



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

MUNICIPAL YEAR 2023/24

EDUCATION AND INCLUSION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

22 JANUARY 2024

**REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, DEMOCRATIC SERVICES &
COMMUNICATIONS**

WELSH GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION – STRUCTURE OF THE SCHOOL YEAR

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 For Members of the Education and Inclusion Scrutiny Committee to formally respond to the Welsh Government's [consultation](#) which sets out the proposals on the principle of modifying the school year, options for implementing changes to the school year including being made in the 2025 to 2026 school year and suggested term dates for 2025 to 2026 school year

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members: -

- 2.1 Provide feedback on the proposals as outlined in paragraph 4, and decide whether they wish to make any further comments or suggestions as appropriate following consideration of the information before them.
- 2.2 Authorise the Service Director Democratic Services and Communications to submit the feedback provided by Members to Welsh Government on behalf of the Committee

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1. To provide Scrutiny with the opportunity to respond to the consultation so that it can have its say on the proposals which set out a number of objectives as set out below.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The current consultation seeks Members views on a number of specific modifications (or changes) to the school calendar. Welsh Government are proposing working with relevant bodies to reframe the traditional parameters of the school calendar to create more consistent term-lengths and increase some half-term breaks so that each half-term is broadly the same length.
- 4.2 The total number of days provided for learning, breaks, and staff training will not change. The proposals seek to maintain the existing provision of 190 days/380 sessions (38 weeks) of learning, 13 weeks of school breaks, and the existing number of staff training (INSET) days per school year. Similarly, all public holidays will remain.
- 4.3 It is proposed that implementation would begin in the 2025 to 2026 school year. These changes would include the following:
- Extending the October half-term break to two weeks and shortening the summer break by one week.
 - The flexibility to de-couple the spring break from the Easter public holiday. Recognising the importance of Easter to many people, it is important to note that should Easter fall outside of the school break, the public holidays would still apply, and learning time should be re-distributed, for example, schools would be closed on Good Friday and Easter Monday. Broadly, Easter and Holy Week will stand outside the spring break for two years in every 10-year period.
- 4.4 While an approach to the school calendar which has more equal term dates is being proposed, there would remain room for some flexibility in response to particular needs. For example, there may be local, cultural, one off or national events which may necessitate a change to the normal pattern.
- 4.5 Welsh Government are also seeking views on further potential changes which could be introduced at a later date. These would include the following:
- Providing the flexibility to extend the May half-term break and/or if necessary, moving the break away from the public holiday with an associated shortening of the summer break by one week.
 - Moving GCSE results day to the same week as AS/A-level results day. This could have benefits, particularly for secondary school staff. These benefits include 'freeing up' more weeks within the break to offset a shortened summer break.
- 4.6 Attached at Appendix A is a proposed set of questions of areas where Welsh Government are seeking feedback. Members can find a full list of the proposals attached at Appendix B to the report.

5. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no equality and diversity implications as a result of the recommendations set out in the report.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are no financial implications aligned to this report.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

7.1 There are no legal implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

8. LINKS TO THE COUNCILS CORPORATE PLAN / OTHER CORPORATE PRIORITIES.

8.1 This is an information report presenting the Welsh Government's consultation on its proposals on the structure of the school year. No decisions are being taken in this report.

9. CONCLUSION

9.1 The Education and Inclusion Scrutiny Committee, in line with its Terms of Reference, has been afforded the opportunity to respond to the consultation for the structure of the school year, published by Welsh Government

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

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