

**ROTHERHAM STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION
(SACRE) - 21/03/17**

**ROTHERHAM STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION
(SACRE)**

TUESDAY, 21ST MARCH, 2017

Present:-

Group A – other Christian denominations and faiths

Mrs. N. Goodwin (Pentecostal), Mr. D. Homer (Buddhist), Mr. I Jones (Evangelical Christian), Mr. S. Silnass (PAIS), Mr. C. Wells (Methodist Church), Mr. R. Dyson (Roman Catholic Church), Mrs. Z. Ahmed (Islamic), Mrs. G. Raha (Hindu) and Mrs. T. Williams (Baha'i).

Group B – the Church of England

Mrs. H. Lambert (Diocese of Sheffield).

Group C – Teachers' Professional Associations

Mrs. R. Turnbull.

Group D – the Local Authority

Councillor E. R. Keenan.

Also in attendance were Mrs. V. Gregory (Curriculum Consultant for RE).

Apologies for absence were received from : Mr. A. Griffin (Humanist), Mrs. C. Webster and from Councillors S. Alam, I. Jones and G. Watson.

(Mrs. N. Goodwin in the Chair)

20. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 21ST NOVEMBER, 2016

Agreed:- That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 21st November, 2016 be approved as a correct record for signature by the Chair.

21. MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

The following items were updated:-

(1) Minute No. 12(2) (Election of Vice-Chair, 2016/17) – it was confirmed that Mrs. C. Webster did not wish to continue in the role of Vice-Chair.

(2) Minute No. 15 (Syllabus for Religious Education 2016) – it was noted that copies of the Rotherham Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education

2016 are to be provided free of charge; however, a fee will be charged for the provision of the units and schemes of work which accompany this Syllabus. Copies of the Syllabus are to be provided for all members of the SACRE (by electronic mail) and also to all schools in the Rotherham Borough area.

(3) Suggestion of a South Yorkshire Joint Committee for SACRE – the Rotherham SACRE noted the contents of a report explaining the legal background to the establishment of Joint Committees of local authorities.

22. SCHOOL PRESENTATIONS

The Chair informed everyone that the School representatives had been unable to attend this meeting and consequently consideration of this item was deferred until the next meeting of the Rotherham SACRE, to be held on Monday, 19th June, 2017. It was also noted that representatives of the Newman Special School had also expressed interest in making a presentation at a meeting of the Rotherham SACRE.

23. COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

The Rotherham SACRE meeting considered the draft document entitled “Rotherham Collective Worship Guidance 2017” which would eventually be distributed to all schools in the Rotherham Borough area. A number of amendments were discussed, including the need for a revised message from the Chair, the updating of the calendar of Religious festivals and the use of photographs (with the necessary permissions being obtained) to reflect accurately the diversity within the Rotherham school pupil population.

Discussion took place on the role of the SACRE to monitor the provision of Religious Education in Schools. It was suggested that appropriate information should be collected from all schools, although the limited resources available would serve to hinder that process.

It was also reported that some primary schools had recently benefitted from a workshop about the Hindu religion.

Agreed:- That the draft “Rotherham Collective Worship Guidance 2017” be amended and updated as now discussed and distributed to all members of the SACRE.

24. COMMUNITY COHESION

The Rotherham SACRE received information from Mr. Shokat Lal (RMBC Assistant Chief Executive) and Mrs. Zaida Ahmed (RMBC Corporate Equalities and Diversity Officer) concerning the Borough Council’s strategy and practice in respect of community cohesion. The following matters were discussed:-

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: the Assistant Chief Executive is the Borough Council's lead officer in terms of community cohesion strategy and policy;

: the Assistant Director for Community Safety and Street Scene is the Borough Council's lead officer in terms of community safety, which includes dealing with specific issues such as hate crime (other officers within the Neighbourhoods Directorate have similar responsibilities in respect of this matter);

: the specific post of Corporate Community Cohesion Officer currently remains unfilled and vacant;

: the investigations and reports of the recent past (specifically the ones by Professor Alexis Jay (2014) and by Dame Louise Casey (2015)) had been critical of the Borough Council's approach to community cohesion;

: in response to these critical reports, the Borough Council is currently drafting a strategy and statement, which will be entitled "Building Stronger Communities"; this strategy will draw upon the contents of the more recent report by Dame Louise Casey (published on 5 December 2016) into social integration in Great Britain;

: this strategy has to address issues of concern which have affected Rotherham's recent past (eg: right-wing demonstrations in the Rotherham town centre; the vulnerability of children and young people; the media's perception of Rotherham; hate crime occurring in the community and in schools; religious differences); the strategy will focus upon the local authorities' "prevent duty" (the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015), as well as neighbourhoods and enabling people from different ethnic backgrounds to live and work together; it was emphasised that the strategy is most certainly not an attempt at social engineering;

: the strategy's focus upon the Borough Council's community leadership role will include consultation and discussion with faith leaders throughout the Rotherham Borough area; the Rotherham Faith Leaders' Council intends to undertake its own process of internal review;

: the Borough Council strategy will include an action plan and a means of measuring the success of the implementation of the various actions; it was acknowledged that there are practical difficulties in measuring the successes of a cohesive community; in that vein, the Borough Council has sought advice about best practice from the Home Office and from the Government Department for Communities and Local Government, although replies from both are still awaited;

: various grant funding sources are available in respect of community cohesion, which would include funding for the currently vacant officer post; the Borough Council's intention is to make application to these funding sources (two examples are the Home Office grants in respect of Radicalisation and there is also the Controlling Migration Fund);

: the draft “Building Stronger Communities” strategy will be considered at a meeting of the Borough Council’s Cabinet and the Government-appointed Commissioners to the Borough Council during May, 2017;

: the Borough Council had recently begun a new initiative entitled the Child-Centred Borough (which places the wellbeing of children and young people at the centre of Borough Council policy-making) and had obtained details of good practice from a number of other local authorities including Leeds City Council; some members of the SACRE meeting volunteered to contribute to this Child-Centred Borough initiative;

: as an individual school initiative, the Wingfield Academy had recently undertaken a project about the United Nations.

