

Title of report: SACRE membership

Meeting: Standing advisory council for religious education (SACRE)

Meeting date: Friday 19 November 2021

Report by: Democratic services officer

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 constitution and membership and recommends any changes to its representatives.

Alternative options

1. SACRE could choose not to consider its current membership however it was requested at the October 2020 meeting and then deferred at the March 2021 meeting for consideration at the current meeting.

Key considerations

2. Under Section 390(4) of the Education Act 1996, the SACRE must include persons appointed by the Local Authority to represent respectively the following groups–
 - A. such Christian denominations and other religions and denominations of such religions as, in the opinion of the Local Authority, 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 Authority (LA).

3. In accordance with the requirements of Section 390(4), the membership of the SACRE for Herefordshire currently 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 Authority representatives.

4. The Membership of SACRE comprises 20 members. There are six existing vacancies. The current membership and the existing vacancies are listed in full in appendix 1 to the report.

5. At the meeting of SACRE on 23 October 2020 there was a discussion about 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 March 2021 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. From the information provided 61 of the 173 SACREs listed do not currently have a humanist representative; this equates to approximately 65% of SACREs listed as having a humanist representative. It should be further noted that applications for membership from a humanist have been made to 8 of the SACREs listed that are currently not represented. This detail is available through the link below:

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

6. At the meeting on 12 March 2021 SACRE discussed the potential inclusion of a Humanist representative on its membership and the proportion of SACREs across England and Wales with such a representative. The Humanist representative on Gloucestershire SACRE was raised and the non-religious perspective provided to Gloucestershire's SACRE. It was commented that Humanism represented one part of the much broader non-religious worldview. It was agreed at the March meeting that consideration of the SACRE constitution as a whole, including the membership, would take place at the next meeting with any changes to the membership deferred until this time. To enable the review agreed at the previous meeting

SACRE's latest membership is attached at appendix 1 and its constitution is attached at appendix 2.

7. To assist SACRE to consider the inclusion of a Humanist representative on its membership it was suggested at the March meeting that the representative currently on Gloucestershire SACRE be invited to this meeting to talk about how they contribute to and work with SACRE. Unfortunately the representative is unable to attend but has provided a written statement at appendix 4.
8. To also inform discussion of the membership of SACRE, detail of religious identification in Herefordshire is provided in appendix 3.

Community impact

9. 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 county plan ambition to strengthen communities to ensure that everyone lives well and safely together.
10. 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

11. 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

12. 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.
13. 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

14. 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.

Legal implications

15. 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) and listed in paragraph 3 above.

16. 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. Any change to the membership of this statutory committee will require a change to the constitution, this is reserved to full council. If this committee wishes to recommend changes to its membership then the audit and governance committee can consider the requested change to the constitution and recommend the change at the next council meeting.

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

17. None

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Current Membership and Existing Vacancies
- Appendix 2 – SACRE's constitution
- Appendix 3 – Demographics from Herefordshire
- Appendix 4 – Statement from Gloucestershire SACRE Humanist Representative

Background papers

None identified

Report Reviewers Used for appraising this report:

Please note this section must be completed before the report can be published

Governance John Coleman Date 22/10/2021

Finance Karen Morris Date 19/10/2021

Legal Angela Ugbesia Date 08/11/2021

Communications Luenne Featherstone Date 19/10/2021

Equality Duty Carol Trachonitis Head of Information Compliance and Equality Date 20/10/2021

Risk Kevin Lloyd Date 08/11/2021

Approved by Claire Ward Date 09/11/2021

[Note: Please remember to overtype or delete the guidance highlighted in grey]

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