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Title of meeting: Safety in the Community Decision Meeting

Subject: White Ribbon Accreditation

Date of meeting: 15th March 2023

Report by: Caroline Hopper, Corporate Projects Manager, The Executive

Wards affected: All

1. Requested by Cllr Fazackarley

2. Purpose -

To update the Safety in the Community Portfolio on the Council plan to become a White Ribbon accredited organisation.

3. Information Requested

3.1 Summary: It is noted City leaders have made a pledge to end male violence against women. White Ribbon is a global initiative and calls on men to take action to make a difference. It is noted the Council is committed to continuing its White Ribbon journey by becoming accredited. Championed by the Safety in the Community Portfolio, this is a cross cutting piece of work which will require service areas across the council to come together to develop an action plan.

4. Background to this report: There has been an increased focus nationally on the prevalence of Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG). The term VAWG has come to embody a range of unacceptable and damaging behaviours; including rape and other sexual offences, stalking, domestic abuse, 'honour-based' abuse (including female genital mutilation and forced marriage and 'honour' killings), 'revenge porn' and 'upskirting'. Whilst men can also be victims of these behaviours, women and girls are disproportionately affected, and the term VAWG is used to refer to all victims of these offences regardless of the gender of the victim.

4.1 Within Portsmouth domestic abuse continues to be the largest driver of violent crime, accounting for 44% of assaults recorded by police. Portsmouth's domestic abuse strategy aims to ensure that everyone in the city, especially young people, understand what a healthy relationship looks like, know where to get support, for as long as required, and those perpetrating unhealthy or abusive behaviour are held to account and supported to

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change. The accompanying plan is systemic, is based on multiagency working with health, police and voluntary sector providers and focuses on identifying, assessing and reducing risk through intervention and raising awareness. Governance for this strategy is via the Health and Wellbeing Board.

4.2 The city has also benefited from considerably from Safer Streets funding. Safer Streets delivers behavioural and situational measures that challenge underlying social norms that create the context for criminal activity and builds local capacity to respond as a key mechanism to improving feelings of safety. Projects including Community in Motion, Mentors in Violence prevention and We Stand Together spaces are creating capacity within local communities to respond.

4.3 The White Ribbon agenda is about long-term culture change in the community and in leading organisations like the Council. It will complement the existing work being undertaken.

5. White Ribbon

5.1 The White Ribbon is the internationally recognised symbol for ending male violence against women. White Ribbon UK is the leading charity working to end male violence against women with a programme of awareness raising and campaigning and with a particular focus on the need to engage with men and boys. The White Ribbon UK agenda encourages everyone, especially men and boys, to make the White Ribbon Promise to never commit, excuse or remain silent about VAWG. The movement works to prevent all forms of VAWG by raising awareness and preventing violence through changing culture. It is recognised by over a hundred organisations including local authorities, emergency services and universities, and is part of the global White Ribbon movement which was founded in Canada in 1989.

5.2 In 2021 Council Leaders took the White Ribbon pledge. In 2022 the Council formally raised the White Ribbon flag and took part in 16 days of action that included encouraging staff and partners to take the pledge. International White Ribbon Day occurs annually on 25th November, whilst the White Ribbon accreditation is an ongoing piece of work.

6. White Ribbon Accreditation

6.1 Regardless of size, all organisations can be White Ribbon accredited and can make a real difference through their staff, their policies, and their day-to-day work; as well as their role within the communities in which they are based.

6.2 For public sector bodies such as Portsmouth City Council achieving White Ribbon accreditation can help with demonstration of the Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act 2010.

6.3 Becoming white ribbon accredited will demonstrate Portsmouth City Council is committed to:

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- Having a positive and safe organisational culture
- Having staff who are knowledgeable and skilful in recognising and addressing violence against women and girls, including abusive and sexist behaviour
- Raising awareness among staff, enabling them to become allies and positive role models
- Improving the experience of our customers and stakeholders
- Influencing wider societal change beyond our organisation to end violence against women and girls

6.4 To become accredited, the Council must meet several criteria. Central to this is an action plan which sets out how the Council will embed White Ribbon principles through strategic leadership, engaging men within all levels of the organisation to become ambassadors, creating opportunities to encourage and develop a positive culture of allyship, and raising awareness.

6.5 Most activity required for White Ribbon will be achieved within existing resources. Some additional funding is required for the accreditation fee and associated communication activity and this funding has been secured through the Safety in the Community Portfolio.

7. **Next steps:** For the Council, White Ribbon is a cross cutting agenda, relevant to several areas of service which will be brought together through a steering group to begin to develop the Council's action plan. Building upon the pledges that have already been made, a register of White Ribbon ambassadors will be developed; these will be people who will champion the agenda within their service areas and support with planning for White Ribbon Day.

8. Conclusion:

8.1 It is noted City leaders have made a pledge to end male violence against women and girls. White Ribbon is a global initiative and calls on men to take action to make a difference. It will complement existing partnership work to tackle VAWG through the Domestic Abuse Strategy and Safer Streets. It is noted the Council is committed to continuing its White Ribbon journey by becoming accredited. Becoming White Ribbon accredited will require a whole Council approach to the VAWG agenda which will require service areas across the Council to come together to develop an action plan. White Ribbon focuses on long-term culture change and the Council is well placed to make this commitment for the benefit of its staff and residents within the city.

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Signed by Paddy May, Corporate Strategy Manager

Appendices: none

Background list of documents: Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972

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The following documents disclose facts or matters, which have been relied upon to a material extent by the author in preparing this report:

Title of document	Location
White Ribbon Accreditation process	Corporate strategy