

**ROTHERHAM STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION
(SACRE)
THURSDAY 11 JUNE 2026 AT 4:00PM**

Present:-

Group A

T. Griffin
D. Homer
T. Williams

Group B

H. Lambert

Group C

L. Melvin
E. Nicholls
S. Yasseen

Group D

N. Devlin
F. Radford

Also in attendance was Kristianne Thorogood – Governance Advisor

1. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR

The Governance Advisor advised members that there had been one nomination received for the position of Chair to the SACRE for 2026-2027 Academic Year. The nomination was for the current Chair, Hannah Lambert.

The Governance Advisor asked Members present to raise their hand if they wished to vote for the nomination received.

Resolved:- That Hannah Lambert be appointed Chair for the 2026-2027 Academic Year.

(Hannah Lambert in the Chair)

2. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR

The Governance Advisor advised Members that three nominations had been received for the position of Vice-Chair for the 2026-2027 Academic Year.

Two nominees advised that they would be unable to consider the role of Vice-Chair due to pre-existing commitments and wished to withdraw their nominations.

The remaining nomination was for Liza Melvin (Group C).

The Governance Advisor asked Members present to raise their hand if they wished to vote for the nomination for Liza Melvin to be Vice-Chair.

Resolved:- That Liza Melvin be appointed Vice-Chair for the 2026-2027 Academic Year.

3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor R. Ismail, Councillor V. Cusworth and V. Gregory.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

5. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

There were no matters of business for which it was deemed necessary to exclude members of the public or press.

6. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes from the last meeting on 19 March 2026 were approved as a true and accurate record of the proceedings.

7. DEVELOPMENT PLAN UPDATE

The Chair provided a verbal update on the ongoing SACRE Development Plan and in the ensuing discussion, the following points were discussed and noted:

- **RE Hubs**

SACRE would continue to promote the RE Hubs and the Chair and the Governance Advisor would continue to attend the Yorkshire Branch RE Hub/NASACRE evening meetings where possible.

- **Together for Tomorrow Project**

The Chair confirmed that they would contact Fiona Radford to help facilitate school visits to places of worship but commented that it had proved difficult to make confirmed arrangements with most locations, other than Rotherham Minster. The Chair would continue to send emails to try and secure some further venues for school

visits.

The next “Ask Me Anything Panel” was planned for September 2026. Fiona Radford confirmed that lessons had been learnt from the format of the previous panel session and suggested that plans be formulated for the September panel over the summer break.

Niall Devlin, the Service Director for Education & Inclusion (Service Director), commented that the Together for Tomorrow song, written by the Chair, had been performed that day by Wales Secondary School choir at the Rotherham Together Partnership Event at Magna.

The Chair confirmed that when the revised syllabus was finalised, it was planned to sub-title this “Together for Tomorrow” to support the longevity of the project.

- **Links to other local SACREs**

It was reported by the Chair that it was an ongoing challenge to establish links to other local SACREs but that attempts would be made again in the new academic year.

- **Determinations**

There had been no recent requests for determinations.

The Chair sought any further suggestions from Members for additions to the SACRE Development Plan. Tricia Williams requested that strengthening links with the Rotherham Faith Leaders Group be added. Local faith leaders would be needed to deliver sessions in pairs (of two different faiths) to schools as part of Inter-Faith week in November each year. The previous Inter-Faith link officer at the Council had recently left their post and work would need to be done to maintain these connections.

It was agreed that it would be useful for SACRE Members to make contact with any local connections they had who may be added to the pool of faith speakers. Fiona Radford confirmed that the need for speakers had been advertised but commented that the take up from schools for visits had been poor in the last Inter-Faith week. The option to request school visits was well publicised via the Rotherham School Improvement Service (RoSIS) website and newsletter but Tricia Williams commented that a number of schools still claimed that they were not aware of it.

