

RECORD OF DECISION MADE UNDER DELEGATED AUTHORITY

***PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT**

Any interest to declare/ or conflict and any dispensation granted [*if applicable*]

SERVICE DIRECTORATE: Legal and Community

1. DECISION TAKEN

To approve the Council's annual Modern Slavery Transparency Statement for 2022 – 2023.

2. DECISION TAKER

Executive Member – Finance and IT Cllr Ian Albert

3. DATE DECISION TAKEN:

14 September 2022

4. REASON FOR DECISION

- 4.1 The Modern Slavery Act 2015 requires every local authority to annually publish a statement setting out the actions that are being taken to understand all potential modern slavery risks related to its business and to put in place steps that are aimed at ensuring that there is no slavery or human trafficking in its own business, and its supply chains.

5. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

None.

6. CONSULTATION (INCLUDING THE EFFECT ON STAKEHOLDERS, PARTNERS AND THE PUBLIC)

- 6.1 Consultation with the respective officers in the Legal Department and other relevant departments have taken place with regards to this updated annual Modern Slavery Transparency Statement.

7. FORWARD PLAN

- 7.1 This decision is not a key Executive decision and has therefore not been referred to in the Forward Plan.

8. BACKGROUND/ RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS

- 8.1 Since the coming into force of the Modern Slavery Act 2015, the Council has been proactive in taking on board its responsibilities and several cycles of training have been organised by the Council to deliver the necessary training to members of staff (including to elected Members).
- 8.2 On 27 June 2019, Cabinet approved the Council's Modern Slavery Transparency Statement. The Council has continued to produce, on an annual basis, a Modern Slavery Transparency Statement explaining the steps the Council takes to avoid the presence of modern slavery in any of its supply chains. The Council is committed to

preventing and taking action against identified slavery and human trafficking in its corporate activities, its supply chains and the wider community and this updated Modern Slavery Transparency Statement builds on the previous steps taken in recent years to realise those commitments. The Council became a signatory to the Charter Against Modern Slavery in July 2019, is part of the Hertfordshire Modern Slavery Partnership and our overall safeguarding processes have been reviewed by the Shiva Foundation¹.

- 8.3 The Council's Modern Slavery Transparency Statement sets out the commitment to identify, address and prevent slavery and exploitation within its work; that of contractors that it commissions and services that it procures. The Statement highlights the Council's responsibilities as an employer and acknowledges and accepts its duty as a Council under Section 52 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015, to notify the Secretary of State of suspected victims of slavery or human trafficking.
- 8.4 The prevention work is addressed throughout the Council's policies and procedures relating to Procurement, Recruitment, employee and Member safeguarding training, and through proactive work with partners. The Council's updated Modern Slavery Transparency Statement for 2022 to 2023 is attached to this report at appendix A.
- 8.5 In 2021, the Government announced the roll out of the government's Modern Slavery Statement Registry which is a central registry launched in an effort to enhance transparency and make it easier for consumers, suppliers and others to access and compare the action being taken by organisations to address modern slavery risks in their operations and supply chains. The Government has indicated that it intends to pass legislation making it mandatory for organisations caught by Section 54 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 to submit a statement to the Registry. We will continue to utilise the Government's Modern Slavery Statement Registry within our processes and have referenced it and incorporated it into our Modern Slavery Transparency Statement.
- 8.6 Within the last year, we have enhanced our processes as outlined within the attached Transparency Statement at Appendix A. In order to strengthen the steps that we take to seek to eliminate modern slavery within our supply chain, at the outset of a procurement and where appropriate, our Contract Managers and relevant Officers will be invited to complete the Modern Slavery Identifiers checklist, which has appropriate actions based on a risk score. Additionally, for high-risk contracts, Contract Managers will be invited to complete the Government Modern Slavery Risk Assessment tool which is designed to help public sector organisations work in partnership with suppliers to improve protections and reduce the risk of exploitation of workers in their supply chains.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1. The Modern Slavery Act 2015 (MSA 2015) applies to England and Wales and includes the offences of human trafficking and slavery, servitude and forced or compulsory labour. The Act consolidated and simplified existing offences and establishes a legal duty under Section 52 for specified public authorities to notify the Home Office where there are reasonable grounds to believe a person may be a victim of modern slavery.
- 9.2. Section 54 of the MSA 2015 requires commercial organisations carrying out business in the UK, with a turnover of at least £36 million, to prepare and publish a slavery and human trafficking statement for each and every financial year.
- 9.3. The MSA created the role of the Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner (the Commissioner) whose role is to act in the interests of victims and potential victims by ensuring that the law enforcement response to modern slavery is coordinated.

¹ <https://shivafoundation.org.uk/>

9.4. Section 43 of the Act states that specified public authorities (including borough councils) have a duty to co-operate with the Commissioner. The Commissioner may request a specified public authority to co-operate with the Commissioner in any way that the Commissioner considers necessary for the purposes of the Commissioner's functions. A specified public authority must so far as reasonably practicable comply with a request made to it under this section.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1. There are no significant financial implications arising from this decision.

11. RISK IMPLICATIONS

11.1 The actions and measures taken in the Council's updated Modern Slavery Transparency Statement should help to reduce the Council's risks in relation to Modern Slavery.

12. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

12.1 In line with the Public Sector Equality Duty, public bodies must, in the exercise of their functions, give due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

12.2 The Modern Slavery Transparency Statement is a positive step to raising awareness amongst any employee, Councillor or those suppliers delivering services on behalf of the Council. The Statement supports the Council's commitment to eradicate slavery in any form across North Hertfordshire.

13. SOCIAL VALUE IMPLICATIONS

13.1 The Social Value Act and "go local" policy do not apply to this decision.

14. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

14.1. There are no known Environmental impacts applicable to this decision.

15. HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

15.1 There are no direct implications from this report.

16. BACKGROUND PAPERS

16.1 None.

17. APPENDICES

17.1 Appendix A – NHDC Modern Slavery Transparency Statement 2022-2023

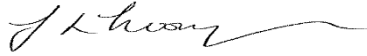
NOTIFICATION DATE

16th September 2022

Signature of Executive Member decision maker



Date: 14.09.2022



Signature

Jeanette Thompson

Service Director – Legal and Community

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Please Note: that *unless urgency provisions apply* EXECUTIVE decisions cannot be implemented until 5 clear working days have elapsed after the decision has been taken to allow for scrutiny call-in.

Call-in does not apply to NON-EXECUTIVE DECISIONS