

From: Shellina Prendergast, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills

To: Children, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee - 19 July 2022

Subject: Kent Locally Agreed Religious Education Syllabus 2022-2027 - Update

Classification: Unrestricted

Past Pathway of report: Children, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee – 12 May 2022; Agreed Syllabus Conference – May 2022.

Future Pathway of report: Cabinet Member Decision - **22/00048**

Electoral Division: All

Summary: This report summarises the work of the Agreed Syllabus Conference and sets out the proposal to renew the RE Today Model A+ syllabus licence for a further five years.

Recommendation(s):

The Cabinet Committee is asked to NOTE that:

- a) the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills considered the Locally Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education, as recommended by the Agreed Syllabus Conference; and
- b) the decision to approve the Locally Agreed Syllabus was progressed prior to the July 2022 Cabinet Committee to allow appropriate arrangements by affected parties to make relevant preparations to implement the syllabus from September 2022.

1. Introduction

1.1 This report informs Members of the work of the Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC) on the development of the new Kent Agreed Syllabus for religious education 2022-2027 and sets out the decision to renew the RE Today Model A+ syllabus licence for five years.

1.2 Every maintained school in England must provide a basic curriculum covering religious education (RE), sex education and the National Curriculum. This includes provision for RE for all registered pupils at the school (including those in the sixth form), except for those withdrawn by their parents (or withdrawing themselves if they are aged 18 or over) in accordance with Schedule 19 to the School Standards and Framework Act 1998. The key document in determining the teaching of RE is the Locally Agreed Syllabus within the Local Authority concerned.

2. Background

2.1 The Local Authority is required to revise its Locally Agreed Syllabus for RE at least every five years. The current Kent RE syllabus was introduced in September 2017 and has therefore been reviewed in 2022. Section 375 and Schedule 31 of the Education Act 1996 requires the establishment of an Agreed Syllabus Conference to oversee the Syllabus review.

2.2 In May 2022, the Cabinet Committee noted that the decision to approve the Locally Agreed Syllabus, if appropriate, would be taken prior to the July 2022 Cabinet Committee meeting date to allow appropriate arrangements by affected parties to make relevant preparations to implement the syllabus from September 2022.

2.3 The review process began in Spring 2022. At the SACRE meeting held on 8th March 2022, SACRE Members considered the current syllabus and expressed a preference for continuing with the current provider. SACRE Members also noted that the resources required to independently write a new syllabus would outweigh the costs involved with the license renewal. These views were communicated to the Agreed Syllabus Conference which considered all factors when deciding on a recommendation to the Local Authority.

2.4 The formal review was undertaken by the Agreed Syllabus Conference in May 2022. The Conference unanimously agreed to recommend renewing the RE Today Model A+ syllabus licence for a further five years. Subject to the approval by the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills, the new syllabus will be formally launched in July 2022 and will become effective from 1 September 2022.

2.5 Further events to support the introduction of the syllabus in schools will take place during October 2022. SACRE will monitor and support the implementation of the Agreed Syllabus within schools.

3. Financial Implications

3.1 The costs of the Agreed Syllabus will be met from within existing budgets.

4. Legal implications

4.1 The adoption of a revised Locally Agreed Syllabus fulfils the duty under Section 375 and Schedule 31 of the Education Act 1996 to review syllabi periodically.

5. Equalities implications

5.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been produced and no adverse impacts were identified during the assessment.

6. Conclusions

6.1 The Cabinet Member for Education and Skills, in giving effect to the Agreed Syllabus Conference recommendation allows the Local Authority to fulfil its duty to review and provide a Locally Agreed Syllabus for religious education.

6.2 The proposed adoption of the Agreed Syllabus is in line with and supports our vision as set out in KCC's Strategic Statement ('Framing Kent's Future') and the 'Commissioning Plan for Education – Kent' (2020 – 2024).

7. Recommendation(s):

The Cabinet Committee is asked to NOTE:

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- b) the decision to approve the Locally Agreed Syllabus was progressed prior to the July 2022 Cabinet Committee to allow appropriate arrangements by affected parties to make relevant preparations to implement the syllabus from September 2022.

8. Background Documents

Non-Statutory Guidance for the Kent Agreed Syllabus:

<https://www.kelsi.org.uk/Curriculum/curriculum-resources/standing-advisory-council-for-religious-education>.

SACRE Constitution and Terms of Reference:

<https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/ecCatDisplay.aspx?sch=doc&cat=13145>

Decision 22/00048:

<https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/mglIssueHistoryHome.aspx?Ild=61301&optionId=0>

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