

Minutes

HILLINGDON STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

4 November 2021

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



	<p>Committee Members Present: Father Desmond Banister Dr Ninette Fernandes Viana Alice Vahdat Angela Lount Pauline Byles Keith Lunn Councillor Shehryar Ahmad-Wallana Councillor John Hensley Councillor Jagjit Singh</p> <p>Also Present: Jack Roberts (Democratic Services Apprentice) Steve Clarke (Democratic Services Officer)</p>
11.	<p>MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (<i>Agenda Item 1</i>)</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 17 June 2021 were agreed as a correct record.</p>
12.	<p>HSACRE ANNUAL REPORT 2019/20 (<i>Agenda Item 2</i>)</p> <p>Officers introduced the report, noting that the report covered the activities of HSACRE over the period 2019-2020, not 2020-2021. This was because HSACRE had been put on hold for most of the duration of the pandemic, and as such, neither the 2019-2020 report nor the 2020-2021 report had been brought to the committee. It was confirmed that the 2020 – 2021 annual report would be brought to the committee for the meeting scheduled 29 March 2022. It was also confirmed that once the reports were endorsed by the committee, they would be submitted to the Department for Education and NASACRE.</p> <p>The committee noted the number of vacant spaces on the committee shown in Appendix A of the report. Officers confirmed that efforts had been made to fill the vacant spaces, which had included sending out letters to the relevant centres for the religious groups, but they had received a limited response with only two vacancies being filled. Given the number of vacant places, it was suggested that the committee could review the membership of group A of the committee. The committee agreed that a review would be useful and asked that a report be compiled and brought to the next meeting on 29 March 2022.</p>

RESOLVED: That the Committee:

- 1. Endorsed the 2019/20 HSACRE Annual Report for submission to the Department for Education and the NASACRE; and**
- 2. Requested that officers compile a report reviewing the membership of the committee, particularly membership of Group A, and schedule it as an item for the committee meeting on 29 March 2022.**

13. DRAFT QUESTIONS FOR HILLINGDON RE TEACHER SURVEY (Agenda Item 3)

This item was deferred to the meeting on 29 March 2022 because the lead officer was not in attendance. It was requested that the item not be a verbal report, but a written report circulated in the agenda ahead of the next meeting.

RESOLVED: That the Committee:

- 1. Deferred the item Draft Questions for Hillingdon RE Teacher Survey 2020 to the meeting scheduled for 29 March 2022; and**
- 2. Requested that the item be submitted as a written report ahead of the meeting and that it be circulated with the agenda.**

14. HILLINGDON SCHOOL WORKFORCE DATA 2020 (NATRE) (Agenda Item 4)

Officers introduced the item, explaining that the data in the report had come from the National Association of Teachers of Religious Education (NATRE) by way of the Department for Education (DfE) 2020 School Workforce Census. The data showed the hours taught of RE or philosophy for years 7 to 11 of a sample of 20 secondary schools in Hillingdon. It was suggested that the data could act as useful gauge for assessing the current practice of RE teaching in Hillingdon's non-maintained schools.

It was noted that the data suggested that some non-maintained schools in Hillingdon did not meet their statutory duties to teach RE to students in the years 7-11. In the case of Academies, it was suggested that this could be in breach of their funding agreements. Whilst it was acknowledged that some of the data could have been explained by schools delivering the required content but not formally referring to it as RE, it was emphasised that clarity needed to be sought on the matter. It was requested that officers investigate whether the schools listed as not teaching any RE in the DfE data were breaking the law or breaching their funding agreement by doing so.

It was suggested that the DfE had a role to play in ensuring that OFSTED checked that schools were meeting their statutory duties with respect to the teaching of RE. However, concerns were raised about waiting for OFSTED visits in order to solve the problem. It was agreed that the problem required a more urgent response.

It was noted that staffing issues may be raised by schools as the reason for their failing to meet the requirements. It was felt that such a response may have been indicative of RE being the 'left behind' subject; one that governing bodies gave less priority to than other subjects. However, it was also acknowledged that the problem may have been to do with the recruitment of RE teachers.

It was suggested that it would be useful to find out if the problem was a national or a regional one, as geographical differences may have impacted the reporting of data. It

was emphasised that religious literacy was of particular importance in all schools, particularly for a London Borough. Further data from other parts of the country was requested to gain clarity on whether RE provision differed regionally.

It was noted that further teacher engagement on this topic was important. Concerns were raised about the lack of RE teacher representation on the committee, and it was requested that officers consider ways to increase the number of teacher representatives in Membership Group C. It was suggested that the National Association of RE Teachers (NATRE) may have had a regional branch, and that they could assist in recruiting teachers to sit on HSACRE.

RESOLVED: That the Committee noted the Hillingdon School Workforce Data 2020.

15.	ANY OTHER BUSINESS (<i>Agenda Item 5</i>) No other business raised.
16.	DATE OF NEXT MEETING (<i>Agenda Item 6</i>) It was noted that the next meeting of HSACRE was scheduled for Tuesday 29 March 2022. Further meetings would be scheduled for June and November 2022, with the exact dates to be agreed in the Council's 2022/23 programme of meetings which was due to be ratified at the Full Council meeting in February 2022.
	The meeting, which commenced at 6.00 pm, closed at 6.33 pm.

These are the minutes of the above meeting. For more information on any of the resolutions please contact Jack Roberts on 01895 250833. Circulation of these minutes is to Councillors, Officers, the Press and Members of the Public.