

STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL (SAC)

Minutes of the hybrid meeting held on 16 October 2025

PRESENT: Councillor Non Dafydd (Chair)
Councillor Arfon Wyn (Vice-Chair)

The Education Authority

Councillors Dylan Rees, Keith Roberts

The Religious Denominations

Rev Deborah Stammers (The Baptist Union of Wales)
Mrs Collette Owens (The Catholic Church)
Rev Neil Ridings (The Church in Wales) (until 3:10 pm)

Teacher Representatives

Mrs Mefys Jones-Edwards (Ysgol Syr Thomas Jones, Amlwch)
(until 3:00 pm)
Mr Owain Roberts (Ysgol Cybi) (until 3:00 pm)

Co-opted Member

Mr Rheinallt Thomas (Co-opted Member)

IN ATTENDANCE: Director of Education, Skills & Young People
Mr Owen T Davies (Senior Manager, Primary Sector) (Clerk to the SAC)
Mr Phil Lord (Independent RVE Advisor)
Mrs Shirley Cooke (Committee Officer)

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor Dafydd Roberts (Portfolio Holder for Education and the Welsh Language)
Mrs Joanna Thomas (Bangor Diocese, The Church in Wales)

APOLOGIES: Councillor Gwilym O Jones
Sarah Lloyd (Humanists)

1. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

None received.

2. MINUTES

The draft minutes of the previous SAC meeting held on 10 July 2025 were presented

and confirmed as correct, subject to the following: -

Matters arising from the minutes: -

- The Chair confirmed that she written to North Wales Police's Diversity, Equality and Hate Crime Officer on two occasions inviting the Officer to attend a SAC meeting, but has not received a response to date.
- The Senior Manager, Primary Sector confirmed that he has written to Estyn to ask for consistency in its reporting process by providing comments on schools that have achieved positive results in their Estyn reports. He reported that he is awaiting a response from Estyn. It was noted that should an opportunity arise, an individual from Estyn will be invited to attend a SAC meeting.
- A correction was noted in Item 4 of the minutes in relation to a comment on Ysgol Rhed y Llan, which should have read Ysgol y Graig.
- Reference was also made to a comment by the RVE Advisor in Item 4 on the agenda which states "*that the right of withdrawal is relevant for RVE*", which is incorrect. It was noted that the right to withdraw has ceased since new legislation came into force.

3. WALES ASSOCIATION OF SACRES (WASACRE)

- A report on the WASACRE's activities during 2024/25 was presented and noted for information.
- The WASACRE's Statement of Accounts for 2024/25 in the Annual General Meeting was presented and noted for information.

RESOLVED to note the information presented.

4. THE STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL'S DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2024/25

The SAC's draft Annual Report for 2024/25 was presented for comment and approved by the SAC without further amendments.

RESOLVED: -

- **To approve the Anglesey SAC's Annual Report for 2024/25, as presented.**
- **That a copy of the final version of the Anglesey SAC's Annual Report for 2024/25 be forwarded to Welsh Government for information.**

5. DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION FOR THE DIOCESE OF BANGOR

Mrs Joanna Thomas gave a presentation on her new role as Director of Education for the Bangor Diocese of the Church in Wales.

Mrs Thomas reported that her work involves supporting church schools across Anglesey. She stated that she has already visited Ysgol Cybi in Holyhead and Ysgol Santes Dwynwen in Newborough.

Reference was made to Section 50 Inspections for Church in Wales schools. Mrs Thomas explained that pilot programs have been undertaken during last term and

inspector training will commence next month. She stated that both Headteachers from the schools visited are committed to be involved in the process and sharing good practice across other schools.

It was noted that pilot reports are available on the Church in Wales website, with the intention of bringing teachers together to work on the provision of Welsh resources. Emphasis was placed on maintaining quality in schools and ensuring that collective worship and the Christian ethos is developed.

The Chair thanked Mrs Thomas for providing an insight into her work and her informative presentation.

RESOLVED to note the content of the presentation.

6. ANGLESEY SAC'S DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR 2025/26

The RVE Advisor reported that each SAC has to provide an annual report to reflect on its business. The SAC will recommend to Welsh Government that all SACs will need to have their own development plan.

It was noted that discussion across Wales has focused on the possibility of SACs developing their own objectives, resulting in actions within annual reports becoming conversations around how well SACs have moved forward on their development plans. The first objective for the Anglesey SAC will be to ensure that the SAC's membership meets the requirement.

It was noted that the SAC's main responsibility is to support schools and develop their RVE, which could be used as another SAC objective, by acting on its actions to support and develop schools. It was suggested that faith representatives could share the SAC's minutes, annual reports etc., to continue conversations around how organisations that support the SAC can support RVE in schools.

Thirdly, a question was raised on how the SAC could support collective worship? It was suggested that a Newsletter would be a good way to move forward together with a Secondary Head of Department Network, which is being developed to support professional learning.

It was noted that the SAC's members observe collective worship sessions and could consider observing an assembly or an RVE lesson? Having a bank of resources and a directory of trained people who are willing to go into schools to do assemblies would also be a way to support schools.

Discussion focused on whether WASACRE should look at having a template to encourage all SACs to adopt national objectives and add local objectives to their development plans to identify good practice for other areas? It was proposed and accepted that the SAC write to WASACRE to formally request that its Executive discuss this matter in due course.

