

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
LONDON BOROUGH OF WALTHAM FOREST
STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE)
HELD ON TUESDAY 8TH DECEMBER 2020 AT 12PM
VIA ZOOM**

Present: Mr Ted Cooke (TC) Member Group B (Chair)
Mr Colin Whitehead (CW) Member Group C
Mr Is'Haaq Jasat (IJ) Member Group C
Ms Ruth Kaufman (RK) Member Group D
Mr Adewale Akano Co-opted member –
Metropolitan Police Faith Officer
Cllr Richard Sweden Member Group D

Clerk: Sinead Safford

Also present: Ms Darra McFadyen (DMc) Observer

To note: All action points recorded in the minutes would state only the person(s) responsible for that action. Full action details are recorded in the summary table below.

Summary of agreements and actions:

Minute reference	Formal agreements and/or actions identified	Named person(s) for action(s) identified	Completion date
4	Response to be sent on SACRE'S behalf and a copy sent to all.	Ms Darra McFadyen	ASAP.
6.1	Letter to be drafted to the Local Authority and sent to the committee for review	Colin Whitehead	ASAP
6.2	Meeting to be arranged with Governor Services.	Ms Darra McFadyen	ASAP

1. WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.
- 1.2 Apologies were received and accepted from Miss Lashanna Hamilton and Heather Soar.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- 2.1 Members to declare any personal or pecuniary interests relating to this meeting's agenda

There were no declarations made, of personal or pecuniary interest, pertaining to any of the agenda items for this meeting.

3. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 16 SEPTEMBER 2020

- 3.1 To be discussed at the next meeting.

3.2 **Matters arising**

To be discussed at the next meeting.

4. **INDEPENDENT FAITH ENGAGEMENT REVIEW**

Ms Darra McFadyen is happy to respond on SACRE's behalf copy of the response to be sent all. All in agreement it is important we put in a response. **ACTION**

5. **MEMBERSHIP AND RECRUITMENT TO SACRE**

5.1 The core reason of this meeting is to look at ways of identifying a recruitment strategy for SACRE and come up with a constitution to clarify how we recruit new members and record attendance at meetings. SACRE document had been sent to all before the meeting to clarify the roles of the SACRE members and this was useful.

Questions have been sent to Donna Miller at Governor services and members would like a meeting to be arranged to discuss these further.

5.2 It is clear that the membership of the SACRE and recruiting members should be managed by the Local Authority. Currently that duty is not being undertaken and this has been previously discussed but no action taken.

5.3 Mr Colin Whitehead is happy to write to the Local Authority and look at engagement with them. The Local Authority should go to organisations within the Borough to get nominations for members. At the moment our membership has developed over time but when someone drops out the nominated body is not then contacted to find someone else. As a nominated body there is an option for them to send an alternative member if someone cannot attend. We need to advise the Local Authority on what their role is with regards to sustaining and maintaining communication.

5.4 Over time members have dropped out of SACRE, but when meeting with previous members they thought they were still involved but have not been receiving updates. If the information has not been sent then individuals do not know when meetings are taking place. Going forward we need to ensure everyone who should be involved is invited and this needs to be monitored. We should be challenging people who do not attend on a regular basis and do not send another member on their behalf.

5.5 We are aware that Governor services are very stretched and they do a sterling job, however this is a statutory duty and more time needs to be devoted to this. We know that the Local Authority funding has been cut to the bone, all services have been cut but statutory duties must be carried out. Mr Is'Haaq Jasat agreed, we need a lead within the Local Authority to work on this, we need to work together, there are so many groups doing amazing work and we need to be engaging with them. We have a duty of care to advise the council of any work that needs to be done. If we have someone who we can contact for this, this will make recruitment easier, as well as ensuring people are followed up if they do not attend meetings.

Ted Cook commented that the Local Authority also need to look at groups that are developing within the area, there are many and new facilities are being built. We have large communities of Somalian Muslims and these are significant in terms of the number of Mosques answering need. We need to look at the amount of representation the Muslim community should have. Christian faiths also have large groups meeting and are significantly growing within the area. We must ensure we have a proper representation on SACRE so we get a view across the Faiths.

