

Report of the Director of Communities and Environment

Report to Executive Board

Date: 17th October 2018

Subject: International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance Definition on Antisemitism

Are specific electoral wards affected? If yes, name(s) of ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for call-in?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, access to information procedure rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Summary of main issues –

1. Antisemitism, alongside Islamophobia, racism, homophobia and other forms of discrimination, remains a significant national challenge, impacting upon cities and towns across the UK and our communities here in Leeds.
2. The issue has sadly increased in prominence again over the last few years. Whilst numbers of serious recorded incidents remain low, national reports point to a general rise in 'casual' antisemitism. There have been a number of widely publicised incidents of antisemitic graffiti on religious buildings over the last few years; most recently in Leeds, Nazi symbols were daubed at the entrance to the Harrogate Road Synagogue.
3. The council, through its work on the equality, diversity, inclusion and the cohesion agenda is working to eradicate all forms of discrimination. Adopting the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition on antisemitism is one important element in a much wider programme of work to do this.

Recommendations

Executive Board is recommended to:

1. Adopt the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance Working Definition on antisemitism for use across the council.
2. Note that the Director of Communities and Environment will be responsible for its implementation.

1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1 This report provides the context for recommending the council adopts the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's working definition on antisemitism. It presents an overview of the Jewish community in Leeds and explains some of its significant contributions to the city. It also defines 'hate crime' and the latest picture in Leeds and includes the full IHRA definition on antisemitism with the IHRA's accompanying examples.

2. Background information

- 2.1 Leeds is a growing and richly diverse city, with people of different ages and from many different backgrounds, cultures and beliefs living and working alongside each other. The council plays an important role, working with partners across all sectors, in supporting people and communities from these different backgrounds and of different ages to feel comfortable living together. We welcome all communities in Leeds and value the contributions that our citizens make to our city.

The Jewish community in Leeds

- 2.2 The Jewish community in Leeds came to the city in large numbers in the later part of the 19th century and early years of the 20th. It reached a high of approximately 20,000 in the post-war years though, like many communities outside of London and Manchester, numbers have since declined. Traditional industries reduced in size after the war, with some facilities considered essential for Jewish life such as a Jewish education, not available in the city. For many smaller communities held together via cultural and religious observance, the attraction of moving to a larger city such as London or Manchester with a wider range of opportunities to live a 'Jewish' life proved compelling.
- 2.3 The community today numbers almost 7,000 based on the 2011 Census in which 0.9% of the Leeds population identified as Jewish (compared to 0.5% of people across England and Wales). However, this is widely believed to be something of an underestimate as completion of the question, 'What is your religion?' was the only voluntary question on 2011's Census. Many Jews who do not observe/are secular may not answer this question and there are also historical reasons why Jewish people may be reticent to disclose religion on public surveys, including ongoing antisemitism and the legacy of the Shoah¹.
- 2.4 The Leeds Jewish community is mostly based in North Leeds with the majority living in Alwoodley, Moortown, Roundhay and Chapel Allerton, with the neighbouring Harrogate community continuing to grow. There are three main Orthodox Synagogues, located on Harrogate Road (Etz Chaim), Street Lane (Beth Hamidrash Hagadol), Shadwell Lane (United Hebrew Congregation) and one Reform Synagogue on Roman Avenue in Roundhay.
- 2.5 The community has significant and well developed communal organisations such as the Jewish Representative Council, the Marjorie and Arnold Ziff Community Centre, the Jewish Housing Association, Jewish Welfare Board and Donisthorpe Hall, as well as the Jewish Free School.

¹ The Hebrew term for the Holocaust.

