

**Report to the Cabinet**

Meeting to be held on Thursday, 3 October 2024

**Report of the Director of Law and Governance**

**Part I**

Electoral Division affected:  
N/A;

**Corporate Priorities:**  
Delivering better services;

**Lancashire Religious Education Agreed Syllabus Conference**

(Appendix 'A' refers)

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**Brief Summary**

The appointment of an Agreed Syllabus Conference to commence in Autumn 2024 for the purpose of reviewing the Lancashire Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education.

**Recommendation**

Cabinet is asked to approve that an Agreed Syllabus Conference for the purpose of reviewing the Lancashire Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education be convened and that any person who sits on the representative groups on the Lancashire Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education, excluding the co-opted members and observers, can be appointed as members of that Agreed Syllabus Conference.

**Detail**

It is a statutory requirement for every local education authority to have a Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education. The purpose of the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education is to advise on, and support, the provision of religious education and collective worship in schools and to consider any requests for determinations.

Lancashire County Council, as the local education authority, is responsible for forming an Agreed Syllabus Conference every five years to set the religious



education syllabus for schools. It is a statutory requirement that the local education authority should convene an Agreed Syllabus Conference for the purpose of reviewing the religious education syllabus. The syllabus sets out what should be taught to pupils in all key stages and the standards expected of them at the end of each key stage. The syllabus must be reviewed within five years from the date on which it was adopted. The current Lancashire Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education was last reviewed during 2021 and adopted, following approval by Cabinet, in September 2021. Whilst a revised syllabus does not need to be in place until September 2026, the Lancashire Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education is of the view that work should begin as soon as possible in Autumn 2024 and continues through 2025. This will ensure sufficient time is given to reviewing the syllabus, the intention being to have all the documentation finalised by March 2026 to ensure a September 2026 launch can be achieved.

It is therefore proposed that the county council, as the local education authority, convenes an Agreed Syllabus Conference to review and set a new religious education syllabus for Lancashire, the first meeting to be held on a date to be arranged during Autumn 2024.

The composition of the Agreed Syllabus Conference is very similar to that of the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education with the conference to be made up of persons representing the same four groups that constitute the representative groups on the Standing Advisory Council, namely:

- Group 1 - Such Christian and other Religious Dominations as, in the opinion of the local education authority, would appropriately reflect the principal religious traditions in the area.
- Group 2 - The Church of England.
- Group 3 - Such Associations, representing teachers as, in the opinion of the local education authority, ought, having had regard to the circumstances of the area, be represented.
- Group 4 - The local education authority.

The current membership of the Lancashire Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education is set out at Appendix 'A'. There is, however, unlike the Standing Advisory Council itself, no provision for co-opted members or observers to have a place on the Agreed Syllabus Conference. However, the conference may ask for contributions and advice from anyone who it deems would be useful in reviewing the syllabus.

Subject to approval of the recommendation in this report, volunteers will be sought from amongst those representatives of Groups 1 - 4 above to serve on the Agreed Syllabus Conference.

Once a new religious education syllabus for Lancashire has been finalised, it will be subject to Cabinet approval for implementation from September 2026.

## **Appendices**

Appendix 'A' is attached to this report. For clarification it is summarised below and referenced at relevant points within this report.



<b>Appendix</b>	<b>Title</b>
Appendix 'A'	Current membership of the Lancashire Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education

## **Consultations**

The Lancashire Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education has been consulted.

## **Implications:**

This item has the following implications, as indicated:

### **Legal**

Schedule 31 of the Education Act 1996 requires the county council, as the local education authority, to convene a conference to re-consider the agreed syllabus for Religious Education by convening an Agreed Syllabus Conference every five years to set the religious education syllabus for schools.

### **Financial**

There are no financial implications.

### **Risk management**

Failure to convene an Agreed Syllabus Conference would mean that the county council would be in breach of the statutory requirement to do so, and the Secretary of State for Education could intervene to undertake the duty and appoint a body of persons to prepare the syllabus.

### **List of Background Papers**

Paper	Date	Contact/Tel
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None

Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate

N/A

