



Council – 25th April 2005

**Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) –
Review of constitution**

Summary of report

This report informs the Council of the decision of SACRE to amend its constitution to increase the number of “Christian and other religious denominations” represented on SACRE to enable the Orthodox Church to be represented.

Recommendations

That the Constitution of the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) be amended to increase the membership of Christian and other religious denominations from 20 to 21 in order that the Orthodox Church can be represented.

Background

At its meeting on 21st March 2005, SACRE considered increasing the membership of Christian and other religious denominations in order that the Orthodox Church could be represented. The report considered by SACRE is reproduced as an Appendix hereto.

Signed:

Chief Executive:

Date: 15th April 2005

Contact officer

Glenys Ensor, Constitutional Services, Tel. 653265

STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

**REPORT OF HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES
TO THE MEETING ON
MONDAY 21 MARCH 2005**

REVIEW OF THE CONSTITUTION

1.0 Purpose of report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to request SACRE to consider increasing the number of “other denominations” represented on SACRE to enable the Orthodox Church to be represented.

2.0 Recommendation

- 2.1 That SACRE consider recommending to Council that approval be given to increasing the number of Christian and other religious faith representatives from 20 to 21 in order that the Orthodox Church can be represented.

3.0 Background

- 3.1 The current membership of SACRE is as follows:-
- (a) LEA representation – 7 members – to be politically balanced; the representatives to be appointed by Council;
 - (b) Teacher representation – 6 members to be nominated by the NUT, NASUWT, ATL, NAHT, SHA and PAT;
 - (c) Church of England representation – 5 members nominated by the Lichfield Diocesan Education Council;
 - (d) Christian and other religious faiths – 20 members – 8 by the Walsall Council of Churches; 2 by the Evangelical Churches Group and 10 by the Muslim, Sikh and Hindu Groups.
- 3.2 In recent years there has been an increase in members of the Orthodox faith residing in the Borough. The faith is represented on many SACREs in the country and has a distinctive voice on many issues. Some of these include:-

- It represents a non-Roman tradition of Christianity. All the protestant denominations came out of Rome and inherit something of the same ethos;
- It has many centuries of experience of living in close proximity to other religions, in particular Islam;
- The Orthodox Christians of Walsall come from a number of different minority ethnic groups.

3.3 A review of the Constitution of SACRE took place on 29 April 2003, and a copy of the revised Constitution is attached as Appendix A.

4.0 **Conclusion**

4.1 Members are requested to consider the recommendation set out at paragraph 2.1.

R. F. WILLIAMS
HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

WALSALL STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL
FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION
(S.A.C.R.E)

CONSTITUTION

(i) Terms of Reference

1. "To advise the Authority upon such matters connected with Religious Education to be given in accordance with an agreed syllabus as the Authority may refer to the Council or as the Council may see fit..." (Education Reform Act 11.1a).
2. In particular the advice must cover "methods of teaching, the choice of materials and the provision of training for teachers" (Education Reform Act 11.2).
3. "...In each year to publish a report as outlined in (Education Reform Act 11.10)."
4. When appropriate to require the Authority (on a vote of three groups representing the Church of England, other faiths, and Teachers' Associations) to review the agreed syllabus by convening a statutory conference for this purpose (Education Reform Act 11.7 and 11.8).
5. In accordance with Education Reform Act Section 12, on receipt of an application, to make a determination about whether the requirement for mainly Christian collective worship is appropriate in that county school.
6. To receive reports on any complaints made under the Authority's complaints procedure (Education Reform Act Section 23) which relate to worship or Religious Education and to provide advice about such cases to the Authority and Governing Bodies.
7. To draw up and periodically review guidelines for the regulation of its business.

