
CABINET RESPONSE – SCHOOL TERM TIME INQUIRY

Background

1. The Council at its meeting on 28 July 2016 debated a motion on School Holidays. The Motion, as amended, was carried as follows:
The Council notes:
 - The disproportionately expensive cost of holidays during the traditional school holiday period, and the impact these costs have on families in our city;
 - That families want to observe designated school holiday periods, but that the excessive cost of taking breaks during these periods can prove prohibitive – meaning families often have to choose between taking no holiday at all, or taking pupils out of school during term time;
 - Moves by other councils in the UK to examine existing school term arrangements, with a view to shortening the summer break in order to create an additional week's holiday elsewhere during the school calendar when families can take holidays at a cheaper rate;
 - The Council resolves to ask the Members of the Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee to consider, as part of their future work planning, whether they wish to undertake a detailed analysis of the issue.
2. The Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee agreed at its meeting on 27 September 2016 to undertake an inquiry into amending school term times, in line with the request by Council on 28th July 2016. The first meeting of the task group was held on 14th November 2016. Members of the Task Group agreed that prior to providing any report to the Cabinet, it would be prudent to seek the views of

Head teachers, teachers, and school Governing Bodies, firstly on whether or not to investigate the possibility of amending school term dates and then to provide a robust evidence base on which to consider their decision.

3. The task group Inquiry was informed by a survey from a total of 74 responses received from the 127 Schools contacted. The survey was also discussed at a Primary Head teachers' Association meeting. Most of the responses were from the Head Teacher and Chair of Governors combined, however where a collection of responses were received from some schools, a consensus view was used
4. The report was presented to Cabinet on 6 July 2017, which included two recommendation for the Cabinet to respond to, copy attached at **Appendix A**. A full response was agreed by Cabinet on 12 October 2017, copy attached at **Appendix B**.

Cabinet Response to Recommendations

5. The Cabinet response, presented to Cabinet on 12 October, stated:

Recommendation 1:

That Cabinet considers the overall results from the responses received from Cardiff's Schools and decides whether it should undertake formal consultation with the view to seeking the Welsh Government's approval to change the School Term Dates for Cardiff's schools.

RESPONSE: THE RECOMMENDATION IS NOT ACCEPTED.

The Cabinet is recommended to refer the issue on changes to term times to Welsh Government for their consideration, as to whether they would wish to undertake a coordinated national consultation on this matter.

In responding to the first part of the recommendation from the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee, it is clear that the Welsh Government Cabinet Secretary statement from June 2017 is an important point of reference. Welsh Government expect to see a high degree of harmonisation across Wales on term dates. Cardiff acting independently and undertaking its own consultation on significant changes works against this expectation.

Any significant amendment to term dates would need to align closely with nationally agreed schedules for examinations and tests in schools, together with nationally agreed conditions of service for school based staff, including teachers.

Recommendation 2:

Inform Schools Governing Bodies that they may wish to amend their Inset days to link with Eid al- Adha and Diwali.

RESPONSE: THE RECOMMENDATION IS ACCEPTED.

A number of factors should be considered by schools in determining their inset days. Where schools in a network or cluster align inset days they can provide important opportunities for collaborative professional development. Consideration of religious festivals is also an important factor in some school communities. However it should be borne in mind that the scheduling of inset days on such religious festivals would also impact on staff who themselves may be wishing to celebrate the festivals.

Way Forward

6. The Cabinet Member for Education, Employment and skills and Deputy Leader together with the Director of Education and Lifelong Learning, will present the Cabinet response report and be available to answer any questions Members may have.
7. Members may also wish to consider the response contained in the attached **Appendix B**, and provide any comments, advice or recommendations to the Cabinet Member and Director.

Legal Implications

8. The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review and recommend but not making policy decisions. As the recommendations in this report are to consider and review matters there are no direct legal implications. However, legal implications may arise if and when the matters under review are

implemented with or without any modifications. Any report with recommendations for decision that goes to the Cabinet/Council will set out any legal implications arising from those recommendations. All decisions taken by or on behalf of the Council must (a) be within the legal powers of the Council; (b) comply with any procedural requirement imposed by law; (c) be within the powers of the body or person exercising powers on behalf of the Council; (d) be undertaken in accordance with the procedural requirements imposed by the Council e.g. Scrutiny Procedure Rules; (e) be fully and properly informed; (f) be properly motivated; (g) be taken having regard to the Council's fiduciary duty to its taxpayers; and (h) be reasonable and proper in all the circumstances.

Financial Implications

9. The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review and recommend but not making policy decisions. As the recommendations in this report are to consider and review matters there are no direct financial implications at this stage in relation to any of the work programme. However, financial implications may arise if and when the matters under review are implemented with or without any modifications. Any report with recommendations for decision that goes to Cabinet/Council will set out any financial implications arising from those recommendations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is recommended to consider the Cabinet response report, attached at **Appendix B**, together with the information presented at the meeting, and provide the Cabinet Member and the Director of Social Service with any comments, concerns or recommendations.

Davina Fiore

Director of Governance and Legal Services

6 November 2017