A teacher representative referred to a possible action point for the future regarding collaboration between the SAC and secondary schools specifically. She stated that pupils in Years 10 and 11 undertake coursework and a non-examination task, which

has been introduced for teachers and pupils. In September each year, WJEC present two questions each for Years 10 and 11, where pupils have to search for evidence, which is challenging for them, with teachers leading them through it. It was suggested that the SAC could give its opinion on whatever subject is presented annually.

The SAC agreed that it would be an interesting link on religious views which could be shared with Anglesey schools who are also undertaking the task. It could also be included in the Newsletter and used as a source of information for primary or secondary schools and could be incorporated into the work of faith representatives.

An invitation was extended to the SAC to visit St Mary's Catholic Primary School in Holyhead to observe a collective worship session. It was suggested that a SAC member could write a small article following a visit, which could be included in the Newsletter.

RESOLVED: -

- **To support the SAC's development plan.**
- **That the Senior Manager, Primary Sector (Clerk to the SAC) writes to WASACRE to ask its Executive to consider providing a template to encourage all SACs to adopt national objectives, where local objectives could be added to SACs' development plans to identify and share good practice.**

7. CULHAM ST GABRIEL – GRANT APPLICATION

The RVE Advisor reported that he had applied for grant funding from Culham St Gabriel in relation to the Holyhead Primary Cluster RVE Planning Project. He stated that the cluster had been keen to meet and develop a set of resources to share across Anglesey schools. In this instance, the application was rejected.

Further contact was made with Welsh Government regarding a process driven curriculum, where pupils draw in knowledge to navigate through questions. It is hoped that RVE can be used as a framework to meet the structure for Welsh Government funding.

Reference was made to 'adnodd', a new Welsh Government body who commission bilingual resources that support the Curriculum for Wales. It was noted that the organisation's deadline for applying for resources has also passed.

The SAC emphasised the importance of teaching the history of local Saints in our schools. It was noted that Mudiad Addysg Cymru will be publishing a bilingual book on Saints looking at traditions in Wales.

RESOLVED to note the information presented.

8. SAC NEWSLETTER

The RVE Advisor referred to the Denbighshire and Conwy SAC RE Newsletter in Item 8 on the agenda and sought the SAC's views on producing a similar Newsletter for Anglesey to promote the SAC's work and inspire teachers. Discussion focused on whether a Newsletter for schools, churches etc. covering North Wales or Anglesey

would be preferable. The SAC responded that its members favoured a personalised Newsletter unique to Anglesey.

It was suggested that the SAC's members could be introduced over a series of Newsletters. The Newsletter would contain substantive knowledge and local knowledge relating to RE, including information from school presentations in SAC meetings and visits by the SAC's representatives.

Concerns were expressed that schools are anxious about the authenticity of some information online. It will be necessary to ensure that all the information presented in the Newsletter is genuine, attractive and something that schools and teachers can use.

The SAC's teacher representative responded that the Newsletter should be relevant for primary and secondary schools. She explained that it would need to be carefully planned during the first year to ensure that it is relevant for each audience. She further stated that it would be very useful to hear views on different religions.

RESOLVED: -

- **To agree to produce an Anglesey SAC Newsletter.**
- **That the Newsletter be reviewed periodically.**

(Mrs Mefys Jones-Edwards and Mr Owain Roberts left the meeting at 3:00 pm)

(Rev Neil Ridings left the meeting at 3:10 pm)

9. EFTRE (European Forum of Teachers of RE) Conference 2025

The RVE Advisor reported that he recently attended the European Forum of Teachers of RE held in a Lutheran training college in Budapest, where he met up with RE professionals from across Europe. He highlighted how RE/RVE is very different in Europe compared to the UK; in this country, RE has moved on in the last 25 to 30 years, whereas most of Europe has not progressed at the same rate. He explained that RE in Europe is mostly confessional RE, where the churches and religious institutions develop the curriculum that schools deliver. It was noted that beliefs are taught within different religious institutions: in Finland Lutheran Christianity is taught in schools, whereas Muslims opt for Islamic RE, rather than having several subjects covered under one heading like RVE.

A presentation was given on questioning. Observations concluded that it was the teachers who asked questions in the classroom and not the pupils. It was evident that teachers asked concrete questions that tested pupils' knowledge rather than their understanding. The question 'why?' was not asked very often. The RVE Advisor highlighted that the objective is to get pupils to be critical thinkers and ask more questions.

Discussion focused on existential questions, being the big questions in life, and how to find answers to these difficult questions within an anxious generation. It was highlighted that skills are being removed from our learners to discuss the big questions. It was noted that RVE has a platform to help learners develop language

and make sense of these questions.

The RVE Advisor stated that his visit to Budapest was fascinating and relevant for teachers in Wales.

RESOLVED: -

- **To note the information presented in the RVE Advisor's summary from the European Forum of Teachers of RE Conference 2025 in Hungary.**
- **That a summary of the above visit be included in the SAC's Newsletter.**

10. ANY ISSUES SPECIFIC TO THE SAC

The Chair reported that there are currently four vacant seats on the SAC from the following religious denominations: -

- Union of Welsh Independents;
- The Methodist Church;
- Islam;
- Jehovah Witness.

The Senior Manager, Primary Sector responded that he would look into the matter and report back to the SAC's next meeting.

RESOLVED that the Senior Manager, Primary Sector (Clerk to the SAC), contacts the 4 religious denominations to ask them to nominate a members of their religious groups to represent the SAC.

11. NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the SAC's next meeting will be held on 10 February 2026 at 2:00 pm.

The meeting concluded at 3:25 pm

**COUNCILLOR NON DAFYDD
CHAIR**