

North Yorkshire County Council
Children and Young People's Service
Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education

SACRE meeting Thursday 21st February 2019

The Brierley Room, County Hall, Northallerton DL7 8AD

1.30 pm – 2.45 pm for Meeting, followed by Agreed Syllabus
Conference **3.00 pm – 5.00 pm**

Agenda

1. Apologies
2. Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday, 8th November 2018
3. Draft SACRE Annual Report 2017/18 – For approval (Rebecca Swift)
4. Draft SACRE Revised Terms & Conditions – For discussion and approval (Rebecca Swift)
5. Humanist Association - Request to join Group A - Vote to be taken
6. To report on any local or national updates (Olivia Seymour)
7. Correspondence
8. Any Other Business
9. Date and time of next meeting – **Tuesday 9th April 2019** (Special Meeting)

Barry Khan
Assistant Chief Executive (Legal and Democratic Services)
County Hall
Northallerton

North Yorkshire County Council

Children and Young People's Service

Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education

Minutes of a meeting held at County Hall, Northallerton on Thursday, 8th November, 2018

PRESENT:

County Councillors: Robert Heseltine, Andrew Lee and Annabel Wilkinson

Professor John Adams (Humanist), Mrs Barbara Belsham (Methodist), Reverend Simone Bennett (Church of England), Mrs Sarah Beveridge (Teacher), Mr Robert Brownlow (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints), Mr Nasr Emam (Muslim), Mrs Margaret Gibson (Church of England), Kate Hill (Teacher), Mrs Helen Sellers (Baptist), Mrs Olivia Seymour (Church of England) and Mrs Christina Taylor (Buddhist)

Officers: Mrs Rebecca Swift (Equalities Adviser – Education and Skills – Children and Young People's Service and Mrs Sally Mitchell (Principal Democratic Services Officer)

Also present: Mr Howard Quinn (Buddhist), Mr Douglas Rice-Bowen (Giggleswick School) and Mr Daniel Harry (Democratic Services and Scrutiny Manager), as observers

Action

142.	<p>ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN AND VICE-CHAIRMAN</p> <p>Mr Nasr Emam withdrew his application for consideration for the Chairmanship of SACRE, due to personal reasons.</p> <p>Members echoed County Councillor Robert Heseltine's request to place on record his sincere thanks on behalf of SACRE to Nasr Emam for his long-standing contribution as Chairman of SACRE and for his service in that role, locally, regionally and nationally.</p> <p>Resolved -</p> <p>That Mrs Olivia Seymour be elected Chairman of the SACRE for 2018-19 and Mrs Sarah Beveridge be elected Vice-Chairman.</p>	
143.	<p>APOLOGIES: Apologies were received from: County Councillors Jim Clark and Patrick Mulligan, Mr Mohinder Singh Chana (Sikh), Dr Neville Packter (Jewish) and Mrs Rachel Oates (Teacher).</p>	
144.	<p>MINUTES</p> <p>RESOLVED -</p> <p>That the Minutes of the meeting held on 21st June, 2018 be agreed and signed by the Chairman, as an accurate record.</p>	SAM

145.	<p>MATTERS ARISING</p> <p>Minute No. 122i) refers - Members Attendance: The Clerk reported that she had contacted the two County Council members who had a poor attendance record at SACRE meetings. Both the Members concerned had apologised and explained that their Executive duties often had to take precedence, but they did still wish to remain as Members of SACRE.</p>	
146.	<p>HUMANIST REPRESENTATION ON SACRE</p> <p>Rebecca Swift reminded Members that at the previous meeting Professor John Adams had formally requested that Humanism be admitted to full membership of SACRE. Following advice from NYCC's Legal Services and discussion on that advice at the meeting, it was agreed that SACRE members should consider and vote on the question of whether there was agreement on 'changing the terminology of the constitution of Group A to include representatives of 'non-religious world views'.</p> <p>Professor John Adams re-presented his case for a Humanism representative on SACRE, with full voting rights.</p> <p>The meeting was adjourned for the four Groups to discuss and vote on the proposal.</p> <p>RESOLVED -</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) That in a 3:1 vote (Group A against) <p style="margin-left: 40px;">It be agreed that the terminology contained in SACRE's Terms of Reference relating to the constitution of Group A be changed, to enable representatives of 'non-religious world views' to be admitted as full voting Members; and</p> 2) That the specific wording for the constitution of Group A be considered and agreed at the next meeting of SACRE; and 3) then a vote be taken on whether a Humanist representative should be admitted to Group A of SACRE. 	RS to suggest wording and all to consider prior to next meeting
147.	<p>REVIEW OF SACRE'S TERMS OF REFERENCE AND CONSITUTION</p> <p>Rebecca Swift reminded Members of the advice received from the National Association of SACREs regarding changes to the Constitution and also informed the meeting that advice had been sought from the County Council's Legal Team.</p> <p>In reviewing the Terms of Reference and Constitution it was agreed that consideration would be given to whether a Teacher representative could be a representative of an Independent School.</p>	

