

From: Joel Cook – Democratic Services Manager
To: Shellina Prendergast, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills
Subject: Kent Locally Agreed Religious Education Syllabus 2022-2027

Decision Number: **22/00048**

Key decision

- *It affects more than 2 Electoral Divisions*

Classification: **Unrestricted**

Past Pathway of report: Children, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee - 10 May 2022,
Agreed Syllabus Conference – 12 May 2022.

Future Pathway of report: Cabinet Member Decision

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 Member for Education and Skills is asked to agree to adopt the proposed syllabus as Kent's Locally Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education.

1. Introduction

1.1 This report summarises 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 proposed 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includes provision for RE for all registered pupils at the school (including those in the sixth form), except for those withdrawn by their parents (or withdrawing themselves if they are aged 18 or over) in accordance with Schedule 19 to the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.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 was therefore due to be 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 Membership of the 2022 Kent Agreed Syllabus Conference comprise of the members of the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) which includes representatives of local faith groups, teacher representatives and elected Members, organised as follows:

- i. Group A – Christian Denominations (other than Church of England) and other religions which reflect the principal religions in the area
- ii. Group B – Church of England
- iii. Group C – Teacher representatives (from a range of teacher associations)
- iv. Group D – Local Authority (LA councillors)

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.

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. An update paper on the progress with the development, approval and launch of the syllabus may be provided at the next CYPE Cabinet Committee meeting.

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

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 would allow the Local Authority to fulfil its duty to review and provide a Locally Agreed Syllabus for religious education.
- 6.2 Historically, SACRE has led the development and introduction of the Agreed Syllabus via its Outside Body Status, alongside the relevant Agreed Syllabus Conference. For 2022, the approach has been amended to include a specific Executive Decision by the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills to better evidence the full process for developing and adopting a Locally Agreed Syllabus, balancing the independent role of the ASC and SACRE more broadly and the obligation for KCC as the Local Authority to make the final decision.
- 6.3 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 Member for Education and Skills is asked to agree to adopt the proposed syllabus as Kent's Locally Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education.

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>

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