



# Leicester Labour Market Partnership

Annual Report: 2019-2020

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*City Mayor Peter Soulsby visits Ethically Sourced Products, Bridge St, Leicester in January 2019*

# 1.0 Foreword

**Leicester is a modern, multicultural, global city. We have an economy rich with dynamic, diverse sectors from food manufacture to space exploration.**

Leicester is a city which should have absolutely no place for worker exploitation.

Removing people from the misery of exploitation in any industry and ending poor and illegal business practices is an absolute priority.

Historically, much of Leicester's growth was built around our hosiery and textiles sector. They used to boast we "clothed the world". We want and believe we can help make this a proud boast once again. We can create the good jobs and support the ethical businesses our city needs. We want Leicester to be the host to a resurgent, vibrant, compliant and ethical textile sector. We welcome good jobs into the city, producing high-quality garments made by well-paid people, working in modern, safe and ethical conditions.

We cannot do this alone. It is intensely frustrating that Leicester City Council does not have enforcement powers over working conditions or pay in factories. I have previously called for these powers and continue to do so.

The City does not have the power to ensure:

- National Minimum Wage is paid,

- Health and Safety at Work Act contraventions in factories are dealt with
- issues relating to allegations of modern day slavery are investigated.

Agencies such as Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC), the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), the Employment Agency Standards Inspectorate (EAS) the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority (GLAA), Immigration Enforcement and others such as the Police and National Crime Agency (NCA) do have these powers.

This complex network of agencies has not served Leicester, the textiles industry or the labour market well. Successive Directors of Labour Market Enforcement, the House of Commons Select Committees, and the Government itself have recognised this. For far too long the Government has promised to bring forward a single enforcement body but has failed to act.

Not even a plan for a single enforcement body has yet emerged and we appear to be years away from seeing an operational and effective agency's establishment.

Until such time as the single agency is established, we are committed to doing all we can to enable the various agencies to tackle labour market exploitation.

This document provides an annual review of this work.

The Leicester Labour Market Partnership, that I commissioned in October 2019 following our activity in the preceding years, sets out what we've done and what we see as crucial to do in the future.

The Partnership recognises the complex chain of commercial relationships that enables exploitation. It brings together every facet of the sector from the High Street to the factory floor: retailers, manufacturers, unions, us as the local authority and all enforcement agencies.

Already we have:

- developed mechanisms and networks for improved and better intelligence and information sharing across key agencies.
- developed and strengthened links with the voluntary and community sector organisations such as Hope for Justice, Citizens Advice LeicesterShire and Unseen to help workers reach out for help, where they may feel concerned to turn to statutory agencies.
- hosted a summit with the TUC to support workers' access to unions. This work is seeking to strengthen the voice of workers in the workplace.
- helped to raise the profile of campaigns aimed at encouraging people to report concerns about exploitation, for instance by supporting the CrimeStoppers campaign *#EndGarmenSectorSlavery* that included distribution of a CrimeStoppers leaflet and posters in various languages including English, Gujarati, Punjabi and Hindi.
- improved reporting mechanisms both internally and in partnership with others, as well as developing and maintaining a public-facing city council webpage on modern-day slavery, which also includes details of how to report problems to us and our partners: <https://www.leicester.gov.uk/your-community/emergencies-safety-and-crime/crime-prevention.modern-day-slavery-and-exploitation/>
- worked with more than 200 textiles businesses, providing free impartial advice and enabling access to business grants. Over £3m of investment/grants from the European Regional Development Fund and Regional Growth Fund have been secured by textiles businesses over recent years.
- conducted discussions with key retailers that source from Leicester, along with intermediary organisations that work with or represent the sector.
- held meetings with suppliers and manufacturers in the city and visited sites wishing to highlight the good practice that exists in the city.
- fully engaged with the Apparel and General Merchandising Public Private Protocol, which brings together retailers, enforcement agencies, lobbying and campaigning organisations with a mission to “work together to eradicate slavery and exploitation in the Apparel and General Merchandise supply chain on the UK”.
- participated in Operation Tacit, supporting coordinated factory visits with government agencies across the city to check them for any evidence of modern-day slavery and exploitation.

