



EXECUTIVE

14th September 2023

Report Title	The Establishment of a North Northamptonshire Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE)
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Lead Member	Cllr Scott Edwards – Executive Member for Children, Families, Education and Skills

Key Decision	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for call-in by Scrutiny?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Are there public sector equality duty implications?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information (whether in appendices or not)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Applicable paragraph number/s for exemption from publication under Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972	

List of Appendices

Appendix A - Equality Screening Assessment

Appendix B - North Northamptonshire SACRE Constitution

Appendix C - North Northamptonshire SACRE Principles

Appendix D - North Northamptonshire SACRE Agreed Syllabus Conference

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To request that Executive approve the establishment of a North Northamptonshire Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE).

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 Every local authority has a duty to establish a permanent body known as the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) in accordance with the Education Act 1996.

- 2.2 The broad role of the SACRE is to support the effective provision of Religious Education (RE) and collective worship in schools and to enrich the experience of RE and collective worship for all pupils. Further information about SACRE is set out in this report.
- 2.3 There is currently a SACRE serving the whole of Northamptonshire.
- 2.4 The report sets out a proposal to establish a specific North Northamptonshire SACRE to reflect the change to a unitary authority. A North Northamptonshire SACRE would:
- Fulfil SACRE statutory duties operating as North Northamptonshire unitary authority;
 - Ensure that SACRE membership is reflective of the local communities, religions and beliefs in North Northamptonshire; and
 - Ensure the best outcomes for all children by collaboratively engaging with schools in North Northamptonshire to facilitate high quality Religious Education (RE) and collective worship, suitably tailored to specific locality strengths and areas for improvement where appropriate.
- 2.5 If approved, a North Northamptonshire SACRE would adopt its own Constitution (attached as **Appendix B**).

3. Recommendation

- 3.1. It is recommended that Executive approves the establishment of a North Northamptonshire SACRE.
- 3.2. Reasons for Recommendation:
- To ensure the best outcomes for all children in North Northamptonshire for Religious Education (RE) and collective worship, and access to a high quality RE curriculum.
 - To ensure that the following SACRE duties are met for North Northamptonshire Council:
 - Advise the local authority (LA) on matters related to agreed syllabus Religious Education (RE) and collective worship;
 - Publish an Annual Report on its work and on actions taken by its representative groups;
 - Monitor the provision and quality of Agreed Syllabus RE and of collective worship in order to provide targeted advice and support on teaching Agreed Syllabus RE;
 - Advise the LA on the provision of training of teachers;
 - Consider complaints about RE and collective worship referred to them by their LA;
 - Consider whether changes need to be made to the Agreed Syllabus, in partnership with the LA;

- Offer advice to the LA in respect of the Agreed Syllabus and its implementation.

3.3 Alternative Options Considered: There are no alternative options as legally each local authority must have its own SACRE according to Section 390 of the Education Act 1996. There is no reason why North Northamptonshire SACRE cannot work collaboratively with West Northamptonshire SACRE once they are both established in the future should this be agreeable.

4. Report Background

4.1 Section 390 of the Education Act 1996 states that it is the statutory duty of the Council to establish a permanent body called a SACRE to advise the Council on matters concerned with RE and collective worship.

4.2 Councils must appoint 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, will appropriately reflect the principal religious traditions in the area;
- Group B: the Church of England;
- Group C: teacher associations;
- Group D: the local authority.

4.3 The broad role of the SACRE is to support the effective provision of RE and collective worship by:

- Giving advice on methods of teaching the Agreed Syllabus for RE;
- Advising the Council on the provision of training for teachers;
- Monitoring inspection reports on RE, collective worship and Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development (SMSC);
- Considering complaints about the provision and delivery of RE and collective worship referred to it by the LA.

4.4 SACRE was first established in Northamptonshire in 1988 with great enthusiasm from teachers in general as well as RE teachers. There were a number of training sessions provided for teachers by the former Northamptonshire County Council (NCC) and the very first Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC) took place.

4.5 In April 2021, and following Local Government reorganisation in Northamptonshire, North Northamptonshire Council (NNC) and West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) were formed, and the County Council was abolished. However, since that time SACRE has continued as a single standing advisory council across the whole of Northamptonshire.

4.6 With two different and separate local authorities now operating in Northamptonshire it was proposed by the current SACRE members that two standing advisory councils were established in order to reflect this significant change.

