

STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

8 February 2017

Present:-

Group A: Christian and Other Religion and Belief Communities (with the exception of the Church of England)

H Hastie, B Lane, N Nation and M Miller

Group B: The Church of England

M Dearden, T Pritchard and T Wilson

Group C: Teachers' Associations

L Clay, J Gooddy (Chairman for the meeting), T Griffiths (substitute for Dr Teece), P Hammett, W Harrison and S Shute

Group D: The County Council

Councillors P Colthorpe, A Hannan and M Squires

Co-opted Members

J Marshall, J Roberts and S Spence

Advisor - E Pawson

Apologies:-

J Berry, C Channon, P Cornish, K Denby, R Halsey, M Hext, C Hulbert, R Khreisheh, R Nathwani, J Taylorson, and R Younger-Ross.

30 **Minutes**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 1 November 2016 be signed as a correct record.

31 **Items Requiring Urgent Attention**

There was no matter raised as a matter of urgency.

32 **Devon SACRE Membership**

Mr Pawson reported on the 4 year appointments noting that J Walmsley (Quaker Rep) had resigned and Mr Langtree was no longer able to continue and other vacancies including Sikh representation. Attendance from all the houses had been relatively good and Devon SACRE was an active and engaged forum.

The Council noted that substitutes were permitted and that members could be reminded of this facility.

Mr Pawson would contact the Sikh Community to ask them to nominate a new representative on SACRE, noting that Penny Rouvas (who is a convert to Sikhism) might be a suitable candidate.

Devon SACRE proposed Budget and draft Development Plan

Mr Pawson reported on current budget proposals relating to funding for the SACRE to implement its Development Plan 2017 – 2019. The proposed budget for 2017 – 2019 had been reduced by Babcock LDP from £39,000 to £32,500 (from £19, 000 per annum to £16, 250 per annum) representing a 17% cut. It was understood (subject to confirmation) that that the allocation from the County Council to Babcock LDP for all its services under the LDP agreement had represented a 3% cut.

The Development Plan before the meeting highlighted proposed reductions to meet the programmed commitments including the allocated Advisers' time.

Councillor Squires reported on views from Councillor Channon relating to proposed cuts relating to Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD), lunch expenses on committee days followed by member training and the relatively good support this SACRE enjoyed compared to other areas.

SACRE members noted:

- the value of training for members and cost effectiveness of having training sessions on days when the SACRE met (which has been the practice for some 10 years) and minimal expense of lunch to facilitate this;
- the extent of the work and added value of the Advisors with their local, national and international links, expertise and experience and their levels of unpaid and voluntary work for the benefit of SACRE;
- that the Devon SACRE (which had been relatively well-funded) was responsible for the oversight of RE in over 330 schools (compared to the Torbay SACRE for example with only 50 schools, notwithstanding a smaller budget) which represented good economies of scale and excellent value;
- the lack of any rationale from Babcock for the disproportionate reduction of 17%.

At this point Mr Pawson and Mr Roberts left the meeting whilst Members discussed the proposed cuts as detailed in the updated Development Plan and the allocated advisors' time.

The Members noted that the original Development Plan had been drawn up cautiously and judiciously and there was no or very limited scope for cuts, particularly in the following areas:

- 3 b: Learn Teach Lead RE Programme: the need for continued SACRE funding to support this and which represented valuable Continued Professional Development (CPD) for teachers;
- 3 c: the proposed cut (from 6 to 4 days over two years) for schools faith and belief visitors was untenable;
- 3 f: Holocaust Memorial day (HMD): members noted the support provided by the Exeter City Council and consideration should be given for a request to the County Council for direct support (rather than through SACRE) to eliminate the proposed cut from 8 – 6 days – even the current allocation (8 days) did not truly reflect the level and complexity of the work involved (including from expert voluntary input) in this high profile, worthwhile and well-received event involving schools and young people, which promoted a wider agenda of community cohesiveness;
- 4 a: Evaluating and Appraising the Agreed Syllabus in preparation for a review in 2019: more time was required in view of the number of Devon Schools and the valuable work of the advisors and huge benefits derived and noting the informal additional input from the advisors (noting that the 5 yearly review was due in 2019/20 when additional resources would be required).

RESOLVED that the Chairman and Vice-Chairman write a letter to the County Council's Head of Education and Learning (with the copies to the Leader of the Council, Chief Executive and Babcock LDP) expressing the concerns of Devon SACRE relating to:

(a) the proposed 17% cut for SACRE by Babcock LDP and impact on the SACRE's Development Plan (as outlined above) noting the statutory functions and obligations;

(b) seeking a rationale from Babcock LDP for the proposed 17% cut to the SACRE and requesting reinstatement of funding to £39,000 for 2017 - 2019 to properly implement the Development Plan;

(c) consideration to direct additional Devon County Council support for the Holocaust Memorial Day arrangements.