Finally, in publishing of this first review, I want to thank Cllr Adam Clarke for all that he has done to provide additional focus and support, particularly when these issues gained welcome national media and political attention during the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Sir Peter Soulsby. City Mayor**



*Deputy Mayor Cllr Adam Clarke  
visits Basic Premier on Rolleston  
Street in September 2020.*

## 2.0 Introduction

**Today Leicester is thought to host the UK's second largest compliment of textiles businesses. The true size and scale of the sector is somewhat unknown, contributing to concerns of a 'hidden economy'. The nature of the sector means people can work alone and in small numbers in smaller workshops and away from the eyes of agencies that exist to support an ethical economy. Homeworking has also been an efficient option for many businesses and has enabled employment for much of the workforce.**

During the 19th century and for most of the 20th century Leicester was known around the world for hosiery, textiles and footwear. The city hosted businesses that were at the time household names, such as Corah and Wolsey. Corah was once the largest knitwear producer in Europe and Wolsey produced around eighteen million garments during the First World War for British and allied troops.

In the 1980s, manufacturing industry in the UK declined. New global markets and global supply chains were created. In the textiles sector, this led to the development of fast fashion providing huge quantities of clothes to the high street at speed with very low-price tags – leading to genuine and founded concerns about exploitation of the environment and of people, throughout the sector and around the world.

As the big names like Corah and Wolsey left the city, some smaller businesses remained. In time, new textiles businesses arose. Many of these businesses contributed to the 'cut, make and trim' end of the market, producing the cheaper garments now feeding the online market as well as the traditional high street retailers. While many of these businesses provided good jobs in healthy working environments, it is to their detriment that too many others did not operate as ethically.

As the economy has changed, the ambition for a fully compliant, strong and vibrant textile sector in Leicester has not, but there are significant challenges to overcome, which require redoubled effort and genuine resolve by all concerned.

This annual review outlines work between October 2019 and November 2020.

Contextually, the last twelve months has seen significant local and national activity:

October 2019	<b>The Leicester Labour Market partnership was formed led by Leicester City Council. Partners include HMRC, HSE, GLAA, BEIS etc.</b>
December 19 – January 2020	<b>Recruitment to a Community Safety (Labour Market) Officer post and second meeting of the Leicester Labour Market Partnership.</b>
March 2020	<b>The new Community Safety (Labour Market) Officer begins work at Leicester City Council.</b> National Lockdown – COVID-19.
April - May 2020	<b>Development of the Leicester Labour Market Partnership Action Plan identifies four ‘P’s’ model: Prevent, Protect, Prepare and Pursue.</b>
June 2020	Labour behind the Label Report: Boohoo and COVID-19. The people behind the profits. Leicester Local Lockdown
July 2020	National headlines regarding Leicester’s textile sector. Widescale coverage by all media channels. In response, the Home Office initiates Operation Tacit. Alison Levitt QC commissioned to conduct independent review into Boohoo PLC’s Leicester supply chain. <b>Hope for Justice and Slave Free Alliance join the Leicester Labour Market Partnership.</b>
August 2020 – September 2020	<b>Deputy Mayor Cllr Adam Clarke conducts discussions with key retailers that source from Leicester, along with intermediary organisations that work with or represent the sector. This has included:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Senior representatives from retailers ASOS and boohoo.</li> <li>• British Retail Consortium</li> <li>• Alliance HR, who work with many major retailers on the Fast Forward ethical auditing labour standards improvement programme that seeks to uncover hidden exploitation and drive collaborative continuous improvement in supply chains</li> <li>• Labour Behind the Label – a campaign group for garment workers worldwide</li> <li>• Fashion Enter - a specialist not for profit social enterprise provider of accredited qualifications and apprenticeships in the fashion and textiles sector</li> </ul> <p>Leicester City Council and TUC convene a summit with retailers focusing on the role of Trade Unions in the sector.</p> <p>Leicester Primary Partnership meetings regarding schools and their role in understanding and acting upon issues in the textile sector.</p> <p>Alison Levitt QC publishes her findings from her independent review into Boohoo PLC’s Leicester supply chain.</p> <p><b>Economic Development, Transport and Tourism Scrutiny Commission receives paper: Leicester Textiles Sector (Modern Slavery and Exploitation).</b></p>
October 2020	<b>Recruitment to Community Engagement Officer post by Citizens Advice LeicesterShire. Unseen join the Leicester Labour Market Partnership.</b>
November 2020	<b>Leicester Business Festival Crimestoppers Event, launching #EndGarmentSectorSlavery campaign supported by PCC Lord Willy Bach and Deputy City Mayor Cllr Adam Clarke.</b>

