

SOUTHEND-ON-SEA BOROUGH COUNCIL

Meeting of Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education

Date: Wednesday, 28th September, 2016

Place: Committee Room 4 - Civic Suite

Present:

Councillors M Davidson and F Evans,
Mr K Ryan, Mr S Tinning, Mrs M Larkin, Ms P Draycott,
Mr G Licence, Dr Khokha, Mrs Y Werrett, Mr B Werrett, Ms J Barnett,

In Attendance: Ms F Neil (Advisor), Mr R Harris (SBC) and Mr B Martin (SBC) and
Ms K Christopher (REToday).

Start/End Time: 2.30 - 4.20 pm

1 Election of Chair and Vice-Chair

Resolved:

1. That Mr Kevin Ryan be appointed Chair of SACRE.
2. That Councillor Evans be appointed Vice-Chair of SACRE.

2 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Ware-Lane, McGlone and Davies (no substitutes). Apologies were also received from Ms L Hopkinson, Mr M Buckley, Mr C Pegler, Ms K Mistry and Mr J Greenstein.

3 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest at this meeting.

4 Minutes of Previous Meeting

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 13th July 2016 be confirmed as a correct record.

5 SACRE Member Training: Statutory Duties Dealing with Determinations

The SACRE undertook a training session covering 'What is an Effective SACRE' as part of their development needs identified through the RETool self-evaluation form and included on the SACRE Action Plan 2015/16 (Action Point 1a). The training session was delivered by Kate Christopher from RE Today and covered the following areas:

- The Law regarding RE;
- The RE Curriculum;
- The 21st Century World;

The SACRE asked a number of questions which were responded to covering the RE curriculum and academies and SACRE's role in the provision of RE in schools.

Members reflected on the training and discussed the Southend Agreed Syllabus and the 2011 Census. The SACRE was informed that an interim 'light-touch' review of the Agreed Syllabus would be undertaken at a future meeting of the SACRE/Agreed Syllabus Conference and the Census 2011 data would be reviewed to ensure that the SACRE reflects the make-up of the borough.

The SACRE Advisor reported that further work would take place during next school term to identify gaps in the provision of RE in schools.

Resolved:

1. That a further discussion on 'what makes an effective SACRE' take place at the next meeting of the SACRE.

6 SACRE Membership

The SACRE Clerk provided an update on the SACRE membership.

The SACRE was informed that Mr Clive Pegler had recently retired from the SACRE and also that this was the last meeting for Mrs Marilyn Larkin.

Resolved:

1. That the update on the SACRE membership be noted and the Inter-Faith Forum be approached for representatives to fill the current vacancies in the 'other faiths' category.

2. That the deepest thanks and appreciation be extended to Mr Clive Pegler and Mrs Marilyn Larkin for their valuable contributions to the SACRE and wish them all the best for the future.

7 SACRE Advisors Report

The SACRE received and considered the Advisors report, which covered the following matters (items 8, 9, 11, 12 and 13 on the agenda):

- NASACRE's consultation on their revised Constitution;
- The Tell MAMA Report;
- Accord Coalition Annual Award 2017;
- Improving Religious Literacy APPG report;
- Post-Brexit Britain;

The report also presented an update on the matters that have been progressed since the last meeting and also contained the 2016/17 action plan and priorities.

Members discussed the various matters and recommendations outlined in the Advisors report which are covered in items elsewhere on the agenda.

The SACRE noted that the Advisor had started to analyse the data from academies in the borough on the status of RE in their schools. The data will inform the SACRE of the status of their RE, the Syllabus they are following and what their provision is for Collective Worship. Once the work had been completed the information would be presented to the SACRE for discussion.

Resolved:

That the report be noted (see separate agenda items below for the specific resolutions).

8 NASACRE Consultation on Revised Constitution

The SACRE received proposed revised NASACRE constitution.

The Clerk advised that the constitution was for NASACRE to approve but they were seeking the views of SACRE's nationally before adoption. The SACRE supported the revised constitution and made no comments or suggested additions/changes.