Action

	<p>RESOLVED –</p> <p>That a review of SACRE’s Terms of Reference and Constitution be undertaken at the next meeting.</p>	RS/OS
148.	<p>THE COMMISSION FOR RE REPORT</p> <p>Olivia Seymour reminded Members that she had collated responses on behalf of individual members and sent them to the Commission as the official, formal response of North Yorkshire SACRE.</p> <p>The Report had been published in September 2018.</p> <p>Olivia Seymour proposed that some aspects of the Commission’s Report could be taken to inform SACRE’s discussions on the RE Agreed Syllabus review and what was needed to support schools going forward.</p> <p>RESOLVED –</p> <p>That the Commission’s National Plan for RE be brought to the next meeting for discussion.</p>	RS/OS
149.	<p>RELIGIOUS STUDIES EXAMINATION OUTCOMES</p> <p>Considered –</p> <p>Power-Point presentation showing the key outcomes for RE Examinations.</p> <p>Rebecca Swift advised Members that the nationally validated data required to complete Examinations outcomes section of the draft Annual Report was not yet available. It was estimated, however, on the basis of interim data, that North Yorkshire’s GCSE results for RE full course at Level 4 grades were significantly above national average. 75.5% achieved a Level 4 or above.</p> <p>32% of the cohort achieved a Level 7 or above, which was above the 29.8% National average.</p> <p>Rebecca Swift summarised attainments from 2015-18 and gave the national picture for GCSE results and commented on the reduction in the number of students taking up Religious Studies to GCSE level. Members were also advised that there was a concerning trend in that there had also been a 22% reduction in RS A Level entries.</p> <p>RESOLVED –</p> <p>That Rebecca Swift circulates the Power Point presentation on RE Examination outcomes to SACRE Members, for their information.</p>	RS

150.	<p>AGREED SYLLABUS REVIEW – 2018/19</p> <p>Considered –</p> <p>A note of the first meeting of the Working Party established to consider the review process, was circulated at the meeting.</p> <p>Rebecca Swift advised that the Working Party had agreed on several Key Principles which it would like the revised Syllabus to meet and outlined those to Members.</p> <p>Members were informed that three options had been identified as possible means of revising the Syllabus, of which Options 1 or 2 were felt to be the best options. Funding, agreed actions and the timeline involved in the revision was explained.</p> <p>Concern was expressed that the reduction in the number of students taking-up RE might be due to the content of the current Syllabus and it was commented that taking into account the views of Teachers was vital, as was the view of students.</p> <p>RESOLVED –</p> <p>That –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) the progress of the Agreed Syllabus Working Part be noted; ii) the views of pupils on RE would be gathered to help inform the process 	RS
151.	<p>CORRESPONDENCE</p> <p>RESOLVED –</p> <p>It was noted that there had been no correspondence received since the last meeting.</p>	
152.	<p>OTHER BUSINESS</p> <p>Draft Annual Report 2017/18 – Rebecca Swift advised that she was currently working on the Annual Report and was awaiting certain information to complete the contents, but should be in a position to circulate the full draft for Members’ comments, before Christmas.</p>	RS
153.	DATE OF NEXT MEETING	

Action

	<p>As there needs to be an Agreed Syllabus Conference, it was agreed that the next meeting should be an extended meeting. The first half will be a SACRE meeting and the second half (3-4.30pm) will be the Agreed Syllabus conference, where other interested parties will be invited to attend.</p> <p>RESOLVED -</p> <p>That the next meeting be held on Thursday, 21st February, 2019 starting at 1.30 pm to 4.30 pm at County Hall, Northallerton.</p>	<p>All to note SAM to arrange</p>
--	--	---------------------------------------

The meeting concluded at 4.15 pm

SAM

North Yorkshire Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education: Constitution

Why is there a SACRE?

In 1944, Local Education Authorities were empowered by law to set up a Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE). In 1988, the Education Reform Act made it a legal responsibility for them to do so.