## 2.1 The issue

There is consensus that the regulatory environment overseeing the textile sector (and other sectors) is fragmented to such an extent that it allows exploitation and fraud including money laundering to thrive. These complexities exacerbated by the under-resourcing of the current network of agencies has helped to create this perfect storm. Only central Government can fix this and whilst they consider the options for change, Leicester City Council has been working with those within their current roles and responsibilities to make a positive difference for the people working and trying to make an honest living from within the textile sector. Our passion is to develop a textile sector that is ethically sound and complicit with good practice across all supply chains from the factory floor to the shop floor.

## 2.2 Leicester City Council's approach

The City Council's proactive position on these matters is well known. In 2017 the City Mayor for Leicester Sir Peter Soulsby ensured the City Council participated in the Joint Human Rights and Business Select Committee Inquiry led by Rt Hon Harriet Harman QC MP. Leicester City Council hosted a special session of the committee in Leicester, and supported the Inquiry's specific recommendation to "bring forward legislative proposals to grant powers to and fully resource local authorities to close down premises which are found to exploit workers through underpayment of wages, lack of employment contracts or significant disregard of health and safety regulations".

**“ bring forward legislative proposals to grant powers to and fully resource local authorities to close down premises which are found to exploit workers through underpayment of wages, lack of employment contracts or significant disregard of health and safety regulations ”**

In 2017 the city mayor also convened and hosted a textiles coalition event that brought together over 40 representatives from national regulators and public sector bodies including the Director of Labour Market Enforcement's (DLME) office, retailers and sector bodies to discuss how ethical compliance can be maximised. This event concluded that tackling non-compliance in the textiles supply chain requires not only the reporting of intelligence, but also effective intelligence sharing between national regulators and the translation of this intelligence into coordinated action at the local level. Visibility of this enforcement activity was also identified as a key issue, to send out a clear message of the consequences of non-compliance. In 2018 the city mayor provided support for the National Labour Market Enforcement Strategy (May 2018) which recommended a Leicester textiles taskforce. In May 2019, despite having no regulatory responsibility for this area of work, he supported resourcing the taskforce recommendation to further pilot activity including a commitment to fund a Community Safety (Labour Market) co-ordinator post to drive agency collaboration. This would be the first role of its type in the UK.

During the Summer of 2019 work to pull agencies together took place and in October 2019 the first Leicester Labour Market Partnership was established. This is chaired by Leicester City Council, with membership including HSE, HMRC, Police, the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS), GLAA etc.

This document provides an annual review of the work of the Leicester Labour Market Partnership - partnership work we commissioned in October 2019 - and highlights our complementary work to support the sector more broadly. Work which further confirms our commitment and our approach to the challenges and opportunities within Leicester's textile sector.



*City Mayor Peter Soulsby and Deputy Mayor Cllr Adam Clarke visit Leicester Textile Factory*

## 3.0 Commitments, Objectives and Responsibilities

### 3.1 Leicester City Council Commitment

Leicester City Council is committed to working with those many partners who have enforcement powers and others, in assisting local manufacturing businesses to develop and grow; and supporting our local people and communities who work within the sector. Further to this, we want to be part of a dynamic partnership driven by a desire to ensure Leicester has the highest standards of employment in the highest quality environments with the best possible pay and conditions.

### 3.2 Leicester City Council Objectives

As a local authority our objective is:



To promote and encourage compliance across the textile sector operating in Leicester by addressing the issues around labour exploitation and modern slavery, and



To ensure that communities and employees within the sector are fully aware of their rights and how to seek support should they need it.



