

CABINET MEETING – 15 JUNE 2021 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY SHEET – PART I									
Title of Report: Sunderland Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education									
Author(s): Director of Children's Services, Chief Executive of Together for Children									
Purpose of Report: To seek Cabinet approval for the revised Sunderland Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education.									
Description of Decision: Cabinet are asked to agree the revised Sunderland Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education which has been recommended by the Agreed Syllabus Conference of SACRE for adoption by Sunderland schools, with effect from 1 September 2021 for a period of five years.									
Is the decision consistent with the Budget/Policy Framework? Yes									
If not, Council approval is required to change the Budget/Policy Framework									
Suggested reason(s) for Decision: In order to comply with the Education Act 1996 and the Schools Standards and Framework Act 1998, Local Authorities are required to set up a Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) to develop an Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education. It is the responsibility of Cabinet to approve the agreed Syllabus.									
Alternative options to be considered and recommended to be rejected: Failure to have/adopt an Agreed Syllabus would lead to a breach of the Local Authority's statutory duties in relation to religious education in schools.									
Impacts analysed; <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="border: none;">Equality</td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; width: 40px; text-align: center;">✓</td> <td style="border: none;">Privacy</td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; width: 40px; text-align: center;">N/A</td> <td style="border: none;">Sustainability</td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; width: 40px; text-align: center;">N/A</td> <td style="border: none;">Crime and Disorder</td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; width: 40px; text-align: center;">N/A</td> </tr> </table>		Equality	✓	Privacy	N/A	Sustainability	N/A	Crime and Disorder	N/A
Equality	✓	Privacy	N/A	Sustainability	N/A	Crime and Disorder	N/A		
Is the Decision consistent with the Council's co-operative values? Yes									
Is this a "Key Decision" as defined in the Constitution? Yes									
Is it included in the 28 day Notice of Decisions? Yes									

CABINET – 15 JUNE 2021

SUNDERLAND AGREED SYLLABUS FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Report of Director of Children's Services, Chief Executive of Together for Children

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 This report seeks Cabinet approval for the revised Sunderland Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education.

2. Description of Decision (Recommendations)

- 2.1 Cabinet are recommended to approve the proposed Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education which was been recommended by the Agreed Syllabus Conference of SACRE for use by Sunderland schools, with effect from 1 September 2021 for a period of five years.

3. Introduction/Background

- 3.1 Local authorities have a statutory duty to set up and maintain a Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) whose duties include the provision and monitoring of a Religious Education Agreed Syllabus and the provision of collective worship in local authority maintained Schools. The Authority has appointed a SACRE which meets once per term. As part of SACRE's responsibilities, it must establish a locally Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education which is reviewed every 5 years. It must be educationally sound and meet legal requirements.
- 3.2 The Agreed Syllabus is a statutory syllabus for Religious Education (RE), prepared under Section 375(2) and Schedule 31 to the Education Act 1996 and adopted by the local Authority under that Schedule. The Agreed Syllabus is, therefore, the key document in determining what is taught in RE in a maintained school.
- 3.3 The Agreed Syllabus is for all maintained schools in the City's Area save in relation to those schools with a designated religious denomination or where the school's trust deed provide an alternative with respect to RE.
- 3.4 RE Education is still a statutory requirement on the curriculum of non-maintained schools although Academies and Free schools can choose to follow the Agreed Syllabus, another agreed syllabus or adopt their own.
- 3.3 It should be noted that Parents/Guardians have the right to withdraw their children from all or part of religious education lessons.

- 3.4 The revised Agreed Syllabus must be developed to take into account requirements of the Equality Act 2010, the new Ofsted framework, and current curriculum changes outlined by the Department for Education.

4. Current Position

- 4.1 An Agreed Syllabus Conference has taken place, organised by SACRE. The Agreed Syllabus Conference met on 13 January 2020 and reviewed the current syllabus and presentations made by two organisations in relation to other possible syllabuses. Following discussion, it was unanimously agreed by the Agreed Syllabus Conference to recommend the RE Today Syllabus B to the Cabinet for formal adoption. Members of the Conference felt that the new specification provided an opportunity to invigorate and offer something new and modern to Pupils and RE departments in Sunderland with a greater level of professional support than previously. Subject to the decision of Cabinet the new syllabus will be formally launched at a training day with RE staff in Sunderland as soon as possible.
- 4.2 The proposed Agreed Syllabus has been developed by RE Today. RE Today is a leading national company that provides support to over 30 SACRE's across the country. RE Today's Syllabus B (which is the proposed Agreed Syllabus) provides a systematic approach to the provision of RE and is well presented, organised and has ease of access for delivery by teaching staff. The proposed Agreed Syllabus considers local and regional resources for RE and the make-up of local religious communities. Exemplar materials are attached.

5. Reasons for the Decision

- 5.1 In order to comply with the Education Act of 1996 and the Schools Standards and Framework Act 1988, Local Authorities are required to set up a Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) to develop an Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education.

6. Alternative Options

- 6.1 Failure to have / adopt and Agreed Syllabus would lead to a breach of the Local Authority's statutory duties in relation to religious education in schools.

7. Impact Analysis

- 7.1 The Education Act 1996 states that an agreed syllabus must reflect the fact that the religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian, whilst taking account of the preaching and practices of other principal religions represented in Great Britain. It must be non-denominational and must not be designed to convert pupils or to urge a particular religion or religious belief on pupils.

- 7.2 All Sunderland Schools will receive a paper-based copy of the syllabus together with an electronic version for future use.

8. Other Relevant Considerations / Consultations

- 8.1 The Local Authority has a duty to set up and maintain SACRE. The Local Authority provides a place for SACRE to meet, and clerking / support services to SACRE meetings and educational settings. There is budget provision of £13,000 in place as part of the Dedicated Schools Grant, administered by Together for Children, for revision of the Agreed Syllabus (every 5 / 6 years) and to cover the costs of printing, publishing and circulating the revised Syllabus. In addition, there will be costs in respect of launching the new Syllabus into schools, which will also be met through this existing budget.

9. Background Papers

The Education Act 1996.

The Schools Standards and Framework Act 1998.

