

Report to the Cabinet

Meeting to be held on Thursday, 16 January 2020

Report of the Head of Service - Policy, Information and Commissioning (Start Well)

Part I

Electoral Division affected:
(All Divisions);

Adoption of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance Definition of Antisemitism

Contact for further information:

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Executive Summary

Lancashire County Council received a letter dated 15 October 2019 from the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government (Rt. Hon. Robert Jenrick MP), encouraging council leaders in England, to formally adopt the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance working definition of antisemitism.

The Community Security Trust is the leading organisation monitoring and supporting victims of antisemitism. Community Security Trust figures reflect the Home Office official statistics from October 2019, which show that 18% of religiously motivated hatred is targeted at Jewish people - up from 12% in 2018 - and that, per capita, Jewish people were most likely to report experiencing hatred.

Recommendation

Cabinet is asked to adopt the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance working definition, of antisemitism, as recommended by the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government.

Background and Advice

Lancashire County Council condemns racism, xenophobia and hate crime unequivocally. We will not allow hate to become acceptable. Lancashire County Council will work to ensure relevant local bodies, partnerships and programmes have the support needed to fight and prevent racism in any form and we will reassure all people living in Lancashire that they are valued members of our community.

Hate crimes are covered under existing legislation through the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 (as amended) and Section 145 of the Criminal Justice Act.

The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, an intergovernmental body of 31 states, has adopted a “non-legally binding working definition” of antisemitism:

“Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities.”

To guide the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance in its work, the following examples were developed to serve as illustrations:

Working definition of antisemitism, examples

Manifestations might include the targeting of the state of Israel, conceived as a Jewish collectivity. However, criticism of Israel similar to that levelled against any other country cannot be regarded as anti-Semitic. Antisemitism frequently charges Jews with conspiring to harm humanity, and it is often used to blame Jews for “why things go wrong.” It is expressed in speech, writing, visual forms and action, and employs sinister stereotypes and negative character traits.

Contemporary examples of antisemitism in public life, the media, schools, the workplace, and in the religious sphere could, taking into account the overall context, include, but are not limited to:

- Calling for, aiding, or justifying the killing or harming of Jews in the name of a radical ideology or an extremist view of religion.
- Making mendacious, dehumanising, demonising, or stereotypical allegations about Jews as such, or the power of Jews as a collective - such as, especially but not exclusively, the myth about a world Jewish conspiracy or of Jews controlling the media, economy, government or other societal institutions.
- Accusing Jews as a people of being responsible for real or imagined wrongdoing committed by a single Jewish person or group, or even for acts committed by non-Jews.
- Denying the fact, scope, mechanisms (e.g. gas chambers) or intentionality of the genocide of the Jewish people at the hands of National Socialist Germany and its supporters and accomplices during World War II (the Holocaust).
- Accusing the Jews as a people, or Israel as a state, of inventing or exaggerating the Holocaust.
- Accusing Jewish citizens of being more loyal to Israel, or to the alleged priorities of Jews worldwide, than to the interests of their own nations.

- Denying the Jewish people their right to self-determination, e.g., by claiming that the existence of a State of Israel is a racist endeavour.
- Applying double standards by requiring of it a behaviour not expected or demanded of any other democratic nation.
- Using the symbols and images associated with classic antisemitism (e.g., claims of Jews killing Jesus or blood libel) to characterize Israel or Israelis.
- Drawing comparisons of contemporary Israeli policy to that of the Nazis.
- Holding Jews collectively responsible for actions of the state of Israel.

Anti-Semitic acts are criminal when they are so defined by law (for example, denial of the Holocaust or distribution of anti-Semitic materials in some countries).

Criminal acts are anti-Semitic when the targets of attacks, whether they are people or property – such as buildings, schools, places of worship and cemeteries – are selected because they are, or are perceived to be, Jewish or linked to Jews.

Anti-Semitic discrimination is the denial to Jews of opportunities or services available to others and is illegal in many countries.

Consultations

N/A

Implications:

This item has the following implications, as indicated:

Policy

The county council promotes harmony, cohesion, social integration and wellbeing for all its communities. It values the diversity of its communities, whether this is culture, religion, race, gender, sexual orientation, age and ability. Alongside this, via legislation under which hate crimes are an offence, the county council has been proactive in promoting more cohesive and integrated communities.

Legal

The county council is bound by the Equality Act and the Public Sector Equality Duty. Formal adoption of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance definition will support the county council's position, which will in turn support our legal obligations.

Equality

The council is bound by the Equality Act and the Public Sector Equality Duty and the formal adoption of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance definition will support this.

Risk management

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government has stated in the communication sent to us on 15 October 2019, that eradicating antisemitism is not a task that the Government can achieve on their own. They are asking local authorities to give out a strong signal of support to the Jewish communities, by adopting the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance definition of anti-Semitism.

On 12 December 2016, the UK Government formally adopted the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's working definition of antisemitism, in a bid to curb hate crime against Jews. In September 2018 the Labour party adopted the full antisemitism definition.

The Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government has requested to be informed when the county council has adopted the definition, or the steps the county council is taking to adopt it, or otherwise explain the reluctance to do so.

List of Background Papers

Paper	Date	Contact/Tel
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None

Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate

N/A