

SHADOW EXECUTIVE
17 MARCH 2009

SUBJECT	ESTABLISHMENT OF A STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE) FOR CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE: 1. To advise the Shadow Authority of its statutory duty to set up a SACRE. 2. To ask the Shadow Executive to agree to the establishment of a Central Bedfordshire SACRE.
REPORT OF	Director of Children, Families and Learning
<i>Contact Officer: Patrick Shevlin (01234 836004)</i>	

IMPLICATIONS

SUSTAINABILITY	The Local Authority (LA) provides support through funding, personnel such as clerking service and officer time to advise the SACRE.
FINANCIAL	Funding on annual basis to cover the SACRE development plan (between £5000 to £7000) Costs of review of Agreed Syllabus every 5 years (£10,000 - £12000)
LEGAL	Education Reform Act 1988 sets out legal requirement for each LA to have a SACRE.
PERSONNEL/ EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES	LA appointed clerk and officer to be adviser. Representation on groups that fairly mirror the local community.
COMMUNITY DEV/SAFETY	Links to policies on community cohesion
TRADES UNION	Group C is made up of teachers and headteachers who usually represent the teacher associations. It is the LA who decides which associations will be invited to be represented.
HUMAN RIGHTS	No
KEY ISSUE	Yes
BUDGET/POLICY FRAMEWORK	No

OTHER DOCUMENTS RELEVANT TO REPORT
1. See background papers

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. That the Central Bedfordshire Council establishes a SACRE in accordance to the requirements of the 1988 Education Reform Act and the 1996 Education Act.
2. That the Shadow Executive approves, in principle, the draft constitution for a Central Bedfordshire SACRE as set out in paragraphs 13 – 19 of this report.
3. That the Interim Chief Executive, in consultation with the Portfolio holder for Children, Families and Learning be authorised:-
 - (i) to amend the constitution and composition of the SACRE, as appropriate following initial consideration by the elected members appointed to serve upon the SACRE; and
 - (ii) to undertake the recruitment process and make appointments to the SACRE in respect of the representatives of the faith groups and teachers' associations.
4. That five elected members (4 Conservative and 1 Minority) be appointed to represent the Council upon the Central Bedfordshire SACRE.

Reason for Recommendation: To comply with the legal requirements and ensure that Council Members are able to fulfil their statutory duties

Background

1. The Education Reform Act of 1988 and the Education Act 1996 require all Local Authorities to set up a SACRE. The law states that Religious Education (RE) must be taught in all schools and a SACRE's role is to advise the LA on what needs to be done to improve RE and collective worship in schools.
2. A SACRE should represent a balance of interests within the local community. So it should have elected councillors, representatives of faith communities, and members of the education community, including teachers and headteachers.
3. SACRE consists of four groups, each group having one vote, where required. The constitution of each SACRE will decide the specific numbers of members in each group

4. Local Authorities have a responsibility to ensure that:-
 - There is a SACRE
 - All four groups are represented on it.
 - There is an agreed syllabus, reviewed every five years.
 - Support is in place to enable SACRE to fulfil its duties, which includes providing appropriate clerking and specialist advice.
 - It takes note of and responds to advice from SACRE.
5. The SACRE will advise the Executive on matters relating to RE and on collective worship in schools.
6. The SACRE can:-
 - (a) require the Local Authority to review its agreed syllabus for Religious Education.
 - (b) consider and determine applications from a headteacher in relation to the requirement of Christian collective worship to apply at their school.
7. The SACRE is required Publish an annual report of its work.

SACRE's duties

8. SACRE'S broad role is to support good RE and collective worship in schools by:-
 - giving advice on ways of teaching the agreed syllabus, including the use of teaching materials.
 - monitoring schools' provision for RE and collective worship as well as the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC) of pupils.
 - advising the LA on the provision of training for teachers in RE.
 - considering complaints about the provision and delivery of religious education and collective worship referred to it by the LA.
9. SACRE's duties are to review every five years the RE Locally Agreed Syllabus, consider applications from a headteacher and governing body that their school be released from the requirement for collective worship to be 'wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character' (known as a determination). It must also publish an annual report of its work.
10. Locally Agreed Syllabus sets out what should be taught to pupils in all key stages and the standards expected of them at the end of each key stage. It is produced by an agreed syllabus conference (ASC).

11. The ASC is a separate legal entity from a SACRE and the local authority has a duty to convene the ASC and to provide funds and support for its work. The ASC has the same structure as the SACRE. Membership of the ASC is not restricted to SACRE members.

12. The current Agreed Syllabus dates from 2006. An initial task for the SACRE will be to decide whether to adopt the existing syllabus. Assuming this is agreed in 2010 there will need to be an Agreed Syllabus Conference leading to the new Agreed Syllabus in 2011. This work is quite extensive and early discussions have taken place about working with neighbouring authorities to share this task.

SACRE Constitution

13. The Constitution determines the numbers of Council Members represented in each voting group.

14. The suggested composition for the Central Bedfordshire SACRE is:-

Group A Christian and other religious denominations

Roman Catholic Church	2
Free Church	3
Muslim	1
Hindu	1
Sikh	1
Jewish	1
Buddhist	1
Sub total	10

Group B Church of England	3
Sub total	3

Group C Teachers' Associations

Head teacher	1
Secondary RE Specialist	1
Middle School representative	1
Lower School representative	1
Special School representative	1
Nursery School representative	1
Sub total	6

Group D The Authority

Elected Members	5
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LA Adviser (non voting)

Total 24

15. The elected members appointed to the SACRE should have an interest in collective worship and Religious Education.
16. SACRE Council meets every term.
17. Working groups made up of SACRE members can meet between full meetings.
18. The LA can elect the Chair or allow the SACRE to elect from amongst its members.
19. The LA provides a clerk who attends and minutes each meeting and provides a point of contact for SACRE matters within the LA.
20. The Shadow Executive is requested to approve the above constitution of SACRE in principle at this stage. It is proposed that the 5 elected members appointed to serve upon the SACRE should meet to review the proposed composition of the body and, in particular, to ensure that the proposed representation of the faiths is appropriate for Central Bedfordshire and has due regard to the provisions of the National Guidance in respect of SACREs. It is therefore requested that the Interim Chief Executive, in consultation with the Portfolio holder for Children, Families and Learning, be authorised to make any amendments which may be required to the constitution/ composition of SACRE following those further deliberations.
21. The Shadow Executive is also requested to authorise the Interim Chief Executive, in consultation with the Portfolio holder for Children, Families and Learning, to undertake the necessary process to select and appoint representatives of the faiths and teachers' associations to serve upon SACRE.

Background Papers: Education Reform Act 1988
 Education Act 1996, Part V, Chapter 111, Schedule 31
 School Standards and Framework Act 1998, Chapter V1 and Schedules 19 and 20
 An Evaluation of the Work of SACREs, 2004
 SACRE Self Evaluation
 A Handbook for SACRE members, NASACRE

Location of Papers: Ofsted website – www.ofsted.gov.uk
 NASACRE – info@nasacre.org.uk

File Reference: