

STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

HELD ON TUESDAY, 21ST JUNE, 2022 AT 4.30 PM

VENUE: COMMITTEE ROOM 1, CITY HALL, PLATER WAY

Present: -

Local Councillors

Councillor Farthing

Councillor P. Smith

Christian and Other Denominations

Matt Moore

In Attendance

Cathryn Forbes, Specialist Officer

Richard Cullen, Strategic Lead, School Improvement & Early Years

Paul Wood, Principal Governance Services Officer

Sara Gummerson, School Improvement Officer

Syeda Fahmena Khatun, Prospective Member – Christian and Other
Denominations – Muslim Representative

Mark Chandler – Education Data and Information Officer

As the meeting was inquorate, the following discussions could not be viewed as having been approved and therefore, could not be acted upon until approved at a future quorate meeting.

SAC169 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted to the meeting on behalf of Caroline Weir and Valerie Blackett

SAC170 Election of Chairman and Vice Chairman

As the meeting was inquorate, the process of electing the Chairman and Vice Chairman could not be carried out.

SAC171 Minutes of Previous Meeting held on 22nd March, 2022

It was AGREED that the minutes of the meeting held on 22nd March 2022 were a true record

SAC 172 Matters Arising

The Chairman referred to discussions about Humanists having voting rights and advised that she had undertaken some research since the last meeting and that she had obtained information that the vast majority of crematorium services had been humanist which showed a large representation within Sunderland. However, upon legal advice, the situation was that current legislation in England differed from Scotland and Wales, therefore it was Legal' s view that voting rights could not be granted as yet.

Richard Cullen advised that legal guidance had been issued and we must follow our team's expertise at this time.

SAC172 SACRE Membership

The Assistant Director of Law & Governance submitted a report (copy attached) for Members of the Standing Advisory Council to review and approve the list of volunteers (listed in 3.1 of the report) onto its Membership and to consider and approve the reappointment of those Members of SACRE whose Membership was due to expire (listed within 3.2 of the report).

(For copy report – see original minutes)

Although the meeting was inquorate, Paul Wood proposed that the recommendations be agreed in order to facilitate a greater chance of quorum being achieved in the future.

Mr Wood introduced Mrs Syeda Fahmena Khatun who was in attendance and she was welcomed to the Council.

Mrs Forbes informed of her conversation with a NASACRE representative who had advised that the Local Authority should have a list of Nominating Bodies which could be contacted to supply a new representative when a current Member leaves or retires etc. Mrs Forbes referred to the Still Standing report which had details of nominating bodies to contact.

The Teachers Union to be contacted as this was the main category that was causing issues with regards to attendance.

Councillor P. Smith commented that the Members currently on the Council should be submitting apologies to the meeting if they could not attend.

It was also advised that Members had the ability to send a substitute in their place under the terms of the Constitution.

It was AGREED to approve the new volunteers onto the Membership of the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education and to extend the Memberships of those which were due to expire for a further period of four years, starting from the date of this meeting.

SAC173 Proposal to Change the SACRE Constitution

The Assistant Director of Law & Governance submitted a report (copy attached) for Members of the Standing Advisory Council to discuss and approve the amendment of its Constitution in relation to Quorums and the minimum requirement of representatives needed in order to achieve a quorum.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

As the meeting was inquorate, the report could not be approved but general discussion was had.

Mrs Forbes referred to her conversation with NASACRE and they had advised that it was their view the proposed change could be done, but was not best practice and this could be challenged. Mrs Forbes also stated that NASACRE advised changes to the Constitution were to be made by the Local Authority and it was not for SACRE to vote on.

(Update – Upon seeking guidance from Legal Officers outside of the meeting it was considered that this advice was a misinterpretation of the guidance and the use of the term “the Council” would refer to SACRE and not the Local Authority)

The report was noted and would be brought back to the next meeting for deliberation.

SAC174 Annual Report

Consideration was given to the Annual Report and it was agreed that nothing else needed to be reflected within the report and Mrs Forbes was to draw up a draft to bring to the October meeting.

SAC175 Review Short Term Action Plan

A copy of the new proposed work programme for future meetings was circulated with proposed standing agenda items and preparatory work included for discussion and any possible additions.

SAC176 NASACRE Briefing

Mrs Forbes advised that there had been no new briefing issued since the last meeting.

SAC177 Newsletter Items

Mrs Forbes requested consideration of any items for the next newsletter and advised that RE Today would be providing a presentation on the new syllabus in September and the flyer was going out to teachers and would be live on the website in order for people to book onto. Mrs Forbes advised that she would send the flyer to Paul Wood for circulation to the Council.

SCA178 Any Other Business

There was no other business to discuss.

SCA169 Date and Time of the next meeting

It was agreed to move the date of the next meeting to Wednesday 12th October at 4.30 p.m.

(Signed) Councillor L. Farthing,
Chairman