

## MID BEDFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE)** held at Watling House, Dunstable on Tuesday, 14 June 2016

### PRESENT

Cllr Mrs D B Gurney  
Jane Chipperton

Apologies for Absence: Cllrs Mrs A Barker  
Lucy Chapman  
Rev. Anne Crawford  
Kathleen Eldridge  
C C Gomm  
Mary O'Sullivan

Substitutes: Cllrs T Swain  
M A G Versallion  
N Warren

Officers in Attendance: Mel Peaston – Committee Services Manager  
Paul Harpin – School Intervention officer

#### L/04/54 **Election of Chairman**

Jane Chipperton was duly elected as Chairman for the remainder of the municipal year.

Thanks were extended to Mrs Chipperton on behalf of all the members of the SACRE for her support and commitment to the SACRE which she had shown in her previous years of chairmanship.

#### L/04/55 **Appointment of Vice Chairman**

Cllr Doreen Gurney was duly appointed as Chairman of the SACRE for the ensuing municipal year.

#### L/04/56 **Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from:  
Mary O'Sullivan  
Rev Anne Crawford  
Lucy Chapman  
Kathleen Eldridge  
Naresh Roula

Cllr Mrs Angela Barker – Cllr Nigel Warren was present as her substitute  
Cllr Charles Gomm – Cllr Mark Versallion was present as his substitute..

In view of no representative being present from Group C (Schools) the meeting was inquorate.

With the agreement of the Chairman and those members present, the meeting proceeded on an informal basis and ratification would be sought for any action at the next meeting (November 2016).

L/04/57 **Minutes of the Last Meeting**

**AGREED**

**that the minutes of the meeting held on 2 February 2016 be approved as a correct record.**

L/04/58 **SACRE membership update**

It was noted that Mohsin Malik (Group A, Muslim) and Ven Akurala Samitha (Group A, Buddhist) should be removed from the membership of the SACRE as they no longer attended.

A request was made that all members of the SACRE seek out any appropriate contacts they may have to increase membership on the SACRE of faith representatives (Group A).

L/04/59 **Review of the Agreed Syllabus**

It was noted that five years had elapsed since the last review of the Agreed Syllabus in 2012 and the SACRE should start to prepare for the next review, to meet its statutory duty.

In view of there being no national Agreed Syllabus, Mr Harpin had carried out some research and had established that:

- Hertfordshire County Council had progressed a slimmed-down Agreed Syllabus, with the emphasis on meeting legislation and a focus on assessment
- the current RE syllabus in Bedfordshire looked rather out of date with its 8-level scale.

Mr Harpin suggested that:

- the three neighbouring local authorities of Bedford Borough, Central Bedfordshire and Luton Borough could work together to review options
- those options could include:

- producing a slim legal document with assessment units kept separately, replicating Hertfordshire County Council's approach; or
- commissioning RE Today to draft a slim legal document and rework the assessment units.

It was noted that there would be some associated costs, estimated as follows:

- if the three local authorities worked together, making use of the old assessment units, the cost in total could be approximately £5,500
- if RE Today drafted the slim document and re-worked the assessment units, each authority would be required to contribute in the order of £6,000 from CBC and £5,000 from each of the other two authorities making a total of £16,000.

Questions arose as to whether there was any budget available for this. Mr Harpin indicated that he would seek advice as to CBC's budget availability.

The intention was noted to provide one copy of the arising document to each school, and also to make it available on-line for ease of reference.

**AGREED:**

- 1. to establish whether Bedford Borough and Luton Borough Councils would be interested in working together on this initiative, and**
- 2. to receive a report on this matter from Mr Harpin at the next meeting.**

**L/04/60 New Draft Development Plan**

The draft Development Plan attached to the agenda was noted.

The proposals were welcomed as a means of providing that the SACRE meetings would be worthwhile.

An inquiry was made as to whether SACRE-related documents could be published on the Central Bedfordshire Council website. The Clerk undertook to provide a contact so that this could be checked.

**AGREED to adopt the Development Plan for the ensuing year.**

**L/04/61 Spiritual, Moral, social and Cultural Comments from Ofsted reports**

**AGREED to note the gradings and comments made by Ofsted inspectors about five Central Bedfordshire schools between January-March 2016.**

**L/04/62 Feedback form NASACRE**

The Chairman reported back on the NASACRE AGM and made the following points

- The Right Hon Elizabeth Butler-Sloss spoke on a publication “Living with Difference” which had been produced by the Wolf Institute. This was one of 2 major reports recently published about faith, ethics and fundamental values.
- The Chairman would make available a link to this document.
- Professor Alan Dinham spoke in the afternoon about the purposes of RE, and mentioned religious literacy, fuzzy secularity and the right of parents to withdraw their children from RE lessons.

L/04/63 **National Updates**

The Chairman reported back on the following:

**(i) RE Council of England and Wales**

A 2-year commission on religious education would undertake a review looking into preparing young people for life in modern Britain.

**(ii) Centre Parcs Meeting**

Whilst Hertfordshire County Council was forming groups of teachers to meet together about RE, it was proving difficult to attract teachers to attend meetings in Bedfordshire.

L/04/64 **Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting would be held on 8 November 2016.

(Note: The meeting commenced at Time Not Specified and concluded at Time Not Specified.)

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