

Minutes

HILLINGDON STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

21 February 2017

Meeting held at Committee Room 4 - Civic Centre,
High Street, Uxbridge UB8 1UW



	<p>Committee Members Present: Carole Jones (Chairman), Councillor June Nelson, Councillor Susan O'Brien, Gail Butler, Angela Lount, Amir Ahmed (Syed Amir Ahmed), Naseem Bint Amir, Jasvir Singh Rayat and Melanie Dring MA BA(Hons) PGCE</p> <p>Also Present: Duncan Struthers (Advisor to HSACRE) & Eleanor Paul</p> <p>LBH Officers Present: Venetia Rogers (Education Policy Manager) and Luke Taylor (Democratic Services Officer)</p>
42.	<p>MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS (<i>Agenda Item 1</i>)</p> <p>That the minutes of the meetings held on 7 June 2016 and 10 November 2016 were agreed.</p>
43.	<p>CONSTITUTION (<i>Agenda Item 2</i>)</p> <p>The Advisor to HSACRE introduced the item confirming that at the previous NASACRE meeting changes were proposed to the constitution, however, the meeting was not quorate and it was decided to contact local authorities and SACRES to ask them to vote for or against the proposed changes.</p> <p>The Committee confirmed there were no objections to the new constitution, but commented that it would be useful for the constitution to feature a paragraph which set out NASACRE's ability to lobby the government on any issues that arose. This change would then ensure that a legal challenge could not prevent NASACRE from lobbying Parliament on relevant issues.</p> <p>Members also commented that paragraph 3.5 was not clear in its wording, which stated "a majority of half plus one of the Council shall be necessary for any amendment to the Constitution". The Committee did not believe that this clearly distinguished between "one half plus one of the entirety of the Council" or "one half plus one of those Council members present at a NASACRE meeting".</p> <p>It was confirmed that the clerk to HSACRE would respond electronically to NASACRE to inform them of HSACRE's decision to agree to the new NASACRE constitution, but would also include the comments made by the Committee with regards to paragraph 3.5 and lobbying.</p> <p>– RESOLVED: That the new NASACRE constitution was agreed, and that the</p>

response be sent to NASACRE alongside comments made by HSACRE on the inclusion of lobbying and the wording paragraph 3.5 in the new constitution.

44. **RAMADAN GUIDANCE** (*Agenda Item 3*)

The Muslim representatives to HSACRE confirmed that local Muslim groups have not yet met to see what changes to the Ramadan Guidance from last year are necessary, but they will be meeting soon to discuss this. It was confirmed that Ramadan will take begin around 25 May 2017 and will run until roughly 23 June 2017, subject to the siting of the moon.

The Committee were informed that Muslim groups hope to finalise the Ramadan Guidance well before Ramadan begins so that schools have plenty of time to inform parents of the guidance and allow parents to have input.

The Muslim representatives confirmed that the guidance will confirm that there is no excuse for a fasting child to forgo a fast, and parents should inform schools beforehand as to their wish for children to fast and attend Eid. It was suggested by the Muslim representatives that children could pray in the morning of Eid, before attending school in their Eid dress, and this may invoke debate and help understanding of the importance of the day.

Members were informed by the Muslim representatives that the Muslim community greatly appreciate schools and communities for helping them come together for Ramadan, and welcome further engagement or any questions that may arise from other faith groups and communities.

It was confirmed that Amir Ahmed, the Chairman and the advisor to HSACRE would further discuss the Ramadan Guidance in early March, before taking the guidance forward, and the Committee confirmed they were happy for this to take place.

- **RESOLVED: That it was agreed to delegate authority to the Chairman, the advisor to HSACRE, and the Muslim representatives to discuss the Ramadan Guidance and send the information out to schools once it was confirmed.**

45. **BUDGET UPDATE** (*Agenda Item 4*)

The Chairman confirmed that budget funds have now been transferred from Holy Trinity School to Yeading School as required.

It was proposed that the budget be used for CPD, with a total cost of around £4,200, and HSACRE would be looking to find a small amount of additional funding which would cover the cost of CPD comfortably.

The Committee confirmed that, if successful, it would continue to run the CPD in future years with the hope that it was self-funded. However, the first year should remain free as schools shouldn't be expected to cover the cost.

Members also confirmed that HSACRE would be looking for a cost-effective way to print the Agreed Syllabus.

The Committee confirmed that they would like the Council to help as much as possible

with any additional costs required, as very little of the budget had been spent in previous years.

- **RESOLVED: That the budget update be noted.**

46. **CPD UPDATE** (*Agenda Item 5*)

The Chairman welcomed Ms Eleanor Paul, who was to help deliver the contents of the Hillingdon Agreed Syllabus within the Borough, to the meeting.

Ms Paul proposed to promote and support SACRE in regards to implementing the agreed syllabus, and informed the Committee that the aim was to create a Primary Co-ordinators Cluster for the leaders of Religious Education within a number of schools. The Group would meet to network, share best practice and learn new teaching styles and methods to ensure teachers of RE are confident when teaching the subject.

The aim is for the Co-ordinators cluster to meet six times throughout the year, with the first meeting scheduled in June 2017.

The advisor to HSACRE confirmed that he approached NATRE to look for support for Ms Paul in delivering the project. The Committee were informed that Stephen Pett will be helping in this regard, and he has excellent experience to do so as a former Chairman of SACRE who now delivers services for teachers.

Members confirmed their support for the initiative and offered places of worship as potential locations for the meetings. It was confirmed that HSACRE would be very happy to use places of worship for this purpose, and the first meeting would start at the beginning of the next school term, with the second meeting taking place following the summer holiday in the Autumn Term.

- **RESOLVED: That the CPD Update be noted.**

47. **THE CASEY REVIEW** (*Agenda Item 6*)

The advisor to HSACRE introduced the report, confirming that the Casey Review was a very large document, and as such NASACRE had reduced the size of the report into a briefing which was sent out to members. The advisor to HSACRE confirmed that the portrayal of religion within the Casey Review was not similar to what he had experienced in the London Borough of Hillingdon.

Members expressed their concern that RE was mentioned just once in the review, and commented that it was important to ensure RE remained part of the syllabus and an important part of children's understanding.

The HSACRE Advisor confirmed that the Government response to the review was due in spring 2017, and then it may be possible to formulate a reply from HSACRE. It was suggested that Hillingdon Strong and Active may also be in a position to reply and shape the "British Values" that were referred to in the Casey Review. Members were concerned that the review would allow schools to address secular education with a religious or spiritual angle, and involve these topics in PSHE lessons instead of having separate RE lessons. It was agreed that RE remains a very important part of communities, and the Chairman agreed that this message would be taken to Hillingdon Strong and Active.

The Committee also commented that in some cases, schools want to be more engaged in RE matters, but responses required on relevant issues often are required too quickly to allow a reply; it was confirmed that, if possible, larger response times were allowed for schools to ensure higher rates of reply.

- **RESOLVED: That the Casey Review was noted.**

The meeting, which commenced at 6.04 pm, closed at 7.39 pm.

These are the minutes of the above meeting. For more information on any of the resolutions please contact Luke Taylor on 01895 250693. Circulation of these minutes is to Councillors, Officers, the Press and Members of the Public.