The Rotherham SACRE meeting acknowledged the progress being made by the Borough Council with its community cohesion responsibilities and that matters would further progress after approval of the strategy. The eventual appointment of an officer to the specific community cohesion post was considered to be essential in implementing the strategy’s action plan, as well as re-commencing the work with schools in respect of community cohesion.

Agreed:- That the information about the Borough Council’s draft “Building Stronger Communities” strategy be noted and the approved strategy be submitted to a future meeting of the Rotherham SACRE.

25. SOUTH YORKSHIRE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CONFERENCE 2017

The Rotherham SACRE meeting was informed that the South Yorkshire Religious Education Conference 2017 had taken place on Tuesday, 14th March, 2017 at the Hub, 103 Canklow Road, Rotherham. The event had been very well-received, although there had been a marked reduction in the number of schools represented at this year’s event, when compared to the 2016 event.

It was noted that next year’s South Yorkshire Religious Education Conference was scheduled to take place on Tuesday, 13th March, 2018 again at the Hub, 103 Canklow Road, Rotherham.

Members of the Rotherham SACRE asked to be provided with copies of the Conference materials and information.

Agreed:- That the information about the South Yorkshire Religious Education Conference 2017 be noted and every endeavour be made to ensure early notification of the 2018 Conference.

26. RELIGIOUS EDUCATION - SOUTH YORKSHIRE HUB - UPDATE

The Rotherham SACRE meeting was informed of the development and

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use of the social media Facebook page in respect of the Religious Education curriculum. Teachers of all primary and secondary schools were being invited to a South Yorkshire Hub meeting to be held on Thursday, 30th March, 2017, at the 'Costa' café, Meadowhall Way, adjacent to the Meadowhall shopping centre, Sheffield. Teachers will be asked to bring and share one tried and tested idea with other Religious Education teachers present.

The intention was also to hold a similar event in the Doncaster area. It was also noted that the Sheffield Hallam University was supportive of the South Yorkshire Hub initiative.

It was suggested that an Internet web-site link to the information be provided for those persons who did not use Facebook.

Agreed:- That the information be noted.

27. ROTHERHAM SACRE ANNUAL REPORT 2015/2016

Further to Minute No. 16 of the meeting of the Rotherham SACRE held on 21st November, 2016, the Rotherham SACRE meeting considered the contents of the draft Annual Report for Religious Education, which covered the period September 2015 to September 2016. A number of textual corrections were highlighted.

Agreed:- That the draft Rotherham SACRE Annual Report for Religious Education 2015/16 be approved, subject to the inclusion of the amendments as now discussed.

28. ROTHERHAM SACRE DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2016/17

Further to Minute No. 17 of the meeting of the Rotherham SACRE held on 21st November, 2016, consideration was given to the draft Rotherham SACRE development plan for 2016/17.

A suggestion was made that the development should highlight the need for the Rotherham SACRE to maintain a list of guest speakers who would be available to visit schools and talk with pupils and staff about aspects of faith and religion.

It was agreed that a working group be established to consider the detail of the development plan and report to the next meeting of the Rotherham SACRE, to be held on Monday, 19th June, 2016. The members of the working group are Mrs. Z. Ahmed, Mrs. N. Goodwin, Mrs. H. Lambert, Mrs. R. Turnbull, Mrs. T. Williams and Mr. D. Homer.

29. ROTHERHAM SACRE - CONSTITUTION AND MEMBERSHIP

Discussion took place on the Constitution and membership of the SACRE and the following details were highlighted:-

(a) representation is still required in respect of a number of faiths (eg: Muslim, Sikh, Black Pentecostal, Jewish, Salvation Army, Jehovah's Witness);

(b) Group D – the Local Authority membership – it was agreed that the Clerk to the Rotherham SACRE meetings, as an employee of the Local Authority, should substitute as necessary for the Elected Member representatives in order to ensure a quorum at the Rotherham SACRE meetings (this appointment would be subject to formal approval by the Borough Council).

30. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The following items were discussed:-

(1) Visit to Cambodia and Vietnam – Mr. D. Homer briefly informed the meeting of his recent visit to these two countries when he had been able to continue his study of the Buddhist faith.

(2) REwards ceremony – it was noted that both the Doncaster and Sheffield local authorities had expressed interest in the annual REwards ceremony, celebrating good practice in Religious Education, which would take place on Monday, 19th June, 2017.

(3) The Rotherham SACRE thanked Mrs. V. Gregory for her continuing hard work in the advisory role in respect of the Religious Education curriculum and syllabus, a role she is undertaking alongside her family commitments.

31. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Agreed:- That the next meeting of the Rotherham SACRE take place on Monday, 19th June, 2017, at the Magna Centre, Templeborough, Rotherham, in order to coincide with the Childrens' Festival (with the annual REwards ceremony, celebrating good practice in Religious Education, to follow the SACRE meeting on this same date).