



Chelmsford City Council Cabinet

14th March 2023

Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement

Report by:

Leader of the Council

Officer Contact:

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Purpose

To approve for publication the annual Statement on Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking.

Options

1. Approve the Statement on Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking.
2. Approve a variation of the Statement on Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking

Preferred option and reasons

Option 1 is the preferred option as there is a legal requirement to approve and publish a statement for the 2022/23 financial year. The attached Statement is a comprehensive and factual account of the Council's current position.

Recommendations

The proposed Statement on Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking for 2022/23 be approved and published.

1. Background

- 1.1 Section 54 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 states that every organisation carrying on business in the UK with a total annual turnover of £36m or more must produce a Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement for each financial year. It is good practice to produce an annual statement.
- 1.2 The statement must include “the steps the organisation has taken during the financial year to ensure that slavery and human trafficking is not taking place in any of its supply chains, and in any part of its own business”.

2. Required Content of the Statement

- 2.1. The Modern Slavery Act does not define in detail what a statement must include or how it should be structured. It does, however, indicate that a statement should aim to include information about:
 - i) the organisation’s structure;
 - ii) its policies in relation to slavery and human trafficking;
 - iii) its due diligence processes in relation to slavery and human trafficking in its business and supply chains;
 - iv) the parts of the business and supply chains where there is a risk of slavery and human trafficking taking place;
 - v) its effectiveness in ensuring that slavery and human trafficking is not taking place in its business or supply chains, measured against such performance indicators as it considers appropriate;
 - vi) the training about slavery and human trafficking available to its staff.

3. Conclusion

- 3.1. The attached statement for 2022/23 meets the above requirements. Government guidance indicates that the statement must be approved by the board of directors and signed by a director (or equivalent) before being published. In the case of a local authority operating executive arrangements, the equivalent would be the Cabinet and the Leader of the Council. This statement is therefore updated and submitted annually to the Cabinet for approval before being signed by the Leader and Chief Executive and published.

List of appendices:

Appendix 1 - Annual Statement on Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking

Background papers:

None

Corporate Implications

Legal/Constitutional: These are set out in the report.

Financial: The supplier elements of the strategy may affect the supplier base and possibly increase the costs of procurement exercises.

Potential impact on climate change and the environment: None

Contribution toward achieving a net zero carbon position by 2030: None

Personnel: None

Risk Management: None

Equality and Diversity: N/A

Health and Safety: None

Digital: None

Other: None

Consultees:

Procurement and Risk Services Manager

Relevant Policies and Strategies:

None



Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement 2022-23

This statement explains how Chelmsford City Council aims to understand and address all potential modern slavery and human trafficking risks related to its business. This statement is subject to continual annual review and will be published on the Council's website.

Commitment

Chelmsford City Council as a public sector organisation, an employer and community leader is committed to undertaking a preventative approach to modern slavery and human trafficking within its corporate responsibilities and activities.

The Council adopted the Modern Day Slavery Charter at Full Council on 26th February 2020 to reinforce its commitment to preventing Modern Slavery within its operations and supply chain.

Organisational Structure and Supply Chain

Chelmsford City Council provides a large range of services to over 175,000 residents within Essex. All of the services that the Council delivers are directly managed by the Council.

There is a clear expectation that services or goods delivered by the Council are undertaken in conjunction with external organisations that operate their own policy and practice in relation to modern slavery.

All suppliers taking part in Chelmsford City Council's procurement processes must state whether they are a relevant commercial organisation, as defined by section 54 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 ("the Act"). If they are, they are required to confirm their compliance with the annual reporting requirements contained within Section 54 of the Act. Failure to meet these requirements is treated as grounds for mandatory exclusion.

The above approach, adopted by Chelmsford City Council, is in line with that developed by Crown Commercial Services, the executive agency and trading fund of the Cabinet Office of the UK Government and is utilised nationally across the public sector.

Chelmsford City Council has an expectation that any organisation with which it works, commissions or procures a service from, operates appropriate policies and practices in relation to modern slavery and human trafficking.

Our Responsibilities

Chelmsford City Council has a corporate crosscutting role as an employer, community leader and procurer with responsibility to safeguard people within our communities across all our operations.

Chelmsford City Council works with Essex Police and other enforcement agencies as appropriate to share intelligence and work collaboratively to address issues relating to modern slavery or human trafficking.

