

10/01/2024

Part A

Initial Impact Assessment

Proposal name

Adopting the All-Party Parliamentary Group on

Brief aim(s) of the proposal and the outcome(s) you want to achieve

Full Council passed a resolution at its meeting on 14 December 2022 asking Strategy and Resources Committee to consider adopting the definition of Islamophobia developed by the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for British Muslims. This resolution was adopted in light of information considered by Full Council that Muslims were targeted in 45% of religious hate crime cases recorded by Police in England and Wales in 2021/22 and that in South Yorkshire, the number of Islamophobic hate crimes had increased by 43% in 2021 compared to the previous year.

The APPG definition is that "Islamophobia is rooted in racism and is a type of racism that targets expressions of Muslimness or perceived Muslimness"

Alongside adopting the definition, the resolution passed by Full Council, also asked Strategy and Resources Committee to consider adopting the explanatory guidelines developed by the Coalition Against Islamophobia, and to add to its work programme the following additional considerations:

- (1) working with schools, transport companies, the police force, and other public and private bodies, to tackle Islamophobia at a local level;
- (2) collaborating with the local Muslim community to challenge Islamophobia and to meet their needs such that they are encouraged and safe to participate in public life;
- (3) taking further steps to tackle and raise awareness of Islamophobia, such as organising Islamophobia training, holding local events on the issue of Islamophobia, etc.; and
- (4) working with other local stakeholders such as local MPs to raise awareness of Islamophobia in Parliament and urge the UK Government to adopt the APPG definition of Islamophobia.

Proposal type

Budget

non-Budget

If Budget, entered on Q Tier?

Yes

No

Q Tier reference

Year of proposal (s)

21/22

22/23

23/24

24/25

other

Decision Type

- Committee (select below)**
- Adult Health and Social Care Policy Committee
- Communities, Parks and Leisure Policy Committee
- Economic Development and Skills Policy Committee
- Education, Children and Families Policy Committee
- Housing Policy Committee
- Strategy and Resources Policy Committee
- Transport, Regeneration and Climate Policy Committee
- Waste and Street Scene Policy Committee
- Regulatory Committees (e.g. Licensing Committee)
- Other Policy Committee or sub-Committee
- Local Area Committees

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**Leader**

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**Executive Director/Director**

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**Officer Decisions (Non-Key)**

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**Council (e.g. Budget and Housing Revenue Account)**

**Lead Committee Member**

**Lead Director for Proposal**

**Person filling in this EIA form**

**Equality Lead Officer**

**Lead Equality Objective**

<input type="radio"/> Understanding Communities	<input type="radio"/> Workforce Diversity	<input type="radio"/> Leading the city in celebrating & promoting inclusion	<input type="radio"/> Break the cycle and improve life chances
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## Portfolio, Service and Team

**Lead Portfolio**

**Is this Cross-Portfolio?**

Yes       No

**Is the EIA joint with another organisation (eg NHS)?**

Yes       No      Please specify

## Consultation

**Is consultation required?**

Yes       No

**If consultation is not required please state why**

There has been no consultation specifically on adopting the APPG definition of Islamophobia, but public consultation is taking place on the council's Equality Framework and the associated action planning that will support its delivery.

As part of this work, actions specifically focused on tackling Islamophobia will be developed and reported back to this committee at its meeting in March 2024.

It would make sense to undertake specific consultation with local faith leaders on the adoption of the APPG definition of Islamophobia. Issues around equality, diversity, inclusion and human rights often have a nuanced local context. Since Sheffield has a comparatively high population of Muslims in comparison to other local authority areas across the UK then it would be sensible to engage with local faith leaders to gain their insight on the proposal and to continue to build on the good work the council does around fostering good relations between groups of people who do not share a protected characteristic. At this stage it wouldn't be appropriate to undertake wider public consultation on the definition since the general public is likely to lack sufficient understanding of the context. There may be challenge around freedom of speech issues under Article 10 of the Human Rights Act (HRA) 1998 these will need to be balanced with the council's positive obligations under the HRA.

Also, in 2020 Leeds City Council commissioned a study into anti-Muslim hate and islamophobia which revealed the high levels of anti-Muslim prejudice experienced by the community. With this in mind it is likely that the communities of Sheffield's experiences could be similar, and it may therefore be prudent to undertake a similar study at some point in the future to understand the communities' experiences.

