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MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Agreed Syllabus Conference held
at County Hall, Usk - Remote Attendance on Wednesday, 9th March, 2022 at 10.30 am

PRESENT:

COUNTY COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES:

County Councillor P. Pavia (Chair)
County Councillor T. Thomas
County Councillor L. Brown

FAITH REPRESENTATIVES:

Mrs B. Quinlan
Mrs S. Gooding
Mrs S. Cave

TEACHER REPRESENTATIVES:

Mrs S. Hamer
Ms. C. Skinner
Mr. N. Jenkins

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

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|----------------------|------------------------------------|
| Sharon Randall-Smith | Head of Achievement and Attainment |
| Wendy Barnard | Democratic Services Officer |
| Hayley Jones | Curriculum Partner (SACs and RVE) |

APOLOGIES:

County Councillor M. Powell

1. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were made.

2. Public Open Forum

No members of the public were present.

3. To consider the preparation of a new Agreed Syllabus for Religion, Values and Ethics.

The Chair opened the Agreed Syllabus Conference to make arrangements for the preparation of a new agreed syllabus.

The Chair reminded us of the key questions:

Questions for agreed syllabus conferences and standing advisory councils to consider:

- Are religious and non-religious philosophical convictions appropriately represented?
- Would it be useful to identify faith and belief groups represented locally in the agreed syllabus?

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- Would it be appropriate to offer schools and settings useful information about these faith and belief groups and how to contact them?
- Would it be helpful to include exemplar material and resources to support the locally agreed syllabus?
- How can collaboration between the Agreed Syllabus Conference and local authority schools and settings be facilitated to ensure an appropriate agreed syllabus is produced for your area?
- Are there any other groups or organisations in Wales that could support the Agreed Syllabus Conference in developing the locally agreed syllabus for your area?
- How will the locally agreed syllabus be promoted to schools and settings and other interested parties in your area?
- How will your local Standing Advisory Council support schools and settings with RVE provision that has regard to the locally agreed syllabus?
- In addition to the statutory RVE guidance for learners from 3 to 16, do schools and settings in your area require anything further to support curriculum design for RVE in ways which support the principle of subsidiarity? For example:
 - advice on links to other Areas
 - suggestions for optional post 16 RVE
 - a glossary of terms
 - advice on engaging with sensitive issues in RVE
 - guidance on what critical, objective, and pluralistic RVE might look like

The RVE Adviser delivered a presentation on the RVE Agreed Syllabus Conference noting that once the new RVE guidance is adopted it must be reviewed in 5 years. There is provision that it can be reviewed at any time e.g. in 2 years via a further Agreed Syllabus Conference.

It was noted that the Agreed Syllabus Conference must have regard to the RVE Guidance. It was noted that the Church in Wales and the Catholic Church will be providing additional guidance to sit alongside the RVE guidance and there are plans for diocesan training for voluntary aided schools.

Some errors in the legislative summary were brought to our attention. Further advice is being sought from WASACRE/Legal Dept/Welsh Government as appropriate.

The removal of the right to withdraw was discussed. It was discussed that a well-designed curriculum with good communication between practitioners and parents. Making information and learning available to parents was considered key.

It was also considered that the child's point of view must be taken into account. For example consistency when moving from one region to another.

It is important to make the syllabus individual to Monmouthshire by adding some additional information (e.g. a foreword) rather than adopt the guidance as provided.

It was noted that there are several faith vacancies for the SACRE/Agreed Syllabus Conference despite best efforts to recruit. Other authorities are in a similar position and have circulated the draft syllabus as widely as possible for consultation.

It was pointed out that there are some inconsistencies in the wording e.g. in the Journeys the term 'non-religious' should be worded 'non-religious philosophical convictions'. Reference to religion should be to Christianity and other principal religions.

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It was noted that RVE will mainly be delivered by non-specialists so it is important that the syllabus is as clear as possible with access to training and support.

Workshops will be held on 28th March 2022. A draft document will be made available as a basis for discussion. It was requested that the legislative summary issues are listed before 28th March to add to the draft for discussion so that advice can be sought. It was agreed that legal representation should be requested for the 28th March 2022 workshops.

It was agreed it would be an online meeting on 28th March 2022.

The recommendations in the report were approved as follows:

1. For Standing Conference Members to note the progress made to date regarding the preparation of a new Agreed Syllabus for Religion, Values and Ethics, in view of the recent Curriculum for Wales framework guidance from Welsh Government.
2. For Standing Conference Members to consider this guidance and agree the way forward regarding the preparation of a new Agreed Syllabus for approval at a future meeting of the Standing Conference.

The RVE Adviser and the Head of Achievement and Extended Services were thanked for their work on the syllabus to date.

4. Dates and times of future meetings

28th March 2022 – Agreed Syllabus Workshops
26th April 2022 – Agreed Syllabus Conference

The meeting ended at 12.33 pm

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