

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE)

MINUTES of a meeting of the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) held in the Council Chamber - Sessions House on Tuesday, 6 March 2018.

PRESENT: Mr S C Manion (Chairman), Mrs N Younosi (Vice-Chairman), Mrs C Bell, Miss C Bostock, Ms K Burke, Mr W Chambers, Mrs V Corbyn, Mrs C Elapatha, Mrs J Grant, Mrs R Joyce, Mrs S Prendergast (Substitute for Mr M J Northey), Miss R Walters, Miss J Webb and Mrs J Wigg

ALSO PRESENT: Ms P Smith-Orr (Consultant) and Miss Georgina Little (Democratic Service Officer)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

161. Membership

(Item 1)

The Committee were informed that Mrs Rebecca Swansbury would be joining Kent SACRE as of 26 June 2018 as the new Canterbury diocese representative following Mrs Patterson's resignation.

162. Apologies and Substitutions

(Item)

Apologies were received from Mrs Swansbury, Mr Papadopoulos, Mr Fowler, Mrs Pope, Mrs Malone, Mrs Brownfield, Mrs May.

Mrs Prendergast attended as a substitute for Mr M Northey.

163. Declarations of Interest

(Item)

None declared.

164. Minutes of the last meeting held on 28 November 2017

(Item 4)

Resolved that the minutes of the previous SACRE meeting held on 28 November 2017 are a correct record and that they be signed by the Chairman.

165. Kent SACRE Annual Report 2016 - 2017

(Item 5)

1. Ms Smith-Orr informed the committee that the SACRE Annual Report would be presented by Mr Manion at the Children's, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee on 8 March 2018. She informed the committee that the

exam results had not been verified and that this was problematic when producing the annual report which needed to be finalised in December. Results showed that a low volume of Kent schools were putting children forward to take exams within Religious Education and Collective Worship.

2. Members enquired about the number of schools who attended the RE syllabus launches and the breakdown of cost around these. Ms Smith-Orr confirmed that there was a register for all schools that attended; for the primary school syllabus launch there had been 50 representatives and at the secondary school syllabus launch there had been 28 attendees. The schools that did not attend the syllabus launch would be sent a syllabus book. With regard to the cost implications, Ms Smith-Orr said that the invoices had not been received from RE Today and therefore it was difficult to provide an accurate forecast of the costs. She assured the committee that a meeting would be held with Emma Stone (Business and Finance Process Officer) and Georgina Little (Democratic Service Officer) to discuss the budget and ensure costs were allocated appropriately for future SACRE events and resources.
3. RESOLVED that the annual report be noted.

166. Completing the SACRE Toolkit and Work Programme (Item 6)

1. Ms Smith-Orr introduced the SACRE Self-evaluating Toolkit which had been designed to help individual SACRE's evaluate their role and consider their impact on pupils' educational experience. The Toolkit highlighted five key dimensions of a SACRE's work and provided examples of good practice which enabled members of SACRE to evaluate what category they fell within, be it 'Developing', 'Established', or 'Advanced' and formulate an action plan going forward. Ms Smith-Orr separated the committee into two groups to allow for a 40 minute discussion on the following sections, followed by a 20 minute committee discussion to summarise the findings:

Section 1 – Standards and quality of provision of Religious Education

Section 3 – Collective Worship

Section 4 – Management of the SACRE and partnership with LA and other stakeholders

Section 5 – Contribution of SACRE to promoting cohesion across the community

2. As a result of the group discussion, it was recognised by members of SACRE that they were not as involved with school curriculums as initially hoped. It was felt that SACRE needed to strengthen its communication with School Governors and Councillors to ensure information was being cascaded effectively and efficiently through the appropriate school governing bodies. The Chair welcomed the suggestion of reintroducing the use of an RE bulletin to remind Governors of their responsibility around Religious Education and direct them to the KELSI website which contained guidance and information for schools around the statutory and non-statutory requirements that needed to be conducted around Religious Education and Collective Worship.

