

TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL

CABINET - 26th JANUARY 2009

STRATEGY AGAINST HATE CRIME AND HARASSMENT

REPORT OF CORPORATE DIRECTOR: COMMUNITY SERVICES

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To inform Cabinet of the production of a strategy against Hate Crime & Harassment 2008-2011 for Telford & Wrekin and to seek Cabinet endorsement for the strategy.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

Cabinet is asked to:

- 2.1 **Recognise the contributions made by all of the partners who have assisted in the development of the strategy;**
- 2.2 **To support the promotion of the support services that are available to victims of hate crime and harassment;**
- 2.3 **Formally approve the Strategy.**

3.0 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Hate Crime and Harassment is a serious social issue that has a significant impact on its victims, families, and the wider community within Telford & Wrekin.
- 3.2 Everyone should be treated with dignity and respect. Harassment is now recognised as one of the major contributing factors to unnecessary stress. It often leads to depression for the victim and can have a devastating effect on their quality of life. The same can be said for hate crime victims.
- 3.3 Hate crime victims feel the added trauma of knowing that the perpetrator's motivation is an impersonal, group hatred, relating to some feature that they share with others. This factor may be greatest where the hatred is directed against a visible feature such as skin colour, physical disability, or relating to core personal values such as religion or sexuality. A crime that might normally have a minor impact becomes, with the hate element, a very intimate and hurtful attack that can undermine the victim's quality of life.

4.0 INFORMATION

- 4.1 The development of the Hate Crime and Harassment Strategy is a joint initiative supported by Safer and Stronger Communities Partnership (SSCP) and the Telford Race, Equality and Diversity Partnership (REDP). Both Partnerships along with other key public sector agencies and community organisations have come together for the purpose of reducing and preventing hate crime and harassment across the Borough.
- 4.2 This multi-agency Hate Crime and Harassment Strategy has been developed in consultation with the wider community.
- 4.3 The Hate Crime and Harassment Strategy will help to maximise the potential in transforming Telford and Wrekin into
- “a successful, prosperous and healthy community which offers a good quality of life for all the people of Telford and Wrekin”**
- 4.4 The purpose of this Strategy is to provide information about partner agency services and to drive forward new service developments.
- 4.5 It is linked to the SSCP Plan and covers the same period of 2008 – 2011.
- 4.6 All agencies included in the SSCP and TREDP are committed to working together to protect adults and children, and the communities in which they live, from the pernicious harm caused by hate crime and harassment.
- 4.7 This Strategy outlines the actions that will be undertaken by the Partnership in order to offer services to all victims of hate crime and harassment, regardless of gender, race, age, sexual orientation, nationality or disability.
- 4.8 Our priorities have been determined by focusing on those actions which will impact most on the experiences of those experiencing and reporting hate crime and harassment. These include:
- a) Improve multi-agency responses and performance in taking action against perpetrators
 - b) Increase access to and confidence in reporting
 - c) Improve support to victims and witnesses
 - d) Improve strategic delivery and effective monitoring
 - e) Improve communication between partners and communities
 - f) Improve preventative measures and promote community cohesion

An executive summary of the document is attached as Appendix 2

Appendix 1

1.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

- 1.1 A key component of the new Hate Crime & Harassment Strategy will be to support vulnerable victims and to improve response to hate crime and harassment.
- 1.2 A full Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken that has ensured that consideration has been given to the six diversity strands: race; age; gender; sexuality; disability; religion and belief. .

2.0 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

- 2.1 Hate Crime and Harassment has significant implications on the quality of life and life chances for residents and has a direct bearing on building sustainable, cohesive and vibrant communities within Telford & Wrekin.

