

LONDON BOROUGH OF HARROW

Meeting:	Education Consultative Forum
Date:	24 March 2004
Subject:	School Term Dates for 2005/06
Key Decision:	Not applicable
Responsible Chief Officer:	Director of Strategy, People First
Relevant Portfolio Holder:	Education and Lifelong Learning
Status:	Part 1
Ward:	N/A
Enclosures:	Appendix 1

1. Summary

The Education Consultative Forum (ECF) noted that the consultation responses favoured model 1 for the school term dates for 2005-06. The working group convened by ECF was requested to consult with neighbouring authorities and the Association of London Government (ALG) to improve consistency in setting the school term dates for 2005-06.

2. Recommendation (to Portfolio Holder)

2.1 **The working group recommend that the February half term date in model 1 be changed to 13-17 February instead of 20-24 February 2006. This revision will help to achieve greater consistency with neighbouring authorities whilst respecting the key principles supported by respondents to the consultation and agreed by ECF.**

REASON: To agree the school term dates for 2005/06.

3. Consultation with Ward Councillors

Not applicable.

4. Policy Context (Including Relevant Previous Decisions)

4.1 Each year the Harrow Teachers' Consultative Committee (HTCC), in liaison with the LEA, undertakes a full consultation with partners on term dates for each school year. The result of this consultation is presented to the Education Consultative Forum as a recommendation for adoption.

5. Relevance to Corporate Priorities

- 5.1 We will promote Harrow as a centre of lifelong learning by offering the highest quality education service, by raising aspirations and outcomes of achievement, and by providing activities for cultural, artistic and leisure pursuits which reflect the profile and the interests of all local communities.

6. Background Information and options considered

- 6.1 The working group consulted with partners and interested parties on 3 models of school term dates for 2005/06.
- 6.2 The ECF on 3 February 2004 supported the adoption of model 1 which was favoured by 58% of the total of responses received.
- 6.3 The ECF requested the working group to consider and make further recommendation following the outcome of officer liaison with neighbouring boroughs and the ALG regarding reaching consistency in setting school term dates for 2005-06 and to report back to the March ECF meeting.
- 6.4 Options considered by the working group included:
- (1) Adopt model 1 as supported by 58% of the consultation respondents although this does not meet a large number of respondents' request for consistency across neighbouring boroughs;
 - (2) Adopt the ALG model to achieve consistency across neighbouring boroughs although this does not support a key principle favoured by respondents, that is to provide 2 full weeks (with 3 weekends) at the Easter break;
 - (3) Adopt an amended model 1 by changing the February 2006 half term break from 20-24 February to 13-17 February. This amendment achieves greater consistency across neighbouring boroughs, maintains the balance of the number of days within and across the terms, and provides 2 full weeks (with 3 weekends) at the Easter break as favoured by consultation respondents.

7. Consultation

- 7.1 The initial consultation was widely circulated to schools, governing bodies, parents, and professional associations.
- 7.2 The report was made available on the Harrow website.
- 7.3 The ALG and Harrow's neighbouring authorities of Barnet, Brent, Ealing, Hertfordshire, and Hillingdon have been contacted regarding the proposed school term dates for 2005-06.

8. Outcome of consultation with neighbouring authorities and ALG

- 8.1 The ALG did not feel able to change its proposed school term dates for 2005-06 as these dates were also supported by the Local Government Association (LGA).
- 8.2 Barnet has yet to consider this issue; Brent are consulting with their neighbouring authorities which includes Harrow's proposals; Ealing are considering the ALG proposal together with Harrow's suggested dates; Hertfordshire are adopting the ALG proposal

and Hillingdon are currently out to consultation on the ALG model. See chart at appendix 1.

9. Finance Observations

None.

10. Legal Observations

- 10.1 Section 32 of the Education Act 2002 obliges the LEA to determine the dates when school terms and holidays are to begin and end and the times of school sessions for all community schools. For voluntary aided schools the responsibility rests with the Governing Body.

11. Background Papers

- 11.1 Minutes of the 3 February 2004 Education Consultative Forum.
- 11.2 Autumn Term 2003 LEA report to Governing Bodies.

12. Author

- 12.1 Geraldine Sparrow, Parent Support and Information Service Manager on behalf of the working group.
Tel: 020 8424 7658, email:geraldine.sparrow@harrow.gov.uk