

By: Roger Gough, Leader (Cabinet Responsibility for Equalities)
To: Cabinet – 23 March 2020
Subject: Equalities Update – IHRA Definition of Anti-semitism
Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: This item provides Cabinet with information relating to the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance working definition of anti-semitism and an opportunity to reaffirm the Council's commitment to addressing issues of inequality.

- 1 The public sector equality duty came in to force in April 2011 (s.149 of the Equality Act 2010) and public authorities like Kent County Council are required, in carrying out our functions, to have due regard to the need to achieve the objectives set out under s149 of the Equality Act 2010 to:
 - a. eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010;
 - b. advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - c. foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- 2 Recognising that Members and officers all have a role to play in delivering equality, Kent County Council adopts a whole organisation approach to addressing issues of inequality. Residents of Kent also have a role in working with us to foster an environment of mutual respect and in promoting good relations.
- 3 The Equality Act 2010 sets out that people should not be treated differently or unfairly because of what are known as protected characteristics and which are:
 - age
 - disability
 - sex changes
 - marriage
 - having a baby
 - race
 - religion
 - being a man or a woman
 - being lesbian gay or bisexual
- 4 The Council has always taken responsibilities in relation to equal treatment extremely seriously and these were embedded into our constitution, policies,

procedures and employee terms and conditions long before the statutory need to do so. We also assess the impact of our decision-making from an equalities perspective throughout the process.

- 5 The Council's Equality and Diversity Policy Statement can be found at: <https://www.kent.gov.uk/about-the-council/strategies-and-policies/corporate-policies/equality-and-diversity>
- 6 The web-link also provides detailed information on our equality objectives alongside the annual report and a range of toolkits, information and statistics that have been helpfully curated by Akua Agyepong, our Corporate Lead for Equality and Diversity. Work is currently ongoing across the Council to prepare the 2019/20 annual report and to review and refresh the Policy Statement.
- 7 Kent 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.
- 8 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.
- 9 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."
- 10 To guide the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance in its work, they considered contemporary examples of antisemitism in public life, the media, schools, the workplace, and in the religious sphere. They noted that these could include (but not limited to) the following:
 - a. Calling for, aiding, or justifying the killing or harming of Jews in the name of a radical ideology or an extremist view of religion.
 - b. 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.

- c. 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.
- d. 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).
- e. Accusing the Jews as a people, or Israel as a state, of inventing or exaggerating the Holocaust.
- f. 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.
- g. 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.
- h. Applying double standards by requiring of it a behaviour not expected or demanded of any other democratic nation.
- i. Using the symbols and images associated with classic antisemitism (e.g., claims of Jews killing Jesus or blood libel) to characterize Israel or Israelis.
- j. Drawing comparisons of contemporary Israeli policy to that of the Nazis.
- k. Holding Jews collectively responsible for actions of the state of Israel.

11 To respond to the request from the Secretary of State meaningfully, Cabinet are asked to formally note the working definition and approve the instruction of senior officers to reflect this in forthcoming changes to governance and policy.

Recommendations

Cabinet are asked to:

1. **AGREE** to reaffirm the commitment as set out at Paragraph 1 of this report
2. **NOTE** that Kent County Council condemns all forms of racism, xenophobia and hate crime unequivocally
3. **NOTE** the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance working definition, of antisemitism
4. **AGREE** that the General Counsel and Director of Strategy, Policy, Relationships & Corporate Assurance reflect the resolutions of this meeting in forthcoming reviews of the Council's formal governance and policy in this area.