



Response to Request for Information

Reference FOI 001410
Date 09 August 2017

Antisemitism

Request:

Further to the letter from the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government to the Leader of Wolverhampton City Council dated January 2017 regarding the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of antisemitism. Could you confirm that Wolverhampton City Council has adopted this definition into their local policies and if so, please provide a link to the decision.

As you are aware, in February 2017, the Government requested that local authorities adopt the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of anti-Semitism.

In respect to hate crimes, the definition of anti-Semitism falls under the religion monitored strand of hate crime, and in the West Midlands it is measured as 'Religious perceived – Judaism'. This fits with the College of Policing's hate crime guidance, and is also in accordance with Home Office Counting Rules.

I can confirm that as an interim measure the City of Wolverhampton Council currently uses the definition adopted by the College of Policing's hate crime guidance. This states that Anti-Semitism:

"is taken to be a combination of race hate crimes where the hostility is targeted towards Jewish people or communities and religious hate crime targeted towards Judaism."

The Council is committed to the fighting hate crime, of whatever nature, with our key local stakeholders. The definition is being used as part of wider public consultation on the issue of hate crime in its broadest sense with our colleagues at Interfaith Wolverhampton. In doing this we expect to achieve a definition which is strongly supported across Wolverhampton's diverse communities and is therefore one that comes more readily to the aid of individuals or groups who may be targeted in this way.

Our objective is to have in place a locally agreed definition of hate crime which will support our work to encapsulate all forms of anti-Semitism and to tackle hate crime as it presents itself to the UK.

I would like to update you on the Councils' progress to date:

1. Faith Covenant

The council is aiming to launch the Faith Covenant by the end of December 2017. The draft wording of the Faith Covenant is currently undergoing a consultation process with the Inter-faith and representative bodies within the faith sector, led by City of Wolverhampton Council and the Voluntary Sector Council. Once feedback has been received, it's anticipated that the amended Faith Covenant will be consulted with other city wide stakeholders over a four week consultation period, before Cabinet approval on the 29 November 2017 and formal launch in December 2017.

2. Policies tackling Anti-Semitism – Development of the new Corporate Equality Strategy 2017 – 2020

The council is committed to and actively tackling all forms of direct and indirect discrimination. The council's equal opportunities policy on employment and the equal opportunities statement make clear that the authority will not tolerate any form of discrimination on the basis of religion or belief which would include anti-Semitism. The council's equality analysis framework ensures that our services, policies, procedures, functions and savings do not discriminate against Jewish people or communities.

All new strategies, policies and services are equality analysed to ensure that they do not directly or indirectly discriminate against any protected characteristic group, which includes tackling all forms of anti-Semitism.

We are also developing a new Corporate Equality Strategy 2017 – 2020, supporting our journey towards Excellence and including a specific section on tackling all forms of anti-Semitism which will be submitted to Cabinet for formal approval in October 2017.

I hope this information is useful to you and demonstrates the Council's commitment to fight hate crime.