

DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

At a Meeting of Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE)
held in Council Chamber, County Hall, Durham on **Thursday 4 November 2021 at 1.30 pm**

Present:

Canon L Burton In the Chair

Church of England

Canon L Burton, K Passmore and Walker

Other Religious Denominations and Faiths

S Baker - Roman Catholic
F Johnson - Methodist Church
C Spencer - Bahá'í Faith
M Turner - Islam

Teachers Associations

V Bain - NEU

County Council Representatives

Councillors S Townsend, C Varty and M Walton

Education Durham Support and Provision Lead

J Rimmer

1 Appointment of Chair and Vice-Chair of County Durham SACRE

The term of office for the current Chair and Vice-Chair of Durham SACRE had expired. Nominations were sought from Members for the appointment of a Chairman and Vice Chairman of Durham SACRE.

Resolved:

- i) That P Welch be appointed Chair for a four-year period.
- ii) That the appointment of a Vice-Chair be deferred until the next meeting.
- iii) That in the absence of the Chair and a Vice-Chair Canon Burton would Chair the meeting.

Canon L Burton (in the Chair)

2 Introductions, Welcome and Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor D Haney and A Barron, B Dunn, R Fischer, W Gray, A Hartley, M Dixon, H Tait, D Van Der Velde, C Weir and P Welch

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting including the newly appointed Councillors. Thanks was also given to J Bainbridge the outgoing Vice-Chair for her commitment to Durham SACRE.

3 Minutes of the meeting held on 17 June 2021

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 June 2021 were confirmed as a correct record with the following amendments and signed by the Chair.

Item 7 paragraph 4 'In response to a question about support for RE teachers in Durham LA, H Tait advised Members that she would be attending the RE *primary* network meetings and could present her notes to SACRE'.

Item 9 and 10 to read at the next *SACRE* meeting.

4 Declarations of Interest, if any

There were no declarations of interest.

5 Matters Arising

K Passmore queried whether there was any update regarding the timing of the Agreed Syllabus review and whether legal advice had been obtained to ascertain if legislation allowed for this to happen earlier.

In response the Education Durham Support and Provision Lead advised that P Welch had followed this up and a further update would be required from him at the next meeting to clarify the position on this matter.

6 Chairs Comments

The Chair added that usually at this stage P Welch would provide comments from the perspective of an RE classroom. She commented that she was acutely aware that things continued to be exceptionally tough for teachers given the ongoing issues brought about by the pandemic whilst still doing all they could to deliver outstanding lessons that the children in our schools

deserved. She recognised those pressures and applauded teachers working at any level in a school in this authority at this present time.

7 SACRE Membership

The Chair asked for an update on the current situation with regards to the current membership of Durham SACRE and in particular, where there were vacancies as it would be important for Durham SACRE to ensure that they continue to meet the requirements of the membership.

It was noted that this issue had been raised with Legal Services who would seek to provide an overview of the council's requirements in relation to its membership and whether additional appointments should be sought to meet those requirements.

S Walker at this point also noted that she had written to the Chair requesting full membership of the committee and asked whether there'd been any progress on that request. The Education Durham Support and Provision Lead explained that given the constraints of the 1986 Education Act and the constitution for this SACRE, legal advice had been sought. Further information was to be sought from other SACREs as to how they enabled a humanist to be part of their as there was no provision for that within the ACT.

An update would be provided directly to S Walker prior to the next meeting and a full update would be provided at the next SACRE meeting.

K Passmore commented that in North Tyneside custom and practice had been to include the humanist member in all discussions. However, appreciated that further legal advice and information would be helpful.

Resolved: That the current membership and vacancies be noted.

8 Feedback from the Agreed Syllabus

Resolved:

That the item be deferred to the next meeting.

9 Additional Support Materials

Resolved:

That the item be deferred until the next meeting.

The Education Durham Support and Provision Lead advised that support materials were available online through the DCC e-shop, and some exemplar material had been circulated by email to members earlier that day.

10 Education Durham Report to SACRE

Members considered the Education Durham Report to SACRE that provided details of the Education Durham Support to Schools in 2020-2021 to date. The report also advised Members that Darlington Borough Council had approached the Council in relation to adopting the 2020 Durham Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education (for copy of report, see file of minutes).

The Education Durham Support and Provision Lead presented the report.

Discussion ensued regarding the topic of 'worldviews' and it was noted that an online event offered by NASACRE would be held on 10th Nov 2021, 7-8pm: What do SACREs need to know and understand about worldviews. The aim of the session was to share an overview of what the term 'worldviews' means in a number of different disciplines and would reflect upon how it provides useful concepts from which teachers feel more equipped to teach RE. The session was available to all SACRE members and details would be circulated following the meeting.

Following a request from the Chair, K Passmore agreed to provide an overview on the topic of 'worldviews' at a future session.

It was noted that children in different stages of education had varying understanding of worldviews and noted that a lot of teachers in primary schools were not RE trained. This highlighted the importance of having RE practitioners on SACRE to complement members of other faiths.

The Education Durham Support and Provision Lead added that it was acknowledged that support was required for staff in schools and the way in which support could be provided was being reviewed to determine how it could be adapted to provide the level required.

Whilst it was acknowledged that ways of working had significantly altered since 2020, in the present situation it was very difficult for teachers to attend meetings of SACRE due to ongoing pressures and timing of meetings. Discussion then ensued regarding online meetings and whether SACRE could explore options for holding meetings remotely or in a hybrid way alongside seeking the views of teachers as to how they felt SACRE could support them going forward.

It was noted that the comments regarding remote meetings would be passed to Legal Services and a response be provided at the next meeting.

Resolved: that the content of the report be noted.

11 Regional/National Updates

Resolved: That there were no updates to be received.

12 Interfaith Week

Human Flourishing: Living Well in Challenging Times

C Spencer extended an invitation to SCARE to attend County Durham Faiths Network (CDFN) event for Interfaith Week on Monday 15th November at 7.30pm, via Zoom. The theme for the session was Human Flourishing: Living Well in Challenging Times - a personal faith perspective.

The invitation and details as to how to register would be circulated following the meeting.

Holocaust Memorial Day

The Voluntary and Community Sector Officer advised that a free virtual event was being hosted for Holocaust Memorial Day on 27th January 2022. Details would be circulated to SACRE in due course. It was not possible to hold the usual day of activities to mark this day however, the virtual event would also be pre-recorded and would enable schools to access at a time convenient for them.

13 A Personal View

Resolved:

That the item be deferred in the absence of the Chair.

14 Date of the Next Meeting

The next meeting would be held on 3 March 2022.

Signed:P Welch Chair of SACRE

Date: 3 March 2022