- 4.7 The establishment of a North Northamptonshire SACRE would:
- Establish responsibility for all of the SACRE statutory duties ensuring that they are being appropriately fulfilled;
 - Recognise, welcome and represent all faith communities and non-faith communities in North Northamptonshire;
 - Ensure that membership of a North Northamptonshire SACRE appropriately reflects the four committees set out in section 4.2 above and in the constitution.

5. Issues and Choices

- 5.1 A Local Authority SACRE must adhere to the statutory duties outlined in this report and the supporting documents.
- 5.2 North Northamptonshire Council has been operating as a unitary council for approximately two years. SACRE must be representative of the local authority area that it is in and therefore it is deemed necessary, as time has progressed, to request the establishment of a North Northamptonshire SACRE.
- 5.3 A North Northamptonshire SACRE would operate under the relevant statutory duties including reporting annually to Executive.
- 5.4 A North Northamptonshire SACRE would operate under its own constitution. This is because each individual SACRE is required to do so under Section 390 of the Education Act 1996.

6. Next Steps

- 6.1. Should the establishment of a North Northamptonshire SACRE be approved by the Executive, the relevant members from the current countywide SACRE will begin work immediately on planning the transition to North Northamptonshire SACRE. The aim is to complete this by September 2024.

7. Implications (including financial implications)

7.1. Resources, Financial and Transformation

- 7.1.1 The Council's responsibility to convene the Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC) comes with a duty to provide funds and support for its work. The allocated budget for the production of an Agreed Syllabus is approximately £5,000.
- 7.1.2 The cost for a SACRE Advisor for one day a week for an academic year will be approximately £12,000.

7.2. Legal and Governance

7.2.1. The SACRE constitution sets out the requirements of SACRE. The constitution is underpinned by legal information stating that the SACRE has been established under the provisions of Section 390 of the Education Act 1996.

7.2.2 Every local authority must have a SACRE and it must meet sufficient times to fulfil its statutory duties. North Northamptonshire SACRE will meet three times per year.

7.3. Relevant Policies and Plans

7.3.1. The work of SACRE, through its statutory duties, links to the Corporate Plan key commitments of:

- Better, brighter futures; and
- Connected communities.

7.3.2 Specifically, the statutory duties that SACRE must adhere to will assist the Council in meeting its commitment to:

- Ensuring that every child has equal access to a high standard of education; and
- Informing and listening to our communities, giving them a greater say in their future.

7.4. Risk

7.4.1. There is a risk that North Northamptonshire SACRE may not achieve adequate representation from the various faith and non-faith communities in the localities.

7.4.2 To mitigate this risk, the SACRE Advisor and current SACRE members will be actively engaging with their local communities to invite members of the various local faith and non-faith communities to North Northamptonshire SACRE.

7.4.3 The North Northamptonshire SACRE membership should reflect and represent the local community.

7.5. Consultation

7.5.1 Before the proposals in this report were put forward to Executive, a working party was set up to create the necessary unitary constitutions. These were then shared, discussed and consulted upon within the current SACRE.

7.5.2 The SACRE currently comprises of four groups: the Church of England, other Christian denominations and the major faiths represented in Northamptonshire, teachers and the Council.

7.5.3 All groups have voted in support of the proposals put forward in this report.

7.6. Consideration by Executive Advisory Panel

7.6.1 The Future Communities Executive Advisory Panel (EAP), at their meeting on 7th September 2023, considered the Establishment of a North Northamptonshire Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) and linked documents. The key issues raised by the panel will be verbally updated at the Executive meeting.

7.7 Consideration by Scrutiny

7.7.1 This report has not been considered by the Council's scrutiny function.

7.8 Equality Implications

7.8.1 There is no detrimental impact on any protected characteristic as a result of the recommendations in this report.

7.9 Climate and Environment Impact

7.9.1 There is no detrimental impact on the climate or environment as a result of the recommendations in this report.

7.10 Community Impact

7.10.1 The proposal to establish a North Northamptonshire SACRE will have no distinct negative impact on the community.

7.10.2 The proposal is likely to have a positive impact because a more local North Northamptonshire SACRE will better reflect the makeup of the locality areas, giving members an opportunity to contribute and add value to the wider duties of SACRE.

7.11 Crime and Disorder Impact

7.11.1 The recommendations in this report will have negligible, if any, crime and disorder impact.

8 Background Papers

8.1 None