- 2.6 The Jewish community has taken a strong role and lead in interfaith work over many years. The Jewish Representative Council provides an effective representative voice which engages with the other faith communities within the city. The current interfaith lead for the Council is Simon Phillips who is also a Hub Representative for Leeds City Council's Religion or Belief Hub. The Hub was launched in 2016 and acts as a consultation and engagement forum with members of faith, religion or belief communities. It aims to provide a platform for members of these communities to provide constructive challenge to the local authority and other organisations in how they consider religion or belief around the planning and delivery of their services. The Jewish community have been strong supporters of the Hub since its inception.
- 2.7 The work of the Nisa-Nashim organisation is one example of an interfaith initiative which has proved extremely successful. The Leeds branch of this Muslim-Jewish women's network - which seeks to bring Muslim and Jewish communities closer together through its women - launched at the Shine Centre in Harehills in 2016. It has since undertaken work which has received national recognition from the Board of Deputies of British Jews and the Jewish Leadership Council.
- 2.8 The Representative Council has also been working with the Sikh community through the Chapeltown Gurdwara.
- 2.9 The issue of genocide commemoration – specifically the Shoah or Holocaust – remains a very important issue for the Jewish community in Leeds. The community is prominent in its support for the city's Holocaust Memorial Day celebration which takes place each year in January, one of a number of events that take place in towns and cities across the country. In Leeds, the council has a long-standing relationship with the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust – a charity set up and funded by the Government - and works to its guidance.

Hate crime

- 2.10 The council works with all communities to ensure people are treated with dignity and respect and the causes of unfairness are understood and addressed. We also work with organisations across Leeds to promote a clear and consistent message that prejudicial views or behaviour that could result in hate incidents or crimes are not tolerated or condoned.
- 2.11 A hate crime is defined as a crime which is committed against someone due to their race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age or disability. Tackling hate crime – which includes antisemitism - is important for the city, not just because of the devastating consequences it can have for victims and their families, but also because it can divide communities.
- 2.12 2,432 incidents were reported across the city in the 12 months to March 2018, up by 11% on the year before (2,192 incidents reported) but considerably lower than the rate of increase of 27% two years ago. During 2017/18, Police in Leeds recorded 1,892 Race hate incidents, 280 Sexuality hate incidents, 258 Disability hate incidents, 168 Faith hate incidents, and 51 Transphobic hate incidents (NB a single incident may be recorded in more than one category). In March 2018, 257 hate incidents were reported compared to 199 in March 2017. Such increases in hate

crime reporting have gone hand in hand in recent years with national and international events.

- 2.13 Work is taking place in Leeds to increase awareness and understanding of hate crime and reduce both its occurrence and impact. Safer Leeds' Strategic Action Plan includes a focus on preventing hate crime, increasing reporting, responding to hate crime in our communities and supporting the victims affected. As part of National Hate Crime Awareness Week in October 2017, Councillor Debra Coupar (the Executive Member for the council's Communities portfolio) officially launched the updated Leeds Hate Crime Strategy, '*Responding to hate*'. A series of events took place across the city where residents were able to discuss and offer their thoughts on hate crime with representatives of the council's Safer Leeds team, West Yorkshire Police and partners, and also find out more about the support which is available in the city to tackle the issue. The events promoted Leeds' clear no tolerance message towards hate crime and stressed the importance of immediately reporting any instances. In July 2018, West Yorkshire Police led an event to help Faith communities become more aware and vigilant of hate crime. The annual Hate Crime week will be held in October this year.
- 2.14 Despite progress, the issue of antisemitism has sadly not gone away. Whilst numbers of serious recorded incidents remain low, national reports point to a general rise in 'casual' antisemitism. There have been a number of widely publicised incidents of antisemitic graffiti on religious buildings over the last few years; most recently in Leeds, Nazi symbols were daubed at the entrance to the Harrogate Road Synagogue.

3. Main issues

- 3.1 In May 2016 the plenary session of the IHRA resolved to adopt the following non-legally binding working definition on 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.”

- 3.2 Manifestations might include the targeting of the state of Israel, conceived as a Jewish collectivity. However, criticism of Israel similar to that leveled against any other country cannot be regarded as antisemitic. 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.
- 3.3 The IHRA definition specifies eleven 'contemporary examples of antisemitism' in public life, the media, schools, the workplace, and in the religious sphere which could, taking into account the overall context, include but are not limited to:
1. Calling for, aiding, or justifying the killing or harming of Jews in the name of a radical ideology or an extremist view of religion.
 2. 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.

