

KETTERING BOROUGH COUNCIL AND KETTERING INTERFAITH FORUM
JOINT RESPONSE TO ISSUES OF LOCAL AND NATIONAL SAFETY AND SECURITY

INTRODUCTION

Recently there has been an escalation in incidents, threats and attacks which affect local and national security. Some of these incidents appear to be racist or linked to religious hatred. Following the Manchester Arena Terrorist Attack in 2017 it was clear that there was a need for faith communities and the local authority to agree a joint response to such incidents.

The Kettering Interfaith Forum was set up in 2016 to promote and maintain harmonious relations between people of different faiths by working together to overcome ignorance, fear and misunderstanding. Kettering Borough Council and Kettering Interfaith Forum are committed to working in partnership to show solidarity to the Borough's residents and faith communities in responding to local or national atrocities or hate incidents.

This protocol sets out procedures in terms of joint activities and other responses to both local and national incidents and attacks that affect residents and communities in Kettering Borough.

This protocol does not take precedence over, or circumvent, the arrangements already in place under the North Northamptonshire Safety and Resilience Partnership's emergency planning procedures, to which Kettering Borough Council is committed as a partner authority.

THE ROLE OF THE MAYOR

As first citizen of the Borough, the Mayor has three important roles that underpin good interfaith relations:

- As a symbol of the local authority
- As a symbol of an open society
- In expressing social cohesion and respect for the beliefs and practices of different communities

By demonstrating these three roles at times of an incident, threat or attack, the Mayor is in a unique position to act as a focal point to help calm situations and lessen the likelihood of inter community misunderstandings and tensions.

The Mayor will maintain membership of the Kettering Interfaith Forum during his or her year of office. This will build on and strengthen good interfaith relations and give recognition and respect for the traditions of faiths, beliefs and practices of different communities and their places of worship. The Mayor will therefore act as an impartial

focal point to help calm situations and lessen the likelihood of inter-community misunderstanding should an incident, threat or attack occur either nationally or locally.

The Mayor will undertake the following roles should a response to a local or national incident be requested, as determined by the Kettering Interfaith Forum:-

- Lead any Prayer Vigil or similar event within the Borough of Kettering that may be organised or endorsed by the Interfaith Forum
- Upon invitation, visit places of worship or other buildings in the Borough of Kettering that have been the subject of an attack or vandalism as a result of hate crime
- Publicise any Prayer Vigil or similar event organised or endorsed by the Interfaith Forum on the Council's website and social media pages
- Issue a press release in respect of such event
- In consultation with the Kettering Interfaith Forum, produce an Order of Service, if appropriate
- Send any letters of condolence on behalf of residents of the Borough

The Mayor may be accompanied at any of the above times by senior officers of the Council, other civic leaders in the Borough, Local Police Commander and the Leader of the Council, as appropriate to the nature of the visit or event and as agreed by the Interfaith Forum. Advice will be taken first from the Police and other security agencies, when appropriate.

Prayer Vigils and Similar Events held in the Open Air

A risk assessment for a Prayer Vigil or other similar open-air event will be carried out in consultation with the North Northamptonshire Safety and Resilience Partnership and the Police. Civic events are covered by Kettering Borough Council's Public Liability Insurance Policy. A civic event is defined as an event that is led or organised by the Mayor and may be a public event or for invited guests only.

ROLE OF THE KETTERING INTERFAITH FORUM

The Kettering Interfaith Forum will undertake the following roles in organising a Prayer Vigil or similar event:-

- Set a timetable and identify a location for the event
- Contact the emergency services to let them know that the event is taking place
- Liaise with the Police and other appropriate bodies on timings, road closures or other logistical issues associated with the event
- Co-ordinate and consult with other Interfaith Forums or bodies that may be involved in organising a national event to coincide with local events
- Agree the wording of any press release issued by the Mayor
- Organise stewards and volunteers and officials for the event

Mayoral visits and meetings with faith leaders

The Mayor may be accompanied by senior officers of the Council, other civic leaders in the Borough, the Leader of the Council and Police Officers, as appropriate to the nature of the visit or meeting and as agreed by the Interfaith Forum.

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