

7 December 2016		ITEM: 7
Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education		
Thurrock SACRE Membership Update		
Report of: Kenna- Victoria Martin, Senior Democratic Services Officer		
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: Non-Key	
Accountable Head of Service: Roger Edwardson, Interim Strategic Leader, School Improvement, Learning & Skills		
Accountable Director: Rory Patterson, Corporate Director of Children’s Services		
This report is public.		

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Members of Thurrock SACRE requested at their meeting on 18 April 2016, to receive an update on the membership of the committee.

1. Recommendations:

1.1 That SACRE comment on and approve the membership of Thurrock SACRE.

2 Introduction and Background:

2.1 The membership of Thurrock SACRE was last amended following, a report published for the meeting of SACRE on the 6 March 2013, which requested members consider the membership of Committee A and decide whether or not it appropriately reflected the principal religious traditions in the area.

Although this meeting was declared inquorate, it was agreed that the meeting would continue informally and Members discussed the following:

“The Changing Profile of Religion and Belief in Thurrock

SACRE were provided with factual information on the religious profile of Thurrock as evidenced by the 2011 census data.

Councillor Anderson provided those present with the following suggestions:

1. *That Thurrock SACRE should adopt the following principles as guidelines when determining the composition of Committee A. In order to nominate a representative to Thurrock SACRE, a religion or belief should have:*
 - a) *A minimum of 500 self-identified adherents (0.3%) in the Thurrock area;*
 - b) *A recognisable local group meeting regularly within the Thurrock area;*
 - c) *A representative organisation capable of providing nominations which is willing to confirm its acceptance of and support for the aims and objectives of Thurrock SACRE.*
2. *That in light of the above, Thurrock SACRE should seek to identify a Buddhist member to be added to Committee A.*
3. *That Thurrock SACRE should consult with Christian groups within Thurrock to identify whether the current Christian members of Committee A still adequately reflect and represent the Christian groups active within Thurrock, and consider any changes at a future meeting.*
4. *That the Jewish representative ceases to be a permanent member of Committee A, but that the current representative be invited to continue serving SACRE as a co-opted member.*

The RE Consultant was requested to provide a breakdown of the Christian faith and she agreed that she would make this request to the National Statistics Office.

Councillor Anderson requested that nominations be invited from the Buddhist denomination as it had seen an increase from 0.17% to 0.40% over the last ten years.

The issue of a Humanist representative on Thurrock SACRE was discussed and it was recommended that if the British Humanist Association was happy to confirm their acceptance of the objectives of SACRE, then a representative from this Association should be sought.

The RE consultant advised members that the legal duties on SACRE in relation to the Agreed Syllabus, mean that all six of the 'principal religions' really need to be represented and they include Judaism. She suggested the following amendment to 4 above:

"In addition to 1 above, each of the principal religions represented in the UK as a whole should be represented in order that an Agreed Syllabus Conference convened by SACRE can include people that are fully informed to meet the legal requirements for an RE Syllabus"*

**Defined as Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Judaism, Islam and Sikhism."*

Legal Background

- 2.2 S390 of the Education Act 1996 requires that a Local Authority shall constitute a standing advisory council on religious education (SACRE). The SACRE must consist of such groups of persons appointed by the Authority as representative members, as required by subsection 4. The SACRE may also include co-opted members; however co-opted members do not have voting rights.
- 2.3 Subsection 4 specifies that the representative groups that are to constitute membership of the SACRE are:
- a) A group of persons representing such religions and denominations other than the Church of England as, in the opinion of the authority will appropriately reflect the principal religious traditions in the area.
 - b) A group of persons to represent the Church of England.
 - c) A group of persons to represent such associations representing teachers as, in the opinion of the authority, ought to be represented, having regard to the circumstances of the area.
 - d) A group of persons to represent the Local Authority.
- 2.4 Section 390 (4) (a) of the Education Act 1990 provides that, in addition to the requirement that the composition of Group A be broadly representative of the proportionate strengths of the denominations and religions in the area, that the representative groups represent such religions as, in the opinion of the authority, will appropriately reflect the principal religious traditions in the area.
- 2.5 Current Membership of Thurrock SACRE

The current membership of Thurrock SACRE is, as follows:

i) Committee A

Christian denominations and other religious denominations representative of the local community:

10 members:

- 2 Free Church Christian member nominated by the Free Church Federal Council;
- 1 Roman Catholic member nominated by the Roman Catholic Diocese of Brentwood;
- 2 Muslim member nominated by the Muslim Teachers' Association;

- 1 Sikh member nominated by the Committee of the Local Gudwara;
- 1 Pentecostal member
- 1 Buddhist member
- 1 Jewish member
- 1 Hindu member

ii) Committee B

The Church of England – 4 members nominated by the Diocese of Chelmsford.

iii) Committee C

Teachers' Associations – 6 members nominated by the Professional associations group representing as far as is practicable, primary, secondary, special schools and academies.

iv) Committee D

The Local Education Authority – 3 members nominated by Council.

2.6 Vacancies of Thurrock SACRE Membership

Vacancies on the membership of Thurrock SACRE are, as follows:

Committee A

- 1 Jewish member to be nominated by the Board of Deputies of British Jews;
- 1 Hindu member to be nominated by the National Council of Hindu Temples

Committee C

2 members to be nominated by the Professional associations group representing as far as is practicable, primary, secondary, special schools and academies.

Committee D

- 1 member to be nominated by Thurrock Council.

Co-opted Member

- 1 member to be nominated by Thurrock SACRE

3. Issues, Options And Analysis Of Options:

- 3.1 Members may wish to suggest alternative membership; any proposals can be done at the meeting.

4. Reasons For Recommendation:

- 4.1 Members are invited to consider the information in Appendix 1 and consider the current SACRE membership with regard to the overall number of members and /or the number of members representing any particular religion, denomination or association.

5. Consultation (Including Overview And Scrutiny, If Applicable)

- 5.1 None.

6. Impact On Corporate Policies, Priorities, Performance And Community Impact

- 6.1 Not applicable.

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Laura Last**
Senior Finance Officer, Management Accounts

There are no financial implications to this report

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Lucinda Bell**
Education Lawyer

Legal comments are incorporated into the body of the report. .

7.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Becky Price**
Community Development Officer

There are implications based on the information about religion for the way that the diversity of the population of Thurrock is reflected in the provision for Religious Education in local schools, therefore there are implications on the different groups identified in this report.

7.4 Other implications (where significant) – i.e. Section 17, Risk Assessment, Health Impact Assessment, Sustainability, IT, Environmental

- There are none.

Background Papers Used In Preparing This Report (include their location and identify whether any are exempt or protected by copyright):

- None.

Appendices To This Report:

- Appendix 1 – Current membership of Thurrock SACRE

Report Author Contact Details:

Name: Kenna-Victoria Martin

Senior Democratic Services Officer