

DONCASTER METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE)

TUESDAY, 6TH JUNE, 2016

A MEETING of the STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE) was held at the CIVIC OFFICE in ROOM 008 on TUESDAY, 6TH JUNE 2016, at 4.00 pm.

PRESENT:

Chair – Reverend Tom McCready – Unitarian (Doncaster Interfaith)
Vice-Chair – Mr Bruce Gillham (Balby (Doncaster) Society of Friends)

Councillors: Andrea Robinson, Kevin Rodgers and Derek Smith.

Mrs J Gessler, Mrs P Kaur, Mr S Syed, Mr B Teimoori, Mary Sivaanbu and Mr T Griffiths.

APOLOGIES:

Apologies for absence were received from Ms S Norburn, Ms J Crowther and Ms A Nicolson.

38. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST, IF ANY.

No declarations were reported at the meeting.

39. QUORUM

As apologies had been received from the Church of England representative, Ms J Crowther and Mr T Griffiths from the Teacher's Association was not present after the expiry of five minutes, the meeting was declared inquorate. It was agreed that the meeting continue on an informal basis and the recommendations be ratified at the next quorate meeting of SACRE.

40. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR

The Clerk sought nominations for the appointment of Chair.

RECOMMENDED that:

Reverend Tom McCready be appointed Chair for the forthcoming year.

41. APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIR

The Chair sought nominations for the appointment of Vice Chair

RECOMMENDED that:-

Mr B Gillham be appointed Vice Chair for the forthcoming year.

42. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

As there had been some changes to membership of the SACRE, all present were given the opportunity to introduce themselves to the meeting.

43. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 6TH MARCH, 2017

RECOMMENDED that the minutes of the meeting held on the 6th March, 2017 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

44. REVIEW OF MEMBERSHIP AND ATTENDANCE.

Members discussed membership and attendance and raised the following issues:

Concern was raised in respect of vacancies and non-attendance of Members from Committee B (The Church of England) and Committee C (Teacher's Association) which resulted in the last 4 meetings being inquorate. The Chair explained he had made enquiries with the Bishop and with Reverend Stephens to try and identify an Anglican representative and he would look to make further attempts to fill these vacancies. Andrew Sercombe confirmed that in accordance with the Terms of Reference the nominee should be representative of the religion, denomination or associations in question.

In respect of identifying further representatives from the Teacher's Association members recognised the additional pressures facing teaching and other professional staff in giving up their time to attend meetings.

Members recognised that schools were a key partner in helping to shape RE provision throughout the Borough and teacher involvement was crucial in developing the agreed syllabus.

Members discussed practical ways of raising the profile of SACRE and appointing to the vacancies by emphasising the importance of its work and the professional and developmental opportunities that exist for individual's to help shape future RE provision in schools.

The clerk informed the meeting he had had some initial discussions with a colleague in Rotherham and he would look to explore possibilities of sharing good practice and resources including membership.

Members recognised that appointing to the outstanding vacancies was a priority as SACRE needed its full complement of members to ensure it was effective and able to drive forward its work programme, particularly in reviewing the Agreed Syllabus and publishing its Annual Report.

Mrs J Gessler informed the group this would be her last meeting as she was moving out of the area. Members thanked Mrs Gessler for her service and contribution to SACRE.

RECOMMENDED that:

The following actions be undertaken:-

- a) The Chair and Vice Chair draft a letter be sent to all schools seeking nominations for Committee C (Teacher's Association) and emphasising the opportunity to be involved in shaping and developing an agreed syllabus.
- b) A letter be forwarded to Church of England Schools in the Borough seeking nominations for Committee B (Church of England) and C (Teacher's Association) vacancies.
- c) The work of SACRE and a request for nominations to outstanding vacancies on Committee B and C be raised at a future Primary and Secondary Headteacher's Forum.
- d) Jonathon Sharpe to raise the issue of unfilled vacancies at a future Directors of Diocesan meeting with a view to seeking nominations.
- e) A letter be forwarded to all Chairs of Governing Bodies to raise the profile of the work of SACRE and seek nominations to the vacancies on Committees B and C.
- f) A press article be drafted to raise public awareness of SACRE and its purpose and importance.
- g) Jonathon Sharpe to contact the teachers Union ATL and NUT to seek nominations for representatives; and
- h) Mrs Gessler's resignation be noted and the SACRE express its gratitude for her service and contribution to SACRE.

