

## Scrutiny Committee

Meeting to be held on Friday, 23 September 2016

Electoral Division affected:  
(All Divisions);

### Hate Crime

Contact for further information:

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### Executive Summary

Lancashire County Council considered the following notice of motion at Full Council on 21 July 2016.

*Lancashire County Council condemns racism, xenophobia and hate crimes unequivocally. Racism, xenophobia and hate crimes of any description have no place in our country or our county.*

*We are proud to live in a diverse and tolerant society and note that a lot of good work is taking place across Lancashire:*

- *The Lancashire Strategic Hate Crime Group is devising the hate crime strategy and there is a dedicated hate crime unit within Lancashire Constabulary.*
- *There are excellent examples of partnership working to tackle racism, xenophobia and hate crime between the County Council, Borough and District Councils, Lancashire Constabulary, the Office of the PCC and the voluntary, community and faith sectors across the County.*

*This Council wants to assure all of the County's residents and visitors that they are valued members of our society and as elected representatives of the diverse communities across Lancashire, Full Council is asked to place on record that the County Council will not tolerate hate crime, racism or xenophobia in its communities.*

This Council resolved to:

- Display the opening paragraph in this motion prominently on the county council website and that a press release is issued to publicise the motion.
- Ask the scrutiny committee to review the current measures taken to counter racism, xenophobia, and hate crime and report back to Full Council.
- Support and work with people who are victims of hate crime, racism or xenophobia to feel confident in coming forward and reporting it

This report provides the Scrutiny Committee with information relating to the current measures in place and support available.

## **Recommendation**

The Committee is asked to:

- (i) Note the report ;
- (ii) Note the developments and comment as appropriate;

## **Background**

The Lancashire County Council's Equality and Cohesion Team cover many key Central Government policy and legislative areas, including the area of racism, xenophobia, and hate crime.

The Principal Equality and Cohesion Manager is the Vice-Chair of the Lancashire Strategic Hate Crime and Cohesion Group.

Lancashire benefits from a strong multi-agency commitment to tackling and preventing hate crime in all its forms. Across all the partners there is real sense of energy and commitment to ensuring victims are protected and that perpetrators are brought to justice and encouraged to address their offending behaviour.

The Lancashire Strategic Hate Crime and Cohesion Group brings together a range of partners from the public and voluntary sectors including Lancashire County Council, District Councils in Lancashire, Lancashire Constabulary, the Crown Prosecution Service, UCLAN and a range of voluntary, community and faith sector organisations with an involvement in hate crime and cohesion issues across Lancashire.

The Group is overseen by Lancashire Chief Executives Group in addition to reporting within its individual member organisations – e.g. within the County Council the Member Champion for Community Safety and Tackling Hate Crime is regularly updated on its work in addition to other issues.

The Group has committed to developing a three year Hate Crime Strategy and a yearly Delivery Plan which will inform the work of the Strategic Hate Crime and Cohesion Group in this area and which will be regularly reviewed and monitored by the Group as part of its work.

### **Hate Crime:**

“Hate crimes and incidents are taken to mean any crime or incident where the perpetrator’s hostility or prejudice against an identifiable group of people is a factor in determining who is victimised”

“A hate incident refers to any non-crime incident which is perceived, by the victim or any other person, to be motivated by a hostility or prejudice based on or perception of ‘race’, religion, sexual orientation, disability or whether a person is or is perceived to be transgender. A hate crime is any criminal offence which is perceived, by the

victim or any other person, to be motivated by a hostility or prejudice based on or perception of a person's 'race', religion, sexual orientation, disability or whether a person is or is perceived to be transgender”

## **National Context**

Each of the public sector organisations represented on the Lancashire Strategic Hate Crime and Cohesion Group has responsibilities under the Public Sector Equality Duty's general aims which include reference to hate crime. These are:

- To eliminate discrimination, harassment or victimisation or any other unlawful conduct because of protected characteristics;
- To advance equality of opportunity between people who share relevant protected characteristics and those who do not share them;
- To foster good relations (improve community cohesion) between people who share a relevant protected characteristics and those who do not share them.

The Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 and its "Prevent Duty Guidance" have also placed additional responsibilities on local authorities, the police, universities and other public sector organisations which can also have implications for their tackling of hate crime and hate incidents. The Group will also be responsive to the emerging work on Cohesion which arises from recent visits and communications from Louise Casey, who is leading the national review into how the UK can improve integration among isolated groups in a bid to tackle extremism.

In 2012 the Government published its strategy to tackle Hate Crime: Challenge It, Report it, Stop it! The update published in 2014 highlights that victims are still reluctant to report incidents and the importance of continuing to work with partners including the voluntary sector to ensure that victims feel confident to come forward. Understanding the different forms of hate crime and tailoring the response to victims are highlighted.

In July 2016 the Government published an action plan ("**Action Against Hate- The UK Government's plan for tackling hate crime**") outlining how it's going to tackle this divisive crime over the next four years. This this new Hate Crime Action Plan, covers all forms of hate crime, including xenophobic attacks.

Following the outcome of the European recent Referendum on membership of the EU there has been a rise nationally of racist hate incidents being reported. The Government has developed an action plan in partnership with communities and departments across Government. It includes measures to increase the reporting of hate incidents and crimes, including working with communities and police to develop third party reporting centres. It covers work to prevent hate crimes on public transport, and it sets out how the Government will provide stronger support for victims.

## Local Context

In **2012** Lancashire County Council (LCC) commissioned a piece of research to explore how Religious groups particularly Muslim communities suffered from hate crime and incidents due to global events. We commissioned Lancaster University-Dr Paul Iganski in ensuring that a robust research project was conducted, to fully understand the experiences of our Lancashire Muslim Communities.

