

PROPOSED REVIEW OF THE HEREFORDSHIRE AGREED SYLLABUS FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Report By: Committee Officer (Scrutiny)

Purpose

1. To consider requesting the Local Education Authority (LEA) to set up a Herefordshire Religious Education Agreed Syllabus Conference to review the Herefordshire Religious Education Syllabus;

To express a view to the LEA on the membership of the Agreed Syllabus Conference; and

To consider requesting the RE Consultant to undertake preliminary consultation on the revision of the RE Agreed Syllabus.

Report

Review of the RE Agreed Syllabus

2. DfE Circular 1/94 sets out the requirement that every Local Education Authority (LEA) institute a review of its locally agreed syllabus within five years of the last review, and subsequently every five years after the completion of each further review. The current RE agreed syllabus was introduced in September 2001 and therefore needs to have been reviewed and agreed by September 2006. The RE Consultant advises that while a major review of the syllabus is not envisaged, time will be required to undertake consultation and re-drafting work.
3. It is therefore suggested that SACRE consider requesting the LEA to initiate a review of the Agreed Syllabus. While the review can be initiated by SACRE, the review is undertaken by an Agreed Syllabus Conference.
4. For SACRE to initiate such a request will require a majority of the groups on SACRE (other than those representing the LEA – Committee D) to be in favour of such a request. Each Group (Committees A, B, & C) having a single vote.

The Agreed Syllabus Conference

5. The Conference is a separate legal entity from a SACRE and, although common membership is permissible, it must be separately convened, therefore separate agendas are produced for SACRE and the Agreed Syllabus Conference.
6. The Conference is made up of four committees each comprising representatives appointed by the LEA to represent the following bodies:

Committee A – Such Christian denominations and other religions as reflect the principal religious traditions in Herefordshire;

Committee B – The Church of England;

Committee C – Associations representing teachers;

Committee D – Local Education Authority (LEA).

7. There is no provision for an Agreed Syllabus Conference to include co-opted members.
8. Drawing on experience from the last Syllabus Review it is suggested that SACRE recommend to the LEA that the membership of the Syllabus Conference be comprised of the existing SACRE membership, excluding the co-opted members. Co-opted members on SACRE be invited to attend meetings of the Conference as expert observers. Whenever possible meetings of the Conference will be held on the conclusion of SACRE meetings.

Preliminary Consultation

9. On the assumption that SACRE request the LEA to initiate a syllabus review as referred to above, the RE Consultant be requested to undertake preliminary consultation which will inform the syllabus review process.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT

- a) **the Local Education Authority be requested to initiate a review of the Religious Education Syllabus by establishing the Herefordshire Religious Education Agreed Syllabus Conference;**
- b) **the membership of the Herefordshire Religious Education Syllabus Conference be the same as Herefordshire SACRE, excluding the co-opted members;**
- c) **the first meeting of the Syllabus Conference be held on the conclusion of the next SACRE meeting;**
- d) **the RE Consultant undertake preliminary consultation to inform the syllabus review.**

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- None identified.