

DONCASTER METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE)

FRIDAY, 20TH OCTOBER, 2017

A MEETING of the STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE) was held at the COUNCIL CHAMBER - CIVIC OFFICE on FRIDAY, 20TH OCTOBER, 2017, at 3.00 pm.

PRESENT:

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

Richard Iball, Mary Sivaanbu, Tom Griffiths, Sandra Norburn and Alec Depledge.

Also in attendance: Reverend David Stevens

APOLOGIES:

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors: Andrea Robinson, Kevin Rodgers, Derek Smith, P Kaur, B Teimoori.

50 INTRODUCTIONS.

The Chair welcomed Alec Depledge to the meeting as a member of Committee B Church of England. Reverend David Stevens, Vicar of Doncaster Minster was also welcomed to the meeting as an observer.

51 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

No declarations were reported at the meeting.

52 QUORUM

As there was no representative present from Committee D - Local Authority 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.

53 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 6TH JUNE 2017.

RECOMMENDED that: the minutes of the meeting held on 6 June be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

54 CONSTITUTION, TERMS OF REFERENCE AND GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS 2017/18.

Members received a report which identified some of the key governance and operational requirements of the SACRE. It was reported that good governance would allow for the proper discharge of the SACRE's functions.

Members were informed of the importance of acting in accordance with the Nolan principles and key principles of good governance established by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA). These key principles included openness, transparency and accountability and were adopted by public bodies as a measure of good governance. Members were also provided with a copy of Religious Education in English Schools: Non - Statutory Guidance 2010 to assist in understanding the function, roles and responsibilities of the SACRE.

Members were advised that SACRE's core function was to advise the Local Authority on matters related to the agreed RE syllabus and collective worship in the majority of maintained schools, .improving RE and monitoring the provision and quality of RE.

Members sought clarity on whether this role extended to academies. The Clerk informed the Committee that all the Secondary school's in the Borough and a significant number of Primary schools were currently academies and as they were not under the control of the Local Authority, monitoring and evaluating of RE provision in these schools was challenging.

Members discussed the resources required to promote and support an effective SACRE. Reference was made to the Westhill Awards which could potentially provide grant funding to SACRE's to offer pupils at school opportunities to engage in compelling learning experiences in RE (or collective worship) within the broad theme of "education into diversity". It was suggested the SACRE may wish to consider submitting an application for grant funding.

RECOMMENDED that the Committee

1. Agree the Constitution and Terms of Reference attached at Appendix 1 to the report;
2. Adopt the seven principles of Public life detailed at paragraph 5;
3. Operate in accordance with the CIPFA good governance principles; and
4. Receive and note the document Religious Education in English schools: Non-Statutory guidance 20 10 attached at Appendix 2.

55 Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education Membership and Attendance.

Members received a report updating on its Membership arrangements. The Clerk informed the Committee that further actions were being taken to appoint Members to outstanding vacancies.

RECOMMENDED that:-

1. The Committee note and receive the report.

2. Welcome Alec Depledge as a member of Committee C – Church of England.
3. Note the verbal resignation of Bruce Gillham and thank him for his contribution to the Committee; and.
4. Welcome David Stephens to the Committee as an observer.

56 Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education - Work Programme 2017/18.

Members received a report which detailed the core key functions of SACRE required to be undertaken during the course of the year –including: reviewing the agreed syllabus, submission of an annual report and identifying a way to monitor the effectiveness of RE in schools. The Committee acknowledged that the work programme should be focused on a small number of essential key activities that could be undertaken effectively within existing resources.

Agreed Syllabus Conference

The Clerk referred to recent enquiries he had made in respect of developing an Agreed Syllabus which would be a key piece of work for the SACRE to completed by 2018 and the following issues were raised:

- In recognising the pressures on teaching staff Members identified the importance of a syllabus that was supported with resources, work schemes and assessment tools that would assist teachers with varying levels of experience in delivering a consistent standard of RE throughout all key stages.
- Members supported a targeted approach to RE between primary and secondary, rather than a generic one size fits all approach. Members suggested that particularly in primary schools there was likely to be less RE specialism and both provision and resources would need to be tailored to meet this need.

Following the general discussion members considered 3 potential options for reviewing the Agreed Syllabus presented by the Clerk:

1. **Commission a review and new syllabus** from a consultant to be written over the course of the next year. There could be opportunities to share costs with other local authorities who were also developing a new syllabus.

Whilst this would provide a very focused fit for purpose syllabus it was seen as an expensive option. The Committee also had concerns about the support that would be available to assist in the delivery of the syllabus once it was agreed.

