

Report of the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety

MODERN SLAVERY

1. Purpose of Report

To ask Cabinet to consider making a two-year commitment to support an expansion of the Slavery Exploitation team, (SET) so that more work can be done in Broxtowe and across the county to tackle the problem of modern slavery.

2. Recommendation

Cabinet is asked to RESOLVE to support the expansion of the Slavery Exploitation team and to commit £12,711 in each of the 2023/24 and 2024/25 financial years to support this initiative. A budget allocation of £12,750 will be required for this purpose to be funded from General Fund reserves.

3. Detail

Modern slavery is a largely hidden but insidious problem in our society and results in vulnerable people being exploited and harmed. The uncovering of modern slavery requires co-ordinated partnership working, intelligence sharing and expertise. A successful model of working to tackle the problem has been developed leading to the formation of the SET which is located within Nottingham City Council. The team currently operates across the city, Broxtowe, Rushcliffe and Gedling. However, no funding is currently committed by any of the districts or county council towards the costs of the work. Modern slavery is a county wide problem and resources currently committed constrain the amount of work that can be done and it is felt that the problem is considerably greater than can currently be tackled within existing resources.

More details of current activity and outcomes achieved by the SET is shown in the appendix to this report.

The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) has committed in principle to expanding the offer to the county from April 2023, on the basis that this would cost £376,797 (as shown in the appendix attached) funded by up to £182,146 of PCC funding, with the remaining 52% match funded by the city, county and district councils. The PCC is able to commit funding until March 2025 and this would be on the basis that partners work together to identify what activity can be mainstreamed after that.

4. Financial Implications

The comments from the Head of Finance Services were as follows:

There is no currently budgetary provision in place for the proposed expansion of the Slavery Exploitation Team for Nottingham and South Nottinghamshire

(Gedling, Broxtowe and Rushcliffe). If approved, it is proposed that the cost of this revenue development at around £12,750 in each of the 2023/24 and 2024/25 financial years would be funded directly from General Fund Reserve balances.

5. Legal Implications

The comments from the Monitoring Officer / Head of Legal Services were as follows:

By supporting the expansion of the SET the Council will be complying with their duties contained within the Modern Slavery Act 2015 (MSA) including the duty to identify and refer modern slavery child victims and consenting adult victims through the National Referral Mechanism. Section 43 of the MSA states that Council have a duty to cooperate with the Commissioner. The MSA builds on the Modern Slavery Strategy that was published in 2014. The Modern Slavery Strategy is particularly focussed on the law enforcement response, through Councils' role in safeguarding and caring for children and tackling child sexual exploitation is particularly mentioned, and outlines the expectation that Police and Crime Commissioners would reflect the local threat within their policing plans and strategies. As well as the MSA there are a number of other pieces of legislation that have an impact on the Council's role in supporting victims of, and tackling, modern slavery, including: the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, the Housing Act 1996, the Care Act 2014, the Children Act 1989 and the Immigration Act 2016.

6. Human Resources Implications

No HR implications. The council's community safety team works in partnership with the SET.

7. Union Comments

No implications for unions

8. Data Protection Compliance Implications

Any personal sensitive data relating to modern slavery is only shared within legal limits and within data sharing agreements.

9. Equality Impact Assessment

Victims of modern slavery can have protected characteristics under the Equality Act. The proposal will advance work to ensure victim's human and legal rights are protected.

10. Background Papers

Nil