(ii) Membership

- (a) L.E.A. representation - 7 Members – to be politically balanced; the representatives to be appointed by Council;
- (b) Teacher representation - 6 Members to be nominated by the N.U.T., N.A.S.U.W.T., A.T.L., N.A.H.T., S.H.A. and P.A.T.;
- (c) Church of England representation - 5 Members nominated by the Lichfield Diocesan Education Council;

- (d) Christian and other religious faiths - 20 Members - 8 by the Walsall Council of Churches: 2 by the Evangelical Churches Group and 10 by the Muslim, Sikh and Hindu Groups.

(iii) Quorum

The quorum for meetings will be one quarter of the voting members.

(iv) Terms of Office and Removal from Office

Appointments shall be for a period of four years commencing 1st June 1989.

The Authority may remove Members if, in its opinion, they cease to be representative of the Bodies to which they were appointed.

A Member may resign at any time.

Where a Member, without consent, has failed to attend S.A.C.R.E. meetings for a continuous period of twelve months, S.A.C.R.E. may recommend to the Authority the removal of that Member.

Where a representative resigns or is removed, the Authority will take immediate steps to seek a replacement.

(v) Voting

In the interests of achieving consensus, the S.A.C.R.E. should only take a vote of the four groups in order to make a formal record of the decision or if there are opposing views.

Where the Council is required to reach a decision each representative group shall have a single vote.

In the event of a tied vote, the Chairman shall have a second or casting vote.

The representative groups other than that consisting of persons appointed to represent the Authority, may at any time require the Authority to set up a review of an Agreed Syllabus for the time being adopted by the Authority. Each group entitled to vote (i.e. excluding the group representing the Authority) shall have one vote.

(vi) Chairmanship

The Chairman/Vice-Chairman will be elected by S.A.C.R.E. at its first meeting in the Municipal Year.

(vii) Proceedings

Except where stated otherwise, the proceedings of S.A.C.R.E., or any particular category of any representative Members or any Group or Working Party, will be regulated by the Group concerned.

At the Annual meeting, each Group shall elect a spokesperson who shall also act as Chair of the Group if necessary. The spokesperson must allow all Members of the Group to express an opinion and to vote. A record of this vote shall be reported to the full meeting but the single vote of the group must be cast in favour of the simple majority of the group. In the case of a tied vote the whole group vote must be presented as an abstention.

(viii) Sub-Groups and Working Parties

S.A.C.R.E. may appoint Members to Working Parties which may include non-members with expertise to contribute. The terms of reference of a Working Party will involve exploratory work rather than decision making. The composition of a Working Party will normally include members from all groups.

There shall be a permanent sub-group of S.A.C.R.E. able to give immediate guidance to officers (especially the Religious Education Adviser) and to deal with urgent business between meetings. This sub-group shall consist of the Chairperson and the spokesperson of each of the three groups other than the one to which the Chairperson belongs. Members may meet or consult informally by letter or telephone.

(xi) Observers

In addition to an Administrative Officer or Officers appointed by the Authority to clerk meetings, there may be in attendance a Humanities Inspector, an appropriate Advisory Teacher for Religious Education or other persons on the staff of the Director of Education, each of whom may speak but not vote.

It will be open to S.A.C.R.E. to invite other persons of expertise or other interests to attend on an occasional basis. Such persons shall have power to speak but not to vote.

(x) Place and Time of Meetings

Unless decided otherwise meetings shall take place in the Council House and will commence at 6.00 p.m.

(xi) Frequency of Meetings

S.A.C.R.E. shall hold at least two meetings each year. The meeting held in the Autumn term shall agree an annual report covering the previous school year which will be submitted to the Cabinet and then published.

(xii) Constitutional Change

The Authority may alter this constitution subject to the terms of the national legislation at any time but will usually consult S.A.C.R.E. before doing so.

(xiii) Validity of Proceedings

The validity of proceedings of the Council or of the Members of the Council of any particular category shall not be affected:-

- (a) By a vacancy in the office of any Member of the Council;
- (b) On the ground that a Member of the Council appointed to represent any denomination or associations does not at the time of the proceedings represent the denomination or associations in question.

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