

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

AGREED SYLLABUS CONFERENCE 2022

MINUTES of a meeting of the Agreed Syllabus Conference held in the Council Chamber, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Thursday, 12 May 2022.

PRESENT: Mr S C Manion (Chairman), Mrs N Younosi (Vice-Chairman), Miss C Bostock, Mr A Brady, Ms N Brownfield, Mrs M Duncombe, Mrs J Grant, Ms F Hawkes, Mrs B Naden, Miss M Paddison, Mr J Paul, Mrs J Roddan, Mrs R Swansbury, Miss R Walters and Ms S Hamilton

ALSO PRESENT: Mr A Shepherd and Miss E Pope

IN ATTENDANCE: Ms P Smith-Orr (Consultant Advisor), Katy Reynolds (Democratic Services Officer) and Mr J Cook (Democratic Services Manager)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

40. Membership

(Item 1)

1. Mr Joel Cook, Democratic Services Manager, said that the Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC) had been convened with the same composition, membership, and chairman as the Kent Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE). It was said that the relevant appointing bodies had been contacted as part of the appointing process and there had been a positive response overall. Mr Cook thanked the Agreed Syllabus Conference Members for engaging in the process.
2. Mrs Penny Smith-Orr, Religious Education Consultant, welcomed teachers Miss E Pope and Mr A Shepherd who were in attendance to provide further input on the development of effective RE provision in Kent.
3. RESOLVED to NOTE the membership of the Agreed Syllabus Conference 2022.

41. Kent Locally Agreed Syllabus Review

(Item 2)

1. Mr Cook introduced the item and highlighted that the approach to the syllabus review had 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. While the Cabinet Member would make the formal decision, the consideration and recommendation would come from the ASC.
2. ASC Members were told that the funding for the revised syllabus would be met from existing budgets.

3. Mrs Smith-Orr provided an overview of the RE Today Model A+ syllabus adopted in 2017. It was said that there had been positive feedback from Kent teachers regarding this syllabus. Given the resource-intensive alternative options of sourcing or developing a wholly new syllabus, Mrs Smith-Orr recommended renewing the RE Today Model A+ syllabus licence for a further five years. Members were reassured that new units had been introduced in 2022 to bring the syllabus up to date. An outline of new units would be automatically provided as part of the renewal and thereafter schools could choose to buy more in-depth information.
4. Further to comments and questions from Members, it was noted:
 - i. The teaching representatives expressed a preference for the continuation of the current syllabus and welcomed the addition of the new units. There was general agreement that the RE Today Model A+ syllabus was easy to teach and that children enjoyed it. While parts of the syllabus were deficient, teachers were comfortable working within the existing titles.
 - ii. As an outcome of the syllabus review, feedback would be provided to RE Today on the insufficiencies in the current syllabus. A request to update the Church School overview, the names of religions, and the list of teaching resources in the syllabus document would be sent to RE Today.
 - iii. There were a number of additional resources available to help teachers to deliver the syllabus content.
 - iv. There was a recognised need begin the next review in three years' time to allow for a more in-depth consideration of the current syllabus and the alternative models available.
 - v. Further clarification would be sought by Mrs Smith-Orr from RE Today regarding the four new units and the key stages to which these would cater for.
5. The ASC came to a unanimous agreement to recommend to the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills the licence renewal of the RE Today syllabus A+ for a further five years.
6. RESOLVED To consider and endorse or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills on the proposed Locally Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education for 2022-2027.

42. Any other items which the Chairman decides are urgent
(Item 3)

The Chair welcomed the appointment of Ms S Hamilton, Deputy Cabinet Member for Education and Skills, onto SACRE.