

CABINET**4 NOVEMBER 2019****A Modern Slavery Strategy for Wirral****Councillor Tom Usher, Member for Children Families and Education stated:**

“Wirral recognises that slavery is not a thing of the past but continues in the modern era, often with devastating effects upon its victims”

and endorsed the Pledge made at the 2019 Modern Slavery conference:

“Wirral will not tolerate Modern Slavery in any of its guises. We pledge to work together with our communities to protect our most vulnerable and ensure criminals are held to account using all of the powers at our disposal.”

REPORT SUMMARY

Wirral Council has set out a Strategy, Action plan, and Code of Conduct addressing Modern Slavery to ensure a coordinated approach together with partners and communities, to prevent criminals being able to prey on the most vulnerable within our communities.

Under Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act councils have a duty to do all that they reasonably can to prevent crime and disorder in their areas, which includes modern slavery and trafficking.

As part of Pledge 19; ‘Wirral’s Neighbourhoods are Safe,’ the Safer Wirral Partnership Board is already committed to protecting the most vulnerable victims of crime. The Wirral Modern Slavery Officers Group will meet regularly to monitor progress of Wirral’s Modern Slavery Action Plan and report to the Safer Wirral Partnership Board which will be responsible for the governance of Wirral’s Modern Slavery Strategy.

Wirral’s Modern Slavery Strategy has received scrutiny from the Elected Members Working Group in October 2018, where it also considered the recommendations of the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee of November 2016:

The Elected Members Working Group took into account the concern that Modern Slavery has become across Wirral and endorsed both the priorities laid out within Strategy and the recommendations from the Committee be incorporated into a Modern Slavery Action Plan for Wirral. This is a key decision.

RECOMMENDATION/S

Cabinet is recommended to adopt:

The Wirral Modern Slavery Strategy
The Wirral Modern Slavery Action Plan
Wirral Council annually updated Modern Slavery / Human Trafficking Statement

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 In 2018 the Council signed up to the Co-operative Party's Charter Against Modern Slavery to ensure our procurement practices do not support slavery, to consider the wider impact of modern slavery on the borough and to ensure that all forms of modern slavery are eliminated in A strategic approach to tackling Modern Slavery in Wirral is a required to coordinate activity preventing criminals and supporting victims and to agree and oversee the successful implementation of Wirral's Modern Slavery Action Plan.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 Wirral Council has agreed that it will not tolerate Modern Slavery in any of its guises.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 Modern slavery, (or Modern Day Slavery), is an umbrella term, encompassing human trafficking, slavery, servitude and forced labour. Modern slavery is a serious crime and the fastest growing organised crime in the world. In 2017 UK referrals to the National Referral Mechanism increased by 35% on the previous year, from 3,805 to 5,145, whilst in Merseyside the increase was from 38 to 89, an increase of 134%. It is hidden in plain sight and within our communities, high streets and businesses. In 2016 it was estimated 45.8 million men, women and children from every part of the globe were victims of modern slavery.

- 3.2 There are many different characteristics that distinguish slavery, however only one needs to be present for slavery to exist and victims can often face more than one type of exploitation. A person is considered to be in slavery if they are:

- Forced to work through mental or physical threat
- Owned or controlled by an 'employer', usually through mental or physical abuse
- Dehumanised - treated as a commodity or bought and sold as 'property'
- Physically constrained or have restrictions placed on their freedom.

- 3.3 The Modern Slavery Act 2015, gained royal Assent on 26 March 2015. The Modern Slavery Act's stated purpose was to "tackle the worst exploitation" and consolidate various offences relating to human trafficking and slavery.

The Act established the role of an Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner with a UK-wide remit to encourage good practice in the prevention, detection, investigation and prosecution of modern slavery offences and the identification of victims.

- 3.4 In July 2016 Wirral's People Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered a report on the 'Implications of Modern Slavery Act 2015 for Local Authorities'. This made a number of recommendations:

1. staff training and awareness raising
2. clear reporting methods
3. senior management to identify potential and manage risk of modern slavery

- 3.5 Following these recommendations, a series of multi-agency training courses have been delivered by both Merseyside Police officers specialising in modern slavery operations and staff receiving specific Modern Slavery training, under an initiative commissioned across the North West by Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (ADASS). Over 120 people have received training including statutory agencies, practitioners and community groups.
- 3.6 This training has provided a clearer understanding of the legislation the issues in identifying and reporting Modern Slavery, and the initiatives and interventions that can address modern slavery across Wirral via statutory partners agencies and practitioners as well as the voluntary, community and faith sector.
- 3.7 Awareness raising initiatives on Wirral have included:
- Wirral's Modern Slavery Conference
 - Modern Slavery Workshop
 - Wirral's Adherence to Cooperative Party's Charter against Modern Slavery
 - The Invisible People exhibition
 - Multi Agency Training Delivered by Police and Safeguarding Staff

These initiatives have ensured all relevant agencies have been given the opportunity to understand and address the risks posed by modern slavery and ensure there is a coordinated response including clear reporting methods.

