

Report to:	SACRE
Relevant Officer:	Jean Martin, School Improvement Advisor
Date of Meeting:	12 June 2019

AGREED SYLLABUS CONFERENCE

1.0 Purpose of the report:

1.1 To consider arrangements for a possible Agreed Syllabus Conference.

2.0 Recommendation(s):

2.1 To agree to hold an Agreed Syllabus Conference and to appoint members of SACRE to sit on that meeting.

3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):

3.1 To ensure compliance with the requirements of the Education Act 1996.

3.2a Is the recommendation contrary to a plan or strategy adopted or approved by the Council? No

3.2b Is the recommendation in accordance with the Council's approved budget? Yes

3.3 Other alternative options to be considered:

None.

4.0 Council Priority:

4.1 The relevant Council Priority is: "Communities: Creating stronger communities and increasing resilience"

5.0 Background Information

- 5.1 Blackpool Council has had previously an Agreed Syllabus produced in conjunction with Lancashire County Council and at its meeting on 25 July 2016 was supportive of continuing this arrangement after the renewal of that document in 2016. The use of a common syllabus across the wider area has benefits for consistency and children and staff moving across the boundary. It has therefore received support from the local RE Network.
- 5.2 Section 375 of the Education Act 1996 requires local authorities to have an agreed syllabus of religious education. Paragraph 2 of Schedule 31 to the Education Act 1996 requires the Authority from time to time to cause further Conferences to be convened for the purpose of reconsidering any agreed syllabus adopted by them. The agreement of that conference is only binding on the Community sector i.e does not apply to Voluntary Aided or Academy schools.
- 5.3 This has not happened for many years in Blackpool due to both the sharing of a syllabus across the Lancashire and very small numbers of schools involved- none of Blackpool's secondary schools and only five primary schools. Previously advice has been sought from Department for Education but none has been forthcoming as to whether such a meeting was necessary. The Committee is asked first to ask officers to write again seeking confirmation that such a conference is necessary.
- 5.4 If it is confirmed that such a conference is necessary. It is considered advisable to hold such a meeting urgently and undertaken on a light touch basis. Guidance notes from the NASACRE as to the holding of such a meeting are attached for information at Appendix 8a. It is suggested that members propose a date for the conference.

5.5 Does the information submitted include any exempt information? No

5.6 List of Appendices:

Appendix 8(a): Guidance on Agreed Syllabus Conferences from NASACRE

6.0 Legal considerations:

6.1 See paragraph 5.2 above.

7.0 Human Resources considerations:

7.1 None.

8.0 Equalities considerations:

8.1 None.

9.0 Financial considerations:

9.1 None.

10.0 Risk management considerations:

10.1 None.

11.0 Ethical considerations:

11.1 None.

12.0 Internal/ External Consultation undertaken:

12.1 None.

13.0 Background papers:

13.1 None.