

Meeting:	Education Consultative Forum
Date:	22 September 2005
Subject:	School Term Dates 2007/08
Responsible Officer:	Director of Strategy
Contact Officer:	Group Manager – Client and Management Support Services
Portfolio Holder:	Education and Lifelong Learning
Key Decision:	No
Status:	Part 1

Section 1: Summary

Decision Required

To agree to await further information from the Local Government Association (LGA) and the Association of Local Government (ALG) prior to determining the 2007/08 school term dates.

Reason for report

To report back to the Forum, as requested at its meeting on 25 April, on options for agreeing the way forward to determine the term dates for Harrow schools for the academic year 2007/08.

Benefits

- To agree, and publish, the school term dates for 2007/08 as early as possible to aid future planning for schools, governors, parents and other partners.
- To ensure, as far as possible, that the school term dates for Harrow are in line with the dates proposed by the ALG and LGA. The LGA draft proposed dates are shown at Appendix 1a and 1b.
- To comply, as far as possible, with the Harrow principles agreed following consultation with schools, governors, parents and other partners.

Cost of Proposals

No additional costs.

Risks

Lack of early discussion and agreement on the way forward could delay the setting of school term dates and miss an opportunity to influence the ALG and neighbouring authorities in the determination of co-ordinated school term dates for 2007/08.

Implications if recommendations rejected

It will be necessary to undertake a wide-ranging consultation to agree the school term dates for 2007/08.

Section 2: Report

2.1 Background

The Education Consultative Forum (ECF) annually agrees the term dates for each school year. The ECF at its meeting on 25 April 2005 agreed the school term dates for 2006/07 and asked the that the working group, set up by ECF, consider the take up of authorities adopting the ALG proposal for 2006/07 to gauge the impact of the co-ordinated approach.

2.2 To date the ALG has only received responses from a third of authorities on the dates set for 2006/07. The ALG intends to update its records and in so doing to also gather comments from local authorities on the draft proposed dates for 2007/08 to feedback to LGA at a meeting taking place at the end of September.

2.3 Options considered

- i) to adopt the LGA draft proposals for Harrow school term dates for 2007/08 as set out in Appendix 1a and 1b;
- ii) to consult widely with all partners on the LGA dates prior to confirmation that these will be the finalised proposed dates;
- iii) to vary the LGA proposal of school term dates to comply with the Harrow agreed principles and consult widely;
- iv) to defer a decision until further information is available from the ALG on take up across London authorities on the 2006/07 proposed dates and the outcome of the LGA meeting at the end of September regarding the 2007/08 proposed dates.

2.4 Consultation

A full consultation was undertaken with schools, governors, parents and other partners on the school term dates for 2005/06 and also on a set of Harrow principles to inform the future setting of school term dates.

The ALG has consulted with London Boroughs on progressing the co-ordinated setting of school term dates across London.

Consultation with neighbouring authorities (see Appendix 2) shows strong consistency, with minor variations around the start and finish dates for terms and some variance in the February half term dates.

2.5 Financial Implications

None.

2.6 Legal Implications

In the case of Community schools, community special schools, voluntary controlled schools or maintained nursery schools Section 32 of the Education Act 2002 obliges the LEA to determine the dates when school terms and holidays are to begin and end. The Governing Body determines the times of school sessions. For voluntary aided schools the responsibility rests with the Governing Body.

2.7 Equalities Impact

Following consultation with schools, governors, parents and other partners the principles for setting school term dates were agreed for Harrow. These Harrow agreed principles take account of the needs of Harrow's diverse community.

Harrow sets term dates of 195 schools days each year and schools/governing bodies have the flexibility to set the 190 pupil contact days within that framework to meet the needs of each school's community.

Section 3: Supporting Information/Background Documents

1. Appendix 1a and 1b – Draft Proposed LGA school term dates for 2007/08.
(Please note that Appendix 1B is a colour document and is being circulated separately to Members and Reserves only)
2. Appendix 2 – School term dates for neighbouring authorities for 2006/07.
3. ECF minutes of 25 April 2005