- 3.8 Wirral Council's Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee met in March 2017. The committee convened a Task and Finish Group to understand the implications of the Act. It published a draft Scoping Document 'Modern Slavery' with the objective to review:
- the implications of the Act
 - best practise for the Council and its partners
 - arrangements with regard to prevention, detection, and support for victims
- 3.9 The Local Government Association published 'Modern Slavery, A Council Guide' In December 2017, endorsed by the Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner. The guidance set out in detail the processes required to implement the duties under the Act.
- 3.10 Wirral established an Officers Task and Finish Group which recommended a 'Modern Slavery Plan for Wirral,' be developed, based on the work undertaken by the Overview and Scrutiny Committees and the LGA guidance.

Charter against Modern Slavery

- 3.11 Marking National Anti Slavery Day on 18/10/18 Cabinet Member for Law and Order, Cllr. Paul Stuart on behalf of the Council signed up to the Co-Operative Party's [charter against Modern Slavery](#). This was done in coordination with the Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner for Merseyside, Cllr. Emily Spurrell and the five Local Authorities of Merseyside, showing the region's strong commitment to end modern slavery.

- 3.12 The charter commits councils to examine their supply chains, beyond current legislative requirements, to ensure that their procurement activities are not aiding or creating instances of modern slavery. In total English Local Authorities spend £40 Billion annually procuring products and services for their communities. It is therefore right that they play their part as responsible buyers.

At the time Cllr. Stuart said:

“I welcome the opportunity to sign up to the Charter against Modern Slavery, and do so with pride. Modern Slavery might not always be obvious, but its exploitation of vulnerable people can be happening all around us. I am working with Wirral Council and its partners to ensure modern slavery has no place in Wirral. We will do our best to protect victims and push for the prosecution of those who commit this crime.”

- 3.13 Following on from this the council has worked internally with commissioning/procurement officers, not only seeking to audit the council’s supply chain in line with the charter but to integrate these services into wider community safety work e.g. PREVENT.

3.14 **Wirral Modern Slavery Strategy & Conference**

On 21 January 2019 the council held a Modern Slavery Conference at the Floral Pavilion Theatre, New Brighton. This event acted as the launch for Wirral’s Modern Slavery strategy. An audience from across stakeholder agencies attended including those dealing with vulnerable individuals and communities in safeguarding and enforcement roles. As well as partners working in strategic roles.

- 3.15 The strategy was developed around the 4Ps, (Pursue, Prevent, Protect Prepare), following the Government’s Modern Slavery Strategy and the Merseyside Modern Slavery Network.

- Pursue, perpetrators will be deterred, disrupted and prosecuted
- Prevent, raise awareness and improve opportunities to identify victims
- Protect, vulnerable people from exploitation
- Prepare, coordinate partners to prevent and report modern slavery

- 3.16 The conference itself was also delivered around these principles with speakers providing, national, regional and local perspectives on tackling modern slavery. Speakers included representatives from the following partners:

- Wirral Council, Environmental Health
- Merseyside Police, Operation Sanctuary/Wirral Single Point of Contact
- Gangmasters & Labour Abuse Authority
- Home Office
- Salvation Army (who hold the Government’s contract for specialist support to adult victims of modern slavery in England and Wales, along with local providers)

3.17 **Modern Slavery Strategy Workshop**

A workshop session held at the conference discussed how partner agencies can collaborate at a local level. This assisted the development of Wirral’s Modern Slavery Strategy and the actions and intentions of and Modern Slavery Action Plan. Partnership working and understanding the role of all partners and agencies, both at frontline and strategic levels is vital for effectively tackling the multifaceted issues of modern slavery.

3.18 The outcomes of the Modern Slavery Strategy workshop were developed into the Wirral Modern Slavery Action Plan with four main priorities.

1. Improve Awareness, Identification, and Understanding
2. Embed Modern Slavery into Mainstream Activity
3. Put Victims at the Heart of Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking
4. Hold Perpetrators to Account and Promote Appropriate Actions

3.19 **Invisible People Exhibition**

Between 17 January 2019 and 26 February 2019 Wirral hosted the *Invisible People* Exhibition at the Cherry Tree Shopping Centre in Liscard, Wallasey.

