

**Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education [SACRE]  
5 July 2016**

**Item 11**

**Proposal for Joint Poole and Bournemouth SACREs Meetings.**

**Background:**

Each Local Authority has to maintain a Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education [SACRE]. A SACRE is a permanent body which must be established by each local authority with appointed representatives to each of four committees, representing respectively:

**Group A:** Christian denominations and such other religions and religious denominations as, in the authority's opinion, appropriately reflect the principal religious traditions in the area

**Group B:** the Church of England

**Group C:** teacher associations

**Group D:** the LA

The current law remains in place. Local Authorities have to appoint and maintain a SACRE as set out in statute and statutory instruments.

Agreed syllabuses have to be reviewed at least every five years and a revised syllabus published on the recommendation of an Agreed Syllabus Conference.

These functions have to be maintained even in authorities that currently have no maintained schools to which an agreed syllabus or SACRE's advice applies.

SACREs have to report annually to the Secretary of State on the advice they have given and the response to that advice.

**The National Association of SACREs [NASACRE]** guidance suggests that as a minimum this entails:

- Clerking support for 3-6 SACRE Meetings a year
- Specialist RE advice and back up support for 3-6 SACRE meetings per year
- Specialist RE advice and support for preparation and publication of the SACRE Annual Report [Poole SACRE currently receives updates on CPD support and exam results analysis].

**Agreed Syllabus**

Every five years there is the need for RE specialist support and advice for the Agreed Syllabus Conference – which oversees the revision of the Locally Agreed RE Syllabus.

For the agreed syllabus Poole and Bournemouth have already operated in a joint Agreed Syllabus conference. It has done so for the previous syllabuses. The two SACRE's came together in April 2016 to jointly agree the adoption of the 2017 Agreed Syllabus.

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## **Considerations**

- **Agendas**

The agendas tend to be a similar format and content. All SACREs have to address national issues within their own context but also want to celebrate successes in their own schools.

- **Membership**

There are some members from groups A & B that support both SACREs, given that agendas are often very similar, this is a duplication on the demands on the time, as volunteers. However there are different representatives for other representatives in particular groups C & D.

- **Subject Support**

Specialist input is essential for these meetings to ensure that SACRE is accurately informed. Such specialists are hard to find and Poole have engaged Jan Lever's Associates to fulfil this role since Local Authorities no longer have this subject expertise. This is an additional cost that Poole School Monitoring & Intervention Team covers.

- **Funding**

Borough of Poole Council provides £4,000 pa.

- Additional funds have come from the School Monitoring & Intervention Team for the syllabus and specialist cover.
- Each year the vast majority of this goes towards CPD for teachers, which is fully or part funded. This is very high quality and is well received.
- Network meetings (free for Poole teachers)
- Support for new subject leads in schools (free)

We have Bournemouth schools asking to take part and we now need to address this to ensure that charging is made to them.

## **The Proposal to hold joint meetings:**

1. That the meetings of the two SACREs are held simultaneously at an agreed venue.
2. That each SACRE continues to elect its own Chair.
3. That each SACRE continues to have its own Clerk.
4. That the Chairing of the joint meetings is shared between the two existing Chairs on a rotating basis.
5. That decision making votes are recorded separately by each SACRE's Clerk.
6. That the members of one SACRE are treated as members of the public when the other SACRE is making a decision that requires voting.

7. That the minutes and decisions of each SACRE continue to be published separately for each Borough, but there will be common items and common recording of these items.
8. That the two SACREs could commission the same person to provide specialist RE advice and support.

That charging is agreed between the 2 LAs for CPD.

**Benefits:**

- The statutory requirements in relation to the maintenance by each LA of a SACRE will continue to be met.
- Both Boroughs already cooperate on the production of the locally agreed syllabus, joint SACRE meetings will streamline processes and ensure better coherence in decisions.
- Joint commissioning of a single source of specialist advice and support to both SACREs will give savings and better value for money.
- Decision making will retain its local flavour, but opportunities for more collaborative approaches will be greatly enhanced.
- Given common membership of some representatives on the two SACREs, joint meetings will reduce the time commitments required of these members.
- SACRE meetings will be enriched by a wider range of participants.

**Issues:**

The potential merger of the two LAs could make this more difficult and the decision should seek advice from Democratic services (Borough of Poole). Their guidance is to delay this pending further information on the Education White Paper and the Poole Bournemouth reorganisation.

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