

NOTTINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE)

MINUTES of the meeting held at National Holocaust Centre and Museum, Acre Edge Road, Laxton, Nottinghamshire, NG22 0PA on 13 June 2019 18:00-19:59

GROUP A – Representatives of religious / faith denominations (13)

Absent	Bishop James Stapleton	African Caribbean Churches
	No representative	Assemblies of God
	No representative	Baptist
Present	Krishna Dasi	Hindu
Present	Chris Richards	Humanist
Present	Hafiz M Muntazir	Islam
	No representative	Jewish
Apologies	John Heard	Methodist
Present	Caroline Mackeith	Quaker
	No representative	Roman Catholic
Apologies	Martin Bennett	Salvation Army
Apologies	Rav Kalsi	Sikhism
	No representative	United Reformed Church

GROUP B - Church of England representatives (6)

Present	Jill Edmonds	South Wilford
Present	Debs Hunt	Crossteach Education Charity
Present	Jane Lewis	Southwell & Nottingham Diocese
Apologies	Alison Rowe	Bluecoat Wollaton
	Vacancy	
	Vacancy	

GROUP C - Teacher representatives (6)

Apologies	Yasmin Khaliq	Middleton Primary
Apologies	Kirsty Lacey	Bluecoat Academy
Apologies	Ralph Surman	National Education Union
Apologies	David Wand	UNISON
Apologies	Caroline White	Victoria Academy
	Vacancy	

GROUP D - City Councillor representatives (6)

Present	David Mellen (Chair)
Apologies	Patience Ifediora
Present	Neghat Khan

Also present

Heidi Shewell-Cooper - Lead Officer for City SACRE
Catherine Ziane-Pryor - Governance Officer (Nottm City Council)
Members of the County SACRE and support officers were also in attendance.

24 INQUORATE MEETING

Although a joint meeting of the City and County SACRE, the City SACRE did not achieve the required balance of members in attendance to constitute its quorum. However, the meeting continued on an informal basis.

a **WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

Reverend Ken Johnson, Secretary to the Nottinghamshire SACRE, welcomed everybody to the joint meeting of the Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham SACRE at the National Holocaust Centre and Museum.

Everyone in attendance was requested to introduce themselves and state in which capacity they were attending the meeting.

b **PRESENTATION BY THE NATIONAL HOLOCAUST CENTRE ABOUT THEIR WORK WITH SCHOOLS**

Sophie Farrell from the National Holocaust Centre and Museum (NHC&M) provided a verbal overview of education and learning provision, including the exhibition's workshops and primary and secondary school educational visits provided by the NHC&M, the details of which are provided on the website: <https://www.holocaust.org.uk/>

In addition to public access to exhibitions and holocaust research material, the Centre is proactive in providing training and information to help broaden society's understanding of known and subconscious destructive effect of prejudice and intolerance in the wider human context, with the evidence of the holocaust providing the basis on a very personal level.

In addition to public and educational access to the Centre, (approximately 24,000 students per year) collaborative outreach classroom learning is also offered and currently provided in Leeds and London whereby young people not only learn about the history of the holocaust, but also what it is like to be a refugee, interact with relevant objects of the time and hear survivor testimony. Geographical expansion of outreach sessions continues to be developed with the 'journey' and encourages consideration and exploration of topical issue of hate crime.

The centre proactively works with schools, educational facilities and organisations to tailor courses and presentation to meet the needs of that establishment.

The next conference will be held on 24 July 2019 and links to information will be circulated via respective SACRE lead officers.

c **WAYS OF WORKING TOGETHER**

City Councillor David Mellen, introduced the item, noting that the City and County SACRE had last jointly met 8 years ago to consider the syllabus, as required by legislation, and now has the opportunity to consider the broader potential of further collaborative approaches, including where, how often and when the groups meet.

Those in attendance were requested to form small groups of mixed city and county members, and within 10 minutes were tasked to discuss ideas which could be proposed for working together.

The responses included:

- (a) It needs to be more widely promoted that the SACRE exists and that faiths are coming together with a mutual benefit of promoting tolerance and understanding around the religious education syllabus and interaction;

- (b) Where there are hard to fill religious representative vacancies within one group but not the other, representation could be encouraged to be interchangeable to ensure that religious representation is maintained;
- (c) Children should be encouraged to form their own SACRE group, gather in a school environment with a programme of activities, share knowledge and build empathy. Images of multi-faith children working together are powerful and promotes broader tolerance;
- (d) The City Council has a Primary Parliament and there are youth councils which could gather to discuss, consider and advise on aspects of religious education, possibly by encouraging faith councils with members from local schools;
- (e) Coming together and discussing alternative ways to get the message out that religious education and multi-faith communication is vital;
- (f) Tools such as generic risk assessment forms/guidance which would help remove barriers for groups, including teachers and children, coming together, could increase the opportunity for groups to gather at religious facilities;
- (g) There is some amazing high quality religious education activity already taking place but it needs to be shared to ensure the broadest benefit.

AGREED for these ideas and suggestions are to be further discussed within respective SACRE.

d **PLANS TO DETERMINE AN AGREED SYLLABUS 2020-2025**

Reverend Ken Johnson, Secretary to the Nottinghamshire County SACRE, delivered a presentation on the potential collaborative option for the City and County SACRE to work together to determine an agreed RE Syllabus. The presentation is circulated with the initial publication of the minutes.