As a result of the aforementioned research findings, a dedicated third-party Anti-Muslim hate line was rolled out across Lancashire, with the support of ourselves, the Lancashire Constabulary and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Lancashire, this approach will help to ensure hate crime or hate incidents are reported and any chance of victims becoming isolated or communities feeling marginalised are addressed. This initiative will ensure that community cohesion is maintained and trust in state agencies is enhanced, with existing and emerging communities. The recommendations from this research will benefit all diverse groups in Lancashire and will be applied across the protected characteristics, of gender, sexual orientation, disability, race and religion or beliefs.

In October **2015** the Lancashire Strategic Hate Crime and Cohesion Group, where Lancashire County Council played a pivotal lead, arranged an evaluation event which was designed to consider what might be done to improve the effectiveness of all agencies' responses to hate crime in Lancashire to provide context for a revised 3-year Hate Crime Strategy for the Strategic Hate Crime and Cohesion Group. The feedback was evaluated by a team from the University of Central Lancashire. The position in Lancashire reflects the national context including under reporting, that lack of confidence to support and the need to review provision of support for victims. The Lancashire Strategic Hate Crime Group Strategy will therefore include feedback from that Conference and the subsequent considerations of the Group.

Currently, Lancashire County Council with the Lancashire Constabulary are leading on devising and developing the **2016-19** Lancashire hate crime strategy in partnership with the Lancashire Strategic Hate Crime and Cohesion Group, which will also be in line with the Government's newly published Hate Crime action plan.

The following are key considerations when developing the aforementioned **2016-19** Lancashire hate crime strategy:

### 1 Awareness and Understanding

We will create a wider awareness and understanding of hate crime and incidents in the community at large. We will:

- Raise awareness of hate crime itself
- Raise awareness of the Strategy and Strategic Hate Crime and Cohesion Group
- Raise awareness of the work of partners to address hate crime

To do this we will:

- Use a range of media and activities including Facebook, Twitter, etc.
- Recruit MPs, Elected Members/Councillors as Champions
- Utilise a number of Hate Crime Resources

We will improve understanding of hate crime and its impact on victims, witnesses and society by:

- Addressing bullying within schools
- Working with schools and colleges to increase their understanding and strengthen their internal responses to reported incidents/crimes
- Commissioning research into the motivation of perpetrators of hate crimes

## 2 Confidence to Report

There is a wealth of evidence that indicates that hate crime and hate incidents are under-reported and that reporting levels vary across the individual strands, all for a variety of reasons. We will improve confidence to report by amongst other things:

- Developing third party reporting centres (TPRC),
- Raising awareness of TPRC
- Increasing capacity in VCFS groups,
- Increasing awareness the support available to victims and witnesses
- Improving consistency in reporting, recording and response arrangements at Lancashire Constabulary

## 3 Confidence in the Criminal Justice System

Confidence in the Criminal Justice System is essential for both witnesses and victims to initially report and then navigate the criminal justice process. To support victims and witnesses we will review arrangements currently in place including:

- Restorative justice arrangements
- Wider understanding of the criminal justice system
- Provision of support to victims and witnesses

Additional to the above the Equality and Cohesion Team are delivering Hate Crime Bitesize Briefings (for Members and Staff). Our member champion for Hate Crime is CCIr Julie Gibson, who the Principal Equalities and Cohesion Manager/Vice-Chair for the Lancashire Strategic Hate Crime and Cohesion Group updates on a regular basis.

The following paragraph is prominent on the county council website and that a press release was issued to publicise the July 2016 full council motion:

*"We condemn racism, xenophobia and hate crimes unequivocally. Racism, xenophobia and hate crimes of any description have no place in our country or our county."*

The following information is also on the LCC Intranet for staff and members:

### **How can I report a Hate Crime or Hate Incident?**

- If you have witnessed or been a victim of hate crime, please report it. This can be done in a number of ways:
- In an emergency always ring **999**
- For non-emergencies ring **101**
- In person at your [local police station](#).
- **Crimestoppers** anonymously on **0800 555 111**.
- Report anonymously online via **True Vision** <http://www.report-it.org.uk/home>
- Lancashire Victim's Services 0300 323 0085 [www.lancashirevictimservices.org](http://www.lancashirevictimservices.org)
- Young people who experience crime can get help from Nest Lancashire by texting **NEST to 60777**
- **Lancashire Council of Mosques** new confidential anti Muslim hate incident/crime reporting line – **01254 589699**

### **Hate crime position in Lancashire (August 2016)**

HATE crime has risen in Lancashire over the past year, statistics released by Lancashire Police show that there have been 259 incidents reported in June this year compared to only 154 at the same point in 2015. Most cases have involved racism with 195 reported this June compared to 108, fourteen months ago.

The figures cover the period leading up to and following the EU referendum, which has been widely linked to a surge in reported hate crime.

As well as racism incidents, hate crimes involving faith, sexuality, disability and transgender were all included in the figures collected.

On the whole, hate crime has risen by more than 16 per cent compared to last year, with offences linked to race and religion up by nearly a fifth.

## Consultations

N/A

## Implications:

This item has the following implications, as indicated:

### Risk management

Arrangements are in place for Cabinet Fairness for All WG, Management Team, Equality and Cohesion Team to monitor implementation of the Hate Crime Strategy and supporting activity across the organisation.

### Legal Implications

Equality Act 2010 –Public sector Equality Duty

### Financial Implications

N/A

## Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

### List of Background Papers

Paper	Date	Contact/Tel
Equality Act 2010	2010	Saeed Sidat/01772 536118
Action Against Hate- The UK Government's plan for tackling hate crime"	Aug 2016	Saeed Sidat/01772 536118

Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate

N/A