3.0 LEGAL COMMENT

- 3.1 The Council has a duty under section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to exercise its various functions with due regard to the likely effect of those functions on, and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent crime and disorder in its area.
- 3.2 The Safer & Stronger Communities Partnership Hate Crime and Harassment Strategy does not form part of the Council's budget and policy framework and therefore it is not reserved to Full Council. Cabinet therefore have the authority to make the decision.
- 3.3 Any actions taken under the strategy will need to be proportionate and in accordance with the law.
- 3.4 A non exhaustive list of current legislation is contained within the body of the report.

4.0 LINKS WITH CORPORATE PRIORITIES

- 4.1 Hate Crime & Harassment has a direct and indirect impact on the Council's Community Priorities within Telford & Wrekin.
 - Transforming Telford & Wrekin
 - Giving Children & Young People the Best Possible Start in their lives
 - Maintaining a High Quality, Attractive and Sustainable Environment
 - Creating a Safe, Strong and Cohesive Community
 - Promoting Healthy Communities and Improving the Quality of Life of Vulnerable and Older People
 - Strengthening the Local Economy & the Skills of Local People

- 4.2 This Strategy will help improve peoples' life chances and transform Telford and Wrekin by 2026 into a 'successful, prosperous and healthy community which offers a good quality of life for all the people of Telford & Wrekin.

5.0 OPPORTUNITIES AND RISKS

- 5.1 There is a risk that if inadequate action is taken to combat hate crime and harassment in Telford & Wrekin, there could be a negative impact on community cohesion in the Borough. This will have implications for the Council's vision:

“A successful, prosperous and healthy community which offers a good quality of life for all the people of Telford & Wrekin”

- 5.2 Opportunities and risks associated with this decision have been identified and assessed. Arrangements will be put in place to manage the risks and maximise the opportunities that have been identified.

6.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The development of the strategy against hate crime and harassment has been delivered from within existing resources. However there are financial implications arising directly from this report in the development of an infrastructure to support local reporting centres such as appropriate training. This is a corporate training issue and links directly to the community cohesion work of the Council. The extent and cost of training has not yet been quantified however this will need to be funded from within existing training budgets held by Portfolios.

7.0 WARD IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 District Wide Implications

8.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 8.1 'Cutting Crime – a new partnership', Home Office, 2008

End of Report

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Appendix 2

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Hate Crime and Harassment Strategy has been prepared by the Safer Communities Strategic Unit, and partner agencies, under the auspices of the Telford & Wrekin Safer & Stronger Communities Partnership in conjunction with Telford Race, Equality and Diversity Partnership.

The purpose of this Strategy is to provide information about partner agency services and to drive forward new service developments.

This Strategy is a strand of the Safer & Stronger Communities Partnership Plan and covers the same period of 2008 – 2011.

All agencies included in the Safer & Stronger Communities Partnership and Telford Race, Equality and Diversity Partnership are committed to working together to protect adults and children, and the communities in which they live, from the pernicious harm caused by hate crime and harassment.

There is an expectation that all signatories to the strategy have internal policies in place to deal with harassment and discrimination within their respective organisations.

This Strategy outlines the actions that will be undertaken in order to offer services to all victims of hate crime and harassment, regardless of gender, race, age, sexual orientation, religion or belief or disability.

Our priorities have been determined by focusing on those actions which will impact most on the experiences of those experiencing and reporting hate crime and harassment. These include:

1 IMPROVE MULTI-AGENCY RESPONSES AND PERFORMANCE IN TAKING ACTION AGAINST PERPETRATORS

- a) Develop clear and transparent procedures in dealing with hate crime and harassment incidents to reduce unnecessary contact with services
- b) Review existing penalties used by partner agencies in response to incidents and assess whether the full range of powers are being used effectively
- c) Develop a formal multi-agency risk assessment process for higher risk cases
- d) Establish a multi-agency Hate Incident Panel (HIP) to review hate crime incidents

- e) Maximise the use of available resources and approaches within Telford and Wrekin to help prevent re-offending and address the behaviours which lead to hate crime and harassment
- f) Strengthen links with relevant services across Telford and Wrekin to take the appropriate action against perpetrators in particular young perpetrators

