

DONCASTER METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE)

THURSDAY, 1ST JULY, 2021

A MEETING of the STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE) was held at the COUNCIL CHAMBER, CIVIC OFFICE on THURSDAY, 1ST JULY, 2021, at 4.30 pm.

PRESENT:

Chair – Councillor Jane Cox

Councillors Tracey Moran and Glynis Smith

Sally Faulkner - National Association of School Masters/Union of Women Teachers
Andy Wright - Church of England

Co-opted - Bob Kiddle - Humanist

Also in attendance

Paul Ruane - Head of Learning Provision, Learning & Opportunities
Sameena Choudry - Learning Standards & Effectiveness Officer
Andrew Sercombe – Governance Services Manager

APOLOGIES:

Apologies for absence were received from Ms Joanne Crowther, Mr A Depledge, Mr Richard Iball and Ms L Saxton

Quoracy: As a quorum was not established, it was agreed that the information only items would be discussed but no voting or formal resolution of any items on the agenda would be transacted.

1 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR

AGREED that Councillor Jane Cox be appointed Chair for the meeting.

2 APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR

AGREED that the appointment of Vice-Chair be deferred to the next meeting of the SACRE.

3 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 25TH FEBRUARY 2021

AGREED that the minutes be noted and recommended for consideration at the next formal meeting.

4 APPOINTMENT OF NEW REPRESENTATIVES AND MEMBERSHIP UPDATE.

SACRE was updated on the following changes to its membership:

Mr Andy Wright – Anglican (Church of England)

Mr Joel Ward - Baptist

Mr Bob Kiddle – Humanist (co-opted member with no voting rights)

RECOMMENDED that this information be noted.

5 PRESENTATION ON THE ROLE OF SACRE (TO BE PRESENTED AT THE MEETING) - SAMEENA CHOUDRY

Sameena Choudry delivered a presentation on the role of SACRE that included the following areas:

- Legal Background
- Role and purpose including statutory responsibilities and key functions.
- Current position
- Future Challenges facing SACRE locally and nationally: these included enhancing membership, continued implementation of the syllabus, effective monitoring arrangements of syllabus delivery and teaching of RE in schools
- The Role of RE Today
- Next Steps.

During discussion the following issues were raised:

It was reported that both nationally and locally a number of secondary schools were struggling to ensure statutory arrangements were in place for teaching RE.

In terms of developing the role of SACRE the following suggestions were put forward:

- Schools be asked about their expectations of SACRE to help shape the work of SACRE.
- Representatives from different faiths be encouraged to attend schools to broaden knowledge and understanding of RE .
- Consideration be given to developing a directory of the different faiths in the Borough and places of worship to promote awareness in schools.
- Wider initiatives should be developed to promote the role of SACRE in schools.

A number of SACRE meetings had been inquorate and this prevented its effectiveness. Discussion took place around appointing to outstanding vacancies, and Members using their contacts to encourage individuals to come forward and understand barriers to attendance and engagement.

Those present expressed a view that further benefits would be seen by ensuring the role of RE was promoted in school to help children learn about world religions and as well as promoting morals, citizenship and equalities and diversity.

Members were informed, that a copy of the current syllabus and the presentation would be forwarded to them after the meeting.

RECOMMENDED that the information be noted.

6 OVERVIEW OF AGREED SYLLABUS - PAUL RUANE AND LAT BLAYLOCK (VERBAL)

Paul Ruane and Lat Blaylock provided Members with an overview of the agreed syllabus which was agreed in 2019. It was explained this is compulsory for community schools and academies are invited to use it in order to meet their statutory requirements for teaching RE. The syllabus covers the 6 main religions: Judaism, Islam, Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism and Sikhism

In response to a question it was confirmed that whilst they do not need to adopt the Local authorities RE Syllabus, academies are required to deliver RE. A number of secondary schools were not meeting their legal requirements in this respect and there was evidence that in future Ofsted would be placing greater emphasis on teaching of RE in schools.

Further information was requested on the reasons for the decline in popularity for RE as a GCSE subject. It was reported that

- For young people the popularity of studying RE as a GCSE had been in decline for a number of years.
- Historically schools were under pressure to focus on other areas such as maths, English and sciences.
- There was a shortage of dedicated RE provision in schools.
- RE was not a Baccalaureate GCSE subject and therefore considered as less important than other subjects.

In respect of the need for schools to undertake collective worship Members were informed that this needed to reflect a predominantly Christian faith. Children could however, opt to be excluded from this activity.

RECOMMENDED that the information be noted.

7 NATIONAL RE UPDATES FOR SACRES - SUMMER 2021 - LAT BLAYLOCK.

Lat Blaylock provided an overview of the National RE updates.

RECOMMENDED that this information be received and noted.

8 ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION 2021/22 (FOR DISCUSSION)

Establishing membership and encouraging attendance was identified as a key priority moving forward and included the following actions:-

- A short briefing note to be provided to Members outlining the roles of SACRE to be used when encouraging individual's to fill vacancies. (Paul Ruane /Sameena Choudry)
- Seek to identify any barriers to attendance (Paul Ruane/Sameena Choudry)
- Date and time of future meetings to be circulated in advance to all Members (Governance)

9 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Thursday 11 November, 2021 at 4.30pm

CHAIR: _____

DATE: _____