45. UPDATE ON PREPARATIONS TO REVIEW WAYS OF WORKING OF SACRE FROM SEPTEMBER 2018

Jonathon Sharpe informed the meeting that changes to support arrangements over recent months provided an opportunity for members to review and reshape the role of SACRE and identify clear priorities moving forward. He reiterated the importance of ensuring a full complement of members and regular attendance to ensure the work programme could be driven forward.

Members were informed that in addition to filling vacancies on the SACRE there was an opportunity to review governance arrangements to agree a shared understanding of the core purpose and the way in which it carried out its functions. During discussion Members recognised the need to operate within the legislation but also acknowledged there was a need to operate flexibly to take account of changing national and local circumstances.

Members discussed the work required to develop a new agreed syllabus. This was a core function of SACRE. In recognising this challenge Jonathon Sharpe explained he had contacted Rotherham Borough Council to discuss how their SACRE operates and identify opportunities to share resources and best practice. Further discussions would take place to identify any specific support or actions that could be implemented to support Doncaster's SACRE.

Jonathon suggested that a workshop session for members at the next meeting would be helpful in ensuring a clear understanding of the role of SACRE, its terms of reference, operating arrangements, core purpose and development of a work plan.

RECOMMENDED that the proposed approach to reviewing the key governance arrangements and the purpose and practice of SACRE be considered at the Autumn Term meeting.

46. UPDATE ON COLLABORATIVE WORK AND PREPARATION/WORKING PARTY FOR AGREED SYLLABUS 2018

Jonathon Sharpe reminded the SACRE of its requirement to commence work on an agreed Syllabus 2018. He reported that he had spoken to colleagues at Rotherham Council who had indicated they were happy to collaborate with Doncaster and share details of current practices and knowledge on the development of the agreed Syllabus. Further discussions would take place in respect of the level of support, assistance and interaction that would be made available and any resource implications arising from any potential collaboration.

RECOMMENDED that further discussions with a view to developing a collaborative approach continue to be undertaken by Jonathon Sharpe on behalf of SACRE.

47. INFORMATION EXCHANGE

- i. Challenging RE Conference – Members received feedback from the “Encouraging the Provision of Challenging RE conference held at the Hub, Rotherham on 14th March 2017.
- ii. Iftar under the Stars and Aurora – the Chair reported that 1st Doncaster Hunafa Scout Group are hosting the first ever “Iftar Under the Stars” event in Doncaster, this Ramadan to give an insight in to Ramadan and Scouting.
- iii. The 2017 Aurora Humanitarian Index - The Chair referred to an article from the Guardian that was attached to the agenda he highlighted the positive attitudes of young people towards humanitarian and the individual impact on the refugee crisis.
- iv. Multi Faith Event Saltersgate Infant School and Links With Schools- The Vice Chair informed Members he was organising and participating in a free multi faith event at Scawsby Saltersgate Infant School during the Autumn Term. It was proposed that representatives from 6 different faiths would deliver the school assembly as a multi faith workshop which would give pupils the opportunity to learn about aspects of each of the religions. The Vice Chair sought support from SACRE members to participate and assist with the event. Andrew Sercombe confirmed that whilst members could participate and raise awareness of SCARE it was outside the terms of reference to run this as a SACRE event. In addition the meeting was able to comment on the merit of the event but not formally endorse as it was not quorate.

Members recognised however, that this event could be useful for SACRE in terms of developing evidence about RE in schools which was within the remit of SACRE.

Mr Syed informed the group that he used to regularly attend schools to give talks about Islam but over recent years as a number of schools had moved to academy status there had been reduced interest.

Members were also informed that the Ethnic Minority and Traveller Achievement Service also work with schools to highlight diversity and this includes promoting an understanding of different cultures.

RECOMMENDED that information be received and noted.

48. NASACRE BULLETIN

Issue 14 of the NASACRE Bulletin was attached to the agenda for information.

RECOMMENDED that Members receive and note the information.

49. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

AGREED that the Autumn Term meeting be held on Wednesday 27th September at 4pm, meeting Room to be advised.

CHAIR: _____

DATE: _____