

Report to Cabinet

Subject: Modern Slavery
Date: 28 June 2018
Author: John Robinson, Chief Executive

Wards Affected

All

Purpose

To seek Cabinet's approval of a proposed Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Policy and Transparency Statement, including the associated commitments to practical action.

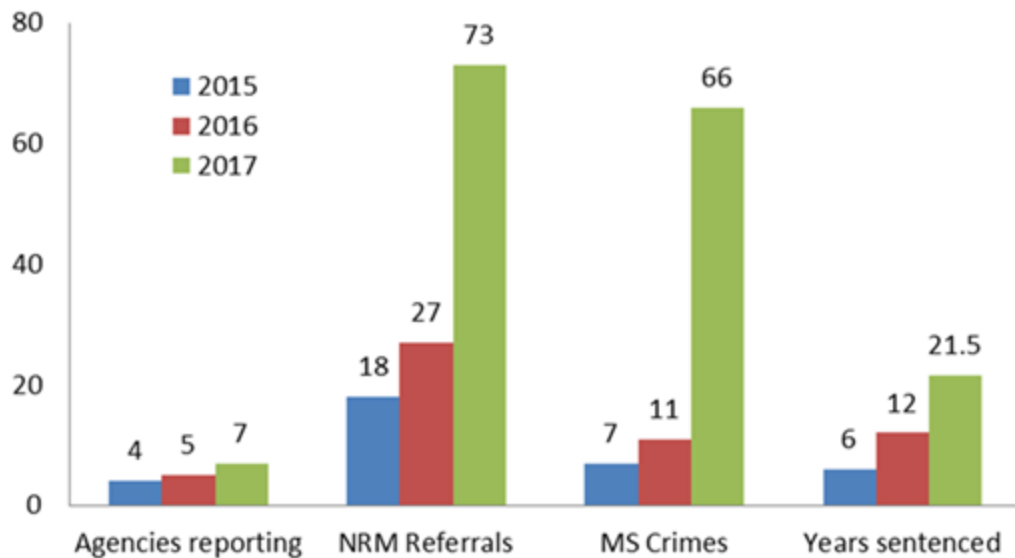
Key Decision

This is not a key decision.

Background

- 1.1 Figures from the International Labour Organisation (ILO) suggest that there are more than 40 million people in modern slavery across the world.
- 1.2 In 2013, the Home Office estimated that there were between 10,000 and 13,000 potential victims of modern slavery in the UK, though this number may well be much greater as modern slavery is often hidden.
- 1.3 In recent years, at a national and local level, the number of victims being identified and the number of crimes being recorded has increased significantly. As the graphs below indicate, though the numbers are relatively small, they are increasing rapidly, supporting the view of the police and other partners who are at the sharp end of this agenda – “if you look for it, you’ll find it”.

Nottinghamshire - Modern Slavery reporting / outcomes



1.4 In March 2015, the Government enacted the Modern Slavery Act 2015 which:-

- consolidated and clarified existing modern slavery and human trafficking offences and increased the maximum sentences for committing these offences
- introduced slavery and trafficking prevention orders and slavery and trafficking risk orders – which can be used to disrupt activities by modern slavery perpetrators
- created the role of the Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner
- introduced support and protection for victims
- introduced a requirement for certain businesses to produce and publish a modern slavery statement on what they are doing to tackle modern slavery and trafficking in their supply chains.

1.5 The Act includes a number of provisions for local authorities. Firstly, a duty to identify and refer modern slavery child victims and consenting adults through the National Referral Mechanism (NRM). Secondly, a duty to notify the Home Secretary of adults who do not consent to enter the NRM. Thirdly, a duty to cooperate with the Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner.

1.6 As already referenced above, commercial organisations, turning over in excess of £36 million annually, are also required to report their efforts to identify, prevent and mitigate the risk of modern slavery in their commercial operations by publishing an annual Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement.

- 1.7 While there is uncertainty as to whether the legal requirement to produce 'Transparency Statements' applies to local authorities, in April 2017, Parliament's Joint Committee on Human Rights recommended that "If the Government expects business to take human rights issues in their supply chains seriously, it must demonstrate at least the same level of commitment in its own procurement supply chains". The same can be said of local authorities i.e. that they have a responsibility to ensure that the risks of modern slavery within their supply chains are understood and that they are demonstrating community leadership in promoting a human rights approach towards procurement.
- 1.8 Beyond ensuring that supply chains are free from modern slavery, local authorities have three key roles to play:-
- identification and referral of victims
 - supporting victims, for example, through safeguarding children and adults with care and support needs and through housing/homelessness services
 - community safety, disruption and enforcement activities
- 1.9 Gedling is already actively involved in tackling modern slavery in a number of ways. Gedling's Member of Parliament, Vernon Coaker, Chairs an All Party Select Committee on Modern Slavery and the Chief Executive leads the Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Modern Slavery Partnership. Key members of staff have been trained by the external organisation Hope for Justice and Modern Slavery featured as the key item at the most recent round of Staff Briefings which raised staff awareness of the signs to look out for which may indicate an individual is enslaved and how to report any concerns. Gedling was also a partner to a successful bid for Home Office funding for a pilot scheme to better support victims and the introduction of the Selective Licensing Scheme carries the potential to trigger additional enforcement and disruption activity. Contractual clauses requiring suppliers and contractors to comply with requirements under the Modern Slavery Act 2015 are also now included in Gedling's standard contract terms and tender documents.
- 1.10 The Council is conscious of the needs of those fleeing modern slavery and human trafficking and the issues they face in relation to their eligibility to access both social housing and financial support. Officers are working with neighbouring authorities in terms of providing a consistent housing offer for these applicants and will take into account the particular issues they face as part of the current review of the Housing Allocations Policy. The updated Policy will be referred to Portfolio Holder for approval to consult in due course.
- 1.11 Enclosed with this report are proposed Policy and Transparency Statements that are intended to not only clarify and respond to the Council's statutory

obligations but also create a framework for ongoing action.

Proposal

- 2.1 Cabinet is asked to approve the Modern Slavery Policy Statement and Transparency Statement attached to this report.

Alternative Options

- 3.1 Members could choose not to approve the Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Policy Statement and Transparency Statement or approve a different version. However, the documents have been prepared in order to set out the current and ongoing action the Council intends to take to demonstrate its commitment to tackling this issue in a clear and concise way. Whilst the Council could take a less proactive approach than set out in the documents, this would not demonstrate the Council's ambition and commitment to tackle and prevent Modern Slavery issues in the Borough, the County and in its own supply chains.

Financial Implications

- 4.1 None at this stage

Appendices

- 5.1 Proposed Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Policy Statement and Transparency Statement.

Recommendations

Cabinet is recommended to approve the Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Policy Statement and Transparency Statement attached to this report.

Reasons for Recommendations

To meet Gedling's legal obligations and to take a proactive role in tackling what is a heinous crime.