

Report Title: **Final Hate Crime and Harassment Strategy**

Forward Plan reference number (if applicable): Full Council 21/11/06

Report authorised: David Hennings, Assistant Chief Executive (Strategy)

Signed:

Wards(s) affected: **All**

Report for: **Non-Key Decision**

## **1. Purpose**

1.1 To present the finalised Hate Crime and Harassment Strategy with an agreed action plan, covering up to March 2008. This version includes comments from key partners and minor issues raised at the Safer Communities Executive Board in September. The strategy was also considered by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 26<sup>th</sup> October 2006 and the Executive Advisory Board on 7<sup>th</sup> November.

## **2. Introduction by Executive Member for Crime & Community Safety**

2.1 There is already a considerable amount of work being undertaken in the borough to increase confidence among all communities. This includes the recent roll-out of Safer Neighbourhood Teams in each ward; the continued successful work of the Anti-social Behaviour Action Team; the ongoing work of the Equalities and Diversity team and the efforts of many front-line staff across the partnership.

2.2 This strategy recognises that there is more work for us to do in co-ordinating and improving our delivery and responses to hate crime. It, therefore, focuses on partnership collaboration, training, awareness, intelligence gathering and prevention as well as giving a commitment to investigating alternative methods of reporting.

2.3 The strategy has been developed with considerable input from the community, key partners and members of staff across the Council.

### **3. Recommendations**

3.1 That Members endorse and support the proposed approach, priorities and actions and agree to support the implementation of the strategy.

Contact Officer: **Jean Croot, Head of Safer Communities**

### **4. Director of Finance Comments**

4.1 As stated, the majority of costs will be contained within existing resources, however to fully implement the recommendations contained within the strategy some additional costs will be incurred covering items such as publicity, staff training, boosting and improving reporting systems. At this stage actual costs haven't been quantified although they are not likely to be high and it is currently expected that they will be met from partnership finances and grant funding. However, no commitment to spend should be made until a clear funding source has been identified.

### **5. Head of Legal Services Comments**

5.1 The Strategy is drafted to ensure compatibility with the Human Rights Act 1998, Crime and Disorder Act 1998, the Crime and Security Act 2001, Criminal Justice Act 2003, to name a few relevant and key pieces of legislation. The Strategy also aligns itself with guidance received from The Association of Chief Police Officers, entitled "Hate Crime: Delivering a Quality Service – Good Practice and Tactical Guidance" (March 2005).

5.2 The Strategy is in line with the Government Respect Action Plan (January 2006) and its six strands namely; supporting families, a new approach to the most challenging families, improving behaviour and attendance in schools, activities for children and young people, strengthening communities and effective enforcement and community justice.

5.3 Whilst the list of legislation above is not exhaustive, consideration should also be given to the Racial and Religious Hatred Act 2006 which received Royal Assent on the 16th of February 2006 but which is not yet in force. The short title of the Act states that it is "An Act to make provision about offences involving stirring up hatred against persons on racial or religious grounds". The Act purports to provide a definition for religious hatred as "hatred against a group of persons defined by reference to religious belief or lack of religious belief".

5.4 It is agreed, as stated within the Report, that relationships and publicity throughout the immediate and wider community need to be handled sensitively; that appropriate heed is taken to ensure the Human Rights Act 1998 and other relevant key legislation quoted within the Strategy are adhered to and that appropriate training is offered to officers involved in the implementation to ensure a careful and considered approach. The London Borough of Haringey Anti Social Behaviour Policy and relevant procedures should also be adhered to.

## **6. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985**

6.1 Key guidance and important legislation which has been used to develop the Haringey definition of hate crime and harassment and this Strategy includes the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, the Crime and Security Act 2001 and the Criminal Justice Act 2003, and further guidance comes from The Association of Chief Police Officers.

## **7. Strategic Implications**

7.1 This Strategy acknowledges the good work already taking place in Haringey and aims to build on this and address identified gaps. The recommended actions have been agreed with full partnership collaboration and approval and are designed to be achievable. However, the community event has raised expectations around delivery. Relationships and publicity will need to be handled sensitively.

### **7 Financial Implication (refer to point 4)**

### **8 Legal Implications (refer to point 5)**

### **9 Equalities Implications**

9.1 This Strategy will assist people from all of Haringey's diverse communities to report hate crimes and harassment and gain the support required.

## **10 Consultation**

10.1 The Strategy draws upon consultation events with key partner services and the community and voluntary sector, including a large consultation event held in late 2005 at Alexandra Palace, which over 100 people attended. This was followed up with close individual consultation with key partners.

## **11 Background**

11.1 In 2005 Middlesex University was commissioned to undertake research on the nature and extent of hate crime and harassment in Haringey. This highlighted some of the weaknesses in the Safer Communities Partnership's response to the issue including the need for better co-ordination across agencies; the need for a shared definition of hate crime and harassment and the need to improve the confidence of communities that reports of these incidents are taken seriously and dealt with appropriately. This strategy addresses these findings.

11.2 The Strategy acknowledges key national and local agendas including:

- The Government Respect Action Plan for combating anti-social behaviour which stresses the importance of cohesive communities and asks local authorities to monitor the extent to which people feel they are treated with respect.
- The Community Cohesion Agenda which encourages breaking down barriers between different ethnic and religious groups

11.3 Priorities for Action: The strategic priorities outlined in this document are defined under five headings. However, they do overlap and in some cases are dependent on each other. The strategy document provides more detail including SMART targets and clear responsibilities:

**1) Improving Community Cohesion:**

Encouraging the voluntary and community sector (VCS) to work with different communities and promote joint working within the VCS and with the Council, Police and other partners. This includes new funding guidance from the Voluntary Sector Grants Department and co-ordinating the work of this Strategy with developments for a Community Cohesion Strategy.

**2) Long Term Prevention Work:**

Increase social intolerance to hate crime and harassment amongst young people and the wider community. This includes building on work in schools to raise awareness that hate crime and harassment is not tolerated and to promote social disapproval of the issue. This work also includes action to challenge intolerance of difference.

**3) Improving Intelligence:**

Improving the collection and analysis of hate crime and harassment data between the Police, Council's Community Safety Team, VCS, Anti-Social Behaviour Action Team and other relevant partners. It also concerns improving front line agencies' connection with communities to increase community intelligence.

**4) Encouraging Reporting of Hate Crime and Harassment:**

This is about increasing awareness about hate crime reporting methods, publicising the benefits of reporting and improving the Borough's capacity to capture reports and respond suitably through training.

**5) Responding to Hate Crime and Harassment:**

Improving the co-ordination of relevant partners' work in dealing with perpetrators and supporting victims. This includes joint mechanisms for sharing information and making referrals as well as improving front line staff's capacity and understanding of where to refer victims and how to deal sensitively with reports through training.

## **12 Conclusion**

12.1 The recommended actions have been agreed with full partnership collaboration and approval and are designed to be achievable. This Strategy should greatly improve the reporting of hate crimes and harassment and in turn should reduce the number of such incidents.

## **13 Use of Appendices / Tables / Photographs**

13.1 Please see attached the Hate Crime and Harassment Strategy.