**Are Staff who may be affected by these proposals aware of them?**

Yes  No

**Are Customers who may be affected by these proposals aware of them?**

Yes  No

**If you have said no to either please say why**

No significant expected impact.

## Initial Impact

Under the [Public Sector Equality Duty](#) we have to pay due regard to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- advance equality of opportunity
- foster good relations

For a range of people who share protected characteristics, more information is available on the [Council website](#) including the [Community Knowledge Profiles](#).

## Identify Impacts

**Identify which characteristic the proposal has an impact on tick all that apply**

<input type="radio"/> Health	<input type="radio"/> Transgender
<input type="radio"/> Age	<input type="radio"/> Carers
<input type="radio"/> Disability	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Voluntary/Community & Faith Sectors
<input type="radio"/> Pregnancy/Maternity	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Partners
<input checked="" type="radio"/> Race	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Cohesion
<input checked="" type="radio"/> Religion/Belief	<input type="radio"/> Poverty & Financial Inclusion
<input type="radio"/> Sex	<input type="radio"/> Armed Forces
<input type="radio"/> Sexual Orientation	<input type="radio"/> Other

## Cumulative Impact

**Does the proposal have a cumulative impact?**

- Yes                       No

<input type="radio"/> Year on Year	<input type="radio"/> Across a Community of Identity/Interest
<input type="radio"/> Geographical Area	<input type="radio"/> Other

*If yes, details of impact*

No significant expected impact.

**Does the proposal have a geographical impact across Sheffield?**

- Yes                       No

*If Yes, details of geographical impact across Sheffield*

**Local Area Committee Area(s) impacted**

- All                       Specific

*If Specific, name of Local Committee Area(s) impacted*

## Initial Impact Overview

### Based on the information about the proposal what will the overall equality impact?

The council strengthening its commitment to combatting Islamophobia and Anti-Muslim prejudice is an important step and follows a number of other local authorities that have done the same. As Sheffield's largest minoritised faith group and with the links to both Pakistani and south Asian ethnicities a visible commitment to support those communities is vital for the council as part of its continuing work to become an anti-racist city.

It is important to note however that the UK Government however decided against accepting the definition as outlined above and there were representations from the national secular society and others also speaking out against the definition.

With this in mind it is therefore necessary that we undertake a full Equality Impact Assessment on this decision. Given the nature of the forms of discrimination suffered by minoritised ethnicities there are considerable risks that non-Muslim communities may experience hatred and prejudice through perception or association. Longer term it would be prudent to plan out activity that allows the council and its partners to understand the nature and prevalence of Islamophobia and Anti-Muslim prejudice to drive the council's commitments on challenging discrimination, fostering good relations and understanding extremism. It would also make sense to work with partners to undertake a campaign of myth busting around Islam and other faiths given the current crisis in the Middle East and to look at ways of improving reporting levels of hate crime and review the provision of 3rd party reporting centres across the city.

Given concerns of some parties about the definitions impact on free speech we are suggesting adding that

- Free speech of staff or citizens will not to be impinged by this definition.
- Hate incidents and Anti-Muslim prejudice would not be tolerated.
- Religious and non-belief freedom would be protected.

Is a Full impact Assessment required at this stage?  Yes  No

**If the impact is more than minor, in that it will impact on a particular protected characteristic you must complete a full impact assessment below.**

## Initial Impact Sign Off

**EIAs must be agreed and signed off by an Equality lead Officer. Has this been signed off?**

Yes  No

Date agreed 16/01/2024

Name of EIA lead officer Ed Sexton

## Part B

### Full Impact Assessment

#### Health

**Does the Proposal have a significant impact on health and well-being (including effects on the wider determinants of health)?**

Yes       No      *if Yes, complete section below*

**Staff**

Yes       No

**Customers**

Yes       No

**Details of impact**

No significant impact expected.

**Comprehensive Health Impact Assessment being completed**

Yes       No

*Please attach health impact assessment as a supporting document below.*

**Public Health Leads has signed off the health impact(s) of this EIA**

Yes       No

**Name of Health  
Lead Officer**

#### Age

**Impact on Staff**

Yes       No

**Impact on Customers**

Yes       No

**Details of impact**

No significant expected impact.

## Disability

### Impact on Staff

Yes       No

### Impact on Customers

Yes       No

### Details of impact

No significant expected impact.