To ensure that the textile sector is fully supported to develop, including supporting the development of manufacturing skills and processes to ensure a sustainable textiles and garments sector.

### 3.3 The Role of Other Agencies

Leicester City Council has limited powers when it comes to working practices in textile factories; the council has no powers to check on working conditions inside a building or to enforce the payment of the national minimum wage. These powers have previously been requested, most notably, within the recommendations of the Harman review.

Alongside the police, the council essentially supports the identification of rogue employers and then signposts to the following national bodies to tackle illegal activity.

The four main national enforcement bodies are:

1. **Gangmaster Labour Abuse Authority (GLAA)**
  - the foremost investigative agency for labour exploitation in the UK. Its role is to work in partnership with police and other law enforcement agencies to protect vulnerable and exploited workers.
2. **HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC)**
  - are responsible for collection of taxes and the administration of other regulatory regimes such as the national minimum wage and the issuance of national insurance numbers, and as such they can play a crucial role in any criminal investigation.
3. **Employment Agency Standards Inspectorate (EAS)**
  - are responsible for investigating complaints, taking enforcement action through the powers at their disposal, including prosecution and unlimited fines and identifying agency workers at risk of exploitation.
4. **Health and Safety Executive (HSE)**
  - are responsible for the encouragement, regulation and enforcement of workplace health, safety and welfare, and for research into occupational risks in Great Britain.

Through his 2018/19 Strategy the then Director of Labour Market Enforcement drew attention to the problems of non-compliance in the textiles sector in Leicester. As such I have been following developments in Leicester with great interest, in particular the growing partnership between the enforcement bodies, City Council and community and worker organisations. I am encouraged by the progress the partnership has made in finding ways of working together, developing trust and sharing information. Together this will help tackle a complex and long-standing issue. Learning from the work being done in Leicester is particularly important as the Single Enforcement Body develops and my Office will continue to work with the partnership to understand the challenges and successes, and how the approach can be applied more broadly to other industries and locations.

***Matthew Taylor, Director of Labour Market Enforcement***

# 4.0 Our Approach and Delivery from October 2019 to November 2020

Although Leicester City Council does not have the required enforcement powers to tackle labour exploitation in factories, the council is resolute in its efforts to support the textile sector. On that basis our approach in addressing the issues outlined is to work in partnership with key agencies through an approach based on the 4 P's (Prevent, Protect, Prepare and Pursue):



## **PREVENT:**

To support local businesses and employees to report issues, prevent and improve; ensure that information, prevention, and enforcement activities are leading to proactive action and positive change.



## **PROTECT:**

To support the sector, ensuring the development of thriving and sustainable businesses and employment opportunities.



## **PREPARE:**

To test through an intelligence led approach (understanding threat, risk and harm), the perception that there are a number of Leicester businesses in the supply chain for the retail sector who act outside of the law, where they exploit workers and do not pay their legal duties.



## **PURSUE:**

Where multiple non-compliance is identified, to undertake joint working between state enforcement bodies to seek to tackle this.

The Leicester Labour Market Partnership led by Leicester City Council and consisting of representation from the HSE, HMRC, BEIS, the Police and the CAB was launched in October 2019.

Resources committed by the city mayor led to the recruitment of a Community Safety (Labour Market) Co-ordinator, the first role of its type in the country.

"I have been involved in working on the modern-day slavery and labour abuse agenda within the East Midlands for the last three years; firstly for HMRC, where I co-ordinated their response on threats and harm caused by modern-day slavery and labour abuse. I took on this work in addition to my main duties as I have always been passionate about the fight against modern-day slavery and bring an end to suffering of innocent people. Through my partner network, I learned about the Leicester City Council's initiative and wanted to be part of the team to drive forward the work of the Leicester Labour Market Partnership.

We all have a part to play in addressing this agenda, from retailers, suppliers and enforcement agencies to the voluntary and community sector – as such no one day is the same as another, things can change very quickly therefore adaptability and agility are very important in making my work a success.

I am keen to carry on with the planned initiatives and, once the pandemic restrictions ease, I expect to see a step-change in this work by engaging more people (individuals, communities and organisations) directly to ensure they are doing everything they can to bring an end to modern-day slavery and labour exploitation."

**Aleksandra Majewska - Community Safety (Labour Market) Co-ordinator**

## 4.1 What we have done so far through our Partnership Work

This section provides an overview of the work being delivered by Leicester City Council and those other key agencies mentioned, through the Leicester Labour Market Partnership.

### a. PREVENT: To support local businesses and employees to report issues, prevent and improve; ensure that information, prevention, and enforcement activities are leading to proactive action and positive change.

- City Mayor, convening, with the TUC, a summit for trade unions and retailers (29th September 2020).
- City Mayor speaking at TUC Midlands Council.
- Engagement with Leicestershire Police.
- Engagement with headteachers and education partners.
- Engagement with major retailers and sector bodies.
- Manufacturer meetings and visits - Connecting with compliant factory owners providing reassurance of support for the compliant sector to understand impact of negative attention on Leicester and support needs manufacturers and suppliers have requested.
- Over 1,600 COVID-19 Secure business check visits across key retail and food business sectors, including visits to 52 HSE-regulated premises.
- Working in partnership with Hope for Justice and Citizens Advice LeicesterShire.
- Working in partnership with Crimestoppers to promote the *#EndGarmentSectorSlavery* campaign, as part of Leicester Business Festival 2020.
- Media – local, national, and international media attention has given an opportunity to both highlight the issues and respond to ill-informed and inaccurate reporting that fails to accurately reflect complexities of the issues being addressed.
- Wide-ranging activity across the voluntary and community Sector to ensure a co-ordinated response between Leicester City Council, Hope for Justice, Unseen, Citizens Advice LeicesterShire.
- Various contacts with Government, including with Liz Kendall MP, Deputy Mayor Cllr Adam Clarke meeting Paul Scully MP, Parliamentary Undersecretary of State in BEIS, ahead of a Westminster Hall debate on the issues – a debate secured by the MP for Leicester West.
- **Scrutiny** – Reports to the Council's Economic Development Scrutiny Commission.
- Formally responding to QC Alison Levitt's independent review of Boohoo's Leicester supply chain.

“Raising awareness and encouraging people to speak out about labour exploitation is essential. To give those a voice, who would otherwise not be able to talk and share what they know, is a very powerful tool in helping us to tackle modern slavery and other crimes. Being able to campaign about forced labour with the support of Leicester City Council and other organisations has been the perfect platform to make this happen in Leicester.”

**Lydia Patsalides, CrimeStoppers**

“Leicester City Council is a valued partner in the task force approach to dealing with labour abuse and exploitation in the garment sector. The Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority, which leads the task force, is indebted to the work of the council in developing and leading on the community engagement side of the task force work. The partnership working in the garment sector will be crucial in developing an enduring legacy which will drive change in this area of the labour market, reducing the opportunities for vulnerable workers to be exploited and abused for their work and rebuilding a flourishing and vibrant garment manufacturing base.”

**Ian Waterfield GLAA**

**b. PROTECT: To support the sector, ensuring the development of thriving and sustainable businesses and employment opportunities. Our focus is on support, guidance, education, and training opportunities by:**

- Working as part of the Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership’s Growth Hub, the council has been delivering a comprehensive business support programme for the textiles sector. We have worked with more than 200 textiles businesses, providing free impartial advice and enabling access to business grants.
- Over £3m of investment/ grants from the European Regional Development Fund and Regional Growth Fund have been secured by textiles businesses over recent years.
- Webinar/ events programme – delivery of a popular ongoing support programme for textiles businesses around ethical and legal compliance, alongside general business growth support topics.
- Production of engagement materials - Includes a leaflet for employers, support for a Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland modern-day slavery poster and leaflets, promotion of the HMRC national minimum wage leaflet, promotion of a Crimestoppers leaflet and posters through various routes and in various languages including English, Gujarati, Panjabi and Hindi.