3. 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.
4. 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).
5. Accusing the Jews as a people, or Israel as a state, of inventing or exaggerating the Holocaust.
6. 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.
7. Denying the Jewish people their right to self-determination, e.g., by claiming that the existence of a State of Israel is a racist endeavor.
8. Applying double standards by requiring of it a behavior not expected or demanded of any other democratic nation.
9. Using the symbols and images associated with classic antisemitism (e.g., claims of Jews killing Jesus or blood libel) to characterise Israel or Israelis.
10. Drawing comparisons of contemporary Israeli policy to that of the Nazis.
11. Holding Jews collectively responsible for actions of the state of Israel.

3.4 In addition the IHRA states:

- **Antisemitic 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 antisemitic** 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.
- **Antisemitic discrimination** is the denial to Jews of opportunities or services available to others and is illegal in many countries.

3.5 The IHRA definition has had significant public and media attention over the last twelve months with considerable debate and discussion over the definition and its attached examples. These have particularly focused on the right to free speech and ongoing debate and discussion over the Israel/Palestine conflict and whether the definition or its examples may restrict legitimate views being expressed in this area.

3.6 It is the view of the UK government and other public bodies that have adopted the definition and its examples that this does not restrict debate about the situation in Israel/Palestine or the holding of views supportive of either side in the conflict.

3.7 31 countries, including the UK, have now adopted the IHRA definition on antisemitism. In the UK, the Police, Crown Prosecution Service and Judiciary and the devolved administrations in Scotland and Wales have also adopted it. In 2017, Lord Bourne, Minister for Faith, wrote to local authorities suggesting they adopt the definition in their work; 130 councils across the UK have now done so. In Leeds, council staff apply this definition in their work to support Holocaust Memorial Day.

There is now an opportunity for the council to formally adopt the IHRA definition for use across its services.

4. Corporate considerations

4.1 Consultation and engagement

4.1.1 The council consults with communities, including faith communities, through a variety of mechanisms including its Equality Assembly and Equality Hubs. Adoption of the IHRA definition of antisemitism has been strongly urged by a number of Jewish organisations; it has already been adopted by the Government and a number of public bodies in the UK.

4.2 Equality and diversity / cohesion and integration

4.2.1 This report supports the council's work on the equality, diversity, cohesion and integration agenda as outlined in our Equality and Diversity Policy, our Equality and Diversity Improvement Priorities (recently updated and approved by this Board at its July 2018 meeting) and our approach to Cohesion via the Stronger Communities Breakthrough Project.

4.2.2 An equality, diversity cohesion and integration screening form has been completed and is attached to this report.

4.3 Council policies and Best Council Plan

4.3.1 We know that some of our communities have poorer outcomes than others and this affects them individually as well as the city as a whole. We are committed to making equality a reality for all the citizens of Leeds, as described in our Equality and Diversity Policy and accompanying Equality Improvement Priorities 2018-22.

4.3.2 The Priorities complement the 'Best City' ambition set out in our Best Council Plan 2018/19 – 2020/21: one that is compassionate with a strong economy, which tackles poverty and reduces the inequalities that still exist. This report supports in particular our Best Council Plan priority around 'Safe, Strong Communities.'

4.4 Resources and value for money

4.4.1 There are no specific resource implications associated with this report.

4.5 Legal implications, access to information, and call-in

4.5.1 There are no specific legal implications associated with this report.

4.6 Risk management

4.6.1 Failure to adopt the IHRA definition could have a significant impact on the council's reputation and relationship with communities in Leeds; in particular the Jewish community. There is a clear steer from central government for local authorities to adopt the definition in their work.

5. Conclusions

- 5.1 Leeds City Council welcomes all communities in Leeds and values the contributions our citizens make to this vibrant, diverse city. We engage with organisations across Leeds to promote a clear and consistent message that prejudicial views or behaviour that could result in hate incidents or crimes are neither tolerated nor condoned. However, antisemitism, alongside other forms of discrimination, remains a significant challenge, impacting upon cities and towns across the UK and our communities here in Leeds.
- 5.2 Adopting the IHRA working definition on antisemitism for use across the council is one important element in a wider programme of work to tackle all forms of discrimination in Leeds.

6. Recommendations

- 6.1 Executive Board is recommended to:
1. Adopt the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance Working Definition on antisemitism for use across the council.
 2. Note that the Director of Communities and Environment will be responsible for its implementation.

7. Background documents²

- 7.1 None.

² The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.