Resolved:

That the NASACRE revised constitution be supported.

9 Tell MAMA Report

The SACRE received and considered the Executive summary of the Tell MAMA Annual Report which highlights crime against Muslims in the UK. Of note for SACRE was that 11% of attacks were in places of education. The SACRE discussed the importance that head teachers, teachers and the safeguarding leads in schools were trained to deal with Islamophobia and anti-Muslim hate. The full report is available at tellmamauk.org/wp-content/uploads/pdf/tell_mama_2015_annual_report.pdf.

The Advisor made reference to the Strictly RE Conference, RE Networks and the Diversity and Difference programme and engagement with Holocaust Education which support and address the priorities within the 'Tell MAMA Annual Report'.

The SACRE suggested that the findings and proposals contained in the Tell MAMA report are raised with schools and other organisations, e.g. Inter-Faith Forum. SACRE noted that the Advisor would be attending the Inter-Faith Forum on behalf of the SACRE in order to raise awareness and support community cohesion.

Resolved:

1. That the findings and recommendations of the Tell MAMA Annual Report 2015 be noted.

2. That SACRE continue to encourage and provide opportunities for schools, teachers, etc to attend a range of Conferences / training, etc (including the Respect for All and NATRE Annual Conference) which support teachers and pupils in building community cohesion and the provision of high quality teaching.

10 School Governors Responsibility for RE

The SACRE received two guidance documents on the provision and training of teachers of religious education issued by the Religious Education Council of England and Wales. The guidance is aimed at the governing bodies of both primary and secondary schools and draws attention to the findings and recommendations of the *Religious Education The Truth Unmasked* report on the outcomes of the recent inquiry held by the All Party Parliamentary Group for RE (APPG). The full report can be accessed at www.religiouseducationcouncil.org.uk/appg/news/2013-03-18/appg-re-final-report-the-truth-unmasked.

Resolved:

1. That the guidance on the provision and training of teachers of RE for primary and secondary school governing bodies be noted.
2. That the APPG recommendations be commended to the primary and secondary school governor bodies in the borough and some work be undertaken by SACRE to support governors respond to the recommendations.

11 Accord Coalition Annual Award 2017

The SACRE received details of the Accord Coalition Inclusivity Award. SACRE's are being invited to submit nominations for work which promotes inclusivity and the growth of mutual understanding, especially on the grounds of religion and ethnicity.

The SACRE noted that the range of programmes, such as the Diversity and Difference programme, would meet the criteria (inclusion, cohesion and mutual understanding between different religions and beliefs) of the Accord Coalition Award / accreditation.

Further details and evidence was included in the Advisors report at agenda item 7 above.

Resolved:

That the potential to apply to the Accord Coalition Inclusivity Award 2017 be investigated by the SACRE Advisor, supported by the Clerk, and if the criteria is met an application be made on behalf of the SACRE.

12 Improving Religious Literacy

The SACRE received and considered an executive summary of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Religious Education (APPG/RE) report on Religious Literacy. Further details on the implications and recommendations of the APPG report were covered under the Advisors report at agenda item 7 above.

The SACRE discussed the APPG/RE report and suggested that the next meeting should hold a session around society and ethics and RE as a subject.

Resolved:

1. That the SACRE discuss further at the next meeting society and ethics and what RE is as a subject.
2. That the SACRE funds the Respect for All Conference and funds teachers to attend the Strictly RE Conference.

13 Post-Brexit Britain: Building Respectful Schools and Societies

The SACRE received and considered an open letter to the Secretary of State for Education concerning the need to promote Citizenship, RE and PSHE in schools to build respectful schools and societies in post-Brexit Britain. Further details are covered in the Advisors report at agenda item 7.

The SACRE discussed in general the implications of Brexit on society and supported the suggestions contained in the open letter and emphasised the vital role of citizenship, RE and PSHE has in the spiritual, moral, social and cultural education of young people.

Resolved:

That the open letter to the Secretary of State for Education concerning the promotion of citizenship, RE and PSHE in schools be supported.

14 Date and time of next meeting

To be advised.