

Minutes

HILLINGDON STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

28 March 2019



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

	<p>Committee Members Present: Carole Jones (Chairman), Balmukund Prasad Joshi, Amir Ahmed (Syed Amir Ahmed), Father Desmond Banister, Keith Lunn, Simon Wallace, Councillor Shehryar Ahmad-Wallana, Councillor Carol Melvin BSc (Hons), Councillor June Nelson and Councillor Jagjit Singh</p> <p>Apologies Joan Beavington, Jasvir Singh Rayat and Councillor John Hensley</p> <p>Also Present: Ms Elenor Paul (Advisor to HSACRE)</p> <p>LBH Officers Present: Dan Kennedy (Director, Housing, Environment, Education, Performance, Health & Wellbeing) and Luke Taylor (Democratic Services Officer)</p>
32.	<p>MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (<i>Agenda Item 1</i>)</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 8 November 2019 be agreed as a correct record.</p>
33.	<p>COMMISSION ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (CORE) REPORT (<i>Agenda Item 2</i>)</p> <p>Elenor Paul, Advisor to HSACRE, introduced the item which focussed on the Commission of Religious Education (CoRE) report into “Religion and Worldviews: The Way Forward – A National Plan for RE”. Ms Paul requested Members comment on a number of the recommendations that were included within the report, most notably, recommendations 1, 4 and 8.</p> <p><i>Recommendation 1: “The name of the subject be changed to Religion and Worldviews. This should be reflected in all subsequent legislation and guidance”.</i></p> <p>The Committee discussed the proposed new name and suggested alternatives, including “Religion and Philosophy”, “Religion, Beliefs and Values”, “Religious Beliefs and Values” and “Beliefs and Values”.</p> <p>HSACRE Members were supportive to the idea of dropping the word “education”, but would like to leave the word “religion”, in one form or another, in the subject name, and avoid a wordy name for the subject title, but ensure it sounded academic.</p> <p>It was agreed that Religious Education may lose its status but not including the word “religion” in the subject, and proposed a vote on two options: “Religion, Beliefs and Values” or “Beliefs and Values”. Upon being put to a vote, “Religion, Beliefs and</p>

Values” was chosen as Hillingdon SACRE’s preferred subject name, and Ms Paul noted that this would be included in her response to CoRE.

Recommendation 4: “Section 375ff of the Education Act 1996 should be amended to remove the requirement for local authorities to convene Agreed Syllabus Conferences and develop locally agreed syllabuses”.

The Committee stated that a group of different boroughs discussing SACRE issues would enable SACREs to improve as they could share best practice and learn from each other. It was agreed that the purpose of RE is to increase understanding, tolerance and awareness of young people in the community and this change would lead to a wider breadth of views. Additionally, when teachers move schools, it impacts on RE as it is the only subject which has a syllabus that is not agreed nationwide, and this leads to difficulties when teaching. As such, HSACRE agreed to support this idea.

Relevant aspects of Recommendation 8: “Legislation regarding the establishment of SACREs should be amended as follows:

- a) The name of the body should be changed to Local Advisory Network for Religion and Worldviews*
- e) The Local Advisory Network for Religion and Worldviews may also:
 - vii. Celebrate success including through offering prizes and competitions*
 - viii. Promote good community relations within and outside schools.**

Statutory funding must be provided for all Local Advisory Networks for Religion and Worldviews, calculated by size of local authority and of a sufficient level to enable the group to carry out its activities effectively. This should be ring-fenced within the Central Schools Services Block of funding provided to local authorities.

Members agreed that the proposed new name was too wordy and would not support a change to this name.

With regards to the defined role, the Committee were happy with this and agreed that a lot of the proposed actions were already taken by HSACRE, often through the CPD Training system. Members also noted that the proposal to ringfence the budget and provide statutory funding to the Committees was an excellent idea. HSACRE stated that the CPD Training has been very productive and moved HSACRE forward, so an increased budget would be very helpful for the Committee.

The Committee, therefore, agreed to support all of Recommendation 8, except for the proposed name change.

