GWYNEDD COUNCIL CABINET

Report to a meeting of the Gwynedd Council Cabinet

Date of meeting:	**September 2022**
Cabinet Member:	**Councillor Beca Brown**
Contact Officer:	**Buddug Mair Huws**
Contact Telephone Number:	**34319**
Title of Item:	**REVIEW OF THE GWYNEDD STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE) CONSTITUTION**

1. THE DECISION SOUGHT

(i) The Cabinet is requested to approve the recommendation of the Education Department and the Gwynedd SACRE Committee to change the membership of Group B, as noted:

- **Group A - Christianity and other Beliefs**

- **Group B - representation of Teachers and Headteachers – retain at 5**

  The seats will be allocated as follows:
  3 seats to be shared between the recognised Teachers' Unions (NAS/UWT; UCAC; NEU; ASCL and NAHT) – to be decided by the Gwynedd Teachers' Union Forum.
  1 seat to be filled by the Primary and Special Catchment Areas Consultative Group (GYDCA)
  1 seat to be filled by the Gwynedd Secondary Headteachers Group (GSCU)

- **Group C - Elected Members - retain at 7**

- **Co-opted - SACRE Committee to retain the right to co-opt members**

- **(there are 3 votes, which is 1 for each Group. The Co-opted members do not have a vote)**

2. THE REASON FOR THE NEED FOR A DECISION

The Council has not considered the constitution since 2019, and as a result the existing constitution notes that teacher representatives come from the Teachers' Unions that are active within the Authority:

ASCL (1)
NAS/UWT (1)
UCAC (1)

NUT (1)
ATL (1)

However, the NUT and ATL Unions merged in 2017 to create the NEU Union, and the NAHT Union is also recognised by Gwynedd Council.

The Education Department and SACRE are of the opinion that there is a need to strengthen the teachers' representation on the Committee to add value to the Committee's meetings and actions.

The Primary and Special Catchment Areas Consultative Group (GYDCA) is a group that meets monthly and includes one Primary Headteacher from every catchment area in Gwynedd and the Gwynedd Secondary Headteachers Group (GSCU) also meets monthly and includes every Secondary Headteacher in Gwynedd. It is believed that it would be appropriate to ask for a nomination from both these groups to ensure representation of one primary and secondary headteacher/teacher on the SACRE committee.

3. INTRODUCTION AND RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS

Background
The Education Act 1996 places a duty on the local authority to establish a standing council to advise it on religious education.

SACRE Functions

In accordance with the Constitution, the functions of SACRE are as follows:

- Advise the Local Authority on worship in schools and religious education to be provided in accordance with the agreed syllabus, including teaching methods, advice on materials and the provision of training for teachers;

- Consider whether it should be recommended that the Local Authority's current agreed syllabus should be reviewed by calling an Agreed Syllabus Conference [ASC];

- Consider requests from schools to come to a decision (to be excluded from the requirement that religious worship should be "Christian"):

- Report back to the Local Authority and the Welsh Government on its activities annually.

SACRE Membership
The Act notes that SACRE should include representatives from among the following:

- A group of persons to represent the Christian denominations and other religions as, in the opinion of the authority, will appropriately reflect the principal religious traditions in the area ('Group A')

- A group of persons to represent such associations representing teachers as, in the opinion of the authority, ought to be represented, having regard to the circumstances of the area (Group B)

- A group of persons to represent the authority (Group C)

Only the above representative groups have the right to vote, and each group will have one vote.

SACRE itself could also co-opt members (but they would not have a vote)

Circular 10/94
In addition to the statutory provision, in 1994 the former Welsh Office published guidance on Religious Education and Collective Worship in the form of Circular 10/94, which includes provisions involving the implementation of SACRE.

Gwynedd Council SACRE
The SACRE membership was reviewed by Gwynedd Council's Cabinet in April 2019, and the current membership is as follows:

Christians and Other Faiths (Group A)
The Methodist Church
Union of Welsh Baptists
Presbyterian Church of Wales
Church in Wales
Congregationalist Union
The Catholic Church
one representative from the following beliefs: Buddhism, Islam, Hinduism, Judaism, Sikhism and the Humanists

Teachers representing the following Unions
ASCL (1)
NAS/UWT (1)
UCAC (1)
NUT (1)
ATL (1)

Elected Members Membership (7)
(Based on political balance)
(Ex-officio Members, the Chair and Vice-chair of the Council)

The SACRE constitution has not been reviewed since then.

4. NEXT STEPS AND TIMETABLE

4.1 Submit the Cabinet's decision to the SACRE Committee on the 29th of November 2022.
4.2 Act on the change to the Constitution in accordance with the Cabinet's decision.

5. ANY CONSULTATIONS UNDERTAKEN PRIOR TO RECOMMENDING THE DECISION

5.1 **The Gwynedd SACRE Committee's opinion on adapting the way teachers' representatives are invited -** It would be an opportunity for Gwynedd SACRE to be more representational and will enable them to increase the key teachers' representation on the Committee

5.2 **The view of the Gwynedd Teachers' Union Forum -** The constitution needs to be amended to reflect the current situation in terms of teachers' unions.

5.3 **Views of the Statutory Officers:**

i. The Monitoring Officer: The report has been the subject of advice by the Legal Services. No observations to add in relation to propriety.

ii. Head of Finance: Nothing to add from the perspective of financial propriety