

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Report

Committee/Panel:	Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE)
Date:	25 June 2019
Title:	Report to SACRE regarding The Commission on Re (CoRE) and the activities of The Religious Education Council (REC) in the light of this
Report From:	Director of Children's Services

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Purpose of this Report

1. The purpose of this report is to inform SACRE of the key issues discussed at the Religious Education Council AGM, that took place on 16 May 2019.

Recommendation(s)

2. That SACRE notes the report.

Executive Summary

3. This report seeks to inform SACRE of key issues discussed at the REC AGM on 16 May 2019.

Contextual information

4. The Religious Education Council (REC) of England and Wales, is a large body consisting of members of many organisations which have an interested position in relation to RE. This includes many faith bodies as well as national bodies such as AREIAC (Association of RE Inspectors, Advisers and Consultants), NATRE (National Association of Teachers of RE) and AULRE (Association of University Lecturers of RE).

5. The REC was the body that commissioned the Commission on RE (CoRE) which reported its findings in September 2018. The REC is now the body taking forward the recommendations of the CoRE report.
6. The REC meets twice a year in London in various places of worship. The May 2019 meeting was held in Southwark Catholic Cathedral education centre. The meeting included a tour of the Cathedral and explanation of the shrine dedicated to Saint Oscar Romero by CAFOD Education Advisers. A key interactive presentation was received from a speaker from Exeter University who shared their findings of the MPhil research into trainee primary teachers' sense of their own 'worldview'. This enabled group discussions of the concept of worldviews. This was highly relevant because of the first recommendation from the CoRE report that religious education's name is changed to 'Religion and Worldviews'.
7. The REC Board is a body consisting of those elected from the whole REC membership. A small sub-group has been advising the REC Board on a way forward for the CoRE report findings, in light of the limited response received from the DfE. The REC board is proceeding to consider ways to take forward the CoRE report recommendations by grouping them into three broad groups.
 - (i) Aspects of the report that can be put into place right away, acknowledging that some recommendations have already been met. For example, reinstating the bursary for RE PGCE and funding Subject Knowledge Enhancement courses for people wanting to train as RE teachers from other undergraduate disciplines.
 - (ii) Aspects of the report that are not so contentious and could be implemented soon with some specific action. For example, encouraging government to consider bringing together a body to discuss the continuance of the 'right to withdraw' from RE which does not exist for any other subject. In addition, discussion can begin now on what the precise and desirable content of a National Entitlement would be - were it to exist.
 - (iii) Aspects of the CoRE report that need further consideration. For example, the legal position of SACREs, and position and management of a National Entitlement; and in general aspects of the CoRE report that would need legislative change.
8. The AGM revealed the REC to be in a position where finances need to be continually looked at. If the REC is to be able to continue to take a lead as a broad representative and inclusive body taking forward a new and shared vision for RE, it needs to secure funding beyond that which the membership organisations membership-fee can cover alone.
9. The Chair of REC has been working to continue to keep RE in the national eye. The CEO continue to give a clear voice to matters relating to religious education in our schools in many national forums.

10. The Board and especially all office holders and staff of the REC were thanked for their commitment to ensuring that the contribution RE can make to the wider school curriculum, continues to have a high profile in the public sphere.

REQUIRED CORPORATE AND LEGAL INFORMATION:

Links to the Strategic Plan

Hampshire maintains strong and sustainable economic growth and prosperity:	yes
People in Hampshire live safe, healthy and independent lives:	yes
People in Hampshire enjoy a rich and diverse environment:	yes
People in Hampshire enjoy being part of strong, inclusive communities:	yes

Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents

The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)

Document

Location

None

EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT:

11. Equality Duty

The County Council has a duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 ('the Act') to have due regard in the exercise of its functions to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by or under the Act with regard to the protected characteristics as set out in section 4 of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation);
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation) and those who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (see above) and persons who do not share it.

Due regard in this context involves having due regard in particular to:

- The need to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
- Take steps to meet the needs of persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- Encourage persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

12. Equalities Impact Assessment:

- (a) This intends to have a positive impact on groups with protected characteristics through enabling children and young people in Hampshire to think, speak and act in more thoughtful ways with regard to others in the community.