- Training for front-line officers in Leicester City Council to spot and report the signs of exploitation - developed an on-line “face to face” training package.
- Improved reporting mechanisms both internally and in partnership with others, as well as developing and maintaining a public-facing city council webpage on modern-day slavery, which also includes details of how to report problems to us and our partners.  
<https://www.leicester.gov.uk/your-community/emergencies-safety-and-crime/crime-prevention/modern-day-slavery-and-exploitation/>

“Leicester City Council’s leadership to support the local textile sector in the city is enabling good businesses to thrive whilst ensuring concerns that have been raised are not forgotten. By lobbying for change and bringing partners together to work in a concerted and focussed way, we will ensure that bad practice is driven out.”

**Kevin Harris – Chair, Leicester and Leicestershire Local Enterprise Partnership**

“We are pleased that Leicester City Council has joined the Apparel & General Merchandise Public Private Protocol to work collaboratively with a wide group of stakeholders to strive to eliminate worker exploitation from the UK textiles industry.”

**David Camp and Ian Waterfield –  
Chairs of the Public Private Partnership**

### **c. PREPARE - Focussing on understanding threat, risk and harm.**

- Establishment of governance arrangements for the Leicester Labour Market Partnership.
- Development of a shared understanding of each organisation’s role (covering the HSE, HMRC, GLAA, police, city council etc) with respect to tackling exploitation and modern-day slavery through production of a directory for each agency to be aware of each other’s remit.
- Improved and developing intelligence and information sharing, mapping of the problem and understanding regarding the issue of non-compliance – all supported by increased routes of engagement.
- Full participation in the Apparel and General Merchandising Public Private Protocol – active in several workgroups and sub-group activities. This partnership brings together retailers, enforcement agencies, lobbying and campaigning organisations with a mission to ‘work together to eradicate slavery and exploitation in the Apparel and General Merchandise supply chain in the UK by:
  - Raising awareness to prevent the exploitation of workers
  - Protecting vulnerable and exploited workers
  - Disrupting exploitative practices and bringing criminals to justice’

**d. PURSUE – This is the area where the city council has least influence in terms of statutory responsibility. It is true to say that whilst media driven attention in July hit city morale hard, it did initiate action from the Home Office leading to enforcement related activity. Until July 2020, this was the least developed area of the council’s strategy.**

- Operation Tacit, a Home Office-led initiative, is a multi-agency programme of inspections of factories. Operation Tacit is led by the GLAA with the support of the key enforcement agencies such as HSE, HMRC, NCA, the Immigration Authority and the police. Leicester City Council is actively engaged in Operation Tacit, with attendance at meetings and activity on the ground, such as council staff participating in visits whilst supporting work around testing in the city for COVID-19.
- At the time of writing there had been 168 visits conducted with no cases of modern-day slavery identified as a result of Operation Tacit.

During 2020, HSE has continued to work with the partnership providing regulatory support and taking action where health and safety issues are brought to our attention. While this year has seen much focus on the issues brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, it is important that we continue to work together in future to maintain progress and take action on some of the other underlying issues that still remain in the labour market.

### **Sam Wells HSE**

“Since allegations surfaced about unsafe working conditions and the exploitation of workers in some Leicester factories, we and our enforcement partners in Operation Tacit, along with the city council and Public Health England, have been working together to make sure workers are safe from exploitation and dangerous working conditions.

“No one should have to work in an unsafe environment, feel forced or coerced into doing so, nor have their labour exploited. Exploiting vulnerable workers for commercial gain will not be tolerated and there is a concerted multi-agency drive to tackle it robustly. We also want to support those legitimate businesses who are complying with the law and treating their workers fairly.

“This was a fantastic example of multi-agency cooperation to tackle a complex issue.”

### **Dan Scully GLAA Director**

# 5.0 Our Next Steps for 2020/21

Following the success of our strategy and the work to date, we will continue to use the 4 P's to deliver future work around this agenda.

## 5.1 Prevent

- a. To continue to co-ordinate, promote and deliver community engagement and awareness raising initiatives, working closely with partner organisations across the public, private, and voluntary sectors.

## 5.2 Protect

- a. To encourage and lobby for initiatives that build dialogue and trust between retailers/brands and Leicester manufacturers. This could include licensing schemes, kitemark accreditation, auditing regimes and other assurance to give retailers/brands the confidence to invest and place orders with Leicester companies.
- b. To grow the skills development, training, and learning opportunities for textiles employers and employees. In particular the council is keen to help deliver apprenticeship and other accredited training programmes for workers in the textiles industry and wider community. The council has recently announced it will work with a specialist training provider, Fashion-Enter Ltd, to deliver a skills/training centre and has invested £300,000 in the initiative. Industry partners are also backing the project.

