

# North Yorkshire Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education

10 September 2024

## Proposed Amendments to the SACRE Constitution

### Report of the Assistant Chief Executive – Legal and Democratic Services

#### 1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To seek approval from Members to amend the SACRE Constitution.

#### 2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 SACRE last reviewed its Constitution in 2021. Minor additions were made which were designed to align the constitution with those of other authorities, and to reflect best practice given in the NASACRE guidance.
- 2.2 A review of the Constitution is proposed, to clarify the rights of members attending SACRE meetings virtually and make this explicit in the Constitution.

#### 3.0 PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE SACRE CONSTITUTION

- 3.1 There are three changes proposed to the SACRE Constitution:
- a) Addition of a paragraph confirming the status of hybrid meetings and virtual attendees.
  - b) Updating “North Yorkshire County Council” to “North Yorkshire Council” throughout.
  - c) Several minor changes to layout and branding.
- 3.2 The 2021 Constitution does not specifically address virtual attendance of members at SACRE meetings, and whether such attendance counts towards the quoracy requirements.
- 3.3 In 2024, in response to a question arising at a meeting, advice was sought which clarified that virtual and in-person attendance at SACRE meetings were procedurally identical, and that such members could vote, propose and second motions, and count as present in all respects.
- 3.4 It is proposed that the following paragraph be added to the Constitution at paragraph 8.2 to clarify this:
- SACRE meetings can be hybrid at the Chair’s discretion. In these cases, members will be provided with a link to join the meeting virtually. In hybrid meetings, virtual attendees are procedurally identical to members attending in person, and as such may vote, propose or second motions, and count towards the quoracy of the meeting.*
- 3.5 In addition, every instance of “North Yorkshire County Council” has been replaced with “North Yorkshire Council”, to reflect the establishment of the new unitary authority on 1 April 2023.

3.6 Several non-material changes have been made to the format to reflect updated branding for the new authority, and to add paragraph numbering to facilitate referencing.

#### **4.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

4.1 SACRE can amend its Constitution at its own discretion and may choose not to do so. However, this would leave the situation around virtual meetings unclear and subject to confusion in the future.

#### **5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 None.

#### **6.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 None.

#### **7.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 None.

#### **8.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 By clarifying members' powers to attend meetings virtually and participate, travel to attend meetings in person can be reduced.

#### **9.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

9.1 The changes are recommended to clarify the ambiguity in the current version of the Constitution, which does not clearly address virtual attendance.

#### **10.0 RECOMMENDATION**

That the 2024 Draft of the SACRE Constitution be approved.

#### **APPENDICES:**

Appendix A – SACRE Draft Constitution – 2024

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

Report Author – Edward Maxwell, Senior Democratic Services Officer and SACRE Clerk