

## **Title of report: SACRE Membership**

**Meeting: Standing advisory council for religious education (SACRE)**

**Meeting date: Friday 12 March 2021**

**Report by: Clerk to SACRE**

### **Classification**

Open

### **Decision type**

This is not an executive decision

### **Wards affected**

(All Wards);

### **Purpose**

To undertake a review of the membership of SACRE and consider additional members.

### **Recommendation(s)**

**That: SACRE reviews its membership and agrees any additional representatives.**

### **Alternative options**

1. SACRE could choose not to consider its current membership however it was requested at the previous meeting that this exercise was undertaken.

### **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.

One representative of the Hindu religion.

One representative of the Quaker 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 20 members. There are nine existing vacancies. The current membership and the existing vacancies are listed in full in appendix 1 to the report. At the previous meeting of SACRE it was discussed that existing SACRE members with Quaker, Muslim and Sikh contacts locally would approach potential faith representatives to determine interest in membership.
5. At the meeting of SACRE on 23 October there was a discussion of the potential inclusion of a Humanist representative on the committee's membership. It was requested that detail of the number of SACREs in England and Wales with a Humanist representative was presented to the current meeting. Below is a link to the Humanists UK website which provides the latest information collated by Humanists UK of the appointment of Humanist representatives to SACREs in England and Wales:

<https://humanism.org.uk/education/sacres-and-ascs/sacre-reps-map/>,

6. To inform discussions of the membership of SACRE, detail of religious identification in Herefordshire is provided in appendix 2.

## **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 the membership of SACRE is kept up to date supports the council to uphold the principles in its adopted code of corporate governance.

## **Environmental Impact**

9. Whilst this is a decision on back office functions and will have minimal environmental impacts, consideration has been made to minimise waste and resource use in line with the Council's Environmental Policy

## **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) require 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 awareness 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.
- 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;
  - A group to represent the Church of England;
  - 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;
  - A group to represent the council.
  - 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.

14. Section 2.9.19 of Herefordshire Councils constitution provides for the establishment and membership of SACRE. The current membership groups are outlined in 2.9.21.

## 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

15. None.

## **Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Current Membership and Existing Vacancies

Appendix 2 – Demographics from Herefordshire

## **Background papers**

None identified

**Please include a glossary of terms, abbreviations and acronyms used in this report.**

SACRE – Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education