

## **STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL (SAC)**

### **Minutes of the hybrid meeting held on 9 July 2026**

**PRESENT:** Councillor Non Dafydd (Chair)

#### **The Education Authority**

Councillors Gwilym O Jones, Dylan Rees, Keith Roberts

#### **The Religious Denominations**

Mrs Collette Owens (The Catholic Church)

Rev Neil Ridings (The Church in Wales)

Dr Alun Thomas (The Union of Welsh Independents)

#### **Teacher Representatives**

Mrs Mefys Jones-Edwards (Ysgol Syr Thomas Jones, Amlwch)

#### **Non-Religious Representative**

Sarah Kingman (Humanists UK)

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Mr Owen T Davies (Senior Manager, Primary Sector, Education)  
(Clerk to the SAC)  
Mr Rhys Williams (Strategic Leader, Primary Sector, Education)  
Mr Phil Lord (Independent Religion, Values and Ethics (RVE)  
Advisor)  
Mrs Shirley Cooke (Committee Officer)

**ALSO PRESENT:** Anna Silver (Education Officer, Board of Deputies of British Jews)

**APOLOGIES:** Councillor Arfon Wyn (Vice-chair)  
Rev Deborah Stammers (The Baptist Union of Wales)  
Mrs Manon Morris-Williams (Ysgol Santes Dwynwen)  
Mr Owain Roberts (Ysgol Cybi)  
Mr Rheinallt Thomas (Co-opted Member)  
Director of Education, Skills and Young People

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The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, particularly Dr Alun Thomas, to his first SAC meeting. Dr Thomas is the new SAC representative for the Union of Welsh Independents.

### **1. DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

None received.

## **2. MINUTES**

The draft minutes of the previous SAC meeting held on 10 February 2026 were presented and confirmed as correct, subject to the following: -

### **Matters arising from the minutes: -**

- The Chair reported that she has spoken to the Head of Democratic Services regarding appointing an elected member to the vacant seat on the SAC. The Head of Democratic Services responded that following a by-election in the Bro Llynnon ward this month, committee memberships will be reviewed.
- The Clerk to the SAC confirmed that HMS training has taken place, with further training sessions to follow.
- The RVE Advisor confirmed that he has circulated the Guidance for schools and an example letter to parents on the right of withdrawal from RVE to Headteachers.
- The RVE Advisor reported that Anna Silver from the Board of Deputies of British Jews will be replacing Professor Nathan Abrams to give a presentation on Teaching Judaism in today's meeting.

## **3. WALES ASSOCIATION OF SACRES (WASACRE)**

The draft minutes of the WASACRE virtual meeting held in Cardiff on 19 March 2026 were presented for information and noted.

The RVE Advisor referred to Item 9 of the minutes, where concerns have been raised regarding the GCSE course in relation to teacher workload, academic expectations from learners and Non-Examinable Assessments (NEAs). He reported that he has written to Qualifications Wales and WJEC expressing concerns by the Island's RVE Heads of Departments as to whether the course is fit for purpose. WJEC responded by providing late entry themes for teachers to allow more time for them to prepare their NEAs. It was highlighted that the March deadline for schools to submit their NEA papers to WJEC has been extended by six weeks to late April or early May. The RVE Advisor reported that Qualification Wales are aware that WASACRE would like Wales to have a qualification that meets the statutory requirements.

The SAC's secondary school teacher responded that she met with two representatives from WJEC recently, when she was asked for her views on the new GCSE course. She highlighted the following points from the meeting: -

- The GCSE course is extremely heavy. Once the NEAs have been delivered in Year 10, there is insufficient time for teachers to prepare pupils for the exam.
- The fact that there were no Assessment Objectives (AOs) on the exam paper was raised by the teacher, as WJEC had agreed that they would be included, which led to students being very upset coming out of the exam.
- The 'question and answer' document was not included on the exam paper, as originally stated by WJEC. The teacher raised this issue with WJEC, who responded that the document should not be on the exam paper, in line with other subjects.
- Complaints about AOs were also received from teachers in the Island's secondary schools, which have been forwarded to WJEC.
- It was highlighted that the content of the course will not change, although WJEC

listened on the NEA issue.

- WJEC questions have already been circulated for both Years 10 and 11 next year, allowing teachers more time to prepare.
- WJEC will be sticking to the same two topics for Years 10 and 11, therefore can use the same materials for next year.
- WJEC have addressed that materials should be given sooner.
- A face to face course will be convened in Llandudno on 23 November, which clashes with the teacher's intention to deliver the NEAs in September.

The RVE Advisor reported that a Secondary Heads of Department Network will be convening a meeting on Thursday, 24 September, when NEAs will be the main topic of discussion.

Concerns were expressed that schools were not receiving exam resources sooner. The SAC agreed to raise this issue with WJEC. With regard to another matter, the teacher asked the SAC to intervene and ask WJEC to remove information on AOs on its website.

