

CABINET MEETING – 9 OCTOBER 2013

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY SHEET – PART I

Title of Report: Sunderland Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education									
Author(s): Executive Director People Services									
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 for adoption by Sunderland schools, with effect from 1 November 2013 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 1988, 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.									
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; text-align: center; width: 40px;">✓</td> <td style="border: none;">Privacy</td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; text-align: center; width: 40px;">N/A</td> <td style="border: none;">Sustainability</td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; text-align: center; width: 40px;">N/A</td> <td style="border: none;">Crime and Disorder</td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; text-align: center; width: 40px;">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 this a “Key Decision” as defined in the Constitution? Yes Is it included in the 28 day Notice of Decisions? Yes	Scrutiny Committee								

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PEOPLE SERVICES

SUNDERLAND AGREED SYLLABUS FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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

- 2.1 Cabinet are asked to agree the revised Sunderland Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education which was been recommended by the Agreed Syllabus Conference for adoption by Sunderland schools, with effect from 1 November 2013 for a period of five years.

3. 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 collective worship in the Local Authority's Community Schools. Sunderland has a SACRE which meets once per term.
- 3.2 The local agreed syllabus is a statutory syllabus for RE, prepared under schedule 31 to the Education Act 1996 and adopted by the local Authority under that schedule. The Agreed Syllabus will be for all maintained schools or in accordance with the school's designated denomination or trust deeds. Religious Education is still statutory on the curriculum although Academies, Free schools and Voluntary aided schools with a religious character can choose to follow another agreed syllabus or adopt their own.
- 3.3 The legal requirements for teaching religious education are set out in the Education Act 1988 and confirmed by the Education Acts 1996 and Schools Standards and Framework Act 1998. Parents have the right to withdraw their children from all or part of religious education lessons.
- 3.4 The revised syllabus has taken into account the Equality Act 2010, the new Ofsted framework, and current curriculum changes outlined by the DfE.
- 3.5 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.

4. Current Position

- 4.1 The new syllabus is a revision of the Sunderland Agreed Syllabus for Education produced in 2008. It takes into account of local and regional resources for RE and make up of local religious communities. In line with national guidance, the Agreed Syllabus for Sunderland has been reviewed and re-written. An Agreed Syllabus Conference has taken place, organised by SACRE. The draft syllabus (attached) is the result of this process.
- 4.2 The final draft of the new syllabus was submitted to the Agreed Syllabus Conference on 15 July 2013 when it was unanimously agreed to recommend the Syllabus to the Cabinet for formal adoption. Subject to the decision of this meeting, the new syllabus will be formally launched at a training day with RE staff in Sunderland.

5. Financial and Value for Money Implications

- 5.1 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. A budget of £10 000 for revision of the Agreed Syllabus (every 5 / 6 years) and a budget to cover the costs of printing, publishing and circulating the revised Syllabus will be met from the existing budget. In addition there will be costs in respect of launching the new Syllabus into schools. These costs will also be met through existing budgets.

6. Reasons for the Decision

- 6.1 In order to comply with the Education Act 1988, 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.
- 6.2 The locally agreed Syllabus for Sunderland will have the copyright for schools in Sunderland only.

7. Alternative Options

- 7.1 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.

8. Impact Analysis

- 8.1 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. Teaching about denominations is not prohibited.

9. Environment and Sustainability Implications

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

10. Recommendations

- 10.1 Cabinet are recommended to agree the Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education in Sunderland 2013

11. Background Papers

- [The Schools Standards and Framework Act 1998](#)
- [The Education Act 1996](#)
- [The Education Act 1988](#)

