

Agenda

Agreed Syllabus Conference

Date: **Friday 29 November 2019**

Time: **3.00 pm**

Place: **Committee Room 1, Shire Hall, St Peter's Square,
Hereford HR1 2HX**

Notes: Please note the time, date and venue of the meeting.

For any further information please contact:

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Agenda for the meeting of the Agreed Syllabus Conference

Membership

Committee D	Councillor Harvey Councillor Hewitt Councillor Stone	
Committee A	Mr Burbidge Canon Nugent Mrs Ault Ven. Choesang	Roman Catholic representative Free Church representative Bahai faith representative Buddist faith representative
Committee B	Mr Debenham Mr Harrington Mr Nicholas	Church of England representative Church of England representative Church of England representative
Committee C	Mr Caldicott Mrs Barker	Primary teacher representative Secondary teacher representative

Agenda

	Pages
1. ELECTION OF CHAIRPERSON To elect the chairperson of the agreed syllabus conference.	
2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE To receive apologies for absence.	
3. NAMED SUBSTITUTES (IF ANY) To receive details any details of Members nominated to attend the meeting in place of a Member of the Committee.	
4. MINUTES To approve and sign the Minutes of the meeting held on 15 March 2019.	7 - 10
5. GUIDANCE FOR THE AGREED SYLLABUS CONFERENCE To consider the results of the consultation conducted with teachers in respect of the religious education syllabus options and agree which option to progress.	11 - 30

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HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

SHIRE HALL, ST PETER'S SQUARE, HEREFORD, HR1 2HX.

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Minutes of the meeting of the Agreed Syllabus Conference held at Committee Room 1 - The Shire Hall, St. Peter's Square, Hereford, HR1 2HX on Friday 15 March 2019 at 2.00 pm

Present: Councillor John Stone (chairperson)

Carolyn Ault, Lou Barker, Venerable Tsultrim Tenzin Choesang, Stewart Debenham, Councillor EPJ Harvey, Duncan Jones, Councillor MT McEvilly, Jonathan Nicholas, Anna Nugent and Tracey Wakefield

Officers: Alison Naylor and Stephen Pett

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Pat Burbidge and Ben Caldicott.

2. NAMED SUBSTITUTES (IF ANY)

Tracey Westlake acted as a substitute for Ben Caldicott.

3. GUIDANCE FOR THE AGREED SYLLABUS CONFERENCE

The Agreed Syllabus Conference received a report from the RE Consultant setting out the proposed timeline and options for a review of the agreed RE syllabus. The following points were raised in the presentation of the report:

- The role of the Conference was to recommend to SACRE a new RE syllabus for Herefordshire.
- A review of the RE syllabus needed to take place every five years. SACRE had requested the review of the syllabus to commence after four years following the agreement of the previous syllabus in 2015.
- The syllabus currently in place in Herefordshire was an 'off-the-shelf' syllabus with elements adapted to the county.
- The proposed timeline identified summer 2020 for the launch of the new syllabus.
- An amount of £5,000 had been allocated to fund the review.
- A syllabus needed to be clear in intent, impact and monitoring.
- It was explained that the Commission on RE was looking to remove the locally agreed syllabus for RE but there was no imminent national curriculum proposed.

The options

The RE Consultant outlined the three options proposed for the review of the syllabus as below:

Option A:

- Consisted of a renewal of the current syllabus in Herefordshire with updates included.

- There would be no financial pressure on the budget for the review with the selection of option a.
- The syllabus had originally been written for Worcestershire and had been adapted and introduced in Herefordshire four years ago.
- The benefits of the syllabus was that it was established in schools, teachers were familiar with it and lesson plans had been produced around its core elements.
- Updates to the syllabus would be required to key stage one and assessment elements as well as some updates to take account of new legal elements e.g. the inclusion of Humanism.
- Disadvantages consisted of the syllabus being considered archaic and some considered it to be insufficiently local.
- The syllabus explored key questions along the strands of believing, expressing and living. It contained aims and outcomes and planning steps. There was also an assessment model for progression and it was practical and user-friendly.

Option B

- Option b was a different syllabus which contained an alternative approach.
- There would be no financial pressure on the budget for the review with the selection of option b.
- The syllabus proposed was produced in 2017 and was a more recent syllabus than option a.
- The syllabus did not contain a thematic approach but provided a systematic approach to teaching and learning.
- The syllabus incorporated the Understanding Christianity module which was already used in a number of schools in Herefordshire.
- A disadvantage with the syllabus is that it would represent a change after five years.
- The units in the option b syllabus were structured around making sense of belief, understanding impacts and making connections.
- The key questions in the syllabus were structured around religion e.g. what it means to be a Muslim in modern day Britain.

Option C

- To write an entirely new syllabus.
- The budget proposed for the review would not meet the cost of option c and additional funding would need to be sought.
- If neither option a or b were acceptable it was proposed that the conference return to consider the potential of option c.

The conference made the points below in the discussion, which focused on options a and b, that followed:

- Both syllabuses looked good.
- Schools and teachers in Herefordshire had put a lot of work into delivering the syllabus in option a.
- The approach in option a syllabus was liked by pupils.
- Where the syllabus in option b had been implemented it had quickly become established and did not represent a big change from the option a syllabus.
- Option b provided the better preparation for GCSE RE but it was acknowledged that the chosen syllabus needed to appeal to all cohorts.
- It was proposed that a small panel of teachers look at the two syllabuses in greater detail and report back to the meeting of the conference in November 2019.
- It was queried how Understanding Christianity could be incorporated into syllabus b. A number of schools had adopted Understanding Christianity and if it could be

incorporated it would make it more attractive to schools. *The RE Consultant confirmed that some key questions and outcomes in syllabus b had been taken from Understanding Christianity. Syllabus b contained an abridged version of the core learning content from Understanding Christianity.*

- How Understanding Christianity could be included in the syllabus in option a was also queried. *The RE Consultant explained that a supplement to the syllabus could be produced. It was important to know how many schools had incorporated Understanding Christianity in Herefordshire.*
- Syllabus b provided more information about individual faiths and syllabus a was more comparative across faiths.
- It was proposed and agreed that a slot at the primary school conference would be arranged to allow teachers to consult over the syllabus options. Lou Barker would engage with secondary teachers regarding the options.
- The Conference would look to make a decision in November 2019 and the syllabus would launch in summer 2020.
- It was suggested that the selected syllabus option should contain a list of local resources and contain annexes with local elements.

RESOLVED: That –

- a) The timetable for the review of the agreed syllabus is agreed; and**
- b) The outcome of the primary and secondary teacher consultation is reported to the next meeting of the Conference in November.**

The meeting ended at 3.05 pm

Chairperson



Meeting:	Agreed Syllabus Conference
Meeting date:	Friday 29 November 2019
Title of report:	Guidance for the agreed syllabus conference
Report by:	RE Consultant

Classification

Open

Decision type

This is not an executive decision

Wards affected

(All Wards);

Purpose and summary

In accordance with Section 35 of the Education Act 1996 the council is obliged to establish an Agreed Syllabus Conference to produce and recommend to the council an agreed Religious Education Syllabus for Herefordshire.

To consider the results of the consultation conducted with teachers in respect of the religious education syllabus options and agree which option to progress. The final version of the syllabus will be considered by a future meeting of the Agreed Syllabus Conference for recommendation to the local authority (LA).

Recommendation(s)

That:

- (a) **The Agreed Syllabus Conference agree the syllabus option, from those contained in paragraph 5 below, to progress for production .**

Alternative options

1. There are three potential RE syllabus options open to the agreed syllabus conference to progress for production , as below:
 - a) the renewal of the licence with RE Today, which includes a supplement to insert into the 2015-2020 syllabus.
 - b) purchasing the licence for the use of RE Today's more recent Syllabus Model B.
 - c) the commissioning of a bespoke new syllabus from RE Today.

Key considerations

2. At the meeting of SACRE held on 9 November 2018, it was noted that an agreed syllabus conference would take place in March 2019 to review the religious education syllabus currently being used by Herefordshire schools. It is a requirement that the syllabus is reviewed, at least, every five years. The existing syllabus was last reviewed and approved in March 2015.
3. At the meeting on 15 March 2019 the Agreed Syllabus Conference agreed the timetable below for the progression of the new syllabus. Further information is attached as appendix 3 to this report which contains a background briefing on options for Agreed Syllabus review 2019 (for 2020).