(Note: Mr Pawson and Mr Roberts re-joined the meeting)

34 Devon SACRE Annual Report (including analysis of GCSE results)

Mr Pawson reported on RE GCSE Data for Devon Schools (compared with national results) for the full and short courses from 2012 -2016, and the religious studies examination entry trends 2012 -16 for all Devon Schools (detailed according to maintained and academy Schools).

Members noted:

- that the full analysis of results would be presented at the June meeting each year (in respect of the previous academic year);
- that pupils in Devon schools were underperforming in the GCSE results in 2016 against the national trend in the A* - A and particularly in the A* - A categories; and this required further analysis as to possible reasons;
- good progress in the numbers being entered for the full course in 2016 in all Devon schools, noting that additional time was not available which would have had adverse impact on results;
- the need to learn from other authorities about the reasons for better performance;
- academy schools highlighted with low entries for RE which would warrant further visits by advisors.

35 Interfaith Focus Faith and Belief Training, Interfaith Conference, Feedback on Interfaith Week 2016 and Hindu workshops

Mr Roberts reported on:

- the success of the Hindu Workshop for Schools held on 4 November 2016 at Sidmouth College for primary school children led by Sushma Sahajpal with assistance and time dedicated by Mr Pawson;
- the Devon Faith and Belief Forum event 'Not in God's Name' on 5 November 2016 at the Mint Methodist Church which was well attended with over 70 delegates in preparation for interfaith week with valued involvement of John Hall – interfaith relationships advisor to the Bishop. This year's theme for interfaith week would be 'Health and Faith' including themes relating to 'end of life care' for both care volunteers and professionals in relation to patients' beliefs and faiths;
- progress and success of Faith and Belief Speaker Training with the next sessions being arranged for 22 April, 29 April and 20 May 2017 at the Exeter Community Centre.

36 Learn/Teach/Lead Religious Education (LTLRE): Hub Groups Update

Mr Pawson reported on the latest LTRE news:

- new hubs in West Devon and Exeter
- the Annual Conference in October 2017
- bidding for extension to funding for the programme
- new programmes started in NW and NE England, and
- the faith and belief visitors contact list.

The Chairman reported on the excellent value of the Exeter Hub and the contribution Hubs make towards Continued Professional Development and the continuing budgetary pressures on CPD generally. Mrs Wilson referred to difficulties relating to the need for continued funding by the Diocesan, Cornwall and Devon SACREs.

37 **Working Group: Assessment Project**

Mr Roberts reported on the Working Group which had met twice since the last meeting, there was good co-operation with the Torbay SACRE who had agreed financial support and with excellent input from teacher colleagues. The Group was now moving on from theoretical work to more practical examples and planning for some development of exemplars to meet the needs of schools. Funding commitment from Babcock LDP was still awaited and Mr Pawson was progressing this.

38 **Planned CPD for Devon schools**

Mr Pawson reported on events for CPD training:

- GCSE/A Level Islam subject knowledge course, Exeter Mosque: Wed 23rd November 2016
- GCSE/A Level Buddhism subject knowledge course, Hartridge Buddhist Monastery, nr Honiton: Wed 30th November 2016
- Secondary RE conference Thurs 9th February 2017 cancelled
- New to RE in Devon: Thurs 9th March 2017
- Primary RE course: Thurs 20th April 2017
- Planned CPD for summer 2017: Understanding Christianity for community primary and secondary.

39 **Holocaust Memorial Day 2017: Feedback and Review**

Mr Pawson reported that feedback from the Day and events had been very positive and read a letter from the Lord Mayor thanking the organisers and all contributors for a very successful day and members noted the excellent uptake from schools and the valuable and meaningful learning experience.

Mrs Spence asked that the thanks for the organisers and contributors be recorded.

40 **National Developments**

Mr Pawson reported on 'The BIG NASACRE Survey 2017' in order for NASACRE to be able to represent the views of its member SACREs at a national level, including to the REC and other policymakers for discussion at the NASACRE Executive and being used to inform policymakers about the strengths, views and hopes of SACREs across the country.

Mr Pawson asked members to complete the anonymised survey for discussion at the next meeting before agreement and return. The full report from the research would be made to all SACREs when completed.

41 **The Casey Report: Executive Summary**

This item was deferred.

42 **SW SACRE Conference (Mon 6th March 2017, Dillington House) and NASACRE Annual Conference (Tues 16th May 2017 in York)**

Mr Pawson reported that all six places offered by this SACRE had now been taken-up.

43

Dates of Future SACRE Meetings

Wednesday, 7 June at 10.00 am

The Meeting started at 10.00 am and finished at 12.40 pm