

LGA Member Briefing: SACREs, ASCs and Local Government Reorganisation

Local authorities have a **statutory duty** to:

- **Establish and support a Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE)**, including appropriate membership, governance, and resourcing.
- **Convene an Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC)** to determine the local Agreed Syllabus for RE and **review it at least every five years**.
- Provide maintained schools with **clear guidance and access** to the current Agreed Syllabus for RE and arrangements for collective worship, including determinations.
- take note of, and respond to, advice from the SACRE.

Action in the context of reorganisation (LGR)

Where boundary changes or mergers are planned or proposed, authorities should **plan early** to avoid duplication, gaps, or unnecessary spend—especially if a syllabus review is due close to the period of reorganisation.

Recommendations for Leaders, Lead Members and Chief Officers:

- **Identify or nominate a single senior lead** for SACRE/ASC across all affected councils and establish a **joint transition group** (officers + SACRE Chairs / Specialist Advisers).
- **Map current positions:** SACRE constitutions/membership, live determinations, existing Agreed Syllabuses (and expiry dates), contracts/licences with syllabus providers, and budgets.
- **Agree a holding position:** where a review is due, consider convening an Agreed Syllabus Conference to **formally extend the lifetime of the current syllabus** or commission a **single joint review** for the new footprint when that is confirmed, to prevent parallel processes.
- **Secure continuity:** confirm interim **governance, clerking and budget**; protect **IP/licence** arrangements; and ensure **records and websites** are updated so schools know which syllabus applies and until when.
- **Engage partners early:** Including bodies who appoint to SACRE/ASC: dioceses, faith and belief communities, professional associations representing teachers, MATs, and neighbouring LAs.
- **Assess risks** (legal, timetable, procurement, equality) and build them into the LGR programme plan.

Key message 1: If a SACRE launches a full syllabus review shortly before reorganisation, **significant officer time and money may be wasted** and schools may face uncertainty.

Key message 2: Any new Authority has statutory duty to establish a SACRE. **Key message 3:** **Coordinate now** to align timetables, pool resources, and deliver a single, high-quality syllabus and support offer for the new authority.

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