

**REPORT TO:** Executive Board  
**DATE:** 30<sup>th</sup> June 2011  
**REPORTING OFFICER:** Strategic Director, Communities  
**SUBJECT:** Hate Crime Reduction Strategy and Action Plan  
**WARD(S)** Borough-wide

**1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 To provide members with a draft of the Hate Crime Reduction Strategy and Action Plan for Halton.

**2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That Members support and endorse the content of the report.**

**3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

3.1 Hate crime is a serious issue that can affect the quality of life for people and communities, and reducing the level of hate crime is a key priority for the Safer Halton Partnership. Hate crime can take various forms of either physical or verbal abuse and even the threat of attack.

3.2 According to the Home Office and Association of Police Chief Constables the definition of hate crime comes in five categories: Race, Faith, Homophobic, Transphobic and Disability, with the number of incidents being under reported nationally.

3.3 The issue of under reporting is not unique to Halton. It is in fact a national problem which is why a Hate Crime Cross-Government Action Plan was produced.

3.4 It should also be noted that not all reported incidents become crimes. A hate incident may or may not constitute a criminal offence once it's been investigated however, keeping a record of incidents can help build a picture of what is happening within communities.

3.5 In Halton, due to the low numbers of reported incidents and the knowledge that there is a smaller diverse community, work has been progressing to include the hate crime matters with the wider safeguarding issues, such as training front line service providers and using existing communication methods to raise awareness of reporting centres.

3.6 This strategy and action plan is for the wider Strategic Partnership,

as it's been recognised that the Council cannot progress this work alone.

- 3.7 This strategy has been shared with a variety of Partners, groups and networks, such as the Partnership's Equalities, Engagement and Cohesion Group, the Community Cohesion Officers Group, the emerging BME Network for Halton, Halton Speak Out and the Safer Halton Partnership. The strategy has also been shared with the Safeguarding Co-ordinator and Manager for Adults and Children and Young People. There have also been 1-2-1 meetings with the two lead officers for the Community Safety Team, along with a large public consultation event held in November 2010 which included service users and providers.

#### 4.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 Whilst this strategy doesn't require any additional funding, it does require Partners to review existing areas of work and methods of working and asks that they incorporate an element of the hate crime reduction work. It is also difficult to identify how this will impact on current policies until the action plan has been finalised, however it isn't anticipated that there will be any major changes required.

#### 5.0 **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 This is no additional funding from Government associated with the requirement to develop a Hate Crime Reduction Strategy, however, the actions identified in the strategy should be able to be contained within partnership budgets.

#### 6.0 **IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

##### 6.1 **Children & Young People in Halton**

Life for Children and Young People will improve for living in a safer community.

##### 6.2 **Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton**

None identified.

##### 6.3 **A Healthy Halton**

Halton residents who suffer hate crime incidents will be more empowered to report these, which in turn will hopefully improve their confidence and overall mental health.

##### 6.4 **A Safer Halton**

Halton will have stronger and more resilient communities.

6.5 **Halton's Urban Renewal**

None identified.

7.0 **RISK ANALYSIS**

7.1 This work will help to build stronger and more resilient communities and will help to empower local residents to report incidents of hate crime. This will in turn help to improve community cohesion across the borough and ensure Partners work together to maintain these strong and resilient communities. The development of a hate crime action plan is part of this process, as well as being a Government requirement.

8.0 **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

8.1 The hate crime strategy will cover all protected characteristics as currently contained within the new Equality Act.

9.0 **REASON(S) FOR DECISION**

To address hate crime issues within the Borough and increase the joint working across Partners that will make Halton a stronger and more resilient place to live.

10.0 **ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED**

Current arrangements could continue however as identified in this report the Council cannot progress and develop this work without the input from the Strategic Partnership.

11.0 **IMPLEMENTATION DATE**

The detailed action plan has several different implementation dates depending on which action is being undertaken. Some activity has already started with the latest completion date being December 2012, depending on Partners involvement.

12.0 **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

None.