Timeline:

March 2019	Agreed Syllabus Conference set up and consider options
June 2019	Consultation with teachers (if required)
November 2019	ASC meeting. Results of consultation.
February 2020	ASC Final Syllabus agreed by ASC and recommended to the LA
June 2020	Syllabus launch conferences
September 2020	Syllabus implementation year in schools

4. At the meeting on the 15 March preference was expressed for options a and b and it was requested that consultation was conducted with teachers on the options. Details of this consultation and outcomes are contained in appendix 1.
5. The Agreed Syllabus Conference will consider the following syllabus options for development:
 - a) renewal of the licence with RE Today, which includes a supplement to insert into the 2015-2020 folder, delivered electronically.** This supplement includes updates on, for example, the Commission Report, tighter requirements at KS4 and 5, assessment, and some additional guidance. This relicensing would include a 'relaunch' conference, to support teachers with ideas and resources.
 - b) purchasing the licence for use of of RE Today's more recent Syllabus Model B.** This syllabus shares some DNA with the current Worcestershire syllabus, but offers a

more systematic approach, incorporating questions from the Understanding Christianity resource being used in many schools, and a revised assessment model.

- c) **the commissioning of a bespoke new syllabus from RE Today.** This could reflect the Commission on RE national report recommendations closely, exemplifying its new direction for Religion and Worldviews.

6. The syllabus option selected by the Agreed Syllabus Conference will be developed and presented to the meeting scheduled for 13 March 2020 where there will be a decision to prepare and recommend it to the council

Community impact

7. The provision of religious education and collective worship seek to increase understanding and tolerance of all religions in all local communities. A stated aim in Herefordshire Council's corporate plan is to ensure that there is access to excellent education and learning opportunities at all levels, including early years/schools, Further Education, Higher Education and adult learning.

Equality duty

8. Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the 'general duty' on public authorities is set out as follows:

A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to -

- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
 - (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
9. The public sector equality duty (specific duty) requires the council to consider how it can positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations, and demonstrate that 'due regard' in decision making in the design of policies and the delivery of services. The provision of religious education seeks to contribute positively to the specific duty by increasing the understanding and tolerance of all religions in local communities.

Resource implications

10. Up to £5,000 has been allocated for the syllabus review. The costs of each of the options that the Agreed Syllabus Conference will consider are provided below:

Option A -	Syllabus licence renewal includes cost of update and supplement - £4,185
Option B -	Syllabus licence costs for syllabus 'model B' will be comparable with that of the updated 'model A' - £4,185
Option C -	Bespoke syllabus writing can cost between £15,000 and £30,000

Legal implications

11. In accordance with Section 35, Schedule 31 of the Education Act 1996 the council is obliged to establish an Agreed Syllabus Conference to produce and recommend to the council an agreed education syllabus for Herefordshire.
12. In 2010 the Department for Education produced a document: 'Religious education in English schools: Non-statutory guidance 2010'. An extract from the 2010 guidance is attached at appendix 2.

Risk management

13. During the production of this report there has been an assessment of the likely risk management implications. It is not considered that risk of any significance arises from the drafting or content of this report.

Consultees

14. Consultation concerning those options proposed above has been conducted with teachers at schools across Herefordshire. The outcomes of this consultation are contained in appendix 1. recommendations.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Consultation with teaches and outcomes.

Appendix 2 – Extract from department for children, Schools and Families Religious education in English schools: Non-statutory Guidance 2009

Appendix 3 – Background briefing - options for Agreed Syllabus review 2019 (for 2020)

Background papers

None identified

Please include a glossary of terms, abbreviations and acronyms used in this report.

LA – Local Authority

RE – Religious Education

SACRE – Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education

Appendix 1: feedback from teachers.

In June 2019, 22 delegates attended the primary RE conference. They were shown the two syllabus models and had a chance to ask about the similarities and differences.

19 delegates completed an evaluation form and their feedback on the syllabus options.

Comments on Herefordshire agreed syllabus review: what's your preference?

Retain current syllabus:

- I like the current syllabus... would welcome an update and revised resources. As a school that has chosen not to implement UC (mainly due to cost) it would be good to have discounted training. But I am a believer in 'it ain't broke...' so would need convincing of the need to adopt a totally new syllabus. (HW, Colwall CE)
- Prefer to keep Herefordshire syllabus. Teachers should not incur cost for units as suggested in Glos. (RA, Ashfield Park)

Adopt new syllabus model:

- To use Glos syllabus would be great. I feel that the LA need to pay for this. Would there be any training? (HW, Kingsland CE)
- I would *really* favour an AS based on similar lines as Glos – systematic learning moving into thematic, incorporating UC and led by key questions related to core concept - i.e. the 'new' AS. The LA should pay for all 18 units to be part of this AS. We would all appreciate training on this. (BK, Eardisley)
- I would prefer Glos syllabus. I like the idea of the systematic progression and thematic unit at the end. (TK, Canon Pyon CE)
- Much prefer Glos syllabus as seems to be clearer for children – knowledge before comparisons - also clearer spiral curriculum. Like the key concepts and vocabulary. Looks easy for staff to follow. A change might breathe new life into RE teaching in our school (will make teachers evaluate what they are doing). Seems to link well with our new curriculum design (based on Harmony curriculum) in our school which is based on big questions. LA should pay for units of work. (LP, Kington)
- I like the look of the Glos syllabus, I like the development and progression throughout the school. I like that it considers the demographic of my pupils. It seems to fit with the new Ofsted framework. The only negative I see is the lack of all the units as we currently don't have UC. (HY, Ashperton)
- I prefer the look and development of the new curriculum. The research behind it makes sense and it develops children's knowledge. The outcomes for each unit seem clearer and assessment would be easier. I feel the LA should be providing schools with the syllabus and ensuring all schools have the access to the curriculum provided by them. (MT, Wigmore)
- Newer – we use UC alongside the current syllabus. This would make planning easier and would also be easier to explain to Ofsted when and why we have chosen to teach the units. (MD & IW, St James' CE)
- Second option – would fit better for our school to fit in with UC (TM & DM, St Mary's CE)
- Option B! Glos syllabus. (TW, Marlbrook)
- Glos looks used-friendly. Love the idea of giving children more views and longer on specific religions. (AP, Leominster)
- Currently using Glos syllabus (adopted by Bishop Anthony Education Trust) along with UC. We need to continue with this so that it's fully embedded and we can see the impact of the spiral curriculum. (KH & WB, Tenbury)

Mixed:

- I'm happy to keep the Herefordshire syllabus but also happy with the systematic/thematic approach of Glos syllabus. HOWEVER – we should be provided with FREE OF CHARGE the 18 units to assist with planning as part of the Glos syllabus. Whole thing not just scheme. Teachers need the planning – we are all busy and need this alongside everyone/everything else. (HB, Mordiford)
- I like the idea of spiralling curriculum as I feel children will gain a deeper understanding and allows opportunities to 'plug gaps' should any arise in RE delivery across year groups. I like the idea of learning about faiths before making comparisons. I am happy with what we currently use and have found it effective in school. (EW, Ledbury)
- If you wish to change to syllabus we would like the LEA to pay for all the units for the schemes of work. Staff need the confidence these give to deliver the lessons if unfamiliar with all religions covered. (CA, Clifford)

On 21 October 2019, 22 teachers gave feedback at a primary NATRE local group meeting at Marlbrook Primary School.

They were shown the same presentation as shown to teachers at the summer conference.

Feedback form stated:

I would prefer to:

... stick with the current syllabus plus supplement	0	0
... move to the new model	22	100%

Please write your comments in support of your choice above. Detail will be helpful for SACRE's decision!

Organising Hereford's scheme and Understanding Christianity was a bit of a nightmare! Like the Understanding Christianity and want to continue using it. New scheme with relationship with UC seems great. Easy to read and pick up and teach. Could we use a word doc? HF Lea CE
I think that the background information for non-specialist teachers at start of unit are invaluable I believe that the current syllabus mixes up the religions too much for KS2 and this confuses children and staff. My only concern is the cost to our small village schools in terms of new training i.e. Understanding Christianity and costs of purchasing the 18 units (we have the previous 31 units). Will we have to purchase them all or will some be a rehash of the previously sold units of work? Can SACRE members have reduced rates please? CA Clifford
A clear teaching and learning model Implementation of individual religions before comparing great I like the principal aim. MF Blackmarston
Like systematic approach to studying religions before thematic units. Seems more user-friendly than current syllabus. Reflects non-religious worldviews Links with our new enquiry-based curriculum model (Harmony curriculum). LP Kingston
I like that its focus on religion at a time and then compares through thematic approach at the end. Long term plan would be useful, more focused/clear. LC Madley
I think the link with UC will be a great thing. I also think as HT I would need to purchase the 18 support units especially with the new Ofsted framework focus on progression so a possible discount at launch would be great! BC St James' CE
As we follow Understanding Christianity new model would suit better. Extra units needed to supplement UC units. GS Clehonger CE
Links more clearly to the Understanding Christianity resource (which is great in places but sometimes difficult to link). Like the discrete units of different religions and the comparison of the end of the year. Like keeping the key questions for unit names. Keeps enough other religions in comparison to UC syllabus. BT
The current syllabus requires children to come to answer big questions sometimes without the knowledge or understanding of religions to be able to do so. The thematic approach sometimes confuses children. Building on prior knowledge and spiral curriculum will help to develop children's deeper understanding. Like the systematic approach to learning much better. JB Peterchurch
Less confusion between the different religions for pupils. Knowledge to base discussion around, hard to compare if you don't understand. 15 years for one curriculum is a long time. Different demographic of children, changed overtime. Builds on previous knowledge, gives opportunity for 'sticky knowledge'. SD Trinity CE
As we are not a church school many of the staff are not confident when teaching RE. To have a syllabus which supports the staff to teach a subject which they find difficult would be really helpful. I think that a theme thematic approach would also be really helpful. PB Hampton Dene
We have implemented Understanding Christianity into our RE curriculum and as a school love the resources,