With regards to other recommendations, Members commented that Recommendation 10 should be supported strongly, and Recommendation 11 did not go far enough, although the reasoning behind it was understandable.

RESOLVED: That the Advisor to HSACRE put together a response to the report on behalf of HSACRE, and sends this to CoRE.

Ms Paul gave a recap of the CPD Training, and noted that at the recent Teachers' Conference, 20 schools sent 25 delegates to attend, and these included delegates from schools that had not previously been involved in the training. This meant that between 45-50 schools have been involved in the CPD Training over the past two years, and that information is heading back into schools, although staff still require support with managing the Agreed Syllabus.

At the Teachers' Conference on 12 March 2019, training sessions were held on assemblies, class learning lessons and how to roll out teaching sessions to an entire year group or Key Stage.

The Chairman thanked Ms Paul for all her work, and noted that it was heartening to see attendance increasing. The Director for Housing, Environment, Education, Performance, Health & Wellbeing was asked to clarify the budget process and confirmed that it would be good to have any budget proposals received by June.

Ms Paul confirmed that the next session will take place on 13 June 2019, and will be a conference for Key Stage 1 children. As such, HSACRE members were asked if it was possible to find a venue that was suitable for children of this age, and Members agreed to help search for a venue.

RESOLVED: That the CPD Training Update was noted.

35. **RAMADAN ADVICE** (*Agenda Item 4*)

The Muslim representative confirmed that Ramadan was expected to take place from roughly 5/6 May until 4/5 June 2019. HSACRE heard that the Muslim representative would encourage parents to send their children to school in Eid clothes after early prayers, which would also give schools the opportunity to celebrate the festival.

HSACRE heard that it was not encouraged for children to pray outside schools, but schools should encourage parents to bring people into the school to facilitate this in schools. The Chairman agreed that it would be helpful to include a message within the Headteachers' Briefing, and the message from the Muslim representative has been strong and consistent, but some parents may have different plans and this can cause difficulties from schools.

With regards to fasting, the Muslim representative confirmed that it was prescribed that those who are able to should fast. However, if a matter of health or safety, people should not be fasting. As Ramadan takes place in June, the days will be longer and fasting will be difficult, so it should be recommended that children's health comes first and anyone can make up the fast at a later date if a fasting day is missed, and members were informed that this message would be reinforced within the community.

HSACRE commended the Muslim representative for his comments, and supported his progressive message and encouraged that this message be passed on to schools. The Director for Housing, Environment, Education, Performance, Health & Wellbeing noted that previously, guidance has been presented to schools each year, and it was agreed that if Ramadan Guidance be provided to the Democratic Services Officer, this can be passed on to the Education Team who can disseminate the information to schools and Headteachers. Members agreed that this guidance should also reflect teachers' thoughts, but schools must also be advised on what is right and appropriate during Ramadan.

The Committee discussed fasting for students who were taking exams, and were

	<p>informed by the Muslim representative that children who had reached puberty were obliged to fast, however, if they were unable to fast, they would be able to make up these days at a later date. As such, it is up to individuals to decide whether or not they will fast on any given day.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the Muslim Representative provide Ramadan Guidance to the Democratic Services Officer, which can then be disseminated to local schools by the Education Department.</p>
36.	<p>HILLINGDON SACRE 2019 - 2020: FUTURE PLANS (<i>Agenda Item 5</i>)</p> <p>Ms Paul noted that HSACRE must consider its plans for the forthcoming year, and proposed that to do this, a self-evaluation of what the Committee was doing well and what could be done to encourage more involvement.</p> <p>As such, Ms Paul confirmed that she would provide the self-evaluation to the Democratic Services Officer, who would then send this to all members of HSACRE.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That a self-evaluation survey of HSACRE be sent to all Members to begin a discussion on what can be done to continue to improve the work of HSACRE.</p>
37.	<p>NEXT MEETING (<i>Agenda Item</i>)</p> <p>Members were informed that the next meetings of SACRE take place on 6 June 2019, 7 November 2019 and 26 February 2020.</p>
	<p>The meeting, which commenced at 6.00 pm, closed at 7.36 pm.</p>

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.