The following points were highlighted:

- (a) Consultant in Religious Education, Lat Blaylock, has considered the current syllabus (which has to be reviewed every 5 years) and determined that whilst overall sound, there are 6 areas which need 'light touch' revision. These include:
 - (i) updating outcomes and assessments,
 - (ii) inclusion of the latest OFSTED requirements,
 - (iii) responding to the CoRE report's call for RE entitlements and a national plan,
 - (iv) including the new requirements at GCSE RS,
 - (v) a clearer and broader approach to planning,
 - (vi) recognition of Humanists and updating how the syllabus deals with non-religious world views;
- (b) It is suggested that the City and County work together to form a statutorily required 'Agreed Syllabus Conference' (ASC) potentially consisting of teachers and faith representatives, possibly to work with a consultant, to produce and recommend an agreed RE syllabus to each LA, having considered the points identified in the presentation;
- (c) A budget is required for the work, especially if a consultant is to be engaged, and it is suggested that it is sourced equally from each Local Authority (LA) and not the SACRE. A budget will need to be confirmed by September 2019;

- (d) The work needs to be completed by June 2020, with a proposed launch date of up to early July 2020 for implementation during the September 2020 term;
- (e) The anticipated cost of a consultant is within the region of £7.5k with additional funds required for teacher time cover, meeting venue and expense, production costs and a launch event (which may be self-financing).

Following the presentation, County Councillor Boyd Elliot, addressed the meeting stating that a decision on the way forward was not required today but that the options available raised several questions.

City and County SACRE members in attendance provided the following contribution, with responses to questions provided Ken Johnson:

- (f) The syllabus is well developed with regard to faith information and topics but further first-hand input from different faiths, including examples, could influence the end result, form which schools decide how to approach and adapt as appropriate to their areas;
- (g) Suggestions of how pupil consideration and discussion of how common themes are found in different faiths could be presented as stand-alone teaching examples;
- (h) The proposal of the City and County SACREs working together is welcomed and should be recommended to the respective LAs, but it is up to them as to how it should proceed, ensuring that any changes fit with the requirements of the ASC;
- (i) Although there are other consultants who could be engaged, the consultant named in the presentation, Lat Blaylock, is very experienced and respected and has successfully undertaken similar work for other SACREs. Other consultants could be considered;
- (j) It would be good to have a range of different faith group representatives on the ASCs but this may need to be on a voluntary basis due to the financial impact on schools of needing to find cover for teachers, and potentially the cost of a consultant;
- (k) The ASC meeting commitment is likely to be 3 non-consecutive days, potentially in October, January and April, but this could be less and may be flexible;
- (l) As OFSTED is emphasising the importance of school based subjects, it may be beneficial for schools if the syllabus includes a focus on reading and literature;
- (m) At the NSACRE AGM, the suggestion was made that SACREs write to schools to explain how OFSTED is changing, and ask how the SACREs can help schools meet the statutory requirements. A template letter was suggested which may be helpful;
- (n) Savings could be made by only producing an electronic copy of the end product and not circulating hard copy which incurs print and postage costs. Many teachers and schools would prefer an electronic copy which could be stamped/licensed so it is not easily shared with other schools without it being obvious that it is licensed;
- (o) NSACRE had asked whether the agreed syllabus should be the property of those who paid for it, or should it be available to everyone? The general feeling is that it belongs to those who paid for it;
- (p) The agreed syllabus could offer supplements of additional religious material for specific religions;

- (q) The syllabus needs to be tweaked, but its profile needs to be raised.

e **SEPARATE CITY AND COUNTY SACRE MEETINGS**

The City SACRE members gathered to discuss the proposals regarding how an agreed syllabus could be achieved and made the following points:

- (a) The potential cost of the proposed process is significantly higher than the cost 4 years ago, but does not provide as much;
- (b) With the financial restraints of LAs, there needs to be a realistic approach with minimal spend;
- (c) Members of the County SACRE had said that they had financially broken even due to the success of the launch event, resulting in a nil cost;
- (d) There may be other routes to achieve the agreed syllabus at a much lesser financial cost. These need to be considered, especially as it was said that only minor tweaks are required;
- (e) The Local Authority could be approached for funding for this proposed route, and if refused, then SACRE could look at other options as it has been stated that the current syllabus is of good quality;
- (f) City SACRE could buy-in to the County SACRE ASC or another SACREs' ASC;
- (g) Different models and costings need to be considered before any decisions are made, including clarification of the exact cost of the proposed city/county model.

Heidi Shewell-Cooper, Lead Officer for City SACRE, requested nominations of members to sit on a committee (which needs to be convened before the end of the current term) to consider the way forward to determine an agreed syllabus, including the formation of an ASC.

The following members expressed interest:

Debs Hunt Chris Richards Councillor Neghat Khan

Jane Lewis Jill Edmonds Krishna Dasi

On behalf of the Nottingham City SACRE, Heidi Shewell-Cooper presented Councillor David Mellen with a card and gift in recognition of his dedication to the group during his time as Chair. Members of the group warmly welcomed Councillor Mellen's intention to remain on the SACRE but to relinquish the Chair.

AGREED for Heidi Shewell-Cooper to contact volunteers with availability to meet.

f **RECONVENE JOINT SACRE MEETING, SUMMARISE AND CLOSE**

AGREED for each SACRE to determine how they wish to proceed in convening a ASC and pursuing an agreed syllabus, with liaison between lead officers Heidi Shewell-Cooper and ken Johnson where necessary.