Our Policies

As a Council, there are a wide range of policies and processes in place that reflect our commitment to prevent modern slavery and human trafficking in everything that we do.

All policies are subject to a robust assurance process and are subject to staff and union consultation. Councillors, senior officers and partner organisations may also be invited to comment.

Relevant Policies:

- Employee Code of Conduct
- Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Safer Recruitment Policy
- Safeguarding Children, Young People and Adults Policy
- Domestic Abuse Workplace Policy
- Contract Procedure Rules

Multi-Agency Arrangements

The Essex Safeguarding Adults Board (ESAB) is a statutory organisation that is committed to protecting an adult's right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect. It collaborates with wider strategic partnerships in Essex to ensure that where safeguarding responsibilities spread across the organisations, there is a clear understanding of where responsibility lies or a robust joined-up approach.

The Essex Safeguarding Children Board (ESCB) is a statutory body which acts as a mechanism for agreeing how relevant organisations in Essex co-operate to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people.

As part of the Council's commitment to robust safeguarding provision, Chelmsford City Council has a board member on both the ESCB and the ESAB.

The Chelmsford Against Slavery Partnership (CASP) is hosted by Chelmsford City Council and is a community partnership of charities, faith groups, the local authority, law enforcement and community partners within the City of Chelmsford. The purpose is to work towards a slavery-free city through developing community resilience to modern slavery and human trafficking. This will be done through facilitating partnership work, raising awareness, developing and delivering training and safeguarding resources, community intelligence gathering and promoting effective survivor care.

Management Responsibilities

The Council has responsibilities to its workforce, this includes employee health, safety and welfare.

As part of the Council's commitment to the welfare of its workforce, any employee can raise concerns and have assurance from the Council that their concerns will be taken seriously.

The Council has an Employee Assistance program for all staff, which provides confidential support and advice for work and personal matters and also includes support for victims of crime. Employees have access to 24-hour confidential support, 365 days per year.

Training and Awareness Raising

To meet its statutory safeguarding responsibilities, the Council offers a wide and extensive training programme to staff across all services.

In 2022-23 1,428 safeguarding training sessions were delivered by the Council for a wide range of staff, elected members and key partners. The Council's level 3 safeguarding training provides awareness of Modern Day Slavery and Human Trafficking matters within its delivery.

Bespoke Modern Day Slavery training was provided to all Councillors and key external stakeholders. 85% of Councillors attended this training.

All members of the Procurement Team have successfully passed the Chartered Institute of Procurement and Supply – Ethical Procurement Test.

Members of the Internal Corporate Safeguarding Group received a modern slavery awareness session delivered by Stop the Traffik and continue to update their professional development when the opportunity arises.

Chelmsford City Council also worked with Together Free and Essex Police to deliver awareness sessions to around 30 professionals from a range of organisations including local authority, housing providers, drug and alcohol services and businesses.

Chelmsford City Council as a first responder worked with Justice and Care and Essex Police to offer National Referral Mechanism training to all of its front line staff in 2022.

Key communications will continue throughout the year via our internal communication mechanisms and social media platforms.

If any staff witness or suspect modern slavery or human trafficking is taking place they follow the internal safeguarding reporting process.

In line with statutory responsibilities and related guidance for local authorities it may be required to notify the Home Office of a potential victim of modern slavery or human trafficking or make appropriate referrals to the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) for all children and consenting adults.

Due Diligence

Chelmsford City Council is committed to and understands the vital role that procurement plays in this function. This includes due consideration and recognition of its duty when sourcing to ensure that effective employment practices are in place within the supply chain and that modern slavery and human trafficking practices will not be tolerated.

Due diligence actions must be carried out at all times. The contract rules require collaboration with the Procurement Team for high value and high risk procurements to ensure, before awarding any contracts to prospective bidders, the Council meets its legal obligations under the Modern Slavery Act 2015, and the Contract Procedure Rules 2015.

Performance

Chelmsford City Council have made 1 referral to the NRM in 2022-2023.

Declaration

This statement is made pursuant to Section 54 (1) of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 and constitutes Chelmsford City Council's slavery and human trafficking statement for the term of the financial period

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Nick Eveleigh, Chief Executive

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Councillor Stephen Robinson, Leader of the Council