## Pregnancy/Maternity

### Impact on Staff

Yes       No

### Impact on Customers

Yes       No

### Details of impact

No significant expected impact.

## Race

### Impact on Staff

Yes       No

### Impact on Customers

Yes       No

### Details of impact

Asian/Asian British communities are the largest ethnic groups (10.5%) within Sheffield, and these make up the largest percentage of Muslims so the intersection between the 2 protected characteristics should be noted. They are the most likely to experience Islamophobia and anti-Muslim prejudice either as a member of Muslim communities or through discrimination by perception or association. It is therefore an important step for the council to define Islamophobia in order to identify and eliminate such forms of racism and anti-religious hate. By defining Islamophobia, it will also improve the council and its partners ability to improve education around discrimination and harassment and undertake work on myth busting and improving reporting of hate crimes and hate incidents. This will also support the council, its partners and the community in identifying community tension issues earlier and implementing interventions to address these.

It will also go some way to addressing issues of trust between the council, its partners and Minorised ethnicities. As Asian/Asian British communities are the most underrepresented within the council's workforce proactively working to eliminate Islamophobia should attract members of this community to join the council providing much needed insight and lived experience that will help the council meet the needs of the Asian/Asian British Community. This will also go some way to meeting the council's aim for becoming an anti-racist organisation.

## Religion/Belief

### Impact on Staff

Yes  No

### Impact on Customers

Yes  No

### Details of impact

In the census 2021 there was a fall in the number of people who identified as Christian from 52.5% to 38.5%, while the number of people who identified as Muslim increased from 7.7% to 10.3%.

However, the city also has a high number of people who do not have any religion. The percentage of people in Sheffield who identified as having no religion increased from 31.2% in 2011 to 43.4% in 2021 census.

The Muslim community represents the largest minoritised religious group (10.3%) both in Sheffield and within the council's workforce. Adopting the definition of Islamophobia will enable the council to improve its understanding on the issue and allow it to undertake proactive work to tackle it. It will help highlight issues of systemic inequality, promote understanding and awareness and help increase trust between the council and the community.

There has been some challenge of the definition by a number of organisations. In May 2019 the National Secular Society signed an open letter to the Home Secretary criticising adoption of the definition and stating it is 'unfit for purpose'. They also argue "In a liberal secular society, individuals should be afforded respect and protection, but ideas should not. The widespread adoption of this definition has the potential to chill freedom of expression, including academic and journalistic freedom."

Christian concern has also expressed issues such as Islamophobia is defined as a type of racism – and that Islam is not a race. That it targets 'expressions of Muslimness' without clarification, and then roots this in perception. There is no definition of 'Muslimness'.

It is important to reflect that given potential these issues around freedom of expression that we take this into account. We should also seek to work with our communities to further develop our understanding of issues via our work on a potential faith covenant/compact for the city.

## Sex

### Impact on Staff

Yes  No

### Impact on Customers

Yes  No

### Details of impact

No significant impact expected.



## Sexual Orientation

### Impact on Staff

Yes       No

### Impact on Customers

Yes       No

### Details of impact

No significant impact expected.

## Gender Reassignment (Transgender)

### Impact on Staff

Yes       No

### Impact on Customers

Yes       No

### Details of impact

No significant impact expected.

## Carers

### Impact on Staff

Yes       No

### Impact on Customers

Yes       No

### Details of impact

No significant impact expected.

## Voluntary, Community & Faith sectors

### Impact on Staff

Yes       No

### Impact on Customers

Yes       No

### Details of impact

Adopting the definition is likely to have a positive impact on faith sector organisations who work with the Muslim community. By improving the council's understanding of the challenges faced by the Muslim community due to Islamophobia this should enable improved dialogue with faith sector organisations.

However, given concerns from the national secular society and others we also need to take into account the potential impact on freedom of speech and guard against issues.

## Partners

### Impact on Staff

Yes  No

### Impact on Customers

Yes  No

### Details of impact

By working to the definition of Islamophobia this will give the council some clarity around the issue and how it affects members of the community. It should also improve how the council and its partners are able to communicate issues around hate crime, hate incidents and reporting. This will allow the council and its partners to collect more robust evidence around Islamophobia and share intelligence on potential community tensions.

However, given concerns from the national secular society we also need to take into account the potential impact on freedom of speech and guard against issues.

