
COUNCIL MEETING

To All Members of the Council on Friday 6 December 2019

Date of meeting: Monday 16 December 2019

Time: 6.30pm

Venue: the Council Chamber, The Symington Building, Adam and Eve St, Market Harborough, LE16 7AG

Dear Councillor

A Meeting of the Harborough District Council, which you are invited to attend, is to be held as detailed above.

The business to be transacted is set out in the Agenda below.

Yours faithfully

Norman Proudfoot
Joint Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service

Agenda

- 1) Chairman's Announcements
 - 2) To receive Declarations of Members' Interests
 - 3) To receive the Minutes of the meeting of Council held on 18th November 2019
 - 4) To receive the report of the Leader and receive questions and answers on it (to follow)
 - 5) To answer written questions or receive petitions submitted by the public.
 - 6) To answer written questions submitted by Members
 - 7) To receive a report from the Cabinet and receive questions and answers on it (page 1)
 - 8) To receive recommendations from the Constitutional Review Committee held on November 12th 2019 (to follow)
 - 9) To receive reports about and receive questions and answers on the business of joint arrangements and external organisations
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10) To receive the report of the Chairman of the Scrutiny Commission (page 4)

11) To consider a Notice of Motion

The following Notice of Motion has been submitted by Councillor King and seconded by Councillor Rickman in accordance with Procedure rule 11.1 of Part 4(1) of the Council's Constitution:

Adoption of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) Working Definition of Antisemitism

Background:

Following the Government's adoption of the IHRA definition in 2017, Government has been encouraging Councils' to formally adopt the definition as a clear message that anti-Semitic behaviour will not be tolerated. The Secretary of State wrote to all Council Leaders on 15th October 2019 to explain the need to take urgent action, which is more important now than ever. An extract from this letter is appended below, a copy of which is attached as appendix A.

"The Community Security Trust (CST) is the leading organisation monitoring and supporting victims of antisemitism, and I know many of you will be familiar with their work. Earlier this year, CST released their report on anti-semitic incidents in the first six months of 2019. It showed the highest total on record over a six-month period, and an increase of 10% on the same period in 2018, with over 100 incidents per month for the third year running. Similarly, the annual figures for 2018 showed the highest number of anti-semitic incidents on record.

This is a very worrying trend. CST's 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.

The recent deplorable attack on a synagogue in Halle, Germany, which took the lives of two innocent people on Yom Kippur, the holiest day in the Jewish calendar, shows that anti-semitic hate crime is not a thing of the past. This must give us all serious pause."

It is in this context that the Secretary of State, MHCLG in his letter of 15th October urged all Council Leaders "to seek to formally adopt the IHRA definition and use it on all appropriate occasions. The definition is not designed to be legally binding, but it is 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 the contemporary challenges they face.”

“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. The United Nations Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief also recently released a report which agreed that “the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism can offer valuable guidance for identifying antisemitism in its various forms” and encouraged its use in “education, awareness-raising and for monitoring and responding to manifestations of antisemitism”.

The Government is absolutely committed to combatting antisemitism in all its forms, from wherever it arises. Examples of this include the strong work of the Cross-Government Working Group to Tackle Antisemitism, which builds on our close relationship with Jewish communities. The Government funds projects such as Solutions Not Sides which seeks to challenge stereotypes and foster more nuanced discussion of the Israel-Palestinian conflict, and we have recently announced a further £100,000 in funding to tackle online antisemitism. I am a strong advocate for clear standards on hate crime and a consistent approach across institutions to strengthen the support we provide to students and communities.

We recognise the incredibly valuable role local authorities have to play in tackling all forms of hate crime, in partnership with local police forces. Your intimate knowledge of local communities and their concerns provides valuable evidence to target responses. Your work to build resilience and integration locally helps to challenge some of the factors that may cause hate crime, preventing prejudice and hatred from taking root.

Eradicating antisemitism is not a task that the Government can achieve on our own. We need local authorities to show leadership, alongside our partners in civil society and community activists. The Government has adopted the IHRA definition of antisemitism, as we recognise this is one of the strongest signals we can give our Jewish communities. It demonstrates that we hear and understand their concerns and are ready and willing to act in response. I would be grateful if you would inform me when you have adopted the definition, or the steps you are taking to adopt it, or otherwise explain your reluctance to do so, so that I can discuss the matter with you directly.”

Recommendations:

- 1) Harborough District Council agrees with the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance working definition of anti-Semitism:-
“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.”

- 2) Council notes that:
We have both a legal and a moral duty to show fairness and equality to our residents, our service users and our employees. We currently have systems in place to ensure that anti-Semitism is not tolerated within our District. These include our commitment to hate incident/crime reporting and also our Equality Plan, whilst these are not specific to anti-Semitism they both ensure that anti-Semitism is not tolerated. Through either of these channels we would expect any anti-Semitism to be identified and challenged appropriately. Anti-Semitism is covered under the characteristic ‘religion and belief’ in both hate incident/crime reporting and the Equality Act 2010.

- 3) Subject to approval of recommendation 1) that as per the request from the Secretary of State, the Council’s Head of Governance be authorised to inform him of the Council decision.

11a) Appendix A - Associated letter (page 6)

12) To consider an officer’s report on an Update from the Climate Emergency Working Group (page 9)

13) To consider an officer’s report on the Council Tax base for the Council Tax 2020/21 (to follow)

14) To consider any urgent items (to be decided by the Chairman)

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