



Councillor Ros Wyke
Leader of the Council
Mendip District Council
Cannards Grave Road
Shepton Mallet
Somerset
BA4 5BT

6 October 2020

Dear Cllr Wyke,

We understand according to media reports that Mendip District Council voted unanimously not to adopt the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) Definition of Antisemitism, on the basis that it duplicates pre-existing national policy, namely the Equality Act 2010 and the Human Rights Act 1998.

We find it difficult to follow this reasoning, as more than 100 councils have adopted the definition, from large unitary authorities to small district-level councils, and none have found this a reason to reject the internationally recognised definition. The Liberal Democrats itself adopted the full IHRA definition of antisemitism back in 2018.

We were heartened by Sir Ed Davey's recent statement during the party conference that:

"On behalf of the Liberal Democrats and absolutely under my leadership, we will be a force working with you to eradicate antisemitism from our country. It must absolutely play no part in our politics."

In addition, Ed also stated that he supported the Board of Deputies' initiative to include the IHRA definition of antisemitism in proposed online harms legislation. Speaking at the Liberal Democrat conference he said:



'We have long argued that Online Harms legislation should include clear definitions, and if you're taking clear definitions, to make sure people know what is acceptable and what isn't, it makes sense for the IHRA definition to be part of that'.

We therefore strongly urge you that the best way to realise this laudable vision is for the council to adopt the IHRA definition of antisemitism as soon as possible.

We would like to arrange a meeting to discuss this matter with you. If your office could contact the Board of Deputies' Government, Regional and Religious Affairs Officer, Daniel Elton on 0207 543 5418/ daniel.elton@bod.org.uk with your availability, he will be able to confirm a suitable time. Alternatively, the Liberal Democrat Friends of Israel would happily have this discussion with you, from a Liberal Democrat perspective, if you would prefer.

Yours sincerely

Amanda Bowman
Vice President
Board of Deputies of British Jews

Lord Monroe Palmer
Honorary President
Liberal Democrat Friends of Israel