What are the duties of SACRE?

The SACRE must:

- advise the LA on RE given in accordance with the agreed syllabus, collective worship, and on matters related to its functions, whether in response to a referral from the LA or as it sees fit
- have regard to any circumstances relating to the faith backgrounds of the pupils which are relevant for deciding what character of collective worship is appropriate when a school makes application for a determination
- publish an annual report on its work and on actions taken by its representative groups, specifying any matters on which it has advised the LA, broadly describe the nature of that advice, and set out reasons for offering advice on matters not referred to it by the LA
- send a copy of the report to NASACRE (National Association of SACRE's)
- meet in public unless confidential information is to be disclosed
- make minutes of its meetings available for inspection at the LA's offices (so far as the minutes relate to the parts of meetings that were open to the public). There are also provisions about public access to the agenda and reports for meetings.

The SACRE should:

- monitor the provision and quality of RE taught according to its agreed syllabus, together with the overall effectiveness of the syllabus, and collective worship
- provide advice and support on the effective teaching of RE in accordance with the locally agreed syllabus; provide advice to the LA and its schools on methods of teaching, the choice of teaching material and the provision of teacher training

- in partnership with its LA, consider whether any changes need to be made in the agreed syllabus or in the support offered to schools in the implementation of the agreed syllabus, to improve the quality teaching and learning of RE
- offer advice to the LA, and through the LA to schools, concerning how an existing agreed syllabus can be interpreted, and collective worship provided, so as to fit in with a broad, balanced and coherent curriculum.

The SACRE may:

- require its LA to review the agreed syllabus and, if after discussion a vote is taken on this matter, the LA group on SACRE is not entitled to cast a vote. A majority decision by the three other committees is sufficient
- decide to advise the LA on matters related to its functions to the LA – equally, an LA may decide to refer matters to its SACRE
- co-opt members who are not members of any of the four groups – such co-opted members may provide educational expertise, young peoples' views or religious and non-religious views that reflect a diverse multi-cultural society.

Aims of North Yorkshire SACRE

- promote a high quality Agreed Syllabus
- help teachers and schools raise standards in RE teaching
- help schools improve the quality of collective worship
- contribute towards social cohesion, particularly in respect of improving religious and racial harmony within the community

Attendance at meetings

SACRE members are expected to attend all meetings where possible and send apologies to the clerk when they are unable to attend. A SACRE member who fails to attend three consecutive meetings subject to further clarification for the reasons for non-attendance will be asked to stand down and an alternative representative will be sought.

Who sits on the SACRE?

The composition of the SACRE is defined by law. It is made up of four committees.

Each local authority (LA) must establish a permanent body called a standing advisory council on religious education (SACRE) It must appoint representatives to each of four committees, representing respectively:

Group A: Christian denominations and such other religions and religious denominations as, in the authority's opinion, will appropriately reflect the principal religious traditions in the area

Group B: The Church of England

Group C: Teacher associations

Group D: The LA

Membership of each of the four groups which constitute the North Yorkshire SACRE are:

Group A: Representatives from The Baptist Church, Buddhism, Hinduism, Judaism, The Methodist Church, Islam, The Roman Catholic Church, The Salvation Army, Sikhism, The Society of Friends, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (single representative for each).

Members should be nominated by the body they represent.

Group B: Two representatives nominated by each of the Diocese of York, and the Diocese of Leeds.

Group C: Five teachers of religious education representing teacher associations.

Group D: Five elected members of the county council.

Co-opted membership of the North Yorkshire SACRE shall individually represent:

Academic expertise in religious education

Humanist

Terms of membership

All SACRE members agree to follow the code of conduct, which emphasises that the prime focus of SACRE is to deliver its core aims (see P. 2 above)

Members are appointed by the LA to SACRE for a period of 4 years. After that time, the representing body should nominate a new representative or may choose to continue to nominate an existing member. The maximum time a member may sit on SACRE is 8 years (2 terms).

Members are free to resign at any point. Resignations should be made to the clerk to SACRE and the representing body should be informed, so they can nominate a new representative to the LA.

Co-opted members have the same terms of office as full members (see above). Co-opted members are not entitled to vote.

If a SACRE member does not adhere to the code of conduct, the LA has a right to remove the SACRE member.

What is the distinctive contribution of each committee?