Invisible People is a touring photographic exhibition aiming to raise awareness of modern slavery and human trafficking. Created by the National Crime Agency (NCA) with award-winning photographer Rory Carnegie and human rights charity the Helen Bamber Foundation. The exhibition aims to recreate the lives of Invisible People, the victims of modern slavery and expose the reality of modern slavery in its many forms. Photos depict the working and living conditions of victims across key industries where modern slavery may occur.

Since its launch in January 2018 the exhibition has been to 15 different UK cities including landmark venues such as Westminster Abbey and Canary Wharf. We are delighted that Wirral will bring *Invisible People* to Merseyside for the first time, to the heart of Wallasey, where three 2 metre backlight cubes (Figure 1) bring this hidden crime into sharp focus.

The NCA wished to inform and educate the public of the signs of what is usually a hidden and covert crime and develop a conversation around modern slavery. Through public communications around the Modern Slavery Strategy via press and social media and the *Invisible People* exhibition we have been able to start new conversations and promote understanding and awareness of the problem.

Wirral Globe 21/01/19



Figure 1:

The three cubes sited within the Cherry Tree Shopping Centre, Liscard exhibiting the text and images of *Invisible People* (NCA 2018)

3.20 **Modern Slavery Policy on Merseyside**

Wirral has senior representation within the two Merseyside Modern Slavery strategic fora, Merseyside Modern Slavery Network and 'Operation Sanctuary':

3.21 **Merseyside Modern Slavery Network** is a quarterly meeting chaired and coordinated by the Merseyside Police and Crime Commissioner. Priorities for this forum are:

- Community awareness-raising
- Intelligence sharing
- Survivor support
- Monitoring and analysis of progress

3.22 **Operation Sanctuary** is a Merseyside based, Police-Led, multi-agency forum meeting on a quarterly basis. It's remit is to coordinate operational activity across statutory partnership agencies with an emphasis on coordinating and combining the necessary tools and powers to deter, disrupt and prosecute perpetrators of Modern Slavery. Operation Sanctuary has a Police Officer embedded within each Authority.

3.23 Under Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act councils have a duty to do all that they reasonably can to prevent crime and disorder in their areas, which includes modern slavery and trafficking.

3.24 Under Pledge 19 'Wirral's Neighbourhoods are Safe,' the Safer Wirral Partnership Board is already committed to protecting the most vulnerable victims of crime, many of whom already sit within the definition of Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking.

4.0 **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 Wirral Borough Council is committed to better understand it's supply chains and to work towards a greater transparency and responsibility for people working in them, in accordance with our policy of observing the spirit of the Modern Slavery Act 2015. Wirral updated the Supplier Code of Conduct in August 2019 to address Modern Slavery issues.

4.2 Whilst the implementation of section 52 of the Act will allow for greater transparency in slavery and human trafficking, there may be financial implications for the Council. This comes at a time when the Council remains under pressure to make further savings. As such, the estimated costs for facilitating reporting under section 52 will need to be calculated

5.0 **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 There would be a significant legal risk should the Council fail to comply with its duties under section 52 of the Act. Penalties for non-compliance are however limited though enforcement action may be taken by the Secretary of State.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

- 6.1 There will be minimal staffing or ICT implications as the necessary notification forms and associated guidance have already been uploaded to the Council's website and will only require updating with changes in legislation and any new initiatives.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 7.1 In terms of reputational risk for failing to comply with the Act, it is anticipated that pressure groups may target businesses in vulnerable sectors. Businesses may find it difficult to successfully tender for work or attract investment.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

- 8.1 Wirral's Modern Slavery Strategy has received scrutiny from the Elected Members Working Group in October 2018, where it also considered the recommendations of the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee of November 2016:
The Elected Members Working Group took into account the concern that Modern Slavery has become across Wirral and endorsed both the priorities laid out within the Strategy and the recommendations from the Committee be incorporated into a Modern Slavery Action Plan for Wirral.
- 8.2 In October 2018 Wirral's draft Modern Slavery Strategy was shared with key agencies and officers, including Adult Care and Health, Children's Services, Public Health, Corporate Strategy, Early Help and Prevention, Community Safety, Housing Services and the office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Merseyside, Merseyside Fire and Rescue Services and Merseyside Police. Environmental Health, Licensing & Trading Standards were also engaged as a result of initial feedback from Members.
- 8.3 In January 2019 Wirral hosted a Modern Slavery Conference. Presentations were made by National and Regional Leads to an audience of practitioners representing a wide range of agencies, Elected Members and community representatives.
The conference included a workshop scrutinising and developing Wirral's Draft Modern Slavery Strategy.
- 8.4 Between 17 January 2019 and 26 February 2019 Wirral hosted the *Invisible People* Exhibition at the Cherry Tree Shopping Centre in Liscard, Wallasey. *Invisible People* is a touring photographic exhibition aiming to raise awareness of modern slavery and human trafficking. The exhibition aims to recreate the lives of 'Invisible People', the victims of modern slavery, and expose the reality of modern slavery in its many forms. Created by the National Crime Agency its purpose is to inform and educate the public of the signs of what is usually a hidden and covert crime and develop a conversation around modern slavery.
Through public communications via press and social media the *Invisible People* exhibition prompted a dialogue within Wirral communities and helped promote understanding and awareness of Modern Slavery issues.

