



Report to Leader

Date:	28 th January 2021
Reference number:	L01.21
Title:	Adoption of IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism
Relevant councillor(s):	Cllr Martin Tett, Leader / Cllr Gareth Williams, Communities, Health & Culture
Author and/or contact officer:	Natalie Donhou Morley, Senior Policy Officer
Ward(s) affected:	All
Recommendations:	To adopt the non-legally binding working definition of antisemitism and all illustrative examples
Reason for decision:	Adopting the IHRA definition is considered best practice throughout the UK, and in a number of other countries.

1. Executive summary

- 1.1. The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) working definition of antisemitism and its contemporary examples are a widely adopted non-legally binding definition of antisemitism. The UK government has adopted the definition and has recommended its adoption to local government.

2. Background

- 2.1. The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) was founded in 1998 by former Swedish Prime Minister, Göran Persson and is an intergovernmental organization of 31 member nations. Its aim is to unite governments and experts to promote, advance and shape Holocaust education, research and remembrance.
- 2.2. The IHRA definition is "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."

- 2.3. The IHRA definition specifies eleven ‘contemporary examples of antisemitism’ in public life, the media, schools, the workplace, and in the religious sphere which could, taking into account the overall context, include but are not limited to:
- 2.3.1. Calling for, aiding, or justifying the killing or harming of Jews in the name of a radical ideology or an extremist view of religion.
 - 2.3.2. Making mendacious, dehumanizing, demonizing, 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.
 - 2.3.3. Jews as a people of being responsible for real or imagined wrongdoing committed by single Jewish person or group, or even for acts committed by non-Jews.
 - 2.3.4. 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).
 - 2.3.5. Accusing the Jews as a people, or Israel as a state, of inventing or exaggerating the Holocaust.
 - 2.3.6. 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.
 - 2.3.7. 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.
 - 2.3.8. Applying double standards by requiring of it a behaviour not expected or demanded of any other democratic nation.
 - 2.3.9. Using the symbols and images associated with classic antisemitism (e.g., claims of Jews killing Jesus or blood libel) to characterize Israel or Israelis.
 - 2.3.10. Drawing comparisons of contemporary Israeli policy to that of the Nazis.
 - 2.3.11. Holding Jews collectively responsible for actions of the state of Israel.
- 2.4. There is no specific offence or definition of ‘antisemitism’ in the law of England and Wales. Instead, offences involving antisemitic hostility are prosecuted within the framework of the legislation dealing with racially or religiously aggravated hate crime. Case law has decided that Jews are members of a racial group and a religious group. The legal framework for hate crime is contained primarily in the Crime and Disorder Act (CDA) 1998 and the Criminal Justice Act (CJA) 2003.
- 2.5. Antisemitic acts are criminal when they are so defined by law (for example, denial of the Holocaust or distribution of antisemitic materials in some countries). Criminal acts are antisemitic when the targets of attacks, whether they are people or property – such as

buildings, schools, places of worship and cemeteries – are selected because they are, or are perceived to be, Jewish or linked to Jews.

- 2.6. Antisemitic discrimination is the denial to Jews of opportunities or services available to others and is illegal in many countries.

3. Adoption of the IHRA definition

- 3.1. The UK, Scottish and Welsh governments have all adopted the IHRA working definition of antisemitism and its working examples, together with the police, a majority of councils and a number of international governments, for example: Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and the United States.
- 3.2. In 2017, the then Secretary of State for CLG, Sajid Javid, wrote to local authorities encouraging them to adopt the IHRA working definition of antisemitism. To date over 200 councils have adopted the definition.
- 3.3. The definition was previously adopted by both Bucks County Council and Wycombe District Council prior to the Buckinghamshire Council being formed in April 2020.
- 3.4. Adoption of the definition and its examples would signal our support for the elimination of antisemitism and our support for individuals who have suffered from it.

4. Recommendation

- 4.1. Adoption of the IHRA definition together with its contemporary examples by the Buckinghamshire Council would be a timely act where house of commons statistics (Hate Crime Statistics briefing paper 8537) show an increase in hate crime across the whole of the UK and provide a clear message to the council's customers and stakeholders of its position regarding antisemitism.

5. Other options considered

- 5.1. The Council could decide to not adopt the definition and examples, although it should be noted that this is not considered best practice and would allow the Buckinghamshire Council to avoid criticism over failure to adopt the definition.

6. Legal and financial implications

- 6.1. The IHRA definition of antisemitism is a non-legally binding working definition and would therefore have no legal implications.
- 6.2. There are no financial implications.



7. Corporate implications

- 7.1. In order to ensure that staff are aware of this decision and the expectations that the Council would have in relation to conduct, staff will be notified of this decision via internal communications.
- 7.2. Adoption of the IHRA definition will contribute to the council's commitments under the Public Sector Equality Duty and as part of our ongoing work to promote equality and diversity, and to combat discrimination and hate crime. It will also enable the Council to deal more effectively with antisemitic behaviour directed at our communities and staff.
- 7.3. We are satisfied that there are no further concerns over adopting the IHRA definition.

8. Consultation with local councillors & community boards

- 8.1. N/A

9. Communication, engagement & further consultation

- 9.1. Upon adoption a communication plan will be developed in order to raise awareness – this will align with Holocaust Memorial Day (27th January 2021) and include:
 - 9.1.1. A press release to note the adoption of the definition to residents and our stance regarding discrimination.
 - 9.1.2. Information to be published on our external website on the definition and the Council's adoption of it. This should include signposting to local hate crime reporting.
 - 9.1.3. Internal communications to share the definition and adoption with our members and staff.

10. Next steps and review

- 10.1. Upon adoption the decision should be published on our website as an appendix to our Equalities Policy.
- 10.2. The adoption should be reviewed in line with our Equalities Policy at least every 4 years or as and when updates are made to the definition.
- 10.3. HR will review current internal policies pertaining to staff to identify if any policies require updating following the adoption. All new internal and external policies should continue to measure potential discrimination by completion of a EqIA prior to publication and where possible equality should be encouraged.
- 10.4. Further consultation should be considered regarding the adoption of additional definitions relating to other minority groups that may also feel vulnerable to discrimination and hatred.



11. Background papers

11.1. None

12. Your questions and views (for key decisions)

12.1. If you have any questions about the matters contained in this report please get in touch with the author of this report.

