

MINUTES of the meeting of Herefordshire Agreed Syllabus Conference held at Council Chamber, Brockington on Monday, 7th March, 2005 at 3.55 p.m.

Present:

**Mrs. C. Ault, Revd. P. Barlow, Mrs. J. Brown, Dr. D. Goodman,
Cllr. P.E. Harling, Mr M. Rollnick, Cllr. J. Stone and Revd. I. Terry**

1. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN

The Syllabus Conference noted that Councillor J. Stone had been appointed by the Local Education Authority (LEA) to Chair the Conference.

COUNCILLOR J. STONE IN THE CHAIR

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from: Councillor Mrs W.U. Atfield, Ms K. Mayglothling, Ms S. McCamley, Mrs A. Mundy, Mr Z. Pandor, and Mr J. Rendall.

3. NAMED SUBSTITUTES

There were no named substitutes.

4. THE ROLE OF AN AGREED SYLLABUS CONFERENCE

SACRE considered a number of issues relating to the role of an Agreed Syllabus Conference, key principles and a timetable for the Syllabus review.

The Committee Officer (Scrutiny) presented a report to inform the Conference of a number of issues relating to the role of an Agreed Syllabus Conference and the formation of an Agreed Religious Education Syllabus.

The report detailed a number of key guidance points contained in the Department for Education Circular 1/94 relating to the Conference and committee membership; the role of the conference; the aims of the syllabus; decision-making and the recommendation of a new Agreed Syllabus to the Local Education Authority (LEA).

The Consultant for RE reported that it was important that the review of the Herefordshire RE Syllabus should be linked to some key principles to provide a foundation for the review and give direction to the task. Six principles for consideration were contained at Appendix 1 to the report. She highlighted that since the last review elements of best practice and a range of initiatives needed to be taken full account of including the National non-statutory Framework for RE; Foundation Stage Curriculum; 14-19 developments and various national strategies.

To ensure that the review met the Syllabus implementation date of September 2006, the Consultant for RE proposed the draft timetable, set out at Appendix 2, for consideration.

RESOLVED: that the report be noted and the key principles for the review set

out in Appendix 1 to the report be adopted and the timetable set out in Appendix 2 to the report be accepted.

5. AGREED SYLLABUS REVIEW - CURRENT POSITION

SACRE received a report on the background work to the review undertaken so far and considered areas of work to be undertaken.

The Consultant for RE reported that initial discussion group meetings had been held with both primary and secondary school sectors. Both discussion groups agreed that the syllabus as a whole was basically good but anticipated that the Non-statutory Framework and examples of good practice would be drawn on to improve the Syllabus still further. The Conference confirmed that the review was not expected to be revolutionary as the basic syllabus was satisfactory. It was also appreciated that teachers would not welcome any further major changes.

Conference noted that a key aim of any RE syllabus must be to 'encourage respect for those holding different beliefs' which it was hoped would contribute to social cohesion. While the Non-statutory Framework also placed a very high profile on respect for other faiths, in the review emphasis would be given to putting this into a local context, particularly in view of the secular members of the community.

Conference noted a view that the secondary sector teachers wished, this time, to develop non-statutory guidance to support teaching in the way this had been done for the primary sector in the current syllabus.

Conference noted the action plan, referred to in the previous agenda item, and that progress reports would be presented to future meetings.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted and progress reports be presented to future meetings.

The meeting ended at 4.35 p.m.

CHAIRMAN