**RESOLVED: -**

- **To note the information presented.**
- **That the Clerk to the SAC writes to WJEC to express the SAC's concerns that teaching resources are not made available to schools earlier.**
- **That the Clerk to the SAC requests that WJEC remove its assessment aims published online as a matter of urgency.**

#### **4. TEACHING JUDAISM – RESOURCES FOR SCHOOLS**

A PowerPoint presentation was given by Anna Silver, the Education Officer for the Board of Deputies of British Jews. She reported that Judaism resources to support RVE are now available in Welsh.

The Education Officer gave a summary of how the Board represents all diverse Jewish communities in the UK in a democratic way.

Reference was made to the Living Experience Exhibition (JLEE), which is a travelling exhibition containing 18 banners and 8 boxes of artefacts, which is a resource the Board uses to teach Judaism. It is an interactive, hands on exhibition, where children have an opportunity to handle artefacts and bring Judaism to life. The banners represent diversity across the Jewish community and include visual and geographic displays to break down prejudice. The banners represent the main Jewish festivals, life cycle events and traditions. Two new banners have been introduced recently on Jewish British History and Antisemitism.

The Education Officer explained that the Exhibition is based in Cardiff Synagogue and can be lent out to schools. A 'Jewish Living Online' resource is available, aimed at secondary schools.

The Chair thanked Anna Silver for her informative presentation.

**RESOLVED to note the information presented.**

## **5. SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT AND ANGLESEY**

The Strategic Leader, Primary Sector gave a PowerPoint presentation providing an overview of the National Schools Improvement Guidance. He reported that the guidance was published in draft form in 2022.

The Strategic Leader referred to the aims and objectives of the guidance, to raise the SAC's awareness of its content, and the expectations placed on schools. He explained that the Learning Service has a new structure, and the Council's responsibilities have changed.

It was noted that schools have moved away from categorisation and concentrating on data and results. The Learning Service's role is to support schools by asking questions and encourage them to work together to develop learning communities; challenge and support each other; improve themselves further, to provide the best education for pupils. With regard to accountability, the Authority acts on early intervention.

It was noted that the Council's vision is to develop collaboration, professional learning, and be accountable for each child's success. An effective culture needs to be in place where schools learn with and from each other, where leadership is distributed, and where all practitioners are supported to develop. The Learning Service acts as a strategic facilitator for development at all levels.

**RESOLVED to note the content of the report.**

## **6. UPDATE ON SUPPORT PROVIDED FOR SCHOOLS**

The Independent RVE Advisor gave a presentation to Headteachers on a HMS day on 20 March 2026, to reminded them that the Agreed Syllabus is statutory and needs to be reviewed every 5 years and is due in 2027. He reported that schools need to be aware that there has been a slight change in RVE in terms of legislation, as RVE sits in a different category to other subjects in the Curriculum for Wales.

The RVE Advisor reported that he provided a specific training session for RVE Leads, where emphasis was placed on obtaining materials for schools to access when required.

It was noted that a termly Secondary RVE Heads of Department Network meeting was held recently, which proved very successful. The next meeting will be held in September when schools will have an opportunity to discuss NEAs and the new GCSE.

The importance of facilitating professional dialogue between RVE teachers was highlighted, as RVE is subject specific. The Local Authority is supporting schools on this issue by encouraging RVE teachers from different schools to collaborate with each other and like-minded people on the curriculum. It was noted that all the RVE teachers on Anglesey are professional RVE teachers.

**RESOLVED to note the content of the report.**

## **7. ESTYN UPDATES**

- a) The RVE Advisor gave a summary of Estyn's findings on RVE. He stated that Estyn report by omission resulting in very few comments being made on RVE, collective worship and spirituality in schools. It is only when there is a matter of concern in a school that Estyn will report on an issue.
- b) It was noted that Estyn has summarised its inspection findings on Humanities in its Annual Report for 2024-25. The RVE Advisor reported that the Estyn report is a critical report, with 'unforeseen consequences' on legislation. He stated that changes that were assumed in previous years would happen as a result of teaching a cross curricular Humanities subject have happened. Geography and RVE have lost their voice, and Estyn has reported that History is a very prominent subject. The RVE Advisor expressed concern that the subject knowledge of secondary school teachers is worrying, as some non-specialist teachers are teaching RVE.

It was noted that Estyn has published 14 self-evaluation questions for Humanities Departments. The RVE Advisor reported that the National Advisory Panel for Religion, Values and Ethics (NAPfRVE) has re-written the questions from an RVE perspective, which schools need to be aware of. Further in depth questions on self-evaluation have been prepared to support effective planning for teachers on their RVE curriculum in relation to vocabulary, topics, key aspects for learning, looking at progress in RVE etc., to be shared with schools.

### **RESOLVED: -**

- **To note the content of the report.**
- **That the Clerk to the SAC shares NAPfRVE's self-evaluation questions with schools.**

## **8. ANY ISSUES SPECIFIC TO THE SAC**

None.

## **9. NEXT MEETING**

The SAC's next meeting will be held on 8 October 2026 at 2:00 pm.

The meeting concluded at 3:25 pm

**COUNCILLOR NON DAFYDD  
CHAIR**