Q – Is it worth making a list of Faith Organisations within the Borough and going through the list to see where we can get wider representation. There are lots of faiths, it is such a diverse borough in terms of faith and this is an opportunity to pull this together? This would open up other questions, these are good points about representing more faiths, however if you invite more it could bring an issue of managing meetings? ***Q - Is this why the legislation says SACRE should meet group by group?*** This may not work for Waltham Forest as we have

never operated in this way, but this maybe worth putting into the programme for consideration in the future. We need to get good representations at meetings first. **Q - Could we have an engagement meeting Inviting people from all faiths then we can engage and see where the active organisations are?** The Faith groups are growing across the borough. Then we can look at how we group these faith groups and what representation do we want from each one. We can guide the Local Authority but we need to know what faith groups are where.

It is important to get more teachers on board as well as they are underrepresented. We have some good teacher contacts now, and Ms Darra McFadyen is communicating with them. Mr Colin Whitehead has previously been the only representative of the teacher's group and this hampers our ability to progress as a body.

- 5.6 **What size do we want SACRE to be?** There are currently 33 posts within the constitution and a lot are vacant. **Q – Is recruitment is done on an informal basis?** The two dioceses nominate people and the board of deputies nominate someone, there is currently no formal way the Council of Mosques nominate. The Local Authority does have to carry out these responsibilities but equally the Local Authority is not in a good position to make these contacts. **Q – Who do we mean at the Local Authority in terms of making contacts?** We know that Governor Services is very stretched and the Democratic Services are also. If we make a parallel with governing bodies it has been a long time since the Local Authority appointed a Governor to bodies, in effect the Governing Board appoint then ask the Local Authority to approve, they work together to fulfil statutory obligations. We could work in the same way but we need the member linked with the nomination body to go through the Local Authority to make the appointment. We need to produce a template document of bodies who should nominate. We have been discussing this for years without moving forward and we are not able to do this as we don't have the internal resources and we don't have the processes in place. We need to produce a template of what we want and that is what we are missing. The Local Authority cannot know who is missing from the representation, we need to agree who is missing then pass this information to them. Cllr Richard Sweden suggested that the letter should go from the Chair in consultation with the committee. We are not informed by Democratic Services who the nominated councillors are for SACRE so we cannot approach and invite them, this needs to be looked at as well as membership and attendance.
- 5.7 **Q – In terms of attendance we have never had 33 members present at any meeting, is this due to Covid? Was attendance higher before?** We have never had any more than 15/16 per meeting and this is a good number for SACRE's. If we can get to this number on a regular basis and represent different groups. The first step is a letter drafted from Colin Whitehead then Darra McFadyen can meet with Donna Miller so we can be clear what the Local Authority need to do then if we need to help with a list of people to contact then we can.
- 5.8 At the moment there is not even a list of membership that is consistent, the Membership on governor hub does not match up. Members are not always included in correspondence. It is the responsibility of the meeting to remind the clerk to contact those who do not attend to politely remind members to send apologies. **Q – The questions sent to Donna Miller has she replied yet?** Not yet.
- 5.9 So far in the constitution there are 33 posts, of those there are 9 vacancies and 9 or 10 members who have not attended for over a year. We need to decide who is represented and we need a list of who each member represents. If we had 33 people at each meeting it would not be difficult to manage. We need to look at groups in the borough who are not represented on the body already and we are in a better position to do this than the Local Authority. Some Faith groups may not want to be represented. Group A needs looking at to see if they represent the faith across the Borough; Group C is the teachers and we need to look at this to see if it is formed

in a way to encourage people to take up those positions. There is a role for SACRE to look at the composition and then say to the Local Authority that we would like this changing.

- 5.10 Cllr Richard Sweden - we should be able to get some help when we get back to meeting face to face and we now have scope for hybrid meetings which will make it easier for teachers to get involved.
- 5.11 Constitution cannot be changed till the next AGM which is a year away.

6 Actions

- 6.1 Colin Whitehead to draft the letter and send out to SACRE for review/agreement.
- 6.2 Meeting to be arranged with Donna Miller once the letter has been sent to discuss membership system currently in place.
- 6.3 Once we have the membership systems in place we need to go back and look at group a and group c but need the processes, monitoring and follow ups in place first then we can spend time and concern over making sure we have the appropriate representation.