Members discussed the value of strengthening contact with the Rotherham Faith Leaders Group to promote wider knowledge of the work of SACRE, which may in turn, lead to better links to places of worship and potential speakers. It was agreed that the Chair would try to attend the next meeting of the Faith Leaders Group with Fiona Radford, to promote

the work of SACRE.

The Chair also confirmed that work would be done to support the promotion of Inter-Faith week in the remainder of the summer term and into the autumn term.

The Service Director commented that when considering the Development Plan, Members should be aware that there was room in the proposed 2026-27 budget for some spending on potential resources. There was discussion around upgrading the RE Boxes but also debate on whether these were well utilised enough to justify any further spend. Fiona Radford commented that primary schools used them more than secondary schools. It was agreed that Emily Nicholls would try and pull together a list of secondary RE leads and their contact details to share with Fiona Radford to publicise the RE Boxes. It was suggested that information on resources available also be shared by the Service Director at the next Secondary Heads Meeting.

The Chair referred to David Homer's suggestion in a previous meeting that training and development should be considered on the complexity of teaching and understanding Islam, in the current fraught climate. The Chair was aware of a new training course on "Understanding Islam" offered by RE Today that SACRE may wish to consider purchasing. The cost of the course may be prohibitive (approx. £4,000), but it was possible that the cost could be shared with the Diocese of Sheffield. There was some discussion on what level of staff it would be appropriate to offer this course to, for example Headteachers. It was agreed that this course would be discussed further under the Budget agenda item.

The Chair confirmed that they would review the Development Plan for the academic year 2026-27 over the summer break, in preparation for presenting it formally to SACRE at the next meeting in September.

8. CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

The Chair asked Members to share details of any relevant CPD they had taken part in recently.

Tricia Williams commented that she largely delivered training, both locally and nationally. Therefore, the work that she undertook to research and prepare for these was relevant to SACRE.

The Chair mentioned that it would be possible for a SACRE Member to attend the annual NASACRE conference next May, if there was budget available.

9. SACRE MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

The Chair announced to Members that Tony Griffin had taken the decision to step down from Rotherham SACRE after the meeting. The

Chair expressed SACRE's thanks to Tony Griffin for his valued time and dedication to SACRE over the years he had been a Member.

Tony Griffin confirmed that he would be happy to still take part in events such as the "Ask Me Anything" panel and would be prepared to assist with the final proof-read of the revised syllabus.

The Governance Advisor confirmed that there were a number of vacancies for Group A (Faith) Members on SACRE. The Governance Advisor confirmed that a letter had been sent to Nazish Choudhry asking for confirmation as to whether they wished to remain on SACRE, due to non-attendance at a number of meetings. Members who had an alternative email address for Nazish Choudhry confirmed that they would send this on to the Governance Advisor.

The Governance Advisor also commented that in the previous meeting, Councillor Ismail had mentioned that she may be able to get touch with Maryam Shah, as they had also not attended a SACRE meeting for some time. The Governance Advisor would follow this up to see if there was any clarification with regard to the membership of Group A (Faith).

10. RE AWARDS UPDATE

Members discussed the organisation of the previous RE Awards event and the challenges experienced in the logistics of arranging it. The Service Director suggested that there should be a dedicated line within the SACRE budget for the RE Awards, as an annual commitment, which would cover refreshments, printing, room hire etc. Members agreed that this would be sensible moving forward.

Liza Melvin commented that it would be good to widen the reach of the RE Awards and get more schools involved. The Service Director suggested that SACRE utilise the school contacts that the Council held through Fiona Radford and consider setting aside a portion of money within the budget for "Communications".

There was discussion over the most appropriate time of year to hold the RE Awards. General consensus was that end of June would be most appropriate, once GCSEs were over and Y11s had left. At that time of year, secondary teaching staff would have more time available to engage with the event.

It was suggested that the event could be tied into the "Together for Tomorrow" project and re-named "RE & Community Awards" to recognise community spirit and cohesion. Members discussed organising communications to schools informing them of the date of the event and asking for nominations, possibly via Microsoft Forms.