- c. To continue to deliver business support for textiles manufacturers, including further access to grants/ investment, advice and webinar/ event programmes to support compliance and business growth.
- d. To support local manufacturers to establish an industry led representative trade body of Leicester textiles manufacturers, giving the sector a voice and helping to promote good business and good jobs.
- e. To seek views from partners on this annual review of the Leicester Labour Market Partnership in order to further develop the partnerships work, and to invite and ask partners to commit to offering additional support, intelligence and resources to progress this.

“ In particular the council is keen to establish provision to deliver apprenticeship and other accredited training programmes for workers in the textiles industry and wider community ”

## 5.3 Prepare

- a. Update and share intelligence on the textiles manufacturing sector across Leicester and Leicestershire. Scope to include the number and types of businesses, their location, how many people are employed and the sector contribution to the local economy.
- b. To utilise available evidence, and the feedback from partners on the annual review of the Leicester Labour Market Partnership in order to develop a strategy that provides a long-term plan for tackling labour market compliance issues in the textile sector and opportunities for economic growth.
- c. Within this strategy:
  - To steer our work to ensure clear alignment to the national Labour Market Enforcement Strategy and the Modern Slavery Act 2015.
  - To understand current and emerging threats within the garment sector supported by appropriate analysis and evidence, delivered through the action plan.
  - To develop the textile sector, ensuring that it is strong, thriving and resilient in Leicester.
  - To understand local capability, capacity and resources available to respond to the needs of the sector.
  - To identify cross-cutting themes and issues to ensure a collaborative approach.

- To support partners in addressing the issues identified.
- To identify, and make the use of, available resources to establish the best way forward to ensure compliance and encourage best practice.
- To seek out funding streams to help the partnership to deliver against actions set.
- To continue to look ahead at emerging threats and seek ways to deal with these.
- To identify and share regional and national good practice.
- To promote public confidence and reporting.

## 5.4 Pursue

- a. Continue to push hard for a single enforcement body that pulls together the enforcement powers of those key agencies that are currently regulating working conditions in factories.
- b. We are seeking a body which is able to respond quickly to the needs of workers and others who may be vulnerable to exploitation across a number of fields of concern, whether that is low pay, health and safety, modern day slavery or other exploitative practices.
- c. Continue to lobby for more powers for local Government to be able to take direct action; allowing them to inspect and close factories that breached regulations.

## 6.0 The way forward: an example of our approach

As we continue to use the 4 P's to deliver our work, a fifth P – partnership working, as exemplified by the Leicester Labour Market Partnership – will continue to be just as crucial to our success. A recent example of this is the foundation of the Leicester Fashion Technology Academy, a joint venture between Leicester City Council, leading training provider Fashion-Enter Ltd, and local clothing company Ethically Sourced Products, with further support from other industry partners and the local enterprise partnership.

Feasibility studies, a tender process and partnership development of the project were carried out throughout the period covered by this annual report, and while the challenges of COVID-19 created uncertainty, we were able to formally announce the foundation of the Leicester Fashion Technology Academy shortly before producing this report.

This innovative project will help to raise standards in the industry by delivering a wide range of apprenticeships and accredited training schemes, working closely with local textiles and fashion manufacturing businesses. Its development signals both the importance of this industry to the local economy, and our commitment to ensuring that the industry in Leicester is the best that it can be.

The new academy will offer people the opportunity to work towards entry-level qualifications in core industry skills including pattern-making, fabric inspection, laying and cutting, machine maintenance and stitching. People can then work towards advanced certificates and progress onto one of Fashion-Enter's apprenticeship schemes for retail/retail employers.

We look forward to seeing this innovative training centre in operation in Leicester, as soon as current circumstances will allow. The new Leicester Fashion Technology Academy is planning to open in early summer, following refurbishment of the new premises, with delivery of an initial taster programme.