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Merry Christmas and a happy new year to all.

7.4 Relationships with other SACRE

This was discussed earlier in the meeting and members will be looking at attending meetings of other SACRE groups.

8. Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD) OBSERVATIONS 2021

8.1 Darra spoke about the themes which are all encompassing. The resources, which are accessible on-line, are wonderful. The current theme is 'Be the light in the darkness'. Darra will speak with Donna Miller at Governor Services, regarding sending out the link to schools.

Action: Darra McFadyen

8.2 The Chair said it had been impossible, due to COVID-19 restrictions, to organise the usual commemorations at the Town Hall and the Anne Frank Tree. An additional factor was the work being undertaken at the Town Hall site which had prohibited access.

8.3 In response to Ruth suggesting that an on-line event could perhaps be organised, the Chair said he would discuss this with Paul Braham and would update members. Darra added that Donna Miller, Governor Services, has in the past, tried to organise on-line events but without much success. Ruth said it may actually be easier for schools to allocate 30 minutes at assembly time to do this. David Kilgallon suggested this could be delivered in Year group bubbles or during Form time.

Ruth said it is easier to engage on-line and suggested that perhaps a Local Authority event could be organised.

As recorded in minute 8.1, Darra will request Donna Miller to contact schools with the link to access these great resources.

9. POLICIES / GUIDANCE FOR SCHOOLS

9.1 Relationship and Sex Education – update & model policy

- Darra has uploaded to the Hub, information relating to what Secondary and Primary schools are expected to do.
- Schools must implement a new policy. A group of Head Teachers had met to confirm the policy, which Darra emphasised; although endorsed by the Local Authority, this was not a Local Authority model policy.
- Primary schools have to implement relationships as part of this policy.
- Sex education is part of the Science curriculum in Primary schools.
- David Kilgallon said the Local Authority has purchased resources from an organisation called 1Decision. These resources are available to all schools and if requested, can be presented to members.
- All schools have to evidence that they are preparing for the new RSHE curriculum from September 2020 and they must start teaching this after the Easter break, 2021.
- **Q. Is there any movement within the London Borough of Waltham Forest, as there is in other local authorities, to fight the introduction of RSHE?**
 - A.** David Kilgallon said, generally, no. There was a tiny bit of resistance, with a letter being sent, just over a year ago, to the Local Authority. A public meeting had taken place at which a Local Authority Officer and Head Teacher were in attendance. In addition, there had been a couple

of small incidences in schools where parents had complained about there being single sex parents in the audience.

- In response to Ruth asking if there was communication between RE and RSHE, David Kilgallon said there are no RSHE Teachers. Some schools have suggested/asked/encouraged Teachers who teach RE to step in and lead on this. There is a resource pack available to facilitate the delivery of lessons.

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

10.1 Ruth asked if the minutes of meetings could be circulated to members earlier. In response, the Clerk said she produces the draft minutes, which she then e-mails to the Chair and Darra, within five working days of the meeting. The Chair and Darra agreed that upon receipt of the draft minutes, they would review these in a much timelier manner. The Chair said he would ask Donna Miller if these could then be uploaded to Governor Hub, within 15 working days of the meeting date.

Action: Chair

10.2 **Q. Tara Khare asked if there was more than one vacancy for a Hindu member?**
A. Darra said she believed there was only one but that she would review this.

Action: Darra McFadyen

10.3 Members extended Christmas greetings to one another and wished each other a happy new year. The Chair said he wished everyone a happy and healthy new year and one that is free of COVID and that will allow everyone to meet once again in person.

11. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING AND AGENDA ITEMS

11.1 The next meeting is scheduled to take place on Wednesday, 27 January at 5.30 p.m. This will be a virtual meeting.

11.2 Agenda items

1. Syllabus questionnaire
2. HMD Observation.
3. Schools Survey
4. Collective Worship guidance.
5. Safeguarding in Settings

Carried forward agenda items

1. To review a later start time for forthcoming meetings and next year, to consider different days on which to meet.
2. Safeguarding responsibilities – Working Party

The meeting closed at 6.55 p.m.

Chair: (print)

..... (Sign)

Date: