

DRAFT

THE COUNCIL
28 November 2007

STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE) **(Director of Education, Children's Services and Libraries)**

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek agreement to advise the Council of a proposed change in the constitution of the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE), which advises the Council on matters concerned with the provision of religious education and collective worship.
- 1.2 The Council is also required to convene an occasional body to produce and recommend an agreed syllabus for RE called an Agreed Syllabus Conference and the SACRE acts as the Agreed Syllabus conference when required.
- 1.3 The purpose of the change is to bring the membership of the SACRE into line with the range of faiths represented in the Agreed Syllabus.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 **That the revised composition of SACRE attached as appendix A be recommended to the Executive Member for Education and Libraries for adoption.**

3. SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 Since 1988 local authorities have had a duty to establish a Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE). Religious education is a statutory part of the basic curriculum for all pupils, but it is not a National Curriculum subject. Instead it is a local responsibility of the local authority through its SACRE.
- 3.2 The SACRE advises the authority on matters relating to collective worship in community schools and on religious education given in accordance with the locally agreed syllabus. The SACRE monitors the effectiveness and appropriateness of the agreed syllabus, which is formally reviewed every five years.
- 3.3 It also publishes support materials, approves a programme of training for teachers and sponsors or supports other projects which it deems to be consistent with its responsibility to promote religious education and spiritual, moral, social and cultural education in schools.
- 3.4 The Local Authority has a statutory duty to establish the SACRE. The local authority will seek nominations for the religious committees or groups from the local church and faith groups, set up elections for the teacher representatives and nominate councillors and officers to represent it on the SACRE.

- 3.5 Who sits on the SACRE is defined in law. Section 390 of the Education Act 1996 provides for two types of Committee Members, namely "representative members" and "co-opted members" with only the former having voting rights. SACRE is made up of four groups:
- **GROUP A**
This is a group of persons to represent such Christian denominations and other religions and denominations as, in the opinion of the Council will appropriately reflect the principal religious traditions of the area. The number of persons appointed shall, so far as consistent with the efficient discharge of the group's functions, reflect broadly the proportionate strength of the religion or denomination in the Borough. The composition of Committee A will vary from SACRE to SACRE as it reflects the variety and numerical representation of the different communities in the locality.
 - **GROUP B**
This is made up of representatives nominated by the local Church of England dioceses.
 - **GROUP C**
The teacher members of the committee are representatives of teacher associations. It is the Local Authority that decides which teacher associations will be represented. They may approach the teacher unions, but it is possible that associations of RE teachers in the local area will be asked to provide a representative.
 - **GROUP D**
It is the Local Authority's responsibility to provide their own representatives for this committee. The authority may wish to have all parties and viewpoints from across the political spectrum represented on the SACRE.
- 3.6 The Local Authority has the responsibility to appoint the members of the four groups (there is also a power to co-opt). Legislation requires the Local Authority to ensure that the composition of Committee A of both the SACRE and the Agreed Syllabus Conference is representative of the local community. However, although the numbers of representatives should reflect the proportionate strengths of denominations or religions in the area, this may be departed from in so far as to do so would be consistent with the efficient discharge of the Group's functions. It has become apparent since the SACRE was first established in 1998 that it is difficult to give adequate representation to all the major faiths. It is therefore proposed to increase the number of representatives in Group A to include one for each of the faiths covered in the Agreed Syllabus. This would increase the size of the group by three members. The Baha'I Faith which has been represented in this group, but is not one of the main religions in the Agreed Syllabus could still be represented through co-opted membership.
- 3.7 The proposed changes should not alter the balance should voting be necessary. On any question to be decided by a SACRE the representative groups each have a single vote. Co-opted members do not have a vote.

3.8 The Local Authority should consult locally before appointments are made. The SACRE itself and representatives of all the faiths referred to have been consulted and there is general support for this approach.

3.9 A revised Membership is attached as Appendix A.

4 ADVICE OF STATUTORY AND OTHER OFFICERS

Borough Solicitor

4.1 The legal issues are covered in the report.

Borough Treasurer

4.2 There are no significant financial consequences arising from this proposal.

Impact Assessment

4.3 The impact of these changes will be to secure a better balance in advice on Religious Education.

Strategic Risk Management Issues

4.4 None

Background Papers

None

Contacts for further information

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APPENDIX A

BRACKNELL FOREST STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE)

MEMBERSHIP STRUCTURE

The Authority shall appoint the members of the SACRE (other than co-opted members or any member representing grant maintained schools) so that they shall represent the following groups:

	original	original totals	proposed	proposed totals
Group A				
The Free Churches	3		3	
The Roman Catholic Church	2		2	
Hinduism	two from		1	
Islam	other		1	
Judaism	religions		1	
Buddhism			1	
Sikhism			1	
Baha'i			co-option	
		7		10
Group B				
The Church of England	4		4	
		4		4
Group C				
<i>Associations representing teachers</i>				
NUT	1		1	
NAS/UWT	1		1	
ATL	1		1	
NUT	1		1	
PAT	1		1	
SHA	1		1	
		6		6
Group D				
The Authority	5		5	
		5		5
Co-opted Members				
Not more than	2		2	
		2		2
TOTAL		24		27