agendas 20th June 2008 to April 2009		
Consultation Responses	Grosvenor House - Runcorn	Karen Mitchell

Appendix 1

Summary of Responses from all participating LAs				
Local Authority	Number Responding	Agreed	Disagreed	Neither
Halton	751	661	65	25
Knowsley	248	187	53	8
Liverpool	1444	1189	202	53
St Helens	354	254	97	3
Sefton	1381	1195	171	15
Totals	4178	3486 (83%)	588 (14%)	104 (2%)

Sector Response						
Local Authority	Primary	Secondary	Special	PRU	Nursery	Not declared
Halton	528	272	45	2	45	0
Knowsley	179	75	19	3	21	3
Liverpool	790	580	23	0	32	10
St Helens	260	110	24	1	14	1
Sefton	960	655	48	11	128	23
Totals	2717	1692	156	17	240	37

Stakeholder Group							
Local Authority	Staff	Governors	Parent	Arch Diocese	Diocese	Other	Not Declared
Halton	195	55 (inc 1 GB)	567	1	3	3	9
Knowsley	73	23	180	0	1	3 (inc GMB NASUWT)	5
Liverpool	208	19	1195	0	0	9 (inc NASUWT)	11
St Helens	130	28	217	0	0	5	4
Sefton	74	138	1018	7	1	17	54
Totals	980	263	3177	8	5	37	83

Calendar 2010 / 11

September 2010

Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su
	31*	1	2	3	4	5
	6	7	8	9	10	11 12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	(*= August date)		

October 2010

Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
Su				1	2
3					
4	5	6	7	8	9
10					
11	12	13	14	15	16
17					
18	19	20	21	22	23
24					
25	26	27	28	29	30
31					

November 2010

Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
Su					
1	2	3	4	5	6
7					
8	9	10	11	12	13
14					
15	16	17	18	19	20
21					
22	23	24	25	26	27
28					
29	30				

December 2010

Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

January 2011

Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
Su					1
2					
3	4	5	6	7	8
9					
10	11	12	13	14	15
16					
17	18	19	20	21	22
23					
24	25	26	27	28	29
30					
31					

February 2011

Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
Su					
	1	2	3	4	5
6					
7	8	9	10	11	12
13					
14	15	16	17	18	19
20					
21	22	23	24	25	26
27					
28					

March 2011

Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

April 2011

Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

May 2011

Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

June 2011

Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

July 2011

Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

August 2011

Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

September 2011

Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		