3. Members enquired about a schools responsibility to publicise on their website a parents right to withdraw their child from RE and guidance on how to apply for a determination. The Chair welcomed Members suggestions that this be added as an agenda item for further discussion at a future SACRE meeting and to provide a training event if appropriate.
4. Ms Smith-Orr commended the committee on carrying out the exercise and confirmed that all feed-back would be used to formulate an action plan that would be worked on over the next three years. This would be circulated to Members of SACRE for ratification before formal implementation. Ms Smith-Orr asked that any further comments and/or suggestions be sent directly to her in the next two weeks. Ms Smith-Orr confirmed that her contract had been extended for a further 20 days and this would be a contributing factor in ensuring that key actions were prioritised. Members were reminded that once the action plan had been formulated, the committee would be in a stronger position to request additional funding for SACRE's consultancy.
5. RESOLVED that the RE Toolkit be endorsed.

167. Monitoring Religious Education and Collective Worship in Schools (Item 7)

1. Ms Smith-Orr introduced the RE and Collective Worship monitoring spreadsheet and asked that Members discuss and endorse the proposal to implement the monitoring tool which would be used to identify what schools in Kent met the legal and statutory obligations which fell within Ofsted's inspection criteria. Ms Smith-Orr advised Members that Ofsted were using school websites as the initial trigger for inspection and that SACRE were responsible for ensuring that schools received the correct support and guidance that would help deter investigations. Ms Smith-Orr gave a brief presentation on how to navigate around the various school websites.
2. Members commented on the spreadsheet and made the following points:
 - Guidance on a parents' right to withdraw their child from RE should be a tick box
 - The Church schools already had a monitoring process in place
 - A notice of the deadline date should be sent to Members of SACRE who were able to assist with the exercise
3. RESOLVED that the committee endorsed the proposed decision to implement the monitoring spreadsheet. The SACRE committee recommended to the Chair, that a letter should be sent to schools following the launch of the Kent Syllabus, explaining that Kent SACRE would be undertaking a monitoring activity; looking at all school websites to ensure RE provisions were explicit as Ofsted's criterion had changed.

168. Membership to the National Association of Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education (NASACRE)

(Item 8)

1. Ms Smith-Orr asked that Members consider and endorse the proposed decision to remain as members of the National Association of Standing Advisory Council of Religious Education (NASACRE) and that the new membership would start in June 2018.
2. RESOLVED that the proposed decision to remain as members of NASACRE be endorsed.

169. The National Association of Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education (NASACRE), Annual Meeting on 24 May 2018

(Item 9)

1. Ms Smith-Orr provided an update on the Annual SACRE meeting that would be held on 24 May 2018 and asked that members consider and endorse the proposed decision that two Members from Kent SACRE attend the meeting.
2. RESOLVED that the committee endorsed the decision for both Mr S Manion and Mrs N Younosi to attend the annual NASACRE meeting.

170. Verbal Report on the Kent Syllabus Launches

(Item 10)

1. Ms Smith-Orr provided an update on the Kent Syllabus Launches for both primary and secondary schools and said that there had been 50 primary school representatives at each event however the venue for the secondary school launch was not suitable and only had 28 representatives.
2. In response to Members questions regarding the booking site, Mr Manion had asked that any Members who had trouble with accessing the site email him directly and he would re-direct these to the appropriate person to ensure all attendees received certificates.
3. In regard to concerns around attendance levels, Ms Smith-Orr welcomed Members suggestions that training should initially be concentrated on those schools that did not attend the syllabus launches and then cascaded out.
4. RESOLVED that the verbal update be noted.

171. Budget Update

(Item 11)

1. Miss Smith-Orr provided an update on the budget report and advised Members that due to the inconsistency of information she would be meeting with Mr S Manion, Emma Stone (Business and Finance Process Officer) and Georgina Little (Democratic Service Officer) to look at the finance forecast and align costs to the appropriate budget, be it within Local Authority or SACRE.

2. RESOLVED that the budget report be noted.