

CHILDREN AND EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	AGENDA ITEM No. 5
8 MARCH 2023	PUBLIC REPORT

Report of:	Jonathan Lewis, Service Director Education	
Cabinet Member(s) responsible:	Cabinet Member for Children’s Services, Education, Skills and the University Councillor Lynne Ayres	
Contact Officer(s):	Carley Holliman, Assistant Director Schools & Settings Improvement	Tel.

LOCALLY AGREED SYLLABUS FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (RE) 2023-2028

RECOMMENDATIONS	
FROM: Jonathan Lewis, Service Director Education	Deadline date: N/A
It is recommended that Children and Education Scrutiny Committee approve the Locally Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education (RE) 2023 - 2028.	

1. ORIGIN OF REPORT

1.1 This report has been written by the Service Director (Education) at the request of the committee.

2. PURPOSE AND REASON FOR REPORT

2.1 This report requires approval by committee as it contains the statutory syllabus for all schools.

2.2 This report is for the Children and Education Scrutiny Committee to consider under its Terms of Reference Part 3, Section 4 - Overview and Scrutiny Functions, paragraph No. 2.1 Functions determined by Council:

- 2. Education
- c) Special Needs and Inclusion

2.3 This report links to the Children in Care Pledge: Support children in care to have a good education.

3. TIMESCALES

Is this a Major Policy Item/Statutory Plan?	NO	If yes, date for Cabinet meeting	N/A
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4. BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

4.1 Section 375 and schedule 31 of the Education act 1996 requires the establishment of an Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC) to oversee the Syllabus review. Members of the Agreed Syllabus Conference comprises of the members of the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) which includes representatives of local faith groups, teacher representatives and elected Members.

- 4.2 An agreed syllabus must be reviewed every five years by law so syllabus reviews go in a five-year cycle. In order to have a new syllabus ready for teachers to read absorb and incorporate into their curriculum it has to be ready at least one term before the beginning of the school year. The last syllabus was 2018/23. Work on the new began syllabus almost two years ago to be ready for summer term 2023 and for it to be used from September 2023.
- 4.3 The review and resultant renewal involved teachers and representatives of the faith groups. The final draft report was agreed by the Agreed Syllabus Conference on 11 January 2023.
- 4.4 Subject to Scrutiny member and Cabinet member approval, the new Syllabus will be formally launched on 15 June 2023 and will become effective from 1 September 2023. Further events to support the introduction of the Syllabus in schools will take place during the academic years 2023-2025 for all schools in Peterborough.
- 4.5 SACRE will monitor and support the implementation of the Agreed Syllabus over the next 5 years.
- 4.6 Since the last syllabus was launched in May 2018 there have been developments in RE from both the academic world and Ofsted. The Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC) reviewed the research and recommendations from the Religious Education Council and Ofsted about taking a 'Worldviews Approach' and a more academic approach to RE and added these recommendations to the new syllabus. The ASC also updated the primary assessment criteria, moving away from using targets to assess pupils to pupils showing progression through Key Stage 1 to the end of Key Stage 2. A review of the previous syllabus highlighted teachers would like more resources, so the ASC agreed to add some units of work for Key Stages 1 and 2, with lists of suitable units for Key Stages 1,2 and 3.
- 4.7 There is currently a trial being run in three local authorities to see how well the ideas in Commission in Religious Education's 'Religion and Worldviews: The Way Forward Report' can be incorporated into the curriculum. In phase 1 a handbook was written. The trial has reached phase 2, in which three school-based teams will road test the first draft of the Resource. They will develop their own syllabus/curriculum framework and units of work. This process of testing, will lead to a revised version of the Resource, scheduled to be published in the Spring of 2024.

5. CORPORATE PRIORITIES

- 5.1 *This report links to the following Council Corporate Priorities:*

The Economy & Inclusive Growth

Environment (including a summary of the outcome of a completed Carbon Impact Assessment, to be submitted in full to the Transport and Delivery of the new proposed syllabus will not impact upon carbon emissions.

The syllabus will be introduced at a Conference, which will be held in person. Emissions will be produced through travel to the Conference. Future events will be held to support the introduction of the syllabus from 2023-2025. Some of these events will be held online, which will help reduce travel emissions.

The adoption of a religious education syllabus every 5 years is a legal requirement, and it is deemed that the events proposed are necessary to support education colleagues to deliver this material.

The carbon impact of this proposal is minimal.

Prevention, Independence & Resilience

- *Educations and Skills for All*
- *Adults*
- *Children*

The good teaching of RE is a vital part of education generally. "Every child and young person

who goes to school is entitled to an experience of religious education (RE) that is both academically challenging and personally inspiring”. A Curriculum Framework for Religious Education in England -The Religious Education Council of England and Wales -October 2013.

Further information on the Council's Priorities can be found here - [Link to Corporate Strategy and Priorities Webpage](#)

6. CONSULTATION

- 6.1 All the religious groups in the area are represented on SACRE and the Agreed Syllabus Conference. Representatives of all the groups have been formally consulted and have contributed to the new Syllabus.

Schools are represented on SACRE and the Agreed Syllabus Conference. Schools were invited to send participants to contribute to working groups.

Councillors are represented on SACRE and were part of the agreed syllabus conference.

7. ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES OR IMPACT

- 7.1 The revised Agreed Syllabus will be approved and introduced into Peterborough schools at the launch conference on 15 June 2023, to be implemented in schools from 1 September 2023.

8. REASON FOR THE RECOMMENDATION

- 8.1 Each local Authority's Agreed Syllabus must be revised every five years. As Peterborough's Agreed Syllabus was last reviewed in 2018, it was a statutory requirement for an Agreed Syllabus Conference to be formed to undertake its revision. Peterborough is in a tri-county agreement with Cambridgeshire and Rutland and one adviser works across all three Local Authorities.

9. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 9.1 There were no alternative options considered as this is a statutory requirement.

10. IMPLICATIONS

Financial Implications

- 10.1 The cost of publishing and circulating the revised Syllabus will be met from the existing budget across the three counties. In addition, there will be costs in respect of launching the Syllabus into schools and supporting schools with the implementation of the Syllabus. The overall proposed cost for the syllabus and launch events is £7380. The estimated cost to Peterborough (21%) is £1,550.

Peterborough 'buy in' SACRE and RE adviser services for schools from Cambridgeshire County Council. Any procurement activity will be compliant with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules.

Legal Implications

- 10.2 Section 375 and Schedule 31 of the Education Act 1996 requires a Local Authority to review its Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education every five years. For this purpose, the Local Authority is required to establish an Agreed Syllabus Conference which reviews the Syllabus and formally recommends a revised Syllabus to the Local Authority for adoption.

Equalities Implications

- 10.3 There are no equalities implications arising from this report.

Educational Implications

10.4 Every pupil has a statutory entitlement to Religious Education. The Agreed Syllabus sets a framework to support those who are responsible for the provision and quality of Religious Education in maintained and voluntary controlled schools in Peterborough. It seeks to promote high levels of consistency in teaching and learning, while giving teachers freedom to find the best ways to help pupils engage with challenging spiritual, moral, social and cultural questions.

11. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

11.1 Section 375 and Schedule 31 of the Education act 1996.

12. APPENDICES

12.1 Appendix 1 – Locally Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education (RE)
Appendix 2 – Agreed Syllabus Conference Business Case