

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