<p>therefore we would welcome the new curriculum. The making sense / connections / impact approach has been working well and the systematic rather than thematic approach has been beneficial to our children. BD Holmer CE</p>
<p>Seems more user friendly, prefer focus on religion before comparing. More focus on knowledge to fit in with Ofsted. AP Leominster</p>
<p>Systematic study/spiral approach appeals. Children will build up learning. RA Ashfield Park</p>
<p>Less confusing between religions, clear throughout layout. HB Willington</p>
<p>I like the idea of focusing on a religion then comparing as I feel it will make more sense to the children I also like the idea of the scheme building throughout the year groups. It seems more relevant. CV Marlbrook</p>
<p>I really like the new model due to the fact that it focuses on one faith at a time and I feel that it will make more sense to children and teachers I like the fact that children revisit areas throughout their educational journey allowing them to deepen understanding It has a lot to offer including long term plans Although there may be extra work to change I strongly believe it would be worth it HD St Martin's</p>
<p>The spaced learning and spiral focus allow for a clearer whole school delivery. I like the clarity in the end of phase outcomes LW St Peters</p>
<p>Pros: I really like the model B and the spiral approach I also prefer the knowledge-based focus before the children compare the religions systematic study Cons: cost of purchasing the units and the Christianity units HY Ashperton</p>
<p>It would help to join together the Herefordshire and Understanding Christianity schemes. The staff at our school have been enthusiastic implementing Understanding Christianity but I feel that it would do condense some of the amount of coverage. HW Kingsland CE</p>
<p>Fits with UC well. Better systematic coverage of other religions avoiding confusion. Better progression in theological thinking. MH Diocese of Hereford</p>

Extract from: Religious education in English schools: Non-statutory Guidance 2010

The role and responsibility of an Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC)

Every LA is required to establish and support an occasional body called an agreed syllabus conference (ASC).

An ASC must:

- produce and recommend to the LA an agreed syllabus for RE which is educationally sound and meets legal requirements – as indicated earlier, this process should take account of the illustrative primary programme of learning and secondary programme of study but is in no way bound by them
- with any sub-committee it may appoint,²⁰ meet in public, subject to exceptions in relation to confidentiality²¹
- unanimously recommend a syllabus for adoption by the LA (each committee having a single vote) - there are provisions for the Secretary of State to become involved where an ASC is not unanimous²²
- include on any sub-committee at least one member of each of its constituent committees.

An ASC may specify what must be taught through the locally agreed syllabus. In recommending a syllabus the ASC may not specify the amount of curriculum time that must be allocated to RE by schools, but they may provide an estimate of how much time their syllabus would require, to help schools to plan their timetable.

Membership of an ASC

- An ASC is required to be made up of four committees²³ (see 'LA role', p.10).
- Committee A – Christian denominations and such other religions and religious denominations as, in the opinion of the LA, will appropriately reflect the principal religious traditions in the area;
- Committee B - the Church of England
- Committee C - teacher associations
- Committee D - the LA.

There is no legal provision for an ASC to include co-opted members, but it can seek the advice it considers appropriate from those it considers appropriate, to inform the development of effective RE provision in its area.

The agreed syllabus

The locally agreed syllabus is a statutory syllabus of RE prepared under Schedule 31 to the Education Act 1996 and adopted by the LA under that schedule. It must be followed in maintained schools without a designated denomination.

²⁰ Schedule 31(6), Education Act 1996 ²¹ Regulation 3, S1 1994/1304 ²² Schedule 31(10), Education Act 1996, ²³ Section 390(2) Education Act 1996; Schedule 31, para 4, Education Act 1996

Once adopted by the LA, the agreed syllabus sets out what pupils should be taught and can include the expected standards of pupils' performance at different stages.

Every locally agreed syllabus must reflect that the religious traditions of Great Britain are in the main Christian, while taking account of the teaching and practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain.²⁴

The law does not define what the principal religions represented in Great Britain are. ASCs can decide which are the principal religions represented in Great Britain, other than Christianity, to be included in their agreed syllabus.

Agreed syllabuses in any community school and any foundation, voluntary-aided or voluntary-controlled school without a religious character cannot require RE to be provided by means of any catechism or formulary which is distinctive of a particular religious denomination.²⁵

This prohibition does not extend to the study of catechisms and formularies.

²⁴ Section 375, Education Act 1996 ²⁵ Para 3 of Schedule 19 to the School Standards and Framework Act 1998

Herefordshire SACRE: options for Agreed Syllabus review 2019 (for 2020)

Stephen Pett, RE Today

The legal requirements:

- SACRE must review its RE Agreed Syllabus every five years
- An Agreed Syllabus Conference is to be set up to conduct the review

An agreed syllabus must *'reflect the fact that the religious traditions in Great Britain are, in the main, Christian while taking account of the teaching and practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain.'*

Education Act (1996 Section 375 (3))/School Standards and Framework Act (1998, Schedule 19, para.5).

Background: the need for a high-quality syllabus

The provision of a clear, well-structured, up-to-date and professional agreed syllabus is probably the single most important function of SACRE. Combined with on-going implementation training and resources, a new syllabus offers the possibility of raising achievement in RE in all local schools. In 2019/20, it is essential to consider how this relates to new inspection requirements, to developments in assessment and in teaching and learning, revised GCSEs, the National Report from the Commission on RE, the 'British Values' agenda, and all related educational change.

Ofsted's Subject specialist RE reports 2010 and 2013 highlight the need for syllabuses to:

- be clear about expected knowledge and understanding about religion(s) and belief(s)
- support and empower teachers to plan effectively
- offer coherent progression across the ages and key stages
- support clear and focused assessment, useful for raising standards
- encourage enquiry-based RE.

Implications of new Ofsted framework

The draft new Ofsted Education Inspection Framework (EIF, 2019) places great emphasis on curriculum planning. It asks schools what the thinking is behind their curriculum plan for the school – their intent. It then examines how they implement it – including a context and narrative for its implementation in the school. And then it examines the impact. An agreed syllabus needs to be able to support schools in all three. It needs to have a good rationale for its structure; it needs to be operable in diverse school settings; it needs to show schools how they can see what impact the syllabus is having on pupil achievement.

Current situation

In the SACRE/ASC meeting on 21 Nov 2014, the ASC voted to take up the offer of a licence for a 'model' syllabus developed by RE Today. The ASC decided to bring this forward to 2015, instead of waiting until the 5-year syllabus review was up in 2016. Herefordshire currently has a licence with RE Today for its agreed syllabus for 2015-2020. The licence runs out at the end of the academic year, August 2020, and so SACRE needs to consider its options.

The current Herefordshire syllabus was developed in the light of the National Curriculum Framework for RE (NCFRE) produced in October 2013 by the RE Council (REC). It is a mainly thematic syllabus, constructed around three broad strands (believing, expressing, living), and based on the progression outcomes developed in the NCFRE.

SACRE bought 93 licences for all state-funded schools in Herefordshire, including academies. The number of academies has increased, but it may well still be the wish of SACRE to support all schools in the county, and

encouraging them all to use the local syllabus makes it much easier to offer subsequent support through training and CPD.

Commission on RE National Report 2018

Since the development of the Herefordshire syllabus, the RE Council has published the result of a two-year commission into RE. Among its recommendations are:

- A change of name for the subject, from *Religious Education* to *Religion and Worldviews*
- The removal of the responsibility for SACREs to produce a local agreed syllabus
- Instead, to have a national statement of entitlement and national example programme of study, upon which Local Advisory Networks for Religion and Worldviews (the body replacing the reconstituted SACRE) can base local guidance and support.

The Report has had a positive response from the RE community, in general, although there remain some strong differences of opinion. Its impact on the role of SACREs is limited as yet. The Department for Education gave a lukewarm response to it, and indicated that there would be no time or inclination for any legal change for the foreseeable future. This means that SACREs retain the requirement to set up an Agreed Syllabus Conference and decide upon development of an agreed syllabus.

The RE Council is seeing this as part of a long process, however, and even though there is not any immediate structural change, the Report is having an impact on how people think about the content and purpose of RE, and may well end up having an impact on the structures of RE too.

