

## **SODC Councillor's Monthly Report September 2017**

### **Modern Slavery. Know the signs & how to report it.**

Modern Slavery happens all over the UK, and is closer than you think. This includes in market towns and rural communities. As council staff and councillors, we all have a responsibility to say something if we see something if we think somebody is being exploited. Modern Slavery is the illegal exploitation of people for personal or commercial gain. Victims are coerced or deceived and feel that they cannot free themselves from the situation. Modern Slavery can take many forms including but not limited to:

- Sexual exploitation
- Domestic servitude
- Forced labour
- Criminal exploitation
- Others including organ removal, forced begging and forced benefit fraud

The Home Office estimate that there are between 10,000-13,000 victims of Modern Slavery in the UK. Many victims can be UK nationals. What should you be looking out for? Indicators that a person may have been trafficked and are a victim of Modern Slavery can include:

- showing signs of injury or malnourishment
- not being appropriately dressed for their work or wearing the same clothes day in day out
- looking afraid/withdrawn whilst at work
- avoiding eye contact, reticent to engage
- acting as if they have been instructed or coached by someone else
- allowing others to speak for them when they are spoken to directly
- responding in a fearful/overly timid/subservient way to their employer
- not being allowed to travel on their own
- unfamiliar with their neighbourhood or where they work

Other things that you may notice which could indicate Modern Slavery:

- large amounts of people living at one address
- people living and working in the same place
- dirty, cramped environment
- wages being withheld or very low level of wages being paid
- limited social contact
- travel or ID documents being withheld
- the belief that someone is under debt bondage
- locks on the outside of internal doors
- how the employer speaks to their employee(s) - are they aggressive or domineering?
- people being dropped off and collected for work on a regular basis either very early or late at night.

If you see something in the course of your work which makes you think that somebody may be a victim of modern slavery, you must report it to one the District Council's Designated Officers for safeguarding as soon as possible: Andrew Down

(Designated Officer) 1235 422300 or 07801 203584 If Andrew is not available, please contact either: Margaret Reed (Deputy Designated Officer) 01235 422550 or 07801 203603 or

William Jacobs (Deputy Designated Officer) 01235 422480 or 07801 203558

Make it clear that your concerns relate to modern slavery and try to give as much detail as you can about what you've seen and why you are concerned. Always dial 999 if someone is in immediate danger.

## **New waste and recycling trucks**

**Some of our new waste and recycling trucks are already making their way round the districts.**

**This should help to alleviate some of the disruption caused by the old vehicles. The rest of the new £6.5m fleet will be in place by 2 October and will be covered in eye-catching designs to encourage recycling.**

**With the new fleet, there'll be a change to the way our waste is collected. At present, food waste and recycling (or rubbish) is collected in separate compartments within the same truck. When the full fleet is here, these collections will be by two separate vehicles – one for food waste, another for recycling or rubbish. This will not affect collection days or how you use your bins.**

## **Oxfordshire infrastructure strategy**

The **countywide infrastructure strategy (OxIS)**, which sets out the infrastructure requirements up to 2040, was published by the Oxfordshire Growth Board with the consultation running until 3 September. We are planning a public exhibition with Oxfordshire County Council next month that will focus on the proposed regional and countywide infrastructure projects as well as other vital transport projects. For South Oxfordshire this is the 'knowledge spine' which runs through the centre of the county with the three key areas identified for growth i.e. Bicester, Oxford City and Science Vale UK.

## **Housing Team Award**

You might remember that our housing team was recognised as one of the country's top performers by the National Practitioner Support Service (NPSS). This followed a detailed review of our advice services where we scored 80 per cent against an average of 69 - putting us in the top eight councils in the country. The review checked that the advice and support we give to our residents is provided in a targeted, effective and efficient way. The team has now been presented with their Bronze Award certificate and are already working towards the Silver Award.

## **Local Plan 2011/33**

The timetable for the next stages of the Local Plan are as follows:

13<sup>th</sup> September Scrutiny Committee at Cornerstones in Didcot at 6:30 PM

21<sup>st</sup> September Cabinet Meeting at Milton Park at 10:00 AM

28<sup>th</sup> September Full Council meeting at Fountains Conference Centre in Howbery Park at 6:00 PM

### **Endorsement from the Food Standards Agency**

We are two of only 24 district councils to have completed all the food hygiene inspection programmes for the year according to the Food Standards Agency. As a result of our hard work, we have ensured that 95 per cent of food businesses were considered to be compliant with food hygiene laws. 14 businesses were subject to enforcement notices and 800 received written warnings. Seven locations were temporarily closed to address serious issues and we took three prosecutions following significant breaches of food hygiene laws.

### **Community Safety Partnership**

#### **Safeguarding and prevention**

We have produced and distributed 1,000 leaflets and air fresheners to taxi companies and drivers telling them what to do if they suspect they are being hired to traffic vulnerable passengers to work against their will or being abused. The leaflet provides information on what to look out for, who to tell and where they can find more information on safeguarding.

### **Charges for non-household waste at recycling centres**

From 1 October, Oxfordshire County Council is increasing charges for items of non-household waste taken to recycling centres, including those in our districts. Most items of chargeable waste – generally waste from DIY projects such as sinks, baths, kitchen units, soil and rubble – will cost £1.50 to dispose of, with higher charges for items such as plasterboard (£10 per sheet) and car tyres (£5). The county council is keen to reassure everyone that it will still be FREE to dispose of all household waste at the centres. For more information, see Oxfordshire County Council's website.

### **Veterans' Gateway**

The Veterans' Gateway, funded by the MOD Covenant, is a 24/7 service aimed at supporting veterans, their families and carers. The website is a handy toolkit for officers and councillors to access relevant content and links to help support military veterans.

The website address is [www.veteransgateway.org.uk/partner-toolkit](http://www.veteransgateway.org.uk/partner-toolkit) and password is PartnerToolkit.

Should you require any further information on the website service, please contact [enquiries@veteransgateway.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@veteransgateway.org.uk)

David Turner  
21st September 2017