



CAERPHILLY STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION – 24TH FEBRUARY 2010

SUBJECT: WASACRE ISSUES

REPORT BY: ESIS

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 The report is to inform members of the discussions and deliberations of WASACRE.

2. SUMMARY

2.1 At the last Caerphilly SACRE meeting a paper was presented to SACRE on the issues discussed by WASACRE at its Autumn meeting in RCT – November 2009.

2.2 One of the items discussed was the '*All Wales Community Cohesion Strategy*' - presented by Joanne Glenn, Head of the Community Cohesion Strategy Unit of the Welsh Assembly Government.

2.3 The aim of the strategy is to encourage people to live alongside each other with mutual understanding and respect and to ensure that everyone has an equal chance to participate and has equal access to resources. It was explained that there is a need for the strategy due to the pace and scale of changes in population in Wales during the last few years. The strategy, which is currently in draft format, focuses on aspects relating to housing, learning, communication skills, social inclusion and preventing violent extremism.

2.4 Information was received regarding the UK based Prevent strategy that aims to undermine extremist ideology, disrupt those promoting violent extremism, to identify and support individuals vulnerable to recruitment by violent extremists and increase the resilience of communities to engage with and resist violent extremists.

2.5 In terms of the agenda for Wales it was explained that the Education Cohesion Programme Board were considering a number of projects:

- REsilience
- Getting on Together (GOT)
- GCSE Islamic Studies
- EYST (Ethnic Youth Support Teams)
- Mosques and Imams National Advisory Board
- Young People's Conference
- Prevent Seminar across FE and HE sectors

2.6 It was noted that Cardiff, Swansea, Newport and Wrexham had received Community Cohesion Grants. All 22 local authorities will receive 3 years of funding to support community cohesion (to be distributed through the Community Safety Partnerships).

2.7 It was noted that the role of SACRE could be to:

- Promote community cohesion through RE
- Promote understanding and awareness of community cohesion
- Look at local issues from the point of view of RE
- Contribute to 'mapping' activities
- Contribute to discussions on Prevent

2.8 WASACRE members raised serious concerns regarding the draft strategy especially in relation to the projects being considered by the Education Cohesion Programme Board. Members noted that they were very uncomfortable with the continuous emphasis on Islam and the fact that many of the suggested projects were not 'inclusive'. Representatives also raised concerns about the possible GCSE Islamic Studies course.

2.9 It was noted that there would be a future meeting between Denize Morris, RS subject officer at DCELLS and Joanne Glenn to discuss further aspects of the Community Cohesion Strategy.

3. DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS

- March 18th 2010 - Swansea
- June 24th 2010 - Wrexham
- November 26th 2010 - Caerphilly

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 That SACRE note and discuss the report.

Author: Vicky Thomas (ESIS Religious Education Advisor)