Implications for Herefordshire SACRE

It would be wise to consider the impact of the description of our subject as outlined in the Commission Report. Whether or not we wish to embrace the name change, there may be some adjustments (at least) that we could make to RE. On the other hand, the national conversation being held among RE professionals may not reach quickly down to the classroom. It is part of SACRE's role to mediate this impact, as it sees fit.

Decisions to take:

- The licence for the syllabus from RE Today ends in 2020, so SACRE needs to do something. There is not an option that just allows everything to roll on without change.
- There is the opportunity to make some amendments to the current model, and SACRE should consider the options below.
- There are funding implications for each of the options. It is better that these do not drive the decisions – better to decide what is the best option for the teachers and then pursue the funding!

The options for the agreed syllabus conference include:

- a) Renewal of the licence with RE Today, which includes a supplement to insert into the 2015-2020 folder, delivered electronically.** This supplement includes updates on, for example, the Commission Report, tighter requirements at KS4 and 5, assessment, and some additional guidance. This relicensing would include a 'relaunch' conference, to support teachers with ideas and resources.
- b) Purchasing the licence for use of RE Today's more recent Syllabus Model B.** This syllabus shares some DNA with the current Worcestershire syllabus, but offers a more systematic approach, incorporating questions from the Understanding Christianity resource being used in many schools, and a revised assessment model.
- c) The commissioning of a bespoke new syllabus from RE Today.** This could reflect the Commission on RE national report recommendations closely, exemplifying its new direction for Religion and Worldviews.

Option A

Renew licence with RE Today syllabus (model A) plus supplement

The Herefordshire syllabus was written by RE Today in consultation with Worcestershire and Herefordshire SACRE and teachers. It has been adopted by over 15 other local authorities, with very positive feedback as to its effectiveness.

This syllabus provides the minimum for a SACRE / LA to fulfil its legal requirement.

- The licence renewal would include a slight update to the 2015 syllabus – including new dates, a few corrections and potentially an updated Foreword.
- It would also include a **supplement**. This would be produced electronically, so that it can be sent around to all schools together with the updated syllabus.

The supplement would include, for example:

- An update on the developments in RE, post-Commission Report 2018
- Updated guidance on assessment, withdrawal, Ofsted and SIAMS priorities, legal judgments on Humanism, sample long-term plans for a range of school types, GCSE and A level reform, and links with Understanding Christianity
- Some additional guidance on religions and worldviews
- A limited number of additional unit questions, as alternatives to current questions.

Advantages:

- Teachers build on the work they have put into implementing the 2015 syllabus. Change at this stage may not be welcome.
- All schools receive an updated digital copy of the 120+ page document, in full colour, plus the supplement
- Supplement offers useful updates and additional guidance, to enhance and promote good learning in RE.
- No difficulty with it being ready for summer 2020, with recommendation that we run re-launch conferences for the update.
- There is scope for some additional unit questions to extend options for teachers
- Support materials schools have purchased already continue to be relevant
- On-going support from RE Today with potential upgrades within the 5-year review period if necessary
- Note that the units of work for the 2015 syllabus are still available for schools to purchase, if they missed out first time around.
- Feedback from local authorities using this syllabus has been very positive.

Disadvantages:

- Little involvement from local teachers or SACRE on the content and style.
- Local RE is less prominent (though Herefordshire can insert additional appendices if desired)
- If the Commission Report recommendations are put into action, the syllabus will not reflect its fullest extent.

Details and costs

Syllabus licence renewal includes cost of update and supplement.

93 licences = £4185 +VAT

Option B

Purchase the licence for RE Today's more recent syllabus model B

In 2017, RE Today developed a new syllabus model. It has some questions that are very similar to the Herefordshire syllabus, but its approach is different.

Features:

- The syllabus follows a more systematic approach to the study of religions, in contrast to the more thematic approach of Herefordshire. This means that most questions address one religion at a time. For example, in each year a class will generally study two religions separately before addressing a thematic question in the summer term, allowing them to build on their learning through the year.
- The syllabus follows a coherent teaching and learning approach, with clear assessment outcomes for each unit and each phase.
- The syllabus contains additional guidance on religions and worldviews, and is accompanied by a selection of units of work that can be purchased by SACRE for its schools, or by schools themselves.
- This syllabus incorporates key questions from the *Understanding Christianity* resource that is currently in use in many Church of England and community schools.

This syllabus would include some of the key updates from Option A.