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Slavery can affect all people regardless of race, gender, disability or age. An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed and can be viewed:

<https://www.wirral.gov.uk/communities-and-neighbourhoods/equality-impact-assessments/equality-impact-assessments-2017-1>

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APPENDICES

- Wirral Modern Slavery Action Plan 2018.docx
- Wirral Modern Slavery Strategy 2018 21.pdf
- supplier-code-of-conduct 130819.docx
- Enc. 1 for Modern Slavery - Scrutiny Report.doc

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Wirral Modern Slavery Policy Development Chronology

July 2018

The Home Secretary commissioned an Independent Review of the Modern Slavery Act 2015, (subsequently presented to Parliament in May 2019).

October 2018

Consultation With Key Agencies / Practitioners

Wirral's draft Modern Slavery Strategy was shared with key agencies and officers, including Adult Care and Health, Children's Services, Public Health, Corporate Strategy, Early Help and Prevention, Community Safety, Housing Services and the office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Merseyside, Merseyside Fire and Rescue Services and Merseyside Police. Environmental Health, Licensing & Trading Standards were also engaged as a result of initial feedback from Members.

October 2018

Wirral Council pledged commitment to the Cooperative Party's Modern Slavery Charter

The Co-operative Party's Charter Against Modern slavery goes further than existing law and guidance, committing councils to proactively vetting their own supply chain to ensure no instances of modern slavery are taking place.

October 2018

Modern Slavery Members Workshop

Cllrs. Chris Carubia, Christina Muspratt, and Tom Usher together with Officers Mark Camborne, Mike Lester, and Bob Little undertook process to scrutinise Wirral's Draft Modern Slavery Strategy.

November 2018

Environment - Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Scrutiny Review was undertaken recommending: "The work and contents of this report is considered before the draft Modern Slavery Strategy is referred to Cabinet for approval".

January 2019

Wirral Modern Slavery Conference

Presentations were made by National and Regional Leads to an audience of practitioners representing a wide range of agencies, Elected Members and community representatives. The conference included a workshop scrutinising and developing Wirral's Draft Modern Slavery Strategy. A Wirral Modern Slavery workshop outcomes document was circulated.

January & February 2019

Invisible People Exhibition For 6 weeks Wirral hosted the *Invisible People* photographic exhibition at the Cherry Tree Shopping Centre in Liscard, to raise awareness of modern slavery and human trafficking.

February 2019

Serious Crime - North West Serious Violence workshop

This event is one of a number of regional events the Home Office undertook to allow Ministers to visit various regions in the UK and see how the Serious Violence Strategy is being implemented against the strategy's four key themes:

- tackling county lines and misuse of drugs
- early intervention and prevention
- supporting communities and partnerships
- effective law enforcement and criminal justice response

February - March - April 2019

Association of Directors of Social Services (ADASS) commissioned Training on Wirral to become approved Modern Slavery ‘Train the Trainer’ Trainers
Three separate multi agency sessions were delivered to practitioner agencies

March 2019

Operation Sanctuary Training
Specific Modern Slavery Training was delivered by key Police Officer Practitioners to a range of Front-line staff and key practitioner agencies

May 2019

Independent Review of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 was presented to Parliament by the Secretary of State (subsequent reply from Government in July 2019)

July 2019

Government Response to Independent Review of the Modern Slavery Act 2015

July 2019

Libre Solutions and Merseyside Police and Crime Commissioner

Libre Solutions (Southport-based Modern Slavery Victim advocate charity) delivered a session to Merseyside and Cheshire Authorities, convened by the Office of the Merseyside Police and Crime Commissioner, on the changes to the Modern Slavery Act 2015 (Particularly Section 54 regarding procurement practises) and how it will affect public services.

August 2019

All Procurement staff trained through the Chartered Institute of Procurement and Supply’s (CIPS) online course on Ethical Procurement and Supply.
Draft Wirral Supplier Code of Conduct Completed.

Council Meeting	Date
Environment - Overview and Scrutiny Committee	November 18