

16 July 2014

ITEM: 9

Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education

The Changing Profile of Religion and Belief in Thurrock

Report of: Deborah Weston, Associate Adviser for Religious Education

Wards and communities affected:

All

Key Decision:

Non-key

Accountable Head of Service: Vivien Cutler –Strategic Lead, School Improvement, Learning & Skills

Accountable Director: Carmel Littleton, Director of Children’s Services

This report is public.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents a comparison between the 2001 and 2011 census data on religious affiliation. It will allow SACRE to discuss the changing religious profile of the area in order to inform discussions about the support SACRE provides to schools and also the membership of SACRE.

1. RECOMMENDATIONS:

1.1 SACRE should consider the membership of committee A and decide whether or not it appropriately reflects the principal religious traditions in the area.

1.2 That should SACRE wish to amend the membership list, it should advise the local authority in order that the terms of reference be amended.

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND:

2.1 S390 of the Education Act 1996 requires that a Local Authority shall constitute a standing advisory council on religious education (SACRE). The SACRE must consist of such groups of persons appointed by the Authority as representative members, as required by subsection 4. The SACRE may also included co-opted members. Subsection 4 specifies that the representative groups that are to constitute membership of the SACRE are:

- (a) a group of persons to represent such Christian denominations 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;

- (b) except in the case of an area in Wales, a group of persons to represent the Church of England;
- (c) a group of persons to represent such associations representing teachers as, in the opinion of the authority, ought to be represented, having regard to the circumstances of the area; and
- (d) a group of persons to represent the authority.

In order to form its opinion the Local Authority must therefore be informed about the religious profile of its residents. .

3. ISSUES, OPTIONS AND ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS:

- 3.1 The non-Christian populations in Thurrock are small and SACRE needs to be confident that a suitable representative of that community can be found with the interest and capacity to serve SACRE.
- 3.2 SACRE may wish to consider that given the number of people who might consider themselves to have a non-religious world view, that a member of the British Humanist Association be invited to serve SACRE, as a co-opted member. It is increasingly common for SACREs to include a member of the British Humanist Association. The Equality Act 2010 prohibits discrimination on the grounds of religion OR belief.

4. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION:

- 4.1 The recommendations arise from the legal responsibilities of SACRE set out in 2.1 above

5. CONSULTATION (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)

- 5.1 Not applicable.

6. IMPACT ON CORPORATE POLICIES, PRIORITIES, PERFORMANCE AND COMMUNITY IMPACT

- 6.1 There are none.

7. IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Kay Goodacre**
Telephone and email: **01375 652466**
kgoodacre@thurrock.gov.uk

There are no financial implications to this report.

7.2 **Legal**

Implications verified by: **Lucinda Bell**
Telephone and email: **Lucinda.bell@BDTLegal.org.uk**

The legal basis for widening membership of SACRE is included in the text of this report.

7.3 **Diversity and Equality**

Implications verified by: **Samson DeAlyn**
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sdealyn@thurrock.gov.uk

The publication of the 2011 Census has clear implications for the Council's approach to Diversity and Equality issues. With regards to the different groups identified in this report there are implications based on the information about religion for the way that the diversity of the population of Thurrock is reflected in the provision for Religious Education in local schools.

7.4 **Other implications (where significant) – i.e. Section 17, Risk Assessment, Health Impact Assessment, Sustainability, IT, Environmental**

There are none.

BACKGROUND PAPERS USED IN PREPARING THIS REPORT (include their location and identify whether any are exempt or protected by copyright):

- None.

APPENDICES TO THIS REPORT:

- Appendix 1: Excerpt from SACRE terms of reference
- Appendix 2: Analysis of 2001 and 2011 census data

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Appendix 1: Excerpt from the SACRE terms of Reference

Committee A Christian denominations and other religious and religious denominations representative of the local community

7 members:

1 Free Church Christian member nominated by the Free Church Federal Council;

1 Roman Catholic member nominated by the Roman Catholic Diocese of Brentwood;

1 Jewish member nominated by the Board of Deputies of British Jews;

1 Muslim member nominated by the Muslim Teachers' Association;

1 Sikh member nominated by the Committee of the local Gurdwara;

1 Hindu member;

1 Pentecostal

The changing profile of Thurrock in relation to affiliation to religions and beliefs

Table one sets out the results of the census in 2001 and 2011 comparing the percentage of the population in terms of their answer to the question about their religion or belief

Table 1

Faith in Thurrock	Thurrock 2001 Census	Thurrock 2011 census	UK 2001	UK 2011
Christian	75.09%	63.30%	71.10%	59.30%
Buddhist	0.17%	0.40%	0.30%	0.40%
Hindu	0.55%	0.70%	1.10%	1.50%
Jewish	0.17%	0.10%	0.50%	0.50%
Muslim	1.07%	2.00%	3.00%	4.80%
Sikh	0.70%	0.80%	0.60%	0.80%
Other	0.21%	0.30%	0.30%	0.40%
No religion	15.51%	26.00%	14.80%	25.10%
Religion not stated	6.52%	6.30%	7.70%	7.20%

Green=greater than the national average Yellow=reflects national average Blue-smaller than the national average

Points to note:

1. The percentage of the population that identified themselves as Christians fell approximately around 12% in Thurrock and in the UK overall. There are more Christians in Thurrock than the national average
2. The Buddhist population increased by 0.23% in Thurrock and 0.1% in the UK overall. The Thurrock increase was therefore greater. The number of Buddhists in Thurrock reflects the national average
3. The Hindu population increased by 0.15% in Thurrock and 0.4% in the UK overall. The Thurrock increase was therefore greater. There are approximately half as many Hindus in Thurrock as the national average
4. The Jewish population fell by 0.07% in Thurrock and remained the same in the UK overall. The Thurrock decrease was therefore higher. The number of Jewish people in Thurrock is 20% of the national average.
5. The Muslim population increased by 0.93% in Thurrock and 1.8% in the UK overall. The Thurrock increase was therefore lower. The number of Muslims in Thurrock is around 40% of the national average
6. The Sikh population increased by 0.10% in Thurrock and 0.2% in the UK overall. The Thurrock increase was therefore lower. The number of Sikhs in Thurrock reflects the national average
7. The number of people identifying themselves as members of other religions, e.g. Baha'i, Jain, Zoroastrian in Thurrock increased by 0.09% and 0.10% in the UK overall so almost reflects the national average. The number of members of other religions in Thurrock is 25% fewer than in the UK overall.
8. The number of people who stated that they had no religion in Thurrock increased by 10.5% in Thurrock and 10.3% in the UK overall so Thurrock reflects national trends in this respect.

Table 2: