

**REPORT TO:** Executive Board

**DATE:** 17 October 2019

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Strategic Director - People

**PORTFOLIO:** Children, Education and Social Care

**SUBJECT:** Halton Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) Constitution

**WARD(S)** Borough-wide

**1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 The purpose of this report is to request that the Executive Board recommends that the Council approves the Halton SACRE Constitution.

**2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That Council be recommended to approve the Halton SACRE Constitution.**

**3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

3.1 The Religious Education and Collective Worship DfE Circular 1/94 (published 31 January 1994) paragraph 89 states that there are statutory duties on every LEA to establish a permanent body called a standing advisory council for religious education (SACRE), advise the LEA on matters concerned with the provision of RE and collective worship. (Education Reform Act 1988, s.11).

3.2 A SACRE's main function is to advise the authority upon matters connected with religious worship in county schools (maintained and voluntary controlled) and the religious education to be given in accordance with an agreed syllabus as the authority may refer to the council or as the council may see fit.

3.3 The broad role of a SACRE is to support the effective provision of RE and collective worship in schools. Each LEA should work with its SACRE to review the existing provision for RE and consider with the SACRE whether any changes need to be made to the agreed syllabus or in the support offered to schools. Similarly it should work with its SACRE to monitor the provision of daily collective worship and to consider with it action which might be taken to improve such provision. (Education Reform Act 1988, s11(1)(a).

3.4 Composition of SACRE. (Education Act 1993 s.15+16)

A SACRE is to comprise four groups representing, respectively:

**A** Christian denominations and other religions and religious denominations, the number of whose representatives shall 'so far as is consistent with the efficient discharge of the committee's functions, reflect the broadly proportionate strength of that denomination or religion in the area';

**B** the Church of England;

**C** such associations representing teachers as, in the opinion of the authority, ought to be represented, having regard to the circumstances of the area;

**D** the local education authority

3.5 The Halton SACRE requires a constitution to ensure it operates efficiently and fulfils its statutory duties. The constitution provides a structure for its work and ensures SACRE meetings are held in a way that is publicly accountable.

3.6 The constitution included in this report has, as a final draft been submitted to the four Groups of Halton SACRE for approval.

3.7 The constitution specifies the numbers of representatives in each Group and, in the cases of Group A, C and D, specifies with particular faith group (Group A) or teachers' organisation (Group C) they represent. In the case of Group D the constitution identifies other groups deemed necessary by the authority, notably local authority governors.

3.8 Clear identification of numbers of representatives and other groups as in paragraph 3.8 will strongly assist Halton SACRE in its aim to strengthen membership in order to meet its statutory duties and work closely with schools to support the teaching and learning of RE and daily acts of collective worship.

#### 4.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 None identified.

#### 5.0 **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 None identified.

#### 6.0 **IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

##### 6.1 **Children & Young People in Halton**

The attached document 'Compliance with the duty to teach

Religious Education' has been provided to all Headteachers, Principal's and Chairs of Governors in Halton schools. It makes clear the importance for all schools to adhere to the compliance for the duty to teach RE (letter to Chair of NASACRE 22 March 2019 from Neil Lawson, DfE). This compliance has a direct impact on all children and young people across Halton schools.

The Halton SACRE Constitution will ensure all children and young people in Halton schools are supported, monitored and challenged to provide high quality teaching and learning in RE and high quality acts of collective worship. It will support SACRE in holding academies and free schools to account to ensure compliance with the duty to teach RE. It will support members of SACRE working with schools of all phases that are maintained or voluntary controlled to access and develop the Locally Agreed Syllabus (LAS) for RE to provide high quality teaching and learning experiences as part of a broad and balanced curriculum.

A wider membership of Halton SACRE as referred to in paragraph 3.8 will build capacity within the four Groups to provide expert guidance and support to schools to ensure RE and collective worship is part of the statutory provision for children and young people across the borough.

## **6.2 Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton**

None identified.

## **6.3 A Healthy Halton**

None identified.

## **6.4 A Safer Halton**

None identified.

## **6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal**

None identified.

## **7.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

7.1 There is a risk that without the support for and scrutiny of RE and collective worship by a strengthened SACRE children and young people will not receive and benefit from the provision they are entitled to.

7.2 The Education Inspection Framework (September 2019) has an increased focus on a school's curriculum, its intent, its implication and its impact on children and young people. RE is a statutory part

of the curriculum and specific guidance to the inspection of RE is provided in the handbooks for inspection. There is a risk that, if schools do not meet expectations in terms of provision they are at risk of an adverse inspection outcome.

**8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

8.1 The representatives of religious and other interests on Halton SACRE, as identified in the constitution gives them opportunities to help ensure the RE curriculum deals accurately and sensitively with their own religious or other perspective, and that any concerns about RE are raised and considered.

8.2 Current political sensitivities, the need for schools to provide appropriate learning opportunities and experiences that celebrate diversity and equality, and the need to advise and support schools in teaching controversial issues means that Halton SACRE has a significant role to play acting as a learned voice to schools.

**9.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

<b>Document</b>	<b>Place of Inspection</b>	<b>Contact Officer</b>
DfE Circular 1/94. Religious Education and Collective Worship. 31 January 1994	People Directorate	Operational Director, Education, Inclusion & Provision
Halton SACRE Constitution 2019	People Directorate	Operational Director, Education, Inclusion & Provision
Compliance with the duty to teach Religious Education	People Directorate	Operational Director, Education, Inclusion & Provision