

Minutes

HILLINGDON STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

30 November 2017

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



	<p>Committee Members Present: Carole Jones (Chairman), Robert Harwood, Angela Lount, Naseem Bint Amir, Jasvir Singh Rayat, Father Desmond Banister, Joan Bevington, Melanie Dring MA BA(Hons) PGCE, Alison Rollin, Councillor Shehryar Ahmad-Wallana, Councillor John Hensley, Councillor June Nelson, Councillor Susan O'Brien, and Councillor Jagjit Singh</p> <p>Also Present: Duncan Struthers (Advisor to HSACRE) & Elenor Paul</p> <p>LBH Officers Present: Venetia Rogers and Luke Taylor (Democratic Services Officer)</p>
3.	<p>MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (<i>Agenda Item 1</i>)</p> <p>It was noted that Cllr Jagjit Singh was in attendance for the meeting on 21 February 2017, but not stated as present on the minutes. Further to this change to the minutes, and a typographical error, it was;</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meetings on 21 February and 19 July 2017 were agreed as a correct record.</p>
4.	<p>ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN & VICE-CHAIRMAN (<i>Agenda Item 2</i>)</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. That Carole Jones be elected as Chairman of Hillingdon SACRE for the 2017/18 municipal year.2. That Father Desmond Banister be elected as Vice-Chairman of Hillingdon SACRE for the 2017/18 municipal year.
5.	<p>MEMBERSHIP UPDATE (<i>Agenda Item 3</i>)</p> <p>HSACRE discussed concerns surrounding membership of the Committee, and recent issues the Committee have faced being inquorate.</p> <p>Members agreed that the Clerk to HSACRE would contact each religious group with a representative on the Committee to confirm the name of their representative, along with information on voting and substitutes. It was noted that voting members of the Committee were able to send a named substitute to the meeting in their place.</p> <p>The breakdown of religious groups represented in Group A were discussed, as there were worries that some religions may not feel represented by a HSACRE member, and</p>

it was agreed that this would be a future issue for the Committee, with Members happy to defer the issue for a future meeting.

RESOLVED: That the clerk to HSACRE contacts membership groups regarding their HSACRE representative, asking that the name of each representative be confirmed.

6. **CPD UPDATE** (*Agenda Item 4*)

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.

Ms Paul confirmed that three of the scheduled six sessions had now taken place, with invites to all primary schools. In that time, the numbers of attendees fell slightly, with 19 attendees at the session in September, and 18 attendees in November.

The focus of the previous meetings, and future meetings were outlined as:

- 12 June 2017 - Leading RE in your school;
- 26 September 2017 - Creative teaching strategies;
- 12 November 2017 - Interfaith and how to utilise the links in Hillingdon;
- 29 January 2018 - Teaching and learning ideas and strategies;
- 12 March 2018 - Cross curricular teaching;
- 11 June 2018 - Agreed Syllabus launch, planning and creation of working party.

Feedback from the session included concerns from teachers that parent helpers were reluctant to attend school visits to places of worship, and the Committee commented that HSACRE members may be available and willing to help in instances where helpers were still required. The offer of help was noted, and it was confirmed that any helpers would have to be verified before they could engage in these activities.

Members noted that not all schools expected lesson plans for RE, and it depended on the school in question. The Committee commented that it should not be up to HSACRE to provide lesson plans for schools, and this should be the responsibility of those who deliver the RE lessons.

Ms Paul commented that those who attended the training were enthused with the session, and that the CPD sessions continue to benefit staff. Any further feedback from future sessions would be fed back to the Committee too.

The Committee were asked to continue to support the CPD sessions by giving them publicity, and any further ideas to improve attendance were welcome.

The Policy Manager for Education confirmed that details could be included in the fortnightly "Headteacher's Briefing" while was sent to all Headteachers in the Borough. The Church of England representatives confirmed that the London Diocesan Board for Schools sends out a newsletter, and it was happy to include details of the CPD sessions in this if requested.

HSACRE confirmed that they were very grateful for the work of Ms Paul, noting that the attendance levels were also high in comparison with other training sessions. The Committee thanked Ms Paul for her continued work, and noted that they would continue to support the CPD Training wherever they could.

RESOLVED: That the CPD Update report was noted.

7. **BUDGET UPDATE** (*Agenda Item 5*)

The Chairman for HSACRE provided a budget update, confirming that HSACRE had £4,839.79 remaining in the current budget. It was confirmed that as there had not been a further budget given to HSACRE for 2017/18, the Chairman has put in a budget request of £7,800 to the Council.

HSACRE confirmed that the budget request had their support, and noted that it was important that HSACRE continued to receive budget support from the Council. The Chairman confirmed there would be a further HSACRE update on the budget when necessary.

RESOLVED: That the Budget Update be noted.

8. **CORE INTERIM REPORT CONSULTATION** (*Agenda Item 6*)

The Advisor to HSACRE introduced the item, confirming that the Commission on Religious Education (CORE) had launched a consultation on its interim report, "Religious Education For All", and that groups and individuals can respond to the consultation.

Member discussed a number of topics with regards to the consultation, and points of discussion included, but were not limited to:

- HSACRE should not abolish the Agreed Syllabus Conference, as HSACRE can recognise the area's demographic to ensure the Syllabus meets the needs of the local community.
- If the Syllabus was confirmed by a centralised body it may lead to better national recognition, but the centralism would not suit all demographics and communities.
- A syllabus should be produced locally and backed by the national government.
- Some teachers and parents do not believe that RE is important, and it needs to be part of the national curriculum to be taken seriously.
- If RE was a forced subject, would it lead to parents withdrawing children from lessons? Could RE being an elective subject lead to better participation?
- It was essential that children are religiously literate, and parents should not be able to withdraw them from classes.
- There should be no commitment to changing or abolishing the current Committee structure until a clear picture of the alternative is known and can be outlined.
- If the Government introduced a centralised syllabus, then the funding for this should be expected to come from the education stream for development.
- Releasing staff from school to attend training for RE can prove problematic and this could harm the impact of the training, such as the CPD sessions.

- If a curriculum was based on local situations, it may not prepare children from non-multicultural areas suitably.
- The most important aspect of RE was ensuring that children are religiously literate, and it was important for schools to ensure this. It was commented that for this to happen, RE must be part of the national curriculum and would be helped by central government funding.
- Children must understand different religions, and be able to differentiate from the teachings of religions, and actions that have taken place in the name of religion. If this is left to individuals, it may not be taught correctly as parents may have a lack of understanding of this topic.
- Schools should teach similarities between religions, and teaching RE aids community cohesion.
- Members would like to circulate a GCSE paper at a HSACRE meeting annually.

It was agreed that the Clerk to HSACRE would use the comments made in the discussion of the consultation, and that these comments would then be used in a response to CORE under the banner of HSACRE.

Members were reminded that they could also respond to the consultation as individuals, if they wanted to make further representations on the consultation.

RESOLVED: That the Clerk to HSACRE submits a HSACRE response to the consultation, formulated from comments that were made during the discussion of the item.

9. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING** (*Agenda Item 7*)

Members noted that the next meeting of HSACRE was scheduled to take place on Maundy Thursday, and agreed that the date should be changed.

The Clerk to HSACRE would contact the Chairman to find suitable Committee dates, and then these options would be sent to the Committee.

RESOLVED: It was agreed that the date of the next HSACRE meeting would be changed, following consultation with HSACRE.

The meeting, which commenced at 6.04 pm, closed at 7.47 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.