

## **Minutes of the Meeting of the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education held on 19 April 2017 at 6.00 pm**

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### **Present:**

- Committee A:** Mrs S Lawson, Mrs M Shepherd, Dr O Soleye and Mr P Anderson (arrived at 6.46)
- Committee B:** Rev. J Guest, Mrs M Taylor, Rev. D Bates (arrived at 6.08) and Rev. J Huntcherson
- Committee C:** Ms A Jellicoe and Ms H Gillman
- Committee D:** Councillor T Ojetola
- Apologies:** Mr A Kariyawasam, Mr P Griffiths and Roger Edwardson, Strategic Lead, School Improvement and Skills
- In attendance:** Malcolm Taylor, Strategic Lead - Learner Support  
Deborah Weston, Associate Adviser for Religious Education  
Kenna-Victoria Martin, Senior Democratic Services Officer
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Before the start of the Meeting, all present were advised that the meeting may be filmed and was being recorded, with the audio recording to be made available on the Council's website.

### **10. Minutes**

The Minutes of the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education, held on 7 December 2017, were approved as a correct record.

### **11. Items of Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

### **12. Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **13. Excellent Religious Education**

The Associate Adviser for Religious Education presented the report explaining to Members that by providing training for the teachers in the 11 primary schools in Thurrock the Excellent RE project aimed to increase capacity for the sharing of good practice in the borough.

She continued by stating higher standards in the teaching of RE would help schools to fulfil their statutory duty to promote community cohesion and to encourage better respect and tolerance for those with different religions and beliefs.

It was commented that with SACRE being involved in the 'Excellent RE' programme assisted its members for updated information and invited them to be involved in its monitoring.

Members were then split into groups to discuss the feedback forms, which had already been received. During deliberations the following was highlighted:

- Teacher's responses were positive and many welcomed visits;
- The programme was seen as a way to obtain guidance and support to teaching the agreed syllabus;
- The honesty from teachers, with one admitting RE could be improved within their school and;
- To gain ideas and resources.

Teachers sitting on SACRE notified other Members that the local secondary school RE teachers met to discuss RE within their schools. It was explained there used to be primary schools attending, however this was now no longer the case.

The Chair commented that many schools saw SACRE a council body who completed inspections, rather than a support network who was there to monitor the agreed syllabus and offer guidance.

The Associate Adviser for Religious Education asked Members to contact those Schools who were happy to be visited and arrange a visit with the aim to feed back at the next meeting.

#### **RESOLVED:**

**That SACRE Members visit the schools involved in this project to monitor the impact.**

#### **14. Religious Education Quality Mark**

The report was introduced and explained the RE Quality Mark had been developed to celebrate high quality religious education and provided community schools, faith schools and academies with a framework to capture good practice.

It was commented that the award encouraged the development and celebration of school wide commitment to excellent teaching and learning in religious education. Within the award there were three award levels: bronze, silver and gold.

Schools applying for the REQM would be asked to highlight where they thought they meet the criteria. After applying for the REQM an assessor will

visit the school, interview learners and meet the subject leader and a member of the senior leadership team.

Members heard that the Ockendon Academy had recently been awarded Silver within the programme. It was explained that the award was evidence based and you would meet with an assessor to ensure that all criteria had been met.

The Council discussed how the award was presented and suggested that perhaps the Mayor could present the schools with their certificates as this would also raise awareness of the programme and the high quality of teaching in the borough. Members were informed that once completed you could include the qualification on letterheads, email signature and the schools website.

It was commented that the qualification was positive on both schools and SACRE and by promoting it could help to change schools view of SACRE.

#### **RESOLVED:**

**That SACRE Members discussed the merits of the REQM and the means by which it might be used in Thurrock Schools.**

### **15. Any Other Business**

#### **Thurrock SACRE Annual Report**

The Associate Adviser for Religious Education informed Members the Annual Report had been updated and the take up of the agreed syllabus from Schools and Academies within the borough was now up to 95%.

Councillor Ojetola offered to present the report at the June meeting of Full Council. The Chair thanked Councillor Ojetola and Members agreed the report should be presented at the next available Full Council meeting.

#### **NASACRE Survey**

The Chair explained the survey had been circulated via email prior to the meeting for Members to look over. Members were then separated into groups to complete different sections of the survey to be pulled into one response by the Associate Adviser for Religious Education.

#### **SACRE – Venue, Time and Date**

The Chair of SACRE sought if Members were happy with where the Council met and its time. He suggested that the Council hold its three meetings in separate areas linked to its individual committees:

- Faith Community

- School
- Local Authority

Members commented they were happy to meet at different venues, however they would have to have close links to public transport such as a train station for those travelling back from London.

It was raised that if a meeting was held in a faith venue then Members would need to be aware of difference religions and their customs.

During discussions of the timing of the meeting it was highlighted, that as the meeting was a public meeting then any venue would have to cater for the general public and any media.

Members raised that the Membership of different Committees still had vacancies. The Chair assured Members that Officers were following up on a number of leads to fill the vacancies.

**The meeting finished at 7.20pm**

Approved as a true and correct record

**CHAIR**

**DATE**

**Any queries regarding these Minutes, please contact  
Democratic Services at [Direct.Democracy@thurrock.gov.uk](mailto:Direct.Democracy@thurrock.gov.uk)**