2) INCREASE ACCESS AND CONFIDENCE IN REPORTING

- a) Identify local reporting centres across Telford & Wrekin to act as a single point of contact to record and respond to hate crime and harassment incidents
- b) Develop appropriate training programme for volunteers and front-line staff employed at local reporting centres
- c) Develop marketing campaigns to raise awareness of where to report a hate crime or harassment incident within Telford and Wrekin
- d) Ensure processes are in place for victims and witnesses to receive feedback on the outcomes from the Hate Incident Panel or any other partner investigations
- e) Review all reporting processes to ensure they are inclusive and accessible to all communities
- f) Develop systems to ensure all incidents of hate crime and harassment are reported to one single point of contact
- g) Establish ways to make reporting easier for people with a learning disability

3) IMPROVE SUPPORT TO VICTIMS AND WITNESSES

- a) Review existing provision of advice and support services for victims and witnesses to help identify gaps and maximise the use of available resources
- b) Develop a Directory of Support Services for victims and witnesses
- c) Ensure support services are co-ordinated and a multi-agency referral system is in place
- d) Develop victim and witness feedback processes to ensure victims and witnesses are kept fully informed to help achieve satisfactory outcomes
- e) Explore opportunities to involve former victims and witnesses to help in the development of support services

4) IMPROVE STRATEGIC DELIVERY AND EFFECTIVE MONITORING

- a) Expand and strengthen the membership of agencies working together to tackle and prevent hate crime and harassment within Telford & Wrekin
- b) Seek partner endorsement of the Hate Crime & Harassment Strategy across key partnerships within Telford & Wrekin
- c) Develop a Hate Crime & Harassment Charter
- d) Ensure all partners are aware of their role and responsibilities in dealing with hate crime and harassment
- e) Produce quarterly performance reports on hate crime and harassment
- f) Gain support from key partners for incorporating hate crime and harassment training within their Learning and Development Plans
- g) Explore internal and external funding opportunities to support the work in tackling hate crime and harassment across Telford and Wrekin
- h) Develop a multi-agency protocol and training to support people with learning disabilities and other vulnerable adults who report hate crime and harassment incidents
- i) Ensure, when and where appropriate, that clear links are in place between arrangements for handling hate crime and the multi-agency Adult Protection / Safeguarding process

5) IMPROVE COMMUNICATION BETWEEN PARTNERS AND COMMUNITIES

- a) Develop effective ways for members of the public to help shape services and activities in tackling hate crime and harassment and get involved where applicable
- b) Develop effective ways of engaging with vulnerable groups, such as people with learning disabilities, to raise their awareness and empower them in reporting hate crime and harassment incidents
- c) Develop a catalogue of resources including models of good practice from elsewhere about hate crime and harassment for use by partners and local agencies
- d) Develop a marketing campaign to promote awareness of local reporting sites across the Borough, as well as communicating actions taken to address hate crime and harassment

- e) Strengthen links with local media agencies around the reporting of hate crime and harassment incidents

6) IMPROVE PREVENTATIVE MEASURES AND PROMOTE COMMUNITY COHESION

- a) Forge better links with 'emerging' communities who are 'targets' of hate crime and harassment
- b) Strengthen links with relevant organisations and services in developing initiatives to prevent offending and re-offending
- c) Develop links with relevant strategies and other associated areas of work within Telford and Wrekin to maximise the use of available resources to tackle hate crime and harassment
- d) Involve local schools, youth centres and local communities in developing best practice initiatives to improve hate crime and harassment reporting arrangements in these settings
- e) Promote resources for schools and youth centres, such as the 'Victim Support' educational programmes, for inclusion in curriculum and other activities.
- f) Develop best practice guidelines to assist harassment policies and procedures amongst partner agencies
- g) Engage with self and citizen advocacy groups for people with learning disabilities and other vulnerable adults and their carers, to promote hate crime and harassment prevention messages