Committees A and B:

- Should present a positive image of their religion, so that members of the other Committees are disabused of any religious stereotypes of each denomination or religion. They must also make clear any grounds on which they may differ from each other, but also the respect they have for each other's viewpoints – since such convictions and mutual understanding both lie at the heart of effective classroom RE
- Can create opportunities within SACRE meetings to raise awareness of issues of sensitivity in the teaching of RE to the children of their faith community
- Should appreciate the difficulties schools are facing in the area, support their best endeavours, and act, where necessary, as a link between schools and the faith communities.

Committee C should:

- Have a real and positive interest in RE in primary, secondary or special schools
- Ensure that the needs of schools and teachers are considered by the SACRE in their discussions
- Provide the SACRE with information about the context in which RE is taught in the schools in the local authority
- Ensure that the associations they represent are informed about the work of the SACRE
- Create opportunities for other teachers to learn more about the work of the SACRE and give them the opportunity to have their views expressed at SACRE meetings

- Consult other teachers on matters of particular importance to the work of the SACRE.

Committee D:

- Can bring to the meeting the breadth of educational issues and concerns which elected members are wrestling with, and place RE's role within it
- Can be the supporters of RE within the various committees and structures of the LA
- Can give political support to enable locally determined RE to flourish within each LA – financial support, advisory support, etc.
- Can appreciate the issues raised by a multi-faith, multi-cultural society for the education of children in RE and reflect these issues in the Schools Forum, Scrutiny Committee, etc. as a means of supporting RE
- Can bring the 'public' dimension to the debate about RE provision and support.

Meetings

There are no requirements for SACRE to meet for a certain number of times but meetings are usually held at least once a term. More meetings may be scheduled if the business is considered to be urgent or requiring more discussion time than is possible in the regular meeting/s.

Meetings are arranged by the Clerk to SACRE. The dates for SACRE meetings are decided for the following year at the summer SACRE meeting. Agendas and minutes of the previous meeting, along with papers to be tabled, are circulated to all members at least 1 week prior to the meetings and are published on the North Yorkshire County Council website.

The agendas for the meetings are put together by the Chair and Adviser to SACRE. Other SACRE members may request items to be added to the agenda. This will be at the discretion of the Chair. Items should be submitted at least 2 weeks prior to the date of the meeting.

To enable decisions to be made, the meeting must be quorate, with representatives from all four groups. Attendance at meetings is therefore very important.

Meetings are open to the public but there may be some matters which will be considered in private. During such situations members of the public will be asked to leave the meeting at

this point. The circumstances under which we can consider matters in private are tightly controlled by law.

SACRE welcomes observers to the meetings, but observers are not entitled to speak at meetings, unless a request is made to the Clerk to SACRE, prior to the meeting.

Sally.mitchell@northyorks.gov.uk

As with other Council public meetings, “questions will be asked (or statements made) in the order notice of them was received, except that the Chairman may group together similar questions or statements. A question may only be asked (or statement made) if notice including the full text of the question or statement has been given by delivering it in writing or by electronic mail to the committee clerk no later than midday three working days before the day of the meeting. Each question must give the name of the questioner. Each statement must give the name of the person by whom it is to be made. At any one meeting no person may submit more than one question or statement and no more than one such question may be asked or statement made on behalf of one organisation. No person asking a question or making a statement may speak for more than three minutes, and the total time allowed at any meeting for questions and statements by the public shall be half an hour. A questioner who has put a question in person may also put one supplementary question without notice to the Member who has replied to his or her original question. A supplementary question must arise directly out of the original question or the reply and is permitted solely for the purpose of clarifying the information provided in response to the original question.”

Agendas and minutes of SACRE meetings are published on the NYCC website.

Voting

On any question to be decided by the SACRE, its constituent groups each have a single vote, but co-opted members do not have a vote. For any voting to take place, SACRE must be quorate, with representatives from all 4 Groups present at the meeting.

Decisions within a Group do not require unanimity. Each group must regulate its own proceedings, including provision for resolving deadlock. If there is a tied vote of the 4 Groups (ie: 2/2) Groups will be asked to reconsider, following further discussion.

Only SACRE members present at the meeting are eligible to vote.

Election of chair and vice-chair

One month prior to the Autumn term SACRE meeting, the clerk will ask for nominations for Chair and Vice-Chair. Nominations should be received by the clerk via e-mail two weeks before the SACRE meeting. Candidates will be requested to produce a summary of the skills and experience they would bring to the role, which will be circulated prior to the meeting.

