

Council Meeting	
Meeting Date	18 October 2017
Report Title	Adoption of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance definition of antisemitism
Cabinet Member	Cllr Bowles, Council Leader
SMT Lead	Mark Radford, Chief Executive
Head of Service	David Clifford, Policy Manager
Lead Officer	David Clifford, Policy Manager
Key Decision	No
Classification	Open
Recommendations	Council is recommended to adopt the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance definition of antisemitism cited at paragraph 3.1.

1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report invites council to adopt the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's definition of antisemitism, in line with central government's recent decision to do so and its encouragement of local authorities to follow suit. This is intended primarily as a clear signal of the council's intolerance for antisemitism.

2 Background

- 2.1 The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) is an intergovernmental body whose purpose is to place political and social leaders' support behind the need for holocaust education, remembrance and research. It was initiated in 1998 by former Swedish prime minister Göran Persson and currently has 31 member countries, including the UK. The national government of each country appoints a national delegation composed of both government representatives and national experts.
- 2.2 By way of a first step towards fighting antisemitism, the IHRA developed and adopted a standard definition of the phenomenon in May 2016. In December that year, the UK government became one of the first in the world formally to adopt the definition, and the secretary of state for communities and local government has recently written to all local authorities to encourage them to follow suit.

3 Proposals

3.1 The IHRA definition of antisemitism is as follows:

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 Swale Borough Council has long striven to ensure that as both a service provider and an employer it acts in a way which respects human diversity and, in line with its legal obligations, promotes equality of treatment between people with different personal characteristics.

3.3 The foreword to the latest version of the council's corporate equality scheme states that 'we view equality, human rights and good relations between people as something that affects us all, regardless of our backgrounds, and we are committed to working closely with all those who are interested in, or affected by, our work'.

3.4 The adoption of a formal definition of antisemitism might generally be expected to occur at the same time as a review of the overall equality scheme, but the next review of this is not now scheduled until 2020.

3.5 Council is therefore **recommended** at this stage formally to adopt the IHRA definition of antisemitism as cited in paragraph 3.1 above.

4 Alternative Options

4.1 The formal adoption of the IHRA's definition of antisemitism is intended primarily as a clear signal of the council's intolerance for antisemitism as part of its more general intolerance for any form of racism or discrimination based on personal characteristics. However, adoption of the definition is not mandatory and the council is entirely at liberty to decide not to adopt it.

5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed

5.1 A significant level of consultation was undertaken on the council's general approach to equality and diversity during 2016 when the corporate equality scheme was being updated. This included both general consultation with the public and bespoke engagement with community activists representing people with specific personal characteristics. Nothing in this report would be contrary to the overall tenor of consultation responses received .

6 Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	Adoption of the IHRA definition would support the council's corporate priority theme 'A council to be proud of'.
Financial, Resource and Property	Given that adoption of the IHRA definition is intended primarily to send a signal, it is not expected that there will be any financial, resource or property implications.
Legal and Statutory	Adoption of the IHRA definition would support the council in continuing to meet its legal obligations under the Equalities Act and Human Rights Act.
Crime and Disorder	Swale already works actively with community safety partners to inhibit the incidence of hate crime within the borough. Adoption of the IHRA definition of antisemitism could help to clarify whether an incident does or does not fall into this category.
Environmental Sustainability	No implications identified at this stage.
Health and Wellbeing	No implications identified at this stage. For the implications in respect of hate crimes, see 'Crime and Disorder' above.
Risk Management and Health and Safety	No implications identified at this stage.
Equality and Diversity	The council is already actively engaged in promoting respect for human diversity and equal treatment for all. Its corporate equality scheme 2016-2020 includes four overarching objectives to support the council in meeting its legal and moral obligations as both a service provider and an employer. Adoption of a formal definition of antisemitism is fully in line with these obligations and objectives.
Privacy and Data Protection	No implications identified at this stage.

7 Appendices

7.1 There are no appendices.

8 Background Papers

8.1 There are no background papers.