

# SOUTHEND-ON-SEA BOROUGH COUNCIL

## Meeting of Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education

**Date: Wednesday, 20th January, 2016**

**Place: Edwards Hall Primary School, Macmurdo Road, Eastwood, Leigh-on-Sea, SS9 5AQ**

**Present:** Councillor Ryan (Chair)  
Councillors M Buckley, Mrs Larkin, Ms L Hopkinson, Werrett,  
C Pegler, S Tinning, Dr Khokha, Mr J Greenstein, Mr G Licence,  
Mr B Maddison, Davidson, Evans, Ware-Lane and McGlone

\*Substitute in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 31.

**In Attendance:** Councillors  
R Harris

**Start/End Time:** Times Not Specified

### **1 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Betson, Evans, Davies and Borton (no substitutes). Apologies also received from Ms S Hart and Ms P Draycott.

### **2 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest at this meeting.

### **3 Minutes of the meeting held on 8th June 2015 and Matters Arising**

#### Matters Arising

3.1 Review of Members Item 4.1 refers) – The Clerk and Advisor reported that they had undertaken a detailed review of the membership and had resolved a number of vacancies. There were still some vacancies to fill, namely in the Group C category, Associations Representing Teachers. The Clerk and Advisor would continue to monitor and where possible fill the current vacancies. Mr T B Singh was identified as a possible Sikh representative.

In respect of teacher representative it was suggested that to widen the participation of teachers the SACRE meetings could move to later in the day, e.g. starting at 4pm instead of the current 2/2.30pm time. It was AGREED that the summer term meeting be held at 4pm, to allow teachers (and others) to attend.

3.2 Update on work with schools (item 8 refers) – The SACRE was informed that the RE teacher training day organised by REToday held on 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2015 was well received by teachers and had supported them with a wider understanding of RE, particular those teachers who were not RE specialists.

Further ReToday teacher training would be arranged, subject to available funding. It was suggested that the SACRE use some of its budget to support the training.

(c) National Developments in RE (Item 9 refers)

The changes to the examination criteria for RE GCSE and A-Level were referred to. The changes/new criteria have put a stronger emphasis on comparative religion.

It was suggested that the Inter-Faith Forum could provide some support on comparative religion. AGREED that Mr B Maddison, Frances Neil, Dr N Kokha and Ms K Mistry could produce some learning information on comparative religion for use in schools/by teachers.

The SACRE also discussed the recent High Court ruling concerning the application of humanism to collective worship. It was noted that although the SACRE need to be aware of the ruling it currently has no substance in legislation/law and it is understood that the Government had appealed against the ruling.

(d) GCSE and A-Level Results

The SACRE was informed that it was their responsibility to collect the data on the RE GCSE and A-Level results and review how the RE Syllabus was working within schools. The SACRE were also responsible for considering any determinations put to it either by the Local Authority or the school.

AGREED: Frances Neil to write to all schools in the borough requesting the GCSE and A-Level results (including Head Teachers, Heads of RE and the Chair of Governors) and a report be produced for SACRE on the results.

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> June 2015 be confirmed as a correct record.

#### **4 RETool - SACRE Self-Evaluation**

The SACRE received the following documents:

- (a) RETool Self-evaluation;
- (b) Report from the SACRE Advisor;
- (c) The Draft School Survey;
- (d) Respect for All Conference Programme

(a) RETool Self-Evaluation

The SACRE considered the SACRE RETool reporting and evaluation toolkit which focuses on five key aspects of the work of the SACRE and is a tool to assist SACRE's identify areas of improvement and evaluate its work.

The SACRE made a number of comments and in general agreed that most areas identified in the self-evaluation tool were in the development category. A 2016/17 draft action plan had been produced which aims to address some of the key areas of development within the evaluation toolkit.

In respect to SACRE training (Section 2d of the evaluation toolkit) Frances Neil reported that there was an external trainer who could be brought in to provide training to the SACRE.

AGREED: Frances Neil to follow-up and engage the external trainer and a training session be arranged for the SACRE at its September 2016 meeting.

The SACRE made reference to the DFE guidance on collective worship regarding determinations. It was noted that the NATRE Executive had held a series of discussions on this issue, particularly around the potential move towards a national entitlement in RE. This was also being discussed by the RE Council. It was noted that national entitlement was a form of national curriculum for RE and could radically change the way RE was delivered in schools. Further details and progress would be reported back to future SACRE meetings.

#### (b) RE Advisor Progress Report

The SACRE considered a report from Frances Neil which provided an update on a number of areas that had been progressed since the last meeting.

The SACRE discussed the RE Schools Survey which had been commissioned by the RE Improvement Lead to gather information about RE and Collective Worship. The survey will be sent to all Head teachers, RE leads and school governor chairs. The deadline for survey returns would be end of February/beginning of March 2016.

AGREED: The survey to be sent to all schools in the borough and a report on the results of the survey be provided to a future meeting of the SACRE.

#### (c) RE CPD and Pupil Conference

The SACRE received details of the "Respect for All" RE CPD and Pupil Conference which will take place on Monday 7<sup>th</sup> March 2016 at the Leigh Baptist Church, Marguerite Drive, Leigh-on-Sea. The Conference is aimed at primary school teachers and Year 6 pupils. SACRE was asked if it could contribute some funding towards the conference.

Concerns were expressed that primary aged school children were not being taught/given the non-secular and humanist view in school. Assurances were given that this was not the case, although the non-secular / humanist view may be weaker in some primary schools than others.

AGREED: The Respect for All RE CPD and Pupil Conference be supported and a financial contribution of £230 be provided from the SACRE budget.

## **5 Review of the SACRE Constitution & Membership 2015/16**

The SACRE considered a revised SACRE Constitution and Terms of Reference which had been updated in light of national and local changes.

In respect to the vacancies it was noted that where appropriate representation was not forthcoming from national and regional associations that the Clerk was

approaching local groups, etc for representatives. It was suggested that this was referred to in the constitution.

AGREED: Adopted the revised Constitution and Terms of Reference, with the proviso about approaching local groups, etc where the national or regional organisation are unable to provide appropriate representation.

## **6 Draft Code of Conduct for SACRE Members**

The SACRE considered a draft Code of Conduct for SACRE Members which had been produced by NASACRE.

AGREED: The Code of Conduct be adopted.

## **7 SACRE Members Handbook**

The SACRE considered a reference handbook for SACRE Members which had been produced by NASACRE. The handbook was aimed at SACRE members, new or experienced and has been designed to help the SACRE become more effective. It also sets out the context and work of SACRE.

The SACRE discussed the handbook and suggested that it was used as part of an induction pack for all SACRE members.

AGREED: The Clerk to produce a SACRE Members induction pack.

## **8 NASACRE Conference and AGM 17th May 2016, Central Hall, Westminster, London**

The SACRE was informed that the NASACRE Annual Conference and AGM was taking place on 17<sup>th</sup> May 2016 at the Central Hall, Westminster, London. Frances Neil will be attending with the Chair.

AGREED: Noted the details of the NASACRE Conference.

## **9 Any other business**

(a) Certificate of Thanks

The SACRE AGREED that the pupils and teachers be presented with a certificate of appreciation for their guided tour and for allowing the SACRE to visit the school to hold its meeting.

## **10 Date and time of next meeting**

The next meeting of the SACRE will take place in April 2016. The Clerk will circulate dates, following consultation.

**Chairman:** \_\_\_\_\_