

Lloyd Russell-Moyle MP
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when responding please contact
Councillor Roy Galley
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our ref

your ref

Dear Mr Russell-Moyle

Consultation on the Government's Integrated Communities Strategy Green Paper ends today. As Chairman of East Sussex Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE), I am writing to suggest that SACREs could have a role in carrying forward the agenda of Integrated Communities. We have not submitted evidence to the consultation since I thought an approach to our local MPs would be more productive.

As you know, all schools have a statutory responsibility to provide religious education and collective worship under the 1988 and 1996 Education Acts. The job of each area's SACRE is to monitor provision, publish an agreed syllabus for maintained schools and encourage good quality teaching.

The aim is to promote good education and with that understanding and respect for different religions and traditions. To this end, SACREs are in regular touch with schools, run conferences for teachers and pupils and can help as a link between varied cultural practices and attitudes which is a key part of the strategy.

SACREs have a distinct role in schools and in communities. We can readily build on our work with schools to develop our work in community cohesion. Good religious education is key to understanding many aspects of this country's history, literature, art and music. It is about preserving our heritage but more importantly it is about looking to greater stability in our increasingly diverse society. Dialogue and respect are crucial to a civilised society.

The key advantage to me is that there are local organisations in place who could be ready, willing and able to take this agenda forward. Properly resourced SACREs could provide an excellent way to enhance this community integration rather than setting up a whole set of new organisations.

I hope you will be supportive of such an initiative which SACRE could take forward in East Sussex if encouraged to do so. It would be very helpful if you felt able to raise this idea with Ministers.

Yours sincerely



Councillor Roy Galley

Cc Amber Rudd MP
 Nusrat Ghani MP
 Maria Caulfield MP
 Huw Merriman MP
 Stephen Lloyd MP