

Meeting:	Standing advisory council for religious education (SACRE)
Meeting date:	Friday 13 March 2020
Title of report:	Updates to the Herefordshire Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) constitution
Report by:	Director of Children and Families

Classification

Open

Decision type

This is not an executive decision

Wards affected

(All Wards);

Purpose and summary

To consider and approve the revised Herefordshire Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) constitution, attached as the appendix with changes highlighted. The proposed changes include the creation of the position of a vice chairperson of SACRE and additional faith representatives on the membership of SACRE.

Recommendation

That:

- (a) SACRE consider and approve the suggested amendments to the constitution contained in appendix (a) to this report.**

Alternative options

1. This report proposes two changes to the SACRE constitution. The proposed change to SACRE's constitution to establish the position of a vice chairperson has arisen due to a recognition of the importance of business continuity and succession planning for the chairperson of the committee. The other change proposes an increase in the number of membership positions for faith representatives on SACRE to make the committee more broadly representative of faith groups in Herefordshire.
2. An alternative option would be to retain the current constitution but this would not support principles of good practice with respect to the administration of committee. The role of vice chairperson ensures there is a defined contingency to conduct a meeting in the event the chairperson is unable to attend. It also allows for succession planning by involving the vice chairperson in the chairperson's briefing sessions aiding the development of skills and experience necessary to assume the role of chairperson if and when appropriate. The position of a vice chairperson ensures that the experience and skills of chairing SACRE are not held by a single member of the committee.
3. To retain the current constitution and not include those additional faiths in the membership would overlook their presence in Herefordshire's local communities.

Key considerations

4. At the previous meeting of SACRE on 29 November 2019 the chairperson explained that a report would be brought to the current meeting with updates to SACRE's constitution. At this meeting it was explained that the updates would consist of the creation of the position of vice chairperson on SACRE and the expansion of the membership of the committee to include additional faith representatives. These updates have been incorporated into the proposed constitution attached as appendix (a) to this report and are highlighted in bold italics for ease of reference.
5. As outlined under the preceding section of this report the creation of the position of vice chairperson on SACRE is in accordance with committee administration good practice and contributes to business continuity and succession planning.
6. The updated constitution at appendix (a) also proposes the inclusion of additional faith representatives on the membership of SACRE. In order to represent the broad range of religions within Herefordshire it is proposed that SACRE agrees the addition of three additional faith representatives including:
 - One representative of the Hindu faith;
 - One representative of the Sufi faith;
 - One representative of the Quaker faith.

Community impact

7. 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.
8. Ensuring that governing documents such as the SACRE constitution are clear, effective and up to date supports the council to uphold the principles in its adopted code of corporate governance.

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' 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

11. There are no resource implications involved in the production and consideration of this report.

Legal implications

12. Section 390 of the Education Act 1996 requires Herefordshire Council to establish a permanent body, called a Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE), to advise them on matters concerned with the provision of Religious Education and Collective Worship
13. Paragraph 2.9.20 of the council's constitution provides that in accordance with the Education Act 1996 (as amended) the council has established a Herefordshire SACRE to provide advice on matters concerned with the provision of religious education and collective worship.
14. The constitution of SACRE sets out its functions, membership and rules of procedure.

Risk management

- 15.

Risk / opportunity	Mitigation
That SACRE does not operate in accordance with principles of good committee administration.	The proposed creation of the role of a vice chairperson on SACRE acts as mitigation to this risk

That SACRE is not representative of the range of faith groups in Herefordshire

The expansion of the membership of SACRE to include faith groups represented in the population of Herefordshire mitigates this risk.

Consultees

16. None

Appendices

Appendix (a) – SACRE constitution with proposed updates in bold italics.

Background papers

None

Glossary

SACRE – Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education