

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO POLICY & FINANCE COMMITTEE

Agenda Item No. 13

meeting date: 17 NOVEMBER 2020
title: ADOPTION OF WORKING DEFINITION OF ANTISEMITISM
submitted by: MARSHAL SCOTT
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1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To consider whether the Council should adopt the non-legally binding working definition of antisemitism.
- 1.2 Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities:
 - Community Objectives – none arising from this report.
 - Corporate Priorities – to be a well-managed Council.
 - Other Considerations – to comply with duties under the Equalities Act 2010.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Earlier in the year the Leader received a letter from the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP encouraging the council to formally adopt the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's working definition of antisemitism.
- 2.2 All councils have been requested to do this as a clear message that antisemitic behaviour will not be tolerated. The definition is to be used on all appropriate occasions.

3 ISSUES

- 3.1 The working definition reads as follows:-

“Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred towards 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 The definition is not designed to be legally binding, but as an invaluable tool for public bodies to understand how antisemitism manifests itself in the 21st Century. It demonstrates a commitment to engaging with the experiences of Jewish communities and supporting them against contemporary challenges they face.
- 3.3 The IHRA definition is already used in guidance for the Police and Crown Prosecution Service, providing examples of the kinds of behaviours which, depending on the circumstances, could constitute antisemitism.

3.4 The Government cannot eradicate antisemitism on their own and as such are seeking the help of local authorities to show leadership with this task, alongside partners in civic society and community activists. It is recognised that local authorities play a valuable role in tackling all forms of hate crime through work to build resilience and integration.

4 RISK ASSESSMENT

4.1 The approval of this report may have the following implications:

- Resources – None arising from this report.
- Technical, Environmental and Legal – the definition is not designed to be legally binding.
- Political – None arising from this report.
- Reputation – Adoption will enhance the Council's reputation.
- Equality & Diversity – Using the definition will send a clear message that antisemitic behaviour will not be tolerated.

5 **RECOMMENDED THAT**

5.1 Committee decide whether the Council should adopt the non-legally binding working definition of antisemitism as outlined in 3.1

OLWEN HEAP
ADMINISTRATION OFFICER

MARSHAL SCOTT
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

BACKGROUND PAPERS
Letter from MHCLG

For further information please ask for Marshal Scott, extension 4400

REF: OMH/P & F/171120