
Individual Cabinet Member Delegated Decision

Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education & Skills – Cllr Laura Mayes

Service: Education and Skills

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Reference: CES-05-21

Recommendations for changes to the Constitution of the Wiltshire Standing Advisory Committee for Religious Education (SACRE)

Purpose of Report

- To broaden the SACRE membership with voting rights to include:
 - a Humanist Representative
 - two Governor Representatives (from non-faith-foundation schools)

Relevance to the Council's Business Plan

From Wiltshire Council's Business Plan – "Our vision is to create strong communities in Wiltshire"

- *All strong communities, whether large or small, are built on the foundation of working together where there is a common vision and sense of belonging by all communities; a society in which the diversity of people's backgrounds and circumstances is appreciated and valued whether they are from a religious or non-religious background. SACRE's aim is to ensure that the teaching of Religious Education in schools promotes strong and positive relationships to be developed in the workplace and wider community.*

Background

- *SACRE's constitution dates from 2010 and is no longer fit for purpose as it does not include membership of non-religious representatives.*

Main Considerations for the Council

- To broaden the SACRE membership with voting rights to include:
 - a Humanist Representative
 - two Governor Representatives (from non-faith-foundation schools)

Overview and Scrutiny Engagement

- There has been no engagement that has taken place with the Council's Overview and Scrutiny function.

- The decision has been taken from the national recommendations outlined in the “Commission on Religious Education Report” 2018 which recommends a move towards a “Religion and Worldviews” approach for this curriculum area. This is in order to reflect that there has been a pattern of decreased affiliation with organised religion and a growth in secularisation in England and that this needs to be reflected as we prepare students to live in modern Britain.

Safeguarding Implications

- The decision does not have any implications for safeguarding children, young people or vulnerable adults because the work of SACRE members does not include any direct contact with children, young people and vulnerable adults. SACRE members how are headteacher and teacher members have contact with children and young people through their professional career.

Public Health Implications

- *SACRE’s aim is to ensure that the teaching of Religious Education in schools promotes a curriculum that encourages strong and positive relationships and is inclusive and supportive towards people of all cultures, ethnicities, identities and beliefs. Children enjoy learning about the diversity of people’s backgrounds, especially recognising their own circumstances and being accepted for who they are is important to their mental wellbeing.*
- SACRE’s vision for Religious Education in Wiltshire recognises that communities will not be resilient and cohesive where discrimination and inequalities exist. Therefore good religious education can help to eliminate discrimination and advance equality.

Procurement Implications

- There are no procurement implications.

Equalities Impact of the Proposal

- The decision for the amendments will have a positive impact on equality as it broadens the membership to include a representative of non-world views (Humanist) and this will appropriately reflect the beliefs and philosophies held in the area. This will reflect the National recommendations outlined in the “Commission on Religious Education Report” 2018 which recommends a move towards a “Religion and Worldviews” approach for this curriculum area. This is in order to reflect that there has been a pattern of decreased affiliation with organised religion and a growth in secularisation in England and that this needs to be reflected as we prepare students to live in modern Britain. As the realisation of the importance of inclusion of non-religious worldviews has become increasingly obvious, it is only right that the Humanist representative (who is a member of a non-religious worldview organisation) should be allowed to sit on “Group A” with full voting rights and the possibility of serving as chair or vice-chair.
- School Governor voice and opinion will offer SACRE another level of sounding board to ensure our services and decisions are appropriate and deliverable. Governor

representatives can also be conduits to communicate news of SACRE / Agreed Syllabus developments back to Governor groups.

Environmental and Climate Change Considerations

Question 1

- The decision will result in energy consumption associated with the service area remaining roughly at current levels
- SACRE meets three times a year in Wiltshire, usually at a Headteacher or teacher member's school.
- SACRE members are invited to visit the school's religious education department and enjoy a presentation from pupils/students on their experience of learning religious education.
- SACRE has approximately 10-15 members, not all members attend the meeting. Members usually travel by car to the venue.
- SACRE has been meeting online since the Covid-19 crisis.

Question 2

- As online meetings have been successful, it is likely that SACRE will no longer meet face-to-face for three meetings per year therefore reducing car emissions from travelling to meeting venues.

Question 3

- There are no further environmental risks associated with the decision.

Question 4

- Head of Legal Services has confirmed that a decision has to be made to legally amend the SACRE constitution.

Risks that may arise if the proposed decision is taken and actions that will be taken to manage these risks

- As stated above, Head of Legal Services has confirmed that a decision has to be made to legally amend the SACRE constitution.

Financial Implications

- There are no financial implications.

Legal Implications

- Consultation took place at the SACRE meeting on Thursday 1st July 2021 where constituent members of all representative groups that sit on SACRE were consulted and were able to vote about the proposed changes to SACRE. The decision for change was

unanimous. This can be found in the SACRE minutes which can be found on the Right Choice website.

Workforce Implications

- There are no workforce implications.

Reason for Decision

This will reflect the National recommendations outlined in the “Commission on Religious Education Report” 2018 which recommends a move towards a “Religion and Worldviews” approach for this curriculum area. This is in order to reflect that there has been a pattern of decreased affiliation with organised religion and a growth in secularisation in England and that this needs to be reflected as we prepare students to live in modern Britain.

As the realisation of the importance of inclusion of non-religious worldviews has become increasingly obvious, it is only right that the Humanist representative (who is a member of a non-religious worldview organisation) should be allowed to sit on “Group A” with full voting rights and the possibility of serving as chair or vice-chair.

Options Considered

To keep the SACRE constitution as it has been since 2010.

Proposal

To broaden the SACRE membership with voting rights to include:

- a Humanist Representative
- two Governor Representatives (from non-faith-foundation schools)

Proposals expanded to give details below:

1. That the Humanist representative that currently sits on group E (Co-opted members - without full voting rights) should be moved to sit on group A (Christian denominations (other than CofE) and other religions and denominations of such religions as, in the opinion of the authority, will appropriately reflect the principal religious traditions in the area).

The title of this group changes to “Christian denominations (other than CofE) and other religions and non-religious world views, which in the opinion of the authority, will appropriately reflect the beliefs and philosophies held in the area.

This will reflect the National recommendations outlined in the “Commission on Religious Education Report” 2018 which recommends a move towards a “Religion and Worldviews” approach for this curriculum area. This is in order to reflect that there has been a pattern of decreased affiliation with organised religion and a growth in secularisation in England and that this needs to be reflected as we prepare students to live in modern Britain.

As the realisation of the importance of inclusion of non-religious worldviews has become increasingly obvious, it is only right that the Humanist representative (who is a member

of a non-religious worldview organisation) should be allowed to sit on “Group A” with full voting rights and the possibility of serving as chair or vice-chair.

2. The inclusion of two posts for Governor Representatives (from non- faith-foundation schools) to sit on Group C with voting rights. This is because Governors are partners in Leadership and management of schools. They are responsible for monitoring and evaluating the RE, Collective Worship and SMSC areas within their schools (as well as all other factors).

Governor voice and opinion will offer SACRE another level of sounding board to ensure our services and decisions are appropriate and deliverable. Governor representatives can also be conduits to communicate news of SACRE / Agreed Syllabus developments back to Governor groups.

Reason for Proposal

- To reflect the National recommendations outlined in the ‘Commission on Religious Education Report’
- To reflect that there has been a pattern of decreased affiliation with organised religion and a growth in secularisation in England and that this needs to be reflected as we prepare students to live in modern Britain
- To allow our Humanist representative to take the position of Chair of the Wiltshire SACRE (as per the unanimous vote from all eligible members of the Wiltshire SACRE.

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Date of report **21/09/21**

Appendices

- Existing Wiltshire SACRE constitution (2010)
- The proposed wording of the new Wiltshire SACRE constitution

Background Papers

The following documents have been relied on in the preparation of this report:

- Commission on Religious Education Report (2018)