## Cohesion

### Staff

Yes  No

### Customers

Yes  No

### Details of impact

By adopting the definition on Islamophobia it is anticipated that this should have a positive impact on cohesion within Sheffield. By improving education and awareness around issues of Anti Muslim prejudice and working with communities to improve reporting around hate crimes and hate incidents, this is likely to lead to improved intelligence around potential community tensions which will enable the council and its partners devise more meaningful strategies to address potential challenges. This in turn should enable the council to facilitate improved dialogue between communities who don't share a protected characteristic and build trust between all parties.

However, given concerns from the national secular society etc. We also need to take into account the potential impact on freedom of speech and guard against issues arising.

## Poverty & Financial Inclusion

### Impact on Staff

Yes  No

### Impact on Customers

Yes  No

### Please explain the impact

No significant expected impact.

## Armed Forces

### Impact on Staff

Yes       No

### Impact on Customers

Yes       No

### Details of impact

No significant expected impact.

## Action Plan and Supporting Evidence

### What actions do you need to take following this EIA?

Adopting the definition on Islamophobia is likely to have a positive impact on Muslim groups affected.

Future work will be defined through the development of the Equality Framework and reported on via the annual equality report.

There should be further work including with Faith Leaders from all religions and with representatives from those who have no religion to discuss the impact and review the impact.

Add into the report that as a result of accepting this definition that

- Free speech of staff or citizens will not to be impinged by this definition.
- Hate incidents and Anti Muslim prejudice would not be tolerated.
- Religious and non belief freedom would be protected.

### What evidence have you used to support the info in the EIA?

Report on the Findings of the Leeds Anti-Muslim Hatred Survey 2020

<https://democracy.leeds.gov.uk/documents/s238421/Anti-Muslim%20Prejudice%20Appx%20A%20survey%2022%2009%2022.pdf>

Sheffield Race Equality Commission

<https://www.sheffield.gov.uk/your-city-council/race-equality-commission>

Census 2021 Data

SCC Workforce Data

Islamophobia definition "unfit for purpose", say campaigners

<https://www.secularism.org.uk/news/2019/05/islamophobia-definition-unfit-for-purpose-say-campaigners>

## Detail any changes made as a result of the EIA

An initial Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken and has identified that the equalities impacts of the proposal are likely to be positive for people who are (or who are perceived to be) Muslim.

There is a risk that this may be considered to be an additional level of protection compared to some other groups, although there is nothing in the definition that overrides existing equality obligations or weakens protection for other groups.

Subsequently a Full Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken to look at the key areas in more detail. The adoption of the definition of Islamophobia is likely to have a positive impact on some groups and the further work on equality impact has looked at how the council and its partners can make good use of the impacts. Having a definition of Islamophobia is likely to improve the councils understanding and awareness of the issue and the impact it has both on the Muslim communities and those perceived to be Muslim. This will help to improve education and myth busting on key issues and also improve reporting around hate crimes and incidents which has always been a challenge. As part of the work around reporting it may be prudent to review 3rd party reporting centres and undertake further engagement work with communities to understand their experiences around Islamophobia similar to the work that was undertaken in Leeds in 2020.

There has been some challenge of the definition by a number of organisations. In May 2019 the National Secular Society signed an open letter to the Home Secretary criticising adoption of the definition and stating it is 'unfit for purpose'. They also argue "In a liberal secular society, individuals should be afforded respect and protection, but ideas should not. The widespread adoption of this definition has the potential to chill freedom of expression, including academic and journalistic freedom."

Christian concern has also expressed issues such as Islamophobia is defined as a type of racism – and that Islam is not a race. That it targets 'expressions of Muslimness' without clarification, and then roots this in perception. There is no definition of 'Muslimness'.

It is important to reflect that given potential these issues around freedom of expression the council will ensure that:

- Free speech of staff or citizens will not to be impinged by this definition.
- Hate incidents and Anti Muslim prejudice would not be tolerated.
- Religious and non belief freedom would be protected.

**Following mitigation is there still significant risk of impact on a protected characteristic.**  Yes  No

## Sign Off

**EIAs must be agreed and signed off by an Equality lead Officer. Has this been signed off?**

Yes  No

Date agreed 16/01/2024

Name of EIA lead officer Ed Sexton

Review date 31/03/2025 within the annual report



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