

Interim Report to SACRE

Constitution Working Group

Membership of working group

Deanna van der Veld, Ted Marley (until October), Chris Hudson (from October), Joyce Miller

Introduction

The working group on the constitution was established at a meeting of the SACRE held in July, 2023. Its overarching aim was to carry out Section 16 of SACRE's Action Plan with regard to its relationship to the Local Authority and to examine the constitution to see if changes are necessary to improve SACRE's effectiveness.

We now offer our interim report for consideration. There are two key areas:

- a) changes to the format of the constitution and
- b) significant statements in the existing document that we recommend SACRE note.

We expect to report on our recommendations for substantive changes at the next SACRE meeting.

We are particularly grateful to Ted Marley who made a significant contribution to the meetings he was able to attend.

Proposed draft /minor changes to the format of the constitution

These changes are intended to 'tidy up' the existing document, to ensure consistency in presentation, to delete repetitions and to make the document easier to use. We recommend that SACRE provisionally approves these changes at this meeting, pending further recommendations:

1. Bullet points should be removed throughout and replaced with lower case letters to enable ease of reference
2. Under 5.0, wording should be amended for consistency so that all points begin with a verb
3. 5.1 bullet 11 repeats bullet 4 and should be deleted
4. 6.2 to include '**independent church networks**' in the list of Christian denominations on Committee A
5. 7.3. Amend to read: 'A representative of a religion, denomination, **worldview**, association or the **LA** may be....'
6. 7.11 is a repetition of 7.3 and should be deleted
7. 7.12 is a repetition of 7.9 and should be deleted
8. 8.1 should refer to '**committees**' and not 'groups'. Suggested wording: 'Voting is by committee when each has a single vote'

9. 10.1 is a repetition of 9.1 and should be deleted
10. 14.1. Add 'to' at the end of the introductory sentence
11. 14.2. Amend to read: 'advise and update SACRE members on **national, regional and local** developments'
12. 15.1. Replace 'School Improvement Officer' with 'Professional Officers' to be consistent with 14.2 and to enable the involvement of the Adviser when necessary
13. 17.0. Amend to read: 'The Annual Report will be approved by SACRE and will ...'
14. 22.1. Include the legal stipulation that no-one can be co-opted onto an ASC
15. 20.1. All PDF copies of the constitution should include the date on which it was agreed.

Significant statements in the current constitution for SACRE to note

It became clear to members of the working group that the current constitution is not always followed. Some practices have also been introduced that are not in the constitution - e.g. there is no requirement that the Vice-Chair should be a member of Committee A. We therefore recommend that members should note the following statements and consider their relevance to the future conduct of SACRE:

1. 3.1 states that the SACRE is **independent** of the Council
2. 5.1 bullet 2 requires meetings to allow for 'full participation by **members**'. 1.2 makes it clear that 'members' refers to those appointed to 'represent interest groups' - i.e. ALL SACRE members
3. 5.1 bullet 2 also says that meetings can be held **online**
4. 6.2. Committee C consists of Teachers' Professional Associations and lists the four Unions to be represented. SACRE needs to know if our existing teachers belong to those Unions and/ or whether we need to define 'professional associations' to include representatives of the teacher network groups.
5. 7.4. SACRE members serve for four years but can be reappointed. The dates of appointment of each member should be included in the Annual Report so that this part of the Constitution is observed.
6. 7.5. SACRE determines the length of a co-option. We recommend that this should be for two years.
7. 11.1 and 11.2 make it clear that the Chair will be appointed from SACRE members and that nominations and elections are to take place.
8. 15.1. 'SACRE is intended to be a collaborative body and needs to ensure that no particular sector or member is unduly favoured.'

Final report

This will be presented to SACRE at the next meeting in the Spring term. We invite all members of SACRE to be involved in this process either by volunteering to join the working group or to send suggestions for amendments to be considered or questions to be raised.

October, 2023