2. **Adopt a syllabus from a neighbouring authority.** This would be cheaper than a rewrite of the current Doncaster Council syllabus, would be up to date with the latest guidance and could include a primary scheme of work. Negotiations would need to take place in terms of sharing the intellectual property but this would be cheaper than option 1.

The Committee recognised the advantages in adopting a similar model that was up and running in terms of identifying effectiveness. Also this was seen as potentially more cost effective than Option 1.

3. **Buy in to a national offer for LAs from RE Today.** RE Today currently franchise a 'Model Agreed Syllabus' to 17 local authorities . This is an 'off the peg' solution to the issue of revision, and has a complete scheme of work with it which some SACRE provide for their schools, or which schools can buy. This is franchised on a school-by-school basis.

Members identified that the franchised model would provide greater flexibility and opportunities for using existing resources such as assessment and evaluation tools which would support teachers in the delivery of RE provision. This would also provide an opportunity to identify and share good practice from a range of schools.

The Group recognised that each option had its own merits and disadvantages which needed to be explored further to ensure a clearer understanding of the flexibilities and effectiveness of each option. It was agreed that a sub group be established to consider the options and report back to SACRE with a recommendation. The Clerk agreed to invite a consultant from RE today to discuss the options with the group.

Monitoring the Delivery of RE in Schools

In recognising the requirement to monitor the effectiveness of RE in schools Members raised the following issues:

- Members identified that measuring the impact, value and effectiveness of RE in schools was challenging as this went beyond the outcome of exam results to include issues such as understanding and exhibiting moral issues, values and principles. Members discussed the importance of understanding and measuring the quality of RE provision in schools.
- There may be an opportunity to engage with schools once an agreed syllabus is available by attending training days and highlighting the resources available.
- Use the opportunity of grant funding such as the Westhill Grant to access resources for education into diversity.

RECOMMENDED that

1. The following issues be scheduled on to the Committee's Work Programme:
 - Review of the agreed syllabus
 - Agree and publish an Annual Report
 - Monitor and review the provision of RE and collective worship in schools.
2. A sub group be established to consider further the options for progressing the approach to an Agreed Syllabus and to report back to the SACRE on a potential option.

3. The sub group consist of Reverend Tom McCready, Tom Griffiths, Richard Iball, Sandra Norburn, Alec Depledge plus one representative from Committee D (local authority).
4. All SACRE members be informed of the date of the sub group meeting and be given an opportunity to attend.
5. The Clerk contact the relevant consultant with a view to meeting the sub group in December to discuss the options and flexibilities of undertaking a review of the current syllabus.

57 INFORMATION EXCHANGE.

Baha'i Faith - 200 Year Anniversary Of The Birth Of Its Founder (Baha'u'llah

The SACRE considered information forwarded by Mr Behdad Teimoori informing Members that the Baha'i Faith would be celebrating the 200 year anniversary of the birth of its founder (Baha'u'llah). As part of this celebration, the Baha'i community throughout the United Kingdom would be offering schools the opportunity to show their students a short film developed to mark this celebration and also bring some meaning to young people in today's society (irrespective of faith or none).

Mr Teimoori welcomed any feedback and confirmed he would be available to offer services to schools to assist with lesson plans for those wishing to celebrate the occasion.

Bruce Gillham also read a letter from the Right Honourable Theresa May, Prime Minister which also made reference to the 200 year anniversary of the birth of the Baha'u'llah founder.

Doncaster 71st Hunafa Scout Group Regarding An Interfaith Project

Reverend Tom McCready informed the SACRE of a request from the Doncaster 71st Hunafa scout group regarding an interfaith project with scouts learning about each other's faith through story telling.

The project is a four week workshop with CAST where young people ages 12 to 24 from various faiths (includes non faith) come together to explore different faiths through the art of storytelling. In the final session the young people will put on a performance for a small audience to share their experience.

Reverend Tom asked members if they could raise awareness with any faith groups to identify young people to help with the project he agreed to forward the information and contact details to Members of the SACRE.

RECOMMENDED: that the information be received and noted.

58 NASACRE Bulletin.

Members received the October issue of the National Association of Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education Bulletin for information.

Reference was made within the bulletin to money contained within the Education Services Grant to support SACRE's in the development of their agreed syllabus.

Members asked the Clerk to make enquiries in respect of any money available to support the development of the agreed syllabus.

RECOMMENDED that this information be received and noted.

59 DATE, TIME AND LOCATION OF SPRING TERM MEETING

That the next meeting of the SACRE be held at 3pm on 28th February 2018

CHAIR: _____ DATE: _____