Potential venues for the event were discussed, including; the Town Hall, the Rockingham Centre, the New York Stadium, Gullivers Valley &

Magna. The timing of the event was also discussed, and Members agreed that after-school/ evenings would work best to maximise attendance for parents.

Fiona Radford commented that a recent Together for Tomorrow Celebration Ambassadors event had been held online and had been a very successful virtual event, where children had joined alongside their parents. Fiona Radford offered SACRE the support of her team at the Council to assist in arranging the event. It was also suggested that the Chair consider attending the next Primary & Secondary Heads meetings to raise the profile of SACRE and promote the event.

Members discussed the possibility of arranging a competition for secondary school students to design a logo for Rotherham SACRE and for the RE Awards event, with prizes to be awarded upon judging by SACRE at December's meeting. It was decided that the SACRE logo competition would be open to all schools across the borough, and the RE Awards logo competition would be open to Graphics pupils at Liza Melvin & Emily Nicholls' school, Oakwood High School.

Tricia Williams made a request that pupils were asked to consider making any logo disability friendly, paying particular attention to font and colour combinations. Tricia Williams offered to provide guidance with regard to colour discrimination issues.

It was agreed that a budget line of approximately £1,000 should be inserted into the 2026-27 budget for "RE Awards Planning", with the event to take place in June 2027, in the 2027-28 financial year. This would enable the spend for the event to be spread across two financial years.

The title of the Awards was queried – was it "RE Awards" or "REwards"? Members agreed that it should be "REwards".

11. TOGETHER FOR TOMORROW PROJECT UPDATE

The Chair asked Fiona Radford to provide Members with an update on the Together for Tomorrow project and the following points were highlighted:

- As discussed at Agenda Item 7, speakers for the next "Ask me Anything" panel would be recruited in the Autumn term.
- "Picture This", the Rotherham Trail, was due to be launched the following week at Skills Street and it was reported that 35 schools were due to attend that exhibition.
- The virtual Ambassador Celebration event had successfully taken place earlier that week.
- New resources to support the Personal, Social, Health and

Economic (PHSE) curriculum were being designed regionally, with Rotherham, Sheffield, Barnsley & Doncaster.

- The “Together for Tomorrow” song was being performed by local schools, but work was planned to extend the reach of this in the next academic year.
- Online safety assemblies – around 2,500 children had attended during a recent online assembly week.
- Schools Linking Project via Development Education Centre South Yorkshire (DECSY) – this had worked well to pair up 8 Rotherham schools from different demographics.

There was further discussion around how to better publicise these events amongst secondary schools and Group C Members reiterated the offer to collate contact details for RE leads across the borough.

12. UPDATE ON APPOINTMENT OF AN RE ADVISOR TO ROTHERHAM SACRE

The Chair introduced this item and explained that work had been done to amend the job specification and description for the RE Advisor, following comments received from Members at the last meeting. More detail on the person specification and required qualifications and skills had been included.

Tricia Williams commented that she felt it would not be appropriate for the RE Advisor to “lead” on the review and implementation of Agreed Syllabus as this was a function of SACRE and its Members and not the RE Advisor. There was discussion around the need to make this a clear responsibility under the RE Advisor’s job description, to avoid the situation that had come about this year, where these responsibilities had de facto fallen to the Chair.

Members were in agreement that the RE Advisor, as a qualified teacher, would be the most appropriate person to take responsibility for the review of the Agreed Syllabus but that it should be made clearer that oversight should come from SACRE itself. It was agreed that the word “lead” be replaced with “organise” in the job description.

There was further discussion around the number of days assigned to the role - the equivalent of 5 days. Members felt that this was an unrealistic amount of time for the amount of work required for the role. However, it was also acknowledged that asking for any more than 5 days would make it difficult for any school leader to release a member of staff to undertake the role. On balance, it was agreed that 5 days remained the most appropriate amount of time to state within the job description.

