

Minutes

HILLINGDON STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

29 March 2022



HILLINGDON
LONDON

Meeting held at Committee Room 6 - Civic Centre,
High Street, Uxbridge

	<p>Committee Members Present: Carole Jones (Chair) Councillor John Hensley Keith Lunn Jasvir Singh Rayat Councillor Jagjit Singh Alice Vahdat</p> <p>Also Present: Elenor Paul (Advisor to Hillingdon SACRE) Rani Dady (Education Manager – Education Improvement and Partnerships) Steve Clarke (Democratic Services Officer)</p>
17.	<p>MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (<i>Agenda Item 1</i>)</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 04 November 2021 be agreed as a correct record.</p>
18.	<p>ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR (<i>Agenda Item 2</i>)</p> <p>The Committee were informed that the previous Vice-Chair, Father Desmond Banister, had stepped down from his position on HSACRE and a new Vice-Chair should be appointed for the remainder of the municipal year. It was highlighted that the current meeting was the final meeting of the municipal year 2021/22 and as the Chair was present, this did not necessitate the appointment of a Vice-Chair. The Committee agreed to defer this item to the following meeting which would see the appointment of both a new Chair and Vice-Chair for the 2022/23 municipal year.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the election of the HSACRE Vice-Chair be deferred to the following meeting.</p>
19.	<p>2020/21 DRAFT SACRE ANNUAL REPORT (<i>Agenda Item 3</i>)</p> <p>Consideration was given to the draft HSACRE annual report for the academic year 2020/21. It was highlighted that each HSACRE must submit a copy of its annual report to the Department for Education and the National Association of Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education (NASACRE). The Committee noted that the activities of HSACRE during the 2020/21 academic year were hindered by the Covid-19 Pandemic with only one meeting taking place in June 2021; which was effectively a re-introductory meeting after an extended period of inactivity. It was also noted that, during the pandemic, HSACRE still offered advice to schools where appropriate.</p>

The Chair asked the Committee if there were any changes they would like to make regarding the 2020/21 draft report, to which there were none. Commenting on the HSACRE budget, the Committee were informed that unfortunately any unspent funds from each year's budget were not rolled over into the following year's budget. In terms of utilising the available budget, it was highlighted that a formal plan on how HSACRE would like to spend its budget would need to be produced by the Chair and Advisor and then sent to the Education Team before the funds could be allocated.

The Committee approved the report for submission to the Department for Education and NASACRE.

RESOLVED: That the Committee endorsed the HSACRE Annual Report for 2018/19 for submission to the Secretary of State for Education.

20. REVIEW OF HSACRE REPRESENTATIVE GROUPS (*Agenda Item 4*)

Officers introduced this item noting that the review on HSACRE representative groups should be based in the data of the 2021 census; the results of which were yet to be released. The Office for National Statistics had stated that the first tranche of data, including rounded population and household estimates, would be published at the end of June 2022; more importantly, the second tranche of data, including ethnic group, national identity, language, and religion, would be published in Autumn/Winter 2022. It was therefore agreed that the review of HSACRE representative groups should be deferred until HSACRE could assess the appropriate results of the 2021 census pertaining to the religious make up of Hillingdon.

RESOLVED: That this item be deferred until the 2021 census data on religion in the London Borough of Hillingdon is released.

21. RE LEADERS/TEACHERS SURVEY (*Agenda Item 5*)

The Committee were presented with a draft set of questions for a prospective RE Leaders/Teachers survey aimed at gauging the confidence levels of those administering RE in the Borough. It was clarified that the survey could be distributed through the weekly notice to schools and teachers sent from the Education Team.

The Committee sought to include a preamble ahead of the questionnaire which would explain the role of HSACRE and give context as to the purpose of the survey. Considering the draft questions, the Committee also sought to include a question establishing the hours spent teaching RE; following discussions it was agreed that the question should pertain to the amount of time spent teaching RE per term rather than on a weekly basis. Clarification was also sought on the question pertaining to RE lesson planning and which resources were used by teachers within lessons rather than just lesson preparation.

Members also added a further question to the survey establishing whether an individual had a specific RE teaching qualification.

Discussing what may be the potential outcomes of the survey, the Committee were minded to establish an annual training conference for those affiliated with teaching RE in the Borough. It was understood that HSACRE would wait to see the results of the teacher survey before committing to this activity but Members were encouraged by the prospect and put forward ideas such as hosting the training at the Civic Centre in Uxbridge.

The Committee were encouraged by the survey questions and commented that it would be a good basis for HSACRE's Continuing Professional Development activities.

RESOLVED: That the draft Hillingdon Religious Education Leader/Teacher Survey questions be approved subject to the amendments discussed.

22. **RAMADAN 2022 - HSACRE GUIDANCE** (*Agenda Item 6*)

Officers introduced the item noting that the draft Ramadan guidance for 2022 was an updated version of the guidance supplied by the HSACRE Islamic representative for the previous year's Ramadan. The Committee were supportive of the document and endorsed it to be used as advice for schools in preparing for Ramadan celebrations.

Members discussed the possibility of creating a centralised live document which offered guidance on the religious festivities of all representative groups. Although the idea was generally supported, some issues were raised with regard to the feasibility of offering guidance on the differing views within denominations of religions as to the appropriate way to celebrate certain religious festivities, an example given was regarding some denominations allow children to fast where other denominations do not. Having this kind of guidance centralised and in a live document was deemed difficult to manage in terms of differing sentiments within each religious group.

With regard to withdrawal from school, the Committee deemed it important to grant permission for withdrawal where appropriate.

RESOLVED: That the draft Ramadan Guidance for 2022 be agreed.

23. **AOB** (*Agenda Item 7*)

It was highlighted that an RE teacher in the Borough had enquired as to whether they could use the agreed syllabus of a neighbouring Borough in guiding their own RE teaching. They had been advised against using the neighbouring Borough's syllabus and steered towards the Hillingdon agreed syllabus.

The Committee also noted that Vaisakhi would be celebrated by the Borough's Gurdwaras on 14 April and the HSACRE Members were welcome to attend.

The Sikh representative raised concerns over a publicly available study book pertaining to Sikhism, it was highlighted that the book appeared to contain offensive terms giving a negative impression of the Sikh community and concerns were raised that it was being used as a study guide for students taking their RE GCSE. It was agreed that officers would raise the concerns with NASACRE as a matter of urgency.

24. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING** (*Agenda Item 8*)

It was noted that the next meetings of HSACRE were due to take place at 6pm on Wednesday 15 June and Thursday 03 November 2022.

The meeting, which commenced at 6.15 pm, closed at 6.57 pm.

These are the minutes of the above meeting. For more information on any of the

resolutions please contact Steve Clarke - Email: sclarke2@hillingdon.gov.uk on Please enter via main reception and visit the security desk to sign-in and collect a visitors pass. You will then be directed to the Committee Room. Circulation of these minutes is to Councillors, Officers, the Press and Members of the Public.