

# Agenda

## Herefordshire Agreed Syllabus Conference

Date: **Friday 15 March 2019**

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Time: **2.00 pm**

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

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

For any further information please contact:

**Matthew Evans, Democratic Services Officer**

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If you would like help to understand this document, or would like it in another format, please call Matthew Evans, Democratic Services Officer on 01432 383690 or e-mail [matthew.evans@herefordshire.gov.uk](mailto:matthew.evans@herefordshire.gov.uk) in advance of the meeting.

# **Agenda for the meeting of the Standing advisory council for religious education (SACRE)**

## **Membership**

<b>Group D</b>	<b>Councillor J Stone (Chairman) Councillor EPJ Harvey Councillor MT McEvelly</b>	
<b>Group A</b>	<b>Mr Burbidge Canon Nugent Mrs Ault Ven. Choesang</b>	<b>Roman Catholic representative Free Church representative Bahai faith representative Buddist faith representative</b>
<b>Group B</b>	<b>Mr Debenham Mr Nicholas</b>	<b>Church of England representative Church of England representative</b>
<b>Group C</b>	<b>Mr Caldicott Mrs Barker</b>	<b>Primary teacher representative Secondary teacher representative</b>

## Agenda

	<b>Pages</b>
<b>1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b> To receive apologies for absence.	
<b>2. NAMED SUBSTITUTES (IF ANY)</b> To receive details any details of Members nominated to attend the meeting in place of a Member of the Committee.	
<b>3. GUIDANCE FOR THE AGREED SYLLABUS CONFERENCE</b> To inform the Conference of a number of issues relating to the role of an Agreed Syllabus Conference and agree the formulation of an Agreed Religious Education Syllabus.	7 - 18



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- Inspect minutes of the Council and all Committees and Sub-Committees and written statements of decisions taken by the Cabinet or individual Cabinet Members for up to six years following a meeting.
- Inspect background papers used in the preparation of public reports for a period of up to four years from the date of the meeting. (A list of the background papers to a report is given at the end of each report). A background paper is a document on which the officer has relied in writing the report and which otherwise is not available to the public.
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## **HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCIL**

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

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<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>Standing advisory council for religious education (SACRE) – Agreed Syllabus Conference</b>
<b>Meeting date:</b>	<b>Friday 15 March 2019</b>
<b>Title of report:</b>	<b>Guidance for the agreed syllabus conference</b>
<b>Report by:</b>	<b>RE Consultant – RE Today</b>

## 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.

This report informs the Conference of a number of issues relating to the role of an Agreed Syllabus Conference and seeks to agree the formulation of an Agreed Religious Education Syllabus.

## Recommendation(s)

That:

- (a) **The timetable for the review of the agreed syllabus, set out below and in Appendix 2, be agreed; and**
- (b) **An option for an agreed syllabus, from those outlined in Appendix 2, be selected for review.**

## Alternative options

1. There are no alternative options; this is a statutory requirement for SACRE and an Agreed Syllabus Conference must take place at least every five years. The options for the review of the agreed syllabus are presented in appendix 2.

## Key considerations

2. At the meeting of the Herefordshire Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) held on 9 November 2018, it was noted that an agreed syllabus conference would take place on 1 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. Arrangements for the re-establishment of the Herefordshire Agreed Syllabus Conference were agreed by SACRE at its meeting on 9 November 2018.
3. SACRE must consider reviewing its RE agreed syllabus every five years. An Agreed Syllabus Conference can 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.

4. The council is obliged to establish an agreed syllabus conference to produce and recommend to the council an agreed religious education syllabus for Herefordshire. 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 1. The representative committees, as outlined in appendix 1 shall each have a single vote. Only an Agreed Syllabus Conference may recommend an agreed syllabus and its recommendation must be unanimously agreed by the committees constituting the conference.
5. To ensure that the review meets the agreed syllabus implementation date of September 2020, the consultant for religious education has compiled a report containing a draft outline and timetable for consideration in appendix 2.
6. The proposed timetable for the Agreed Syllabus Conference review is provided below:

### Timeline:

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

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Further information on the subject of this report is available from  
Matthew Evans, Tel: 01432 383690, email: [Matthew.Evans@herefordshire.gov.uk](mailto:Matthew.Evans@herefordshire.gov.uk)



7. The Agreed Syllabus Conference on 15 March 2019 will select an option for the review of the RE syllabus to follow the timeline above. The potential options for a review of the agreed syllabus are contained in detail in appendix 2 and are summarised below:
- a) **SACRE renews 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) **SACRE could adopt 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) **SACRE could commission 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.

## Community impact

8. 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

9. 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.
10. 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

11. 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 in appendix 2.

## Legal implications

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Further information on the subject of this report is available from  
Matthew Evans, Tel: 01432 383690, email: [Matthew.Evans@herefordshire.gov.uk](mailto:Matthew.Evans@herefordshire.gov.uk)

12. 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.
13. SACREs must, every five years, review an agreed syllabus for the area. The Agreed Syllabus outlines the statutory requirements for schools in Herefordshire. It is a unique document as RE is the only subject where the local community determines the curriculum.
14. Local Authorities are required to provide a clear structure which highlights the contribution of RE, particularly taking into account local circumstances and characteristics. They must also ensure that there is continuity and progression, a clear statement about expected standards and appropriate pedagogy and levels of challenge for pupils of different ages and abilities. The syllabus must reflect curriculum developments to ensure RE is part of a coherent curriculum for all its pupils.

## **Risk management**

15. 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**

16. No consultees have been consulted in the production of this report and its recommendations.

## **Appendices**

Appendix 1 - Extract from department for children, Schools and Families Religious education in English schools: Non-statutory Guidance 2009

Appendix 2 – Report from RE Consultant draft outline of options and timetable

## **Background papers**

None identified.

**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,<sup>20</sup> meet in public, subject to exceptions in relation to confidentiality<sup>21</sup>
- 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 unanimous<sup>22</sup>
- 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 committees<sup>23</sup> (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.

<sup>20</sup> Schedule 31(6), Education Act 1996 <sup>21</sup> Regulation 3, S1 1994/1304 <sup>22</sup> Schedule 31(10), Education Act 1996, <sup>23</sup> 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.<sup>24</sup>

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.<sup>25</sup>

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

<sup>24</sup> Section 375, Education Act 1996 <sup>25</sup> 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 Worcestershire, 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 Worcestershire 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 SACRE include:**

- a) **SACRE renews 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) **SACRE could adopt 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) **SACRE could commission 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 conjunction with 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 Worcestershire 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.

£4185 +VAT

## Option B

### Adopt 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 just getting 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' will be comparable with that of the updated 'model A'.

£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 £15-30,000

**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. A full set of primary units of work will cost a school £250, including training where needed.

**Timeline:**

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

**Stephen Pett RE Today Services / February 2019**