

Notice of Non-key Executive Decision

Subject Heading:	Commission RE Today Services to review current syllabus for Religious Education
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Robert Benham – Cabinet Member for Education, Children’s and Families and Deputy Leader of the Council
SLT Lead:	Robert South – Director of Children’s Services
Report Author and contact details:	Susan Sutton, Head of Quality & Effectiveness susan.sutton@havering.gov.uk
Policy context:	<p>Each LA is required to have an Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education.</p> <p>Havering and Redbridge have worked together to develop a shared syllabus which is taught in all maintained schools and many academies across both boroughs.</p> <p>The current syllabus was agreed by the council in 2015 and therefore needs to be reviewed.</p>
Financial summary:	The costs of the review will be £7,334, although it is was hoped that by charging schools to attend the launch event, the LA could recoup much of the costs, so would be asked to underwrite the full amount.

Non-key Executive Decision

Relevant OSC:	Children & Learning Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Is this decision exempt from being called-in?	Yes, it is a Non Key Decision by Officer and exempt from Call-In

Non-key Executive Decision

The subject matter of this report deals with the following Council Objectives

Communities making Havering	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Places making Havering	<input type="checkbox"/>
Opportunities making Havering	<input type="checkbox"/>
Connections making Havering	<input type="checkbox"/>

Part A – Report seeking decision

DETAIL OF THE DECISION REQUESTED AND RECOMMENDED ACTION

The decision requested is that the Council agree to commission RE Today to work with Redbridge and our education community to undertake a revision of the Locally Agreed Religious Education Syllabus as required by statute.

We recommend this as the organisation produced our current syllabus and our partners in Redbridge have agreed to use RE Today to refresh the syllabus. The organisation currently works with our schools and are very well received by teachers. They also advise our Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) currently. The local SACRE have voted to undertake this curriculum re-write.

AUTHORITY UNDER WHICH DECISION IS MADE

Havering Council Constitution

3.5.3 ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION SERVICES

LEA

To exercise all the powers and duties of the Council acting as Local Education Authority as they relate to the general matters listed in the functions below –
[...]

(r) To act on matters relating to curriculum, including - (i) giving advice (ii) taking such action as is necessary to ensure that the curriculum within each maintained school (including religious education) complies with legislative requirements and is effectively delivered.

STATEMENT OF THE REASONS FOR THE DECISION

Each Local Authority is required to have an Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education. Havering and Redbridge have worked together to develop a shared syllabus which is taught in all maintained schools and many academies across both boroughs.

The current syllabus was agreed by the council in 2015:

<https://democracy.havering.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?id=1625>

According to legislation, the syllabus needs to be reconsidered within 5 years of being agreed: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/56/schedule/31>

Havering SACRE began the process of review in collaboration with the HSIS RE Lead, with a consultation sent to schools in 2019. The results of this were considered at the SACRE meeting on May 16th of that year and SACRE continued discussions and investigation throughout 2019 and most of 2020.

Non-key Executive Decision

Havering LA were asked to consider suggested additions of:

Item	Quantity required	Price (to be shared by Havering and Redbridge)
Expand the 1 page unit plans into full unit plans.	9	£9 900
Expand the medium length unit plans into full unit plans.	8	£6 600
Add resource lists to each unit	17	£1 375
Update unit 2.14 which has proved unpopular in Havering schools	1	£550
Create an assessment exemplification document	1	£550
Create a document to highlight progression within the syllabus in light of the new Ofsted inspection framework	1	£1000
RE Today advisers leading a day's worth of training and a launch event (price to be deducted if all items on the list are purchased)	1	£2000
Total		£21,975

As Havering has fewer maintained schools than Redbridge, the LA would be charged £7,334 of the cost. Initially, it was hoped that by charging schools to attend the launch event, the LA could recoup much of the costs, so would be asked to underwrite the £7,334.

This proposal was considered by HSIS and the decision was made to fund the three pieces of work that seemed most urgent: updating of unit 2.14, creation of an assessment exemplification document and the document to highlight progression within the syllabus. This decision was made by taking the survey and finances into account, including uncertainty about recouping funds from a launch.

This decision was presented to SACRE at its meeting on 14th July 2020. SACRE agreed to ask for the full funding and all work completed over 2 financial years rather than 1.

In December 2020, SACRE unanimously agreed the Agreed Syllabus Conference's (ASC's) two proposals:

A) That Havering SACRE's Agreed Syllabus Conference resolves to continue to recommend the current Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education to Havering subject to amendments limited to date-specific material as follows:

- Dates on the front cover changed to 2021-2026
- Forewords to be replaced by text authored by current post-holders
- Page 11, point 9 "Work to create a coherent long-term plan to begin in September 2016." To be updated to reflect the fact that this is a continuing syllabus

Non-key Executive Decision

- Page 11, point 12 “Use September 2015–July 2016 to implement the syllabus gradually”– as above
- Page 15: Change dates in the sentence: The Redbridge and Havering Agreed Syllabus 2015-2020 fulfils the legal requirements set out above, and has its roots in the Non statutory National Curriculum for Religious Education (2013).

B) The Agreed Syllabus Conference further resolves to recommend to the local authority that the partnership with Redbridge SACRE be continued and that the suite of resources supporting the syllabus be extended.

Costs to be spread over two financial years from the CSSB fund and shared on a one-third Havering to two-thirds Redbridge ratio. The aim is to recoup a proportion of the costs by charging schools to attend the launch conference and receive the resources. School unable to attend would be able to purchase the resources after the event. The following work to be commissioned from RE Today Services.

