

Meeting:	Standing advisory council for religious education (SACRE)
Meeting date:	Friday 29 June 2018
Title of report:	SACRE Membership
Report by:	Democratic Services Officer

Classification

Open

Decision type

This is not an executive decision

Wards affected

(All Wards);

Purpose and summary

Following the approval of SACRE's amended constitution at the previous meeting on 17 November it was requested that the current membership was discussed at the next meeting, 16 March 2018. The meeting of SACRE on 16 March was inquorate therefore this report is resubmitted to the current meeting to enable the committee to reach decisions concerning actions required to fill existing vacancies. This report sets out the membership of SACRE, existing vacancies and actions taken since the 16 March 2018. SACRE will agree any actions to be undertaken to fill existing vacancies.

Recommendation(s)

That: SACRE agrees any actions required to fill existing membership vacancies.

Alternative options

1. SACRE could choose not to consider its current membership and vacancies however given the current level of vacancies it is advisable to undertake this exercise.

Key considerations

2. Under Section 390(4) of the Education Act 1996, the SACRE must include persons appointed by the LA to represent respectively –
 - A. such Christian denominations and other religions and denominations of such religions as, in the opinion of the LA, will appropriately reflect the principal religious traditions in the area (not including persons to represent the Church of England);
 - B. the Church of England;
 - C. such associations representing teachers as, in the opinion of the LA, ought, having regard to the circumstances of the area, to be represented;
 - D. the Local Education Authority (LA).
3. In accordance with the requirements of Section 390(4), the membership of the SACRE for Herefordshire comprises –
 - Group (A) One Roman Catholic representative (nominated by the Roman Catholic hierarchy);
One Free Church representative (nominated by Churches together in Herefordshire);
One representative of other faiths as a whole;
One representative of the Bahá'í faith;
One representative of the Muslim faith;
One representative of the Sikh faith.
One representative of the Jewish faith.
One representative of the Buddhist religion.
 - Group (B) Three Church of England representatives (nominated in consultation with the Diocesan Education Authority).
 - Group (C) Three Teachers' representatives, with one drawn from each of the primary, secondary and special education sectors (nominated through recommendation of recognised Teacher Associations) and one Co-opted Member.
 - Group (D) Three Herefordshire Council members as Local Education Authority representatives.
4. The Membership of SACRE comprises 17 members. There are seven existing vacancies. The current membership and the existing vacancies are listed in full in the appendix to the report.
5. SACRE is recommended to consider agreeing actions to fill vacancies. In agreeing any actions SACRE should also consider the attendance records of those members who are currently appointed to the committee. In analysis conducted of meetings of SACRE since the elections in 2015 one representative has been absent from the five meetings held and another member has not attended the previous two meetings. The current vacancies on SACRE and absences from meetings resulted in an inquorate meeting on 18 November 2016.

6. In agreeing actions to be undertaken to address current vacancies and lack of attendance at meetings SACRE could consider the following:
 - That the Chairman of SACRE writes to the Primary Schools Head Teachers Association, and a representative body for the SEN schools Herefordshire to request the nomination of representatives for the committee;
 - That the Chairman of SACRE writes to the leaders of the Muslim and Sikh communities and the Herefordshire Interfaith Group to request the nomination of representatives for the committee;
 - That the Chairman of SACRE writes to the Diocesan Education Authority to request the nomination of a representative for the Church of England.
 - The production of recruitment material setting out the role of being a representative of SACRE and listing some of the achievements of the committee;
 - Existing representatives of SACRE attending nominating bodies to promote and explain the role;
 - That the Chairman of SACRE writes to those representatives whose attendance has been low to establish their continued interest and if there are any barriers to their attendance. If it transpires that the nominated representative will no longer attend meetings the Chairman has authority to write to nominating bodies requesting an alternative;
 - To request a review of the constitution of SACRE to incorporate a term of office for members and periodic membership review.
7. Appendix 2 to the report shows those actions which have been undertaken since the meeting of SACRE on 16 March 2018.

Community impact

8. The provision of Religious Education and collective worship seeks to increase understanding and tolerance of all religions in local communities, supporting achievement of the council's corporate plan priority to keep children and young people safe and give them a great start in life
9. Ensuring that the membership of SCARE is kept up to date supports the council to uphold the principles in its adopted code of corporate governance.

Equality duty

10. 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.

11. The public sector equality duty (specific duty) required the council to consider how it can positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations and demonstrate that 'due regard' is paid during decision making concerning 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. SACRE contributes to this duty by advising the LA on its arrangements for religious education.

Resource implications

12. There are no resource implications involved in the production and consideration of this report. Members of the Council attending SACRE do not get paid an allowance. Travel and subsistence expenses are only payable for meetings of SACRE outside Herefordshire. Travel and subsistence expenses are payable to external representatives on SACRE.

Legal implications

13. Section 390 of the Education Act 1996 requires the council to constitute Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE), to advise them on matters concerned with the provision of Religious Education and Collective Worship in community and foundation schools which do not have a religious character.
 - a. The Act sets out that SACRE shall consist of such groups of persons appointed by the council as representative groups are set out in section 390(4):A group to represent the Christian denominations and other religions that in the opinion of the council appropriately reflect the principal religious traditions of the area;
 - b. A group to represent the Church of England;
 - c. A group to represent associations representing teachers, who in the opinion of the council ought to be represented having regard to the circumstances of the area;
 - d. A group to represent the council.
 - e. SACRE may also co-opt members as required.

The numbers in each group should broadly reflect the proportional strength of denominations or religions in the area, so far as is consistent with the efficient discharge of the groups functions.

On any question to be decided upon by SACRE only the aforementioned groups shall be entitled to vote; with one vote per group.

Risk management

Risk / opportunity	Mitigation
Meetings of SACRE are not quorate, a representative from each of the four groups must be present at a meeting of SACRE to ensure quoracy.	The recommendations in this report mitigate against this by seeking to fill vacancies and thereby increase attendance at meetings.

Consultees

14. None

Appendices

Appendix 1 – current membership and vacancies

Appendix 2 – Updates since the meeting of SACRE on 16 March 2018

Background papers

None