Advantages:

- The systematic approach is more in sympathy with a knowledge-rich curriculum, and its spiral curriculum reflects the contemporary emphasis on embedding pupils' knowledge and understanding in their long-term memory. This idea of curriculum coherence ties in well with new Ofsted emphases.
- This syllabus is a substantial move forward for RE for pupils and for teachers.
- Many schools using *Understanding Christianity* would be delivering the agreed syllabus as they use it; and schools who have not discovered *Understanding Christianity* would benefit from the structural coherence of the study of Christianity in the syllabus.
- The syllabus includes additional scope for the examination of non-religious worldviews, in line with the Commission Report 2018.
- Syllabus is ready for summer 2020 launches.
- On-going support from RE Today with potential upgrades within the 5-year review period if necessary.
- Feedback from local authorities using this syllabus has been very positive.

Disadvantages:

- A substantial change of syllabus may not be welcomed by schools, who are used to the current one, even though the syllabus Model B has been greeted very positively by schools in other LAs.

Details and costs

Syllabus licence costs for syllabus 'model B' is the same as that of the updated 'model A'.

93 licences = £4185 + VAT

Option C: Bespoke review

SACRE could fulfil statutory duties by requiring a local review of the agreed syllabus. This would involve a process something like this:

- an Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC) set up, over-seeing the review;
- a survey of teachers;
- initial drafts by the adviser / a consultant;
- teacher working groups to feed into the process of reviewing the drafts;
- re-writing by adviser;
- approval from ASC, SACRE and the Local Authority;
- design and production of text and/or online version.

This would need to be launched with either a schools conference day or a series of hub CPD sessions, to provide training and resources to enable teachers to implement the syllabus in their schools. A syllabus with strong implementation training plus support will be far more effective than one with no training.

The production of support materials can extend the value of the revised syllabus. A good syllabus can provide the drive, coherence and context for RE, with sample or full units of work exemplifying the syllabus. They are not an alternative to the statutory syllabus but can enhance teaching and learning by providing teachers with additional suggestions and guidance.

The key reason to consider this would be if SACRE believes that it should create a syllabus that reflects the description of the subject of Religion and Worldviews from the 2018 Commission Report.

Relevant recent examples:

RE Today Services have had recent involvement with SACREs and Local Authorities in, for example, Sandwell, Bedford, Bedfordshire and Luton, and Gloucestershire, who have used RE Today to develop a bespoke syllabus. No one else has yet written a syllabus based on the 2018 Commission Report, so this would be ground-breaking.

Advantages:

- Involvement of local teachers strengthens the commitment to the syllabus, maybe resulting in greater buy-in for the revised syllabus
- The process is a form of professional development for those involved, who can then support local schools in the implementation process.
- The syllabus can reflect the local area closely.
- The syllabus could set the standard for post-Commission syllabuses, with national impact

Disadvantages:

- Costs are probably greater than Options A and B.
- Duplication of work with other local SACREs.

Likely costs must include:

- Establishing, managing and supporting the review process,
- Running teacher consultations, including supply cover for teacher working party
- Setting the parameters for writing review materials, and developing local applications of national materials; writing time, drafting and redrafting services
- Production supervision
- Supply cover
- Production costs: editorial, design, print.

Likely costs: In our experience, bespoke syllabus writing can cost between £12-30,000

Support packages:**Launch conferences**

Option A and Option B will include a training conference with two RE Today advisers. The cost of this with expenses + VAT is usually £2500. One conference (including primary and secondary) will be provided as part of the package.

Units of work

Units of work are available for schools to buy to support Option A and B.

Timeline:

March 2019	Agreed Syllabus Conference set up and consider options
June 2019	Consultation with teachers (if required)
November 2019	ASC meeting. Results of consultation.
February 2020	ASC Final Syllabus agreed by ASC and recommended to LA
June 2020	Syllabus launch conferences
September 2020	Syllabus implementation year in schools

Stephen Pett RE Today Services / November 2019**Questions to answer:**

- Which option does Herefordshire ASC want?
- Does Herefordshire LA want to provide a syllabus for all 93 local schools? (if 93 is the correct number in 2019)

Additional questions to consider:

- Does Herefordshire LA want to provide further support through purchasing or subsidising school purchase of additional units of work?
- One teacher said they don't want to have to wait until the summer to have a new syllabus. The ASC could recommend purchasing the licences for A or B in the spring, with a launch conference before Easter, so schools could start planning in the summer term. This adjusts the timeline above. Does the ASC want to recommend this?