1. The planning documents to be developed into full units
2. An appendix on sequencing their long-term planning to be added to the guidance
3. An appendix on assessment to be added to the guidance
4. A launch conference be planned

These proposals will cost £7,334. They will effectively keep the syllabus itself almost exactly the same which provides continuity for schools and pupils whilst allowing for the initially proposed additions to be made.

SACRE recommends these to the Local Authority.

Units to be developed from 1 page plans into full unit plans:

- 1.1 What do Christians do at Easter and why is it important to them?
- 1.2 Who influences our lives?
- 1.6 What festivals do different religions celebrate?
- 2.1 Why is Jesus important to Christians?
- 2.2 Who should inspire us?
- 2.5 Why do religious people celebrate?
- 2.11 What do different people believe about G-d?
- 2.13 Why is prayer important for religious believers?
- 2.15 Why do people make vows and commitments to one another?

Medium length plans to be developed into full unit plans:

- 1.3 How do the stories of Jesus inspire Christians today?
- 1.5 In what ways are a church and mosque important to believers?
- 2.4 Where, how and why do people worship?
- 2.6 How and why do believers show their commitments during the journey of life?
- 2.7 What matters most to Humanists and Christians?
- 2.12 Why are sources of wisdom important to religious people?
- 2.16 What will make our city/town a more respectful place?
- 2.17 Justice and poverty: can religions help to build a fair world?

Full unit plan to be updated:

Non-key Executive Decision

2.14 What do religions say to us when life gets hard

Timeline for developing the new resources:

Date	Writing	Consultation with teachers
Autumn term 2021	9 full units of work, appendix on sequencing for progression	
Spring term 2022	9 full units of work, appendix on assessment, resource lists	9 units of work written in the Autumn term and appendix on sequencing for progression
Summer term 2022		9 units of work written in the Spring term and appendix on assessment, resource lists
Launch: Autumn term 2022		

The additional resources to be written are designed to help teachers implement the syllabus effectively. At the moment, very little planning is provided for some units and there is limited information on how to assess when using this syllabus. Additionally, due to the new Ofsted EIF there is an increased emphasis on sequencing and progression which was not present when the syllabus was first created in 2015, so it will be helpful to provide teachers with more information here.

Whilst the syllabus itself is statutory, supporting documents such as appendices and unit plans are not statutory, therefore although it is good practice to present these documents to SACRE and take comments of members onboard, the documents themselves do not have to be formally agreed by SACRE or an ASC.

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

A review of the syllabus is a statutory requirement; however, Havering Education Officers suggested a more partial re-write of the syllabus and some additional guidance on use of assessment, based on responses to a consultation with teachers and leaders. This would have reduced the initial costs.

This option was rejected by both our partners in Redbridge and our SACRE committee in favour of a more comprehensive re-write.

PRE-DECISION CONSULTATION

As required by statute, Havering Education Officers entered into a consultation with teachers and leaders in schools and the item was discussed by the SACRE committee.

Non-key Executive Decision

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NAME AND JOB TITLE OF STAFF MEMBER ADVISING THE DECISION-MAKER

Name: Susan Sutton

Designation: Head of Education Quality and Assurance

Signature: *Susan Sutton*

Date:23/06/2021

Part B - Assessment of implications and risks

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

The revision and refresh of the syllabus is a statutory requirement set out in schedule 31 to the Education Act 1996. The Council is required to undertake the review and adoption of the relevant syllabus within the 5 year period.

The value of the joint contract award between the two London boroughs is below threshold for the purposes of Public Procurement Regulations 2015 (as amended) and is permissible within the Councils Contract Procedure Rules.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

The total cost of the review is planned at £21,975 out of which Havering is required to pay £7,334, to be covered by the current education budget. There are no other significant financial implications beyond the costs outlined above. We would hope to recoup some of these costs through a teachers' conference in due course but this cannot be guaranteed as to how much.

HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS (AND ACCOMMODATION IMPLICATIONS WHERE RELEVANT)

There are no human resources or accommodation implications or risks.

EQUALITIES AND SOCIAL INCLUSION IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the Council has a duty when exercising its functions. This includes the procurement sought in this report, to have "due regard" to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Act and advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between persons who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not. This is the public sector equality duty. The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

"Due regard" is the regard that is appropriate in all the circumstances. The weight to be attached to each need is a matter for the Council. As long as the council is properly aware of the effects and has taken them into account, the duty is discharged.

There are no equalities and social inclusion implications or risks. The re-written syllabus will go before the SACRE committee to gain approval before being recommended to members for adoption. The committee has representation from all interested parties and therefore an EqIA would not be required.

Non-key Executive Decision

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Consultation with Havering teachers
Minutes of SACRE Committee decision meeting

Non-key Executive Decision

Part C – Record of decision

I have made this executive decision in accordance with authority delegated to me by the Leader of the Council and in compliance with the requirements of the Constitution.

Decision

Proposal agreed

~~Proposal NOT agreed because~~

Details of decision maker

Signed



Name: Trevor Cook

Cabinet Portfolio held:
CMT Member title: AD, Education Services
Head of Service title
Other manager title:

Date: 1st July 2021

Lodging this notice

The signed decision notice must be delivered to the proper officer, Debra Marlow, Principal Democratic Services Officer in Democratic Services, in the Town Hall.

For use by Committee Administration

This notice was lodged with me on _____

Signed _____