The Service Director suggested that Members consider allocating a

further line in the budget to cover the additional expenses associated with the launch of the Approved Syllabus to schools. This was an expense that only occurred every five years. It was agreed that this would be discussed further under the Budget agenda item.

Resolved:-

- 1) That SACRE Members approved the revised RE Advisor job specification, subject to removal of the word “lead” with “organise”, as above; and
- 2) That the Service Director be authorised to progress to advertisement of the role via the Council’s HR processes.

13. ANNUAL BUDGET REPORT

This item was to receive the Annual Budget Report for 2025-26 and an overview of the proposed SACRE budget for 2026-27

Annual Budget Report for 2025-26

The Service Director explained to SACRE Members that the final outturn for the SACRE Budget for 2025-26, included within the Agenda Pack at page 15, demonstrated a closing unspent/uncommitted balance of £1,830.00. There was no carry-forward of this amount to the next financial year.

This represented full and final settlement of the SACRE budget for 2025-26. Members commented that it would be important to make future decisions on spend at an earlier point in the year to avoid losing unallocated budget.

Proposed SACRE Budget for 2026-27

The proposed spend for SACRE in 2026-27, as set out in the report, demonstrated a current unspent/uncommitted balance amount of £4,080.00. Work had been done within the meeting to allocate some of this amount to a number of different budget lines, which the Service Director summarised as follows;

- £1,750.00 for the RE Advisor (equivalent of 5 days’ of time);
- £500.00 for the launch of the Approved Syllabus;
- £1,000.00 for the planning of the RE Awards;
- £50.00 for the logo competition;
- TBC for the purchasing of CPD resources; and
- TBC Communications.

This would leave an amount of £780.00 uncommitted. A final decision on the allocation of these funds would be made at a later date.

Given that the unallocated amount would not be sufficient to buy in the previously suggested RE Today training on Islam, Members discussed exploring local links to Imams with regard to potential delivery of training or awareness events, with a view to enhancing Community Cohesion. This was felt to be of significant importance in the current climate.

The Service Director suggested that SACRE explore other options for external training on Islam, including the possibility of wider training to all local RE Leads. There was clear cross-over with the community cohesion work carried out by the Together for Tomorrow project and it was agreed that SACRE's role should be considered further and any opportunities for combining professional development needs with this project be explored. The Chair committed to add the requirement for further training on Islam to the SACRE Development Plan.

Resolved:-

- 1) That the final outturn report for the SACRE Budget for 2025-26 be approved and accepted;
- 2) That the proposed budget spend table for 2026-27 be amended to include the following allocations:
 - £1,750.00 for the RE Advisor (equivalent of 5 days' of time);
 - £500.00 for the launch of the Approved Syllabus;
 - £1,000.00 for the planning of the RE Awards;
 - £50.00 for the logo competition;
 - TBC for the purchasing of CPD resources; and
 - TBC Communications; and
- 3) That the revised proposed budget for 2026-27 be brought back to the next SACRE meeting for consideration and/or approval in September 2026.

14. SACRE ANNUAL REPORT 2025-26

The Chair confirmed to Members that a start had been made to the draft Annual Report for the 2025-26 Academic Year and that further work would be carried out over the summer break.

The Annual Report for 2024-25 had been submitted to the Department of Education and had been published on the NASACRE website.

15. APPROVED SYLLABUS CONFERENCE UPDATE

The Chair provided a verbal update on the current status of the Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC) following the most recent meeting held on 2 June 2026.

The Chair confirmed that the revised Syllabus was close to the final edit

stage. Tricia Williams had provided some information to insert into an amended table of census data. The Chair had been in contact with secondary school staff to request any further amendments to the sections relating to teaching in KS3, 4 & 5 and had received some minor amendments from Vanessa Gregory.

Tricia Williams and Tony Griffin confirmed that they would be available to carry out a full proof-read of the Syllabus document. The revised Syllabus would be brought back to SACRE Members for final approval in the September meeting.

16. URGENT BUSINESS

There were no urgent items of business to consider.