

Cabinet

2nd April 2013

Report of the Cabinet Member for Crime & Stronger Communities

EMBRACING DIVERSITY: A HATE CRIME STRATEGY FOR YORK

Summary

1. This paper outlines the background to the development of a new Hate Crime Strategy for the City of York and asks Members to approve the strategy and give their commitment to the crucial role that City of York Council plays to provide the support necessary to bring offenders to justice and protect vulnerable victims.

Background

2. In January 2008, City of York Council launched its first Hate Crime Strategy. Since that launch the number of hate crimes reported to the police has declined. However, consultation with agencies providing support to particular community groups in the context of writing this strategy suggests that under-reporting of hate crime incidents is a significant factor. It is widely acknowledged that the recorded statistics of hate crime reporting across all agencies may be a significant under-representation of the true picture.
3. Since the original strategy was launched, there have been numerous changes within organisations charged with supporting delivery, communities within the city have increased in diversity and the Prevent (Government's Counter Terrorism) agenda has developed to include community cohesion as a key theme.
4. Although actual hate crime figures may be low within the city, tackling hate crime remains a priority for City of York Council in building stronger communities and supporting the work of the Fairness Commission. It is therefore timely that the hate crime strategy has been refreshed and developed to take a snapshot of the situation in 2012 from which future multi-agency work can be developed.
5. The strategy has been approved by the Safer York Partnership Board as a multi-agency document.

Consultation

6. Addressing hate crime and its impacts is not a single agency solution. A key focus of developing this strategy has been extensive consultation involving over thirty public and voluntary sector organisations with an interest in tackling hate crime. Central to this consultation has been engagement with those communities of interest who suffer hate crime.
7. Consultation methods have included face to face discussions, views sought by e-mail; the draft strategy has been circulated for comment along with presentation and discussion at the Equalities Advisory Group (EAG), made up of representation from key voluntary sector organisations.
8. EAG requested amendments to be made to the information on legislation and reference to be made to the Government's response to legislation. These changes have been implemented within the final strategy document. They also asked for a zero tolerance approach to be taken to bullying in schools. The strategy makes reference to the link being made with anti bullying steering group to ensure a coordinated approach. Other comments related to appropriate timeframes for consultation and the resource implications of implementing the plan. Consultation has been an ongoing process since July 2012, giving organisations and individuals every opportunity to respond.
9. Whilst it appears within the strategy that there is a reliance on Safer York Partnership to lead on every action, the facilitation and co-ordination of partner's contributions is core business for Safer York Partnership. Actions will be undertaken by a variety of statutory and voluntary organisations. A summary of the consultation responses is provided at Annex B.
10. Views have been collated to provide a strategic overview with the detailed delivery being documented within a set of complex work plans. Key themes to come out of the consultation related not only to the strategy document but also the ongoing delivery of work to prevent hate crime. Key themes were:
 - Reported incidents are only the tip of the ice burg and continued emphasis needs to be placed on supporting victims and communities;
 - The need for confidence building within communities of interest to ensure those who suffer hate crimes feel confident to report it;

- Development of interventions needs to take account of the wider views of communities of interest and address issues that may not be apparent from reported incidents.
- Actions to prevent hate crime need to be focused around the needs of the victims of hate crime not the support services.

11. Safer York Partnership has also worked collaboratively with North Yorkshire Police and North Yorkshire County Council, both of which have been carrying out their own review of hate crime. This ensures a consistent approach across the county and city.

Options

12. Option 1 – Endorse the strategy and to give commitment to the key role that City of York Council will play in the implementation of the strategy and its associated work plans.
13. Option 2 – Ask officers to amend the strategy.

Analysis

14. Option 1 – The strategy has been developed in partnership with over 30 organisations including statutory bodies, voluntary organisations as well as communities of interest. The strategic aims and the key actions have been developed in response to the issues raised by the consultees. The draft strategy plan (prior to formatting) has been circulated to all for comment.
15. Based upon the consultation outcomes, four strategic aims have been identified to stop hate crime occurring:
- Raise awareness of hate crimes to aid prevention;
 - Make it easier for people to report hate crime;
 - Improve the support available to victims of hate crime; &
 - Improve data capture and develop a more accurate reflection of the extent and breakdown of hate crime and incidents.
16. A detailed action plan to sit underneath the strategic objectives has been developed which will be monitored not only against successful delivery of individual actions, but also the cumulative impact of the delivery of actions against individual communities of interest.

It is proposed governance and monitoring of the strategy will be by the Safer York Partnership Board with annual monitoring report on delivery against the action plan to the Equalities Advisory Group.

17. The draft strategy has also been considered and approved by the Safer York Partnership, the city's statutory Community Safety Partnership.
18. Option 2 – If the council request changes, to ensure effective consultation and ownership of the strategy and action plan by partners and importantly communities of interest, further consultation would have to be carried out.

Council Plan

19. This strategy strongly aligns to two of the priorities set out within the Council Plan.
 - Building Strong Communities - Feeling and being safe is crucial to ensuring quality of life for all who live, work in or visit the city. Working in partnership with a range of statutory and voluntary agencies to ensure that hate crime is not tolerated is crucial to developing cohesive communities.
 - Protect Vulnerable People – Victims of hate crime can become isolated and marginalised within society. The strategy ensures that a victim focused approach to tackling hate crime is adopted across all agencies and supports the Council's overarching aim to protect those who are most vulnerable within our communities.

Implications

20. The implications arising directly from this report are:
 - **Financial** There are no financial implications;
 - **Human Resources (HR)** There are no HR implications;
 - **Equalities** The Equalities Leadership Group and Equalities Advisory Group have been consulted. A Community Impact Assessment has been carried out and is attached for information at Annex F;
 - **Crime and Disorder** Safer York Partnership has been consulted and approved the strategy;
 - **Information Technology (IT)** there are no IT implications;

- **Property** There are no property implications;
- **Other** There are no other implications.

Risk Management

21. There are no known risks.

Recommendations

22. Cabinet are asked to:

- Approve Option 1 to endorse the strategy and to give commitment to the key role that City of York Council will play in the implementation of the strategy and its associated work plans.

Reason: To ensure that the city has an effective approach to preventing Hate Crime and addressing the impacts of Hate Crime in a coordinated and victim centred manner.

Contact Details

Author:	Cabinet Member & Chief Officer Responsible for the report:		
Jane Mowat Head of Community Safety Tel No. 01904 555742	Cllr Daf Williams, Cabinet Member for Crime and Community Safety Sally Burns Director of Communities and Neighbourhoods Steve Waddington Assistant Director – Housing & Community Safety		
	Report Approved	✓	Date 27 th Feb 2013
Specialist Implications Officer(s)			
None			
Wards Affected: List wards or tick box to indicate all			All ✓

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers: None

Annexes:

Annex A	Hate Crime Strategy 2013 - 2016
Annex B	List of consultees and key themes arising from the consultation
Annex C	Flow chart of current reporting progress
Annex D	Flow chart of proposed reporting process
Annex E	Diagram of proposed model for dealing with hate crime
Annex F	Community Impact Assessment.