

Minutes

HILLINGDON STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

19 July 2017

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



	<p>Committee Members Present: Alison Rollin, Melanie Dring MA BA(Hons) PGCE, Councillor Susan O'Brien, Councillor Jagjit Singh, Yasmin Afnan, Gail Butler, Amir Ahmed (Syed Amir Ahmed) and Naseem Bint Amir</p> <p>Also Present: Duncan Struthers (Advisor to HSACRE) and Elenor Paul</p> <p>LBH Officers Present: Venetia Rogers and Luke Taylor (Democratic Services Officer)</p>
	<p>PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS MEETING WAS NOT QUORATE AND THEREFORE NO FORMAL DECISIONS WERE MADE</p>
	<p>MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEE</p> <p>It was confirmed to the HSACRE that the meeting did not have the attendance to make quorum, and therefore no formal decision could be made. It was agreed that the meeting continue and updates be provided on each item, where possible.</p>
50.	<p>MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (<i>Agenda Item 1</i>)</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting will be taken to the next meeting.</p>
51.	<p>CPD UPDATE (<i>Agenda Item 2</i>)</p> <p>Ms Elenor Paul, who was delivering the contents of the Hillingdon Agreed Syllabus within the Borough, was in attendance at the meeting to discuss its current progress.</p> <p>Ms Paul confirmed that the first CPD training session took place on 12 June 2017, and teachers from 21 schools throughout Hillingdon attended, and the meeting focused on the history of RE and the legality of teaching the subject.</p> <p>The feedback from the session was positive, with the attendees appreciative of the support, as many felt sidelined when teaching RE. Concerns among teachers included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Poor initial teacher training in terms of teaching the subject;• No teachers had a qualification in religious education or related subjects;• It was hard to get a focus on one subject when primary teachers teach nine or ten.• Not knowing where to get information on the subject from, with some using the

internet for information. Others noted that they used plans or previous teachers' experience; and

- RE was only taught by Planning, Preparation and Assessment (PPA) cover.

It was noted that while those in attendance stated that no teachers had withdrawn themselves from the subject, this could be countered by the fact in some schools the subject was only taught by PPA cover. Furthermore, there were a couple of cases where pupils had been withdrawn from the lessons. However, on the whole it was accepted that there were not many prominent issues. The main concern of those in attendance was that RE can be difficult to teach as it is not valued or held in the same regard as other subjects, and thus is seen as less important.

With regards to the work of SACRE, when questioned on the organisation, the answers ranged from "knowing nothing at all" about SACRE's work to being grateful for its "support and guidance". 90% of teachers were not aware of the revised syllabus, although the other 10% stated that they were consulted over the addition of humanism to the syllabus. The attendees noted that it would be helpful to have the new syllabus agreed sooner rather than later.

Ms Paul confirmed that there will be five more CPD training sessions, with the next meeting taking place on 26 September. The following session is on 13 November and will consider interfaith relations.

Committee members asked whether it would benefit to have HSACRE members in attendance, and it was agreed that this may be helpful and they were welcome to attend.

The next steps were considered, and how to make the work of HSACRE more public. The advisor to HSACRE confirmed that there has been more involvement with schools in the last year than before, with a number of emails contacting them, particularly with regards to the new syllabus.

HSACRE congratulated Ms Paul on her work and achieving a good turnout for the meeting.

52. **CONSULTATION ON RE** (*Agenda Item 3*)

The advisor to HSACRE confirmed that the Commission on Religious Education was to identify what changes are needed to promote high quality RE and what changes were needed to ensure this high quality remains.

The advisor to HSACRE noted that there may be a push for more of a nationally agreed syllabus, and that a local syllabus seemed to be more beneficial to the Borough, which had more diversity and different faiths than many other places in the country.

The Committee then considered a number of questions provided by the Commission of Religious Education, and suggested their responses:

What should be included in the scope and content of RE?

The content could be focused on the common themes and spiritual values that connect religions, such as worship, respect, charity and purpose, instead of looking at the differences between them. It was also noted that stories used to put across these

values would be a good way to teach children about a religion.

What changes (if any) should there be to the current legal framework for RE?

RE should be made part of the curriculum, as this is currently not the case, but should retain the use of local SACREs within that. The removal of the right to withdraw for pupils and teachers alike would also be beneficial, and instead of PSHE encompassing RE, it should be the other way round.

Should there be a common baseline entitlement for RE which applies to all types of school?

There should be a baseline entitlement that all schools should follow. Geographically schools in Hillingdon would have contrasts with other areas in the country, so there should be a baseline of expectations for teaching, as it cannot be completely different for each area.

How should the development of RE standards, curricula, or syllabuses be best organised?

Encouraging teachers to attend a CPD session to find out what SACRE is about, and a link to teaching and SACREs would be helpful. It was suggested that a list of local worship places, including contact details, could be added as an appendix to the syllabus to ensure people can be put in touch with the correct people should they wish. Faith representatives could also attend schools and be available for teachers if they would like guidance, and RE teachers could be encouraged to attend SACRE meetings too.

Are there changes to primary and secondary teacher education that could improve the delivery of high quality RE?

More training for both sets of teachers would be beneficial, along with a list of contact information for those who wished to find out more, such as community leaders and places of worship. Basic documentation provided by each religion would also be helpful. Teachers should also be advised to use the internet with caution, and they should be directed to trustworthy sites with the correct information. Books donated from places of worship may also be beneficial.

What factors lead to high quality learning and teaching in RE, and what are the main obstacles to this?

Increased subject knowledge is a necessity, but time is an obstacle to this. Training opportunities are also vital, but funding is an issue.

Members noted that interfaith activities and involvement helps, and raising awareness of SACREs was vital. E-Learning is a vital tool for teachers, and RE must tap into this format to get their messages out to a wider audience.

53. **HAYES FESTIVAL** (*Agenda Item 4*)

The Committee was informed that, unlike previous years where there was only a Hillingdon Interfaith Network stall, this was the first occasion where the Hayes Islamic Centre also set out a stall. It was noted that there was a good turnout at the carnival. There were also two interfaith trees with messages from local schoolchildren in years

3-6 about what interfaith meant to them. It was suggested that if this happens in the future, it would be good to have blank leaves to be filled in at the carnival.

Members commented that the Interfaith Stall could still do with more staff in the future, as the stall is open from 11am to 5pm, and short stints of roughly two hours on the stands would be very helpful. The possibility of using a panel in the future to answer questions, alongside an exhibition and the stall, was also discussed for future events.

Following a question from members, the advisor to HSACRE advised that there was not a large turnout from residents north of the A40, and the vast majority of attendees were from the surrounding area.

54. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING** (*Agenda Item 5*)

The clerk confirmed that the next meeting is currently scheduled to take place on 1 November. However, this date is likely to change once discussions with the Chairman have taken place, so HSACRE members should be aware that they will receive further contact confirming the date of the meeting.

This will be confirmed in due course, along with new prospective dates for the meeting.

Following this, the next meeting is due to take place on 29 March 2018.

Both these meetings will begin at 18:00.

The meeting, which commenced at 6.15 pm, closed at 7.10 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.