

AGENDA ITEM

REPORT TO CABINET

15 FEBRUARY 2024

**REPORT OF CORPORATE
MANAGEMENT TEAM**

CABINET DECISION

Children & Young People - Lead Cabinet Member – Councillor Lisa Evans

STOCKTON-ON-TEES SACRE CONSTITUTION

SUMMARY

Changes to the constitution of the Stockton-on-Tees SACRE.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)/DECISION(S)

The current SACRE constitution is not fit for purpose and does not reflect the local community.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To change the constitution as below.

1. To introduce the category of 'Other World Views' under Group A (2 positions).
2. To remove 'Society of Friends' and Islamic Society' from Group A.

DETAIL

1. The current constitution does not reflect the local community and the proposed removals have historically remained vacant. The introduction of 'Other World Views' allows for all religions (other than those named within Group A) and for the ever-changing local landscape.
2. SACRE approved the proposed changes at their meeting held on Thursday 16 November 2023.

COMMUNITY IMPACT IMPLICATIONS

3. The CIA process has not been undertaken as the proposed changes positively impacts the community and allows for no discrimination, whereas the current constitution does not.

CORPORATE PARENTING IMPLICATIONS

4. There are no corporate parenting implications.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5. There are no financial implications.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

6. Following a recent High Court judgement where Mr Justice Constable concluded that it was 'unlawful' for Kent County Council to refuse a Humanist membership of the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE), and said it is:

'clearly discriminatory to exclude someone from SACRE Group A solely by reference to the fact that their belief, whilst appropriate to be included within the agreed syllabus for religious education, is a non-religious, rather than a religious, belief.'

7. The changes to the constitution would allow for Humanists to become Members, alongside other religious and non-religious denominations, thus all-encompassing and inclusive.

RISK ASSESSMENT

N/A

WARDS AFFECTED AND CONSULTATION WITH WARD/COUNCILLORS

N/A

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

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