At the SACRE meeting, nominees will be invited to outline their reasons for wanting to take on the role of chair. Members of groups A, B, C and D shall vote individually for the election of a chair. Members must be present at the meeting to cast a vote. The same procedure will be carried out for the position of Vice-Chair. The Chair and Vice-Chair should be representatives from different Groups, where possible. The maximum term of office for a Chair is 4 consecutive years.

To be nominated for Chair, the nominee must have been a member of SACRE for at least 1 year and attended at least 3 meetings.

How is the SACRE managed?

It is the LA's responsibility to set up a SACRE and this implies it also has a duty to fund it. Funding for SACRE's varies across the country, but in this authority there is no specified budget. The SACRE applies for funding as and when it identifies a need.

The SACRE is serviced by a clerk, provided by the chief executive's democratic services unit, who is a contact within the authority for SACRE matters, takes minutes of the meetings and provides administrative support.

The LA can make the decision on how the chair of SACRE may be appointed or it may allow the SACRE to choose the chair from amongst their members.

This SACRE is serviced by a professional RE adviser from North Yorkshire's School Improvement Service, who:

- may advise the SACRE and LA
- ensure that the decisions of the SACRE are moved forward
- oversees the monitoring of RE and collective worship in schools
- oversees the development of the Agreed Syllabus and its implementation
- offers support and advice to teachers and schools through training and consultancy

- writes the SACRE annual report, with the support of the Chair and Clerk.

Complaints

County Councillors

All elected councillors and voting co-opted members on council committees must comply with the code of conduct for members when they go about their official duties. The code states that councillors must behave in certain ways, such as not treating others with disrespect. It also sets out the rules about registering and declaring interests. Further information on this and how to make a complaint are on the Council website.

<https://www.northyorks.gov.uk/councillors-code-conduct>

SACRE members who are not County Councillors

The corporate complaints procedure has two stages. In the first instance you should direct your complaint to the service you want to complain about. Staff will work to ensure complaints are responded to quickly and resolved at this stage wherever possible.

If you are not satisfied with the response you have received you can contact us to escalate your complaint through the two stages. However, if we feel that your complaint has been considered fully at an early stage and it would not be of benefit to either party to pursue internally, we will instead refer you to the local government ombudsman.

<https://www.northyorks.gov.uk/make-complaint>

The SACRE Annual Report

SACRE is required to publish an annual report in the Spring Term. The draft report is prepared by the Adviser to SACRE, Chair and Clerk to SACRE and will be shared with SACRE members for comment, before final approval. The final report is shared with SACRE members, all schools, the School Improvement Service and Council members, as well as being sent to the DfE and NASACRE.

What is an Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC)?

An ASC is convened in order to produce an Agreed Syllabus for RE. It is a separate legal entity from a SACRE.

Although a review of the locally Agreed Syllabus is required within five years of the last review, if the majority of the committees (other than Committee D) ask the LA in writing to reconsider its Agreed Syllabus it must convene a conference for that purpose.

An ASC:

- contains the same committees as the SACRE
- can be made up of SACRE members but need not do so. There is no provision for co-opted members.

The chair of the ASC can be appointed by the LA or the LA may allow the ASC to choose its own Chair.

The LA's responsibility to convene the ASC implies a duty to provide funds for its work.

What other activities might the SACRE be involved in?

- convene working parties of SACRE members and teachers
- produce guidelines for schools, such as: schemes of work; programmes of study; assessment guidance; resource lists including visits and visitors; policy documents; teaching and learning strategies; RE and the early years; RE and post 16; RE and SEN; SMSC; recording and reporting
- keep up to date with Ofsted reports; what is happening with SACREs in other areas (NASACRE and Analysis of SACRE reports)
- monitor action plans
- receive reports on local activities such as exam results; displays; exhibitions; 'special days';
- acknowledge schools on their achievements and encourage those who need it through visits; certificates; letters; invitations to talk to SACRE; listening
- visit schools to: experience an RE lesson or an act of worship;
- presentations to SACRE by teachers
- find out more about the faiths or non-faith stances of: members of SACRE; the faiths identified in the agreed syllabus
- recognise and seize opportunities to raise the profile and status of RE
- ensure schools are kept up to date with both local and national initiatives and information which will support them in their situation
- address the issue of schools' non-compliance with legal requirements

- organise SACRE training days and lectures
- ensure that the LA are fully aware of the duties and responsibilities of SACRE so that they may make informed decisions regarding policy and budget
- ensure that SACRE is represented on national bodies and at national courses/conferences
- development planning to ensure the SACRE 'moves forward' and is effective in carrying out its duties and tasks.

DRAFT