

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL –RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION TAKEN BY:

Leader of the Council

DECISION NO:

22/00036

For publication

Key decision: No

Subject Matter / Title of Decision:
SACRE Membership Update

Decision:

As Leader of the Council, I agree to;

- a) APPROVE the current Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) membership arrangements without change;
- b) NOTE that the current legislation prohibits the inclusion of Humanist representatives within Group A of SACRE Membership; and
- c) Delegate authority to the Democratic Services Manager to take relevant actions, including but not limited to entering into contracts or other legal agreements, as necessary to implement the decision.

Reason(s) for decision:

KCC must review and consider SACRE membership arrangements from time to time with regard to representation in Group A of the body.

The Decision is necessary to clarify that KCC, as the responsible Local Authority for the Kent SACRE, maintains the membership arrangements in full compliance with the relevant national legislation. Specific clarification of this point is required to address membership requests raised by the relevant groups.

The decision will not prevent the inclusion of Humanists or other relevant groups within SACRE as observers or non-voting co-optees (such arrangements for the welcoming of observers or co-optees are matters for determination by SACRE, subject to advice from the Local Authority).

Background

SACRE sits as an outside body, with responsibilities relating to advising the local authority and education providers regarding the teaching of religious education. It draws membership from a range of people, with the membership separated into specific sections (with each section having one vote at full meetings of the SACRE).

- (a) Christian denominations (other than the Church of England) and other denominations and religions as in the opinion of the Authority reflect the principal religious traditions in Kent. The number of representatives approved under the category shall, so far as is consistent with the efficient discharge of this group's functions, reflect broadly the proportionate strength of that denomination or religion in the area.
- (b) The Church of England
- (c) Teacher Associations having regard to local circumstances.
- (d) The Local Authority

KCC is responsible for considering the appropriate representation for Group (a) – Christian

denominations and other denominations and religions. Such consideration may be given from time to time as the Local Authority deems necessary and in response to specific requests for updates to representation.

Financial Implications

None

Equalities implications

The relevant protected characteristic group is Religion and Belief. While this decision limits the role of those seeking to represent Humanist views in terms of voting roles within SACRE, this arrangement is in line with the legislative requirements. More broadly, this decision does not prohibit involvement of Humanist representatives via co-optee and observer status.

Legal implications

KCC is required under the Education Act 1996 to establish a SACRE. Membership arrangements and requirements continue to be subject to this legislation and this decision confirms compliance with the current legal position.

Membership and other SACRE arrangements will be reviewed in the event of new legislation or new guidance issued by the Department for Education.

Data Protection implications

There are no direct Data Protection implications.

Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:

The proposed decision was considered and endorsed by the CYPE Cabinet Committee on 10 May 2022.

Any alternatives considered and rejected:

KCC could have sought to include Humanism with Group A but doing so would have been contrary to law.

KCC could have continued applying standing membership arrangements, based on the legislation, without specific decision-making but this was discarded as it is helpful to update compliance with long standing legislation to confirm ongoing arrangements and provide more recent authority for local decision-making.

Any interest declared when the decision was taken and any dispensation granted by the Proper Officer:

None



17 June 2022

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Signed

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date